Purpose:

The purpose of this guide is to help you brainstorm people in your life (your social network) who are part of your support system to help you achieve your goals and encourage you along the way as a student.

Description:

Everyone has periods of time when they need to draw on support from others to handle the challenges of college. It is even more important to seek out people who support you in a positive way while challenging you to be the person you want to be. This guide will help you reflect on who you have in your support system and how they can help you achieve your goals.

Directions:

Complete the following exercise to help you brainstorm who is in your support network and how they can help.

Circle of Support

1) Identify a goal you want to accomplish
2) Use the drawing below. The middle circle represents you. The circles around will be your support team.
3) Fill in the 5 circles with names of people who can help you accomplish the goal you identified. Who would you consider part of your support network (a parent, your roommate, academic adviser, classmate, etc.) in accomplishing this goal? Try to be specific by writing a person’s name. You want to identify people who can help hold you accountable, but also are easy to access either in person or through phone/email.
4) As you fill in the 5 names, keep in mind the goal you set. If you aren’t able to fill 5 names, think about who is missing from the list. Are there specific people you want to include, but don’t know by name? If so, ask your friends, family, or adviser for help in adding to the list.

5) Begin contacting the list of people you identified. Share your goal with them and ask for their advice on how you might accomplish your goal.
6) Are you interested in meeting new people to add to your support system? Consider getting involved in groups outside of your class. Visit engage.umn.edu to learn about opportunities to meet people who share your interests or goals. What areas of engagement might you pursue to meet people on campus?

Reflection Prompts:

- In what ways do you think expanding your support system might impact your academic life? WHY?

- How can your circle of support help you in exploring majors and careers?

- Who is missing from your circle of support? What steps will you take to add people to your circle?

- Identify a timeline for following up with your Circle of Support contacts. By when do you want to contact each of them?