

# WHAT ARE SAFE SUPPORT SYSTEMS?

An overview and practical exercises from the RYH team.



We all need a **support system** of people we can trust.



## What is a safe support system?

- A network of people who will help you through difficult and confusing situations in life and be with you to celebrate your victories.
- People who will give you practical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual support.



## What does a safe person do?

- Maintains confidentiality
- Listens
- Validates feelings
- Only gives advice when asked
- Encourages honesty and openness
- Doesn't judge or reject
- Is empathetic

## Share, Check, Share

One way to tell if a person is safe is to use the "share, check, share" system. Share a little bit about your life, or your feelings, and check their response. If they handle your information based on the criteria above, then over time share a little bit more.

## PRACTICAL EXERCISE: Identify your safe people

1. List 5-10 people with whom you have regular contact and feel close.
2. Put a checkmark next to the names of supportive people.
3. Circle the names of people who know the things you struggle with.
4. Put a star next to those who directly support you in your struggles.
5. Cross out the names of any who are not supportive.
6. Put a question mark next to those you are not sure about.
7. Go back to those not crossed out. What qualities do they have that make them safe people?

## What do RYH groups offer?

A WDA Restoring Your Heart group gives you the experience of being with safe supportive people. You will learn that you are not alone and not the only one who is struggling. When you share hurtful experiences, you will be believed, and your pain will be acknowledged. You will be challenged and inspired to grow and change. You will receive reassurance and respect, and, most importantly, you will be heard.

