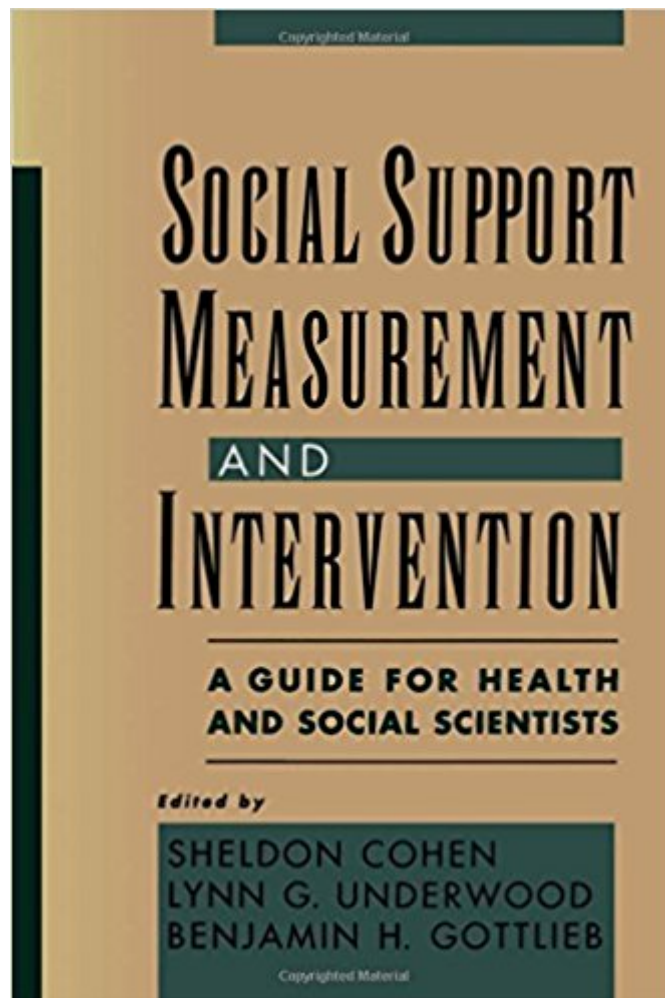




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# Social Support Measurement And Intervention: A Guide For Health And Social Scientists



## Synopsis

Surgery and pharmaceuticals are not the only effective procedures we have to improve our health. The natural human tendency to care for fellow humans, to support them with social networks, has proven to be a powerful treatment as well. As a result, the areas of application for social support intervention have expanded dramatically during the past 20 years. As these areas have expanded, so too has the literature on the theory and measurement of social support. Yet, the literature has focussed on very particular areas. Investigators in the social sciences have mainly focused on the protection that social support confers in the context of stressful life events and transitions, whereas studies in the health sciences have concentrated on the effects of social networks and supports on population mortality and morbidity. Although no single theoretical framework has been widely accepted, there is consensus that both the psychological sense of support and actual expressions of support play critical roles in maintaining health and well being. This book is a state-of-the-art resource for the selection and development of strategies for social support assessment and intervention. Designed for use by behavioral and medical scientists conducting studies of physical illness, psychological adjustment, and psychiatric illness in human populations, this volume presents a broad conceptual framework addressing the role of social support in mental and physical health. The book is divided into four sections. The first provides some historical context as well as a conceptual overview of how social support might influence mental and physical health. The second discusses techniques for measuring social networks and support, and the third addresses the design of different types of support interventions. The final section presents some general comments on the volume and its implications for social support research and intervention. This resource is meant to aid researchers in understanding the conceptual criteria on which measurement and intervention decisions should be made when studying the relations between social support and health. Furthermore, the information provided on both measurement and intervention will be valuable to practitioners interested in designing and evaluating prevention and treatment initiatives. Sponsored by the Fetzer Institute as a follow up to their successful 1995 publication, *Measuring Stress*, this book will provide the most up to date research on the effects of social support interventions on physical and mental health.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This book provides an up to date, comprehensive, review of social support research highlighting theoretical and practical issues that should be considered in the assessment of social support and in the design of support interventions. What comes across constantly in this volume is the need for assessment and intervention to be grounded in theoretical views of the structure and function of social relationships. There are no easy answers to the complexities of the field, but both researchers and practitioners can find much here to think about in the design of their work."--Kenneth Heller, University of Indiana

"This is an excellent volume covering theoretical perspectives, empirical work on social relationships and health, and guides for the development of interventions. It provides up-to-date information for students and investigators across a broad number of fields from sociology and psychology to epidemiology. It will be used so frequently, it will end up sitting on the desk rather than the book shelf."--Lisa F. Berkman, Harvard School of Public Health

"...provides a valuable resource for both scientists hoping to understand and interventionists trying to make the most of the health-related benefits of social relationships."--Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease

November 2001

"...this is an excellent book which is essential reading for anyone embarking on aetiological research or interventions in social support and health. In one bound it has become a classic text for social support researchers."--International Journal of Epidemiology

Sheldon Cohen is at Carnegie Mellon University. Lynn G. Underwood is at Fetzer Institute.

My son, a grad student in social work, requested this book. I assume it met his expectations.

I am someone interested in social support theory and measurement. This book is a standard

resource for me and each chapter is well-written and up to date. A personal favorite of mine is the Wills and Shinar review of different support measures. This is a must own for researchers in this area but also individuals interested in support processes.

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