

Doing new things, meeting new people, and making new friends – it's scary but worth it!



**CONNECT
HACKNEY**
ageing better

Almost all of us have a deep need for social connection and need to keep meeting new people and making friends, no matter our age. Our lives are always changing and the things we enjoy and can do also change – use the research-based tips below to help keep yourself connected and active.



Value social connection

Research has proved that people have a powerful need for social connections – small and large. We should prioritise connection in our lives and do what we can to have friendly interactions with people, no matter how small.

Chat to neighbours, shopkeepers and strangers



Chatting with acquaintances and even strangers is good for you – and them! Most people are worried about talking to strangers, but research shows it usually goes well and lifts both people's moods. Ask for help if you can't find something in a shop or tell your neighbour about a local event.

People like you more than you think

Research shows that we often think that people like us less than they do. This is called the 'liking gap'. Be aware that when you assume someone doesn't like you much, you may well be wrong!



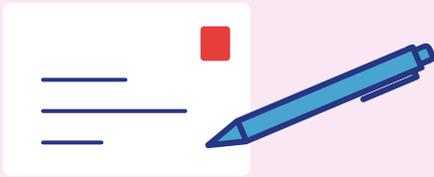
Give compliments, offer to help and receive help

Compliments are known to make both people feel good and finding a compliment to give someone each day can boost your wellbeing. Likewise, both helping someone and receiving help feel good, so feel free to offer assistance and ask for it too.

Wear something that invites conversation

We know that eye-catching clothes and accessories, such as a bright handbag or printed t-shirt, can inspire comments that lead to conversations.



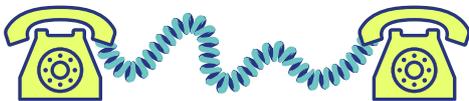


Reach out to people you already know

Deepen your connections by trying to get to know acquaintances better or get in touch with old friends you've lost contact with.

Take a leaflet – and turn up!

There are lots of free and low-cost activities going on locally that you could join in or volunteer at. Look around for leaflets or posters and take the (sometimes intimidating) first step of turning up to a new group or event. Remember to congratulate yourself if you do!



Ask for their number

When you meet someone you like, ask for their number and follow up with them. This feels scary but most of the time it's worth taking the risk.

Invite people to meet up

Most people like to be invited to things – it makes us feel wanted. If you've met someone you like, ask them to go for coffee, to the library, to a community group or for a walk in the park.



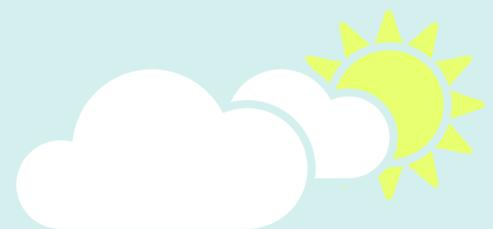
Be clear, friendly and curious

When meeting new people smile, speak clearly and use your observational skills to ask them about themselves. Research shows people enjoy talking about themselves.



Move on

Research shows that most conversations with strangers go well and are enjoyed by both people. However, it can hurt when things don't go the way we hoped. It's normal and OK to feel sad and rejected when this happens but try to chalk it up to experience and keep going.



Be optimistic

Making new friends and acquaintances is a process that takes time. Try to stay optimistic about the possibility of growing your social circle.