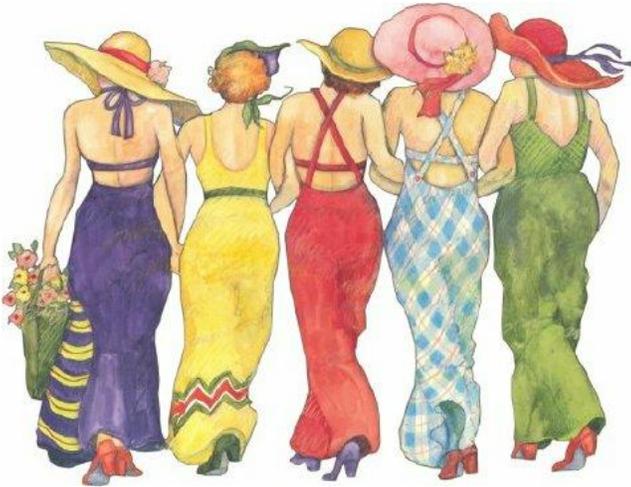


Supportive Relationships: The Foundation of Emotional Health



No matter how much time you devote to improving your mental and emotional health, you will still need the company of others to feel and be your best. Humans are social creatures with an emotional need for relationships and positive connections to others. We're not meant to survive, let alone thrive, in isolation. Our social brains crave companionship—even when experience has made us shy and distrustful of others.

Social interaction—specifically talking to someone else about your problems—can also help to reduce stress. The key is to find a supportive relationship with someone who is a “good listener”—someone you can talk to regularly, preferably face-to-face, who will listen to you without a pre-existing agenda for how you should think or feel. A good listener will listen to the feelings behind your words, and won't interrupt or judge or criticize you. The best way to find a good listener? Be a good listener yourself. Develop a

friendship with someone you can talk to regularly, and then listen and support each other.

Tips and strategies for connecting to others:

- **Get out from behind your TV or computer screen.** Screens have their place but they will never have the same effect as an expression of interest or a reassuring touch. Communication is a largely nonverbal experience that requires you to be in direct contact with other people, so don't neglect your real-world relationships in favor of virtual interaction.
- **Spend time daily, face-to-face, with people you like.** Make spending time with people you enjoy a priority. Choose friends, neighbors, colleagues, and family members who are upbeat, positive, and interested in you. Take time to inquire about people you meet during the day that you like.
- **Volunteer.** Doing something that helps others has a beneficial effect on how you feel about yourself. The meaning and purpose you find in helping others will enrich and expand your life. There is no limit to the individual and group volunteer opportunities you can explore. Schools, churches, nonprofits, and charitable organization of all sorts depend on volunteers for their survival.
- **Be a joiner.** Join networking, social action, conservation, and special interest groups that meet on a regular basis. These groups offer wonderful opportunities for finding people with common interests – people you like being with who are potential friends.

Source: www.helpguide.org



www.crossroadsprogramsforwomen.com

Life is complicated and women face many complex issues and difficult situations throughout their lives. Our weekend and week long treatment programs are designed for real women with real lives and real responsibilities. Our workshops are intensely focused and action oriented to help you discover the "whys" behind the struggles and learn how to move beyond today with a new confidence to change your life!