

SMART Connection

Overview: Improving the quantity and quality of social connections is important in the prevention and management of psychiatric conditions. We know social connections affect everything from neurobiological pathways to psychological resilience. Additionally, the positive psychological states fostered by social connections, such as a sense of belonging, security, self-esteem, and purpose, have been thought to link to motivation for self-care. Other forms of connection include religion, animals, nature, and art.

Details: The latest evidence shows that social isolation may pose health risks equivalent to smoking, hypertension, and obesity. Diminished social networks, a scarcity of close relationships, and a perceived lack of social support are further correlated with depressive symptoms. Social network size is inversely correlated with symptom severity in bipolar and psychotic disorders.

ASSESSMENT: Adapted from the UCLA Loneliness Scale							
Indicate how often each of the <u>positive</u> statements below is descriptive of you.				Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
				1 pt	2 pt	3 pt	4 pt
I feel in tune with the people around me							
I feel part of a group of friends							
I have a lot in common with the people around me							
I am an outgoing person							
There are people I feel close to							
I can find companionship when I want it							
There are people who really understand me							
There are people I can talk to							
There are people I can turn to							
Subtotals							
Indicate how often each of the <u>negative</u> statements below is descriptive of you.				Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
				1 pt	2 pt	3 pt	4 pt
I lack companionship							
There is no one I can turn to							
I feel alone							
I am no longer close to anyone							
My interests and ideas are not shared by those around me							
I feel left out							
My social relationships are superficial							
No one really knows me well							
I feel isolated from others							
I am unhappy being so withdrawn							
People are around me but not with me							
Subtotals							
TOTAL score							
20-39	Low loneliness	40-59	Moderate loneliness	60-80	High loneliness		

Connection Strategies: Consider the following ideas when picking SMART goals below.

Leave the house	Run errands away from home (eg, shopping, going to the library, or the post office)
Go where people are	Go to a park or coffee shop and read or listen to music – practice just being around others
Use your supports	Reach out to family, friends, or colleagues – invite them out or join when they invite you
Follow your interests	Find something you might enjoy and join a class or group that is already doing it
Spend time in nature	Spend time in the yard or go to the park, beach, or forest
Do some art	Draw, paint, write, sculpt, dance, or play an instrument
Use an app	Meetup, Nextdoor, MeetMe, Athlete, Hey! VINA
Do a workbook	Unlocking the Art of Making Friends: A Complete Guide to Meaningful Adult Friendships

SMART GOAL: Create a goal based on what you are doing now, past successes, or any new ideas.

S	Specific action and frequency	
M	Measure of progress	
A	Accountability partner or plan	
R	Relevant to what goal(s)	
T	Time to start and follow-up	

ACTIVITY LOG: Over the next 1-4 weeks, track your progress around the new behavioral goal and make notes on what goes well and poorly. Choose 1 goal or change/increase the goal weekly.

Week 1 Goal				Week 2 Goal			
Day	Yes	No	Notes	Day	Yes	No	No
M				M			
T				T			
W				W			
Th				Th			
F				F			
S				S			
Su				Su			
Week 3 Goal				Week 4 Goal			
Day	Yes	No	Notes	Day	Yes	No	No
M				M			
T				T			
W				W			
Th				Th			
F				F			
S				S			
Su				Su			

Repeat every 1- 4 weeks – when goals are achieved, return to **Health** and **Lifestyle Scorecards**