

BRAIN HEALTH BOOST



Social Connection is Important For Your Brain Health

The Brain Health Initiative (BHI) is working to develop brain healthy communities, creating a culture that promotes brain health protective factors and decreases risk factors, thereby improving brain health, optimizing brain performance, and fighting brain illness across the lifespan for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond.

Social interaction is very important for both protecting our brain and physical health and fighting brain and physical illness. Research shows that social connectedness acts as a buffer to protecting us against the negative physical and mental effects of stress. It even improves immune functioning.

The easiest way to remain socially connected is getting together, but we don't have to be in the same space to be connected. Social distancing – voluntarily limiting physical contact with other people – can help slow the spread of disease. Even when we can't be physically together with our friends and loved ones, today's technology provides many ways to "hang out" digitally. So instead of social distancing, try **distant socializing**. Today's technology provides many ways to "hang out" digitally. Be creative.

No tech? No problem! Go outside and talk to your neighbors, from at least six feet apart. Have you seen the videos of Italians on their balconies singing and interacting? The American equivalent is grabbing a lawn chair, a mug of coffee, and gathering in your driveway or cul-de-sac with neighbors. Even without technology we can talk to those around us while maintaining a safe distance.

Spending time together, whether it is in person at a safe distance, or online, is an important part of managing stress, improving immune functioning, and bolstering positive emotions during these uncertain times. If you're looking for a way to make a beneficial contribution to the effort to fight the coronavirus, remember that just being there for each other is one of the most crucial services we can provide.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY TO PROTECT YOUR BRAIN HEALTH

- Schedule regular daily contact times with your inner social support group. This can be by phone, video conferencing tools, social media, or when safe, in person.
- Connect with people you haven't seen but who have been important in your life. Now that many people are working from home/staying at home it is the perfect opportunity to "catch" someone you've been meaning to reconnect with.
- Use FaceTime, Zoom, Skype and other tools to spend time with your family, friends, classmates and coworkers.
- Schedule an activity online. Some examples are book clubs, or cooking lessons where you cook the same meal with friends on Skype or Zoom. Another example is "watch parties" where you watch movies and videos and chat about them in real time. Facebook and Netflix both offer ways to watch together.

About the Brain Health Initiative (www.brainhealthinitiative.org)

The Brain Health Initiative (BHI) is a cutting-edge, new approach to protecting brain health, optimizing brain performance, and fighting brain illness across the lifespan. The BHI is a collaborative effort with Massachusetts General Hospital, a Harvard Medical School Teaching Hospital, to build brain healthy communities through education, collaboration, research, innovation, and action, with a specific focus on *brain health promotion, prevention, early detection, evidence-based intervention and optimization of performance*. The BHI is creating a culture that promotes brain health protective factors and decreases risk factors, thereby improving brain health and optimizing brain performance outcomes for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond. Join the brain health movement, ***because brain health matters, and lifestyle makes a difference***. To view all Brain Health Boosts [click here](#).