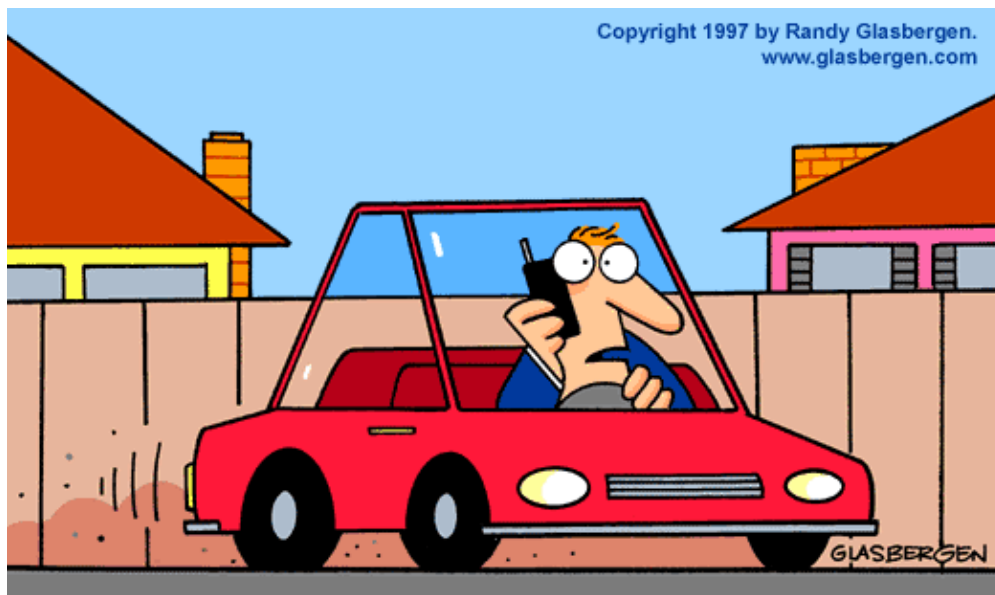


Social Wellness and Mental Health

Research has shown that social support wards off the effects of stress on depression, anxiety and other health problems. Do you need to be more connected to others? Here are some tips to help you create a plan to make, keep and strengthen connections in your life:

- **Make a short list of friends and family members who are supportive and positive.** Also include a list of people you feel the need to stay in touch with regularly such as parents, a close friend or adult child who lives far away, or an aging relative who lives alone.
- **Make a commitment to yourself to call, email or get together with them on a schedule that's reasonable for you.**
- **Share what's on your mind honestly and openly.** Talk about your concerns in a straight-forward way, but try to keep it constructive.
- **When you talk, also listen.** Ask about someone else's day, or follow up on the topic of a previous conversation. Showing sincere interest in another person's life builds relationships and listening to other people's concerns can often shed a new light on your own challenges.
- **Make social plans.** Looking forward to special activities boosts our spirits, gives us energy and makes us more productive.

Source: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/conditions/social-support-getting-and-staying-connected>



“I thought I was falling into a vast, deep, dark pit of despair but it was only a pothole.”