

Finding People with Common Interests

Objective

To build connections with people who share common interests to increase your resilience.

What to Know

How resilient you are may have as much or more to do with your circle of support as it does with your personal strengths. Social support not only positively impacts your physical and mental health but also helps you cope and experience less distress when you face challenges. Although you may think it is easier to change yourself when you are facing adversity, research suggests that healthy relationships and supportive environments play a key role. Lack of social connections is as strong a risk factor for death as obesity and smoking.

Even thinking about your social connections lessens stress reactions. Positive connections with others are also linked to feeling a sense of purpose and meaning—also great sources of resilience. What can you do to make social connections? Spend time out in the world with others, engaging in meaningful activities.

So, when you are going through a difficult time, turn to the people around you. If you currently feel isolated and want to increase your social connections, try participating in groups of people who share common interests.

Resiliency is not simply focusing on your personal strengths and overcoming life's challenges. It is also critical to find ways to build and strengthen your support systems.

What to Do

Write down your interests and find groups that you could become involved with based on your interests.

Interest:

Groups based on this interest:

Interest:

Groups based on this interest:

Interest:

Groups based on this interest:

Interest:

Groups based on this interest:

Interest:

Groups based on this interest:

Interest:

Groups based on this interest:

Now, choose one of the groups you identified above, and write down details of how you can join or participate in activities.

Over the next month, plan to attend one activity, group meeting, or event each week. Use the following chart to record your experiences. Write down the date, the group, and describe the activity, event or meeting you attended. Record whether you met new people, and what you did to make a connection. You might have set up a coffee date, asked for someone's contact information, or followed up by email after the activity.

Date	Group	Activity, event, or meeting?	Did you meet new people? Y/N	What did you do to make a connection?

Was there anything that surprised you during this exercise?

What did you find most challenging about this exercise?

What was your favorite activity that you participated in? Why?

Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?
