



Participant Guide

Healthy Connections: Rebuilding Community in a Disconnected World

Agenda

- Defining Connection & Community
- Why Disconnection is Growing
- Health Impacts of Disconnection
- Lessons from the Blue Zones
- Building Connection
- Rebuilding Community in Everyday Life
- Personal Habits & Reflection



Exercise

Poll #1

How would you describe your current sense of connection?

- Very connected
- Somewhat connected
- Neutral
- Somewhat disconnected
- Very disconnected



Defining Connection

Connection is the experience of being seen, heard, and valued by others – where mutual presence fosters trust, belonging, and emotional safety.



Defining Community

- Sense of belonging & shared purpose
- Emotional safety & mutual support
- Fellowship with like-minded individuals
- Moving from 'me' to 'we'



Defining Third Spaces

- Informal, accessible, welcoming environments
- Where people come together for social connection, shared experiences, sense of belonging
- Often without pressures of home and work roles



Why Disconnection is Growing

- Cultural shifts toward *independence* over *interdependence*
- Hyperfocus on individual achievement
- Technology both connector & barrier
- Rising anxiety & stress
- Different backgrounds
- Social media replacing real interaction



Exercise

Poll #2

What contributes most to your feelings of disconnection? Check all that apply:

1. Remote/virtual work
2. Heavy workload or burnout
3. Lack of meaningful conversations
4. Limited team interaction
5. Personal stress or life demands



Health Impacts of Disconnection

- Higher risk of heart disease
- Higher risk of stroke
- Higher mortality in heart disease patients with poor social integration



Source: American Heart Association –
Scientific statement on social isolation and cardiovascular risk

Lessons from the Blue Zones

Blue Zones: Regions where people live longer, healthier lives

- **Right Tribe** – Intentional social circles
- **Common denominators** – close friends, strong social networks, shared meals, regular check-ins, mutual care
- **Health, happiness, longevity** are contagious



Building Connection Workplace Strategies

- Team rituals and shared check-ins
- Peer mentoring programs
- Encourage psychological safety
- Create space for informal interaction



Building Connection When Life Is Busy

- Use technology intentionally (not passively)
- Schedule connection like any priority
- Ask meaningful questions – “How are you?”
- Reconnect through shared rituals or routines



Building Connection Technology Can Be a Bridge

- Deepen—not replace—local ties
- Nurture relationships outside work
- Maintain connection during transitions or turbulent times
- Host or attend virtual gatherings
- Build a network with like-minded individuals



Rebuilding Community in Everyday Life

- Shop local, support local businesses
- Volunteer with causes that matter to you
- Respond to others with presence & care
- Practice mindfulness
- Communicate openly & consistently
- Create 'Third Spaces' for yourself



Personal Habits & Reflection

- When did you last connect in person with someone outside your home/workplace?
- Do you rely on social media more than phone calls or meetups?
- Are you present when physically with others?
- What's one connection you'd like to strengthen?



Exercise

Poll #3

What's one area where you want to rebuild connection first?

- Work relationships
- Personal relationships
- Community/3rd Spaces
- Self-connection



Personal Connection Challenge

Say "Hello" to one new person each week

Notice how it feels. What shifts?



Strategies to Build Community

WORK Strategies

- Create daily routine, incorporate social engagement
- Schedule on-line working sessions with other colleagues
- Use virtual tools: Slack, Teams, Zoom
- Cultivate online communities
- Virtual coffee breaks at specific time with others
- Peer groups based on different interests

Personal Strategies

- Build into your schedule time to connect with colleagues, check in, chat, create virtual water cooler conversations
- Use tools like Slack, Teams, Zoom, Chat to connect visually with co-workers; interest-based Chat Channels - cooking, books
- Cultivate relationships in LinkedIn, Facebook, Alignable, and other groups to forge friendships

Quick Wins (Small, Daily Practices)

- Send a friendly message to a colleague you haven't spoken to in a while
- Use voice memos instead of texts to create warmer communication
- Call someone and have an actual, spontaneous conversation

HOME Strategies

- Take a class: pottery, painting, writing, yoga, cycling
- Host or attend local gatherings
- Invite neighbor over for coffee
- Participate in local community events
- Join a Meet-Up group or Eventbrite event
- Nurture relationships outside of work
- Reconnect with friends or colleagues
- Volunteer at local charitable events
- Get involved at your spiritual center

Personal Strategies

- Nurture "live" relationships with neighbors, family, friends, spiritual center community, meet-up groups.
- Use time you would have spent commuting engaging in more social activities, such as breakfast socials, after-work networking events
- Focus on your physical, emotional, and cognitive health: engage in hobbies, interests; journal, meditate, pamper yourself
- Practice Self-Care: get a massage, go on a retreat, cook healthy meals, exercise regularly, do things that make you smile

Quick Wins (Small, Daily Practices)

- Say hello to a neighbor when walking your dog
- Join a fitness class instead of working out alone
- Drop into a coffee shop
- Take yourself out on a date
- Re-engage in your community

Call 800.344.4222 or visit employees.concernhealth.com



Healthy Connections

More Tips to Rebuild Community



Notice What Nourishes (and What Drains)

- Pay attention to how different interactions affect your energy.
- Example: Do you feel more grounded after a walk with a friend—or more anxious after scrolling social media?
- Track what leaves you feeling seen, heard, or valued.

Shift the Balance

- Reduce isolating habits:
 - Replace passive scrolling with a quick call or voice message.
 - Add a personal check-in to your team's agenda.
- Add connection buffers
 - Pair hard tasks with uplifting rituals—like a walk or shared lunch.

Reconnect with Intention

- Schedule connection like any priority.
 - Weekly call with a friend.
 - Shared meals or rituals.
 - Join a group or class that aligns with your values.

Make Space for Real Talk

- Share when you're feeling disconnected
"I've been missing real conversation lately—want to catch up?"

Rebuild Community, One Moment at a Time

- Support local businesses and greet familiar faces.
- Volunteer with causes that matter to you.
- Join or start a group around shared interests.
- Be consistent—small gestures build trust over time.



PRO TIP

Connection doesn't have to be grand to be meaningful.

Wave at your neighbor. Compliment someone's socks. Send a meme to a friend who gets your humor. Small gestures count—and they often open the door to something more.

Connection is a human need, not a luxury. Whether at work or in life, rebuilding community starts with small, intentional acts—moment of presence, kindness, and care that remind us we belong.

Call 800.344.4222 or visit employees.concernhealth.com

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Access is easy.

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Two easy ways to connect.

Just call **800-344-4222** or visit employees.concernhealth.com.

Concern is your full-service mental wellbeing program. We provide confidential counseling, coaching, self-paced programs, and everyday support—from legal, financial, and identity theft consultations to parenting, adult and elder care resources. Navigating work-life balance, daily stress, and life's curveballs can feel like a juggling act. If it's starting to feel like too much, call **800-344-4222** or visit employees.concernhealth.com. You don't have to go it alone. We're here for you!

Options for Learning New Skills & Changing Habits



OurRelationship Online Program

Designed to uncover, understand, and solve relationship issues, at your own pace or guided by a program coach.



Personal Coaching

Tailored, actionable strategies to achieve personal wellbeing and professional development goals.



Financial Coaching

Money coach helps with money management, tax basics, investing, retirement planning, and building credit.

Interested in learning new skills?

OurRelationship is an inclusive online resource that helps couples strengthen their connection, at their own pace or guided by a program coach.

Personal Coaching with a skilled coach includes actionable strategies to help you achieve personal well-being and professional development goals.

Financial Coaching. A Money Coach helps with topics like tax basics, money management, establishing credit, debt reduction, and more!

OurRelationship
Your online relationship resource

Inclusive online program designed to uncover, understand, and solve relationship challenges at your own pace or guided by a program coach

- Proven solution for all couples and individuals wanting to strengthen their relationships
- Backed by 10+ years federally-funded research
- Adapted to specific issues, stressors, and communication patterns
- Improve communication skills, regain intimacy, build trust
- 8-10 hours of tailored content/4-6 weeks to complete



OurRelationship is a proven, online, program backed by over a decade of research and designed for real-life challenges. It's available to all couples and individuals who want to strengthen their relationship, with the option to proceed at their own pace or be guided by a program coach.

Sources

- Blue Zones & Longevity**
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[University of Florida College of Medicine – Blue Zones research overview](#)
[Pierre Health – Blue Zone social structures and community impact](#)
- Social Isolation & Health Risks**
[CDC – Health effects of social isolation and loneliness](#)
[U.S. Surgeon General Advisory – Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation \(2023\)](#)
[American Heart Association – Scientific statement on social isolation and cardiovascular risk](#)
- Psychological Safety in the Workplace**
[Harvard Business Review – Psychological safety research by Amy Edmondson](#)
[Amy Edmondson – Psychological Safety resource hub](#)

Questions? Comments

Thank you!

Please complete the Survey Monkey
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3VHDNPS>