

There are many ways to define wellness. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Wellness Initiative outlines eight dimensions.

ACTIVATE
YOUR
WELLNESS

SOCIAL WELLNESS

Social Wellness involves building and maintaining healthy, supportive human relationships.

Areas of Social Wellness to focus on:

Building Healthy Relationships/Community

Staying Connected

Social Time/Balance

WHY IS SOCIAL WELLNESS SO IMPORTANT?

Recent surveys found that about half of all adults in the U.S. report experiencing loneliness, with some of the highest rates among young adults. When people feel lonely, disconnected or isolated, there are serious negative impacts on mental and physical health. Source: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community p.9; 2023.

Forming and keeping meaningful relationships takes time and effort, but the rewards (like improved mental and physical health) are huge! Embrace opportunities to connect with others—every positive interaction contributes to your social wellness. By fostering these connections, you enhance your own well-being and contribute to a stronger, more connected community.

STRENGTHENING SOCIAL WELLNESS CAN INCLUDE:



1. **Nurturing Relationships:** Spend quality time and keep in touch with those who uplift and support you. Simple acts, like sharing a meal or having a meaningful conversation, can strengthen your relationships.



2. **Engage with Your Community to Meet New People:** A sense of belonging starts with small steps. Volunteering or joining group activities is a great way to meet new people and feel more connected. Some organizations, like inter-faith groups, schools and community centers, have events to gather people with different cultures and beliefs, for conversations and exposure to new ideas.



3. **Work on Communication Skills:** Show genuine interest in others by actively listening, being present in your interactions and responding clearly and positively. Minimize distractions as much as possible (phone, TV, computer) so you can truly connect.



4. **Reflect on Your Needs:** Everyone's social needs will change over time—find a balance that works for you. Whether you are craving quiet and solitude, or seeking connection, honor your feelings and adjust your social interactions accordingly. If you need space from a relationship, be honest and respectfully set clear boundaries.



5. **Reach Out and Connect:** If you're feeling isolated, don't hesitate to reach out. A conversation, or reconnecting with a friend, can make a big difference.



6. **Be Aware and Considerate When Others Are Struggling:** Everyone faces challenges and reacts to hardship and loss differently. Sometimes people pull away because they don't want to be a burden. Try to be helpful and understanding, and give people grace when they are facing difficulties. Empathy and understanding form the foundation of supportive relationships. Let people know you care and are thinking of them.

When we work on our Social Wellness, other dimensions of wellness are also boosted. For more resources, visit virginiapreventionworks.org/activate

SOCIAL WELLNESS REFLECTIONS

to build connection and share with others.

Things I love to do and/or things I'd like to learn more about:

Ways I am (or ways I can) share or explore these interests with others (book club, game night, cooking together, woodworking demonstration, museum visit, musical performance...):

Places or organizations (libraries, parks, schools, gyms, places of worship...) where I can meet people and invite someone to join me:

Challenging relationships? How can I improve them? How can I set a healthy boundary when I need space?

How do/can I give back to my community?

What qualities are important for a good friend/friendship? How can I be a better friend?

What are some easy, inexpensive ways (a phone call, greeting card/or handwritten note, going for a walk together, sharing a meal...) to bring joy and connection to myself and others?

