

# Tips to Connect with Others

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## **Social relationships support good mental and physical health.**

These 14 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. Savor 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 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 effortless 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. Do not be discouraged. Remember that social connections are good for you. If you feel like you need support to build better connections skills ask for help from others, including the members assistance program.

### **Members Assistance Program**

If you are experiencing feelings of stress and anxiety during the transition back to our new normal, please use this service. This service is confidential and will provide you with access to a qualified person to help you through these times.

You can access the service here {[Email} therapydogs@tdsinc.com.au](mailto:therapydogs@tdsinc.com.au)



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