

Building New Connections

We know that social connections are important for living a healthy and happy life. Sometimes we find ourselves in new places or stages where we have fewer connections and are looking to make new friends. Explore ideas for expanding social networks in a post-pandemic world.

As adults, making new friends can be challenging. Many of us no longer have places like school or clubs where we can meet people our age or who share similar interests. Social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic has made it especially tough to connect with others. But as we start to figure out a new normal, with more people vaccinated and continuing to practice safe physical distancing and masking as needed, now is a great time to expand social circles. Here are some ways to get started:

- **Become a regular.** Whether it's a coffee shop, park, library or corner store, favorite places bring people together. The next time you visit your spot and recognize someone as a fellow regular, take a chance and say hello.
- **You do you.** A great way to meet compatible people is to do what you love in the company of others. What are some of your hobbies, interests and activities that others might share? If you join a team, take a class or find a group that shares your interests, you will find yourself meeting new people who like those things too.
- **Try the buddy system.** An often overlooked social network is friends of friends. We tend to forget that people we know have others in their lives besides us! Chances are that the friends you like to spend time with also have other friends you'd like to get to know. Suggest to someone you like and trust that you organize a time to hang out and broaden both your networks.
- **There's an app for that.** There are a number of friend-finder apps available these days. If you prefer a virtual connection before meeting someone in real life, check out [Bumble BFF](#) or [MeetUp.com](#) to meet others who are also looking to build new connections.

- **Connect for a cause.** Volunteering is a great way to meet others who care about the same issues and causes you do. Visit [VolunteerMatch.org](https://www.volunteermatch.org) to find opportunities in your region.

And finally...

- **Go at your own pace.** We will be feeling the effects of COVID-19 on socialization for a long time. Some people will be uneasy about going to places we used to rely on to foster community and connection – such as restaurants, bars, and clubs – while others can't wait to get back out there.

Staying safe doesn't have to mean never going out in public again, but it's important to know and respect your own comfort level. As you're able, begin to engage in public life again in safe ways and revisit familiar spaces that allow you to reconnect with others. Pay attention to how it feels and take it as fast or slow as you need to!