



'Home' is about what happens in life outside of work. Thinking about your wellbeing through the 'Home' lens means reflecting on your connections, relationships and supports.



## THE 3AS OF SUPPORT

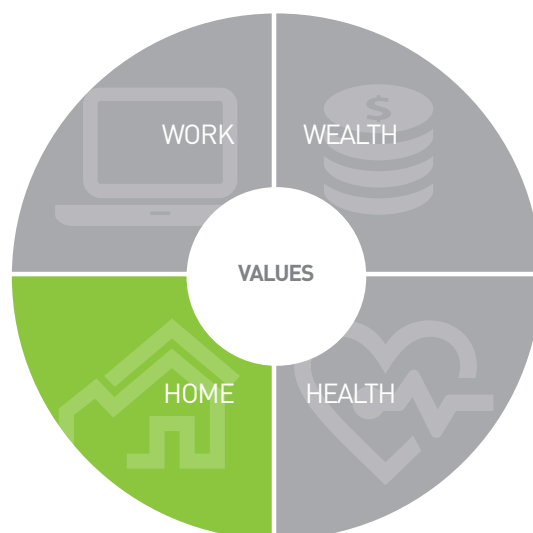
Support networks help in tangible ways, through guidance and advice, and by helping us to cope better.

There are three types of support: **Affection, Affirmation and Assistance**. It is important to get the right kind of support from the right kind of people.

During life transitions, such as retirement, our support networks are often interrupted. The workforce is a significant source of social relationships for many people, and changes at work can result in a loss of connection with others.

THINK ABOUT:

- **Affection:** Who offers you love and respect?
- **Affirmation:** Who agrees with you and backs your actions?
- **Assistance:** Who provides practical help, advice, information (includes professionals and organisations)?



In this worksheet we look at:

The 3As of support

Growing connections

Our significant others



SOCIAL NETWORKS AND IDENTITIES HAVE A PROFOUND IMPACT ON MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH.

C. HASLAM

Notes

## GROWING CONNECTIONS

### Take a moment to think about the people and social groups in your life.

They could be friends or family, they could be connected with school or study, they might be from sporting groups or cultural groups or faith groups. Perhaps you have strong connections through work—either paid or volunteer.

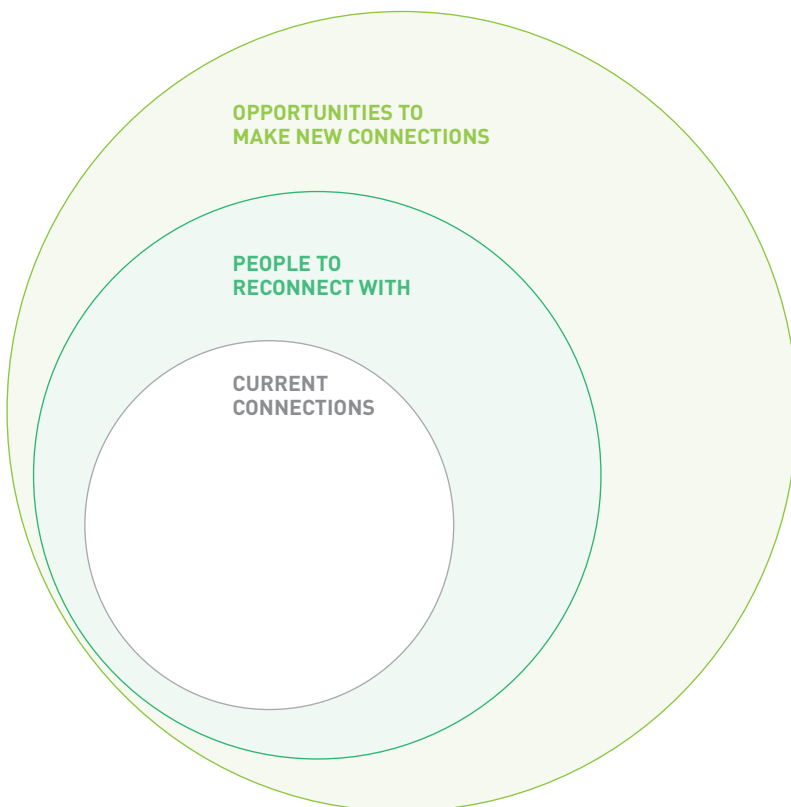
#### Fostering positive relationships leads to:

- Higher levels of happiness.
- Better quality of life.
- Enhanced cognitive functioning.
- Greater independence.
- Less depression and anxiety.

In essence, the connections that transition with you into retirement can really help your wellbeing.

#### The following exercise is designed to help you think about your connections. In the diagram below:

1. Write down the people and groups currently in your social network in the centre circle.
2. Circle the ones you will likely stay connected with as you transition to retirement.
3. Think about friends and groups from your past. Are there people you would like to reconnect with? Write these in the next circle.
4. What new connections might you make as you transition to retirement.
5. Look at the number and variety of connections you've written down. How do you feel about that? Does it look about right to you, or do you want to nurture more connections?



### It can be hard to make new friends as adults, but you are not alone. Here are some ways to meet new people:

#### What are your interests or hobbies?

Consider joining a club or finding a group of people with similar interests.

#### What's in your local area?

Perhaps there's a community centre or local association you can join. It often takes more than one go before you start to feel comfortable, so try and go along for 3 or 4 times before you decide it's not for you.

#### Seek out other retirees.

They might be friends, family, neighbours or friends-of-friends. Take the initiative and ask them if they would like to meet you for a coffee or a walk.

#### Join an online social networking page or interest group.

Good Karma Networks: [www.goodkarmaeffect.com](http://www.goodkarmaeffect.com) and Meet Up: [www.meetup.com/en-AU/](http://www.meetup.com/en-AU/) can be a safe places to start if this is new to you. Online connections can turn into friendships in the 'real world' too.

#### Most of all, be brave!

Put yourself out there, let people know you are looking for new friends. There are many others in similar situations who will be glad to connect.

Notes

## OUR SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

### Relationships with our partner, children and close friends can be tested during transitions such as retirement.

It is too easy for people to make assumptions which cause tension when things don't pan out as expected. And remember that your retirement creates big changes for them too, and perhaps they are struggling to adjust to the 'new normal' as well.

Not everyone has a partner or a spouse, but these conversations apply equally to children and other close family and friends. For example, people make assumptions about how much 'grandparenting' you might do, or that you'll take on more responsibility at a local club once you're not working full-time.

Like other aspects of retirement transition, successfully navigating the experience with your relationship intact benefits from planning well in advance. Start having these conversations in late career, and continue them through your retirement journey.

### Get on the same page by having regular and open conversations with your significant others about your hopes, needs, and expectations for late career and retirement.

Remember, the point of these conversations is to picture a retirement that works for you both and discuss what you need to do over the next few years to make it a reality.

Listen with kindness and curiosity to others' thoughts and feelings, and be willing to share honestly and respectfully your thoughts about retirement life.

#### Here's some open-ended questions and prompts to get you started:

- Do you think you'll wind down work gradually, or just stop?
- What sort of lifestyle do you want in retirement?
- Where do you want to live in retirement? What are your thoughts about different options, such as to stay in our current home, downsize, sea change, move to a retirement community?
- What would you like an average day to look like? Talk through the way you imagine an average day in retirement will go—wake up time, regular routines, etc.
- Will your weekdays be the same as the weekends?
- How have friends or family members made the transition to retirement? What aspects do you want to do the same, which might we do differently?
- What are your priorities in retirement living—family, travel, lifestyle, community or something else?
- If we can't find agreement or compromise, what are we willing to do to invest in our relationship during this transition? Regular conversations, books, counselling?
- What are your thoughts about personal space and time alone? How much time do you expect us to be together, how much time apart? How will you communicate it if you need some alone time?
- What activities will we do together? What activities will we do separately?



## RESOURCES

[Guide to choosing a psychologist](#)

[Blog: Married for life, no for lunch](#)

[Blog: Support for Transitioning to Retirement](#)

[Book: A couple's guide to happy retirement and aging](#), Sara Yogev (2016)

Online social networking:

Good Karma Networks: [www.goodkarmaeffect.com](http://www.goodkarmaeffect.com)

Meet up: [www.meetup.com/en-AU](http://www.meetup.com/en-AU)

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