



## Social Wellness Month!

<https://www.conehealth.com/services/behavioral-health/8-ways-to-better-social-wellness/>

Did you know that having healthy relationships can improve overall health? It is called social wellness or social well-being. In this era of non-face-to-face digital social networking, people are becoming more isolated than ever. The health risks of isolation have been proven to be comparable to those of smoking cigarettes, high blood pressure and obesity.

The reason why social wellness is so important is that people who have healthy relationships, and a strong social network tend to live longer and respond better to stress. This reduction in stress and anxiety results in a healthier endocrine system, healthier cardiovascular functioning and an enhanced immune system.

One of the biggest benefits of having good social wellness is the presence of a social support network. This

network can be close friends and family members to turn to when you are in need or in a crisis situation. Your support team can offer assistance, perspective and insight to a situation that may have caused your judgment to become clouded. This support can come in three different forms:

- *Emotional* – when someone else's actions make you feel cared for.
- *Instrumental* – something physical such as lending money or cooking a meal.
- *Informational* – providing information to help someone else.

In order to make sure your social well-being is healthy, it is important to nurture your relationships. They should be mutually beneficial. Are you always the one in need or are you also providing support? Just as you would care for a child or a special pet, your most important relationships should be a priority every day. Here are some things to consider for a lasting relationship:

- Devote a set amount of time every week to the relationship to show that you see it as a priority.



**July is  
Social Wellness  
Month!**

[www.vadsociety.ca](http://www.vadsociety.ca)  
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### ***What exactly is social wellness?***

*Social Wellness is nurturing yourself and your relationships. It is contributing to those you love on their path to a healthier life.*

*Social Wellness Month is historically celebrated during the month of July. We would like you to join us in celebrating one another this month, and every month, with a goal of improving your quality of life as well as those around you.*

*This month, you can join us on Facebook and Twitter for **#WellnessWednesdays**, as we share the health benefits of social wellness!*

**IN A GENTLE WAY,  
YOU CAN SHAKE  
THE WORLD.**

MAHATMA GANDHI



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- Be honest and supportive of one another's feelings, hopes and dreams.
- If necessary, accept blame or avoid criticism for any breakdowns in the relationship.
- Don't try to fix the person. Be supportive by focusing on the positives in a situation.
- Show appreciation in verbal and nonverbal ways.
- Never jump to conclusions or respond without the whole picture.
- Treat your relationships as a place to give, not a place to take.
- Don't compete. Be happy instead of jealous with successes that aren't your own.

If you find that you are in a relationship that increases your stress level or drains you of your energy, it may not be a healthy one. This can happen when you are with someone who is critical and negative or involved in unhealthy and self-destructive behavior. You must give yourself permission to end a relationship if it is hurting you. Your social support network should give you a feeling of comfort, not apprehension.

If you feel that you would like to expand your social network and aren't quite sure how, there are many options for initiating healthy and lasting relationships.

- If you are a dog owner, walk your pet every day in a public place where there are other people out and about.
- Join a gym or an exercise group. Exercising with others provides a good icebreaker for conversation.
- Volunteering is a great way to meet others who share your same passions.
- Find an interest group that meets regularly and works on their hobbies.
- Go back to school or take a class.
- Attend a house of worship.
- Take the time to develop your social support network. Make some new friends or strengthen the healthy relationships you currently have. The effort you put into fostering these relationships have many long-term benefits for your physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.

## Social Wellness Toolkit

<https://www.nih.gov/health-information/social-wellness-toolkit>

From the time you're born, your relationships help you learn to navigate the world. You learn how to interact with others, express yourself, conduct everyday health habits, and be a part of different communities from those around you. Positive social habits can help you



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### YOUR HEALTHIEST SELF

## Social Wellness Checklist

Positive social habits can help you build support systems and stay healthier mentally and physically. Here are some tips for connecting with others:



#### MAKE CONNECTIONS

Social connections might help protect health and lengthen life. Scientists are finding that our links to others can have powerful effects on our health. Whether with family, friends, neighbors, romantic partners, or others, social connections can influence our biology and well-being. Look for ways to get involved with others.

#### To find new social connections:

- Join a group focused on a favorite hobby.
- Take a class to try something new.
- Try yoga, tai chi, or another new physical activity.
- Join a choral group, theater troupe, band, or orchestra.
- Help at a community garden or park.
- Volunteer at a school, library, or hospital.
- Participate in neighborhood events.
- Join a local community group.
- Travel to different places and meet new people.



#### TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF WHILE CARING FOR OTHERS

Many of us will end up becoming a caregiver at some point in our lives. The stress and strain of caregiving can take a toll on your health. It's important to find ways to care for your health while caring for others. Depending on your circumstances, some self-care strategies may be more difficult to carry out than others. Choose ones that work for you.

#### To take care of yourself while caring for others:

- Ask for help. Make a list of ways others can help. For instance, someone might sit with the person while you do errands.
- Make to-do lists, and set a daily routine.
- Try to take breaks each day.
- Keep up with your hobbies and interests when you can.
- Join a caregiver's support group.
- Eat healthy foods, and exercise as often as you can.
- Build your caregiver skills. Some hospitals offer classes on how to care for someone with an injury or illness.

To find more information, please visit [www.nih.gov/health/social-wellness](http://www.nih.gov/health/social-wellness)

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NIH Publication (NIH) 17-0012

### YOUR HEALTHIEST SELF | SOCIAL WELLNESS CHECKLIST



#### GET ACTIVE TOGETHER

Where you live, work, or go to school can have a big impact on how much you move and even how much you weigh. Being active with others in your community can have a positive effect on your health habits and create opportunities to connect. You can help your community create ways to encourage more physical activity.

#### To help make a more active community:

- Start a walking group with friends.
- Drive the speed limit and yield to people who walk.
- Consider joining an exercise group.
- Participate in local planning efforts to develop walking paths, sidewalks, and bike paths.
- Join other parents to wait for more physical activity at school.
- Try different activities!



#### SHAPE YOUR FAMILY'S HEALTH HABITS

Many things can influence a child, including friends, teachers, and the things they see when they sit in front of the TV or computer. If you're a parent, know that your everyday behavior plays a big part in shaping your child's behavior, too. With your help, kids can learn to develop healthy eating and physical activity habits that last throughout their lives.

#### To help kids form healthy habits:

- Be a role model. Choose healthy food and activities when together.
- Make healthy choices easy. Have nutritious food and sports gear readily available.
- Focus on making healthy habits fun.
- Limit screen time.
- Check with caregivers or schools to be sure they offer healthy food and activities.
- Change a little at a time.



#### BOND WITH YOUR KIDS

Parents have an important job. Raising kids is both rewarding and challenging. Being sensitive, responsive, consistent, and available to your kids can help you build positive, healthy relationships with them. The strong emotional bonds that result help children learn how to manage their own feelings and behaviors and develop self-confidence. Children with strong connections to their caregivers are more likely to be able to cope with life's challenges.

#### To build strong relationships with your kids:

- Catch kids showing good behavior and offer specific praise.
- Give children meaningful jobs at home and positive recognition afterward.
- Use kind words, tones, and gestures.
- Spend some time every day in warm, positive, loving interaction with your kids.
- Brainstorm solutions to problems together.
- Set rules for yourself for mobile devices and other distractions.
- Ask about your child's concerns, wishes, goals, and ideas.
- Participate in activities your child enjoys.

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**YOUR HEALTHIEST SELF | SOCIAL WELLNESS CHECKLIST**



**BUILD HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS**  
Strong, healthy relationships are important throughout your life. They can impact your mental and physical well-being. As a child you learn the social skills you need to form and maintain relationships with others. But at any age you can learn ways to improve your relationships. It's important to know what a healthy relationship looks like and how to keep your connections supportive.

**To build healthy relationships:**

- Share your feelings honestly.
- Ask for what you need from others.
- Listen to others without judgement or blame. Be caring and empathetic.
- Disagree with others respectfully. Conflicts should not turn into personal attacks.
- Avoid being overly critical, angry outbursts, and violent behaviors.
- Expect others to treat you with respect and honesty in return.
- Compromise. Try to come to agreements that work for everyone.
- Protect yourself from violent and abusive people. Set boundaries with others. Decide what you are and aren't willing to do. It's okay to say no.
- Learn the differences between healthy, unhealthy, and abusive ways of relating to others. Visit [www.thehorde.org/healthy-relationships/relationship-spectrum](http://www.thehorde.org/healthy-relationships/relationship-spectrum).

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## Signs of Being Socially Healthy

- Having assertive skills rather than passive or aggressive ones
- Balancing your social and personal time
- Being engaged with other people in the community
- Adapting in social situations
- To be yourself in all situations
- Treating others with respect
- Being able to develop and maintain friendships and networks
- Creating boundaries in friendships to encourage communication and conflict management
- Having a supportive network of family and friends
- Having fun in life

<https://blog.hif.com.au/mental-health/what-is-social-health-definitions-examples-and-tips-on-improving-your-social-wellness>



## Why Is Social Health Important?

Our social health and social wellness are a vital part of our overall health and wellbeing. We interact with people every day. The quality and quantity of our relationships affect our mental and physical wellbeing. Maintaining a good level of social wellness lets you build interpersonal relationships with others. These relationships include friendships, intimate relationships, platonic, family, and professional (work) relationships.

Studies show that people with poor social interactions are more likely to die younger than those with high involvement rates.

Researchers have also linked the following health issues to poor social health:

- Suffering a heart attack
- Chronic disease
- Mobility issues
- High blood pressure
- Raised stress hormones leading to inflammation
- Cancer

- Poor mental health
- Anxiety & depression
- Poor immune system

Signs of good social health include:

- Balancing your social and personal time
- Being your true self at all times
- Engaging with people in your community
- Treating others with respect
- Maintaining and building strong relationships with friends
- Creating healthy boundaries that help with communication, trust and conflict management
- Turning to friends and family for support
- Communicating effectively



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