

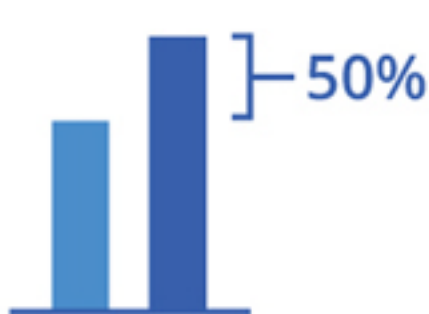
Connect to Thrive

WHAT IS SOCIAL CONNECTION?



The subjective experience of feeling close to and a sense of belongingness with others.

THE BENEFITS OF HIGH SOCIAL CONNECTION:



50% increased chance of longevity



stronger gene expression for immunity (research by Steve Cole, UCLA)



lower rates of anxiety and depression



higher self-esteem and empathy



better emotion regulation skills



Social connection creates a positive feedback loop of social, emotional, and physical well being.

THE DANGERS OF LOW SOCIAL CONNECTION



worse for health than smoking, high blood pressure or obesity



higher inflammation at the cellular level



higher susceptibility to anxiety and depression



slower recovery from disease



increased antisocial behavior and violence



suicide

HOW MUCH SOCIAL CONNECTION DO AMERICANS HAVE?



Loneliness, isolation and alienation are on the rise.



In 2004, 25% of Americans claim that they have no one to share a personal problem with.



Loneliness is the main reason why people seek psychological counseling.

HOW CAN I INCREASE MY SOCIAL CONNECTION? I'M AN INTROVERT, A LONER OR HAVE NO FRIENDS. WHAT SHOULD I DO?



No problem! All the benefits mentioned above have nothing to do with how many friends you have. The benefits come from your internal and subjective sense of connection!



As long as you feel connected to others on the inside, you still get the benefit of being connected. Think of children who run up to play with children they don't know, they feel connected from within.

An internal sense of connection can be nurtured and built:



1) Give, Share, Support & Do acts of service and kindness for others.

Research shows that compassion and volunteering has huge health benefits and creates a sense of connection and purpose. Research also shows that if we need help, we should ask for it. It will create belonging for those we ask.



2) Take care of oneself:

Stress is linked to high self-focus and therefore a lower sense of connection; if you are happy from within, you are also more likely to feel connected, to reach out to others, and to make the world a happier and sunnier place.



3) Ask for help.

Research shows that people are willing to help us but if we don't ask, they assume we don't need help. Reach out to those around you. Sad to be spending Christmas alone? Ask if you can join friends or invite others to join you!

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