

# Social Connection

## What is Social Connection?

Social Connection is a feeling of closeness or belonging, either to other individuals or to a group of people.

## Why is it important?

Connecting with others impacts our emotional well-being and mental health. From birth, we need others to care for us, protect us, teach us, and help us to form our social identity. For adults, social connections have a positive impact on physical, emotional and mental health.

In 2020, 70% of people who were screened with moderate to severe symptoms of anxiety or depression reported that one of the top three concerns contributing to their mental health condition was loneliness or isolation.

## Relationships improve overall well-being and sense of life satisfaction as they:

- provide companionship
- help you to feel socially acceptable
- make you happier
- make you feel better about your life and yourself
- provide emotional support
- help you to get through tough times
- provide tangible support such as lending and borrowing, a ride, help with moving, etc.
- provide opportunities for growth as you learn from advice and knowledge that others share

## How do you form social relationships?

Realize that it takes time and effort to form positive connections. Finding time out of a busy schedule to catch up with a friend or attend a social gathering at least once in a while will allow for opportunities for social connections. Although most people live very busy lives, it is important to seek out activities to participate in that align with your interests and hobbies. Things you can do to increase opportunities for social connections include:

- become active in your community, volunteer, join a club
- practice skills such as active listening and sharing information about yourself
- take time to nurture existing relationships



- have an open mind

In a time where we need to stay physically distant from others, and we are experiencing higher levels of isolation as a result, social connections can act as protective factors that can lower overall stress. Now more than ever, we must remember to reach out to others both when we feel that we need help and support, and to offer help and support to others.

## Readings

- [Shape Your Happiness – The Importance of Social Connections and Why You Need it in Your Life](#)
- [15 Ways to Stay Socially Connected for Better Personal Well-being](#)
- [How To Mitigate Loneliness And Its Consequences](#)
- [We Need to Understand the Difference Between Isolation and Loneliness](#)

## ABOUT HOWARD CENTER

Howard Center has a long and rich history as a trusted provider in the community. With a legacy spanning more than 150 years, we have been providing progressive, compassionate, high-quality care and supports to those in need. Today, we offer an array of exemplary mental health, substance use, and developmental services across the lifespan. As Vermont's largest social service organization, our 1,600 staff help more than 19,000 people each year in over 60 locations throughout Vermont in collaboration with hundreds of community partners.

For a full list of resources please visit <https://howardcenter.org/community-education/world-mental-health-day/>

With support from



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