

Wired for Connection

Mental Health Monday, June 1, 2020



Most of us know and understand the basics of taking care of our health: eat your fruits and veggies, exercise regularly and make sure to get enough sleep. But we often neglect the importance of social connection for our health and well-being. Studies show that social connection strengthens our immune system, helps us recover from illness/disease more quickly, and people who feel more connected have lower rates of anxiety and depression.

Brene Brown explains, ““A deep sense of love and belonging is an irresistible need of all people. We are biologically, cognitively, physically, and spiritually wired to love, to be loved, and to belong. When those needs are not met, we don't function as we were meant to...” We are wired for connection.

So in the midst of a pandemic where we are told to stay home and social distance what are we to do? These recommendations seem strange and unnatural to most of us. In times of trouble we want to help others, we want to do something, we want to connect with our family and friends. The good news is there are a lot of simple things we can do to stay connected. While these are things that most of us have been told or taught to do before, sometimes (especially in the midst of difficulty) we need a little reminder. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- ⇒ **Make eye contact and use people's names.**
Whether you're speaking to the grocery store clerk or a dear friend, making eye contact and

using the person's name engages the brain, helping us to better connect with the person in front of us, no matter who it might be.

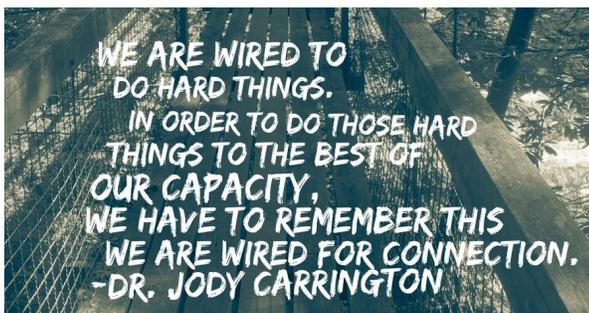
- ⇒ **Random acts of Kindness:** *Mow an elderly neighbors lawn, bring a meal to someone who may need it, volunteer, give a gift, and the list could go on! Random acts of kindness not only make others feel good, but they make you feel good too*
- ⇒ **Stay connected to the people closest to you.** *Make a list of your closest family members and friends and make sure to connect with them regularly, whether that's in person or with the help of technology. It's important to keep family and friends close, especially during hard or stressful times.*

Are you shy? Does it feel hard to connect with others? Don't worry, connection isn't about the number of friends or followers you have on social media and the amount of social groups you are a part of. Connection is simply about our fundamental need to be loved and accepted, and extending that same love and acceptance to others. We can foster, nurture and build connection, and while it may take time, courage and maybe even some creativity, it's always worth it!

References:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/feeling-it/201208/connect-thrive>

“Kids These Day” Dr. Jody Carrington



Sincerely,
FVSD Connection Team

The Fort Vermillion School Division Connection Team works in the schools of our communities to support students in a variety of ways. For more information about our services and resources, please visit the FVSD website (<https://www.fvsd.ab.ca/>) or contact your child's school.