



# TOGETHER IN WELLNESS: A GUIDE FOR LEADERS AND WELLNESS CHAMPIONS

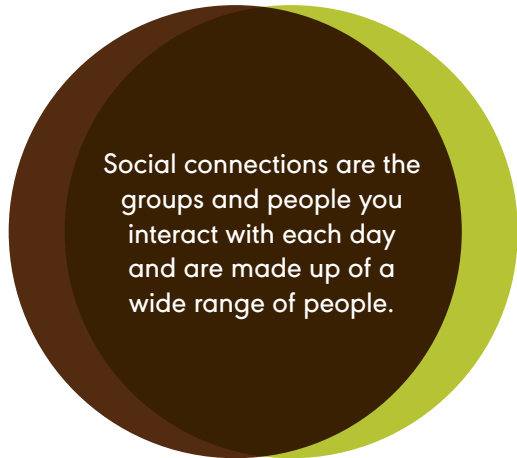
## A SOCIAL STORY

### THE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS

Whether it's personal or professional, social connections are vital to your health and well-being. We all need to have a sense of belonging and know that others care about us. Our social networks can be made up of pretty much anyone: friends, family, partners, co-workers, neighbours, or even professional supports like doctors.

Social connection is a basic human need that's essential to supporting and improving our physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Our social relationships help us cope with life's challenges and manage stress. They help us foster a sense of belonging, make us happier and improve the way we work together.

Social connection is more than just those you have close personal relationships with. It's also the networks, or groups of people, you interact with on a personal and professional level that contribute towards a sense of trust and belonging. When your workplace fosters an environment where employees have trust, laughter, and positive working relationships, this creates a social network where relationships can thrive. And when you have good relationships with your colleagues you look forward to going to work!



Social connections are the groups and people you interact with each day and are made up of a wide range of people.

### TEAM ACTIVITY

#### How to prepare:

**Review** [A Social Story \(Together in Wellness: Your Guide to Wellbeing\)](#), paying special attention to the following tips for creating social connections at work:

**Allow time and space to connect.** Connect face-to-face with your colleagues, when possible. Spend time in a staffroom or common area. Instead of sending an email, try chatting in person.

**Peer recognition.** Recognition can go a long way! Recognize your colleagues' achievements to show them they're valuable and encourage team-building—whether that's through an awards program, a recognition board or meeting shout-outs.

**Peer support.** Peer support programs support the mental health of employees, and they allow those who've experienced and overcome challenges to support and guide others going through similar situations. Check out [Peer Support Canada](#) for more information.

### How to include your team:

1. Distribute copies of [A Social Story \(Together in Wellness: Your Guide to Wellbeing\)](#).
2. Allow your team time to review the first page and ask them to fill out the Connection Reflections worksheet on the second page. The worksheet can either be completed prior to or during the meeting.

### How to debrief:

3. Review the three creating social connections at work ideas previously listed and discuss:
  - What is already in place, either formally or informally, to support the three Creating Social Connections at Work ideas?
  - What could be done to enhance what already exists?
  - What other ideas does the team have to help build social connections?

### How to continue:


Ideas on how and when to check-back.

4. Now that you have an inventory of what's is already in place, write it down on the A Social Story [poster template](#) to celebrate what you're already doing to support social connections in your workplace.
5. Next, it's time to expand. Using the responses from Step 3, consider what could be done to enhance what already exists and what else could support these ideas. Identify one or two social connection ideas to implement at your worksite. This may be done by having the entire group identify their preferences through a voting process or having a couple of volunteers take it on.


### RELATED RESOURCES:

**Research:** Julianne Holt-Lunstad's article, [Fostering Social Connection in the Workplace](#) has great information on why connections in the workplace matter.

**Video:** Check out Emma Seppälä's TEDx Talk, [The Power & Social Connection](#), for a little inspiration and the science behind social connection.



Meaningful connections  
in the workplace create  
a sense of belonging  
and well-being.



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even more great workplace wellness resources.