



FAMILY LIFE

FAMILY REALLY IS EVERYTHING?

We lead increasingly busy lives, which may make keeping in touch with family difficult at times.

But mental health and behavioural experts say staying connected with loved ones can help improve our overall health.

The benefits of creating a social network

According to the Mayo Clinic, having a social network and connection to others may benefit our mental and physical well-being by helping decrease emotional distress, improving our ability to cope with stress, building self-esteem, promoting overall mental health, and reducing physical ailments such as blood pressure.

It further describes social support as a network “made up of friends, family and peers”.

On the contrary, research reveals that isolation and loneliness can have adverse effects and link to “poor mental, physical and cardiovascular health,” the Mayo Clinic warns.

Connecting with family

Here are a few tips for connecting with yours, as suggested by WebMD:

- **Reach out.** An essential part of staying connected with loved ones is to make an effort to check in with them.
- **Taking the time to find out how people are doing** in their lives provides them with the care and emotional support they may need.
- **Offer a listening ear.** People tend to feel a sense of belonging if they can openly communicate about their triumphs or difficulties.
- **Offer them the space and time** to discuss issues they may wish to get off their chest.
- **Giving them your full attention** enables them to feel validated and heard while boosting their sense of belonging.
- **At the same time, be mindful of your emotional capacity and energy** to offer support and make them aware of this in a caring manner.

Overall, communication is key for every family and social network to thrive and provide mutual support for everyone involved.