

Psychology Week 2018

11-17 NOVEMBER

The power of human connection



Tips to connect with others

#psychweek   

Social relationships support good mental and physical health. These tips will help you to enjoy better interactions with the people you encounter, so you can feel the benefits of positive connection.

1 Think positive

Worries about social situations can make you overthink your interactions. Don't dwell on worries about how you are perceived – shift your focus to the other person or the topic of conversation.

2 Forget comparison

Don't be concerned if others appear to have more or better friends than you. Quality and enjoyment matter more than quantity. Savour the moments of connection, wherever you can find them.

3 Expect change

Circumstances can leave us vulnerable to a sense of isolation. Relationships shift over time and we may lose touch with friends who were once important. Accepting change as normal can help you adjust.

4 Tolerate discomfort

Anxiety may cause you to avoid socialising. Understand that awkwardness does not mean you are doing anything wrong. Reach out to others and your skills will improve with time.

5 Listen well

Practice listening. Ask questions and really listen to the answers, rather than just waiting for a turn to talk. Respond warmly to people's experiences through your posture, facial expressions and words.

6 Rehearse

Out of practice with chat? Spend some time thinking about questions you can use when conversation stalls. You might ask if the other person has travelled far, visits this museum often, or liked the show.

7 Say names

Using someone's name when you know it demonstrates caring. Offer yours. Ask after their loved ones, or pick up a previous conversation topic, such as their pet, to show you have paid attention.

8 Go offline

Social media helps many people, but it can also increase disconnection. Ensure you have a healthy offline life. Perhaps invite trusted online friends to an offline meeting to build your relationship.

9 Chat to strangers

Unexpected moments of connection greatly improve your mood. Share a smile and eye contact with a stranger, or chat to a fellow commuter. Rise to the challenge of finding common ground with strangers.

10 Help

Helping someone gives a feel-good rush. Create a bond with someone by offering help, or asking for it. Something as little as assistance with a bag or holding a lift can help people feel seen and cared for.

11 Join in

Embrace opportunities to join, volunteer or participate. This connects you to other people, unites you in a shared activity, and provides an easy way to get to know people better.

12 Reconnect

Reach out to friends from your past. Many people welcome such efforts and the feeling that you care. If you plan a catchup, why not revisit a place or experience where you shared happy memories?

13 Manage stress

Everybody has some social situations they dread. Practice simple stress management techniques, such as breathing deeply and slowly, to help keep your stress in check through awkward moments.

14 Practice, practice, practice

Relationship skills can be learnt. Don't be discouraged. Remember that social connections are good for you. If you feel like you need support to build better connections skills, a psychologist can help.

Psychologists are experts in emotion, wellbeing and behavior. They can help you address relationship issues and learn practical skills and strategies that enhance your interactions with other people and your sense of life satisfaction. To find a psychologist who can work with you to build relationship skills, visit [findapsychologist.org.au](https://www.findapsychologist.org.au)

Find out more at [psychweek.org.au](https://www.psychweek.org.au)

