

BEYOND SEPTEMBER GUIDE

How to Make Connections

Isolation is one of the most dangerous parts of life after an attempt — and one of the most treatable. Connection doesn't require becoming a social person. It requires one or two people who know the truth and stay. Here's how to build that, slowly and on purpose.

Start smaller than you think

You don't need a big circle. Research on what protects people keeps landing on the same thing: feeling connected to even one person. Aim for one honest relationship, not a social life.

Connection, in order of difficulty

- **Low-stakes regular contact.** Same coffee shop, same walking route, same class. Familiar faces are the raw material of connection — you don't even have to talk at first.
- **Text one person something true.** 'Rough day. No advice needed, just wanted you to know.' People can't show up for a struggle they can't see.
- **Peer support groups.** Being in a room — or a video call — with people who have been where you've been skips a hundred explanations. NAMI Connection and similar groups are free and peer-led.
- **Peer specialists.** Certified peer support specialists are people with lived experience, trained and employed to walk alongside you. Ask providers or your local NAMI affiliate about peer programs.
- **Shared activity, not shared feelings.** A walking group, a rec league, a volunteer shift, a faith community. Side-by-side connection is easier than face-to-face, and it grows into the real thing.

Let people help — specifically

- Give people jobs: 'Can you check on me Sunday nights?' is easier to say yes to than 'be there for me.'
- Make a short list of people you can contact when things get dark — and tell them they're on it.
- Connection goes both ways. Listening to someone else is also connection, and it counts.

If the list of people to call feels empty, 988 is a person who picks up — free, confidential, 24/7. Call or text, even just to not be alone for a while. And our companion resource FindSupportToday.com can help you find groups and peer support near you.

Sources & further reading

- CDC — Suicide prevention (connectedness as a protective factor): cdc.gov/suicide
- NAMI — Support groups (NAMI Connection): nami.org • 988lifeline.org

Beyond September is an awareness and education initiative. This guide is general education — it is not medical, mental-health, or crisis care, and it is not a substitute for advice from a qualified professional. If you are struggling right now, call or text **988** or chat at 988lifeline.org. If you are in immediate danger, call 911.