

A group of people are dining outdoors at night. They are seated around a wooden table, illuminated by warm string lights hanging above them. The scene is set against a backdrop of dark trees and foliage. The overall atmosphere is cozy and social.

Be a Star in your own life

By improving wellness through
SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

© 2016. Developed by Dr. Saundra Jain and Dr. Rakesh Jain. This information is not intended as a replacement for consultation with a healthcare provider. No special permission is required to use this material for research and/or clinical purposes. However, no part of this booklet may be used for commercial purposes. Regarding permissions, please email DrJain@WILD5Wellness.com.

The logo for WILD5 Wellness features a stylized five-pointed star with each point in a different color (red, orange, yellow, green, blue).

WILD⁵ Wellness™
Wellness Interventions for Life's Demands

MAKING FRIENDS WITH THE IDEA OF BECOMING MORE SOCIAL

So you can connect
with what makes you happy

*"True friendship is like sound
health: the value of it is seldom
known until it is lost."*

— Charles Caleb Colton

Social connectedness – what does it mean?

Social connectedness is the measure of how people come together and interact – and we're not talking about how many comments you share with your friends on Facebook!

When you're dealing with stress, depression or anxiety, you may be tempted to become less social, but that can create

a nasty cycle that leaves you feeling more isolated, anxious, and depressed.

By nature, we are very social creatures and when we connect with friends and family through fun and engaging activities, we're actually helping to maintain our sense of well-being.

SOCIALIZING MORE WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS WILL HELP:



Getting out and connecting with people is a great way to improve your physical health and mental and emotional well-being.

Lonely Hearts Club

Did you know that feelings of loneliness and social isolation can eventually lead to inflammation in the body? Increased inflammation can cause all kinds of health problems, including heart disease.

GET FRIENDLY WITH THE RULE OF TWO Q'S

And improve your social connectedness

*"I would rather walk
with a friend in the dark,
than alone in the light."*

— Helen Keller

Rule # 1: QUANTITY

How often you socialize is very important. Ideally, you should try to connect with someone on a daily basis. That may seem impossible – but if you call a friend for a quick chat during your lunch hour – even that brief interaction will make a difference in how you feel. Consider calling, emailing or texting someone or – better yet – get together with a friend or family member in person.

Don't limit your socializing to just once or twice a week. Be sure to commit to **daily** contact with others.

Rule # 2: QUALITY

The quality of the people you connect with makes a difference. Avoid toxic relationships or those that violate your personal boundaries. Be sure to connect with people who enrich and nourish you.

Here are a few questions you can ask yourself before spending time with someone:

- Is this person negative or upbeat?
- Do we share a strong bond?
- Are we able to have deep conversations?
- Do we have fun together?

Try to keep company with people who are fun and who make you feel happy.

THE MORE THE MERRIER!

Having about 4-5 strong, close, meaningful, positive relationships in our lives really impacts our happiness!

YOUR DAILY DOSE

Laughter really is the best medicine!
Social relationships that are filled with **laughter** and **fun** are particularly good for your psychological and physical well-being.



IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A GREAT WAY TO CONNECT WITH OTHERS...

Volunteering makes perfect sense!

Volunteering is a great way for you to start building a sense of community, which in turn can help you make new friends and connect with others. People who volunteer have reported an increase in overall happiness, improved physical health, greater self-esteem and self-confidence. Why not get out there and participate in an activity that benefits you and so many others?

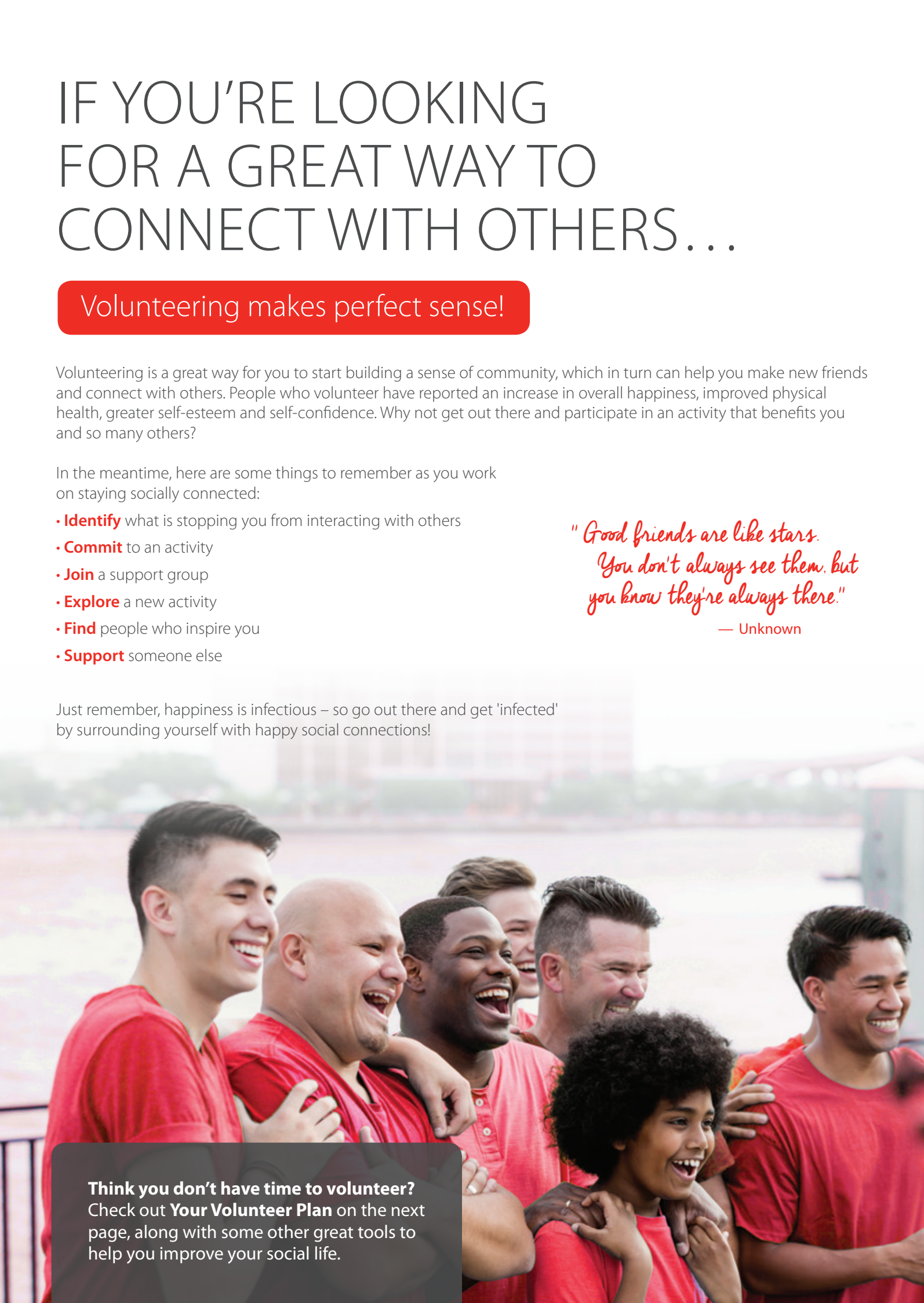
In the meantime, here are some things to remember as you work on staying socially connected:

- **Identify** what is stopping you from interacting with others
- **Commit** to an activity
- **Join** a support group
- **Explore** a new activity
- **Find** people who inspire you
- **Support** someone else

*"Good friends are like stars.
You don't always see them, but
you know they're always there."*

— Unknown

Just remember, happiness is infectious – so go out there and get 'infected' by surrounding yourself with happy social connections!



Think you don't have time to volunteer?
Check out **Your Volunteer Plan** on the next page, along with some other great tools to help you improve your social life.

MY VOLUNTEER PLAN

Take a few minutes to research volunteer opportunities in your area. Call and/or visit three places that look interesting, sign on the dotted line and then begin volunteering! A few ideas could be your local pet shelter, retirement home or YMCA.

Volunteer Option 1

Volunteer Option 2

Volunteer Option 3



Please take some time to think about your current relationships and how you'd rate them.

How often are you socializing on a weekly basis? Taking a hard and honest look at these questions will help you decide how you want to modify and improve your relationships. If you feel your relationships are toxic or harmful in any way, you may want to consider discussing this with your healthcare provider and/or consider seeing a psychotherapist to address these issues. You may find it helpful to jot down some notes to the questions below:

How often do I *socialize*?

I consider these relationships/ friendships as *toxic*:

I'd describe the *quality* of my friendships/ relationships as:

How can I *improve* these relationships/ friendships?

MY ACTION PLAN

Please fill out your action plan and take it with you to your next appointment, so you and your healthcare provider can create a game plan to strengthen your social relationships.

1. MY CURRENT SOCIAL HABITS:

2. ROADBLOCKS THAT KEEP ME FROM BEING MORE SOCIALLY CONNECTED:

3. WAYS I CAN OVERCOME THESE ROADBLOCKS:

4. THREE SOCIAL ACTIVITIES I WOULD ENJOY:

5. MY ACTION PLAN TO DEVELOP BETTER SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS: