

**March Mental Health and Wellness Theme:**  
***Find Time to Spend with Friends***

**NOTE: ALL RPSTA members will be entered to win a \$50.00 gift card for Bushwacker Brew Pub.**



***Why Friendships Are So Important for Health and Well-Being***

[Click Here](#) to read more

“Maintaining positive relationships should rank up there with healthy eating and exercise as a necessary investment in your health. Spending time with friends is not only fun but also yields a multitude of long-term physical and emotional health benefits.”

Read further for 9 highlighted benefits:

1. Friendships Promote a Sense of Belonging
2. Friends can Help Boost Self-Esteem
3. Strong Social Connections Help
4. Friendships may Help Protect Cognitive Health
5. Friends Help us Cope with Grief of All Kinds
6. Friends can Encourage Healthy Behaviors
7. Staying Socially Connected to Others May Lower the Risk of Long-Term Health Problems
8. Strong Relationships May Help Us Live Longer
9. Healthy Friendships Tend to Make Us Happier



## ***“ Friendships: Enrich Your Life and Improve Your Health”***

[Click Here](#) to find out more about:

- What are the Benefits of Friendships?
  - Increase your sense of belonging and purpose
  - Boost your happiness and reduce your stress
  - Improve your self-confidence and self-worth
  - Help you cope with traumas, such as divorce, serious illness, job loss or the death of a loved one
  - Encourage you to change or avoid unhealthy lifestyle habits, such as excessive drinking or lack of exercise
- Why is it Sometimes Hard to Make Friends or Maintain Friendships?
- What’s a Healthy Number of Friends?

-What are Some Ways to Meet New Friends?

- Staying in touch with people with whom you've worked or taken classes
- Reconnecting with old friends
- Reaching out to people you've enjoyed chatting with at social gatherings
- Introducing yourself to neighbors
- Making time to connect with family members



-How Does Social Media Affect Friendships?

-How Can I Nurture My Friendship?

- Be Kind
- Be A Good Listener
- Open Up
- Show that You Can Be Trusted
- Make Yourself Available
- Manage Your Nerves with Mindfulness

## ***“The Science of Why Friendships Keep us Health”***

[Click Here](#) to read more about:

**-How Friendship the Body and Brain:** “A review of 38 studies found that adult friendships, especially high-quality ones that provide social support and companionship, significantly predict well-being and can protect against mental health issues such as depression and anxiety—and those benefits persist across the life span...”

**-The Risks of Social-Isolation:** “On the other side of the coin, research has shown that loneliness—among people who lack



quality friendships, romantic partnerships, or other relationships—increases our risk for heart attack, stroke, and premature death...”

**-The Strength of “Weak” Ties:** “Having a close friend or confidant is undeniably good for us, but psychologists have found that interactions with acquaintances—and even strangers—can also give our mental health a boost”

**-Lovers and Friends:** “We tend to see friendship and romance as separate entities, but the two may have more in common than we realize. Psychological research points to qualities such as chemistry, intimacy, and warmth as key building blocks of close, stable friendships.”

**-Supporting Healthy Friendships:** “Given the clear benefits of friendship, psychologists say we should promote platonic social connection across society—including in school, at work, in public spaces (such as on public transportation), and through entertainment.”