

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:



CONNECT WITH OTHERS

Social connections may 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.
- Volunteer at a school, library, or hospital.
- Stay in touch with family, friends, and neighbors. Connect in person or virtually.
- Share your knowledge. Teach a favorite pastime or skill to a new generation.
- Take the stage. Join a choral group, theater troupe, band, or orchestra.
- Help others. Run errands for people with limited mobility or access to transportation.
- Get moving in a class for physical activity.
- Be more active in your local community or senior center or faith-based organization.



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:

- Make to-do lists, and set a daily routine.
- Ask for help. Make a list of ways others can help. For instance, someone might sit with the person while you do errands.
- 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.



GET ACTIVE TOGETHER

Physical activity has many benefits. It can improve your health, mood, and energy levels. But sometimes, the inspiration to get moving may be lacking. That’s when friends, family, and other social connections can help. Research has shown that connecting with others, called social support, can help you get active and make changes to improve your health.

To get moving with others:

- Build your network.
- Make a shared routine. Commit to a schedule with others.
- Be accountable. Share your goals with others. Ask for their support.
- Take a class in person or online.
- Join a team. Look for a local sports team.
- Family activity. Join kids for activities.
- Get dancing. Go to a local dance or class.
- Move more at work. Join a wellness group.



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, worries, goals, and ideas.
- Participate in activities your child enjoys.



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 behavior.
- 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.thehotline.org/healthy-relationships/relationship-spectrum.