

Do you avoid social situations?

Is your pain worse when you're alone?

Are you sometimes anxious or depressed?

When you are connecting with others, pain won't bother you as much



Socializing with others rewires your brain and this can change your pain



HOW PAIN IS IMPACTED BY OUR SOCIAL CONNECTIONS:

When people live with pain, they can become isolated. Isolation can amplify pain in the brain. When people are not socially connected they tend to do less and focus more on pain.

HOW SOCIAL CONNECTION CAN HELP:

We can begin to rewire the brain and reduce pain by changing a few habits. Connecting with others helps us be more active, happier, and focused on what matters to us. You can decide what activities make the most sense to you.

> CONNECT WITH FAMILY AND CAREGIVERS



- Family and caregivers are often the ones who witness your struggles.
- Using new tools and sharing them with your family can help everyone feel more connected and hopeful.

> CONNECT WITH FRIENDS



- Reconnecting with old friends can remind you who you were before life became all about pain.
- Sharing fun experiences with new people releases powerful brain chemicals that help us feel more confident and capable.

> CONNECT WITH COMMUNITY GROUPS



- Sharing time and activities with people who share similar interests improves quality of life *even if you still have pain.*
- Explore spiritual communities, fitness groups, senior centers, volunteer opportunities, community events, or farmer's markets.

> JOIN AN ONLINE GROUP



- You are not the only one dealing with pain – you can get support and learn about helpful things others have tried.
- Look for online groups that offer positive, action-oriented support without promising quick fixes.

> JOIN A PAIN MANAGEMENT GROUP OR CLASS



- Community groups offer skills, support, and social connection that can help change your experience of pain in powerful ways.
- Check with your healthcare provider for pain management groups in your area.

Celebrate each social connection you make, no matter how small.

My short-term goal:

Steps to reach my goal:

Find more ways to help with your pain:
www.oregonpainguidance.org/paineducationtoolkit

