

The Importance of Having a Community

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By Sophie Suberman

People today report some of the highest mental health issues than ever before in history. We have also never been so connected by new forms of technology, but people are more far apart than ever. Everyone needs a community. Community gives you a sense of belonging, it lets you know you have a place in the world.

Here at Grow Your World we give that community. We have after school classes to pair grade school students with a local college student for tutoring. We offer Summer Camps for students to have a safe and fun environment to build that community.

Community can come from anywhere in so many different forms. We can get community from our significant other and from our families. However, there is more community than the one you are born into we have our friends, our coworkers, people we go to church with. Community can be everywhere but more recently people are individualistic. We aren't doing the things we used to do.

According to Psychology today a sense of belonging is essential to our mental wellbeing. Community is how you can get that sense of belonging. When you are in a shared community with someone you can learn about their history and their culture. This allows your emotional bond to deepen with someone, allowing you and them to feel sustained and fulfilled.

When we are alone, we tend to be more sedentary and less likely to get out of our comfort spaces. However, when we have friends and families, we can be more social. We are more likely to be more active and eat better diets. This can lead to living longer.

Technology has us more connected than ever, but it cannot make up for real in person connection. A text saying "Hello, how are you?" is not the same as hearing someone say "Hello". Seeing their mouth move into a smile and the way a person's eyes light up, getting pulled into a warm embrace.

Communities can be found all around us. Go out and join a nonprofit community organization. Go introduce yourself to your neighbors or volunteer somewhere new. Even small things like smiling to those around you or a simple hello can start to build a community.

Editor's Note: Sophie Suberman is the cofounder of Grow Your, a non-profit located in Carrboro, North Carolina. They focus on working with children and parents to build and grow connections in the local area.