

WHAT IS SOCIAL CONNECTION?

When we think of looking after ourselves and our wellbeing, we often only think about what we consider essential, such as eating healthy, staying active, and getting a good night's sleep. However, research shows that social connection is a key psychological need.

What are social connections?

Social connections are the interactions with the people that you have around you. These connections could be close, such as those with family and friends, or more casual interactions with neighbours or services around you.

Why social connection matters

Having support from those around us gives a sense of belonging, and as a result can improve our mental health, as these connections allow us to share our thoughts with others, relate to one another, decrease feelings of loneliness and isolation, and increase overall happiness and resilience. Social connections can also improve our cognitive and physical health by keeping our minds and bodies active through these interactions. Social connections have also been known to reduce a variety of illnesses, from depression to dementia, cardiovascular disease, and stroke.

Where can you build lasting connections?

Friendship Line: The friendship line offers members with a support network where we connect like mind members with each other to have a weekly, fortnightly, or monthly catch-up on the phone to check in with one another and hopefully develop a life- long friendship.

Wellbeing Activities: 'Wellbeing Support for Defence and Veteran Families' is a social connection and peer support network on Facebook. We understand that Veterans' families carry the burden and cost of supporting Australia's Defence Force personnel, yet they often do so alone and isolated from each other, putting their needs last to be of service to their Veteran loved ones and Australia. They need each other now more than ever and we are here to provide that home to them.

War Widows Social clubs: Our organisation members meet regularly to connect through sharing memories and perspectives. Feel free to call to see if a member's club is close to your area!

Join a group: Explore your hobbies by joining a group that interests you. This may be an exercise, painting, book, music, or bowling club. (These clubs can usually be found through your local community centre).

Visit your local library or community centre: Libraries are peaceful places to read and have some social interaction when talking to librarians to get recommendations and other readers with similar interests. Libraries can also provide services such as technology classes and book clubs!