

The Importance of Community

“The good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life”— Jane Addams

While there continues to be discussion over what actually defines a community, for many people it is a sense of cohesiveness among a group of people. For generations, an individual's community served a vital role in terms of offering camaraderie and acting as a support system.

With our society moving at a faster and more detached manner due to technology, busy schedules and the frequency at which we change jobs, homes and locations, it makes it harder and harder to feel any sense of community. It is too easy to become isolated in our homes and yet isolation tends to beget a sense of loneliness and depression not to mention the breakdown that can occur in communities due to a detachment from others—increased violence, substance abuse, mental illness and so forth.

The idea of community may simply come down to supporting and interacting positively with other individuals who share a vested interest. Whether your vested interest is in the well-being of your neighborhood or extends to the well-being of your global community, you may consider:

- Participating in random acts of kindness.
For more information, visit: www.actsofkindness.org
- Acknowledging a passerby in your neighborhood or at work.

- Attending community events.
- Volunteering.
- Meeting your neighbors.
- Buying from local merchants.
- Making an extra effort to talk with someone who may have a different background or perspective than your own.
- Supporting schools, which tend to be cornerstones in a thriving community.
- Organizing or attending a neighborhood or community party.
- Spending less time on the internet or watching television and more time outside.
- Joining a club or other social organization.
- Personally greeting newcomers to your community.

A strong community benefits the individual, the community as well as the greater society. People of all ages who feel a sense of belonging tend to lead happier and healthier lives, and strong communities create a more stable and supportive society. If you are feeling isolated or lonely, consider contacting your Employee Assistance Program for assistance.

To Contact UW CareLink Faculty and Staff Assistance Program, please call: 866-598-3978 or visit www.apshelplink.com (company code: UW)

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