

A SOCIAL STORY



THE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS

Whether it's personal or professional, social connections are vital to your health and well-being. We all need to have a sense of belonging and know that others care about us. Think about some of the important relationships in your life—who comes to mind? Our social networks can be made up of pretty much anyone: friends, family, partners, co-workers, neighbours, or even professional supports like doctors.

Social connection is a basic human need that's essential to supporting and improving our physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Our social relationships help us cope with life's challenges and manage stress. They help us foster a sense of belonging, make us happier and improve the way we work together.

CREATING CONNECTIONS AT WORK

Having social connections at work not only creates a healthier workplace environment, but also makes being at work more enjoyable. Here are a few ideas for how you can support social connections in your workplace:

Allow time and space to connect.

Connect face-to-face with your colleagues, when possible. Spend time in a staffroom or common area. Instead of sending an email, try chatting in-person.

Peer recognition. Recognition can go a long way! Recognize your colleagues' achievements to show them they're valuable and encourage team-building—whether that's through an awards program, a recognition board or meeting shout-outs.

Peer support. Peer support programs support the mental health of employees, and they allow those who've experienced and overcome challenges to support and guide others going through similar situations. Check out [Peer Support Canada](#) for more information.

CONNECTION REFLECTIONS

Complete the chart below and reflect on some of your current connections and the ways you can continue to strengthen them.

Who is currently a part of your social network at work?

Who inspires you at work?

Who would you like to connect with more at work?

How can you foster more social connections at work?



THE SANDBOX TIP

Why is social connection so important, beyond the fact that it feels good, and how does it translate to the workplace? Check out ***Broaden the Focus: Social Connection and Workplace Wellness***, on The Wellness Sandbox, for a great blog with a few answers!



COMMUNITY CONNECTION TIP

Dr. Jody Carrington states that connection is a universal language and disconnection is one of the biggest problems we face today. Check out **Dr. Carrington's website** for some of the science behind relationships and connections, as well as some ideas and tools for improving these in our personal and professional lives.

SOURCES

1. Canadian Mental Health Association. (2018). Social Support. www.cmha.ca/documents/social-support
2. have THAT talk, Ottawa Public Health. (2016). Learn about the National Standard - Growth and Development. www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-ayikvxCXE&list=PL2NuAPXp8ohZmoVaEC16sRiV9IQ25Xkld&index=7