

Get out from behind the screen and be seen!

Relationships can shape our moods and can even help us develop a healthier lifestyle. “Human connection brings complex values to our lives: relationships give us a sense of belonging in the group, a sense of identity, and a reason not to feel lonely (Smith).” Read the facts below about relationships and be prepared to discuss the impact of human connections on health.

Real in-person connections and relationships can

- Boost your immune system
- Improve chronic health conditions
- Lower blood pressure
- Decrease stress

Our 500th friend or follower on social media is not the same as having an actual connection and relationship. Online friendships do not provide the same emotional connections and health benefits that an in-person connection does. In fact, research shows the more connections made online the lonelier our society is becoming. (Marche)

According to health-related research:

If you are lonely you are more likely to suffer from:

- Obesity
- Hormonal imbalances
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Insomnia or sleep problems
- Memory problems
- Inflammation
- Illness

If you are lonely you are less likely to:

- Exercise regularly
- Laugh as often
- Heal from injury quickly

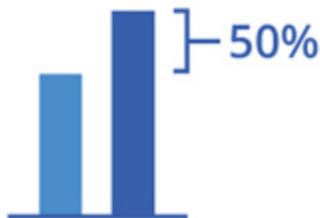
So, combat the loneliness with quality human connection, not just the quantity of social media *friends*. Get out from behind the screen and be seen!

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.

(Seppälä)

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.



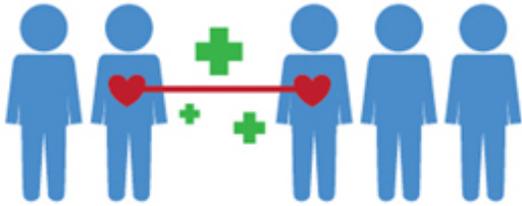
In 2004, 25 % of Americans claim that they have no one to share a personal problem with.



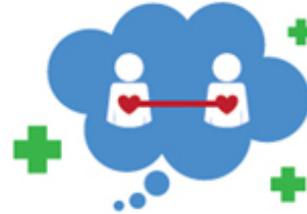
Loneliness is the main reason why people seek psychological counseling.

(Seppälä)

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.

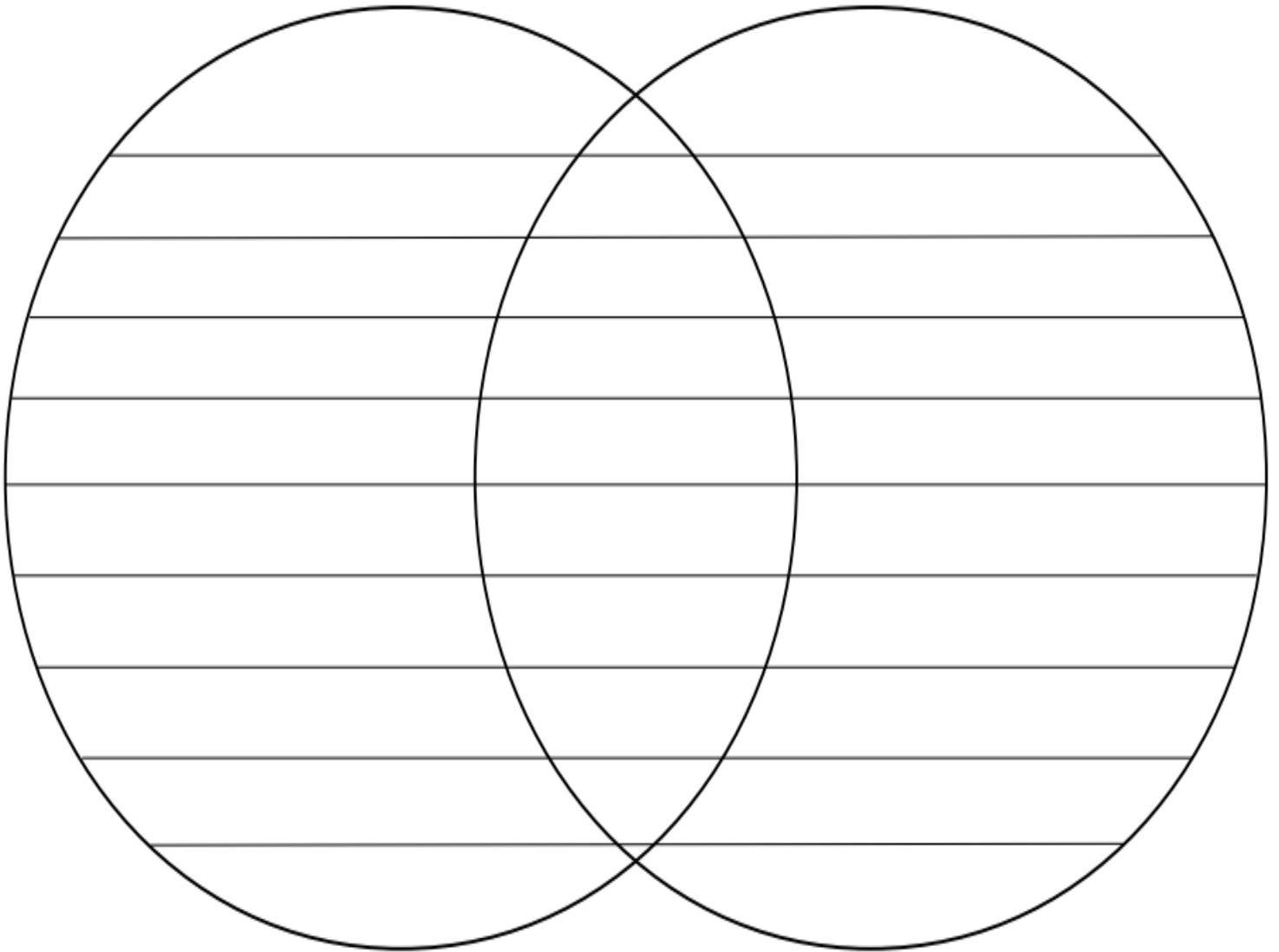


3) Ask for help.

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!

(Seppälä)

Compare and Contrast how you feel when you spend time in person with friends versus social media.



Family Connection

- Tech Support
 - Download FamilyTime APP or use your phone's built in screen time log to limit screen time
 - Challenge your family to delete social media from phones for ten days
 - Utilize a blocking App for your computer
 - Freedom blocks websites and apps
 - StayFocusd Chrome Extension
- Pillar Time
 - Play a board game or card game
 - Go for a walk
 - Play a sport with your child
- Dinner Discussion
 - What is your definition of a good friend?
 - How can having a friend help you in life?
 - Why are healthy friendships important?

References

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