



Creative Ways to Stay Connected to Others



With the festive season and holidays fast approaching, it's a good time to reflect on the importance of building and maintaining our connections. After all, connections can help stop feelings of loneliness, maintain our bonds, and keep the pandemic winter blues at bay. When we can't gather together in person, finding creative ways to show we care is more important than ever.

What ways will you stay well? We put together some creative tips to help you on your way.

- **Send out handwritten cards.** What nicer gift than receiving a handwritten card? Make it into an evening, and dust off your creative tools, make a meal and have some drinks alongside. It can be a good excuse to write a nice note to family and friends, especially those you haven't been in touch with recently.
- **Consider dog walks with friends.** If you are lucky enough to have a pooch, scheduling regular time out with friends and family can be a great way to get some exercise. Even if you don't have a pooch, could you use the time when you were usually commuting to the office to take a stroll around your area? Even better, if you have some green space nearby getting some much needed green too.
- **Host a virtual friendship circle.** It's hard to stay connected with everyone in your usual social circle during these lockdown times. Why not try hosting an evening with a group of friends you haven't seen for a while? You could have themed nights, like 'show and tell', allowing everyone who attends to teach a certain craft or a few minutes or share expertise, or swap recipes. Ask your friends for ideas about what you can do at future sessions, how about a film screening or cook a long?
- **Send uplifting texts to friends.** We all need some encouragement sometimes. Can you remember the feeling of receiving an out of the blue kind message from a friend you've not spoken to for a while? You could also forward on something which has made you laugh, or a situation which has made you think of them. If you're going for a walk anyway, could you share a nice picture of the scenery? It feels nice to know people are thinking of you.
- **Extend a hand to a stranger.** We aren't able to have as many interactions with strangers everyday at the moment. However, we can still create time to have those random (but often enlightening!) conversations. Can you take up the next opportunity to speak to a stranger, it could be the person who delivers your shopping, or the dogwalker in the park? Ask them how they are, and see what new thing you learn.