

CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

Social connectedness, or being close and belonging with others, is a basic human need. Research has shown that social connectedness can reduce loneliness and have benefits for our mental and physical health. Some studies have found that strong social relationships can even help you live longer! Here are a few ways you can improve your social connectedness.



MAINTAIN EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS

Spend time on the relationships you already have. How can you strengthen them? Research has shown experiencing new things together can lead to improved relationship quality. Try a new cuisine, or meet at a new location when you are next connecting with others.



STAY IN TOUCH

Even if you are time poor, make efforts to stay in touch with others. Whether that's sending a quick text, making a phone call or tagging a friend in a meme. These are small ways to maintain connection and let others know you are thinking of them.



GET INVOLVED

Taking a class, participating in a group or joining a club can be an easy way to meet like-minded people whilst enjoying common interests. Monash College have a number of clubs you can join to get you started.



FIND THINGS IN COMMON

When you meet someone new, try to identify something you have in common with them. This is literally 'making connections' between yourself and others. For example, do you come from the same country? Do you both like eating hot pots? Are you both interested in playing online games or basketball? Are you studying the same subject?



In online classes, when you notice a classmate has a virtual background showing their interest in something you like, message them and let them know you like that too!



FORM A STUDY GROUP

Study groups can be a helpful way to increase your learning whilst strengthening the relationships with your peers.



DON'T GET CAUGHT UP IN NUMBERS

There is no perfect number of friends you "should" have. People differ in how many friends they need to feel connected. Having one or two close friends that you really enjoy being with and feel comfortable to be yourself with can be more satisfying than having twenty friends you don't really feel close to.



Focus on the quality and not the quantity of friendships.



WORK ON YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS

One of the ways to turn a more distant acquaintance-like relationship into a friendship is through disclosure.

That means sharing your ideas, experiences and feelings with others. Developing your communication skills will help you do this. A good place to start is by developing your listening and empathy skills.



Like most things in life, research on its own isn't enough. You have to use your new communication skills in real life. It's normal to feel a bit nervous when you learn something new, but with practice you will improve your conversational skills and feel more comfortable using them.

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START A CONVERSATION

Use your everyday interactions to increase your social connectedness. Start a conversation with people that you see every day – this could be your neighbour, your classmate, or someone waiting in line at the supermarket.



KEEP IT REGULAR

Similar to getting enough sleep or exercise, connecting with others is something to be maintained. Make a list of those you care about and schedule time weekly to connect with them. Assigning time to this can help to keep social connection a priority.



ASK FOR HELP

Reach out to people you trust when you need help. Asking for help can allow you to feel more connected, reduce loneliness, help you find solutions and prevent problems from getting bigger.



VOLUNTEER

Look for volunteer opportunities in your community. Research has shown that activities such as volunteering can reduce loneliness or prevent loneliness from occurring in the first place.