

The importance of Social Connections

Social connections are the relationships we have with each other, and the sense of belonging to a group, family, or community. It is an essential part of our health and well-being. Social connections are important because they allow us to create a support system that can provide us with care, make life more enjoyable and help us succeed. Lack of meaningful social connections can impact our mental health and may cause us to experience feelings of loneliness. This can have a negative long-term effect on our mental and physical health, such as difficulty sleeping, depression, difficulty maintaining focus and concentrations, and increase in alcohol use. Social interaction allows to combat loneliness and helps reduce stress, decrease the likelihood of depression, and improve overall quality of life.

Our social network can be big or small. They can live as close as across the street, an hour drive away or so far away that we can only connect with them through telephone or video calls. The ultimate advantage of having a social connection or network is that they make you feel supported and valued.

Take advantage of the holiday season to connect with your family and friends. Here are some ways you can make more social connections:

- Invite a friend to your home who you like to spend time with or makes you laugh
- Send encouraging or “just checking-in” messages to someone who is going through a hard time
- Get in touch with a food bank or a hospital to learn more about their volunteer programs
- Engage in group activities you enjoy such as a book club, faith groups, alumni organizations etc.

