

CONNECTIONS EXERCISE

The Importance of Joining

Research shows that isolation is more of a risk factor for illness and shortened life expectancy than cigarette smoking or drinking! This says a lot about the buffering element of connection with others. So even for those “non-joiners” it is time to consider what it means to join.

If we have had tough experiences in life, we may tend to isolate leaving us feeling disconnected and deeply alone. Finding people you can relate to in safe and friendly environments can help repair years of neglect and historical trauma. We are wired for connection. When we don't have it most of us suffer. It is true that we have varying degrees for the need to connect with others but most of us need connection in order to thrive.

This exercise is designed to move you into experimenting with your social environment by connecting with pre-existing groups or finding people to join you regularly in some type of activity that you can create or co-develop.

There are many ways to meet new people. Here are a few suggestions:

- Local Community Centres
- Meetup Groups: <https://www.meetup.com/>
- Volunteer Activities/Programs/Organizations
- Join a Fitness Centre, Sports Team / Club
- Enroll in a course
- Join a Spiritual / Religious Organization/Facility/Function

PHYSICAL CONNECTIONS EXERCISE

OVERVIEW

The following exercise is to be used in conjunction with our book, “*What Is PTSD? 3 Steps to Healing Trauma*” for best effect. Please visit www.WhatIsPTSD.com for additional resources.

GOAL

The goal of the *Physical Connections Exercise* is to explore physical ways in which you can connect with others on a more personal and enjoyable level such as joining a walking club, taking up yoga, or signing up for a bowling league. Tai Chi and Qi-gong are also useful and gentle ways to increase our activity levels slowly. As with the three other *connecting* exercises we will address (Intellectual, Creative & Artistic and Spiritual & Personal Growth), our goal through this exercise is to help you settle into your skin and to begin the process of becoming fully and genuinely who you wish to be. The challenge here is to ensure that you will be joining with other people in a setting that has some type of social component.

TIME OUT

Always reflect on your inner state and notice if you need a break from the exercise to find your inner calm.

MATERIALS AND LAYOUT

Pen or pencil and the form we have provided on the following pages.

PATH TO COMPLETE

1. Identify below several physical activities that interest you or that you always wanted to try, such as joining a walking club, taking a yoga class, or joining a bowling league. The activity must include some level of social interaction or element.

2. Investigate physical activity pursuits that are available in your vicinity, or create your own group!

3. Based on your investigation, select two to three ways to become involved socially, at least once each month.

4. Decide if any one of these activities is a good fit for you after attending at least three to four times. If this particular activity is not a good fit, move on to the next!

INTELLECTUAL CONNECTIONS EXERCISE

OVERVIEW

The following exercise is to be used in conjunction with our book, “*What Is PTSD? 3 Steps to Healing Trauma*” for best effect. Please visit www.WhatIsPTSD.com for additional resources.

GOAL

The goal of the *Intellectual Connections Exercise* is to help you expand your interests, and perhaps, explore entirely new areas of intellectual pursuits. Opportunities are abound in life and it is never too late to nurture your growth and to accomplish a higher level of thinking – and being. The challenge here is to ensure that you will be joining with other people in a setting that has some type of social component.

TIME OUT

Always reflect on your inner state and notice if you need a break from the exercise to find your inner calm.

MATERIALS AND LAYOUT

Pen or pencil and the form we have provided on the following pages.

PATH TO COMPLETE

1. Investigate the sources of intellectual pursuits in your area. Some places you may want to look include universities and libraries. Join intellectual groups such as chess club or book clubs, or create your own! List some ideas below:

2. Select two to three ways to become socially involved with others, at least once each month:

3. Decide if any one of these activities is a good fit for you only after attending at least three to four times. If it is not a good fit, move on to the next!

CREATIVE PURSUITS EXERCISE

OVERVIEW

The following exercise is to be used in conjunction with our book, “*What Is PTSD? 3 Steps to Healing Trauma*” for best effect. Please visit www.WhatIsPTSD.com for additional resources.

GOAL

The goal of the *Creative Pursuits Exercise* is to explore creative outlets for your self-expression and to find activities that truly make you happy and perhaps even help you find your passion! The challenge here is to ensure that you will be joining with other people in a setting that has some type of social component.

TIME OUT

Always reflect on your inner state and notice if you need a break from the exercise to find your inner calm.

MATERIALS AND LAYOUT

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PATH TO COMPLETE

1. Search for creative outlets available in your community. There are lots of classes that are free or offered for a nominal fee that may be just what you are seeking. Join a pottery or painting class, a scrapbooking club, or a jewelry class as May did. Resolve to attend at least three to four of these classes to see if it resonates with you. List some ideas below:

2. Select two to three ways to become socially involved with others, at least once each month. If your original choices are not to your liking, try another and another until you find a creative outlet that speaks to you. Perhaps it is gardening or music – something that allows you to gain a state of relaxation and calm while expressing yourself creatively.

3. Decide if any one of these activities is a good fit for you only after attending at least three to four times. If it’s not a good fit, move on to the next! Explore how you can creatively honor the traumatic event such as May did in creating and dedicating her first three pieces to her sister and nieces. Provide your art with the meaning of what the experience meant to you and allow it to be an integral part of your healing.

SPIRITUAL & PERSONAL GROWTH EXERCISE

OVERVIEW

The following exercise is to be used in conjunction with our book, “*What Is PTSD? 3 Steps to Healing Trauma*” for best effect. Please visit www.WhatIsPTSD.com for additional resources.

GOAL

Our goal with the *Spiritual & Personal Growth Exercise* is to help you identify new ways to help feed your soul, beginning with defining who you are and the *script* you may be following. It is important to identify the repetitive patterns of thoughts and behaviors that keep you doing things in the same way and that keep you back from stepping outside the box to discover what your passions are and to expand your thinking into new areas. The challenge here is to ensure that you will be joining with other people in a setting that has some type of social component.

TIME OUT

Always reflect on your inner state and notice if you need a break from the exercise to find your inner calm.

MATERIALS AND LAYOUT

Pen or pencil and the form we have provided on the following pages.

PATH TO COMPLETE

1. It is often difficult to see our own value, our own impact on the world at large, so begin this exercise by trying to see yourself through the eyes of someone whom you love and admire. What do they think of you? What are the gifts that they feel you have given to them? How would they remember you if you were no longer here?

2. What are five ways in which their lives are different because you were in it?

3. Try to imagine yourself at a younger age (five to 20 years ago). What fed your soul before you had responsibilities like a career and a family? What could you do for hours without even giving it a second thought and without regard to income for your activity?

- 4 What is your true purpose for being here? What would feed your soul now? Exploring your spirituality by joining a religious order, church or temple? Learning to meditate or to getting in touch with nature? Performing community service by volunteering at a homeless shelter? Take time to reflect on the gifts you feel you have to offer the world and how to best provide them. Decide if any one of these activities is a good fit for you only after attending at least three to four times. If it’s not a good fit, move on to the next! List at least five activities of a spiritual or personal growth nature that you would like to explore:
