



# **MIND YOURSELF** **WITH** **MELBOURNE**

## **SOCIAL CONNECTION**

During the COVID lockdown, the importance of social connection became more apparent than ever, as our opportunities to connect with others in ways that were normal for us, were reduced.

Humans are social beings that crave connection and belonging. Sometimes, during stressful or busy periods in our lives, we may disconnect from others. There are, however, benefits to staying connected not only in times of happiness or when motivated, but also when things in life are a little more difficult. These include an increased sense of belonging and self-worth, and increased experiences of positive emotions such as happiness and joy.

### **There are many ways to stay connected. Here are a few hints and tips**

1. If you find that you are time poor, it can help to schedule a time during the week where you can speak with friends or family. You might choose to arrange to meet at a café or restaurant or to speak on the phone. By scheduling a time into your week, you are more likely to take the time to connect with others, reinvigorate your sense of belonging and provide yourself with the self-care needed to help manage negative emotions.
2. Arrange a walk with friends or family.
3. Do not underestimate the benefit of having your pets around and spending time with them! They are as much a part of your family as your human family.
4. If distance is an issue, arrange a virtual dinner or games night. These can help you stay connected even when you cannot physically be with friends and family.