**Foster your friendships**

Did you know that having social connections can boost your health and wellbeing? This is because a strong social network helps to promote [mental](https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience) resilience which has a range of benefits for our health.

Part of building your social health starts with having close personal relationships. It may seem more difficult to make friends as we get older, but here are some ways to build strong friendships.

**Friendship tips:**

1. **Practice empathy** and be respectful of your friends’ views and opinions. The great thing about supporting your friends is that they will support you, too. And, someone else’s unique situation, feelings and opinions can often help you to learn more about yourself and your own views.
2. **Be present and actively listen** when interacting with your friends. Giving them feedback shows that you are listening, which also shows that you value them.
3. **Spend time together**. Put a reminder in your calendar to schedule social visits with each other, like a coffee date, walk or event. When you take time out of your busy schedule it shows you care and gives you the opportunity to build and maintain your friendships.
4. **Avoid unhealthy relationships.** Remove yourself from relationships that don’t feel right and lower your self-esteem. If you feel unsafe in a relationship or if it’s one that encourages unhealthy behaviours, reach out for help.

Remember that friendships can be made and maintained at any age and even minimal social interactions can be powerful.