

Wellbeing Essentials

Life is Better with Friends

“Check in regularly with the people you care about or the people you work with”



One of the most common signs of poor mental health is withdrawal. When people are suffering they tend to isolate themselves from family, friends and colleagues.

There can be a number of reasons for this:

- they don't want to drag other people down
- they are embarrassed and feel they can't cope when everyone else can
- they are lacking in energy
- they don't want to admit that they may have a problem
- they are worried about repercussions at work
- other friends/family are suffering, and they don't want to add to their problems.

It's a complex issue but one thing is certain – life is better with friends.

Whilst I would never advocate forcing people to come out and socialise, I would always encourage you to check in regularly with the people you care about or the people you work with.

Just because someone is wearing a smile on the outside, doesn't mean everything is ok on the inside.

At work:

- If someone starts lunching alone, go and ask if you can join them
- If someone stays at their desk during break times, go over and chat to them
- If someone is quieter than normal in meetings or discussions, take time to find out if they are ok afterwards
- Start a lunchtime walking club and encourage them to join
- Start a company choir – there is nothing more uplifting and sociable, without putting anyone in the spotlight

With friends:

- If a friend stops communicating with you – call them
- If a friend avoids social situations – call them
- If a friend has been unresponsive for a while – go and see them

The key point here is to make sure that they know you still care. It is very easy to feel that someone just 'can't be bothered' when they don't call or attend social events but, actually, this could be the biggest clue of all that something is wrong.

With immediate family:

- Let them know you are there for them
- Be prepared to listen without feeling the need to 'solve' their problems
- Encourage them to go out for a walk with you or even out for a drink
- If they won't go to any social events then bring the event to them (dinner party, bbq etc.) but keep it small and unthreatening
- Don't expect them to 'snap out of it' – allow time for healing

One of the worst aspects of mental health issues is the feeling of isolation. When friends and family make an effort to keep the lines of communication open it is very nurturing and, ultimately, very healing.

Rachel Munns Founder & Principal

www.myresilientfamily.com

This document is just one of a series of written and video Wellbeing Essentials that you can find at our website. Be sure to visit us regularly to download the latest resilience resources.