

# FINDING COMMUNITY

**You don't have to navigate hard things alone. Even small moments of connection can reduce stress and anxiety, and remind us we're not the only ones feeling what we're feeling.**

## Connection is Protection

When things feel overwhelming, isolating, or heavy, connection can be a lifeline. Communities of color have a rich history of looking to each other for wisdom, protection, and care. In many cultures, community care has always been essential to survival. Whether it's checking in with a neighbor, sharing a meal, or leaning on a faith group. *Community is a valid and powerful mental health tool.*

### Why community care matters:

- It breaks isolation. Feeling seen and heard can change your day.
- It passes down tools that previous generations have used to survive, adapt, and thrive.
- It reminds us that healing is a collective process, not a solo journey.

### Examples of community care that support mental health:

- Cooking a meal for someone who's overwhelmed, or receiving one when you are
- A text that says, "Just checking in. How are you *really*?"
- Laughing with your cousin until your stomach hurts
- A group chat that shares affirmations or coping tips
- Talking to your barber, stylist, or pastor about what's going on
- Sending memes or playlist links to someone who's had a rough week
- Asking a friend, "Have you eaten today?" or "Do you want to go for a walk?"
- A casual neighborhood gathering where someone tells a story and someone else says, "I've felt the same way."

## Who's in Your Corner?

Take a minute to map your support system, even if it's small or unconventional. Having it written out somewhere can help you take action quickly if you're feeling overwhelmed or not thinking clearly.

You will want to think about who you can talk to and the community spaces that make you feel safe, both in person and online.

Use MHA's worksheet, "[Creating a community safety and connection plan](#)," to help you organize your thoughts.

## 5 Questions to Help You Find Community

If you're having a hard time mapping out your community safety and connection plan, ask yourself the questions below to help you find community.



### 1. Who are you already connected to, and how does that connection support you?

It could be a neighbor who always waves, a coworker who checks in, or someone you've had a real conversation with — even once. Start there. One small bond can lead to something bigger.



### 2. Where in your community do people come together or gather?

Think about libraries, parks, recreation centers, cultural spaces, places of worship, salons, barbershops, and cafés. Sometimes just showing up is enough to start meaningful relationships.



### 3. How do you want to show up for others?

Volunteering, going to a meeting, or joining a group can introduce you to people who care about the same things you do.



### 4. What do you love doing, or wish you could try?

Joining others around a shared interest (like dancing, gardening, trivia, walking, knitting, or cooking) can make connections feel more natural.



### 5. If the space you need for real connection doesn't exist yet, what would it look like?

You're allowed to dream it up. Someone else is probably wishing for the same thing — maybe you're the one who can help build it.

*Community can look like a circle of five, a group chat, a Sunday meal, or a shared playlist. However it begins, it's all about connection, the kind of connection that sees you and says, "You don't have to carry this alone."*

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