

Connecting with others

Strong, supportive relationships are one of the biggest protectors for mental wellbeing. Staying connected with others can reduce loneliness, improve self-worth and remind us we are not alone. Even small moments of connection matter and can make daily life feel lighter.

Recommendations for Social Wellbeing

'Connect with other people' is one of the 5 Ways to Mental Wellbeing.

- Building stronger, closer relationships can help you feel happier and more secure.
- Volunteer your time – helping others can give you a sense of purpose and strengthen community ties.
- Talk about your feelings – sharing worries with someone you trust can lighten the load.

Suggestions or ideas

- Stay in touch with family or friends, especially during stressful times.
- Plan small social activities you enjoy, like coffee or a walk.
- Join a local group, class, or volunteering activity to meet new people.
- Spend time in shared spaces - a café, library, park, or community venue - just being around others can help you feel connected.
- Map your support network and keep it visible (e.g. on the fridge).

Map your support network on the next page

Source: NEF Five Ways to Wellbeing 2008

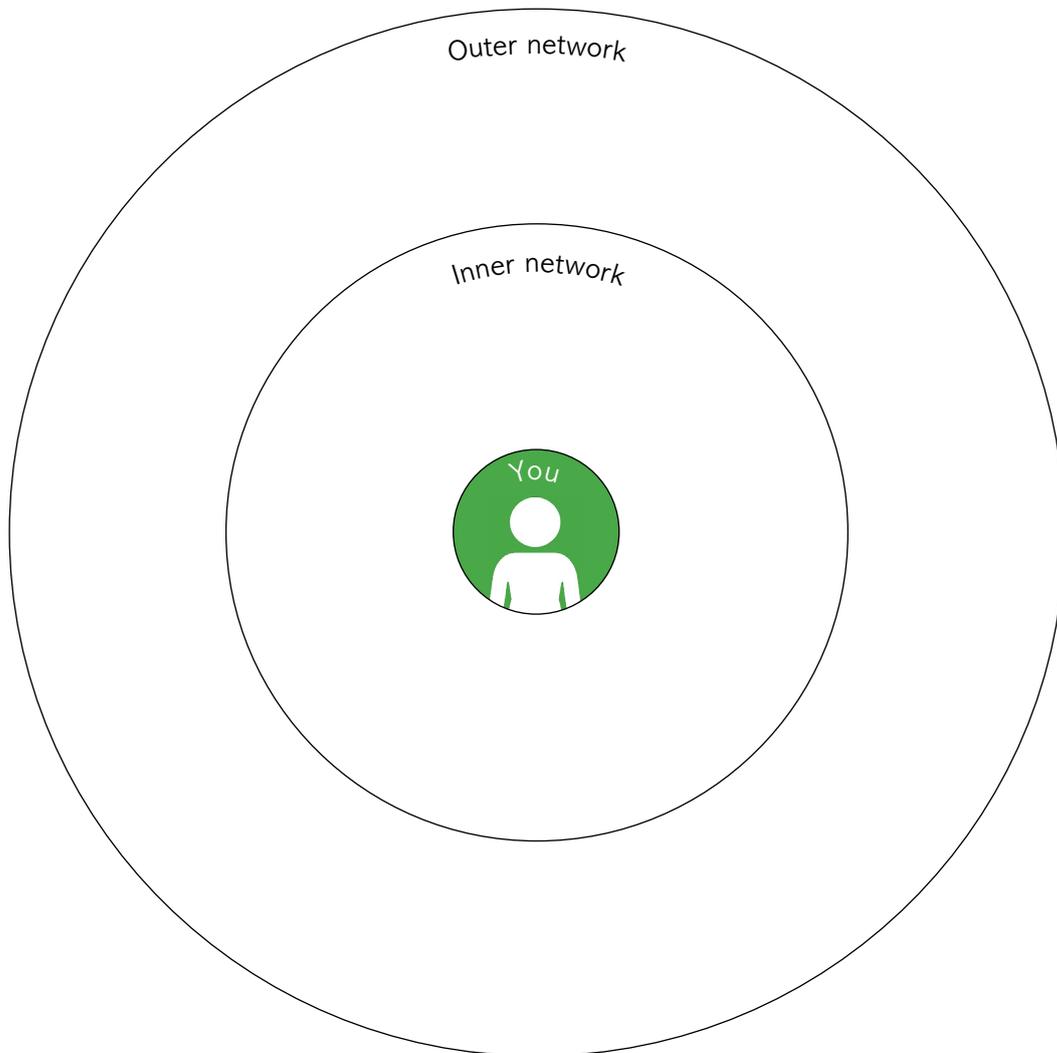
PAUSE & REFLECT

THE EVIDENCE

- Strong social connections support mental wellbeing and help people cope better during difficult times (NHS, 2020).
- People with supportive relationships report better mental health and live longer (Mental Health Foundation, 2016).
- A sense of belonging in the community is linked with higher wellbeing and lower rates of depression (ONS, 2021).
- Peer support interventions can help reduce symptoms of depression (Pfeiffer et al., 2011; Shorey & Chua, 2023).

MY SUPPORT NETWORK

Put down the people, groups and supports in your life. Think about who supports you, for example friends, family, neighbours, professionals, groups or even pets, and what support they offer, such as practical help, company or shared activities. There are no right or wrong answers – include whatever feels supportive to you.



WHERE TO START

You could start by filling in 'My plan' or try any of the following:

- For general information and tips on building social connections, loneliness and healthy relationships:
nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/lifes-challenges/
- For in-person support, join local groups and activities. Explore the Health Connections Mendip, Social Wellbeing category:
healthconnectionsmentip.org/directory/social-wellbeing/



Every Mind Matters
Dealing with Life's Challenges