



Maintaining Social Connections

Isolation and loneliness (<https://www.cdc.gov/aging/publications/features/lonely-older-adults.html>) are known contributors of suicidal thoughts. When fire season ends, many wildland firefighters experience a loss of connection as their peers return home to their families and friends. This separation and disconnection may feel even worse this year because our Modules as One have been extremely close.

As fire crews conclude their season, it is more important than ever to find new ways to maintain social connection. Here are some simple suggestions:

- **Check in!** Hold regularly scheduled check-ins with one other. Do it just for fun, with no “work” agendas. Sometimes texting isn’t enough. Use a video platform, because better connections are made when you can see the face of the person.
- **Meet up!** If it is safe to do so, meet in person.
- **Be there!** Try to be available to help each other out when applying for jobs, finding good deals on lift tickets, or when someone is feeling down.

Worth Reading



<https://www.nwcg.gov/committee/6mfs/weekremembrance/wor-2020-day6>

Worth Watching



https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_the_power_of_vulnerability#t-735336

Worth Doing



https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/asap_suicide_issue3-a.pdf

If you think someone in your social network is suicidal – ask them! And:

SHATTER THE SILENCE
Suicide: the secret you shouldn't keep

If your friend tells you they are having thoughts of suicide...

WHAT TO DO

- Be honest and express your concern
- Listen and offer support
- Take them seriously
- Offer to accompany them to seek help

WHAT NOT TO DO

- Think it will go away
- Keep it a secret
- Think nothing can be done
- Think you can fix it all by yourself

WARNING SIGNS

- Talking, thinking or writing about suicide
- Talking about feeling worthless or hopeless
- Losing interest in activities
- Using or increasing use of drugs or alcohol
- Any changes from typical behavior

TALKING through feelings with your friends and trusted adults can help you realize the need for **HELP**. By showing **CONCERN** and **SUPPORT**, you can **ENCOURAGE** your friend to talk to their parents or another trusted adult about getting help.

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP OR INFORMATION

- Go to the nearest emergency room
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1.800.273.TALK (8255)
- Call 911
- Visit www.dmh.ms.gov
- Call the Department of Mental Health at 1.877.210.8513