Six benefits of friendship on mental health and well-being

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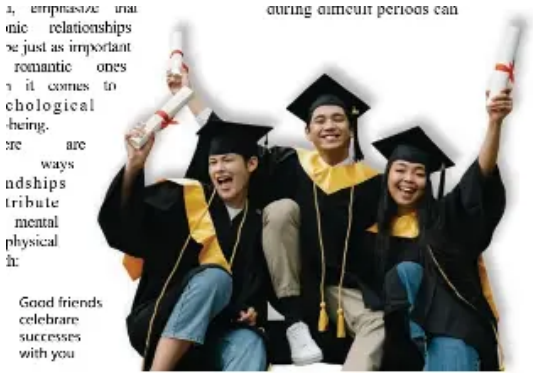
FRIENDSHIP plays a vital role in supporting mental health and overall well-being, according to experts from the Benilde Well-Being Center (BWC) of De La Salle–College of Saint Benilde.



Drawing from insights by Arlin Cuncic, MA, founder of About Social Anxiety, the group identified six key benefits of strong social connections.

“Good friends teach you about yourself and challenge you to be better,” said Cuncic, who has worked in various mental health and research settings, including the Center for Addiction and Mental Health. “They encourage you to keep going when times get tough and celebrate your successes with you.”

The insights, first published on mental health platform Verywell Mind, emphasize that platonic relationships can be just as important as romantic ones when it comes to psychological well-being.

Here are six ways friendships contribute to mental and physical health:

Improved physical health

Social isolation is linked to chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease, substance abuse, and some cancers. Strong social ties help reduce isolation and may lower the risk of these conditions.

Lower stress levels

Spending time with friends during difficult periods can reduce the production of cortisol, the hormone released by the body when under stress. Chronic stress has been shown to affect heart health, gut function, and the immune system.

Emotional support

Friends often serve as nonjudgmental listeners who provide comfort and validation. Regular check-ins can help individuals feel less alone and more connected.

Encouragement of healthy habits

Close friends can support behavior changes by helping set goals and offering motivation. This can lead to improvements in diet, sleep, and other aspects of health.

Con dence building

Being surrounded by a supportive group can significantly contribute to self-esteem and foster personal growth.

Community building

Introducing friends to each other can create a stronger sense of belonging and strengthen community ties.

“If you want to build a stronger support network, reach out to the people in your life,” Cuncic advised. “Friendship is a two-way street. Start by making the connection so you can keep fostering and strengthening your close friendships.”

Cuncic, also the author of The Anxiety Workbook, said quality matters more than quantity when it comes to meaningful relationships.