

## Mental Health Action Day

### CONNECTION

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

May 16: MTV's Mental Health Action Day in partnership with hundreds of organizations across the world, dedication one hour to "CONNECTION."

### Why are connections important?

Connections are vital for mental and physical health because they fulfill the innate human need to belong. Connected relationships allow you to open up, be authentic, and feely supported by those around you.

### What are some ways I build and strengthen connections with people?

- **Be your authentic self**
- **Respect people's boundaries** - be mindful of asking personal questions early in the conversation, build the foundation of basic information first!
- **Stay focused and be present** - don't be looking at your phone or thinking about what to have for dinner. Make sure your body language shows you are paying attention to the conversation.
- **Move past the surface level** - don't be afraid to ask deeper questions (see below for question ideas).
- **Share the conversation** - make sure you leave space for the other person to talk and you listen.
- **Be genuine with your admiration** - actively show sincere appreciation, remember that sometimes less is more.
- **Be a good listener** - make sure you are actively listening to the person who is speaking to you. Listening with an open mind also helps you to get to know the person better.
- **Schedule your time** - make sure you have the proper energy to connect!
- **Maintain eye contact** - maintaining a normal amount of eye contact (don't stare) makes people feel like they can trust you more, helps people open up, and keeps the conversation flowing.
- **Offer a smile** - it can also reduce stress and awkwardness!

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### What are the different types of questions?

- **Open-ended questions:** leave room for more discussion and demand more explanation. These are questions that don't allow the responder to give a simple "yes" or "no" response.
- **Follow-up questions:** let you pursue the topic and expand the conversation.
- **Leading questions:** prompt a specific response and steer the conversation in a new direction.

### What are some questions I can ask to keep the conversation going?

**Be curious. Have purposefulness. Be brave.**

- How was your day?
- What was your favorite part of today?
- What do you enjoy most about your job?
- What is something that is on your bucket list?
- What are some of your personal/professional goals?
- What is something you are passionate about?
- If you could vacation anywhere in the world, where would it be?
- What is your go-to board game, TV show, movie, book?
- What qualities do you value most in a friend?
- What do you enjoy in your free time?
- What small things instantly make you happy?
- Do you have any unique talents or skills that many people know about?
- What makes a good friend to you?
- If you could have any job in the world, what would it be?
- If you could have any superpower, what would it be?
- What's the most valuable lesson life has taught you so far?
- If you could time travel to any era, past or future, where would you go? What would you do there?
- Which season do you enjoy the most and why?
- If your life had a soundtrack, what songs would be on it?

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**What are some non-traditional ways I can connect with people?**

- Join an organization or club
- Volunteer
- Send a letter to a friend or family member
- Send a text or email message
- Share laughter with a co-worker or classmate
- Find a creative outlet like painting, music, dance, etc. to do with a group of people
- Have a video call with a distant family member or friend
- Play virtual reality with friends
- Get up and get active - have a game night with friends, cook with a loved one, or go for a hike/run with a group

**What are some example prompts I can use to create connection?**

“Hey! I’m sorry I haven’t been in touch lately. My mental health hasn’t been the greatest, (feel free to insert reason that applies best) but I was thinking about you and wanted to check in and see how you are doing”

“Hi (name), it’s been a while! I hope everything is going smoothly. Let’s catch up soon. How about a quick coffee chat?”

Begin with a friendly greeting like “Hello” or “Hi.” Then, inquire about their day. For example: “How has your day been so far?”

If you know the person’s hobbies or interests, use that as a conversation starter. For instance: “I remember you’re into hiking. Have you been on any exciting trails lately?”

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