

Connection Calendar
































We all need to feel like **we belong** and that others care about our well-being, and social support is exactly that: the **belonging and care** we receive from other people.

Being **socially connected** can have enormous positive effects on mental health and physical health. Social connection can reduce stress and give one a sense of **meaning, purpose and belonging**. Supportive social ties can have a direct impact on our happiness and can even reduce blood pressure, heart rate and stress hormones. When you feel like you belong, you feel like a **valued and equal** member of the community, and that feels good. Plus, a person is less likely to experience anxiety, depression or problems with substance use if they have friends and **healthy relationships**, feel they are a part of a community and can meet their basic day-to-day needs. Our social support network can include many different groups of people, including friends, family members, teammates, co-workers, neighbours or even professionals like your doctor, your mail carrier or the person you get coffee from.

Connecting with other people and your community doesn't just feel good, it's good for your mental health

At its core, belonging is a sense of connectedness, to family, community and the world around us. What this looks like in daily life is the love, kindness and respect we feel from others, and right now, we could all use a little more love, kindness and respect.

Here's a roadmap to foster and nurture meaningful connections and spread a sense of belonging throughout October:

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Call a friend or family member, just because 1</p> 	<p>Make your circle wider and make some new connections by joining a social club or volunteering 2</p> 	<p>Write a letter to someone to say, 'Thanks for being you' 3</p> 	<p>Make a list. Write three things that you're grateful for 4</p> 	<p>Share your gratitude with others using the hashtag: 5</p> <p>#ThankfulThursday</p>	<p>Be a part of something bigger. Join a movement or give to a cause you care about. We think mental health is a good one! 6</p> 	<p>Treat yourself to a fancy coffee, tea, pastry or whatever, and pay it forward for the next person too 7</p> 
<p>Rest. You deserve it 8</p> 	<p>Send a heartfelt message just because "I was thinking of you!" 9</p> 	<p>Find the perfect card to share with someone you love. Mail it 10</p> 	<p>Introduce yourself or say hello to a new co-worker, neighbour or person at a shop you frequent 11</p> 	<p>Join a club, team or an online group of others who share your passions or hobbies 12</p> 	<p>Make a list. Write three things that you're proud of 13</p> 	<p>Stock up on beautiful cards and make a list of people to mail monthly 14</p> 
<p>Rest 15</p> 	<p>Choose a card to help reconnect with someone you miss 16</p> 	<p>Send a note to the neighbour whose garden makes you smile, or who puts up the scariest Halloween decorations. They'll love that you noticed 17</p> 	<p>Do three random acts of kindness 18</p> 	<p>Make a contribution to your community. Giving back is good for you 19</p> 	<p>Take a walk and notice all the things you're grateful for 20</p> 	<p>Think outside your circle and support someone other than friends and family who has helped you in the past 21</p> 
<p>Rest. You don't need to earn it 22</p> 	<p>Write your own message to a mentor or teacher, letting them know how much they've meant to you 23</p> 	<p>Pick three coworkers who deserve a little extra kindness. Write out a caring thought for each and drop it off at their desk with a small treat 24</p> 	<p>Update your contacts and make a plan to reconnect. Your future self will appreciate the effort 25</p> 	<p>Share your gratitude with others using the hashtag: 26</p> <p>#ThankfulThursday</p>	<p>Make a list. Write three things that you love about yourself 27</p> 	<p>Practice active listening. Empathy comes more easily when you are really present with the other person. It's amazing what you can learn, and how connected you can be 28</p> 
<p>Rest. You deserve it 29</p> 	<p>Letter writing is a lost art. Corresponding by mail is a great way to reach out and connect 30</p> 	<p>Send a loved one a bouquet of flowers or a gift card for a coffee 31</p> 	 <p>Canadian Mental Health Association Mental health for all</p>		 <p>carlton cards #StayConnected</p>	

If you are struggling – or someone you love is – know that there is hope and there is help. If you need to talk to someone immediately, know that there IS hope and call 1-833-456-4566 toll free (In QC: 1-866-277-3553), 24/7 or visit www.crisisservicescanada.ca. You can also reach out to your local Canadian Mental Health Association; find it at www.cmha.ca.