

## Activity 1—Connecting with others

Having people in your life to talk to, laugh with, and have fun with can lift your spirits, give you something to look forward to, and provide you with friendships and support during challenging times. Often, caregivers of adults with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) feel isolated from other families or do not have time to nurture friendships.

Use this worksheet to think of ways to connect with people, such as other caregivers, friends, or community members. Finding an activity that you enjoy that also helps you to meet people can be one option. Or you may choose to cultivate relationships that you already have, but have not made time for. This worksheet can be a springboard of ideas for finding connections to others in your life.

### Activities

Make a list of the types of activities that you enjoy doing:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Of these activities, which ones are done with other people? Which ones could be done with other people?

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Choose one activity. Who could you invite to participate in it with you next time?

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## Places

Make a list of the types of places that you visit on a weekly basis.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Do you see some of the same people each week at these places? Could you connect with someone there?  
Could a friend join you in any of these places?

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## People

Make a list of friends who you've met or spoken with in the last couple of years.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Are there any friends who you've lost touch with? Who could you connect with again?

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## Activity 2—10 in 10

Connecting with your significant other, friend, or family member can provide important time for yourself and your relationships. Caregivers often put themselves last on the list of things to do, and the result can be tired, isolated caregivers. Giving yourself even 10 minutes of time with the people important to you can rejuvenate you and your relationships, keeping both strong and lively.

Use this activity to brainstorm 10 ideas that you can start or do in 10 minutes with the people important to you.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Here are some ideas to jump start your list:

- A quick phone call to catch up
- A coffee break in the backyard
- Starting/making dinner together
- Sending an e-mail update to reconnect with old friends
- Getting an ice cream cone
- Taking the dog for a walk

## Activity 3—Information about adults with autism spectrum disorders

Finding a respite caregiver or service is important to give primary caregivers time for themselves and also for the adult with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) to have additional support in his/her life. Every adult with ASD is unique. While some may need more vigilant supervision, others may live completely independently, without the support of a caregiver. In the former situation, it can be helpful to share information about the adult with ASD with respite caregivers to make the respite time as comfortable and routine as possible.

Complete this worksheet and share it with the respite caregivers that work with your adult with ASD. You may add other relevant information that is important to your adult with ASD too.

\_\_\_\_\_ (insert name):

- Enjoys these activities:

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- Helps with these chores:

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- Does not like these things:

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- Has routines for:

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- Is very good at:

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- Is challenged by:

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- Considers these things important:

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- Enjoys these foods:

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- Has these hobbies:

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- Communicates by:

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