



Mental Health at Work Mini-Lesson Plan #3

The Value of Connection

The importance of social connected-ness at work and beyond

Check-in / Reflection Prompt

In your head or on your paper, think of the name of the person you would talk to in each of these situations:

1. If you were stuck on the side of the highway with a flat tire and needed a ride?
2. If you needed to learn how to decipher a complicated financial statement?
3. If you were feeling unsure and needed a reminder of how great you are?
4. If you were feeling really down and just needed someone to be there and listen?

Hold on to that thought.

Did you know?

- Studies of psychological outcomes after natural disasters have found that people with strong social support experience better psychological outcomes and recovery.
- 20% of the global workforce experiences loneliness daily, suggesting that many of us are feeling socially isolated at work (Gallup, 2024).
- Preliminary research by the University of Winnipeg has shown that when educational staff in Manitoba feel greater social connectedness at work, they are less likely to be thinking about leaving their job.

Key takeaway: We aren't resilient in isolation. Social connection and support is an important part of being well, especially when we're struggling.

- **There are 4 main types of social support:**
 - Practical support – e.g., changing a tire
 - Informational support – e.g., financial info
 - Esteem support – e.g., encouragement
 - Emotional support – e.g., a listening ear
- During the check-in, was one person your go-to for all the scenarios? If so, that's okay and may work for you... but for many of us one person can't provide all the types of support we need
- Work provides us with a space to expand our social support network.



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Discussion Questions

Q1: What kind(s) of social support do you receive from your coworkers?

Q2: When/where do you find opportunities for social connection or support at work?

Q3: What is something you would recommend to a brand new staff, who wasn't sure how to build social connections within your school/school district?



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Resource Highlights

Article: Social Connection

This article discusses how social connection can impact our mental health and well-being, and discusses strategies to enhance social connection.

careforallineducation.com/campaigns/social-connection

Poster: Having the Conversation: How to support coworkers or employees

This poster by CMHA BC outlines practical steps to check-in with someone you work with.

careforallineducation.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Having-the-conversation-How-to-Support-Coworkers.pdf

Article: CMHA BC and Anxiety Canada (2016). Wellness module 3: Social support.

This article discusses types of support, benefits of social support, and tips on how to enhance social support.

heretohelp.bc.ca/wellness-module/wellness-module-3-social-support

Gallup (2024). State of the global workforce.

This report unpacks global and country-specific trends in employee mental health and well-being.

gallup.com/workplace/349484/state-of-the-global-workplace.aspx

Khan Academy (2014). Social support. [YouTube video: 3:36 minutes].

This video describes the different types of social support.

youtube.com/watch?v=gZMvA2Apg2A&t=216s

Want to learn more? Visit careforallineducation.com