



Staying Connected Discussion Questions

November 2024

1. What advice would you give to someone else with chronic pain on maintaining friendships and connections?
2. What kind of support system do you have currently?
(for example: friends, family, neighbors and support groups)
3. What challenges do you face in maintaining relationships when living with chronic pain?
4. Have you found any online communities or support groups that help you feel more connected?
5. How do you respond to the comment "But you don't look sick"?
6. How do you handle feelings of isolation or loneliness that can come with chronic pain?
7. How do you balance social commitments with your need for rest or self-care?
8. What are your favorite chronic pain social media sites?
9. How do you express gratitude for those who support you?
10. What are ways you show yourself compassion when you are feeling self-critical?
11. How have you handled situations where you needed to cut a social event short due to pain?
12. What role does technology (like video calls or messaging) play in staying connected with others?
13. How have your relationships with friends and family changed since you started having chronic pain?
14. How do you initiate plans with friends when you're unsure of how you'll be feeling that day?
15. What new ways have you found to connect with others?
(ex. Online groups, apps, social media)

16. What advantages come from connecting with people who have the same medical condition as you?
17. How do you handle feelings of guilt for not being able to participate in social activities?
18. What ways have you found to expand your social network?
19. What are some things that help your communication with family/ friends?
(For example, picking a good time to talk or looking at the other person's perspective)
20. Have you tried journaling as a way to deal with feelings that are difficult to talk about?
21. What coping strategies have you developed to manage social anxiety related to your pain?
22. How do you communicate your needs to friends and family regarding your pain and limitations?
23. What do you tell people when you need to take breaks or cancel plans?
24. Have you ever written to a friend or family member about what you want or need?
25. Have you thought about seeing a counselor or therapist for your relationship problems?
What was the outcome?
26. What activities or strategies have helped you stay connected with loved ones despite your condition?
27. How can you encourage others to understand your condition and its impact on your social life?
28. What are some small gestures from friends that make you feel more supported and connected?
29. What routines have you developed to stay connected with others?
30. Are you willing to try new things? What new things have you tried recently?
31. What are some new ways that you have tried or learned to stay connected with others?
32. What are some effective ways to communicate your life with chronic pain in a social setting?
33. What qualities do you look for in a friendship?

34. What qualities do you bring to a friendship?
35. Fill in the blank. The hardest part about explaining my chronic pain/illness to others is...
36. If your pain has limited your ways of being with friends, family or your loved ones, have you found other ways of enjoying them?
37. Have some of your friendships/relationships deepened due to your chronic pain/illness? If so, explain.
38. If authenticity feels challenging, what are some small ways you can reveal more about your pain experience?
39. What has been the most effective way you've been able to ask for help? Are you able to accept help when offered?
40. What ways have you found to expand your social network?
41. What are the barriers you find to staying connected and who do you talk to about this?
42. What ways have you found to adapt to social activities and add them to your daily routine?
43. Where are all the places you have found you can share your lived experiences with people with chronic pain?
44. Are there new ways you have found to experience others while living with chronic pain?
45. What or who has helped you find your voice along this chronic pain journey? (To be an advocate for yourself)