



IMPORTANCE OF STAYING SOCIALLY CONNECTED DURING COVID-19

Humans are social beings. Our social groups provide us with an important part of our identity and teach us a set of skills that help us to thrive. During this disease pandemic, feeling socially connected is more important than ever. The benefits of social connectedness shouldn't be overlooked.

BENEFITS OF SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS



Improve your quality of life

One study showed that social connection is a greater determinant to health than obesity, smoking, and high blood pressure. And social connection doesn't necessarily mean physically being present with people in a literal sense, but someone's subjective experience of feeling understood and connected to others.



Help you live longer

Research has shown that social connections not only impact your mental health, but your physical health as well. A review of 148 studies (308,849 participants) indicated that the individuals with stronger social relationships had a 50% increased likelihood of survival. This remained true across a number of factors, including age, sex, initial health status, and cause of death.



Boost your mental health

Friendships offer a number of mental health benefits, such as increased feelings of belonging, purpose, increased levels of happiness, reduced levels of stress, improved self-worth and confidence. A study conducted at a free health clinic in Buffalo, New York found that respondents with insufficient perceived social support were the most likely to suffer from mental health disorders like anxiety and depression.



Decrease your risk of suicide

There are a number of factors that put people at higher or lower risk for suicide. One of these factors is connectedness, which the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) defines as "The degree to which a person or group is socially close, interrelated or shares resources with other persons or groups." Relationships can play a crucial role in protecting a person against suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

It is still possible to form social connections during times of social (physical) distancing. We can be grateful to live in a time of technology whether connecting through virtual means, like hosting a virtual dinner party to celebrate birthdays or have an after work virtual get together to stay connected. Or we can also connect with more traditional means like using the telephone, sending a letter or leaving a neighbor a written note.