Autism & Natural Supports:

What are Natural Supports?
Natural Supports are the relationships that people build upon in their everyday lives. Examples include:
- Friends
- Family Members
- Co-Workers
- Community Members
- Church Personnel/Members

Why are Natural Supports Important?
Natural Supports are important for all people, regardless of disability. Natural Supports help people to develop confidence via meaningful participation in relationships, organizations, and communities. These relationships not only foster individual independence and personal growth, but also improve quality of life.

How can Natural Supports be Used?
Natural Supports can be developed in any type of setting, situation, or relationship. You can develop natural supports by identifying key people in various facets of your life and building upon those relationships. You can also identify your interests/aspirations and seek out social/community events and resources that best fit your interests. It takes time and patience to develop natural supports but it can help you build confidence and self-esteem to yourself.

Examples of Natural Supports in the Community
Volunteering
Community Events/Group Activities
Social Events/Activities
Places of Worship
Recreation Activities
Peer/Mentor Support Groups

Sources

The development of these materials was supported in part by a grant from the South Dakota Department of Human Services-Division of Developmental Disabilities (6191-607-001 17). The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Human Services and should not be regarded as such.