

Social Connectedness

Social connectedness plays an important role in the health of people and communities overall. Strong social connectedness and belonging have been related to the following positive health outcomes:

- Lower prevalence of mental health
- Lower rates of unhealthy behaviors such as smoking, not getting enough exercise, not getting enough sleep and drinking too much alcohol
- Lower risk of cardiovascular disease
- Better health in general

Here are a few ideas to increase your social network:

- **Walk your dog:** people who have a dog and walk it, have an easy way to interact with others, especially other dog owners
- **Go Outside:** walk the neighbourhood, sit out front or stop to greet people who walk by as you do yard work
- **Do lunch:** invite someone out for lunch or coffee
- **Volunteer:** volunteering gives you an instant connection with other people who share an interest in the same cause
- **Take a Class:** if you've always wanted to start or finish something, one benefit is that you're almost sure to find friends at school; Take a class offered within the community in a subject or hobby that interests you.