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SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Building Community Consciousness

People who feel connected to a community are generally healthier and happier. That is because having strong support systems makes it easier to move through life's challenging moments. Feeling a sense of belonging is an integral component of wellbeing.

Communities are typically comprised of people with shared interests and values. Most likely, your community includes your family, neighbors, and a few others you interact with frequently. As you consider your own community, ask yourself this question: How connected are you?

One study conducted by the Pew Research Center¹ found that only about 30% of Americans know all or most of their neighbors, and a similar study found that more than half of residents living in Toronto, Canada only know a few of their neighbors.

Community consciousness, which is defined² as a community's "level of awareness of its current social, economic, and environmental situations," requires a willingness to branch out and become more aware of what is happening beyond your own family and inner circle. It requires acknowledging and accepting the diversity among members of your community, and it involves actively seeking common ground.

One way to expand your community consciousness is through volunteerism. Volunteering enables you to connect more deeply with others in your community. Having conversations with people outside your usual networks can expand your perspectives and give you more insight into the challenges that others face.

What will you do to build community consciousness?

In connected communities, everyone benefits. The more connected you feel, the more support you can give to others—and the more support you will receive in return.



1. <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2018/05/22/how-urban-suburban-and-rural-residents-interact-with-their-neighbors/>

2. <https://www.shsu.edu/glt002/Outreach%20articles/Theodori%202004%20community%20activeness%20consciousness%20matrix.pdf>



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How to Ask for Help

Asking for help seems to come naturally for some, but for others, it is anything but easy. The need to feel independent is a highly valued virtue, especially in professional settings.

Even so, trying to do it all alone seldom produces the best outcomes. When you are chronically exhausted and overwhelmed, you are unable to deliver your best work, so knowing how to ask for help is vital.

Here are some tips for when you need to ask for help:

Recognize when you need help

Know your limits and manage your energy wisely. When it comes to asking for help, the earlier the better.

Be clear about what you need

When you do ask for help, explain exactly how the other person can help you. What specifically do you need help with?

Ask the right person

Seek help from someone who possesses the specific skills needed for the task at hand. Otherwise, you might end up further behind.

Be helpful in return

Extend help to others when you see them struggling. Just remember to always get permission first. Your help may not be as needed or wanted as you think it is. Jumping in to “fix” other people’s problems for them without their permission can backfire.

To ask for help, you first need to know how to recognize when you need it. This may require you to pay more attention to how you respond in certain situations. How do you respond to stress? How do you know when you have reached your limit? The answers can help you understand when you need help.

Getting comfortable with asking for help can take time, but it can make your life a whole lot easier.





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Virtual Connections: Using Technology to Strengthen Relationships

Thanks to technology, staying connected is easier than ever. We now have a wide range of options, like live webinars, podcasts, video conferences, pre-recorded videos, instant messages, voice messages, and audio texts. No matter where we go, we can almost always plug in or tune in.

Despite the ease of connecting, many of us still feel disconnected. One [study](#)³ found that the majority of Americans feel lonely—and those findings were pre-pandemic. In the workplace, loneliness has been linked to lower productivity, poor quality of work, higher turnover, and more frequent absences.

The truth is meaningful relationships require deeper connections. Some experts believe technology can never replace the quality of in-person interaction, but when face-to-face visits are not possible, technology can help make communication easier.



To get the most out of your virtual connections, consider these tips for building stronger relationships:

Discuss shared goals

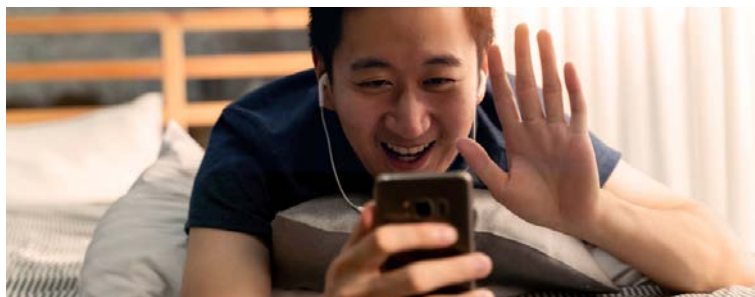
Relationships that are built upon a solid foundation of shared goals are stronger than ones that are more casual in nature. This is true of both personal and professional relationships. Taking time to check in on shared goals can help deepen your connection.

Be on time

Showing up on time for appointments, whether in-person or online, shows a level of respect that communicates to the other person you value their time. Respect can go a long way to building strong relationships.

Check in regularly

Technology makes it possible to keep in touch regularly with friends and colleagues. Add reminders to your calendar or schedule a standing meeting so you have dedicated time to nurture important relationships.



Virtual connections may fall short in some areas compared to in-person interactions, but leveraging technology to maintain relationships that are important to you is the next best thing.

3. <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/01/23/798676465/most-americans-are-lonely-and-our-workplace-culture-may-not-be-helping>



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RECIPE

Strawberry Banana N'ice Cream

INGREDIENTS

- 3 bananas, cut into chunks and frozen
- 12-ounce bag of frozen strawberries, about 2 ¼ cups
- 1 teaspoon Vanilla
- ½ cup unsweetened almond, cashew or coconut milk (plus more as needed to achieve desired consistency)
- 4 scoops Vital Proteins Collagen Peptides (optional ingredient - omit for vegan-friendly)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place all ingredients in high-powered blender or bowl of a food processor. Blend/process until smooth, stopping to scrape down the sides and adding additional milk as needed.
2. Serve immediately.

Total Time:

Prep: 10 min. Cook: 10 min.

Servings: 6



NUTRITION INFO

(per serving)

Calories <i>kcal</i>	104
Carbs <i>g</i>	20
Fat <i>g</i>	0
Protein <i>g</i>	7
Sodium <i>mg</i>	52
Sugar <i>g</i>	10

Source:

<https://therealfoodrds.com/strawberry-banana-nice-cream/>

