

Building Social Connections for Better Mental Health

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Parlons-en. **paesf**

The Importance of Social Support

Humans are inherently social beings. We are better positioned to bounce back when we have a social support network with whom we can both give and receive support during times of stress. Social support is the help you receive from family, friends, groups and community.

These relationships can offer a sense of belonging and provide comfort during both good times and challenging moments. Strong social connections are linked to better mental health, increased resilience and coping, and improved overall well-being.

Even small interactions—like a quick check-in or shared activity—can have a positive impact.

Types of Support

Support can take different forms, and each type plays an important role. A strong network often includes a mix of:



EMOTIONAL

Someone who listens understands, and shows empathy



INFORMATIONAL

Advice, guidance, or sharing helpful resources



PRACTICAL

Help with tasks or responsibilities



SOCIAL CONNECTION

Spending time together, sharing activities, and feeling included



Recognizing these different types of support can help you better understand what you may need and where to find it.



Building Your Support Network

Building a support network doesn't mean having a large circle—it's about having meaningful connections you can rely on. Strengthening relationships often starts with small, intentional steps.

You might consider:

- Reaching out to someone you trust
- Reconnecting with a friend or colleague
- Joining a group, activity, or community space
- Checking in regularly with people in your life



Connection is a two-way experience, and healthy relationships develop through consistent care and attention. Being open to both giving and receiving support can help relationships grow over time. Taking time to listen, show appreciation, and be present with others can deepen your sense of connection.

It's also important to be yourself. Authenticity helps build trust and allows relationships to feel more genuine and supportive.

Reflection Moment

Take a moment to think about your own connections. Who are the people you feel comfortable reaching out to? What kind of support would be most helpful to you right now?

You may find it helpful to write down:

- 2–3 people you can connect with this week
- One type of support you need right now
- One small step you can take to reach out

Overcoming Barriers to Connection

It's not always easy to reach out. Many people experience hesitation or uncertainty when it comes to connecting with others.

“I don't want to burden anyone.”

It can help to remember that many people appreciate being asked and want to offer support because they care.

“I don't know where to start.”

Try starting small—a message, a quick call, or a simple invitation can start the connection.

“I feel disconnected.”

Focus on one connection at a time. Small steps can gradually rebuild a sense of closeness.



You don't have to navigate challenges on your own. Beyond your social support network, additional support is available if you need someone to talk to or help finding resources and supports. Your Employee & Family Assistance Program (EFAP) can provide confidential support, guidance, and tools to help you build communication skills, strengthen connections, and support your well-being.

