

## Friendships: Importance & Tips

Asu Asher, LLMSW | Wedgwood Outpatient Therapist

### WHY MAKING FRIENDS IS IMPORTANT

- **CONNECTION MATTERS:** Friendships help us feel supported, understood, and less alone.
- **BOOSTS MENTAL HEALTH:** Having friends can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression.
- **BUILDS CONFIDENCE:** Meeting new people and making friends helps you step out of your comfort zone.
- **FUN AND JOY:** Friends bring laughter, shared experiences, and happiness into life!

### TIPS FOR MAKING NEW FRIENDS

#### For Kids

- Join Clubs or Activities:
  - Try sports, art classes, music groups, or after-school clubs.
- Be Open and Friendly:
  - Smile, say “Hi,” and introduce yourself.
  - Ask questions like, “What’s your favorite game?” or “Do you want to play together?”
- Be a Good Friend:
  - Listen to others, share, and be kind.
  - Invite someone to join you at lunch or recess.
- Try New Things:
  - Attend events like library story hours, community fairs, or local youth groups.

#### For Adults

- Join Groups or Classes:
  - Look for hobby groups, fitness classes, book clubs, or volunteer opportunities.
  - Websites like Meetup, Facebook Groups, or community centers are great places to start.
- Say Yes to Invitations:
  - Attend gatherings, even if you’re nervous. You never know who you’ll meet!
- Be Open and Approachable:
  - Smile, make eye contact, and start conversations with simple questions like:
    - “How did you hear about this group?”
    - “What’s something you enjoy doing?”
- Reconnect or Expand:
  - Reach out to old friends or coworkers.
  - Encourage casual meet-ups like coffee, walks, or dinner.
- Get Involved in the Community:
  - Attend local events, volunteer, or participate in workshops.
  - Shared experiences help build bonds.

## WAYS TO GET OUT OF THE HOUSE AND MEET PEOPLE

### For Kids:

- Join sports teams, Scouts, or after-school programs.
- Visit parks, playgrounds, or community centers.
- Attend birthday parties or playdates when invited.

### For Adults:

- Try fitness groups (yoga, hiking, cycling).
- Join community classes (art, cooking, dance).
- Volunteer at a local shelter, school, or event.
- Explore places like coffee shops, libraries, or farmers' markets.

## OVERCOMING NERVOUSNESS

- **TAKE SMALL STEPS:** Start with short conversations.
- **BE YOURSELF:** Authentic connections happen when you're genuine.
- **PRACTICE GRATITUDE:** Celebrate small wins, like introducing yourself to someone new.
- **REMEMBER:** Everyone feels nervous sometimes—you're not alone!

## FRIENDSHIP REMINDERS

- **QUALITY OVER QUANTITY:** One good friend is better than many shallow connections.
- **BE PATIENT:** Building friendships takes time.
- **STAY POSITIVE:** Keep an open mind and be kind to yourself during the process.

*“A friend is someone who understands your past, believes in your future, and accepts you just the way you are.” (L.R. Jones)*