

CMAG-1



6

Social Support



# CHAPTER 6: SOCIAL SUPPORT

**In this Chapter we will review the following:**

-  Understand the Importance of a Social Support Network.
-  Functional Social Support Questionnaire.



## CHAPTER 6: SOCIAL SUPPORT

Patients who are ready to make behavioral changes that result in improved adherence to therapeutic regimens can often benefit from family or social support networks. In situations where a patient is about to make a significant change in behavior, the presence of a viable social support network (such as family) can mean the difference between success and failure.

Consequently, an assessment of a patient's perception of, and need for, a social support network can be as important as making an assessment of the patient's readiness to change when determining level of motivation. If the patient has a history of depending upon others for assistance with self-care, this may be especially true.

### **ADHERENCE FACT:**

***“Two-thirds of all Americans fail to take any or all of their prescription medicines.”***

The Duke-UNC Functional Social Support Questionnaire (FSSQ) (Broadhead, 1988) will allow you to make a quick assessment of the patient's social support network and determine if this should be considered a "modifier" to findings of the Readiness Ruler for any planned or desired behavior change.

The FSSQ (Appendix 2) is an 8-question form that asks about the patient's perceived level of confidence in affective support. When summaries of the affective and confident domains are combined into one average score, the tool can provide a good indication as to the patient's level of social support.

Each question on the FSSQ is scored on a 1 to 5 scale, with 3.0 being an average score. A sample question on the FSQQ is:

**I have people who care what happens to me....**

### **ADHERENCE-SUGGESTION:**

"Teach back" - Have patients repeat information as they would tell it to a friend.

### **NOTES:**

**ADHERENCE-  
SUGGESTION:**

Utilize Medication Assistance Programs for appropriate patients  
[www.helpingpatients.org](http://www.helpingpatients.org).

**NOTES:**

The patient is asked to read each statement on the FSSQ and supply a check mark next to the response that best matches his or her feelings about the question. Possible responses and their corresponding scores are:

Response	Score
As much as I would like	5
Almost as much as I would like	4
Some, but would like more	3
Less than I would like	2
Much less than I would like	1

All questions on the FSSQ must be answered before scoring. If the patient skips a question, it will need to be answered to complete the scoring process. To score the FSSQ in its entirety, simply add up the numeric score that corresponds with the patient's response to each question and divide by 8 to generate an average score. The patient is perceived to have greater social support as the number increases.