



FEBRUARY 2020

Wellness Matters

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Emotional Intelligence

Improve Your Interpersonal Connections

Our series on boosting Emotional Intelligence (EI) continues this month with a focus on social awareness. How we connect with others in different situations is a reflection of EI. Better connections are key to boosting our social awareness.

Social awareness is described as empathy for others. Compassion and understanding for others leads to more meaningful interpersonal connections. *How can we boost our social awareness?*

Strengthen Social

Connections Positive social connections can help protect health and lengthen life. Whether with partners, family, friends, or co-workers, building better social connections can influence our well-being and create healthy support systems:

- ☐ Carve out uninterrupted, focused time with your kids.

- ☐ Get active and share good habits with family and friends.
- ☐ If you're a family caregiver,

ask for help from others.

- ☐ Volunteer for things you care about in your community, like school,

library, animal shelter, community garden, or place of worship.

Consider Others' Feelings

Your actions have a larger impact than you may realize. Take a moment to reflect on how your actions affect others:

- ☐ When someone came to you with an opinion or issue, did you brush him/her off?
- ☐ Be a better listener; try to identify one's emotional state during a conversation.
- ☐ Even though you may not agree with one's point of view, you can try to understand it.



Be Trusting, Trustworthy, and Considerate When you are able to trust a friend or family member with your needs and feelings, your bond becomes stronger. Likewise, when you respond to the needs of others, you gain their trust. Acting with kindness in these and all situations can enrich connections even more.

Reflect Think about how today's interactions could have been improved by considering others' emotions. Each day is an opportunity to grow and improve. Try this:

- ☐ Did I listen actively to someone who approached me? Was I fully engaged?
- ☐ Did I ask the other person questions about what he/she was saying or feeling?
- ☐ Did I change my body language, facial expressions, tone of voice, or other elements to signal I was listening and truly care about what he/she is saying?

February is American Heart Month

Your heart is one of your hardest working muscles, but all that work can take a toll. Not treating your body right can quickly lead to serious heart issues. In fact, heart disease accounts for 1 in 4 deaths in the United States. This American Heart Month, make time for your heart and consider implementing some life changes.

Causes Heart disease is caused by atherosclerosis—a buildup of plaque in the inner walls of the arteries—which narrows, slows, or blocks the flow of blood to the heart.

Risk Factors Controllable risk factors for heart disease include the following:

- ☐ High blood pressure
- ☐ High LDL cholesterol
- ☐ Type 2 diabetes
- ☐ Smoking
- ☐ Being overweight or obese
- ☐ Lack of physical activity
- ☐ Using illegal drugs, such as cocaine

Warning Signs The symptoms you experience depend on the type and severity of your heart condition. Common signs and symptoms of heart disease include:

- ☐ Shortness of breath
- ☐ Dizziness
- ☐ Chest pain or discomfort
- ☐ Heart palpitations
- ☐ Weakness or fatigue

Call your doctor if you begin having new symptoms or if they become frequent or severe.

Self-care and Prevention A healthy lifestyle can help prevent heart disease:

- ☐ Get regular medical checkups
- ☐ Don't smoke
- ☐ Maintain a healthy weight



Healthy & Delicious Heart Healthy Diet

A diet rich in fruits and vegetables is not only important for maintaining a healthy weight and one's general health, but it can help prevent chronic heart diseases and conditions.

Cardiovascular Disease

Heart disease is the world's leading killer. All fruits and vegetables are good choices for the prevention of heart disease and stroke, but one of the best choices are green leafy vegetables.

Spinach, kale, and collard greens are all rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, especially Vitamin K, which helps to protect arteries and prevent blood clots.

High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure is a primary risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Foods like *strawberries and blueberries* offer antioxidant compounds called anthocyanins, a type of flavonoid. Full of potassium, *bananas* can help manage hypertension, diminish the effects of sodium, and reduce tension in blood vessel walls. Other foods rich in potassium include *avocado, beans, and tomatoes*.