Why We All Need a Friend

Whether you identify as an introvert or extrovert, there is just no denying the value of a good relationship. We all reap many benefits from knowing we have a trustworthy person to turn to or whose company we simply enjoy in our times of need. This National Call a Friend Day (December 28), we want to take a moment to better understand just how beneficial healthy relationships can be for your mental health and overall wellbeing.

# **The Relationship Between Social Health and Mental Health**

Humans are a social species, meaning we depend on interpersonal relationships to live our happiest, healthiest lives. Research has suggested that the number of social relationships a person has and the quality of those relationships all impact their [mental, physical, and behavioral health](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3150158/). It has also been suggested that our social relationships impact our mortality risks.

# **Five Benefits of Healthy Relationships**

Surrounding yourself with healthy relationships can grant you many benefits- whether to your mental health, physical health, or overall wellbeing. A few benefits of healthy relationships include:

## **You’re Less Stressed**

We all face stressful moments at one point in our lives or another. However, having a supportive social network to turn to in times of stress can be incredibly helpful in relieving us in those moments we feel [anxious and stressed](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3150158/).

## **Aiding in Recovery**

Having social support when recovering from a major injury or illness can be vital to recovery. It can take one’s mind off their pain and symptoms, allowing them to feel more relaxed and give their body a greater chance at healing.

## **Live Longer**

Believe it or not, the quality of your relationships has been suggested to significantly impact your [risk of mortality](https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1000316#:~:text=Cumulative%20empirical%20evidence%20across%20148,a%20function%20of%20social%20relationships.). Healthy, happy relationships are often correlated with greater odds of survival in research.

## **Greater Happiness**

There is a ton of research correlating happiness with social relationships. Having a healthy support network can allow you to build resilience against difficult moments, thoughts, and emotions. It can also help you build confidence and feel motivated to pursue a life you truly want.

# **Ways to Nourish Your Relationships**

## **Put on Your Listening Ears**

It can be so easy to fall into a pattern of communicating without listening. However, this can lead to major conflicts and resentment within your relationships. While your voice is important, make sure you are hearing your friend or partner’s voices and opinions, as well- even if they don’t align with yours.

## **Learn Effective Ways to Communicate Your Needs**

When communicating your desires or needs in a relationship, it is important to have effective communication skills. Knowing how to get your point across without leaving your friend or partner feeling defensive or offended is a skill we can all improve.

## **Do Little Things to Show Your Love Often**

Whether you are working to nourish your familial relationships, romantic relationships, or friendships, showing love and appreciation toward your social network is crucial to keeping the relationships happy and healthy.

# **We Are Here for You**

Have you found yourself unable to connect with others, struggling in your relationships, or just feeling lonely? It is important to know that no matter what social or mental health issues you are struggling with, you are not alone. Our compassionate and experienced therapists are here to help you work toward the solution you need to live a higher quality life. [Contact](http://michiganpsychologicalcare.com/contact.php) us today.

References:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3150158/>

<https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1000316#:~:text=Cumulative%20empirical%20evidence%20across%20148,a%20function%20of%20social%20relationships>.

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