

Friends Versus Paid Staff Support

I spend time with many different people. Some people are my friends. Some people are paid support staff.



A friend is someone who likes spending time with me because they want to. Friends choose to spend time together. Friendships usually go both ways. Both people make choices about the friendship.



Friends may talk, play games, share hobbies, call or text each other, and help one another when they can.



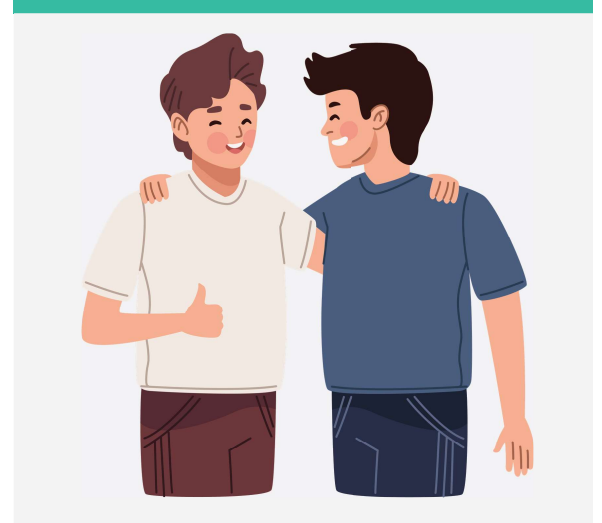
A paid support staff member is someone whose job is to help me. They are paid by an agency, program, or employer to provide support.



Support staff may help me learn new skills, go to appointments, stay safe, reach my goals, and take part in community activities. A support staff member is kind, respectful, and helpful because it is part of their job.



A friend and a support staff member can both be caring and helpful. However, their roles are different.



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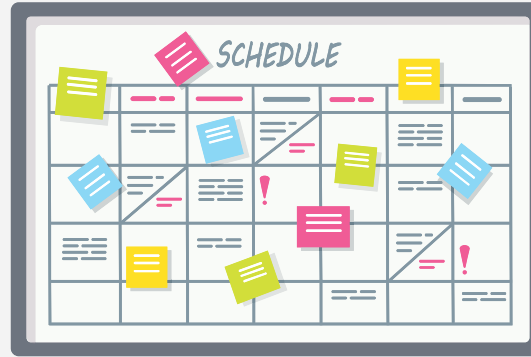
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Friends choose the friendship, spend time together for fun, and do not get paid.



Support staff are paid for their work, follow schedules and job rules, and focus on helping me meet my goals.



Can a support staff member be friendly? Yes! Support staff members are often friendly, kind, and caring. Being friendly does not always mean someone is a friend.



A support staff member may enjoy spending time with me while they are working. They still have a professional role.



Understanding the support staff's role is helpful for me when they take a new job, ask for time off, or work a different shift.



Knowing the difference between a friend and support staff can help me understand my relationships, have healthy expectations, build strong relationships, and respect professional boundaries.

