



Health Matters Well-Being Toolkit: Distant Team Building

Stay connected to your team while remaining physically distant.

WHY SOCIAL CONNECTION MATTERS

It can be challenging to maintain strong social connections with your colleagues while practicing physical distancing. With many still working from home and others adjusting office behaviors to avoid close contact, it is easy to feel isolated right now.

Having positive, trusting relationships with those around you is important to workplace culture and for your overall well-being. Strong social connectivity benefits the entire team and promotes a happier, healthier, and more productive workforce. Feeling connected can also be protective against the negative effects of stress on the body. Now more than ever, we could all use some added defense against stress! Use the tips and ideas in this toolkit to help build and maintain relationships with your teammates at work while remaining physically distant.

Just like food, shelter, and safety, a sense of belonging is included in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as a major human need.

VIRTUAL IDEAS

There are several fun and creative ways to stay connected virtually if some or all your coworkers are teleworking.

- **Share fun photos.** Encourage team members to share photos of things that are making them smile right now (kids, pets, gardens, hobbies, etc.). Share photos and comments using a dedicated email chain or a platform like SharePoint or Teams.

- **Host a virtual coffee or lunch meetup.** One of the simplest ways to connect with colleagues is to grab a coffee or spend time over a meal. Take advantage of your online meeting platform to have a weekly coffee talk or lunch date.
- **Liven up your online staff meetings.** Add a theme to your online meetings by encouraging coworkers to wear a fun hat, rep their favorite sports team, or have their pet make a special appearance.
- **Organize an exercise or meditation class.** Share a YouTube fitness or meditation video over your online meeting platform for team members to practice together at home during a breaktime or at lunch.

IN-PERSON IDEAS

Here are some ideas for connecting in person while remaining six feet apart. *Please remember to wear a face mask covering your nose and mouth when appropriate and/or required.*

- **Have lunch outdoors.** Take advantage of the nice weather by sharing a physically distant lunch outside. Sit 6-feet apart on the grass or bring lawn chairs to enjoy lunch and conversation as a team.
- **Take a walk ([or have a walking meeting](#)).** A shared activity between colleagues, such as a physically distant walk, strengthens working relationships and builds camaraderie.
- **Participate in a [Health Matters challenge](#) together.** Find accountability within your team and challenge yourselves to try something new and fun!
- **Begin meetings on a positive note.** Go around the group and encourage everyone to share three good things from their week. The good things can be personal or professional.

A LITTLE KINDNESS GOES A LONG WAY!

Regardless of your physical working location, one of the best ways to stay connected to your coworkers is by showing kindness, empathy, gratitude, and appreciation. We are all experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety right now, so a little check-in or encouragement may change someone's entire day. It takes just a few minutes to pick up the phone or write a quick note, but the impact can be huge!

SOURCES

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