



Connectedness

In a nutshell: *Connectedness is a relationship with a particular person or a group – at work or in a community. Fundamentally, connectedness is about belonging, being connected to others.*

From the very young to the very old, social relationships promote health and wellbeing. There is evidence that supports the role of our social networks in protecting us from negative mental health and instead supporting a positive psychological health. Loneliness on the other hand has been described as a hidden epidemic that is as damaging to our health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

The feeling of belonging is crucial to our well-being. It can come in various forms. You can feel connected when you volunteer in your community and help others. Or, when you connect with a group with shared passions or beliefs – spiritual/religious/hobbies. It can be honed and strengthened by building more personal relationships.

It is important to understand what connectedness means to you. Is it about building more personal relationships, or is it that you're actually looking to deepen one or some you already have? Or is it about feeling connected to your community?

Connectedness is not about knowing the most number of people or having hundreds or thousands of friends/followers on social media. It is about connecting with those who nourish you deeply, and being able to share your interests, feelings, thoughts – anything that moves you past fleeting and transactional to something deeper that makes you introspect and reflect.

Put into practice: *Be present in conversations. It's been said that attention is oxygen for relationships. Next time you meet someone give them your full attention.*

AXA is committed to help people to become 'fit to flourish'. To learn more, click [here](#).

- By Allison Heiliczer, *Rethink The Couch*.