



Mental Health

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Connection for Ourselves

September is National Suicide Prevention Month: a moment in time in which Fargo Public Schools and the community can rally the public to create awareness of this leading cause of death, and inspire more and more people to learn how they can play a role in their communities in helping to save lives.

Connection is not just nice to have, it is essential to one's health and well-being. People with meaningful social connections have:

- Less stress and better sleep
- Better overall health that can lead to a longer life
- Healthier habits and behaviors
- Better quality of life and a sense of belonging

Connecting can be as deep as a heart-to-heart conversation, or as simple as sharing a smile with someone. Meaningful connections can come from people in any role in your life, such as a next-door neighbor, friend, family member, co-worker, or community member. Connection can look like someone willing to help you with a task, or someone to listen and validate your feelings. Or perhaps, it is someone who can give you a different perspective than your own or provide advice or support for something with which you are struggling.

There are things you can do to form new connections. While there are no official guidelines and no one-size-fits-all, below are some suggestions for finding and fostering connections with others:

- Start a conversation. Talk to people that you already have connections with and build upon that relationship or take an opportunity to authentically get to know your neighbors and co-workers that you just wave at or say hi to in passing.
- Join a club or enroll in a class that intrigues you. You'll know the people that will be there already share a common interest with you. If you end up not meeting anyone new, you will still get to do something that you enjoy.
- Get involved in your community by attending events and doing things that you have not tried before.



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- Explore opportunities to serve and help others within your community. Many organizations, including faith-based organizations, offer volunteer opportunities that can give you the chance to contribute to something that you find important.
- Create a larger and more diverse social network. Having a variety of relationships will allow you to gather additional resources, information, and opportunities.
- Don't let technology distract you from engaging with people. Pay attention to ways it may make you feel worse about yourself or others. Use technology as a tool to make positive and intentional connections.

Seek help during times of struggle with loneliness or isolation by reaching out to a family member, friend, counselor, health care provider, or 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline by calling 9-8-8 or using the [online chat](#) feature. Fargo Public Schools' school-based mental health professionals are available at every campus to support students and staff.

