

#MonthlyMotivations Connecting with Purpose
Presented by Suzanne Vickers, LISW-S, July 21, 2026

[Suzanne] Okay. Well, good morning, everyone. My name is Suzanne Vickers and I'm one of your internal OSU EAP counselors. Um, you might know me from other webinars, but today we're going to talk about connecting with purpose. So, um, research shows that social connection is just as important to our health as exercise. Can you believe that? So loneliness can actually shorten your lifespan. Um I've noticed quite a bit lately that my clients are talking about feeling isolated and lonely. Um loneliness is actually an epidemic. Um where people are choosing screen time over connection or maybe that's you know the option. Decrease of spaces that promote social gatherings and geographic distance from family and friends as well as single person households are increasing. So we're going to talk today about how to find connection. Um so connecting with purpose to decrease loneliness to increase belonging a feeling of belonging which is really important to have meaning in our lives to find shared reality and shared identity and to increase mental well-being. That's what connecting with purpose can help us to do. So, when you think about it, who is your support, pit crew, as um this article is talking about? I call mine the 3:00 a.m. friend. So, those I could call in the middle of the night and they would answer my call. Um it may be that you have a few, none, or maybe not the quality that you would like to have in your relationships. So, let's talk next about ways to connect. Your support pit crew can help you um feel like you can be yourself um if you have that um can help you solve problems, take you seriously. So take your conversations seriously and help you to feel valued and heard. So hopefully you guys have some of that in your lives. So making friends, this seems to get harder the older we get is what I'm hearing and what I noticed. So, how can we as adults make friends? So we can join in on a class that we would enjoy. Having a shared activity can engender conversation and perhaps friendship or at least an acquaintance. We can volunteer. A shared cause is another way to meet people that are like-minded and maybe a place to find friends. Find a book club, hiking group, or artists meetup. There is Columbus Meetup if you're in central Ohio as a place to look as well as on social media like neighborhood sites. And then think of an acquaintance that you might want to connect with more just to kind of maybe deepen that friendship or that acquaintanceship and make plans with them for coffee, lunch or a walk um in order to increase that connection.

So strengthening your relationships that you already have. Maybe write a list of the friends or acquaintances that you already have and commit to connecting with them or contacting them on a regular basis. Put a reminder on your phone. Perhaps make an agreement with your friend or acquaintance to spend some time together each week or each month to have a chance to talk without distractions. I know it's hard to ask for help, but people usually want to offer help or offer a listening ear when we do ask and of course they can't read our minds, right? So, ask for specific things that you need help with or maybe you just need to vent. Share how you feel about your friend and show your support. We think positive things about folks, but sometimes we forget to say them out loud or say them to our friends or acquaintances.

And then this information was done by the US Chamber of Connection, the six points of connection that we all need. This is the US Chamber of Connection is a nonprofit organization that did research about how to have a connected life. They found that the following actions can make for more connection. So getting to know a neighbor and building a trusting relationship if possible. This is so that you may have an emergency contact nearby in case you would need it and also just to have some support that is immediately in your area. Find a community that you share identity with such as cultural, religious, spiritual, lifestyle etc. This can increase a sense of belonging and shared reality. Join an activity-oriented community such as a craft group, book club, sports team. This can help you feel a sense of shared purpose. And then connect with someone at least once a week by having a face-to-face meetup. Talking about that earlier, this can foster a feeling of support and empathy. And then they talked about finding a quote unquote third place in your community, not work or home, but a community center perhaps or a gym, church, some other place that is kind of your third place to kind of connect with people and find shared uh values and meaning. And then shared purpose, community, and giving back all contribute to feeling connected. So talking about volunteering here and giving back to your community. So think about it and think about ways that you can connect this week um and begin to plan for some connection whether one-on-one in the community or in your neighborhood. Sometimes we just need a reminder and so this can serve as your reminder that who is in our lives already and to reach out for connection with them. And if you need some support with this, you can always contact us for some counseling sessions. And this is how to contact us if you would like some further support around connecting with purpose. So,



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thanks everyone. I appreciate your attention and I hope that you have a wonderful and connected week.