The Power of Social Connections

Reconnecting Post-Pandemic

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Objectives



Learn about the science and theory behind social connectedness



Develop strategies on connecting with each other



Experiential activities



Let's practice: Narrative Therapy

Guidelines:

Do not include your name

Answer as honestly as you are comfortable

Responses will be randomly selected and read aloud

"If you really knew me, you would know..."

"Some of the things that have become most important to me following the pandemic are..."





Science and Theory of Social Connection

- Yalom's stages of group cohesion
- Attachment theory

Yalom's Stages of Group Cohesion

1

Forming/ Orientation phase



Storming/ Transition phase



Norming/ Cohesiveness phase



Working/ Performing phase



Adjourning/ Termination phase





THE NEW SCIENCE OF ADULT ATTACHMENT

AND HOW IT CAN HELP YOU FIND-

AND KEEP-LOVE

Attachment Theory

- An evolutionary theory of relationships that emphasizes the interactions between a human and their primary caregivers at the beginning of life.
 - We develop an attachment pattern that shapes future relationship patterns.
 - Attachment is triggered when we are faced with stress, separation, illness, trauma etc.
- Strange situation studies (Ainsworth, 1970s)
- Categorizations of attachment
 - Initially identified four attachment styles
 - Secure vs. Insecure
 - Avoidant and Anxious
- Relationship characteristics (R & J)





Physiological Explanations For Health Benefits of Social Ties

Social support

- Reducing the impact of stress
- May reduce BP, HR, stress hormones

Personal control

 Enhance belief that they can control their lives.

Mental Health

 In concert with everything else



Umberson D, Karas Montez J. Social relationships and health: A flashpoint for health policy. *Journal of health and social behavior.* 2010;51(1 suppl):S54-S66.

Barriers to Building Positive Relationships

- Technology
- Lack of self-confidence
- Lack of interpersonal skills
- Reluctance to interact with others
- Poor communication skills
- Fear of change
- Their surroundings



Loneliness vs Social Isolation

- Subjective mental state
- Inability to connect or communicate with others
- Emotional, physical, and social factors contribute

Social Isolation

- Physical state
- Voluntary or involuntary absence of having contact with other individuals
- Alone, but not enjoying it



What is the most important relationship you have?

For more reading join our book club: Next meeting August 13, 2021 at 12 PM

YOU ARE THE ONE YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR

BRINGING COURAGEOUS LOVE
TO INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

RICHARD C. SCHWARTZ

5 Strategies:

Fostering respect and encouraging quality connections

1) Conveying presence

• Being present, mindful, paying attention

2) Being genuine

Speaking and reacting honestly (no fronts)

3) Communicating affirmations

• Searching for the positive core in another

4) Effective listening

Empathic and active, focus on speaker's agenda

5) Supportive communication

Nonjudgmental, making requests, providing direction and guidance not criticism and threats

Enhancing Social Connection in your Personal Life

Accept other individuals as they are

Have an uplifting attitude

Get a roommate or pet

Volunteer

Develop quality relationships

Expect the best from themselves and others

Identify reasons why you feel lonely

Be aware that loneliness is a signal that something needs to change

Use counseling or therapy to build relational skills





What is Mindful Listening?

- Being fully present
- Not being in a rush
- Avoiding inserting ourselves





Why practice Mindful Listening?

- •Makes the other person feel heard, valued, and safe
- Enhances patience and concentration
- •Allows you to gather crucial information that you might have otherwise missed



Let's practice! Mindful Listening Exercise

Find a partner, someone you have not spoken to before

Pick who will start as the speaker and who will start as the listener

Speaker

Talk about someone you care about (90 sec)

This is NOT a performance!



Listener

- Do not speak
- •Surrender the need to ask questions, give advice, fix problems, or make the person feel good
- Simple eye contact is enough
- RELAX your body, focus on your breathing
- •This is NOT a performance!



Speaker

Talk about someone you are worried about (90 sec)

This is NOT a performance!



Listener

Remember, no need to say anything Take a breath, relax, and be present This is NOT a performance!



What was that like?

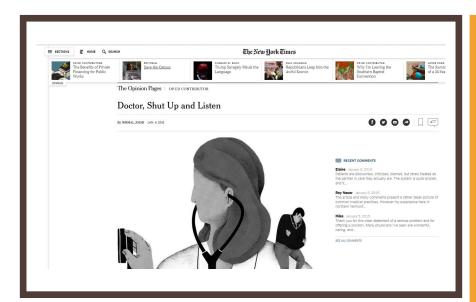
Patient, Interrupte d

- •Average interruption time in a primary care visit is 12-18 seconds
- Only 23% of patients are permitted to complete their opening statement of concerns
- •Female physicians interrupt patients less often than male physicians
- Both female and male physicians interrupt female patients more often than male patients

Beckman HB & Frankel RM. The effect of physician behavior on the collection of data. *Ann Intern Med.* 1984;101(5):692-6.

Rhoades DR, McFarland KF, Finch WH, & Johnson Speaking and interruptions during primary care office visits. *Fam Med.* 2001 Jul-Aug;33(7):528-32









DAILY BEAST



THOMAS NORTHCUT/GETTY

ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL

Why Your Doctor Doesn't Listen to You

Assembly-line patient visits, poor care for the chronically ill, stacks of paperwork, and endless red tape: This is the life of the American physician.



DANIELA DRAKE 09.11.14 5:45 AM ET

Victoria* was a teenager when a car struck and almost killed her. A major surgery requiring plastic mesh sewn into her belly saved her life. Soon after, her skin erupted in painful rashes that refused to heal.

She consulted specialists all over the country, but they couldn't help her. They

Questions, Reflections, and Discussion



- What did you experience in terms of changes to social connection during the pandemic?
- What would help you feel connected to your class?
- Are there changes you want to make in terms of how you connect to others?

