

RQ Dimension — Socially Connected

About this Dimension

Socially connected is an individual's ability to create effective and meaningful relationships with others. Closely related to Interpersonal Competence, this resilience dimension involves the *quality* of a person's personal and professional network of relationships. Resilient people tend to have a strong relationship network within which they share ideas, problems, solutions, frustrations, hopes, and so forth. In the face of adversity and stress, resilient people call upon this network for support, affirmation, and problem solving.

The foundation of Socially Connectedness is Interpersonal Competence — so to maximize resilience, a person needs to first strengthen this related RQ dimension and, using that dimension, develop a network of meaningful relationships with others.

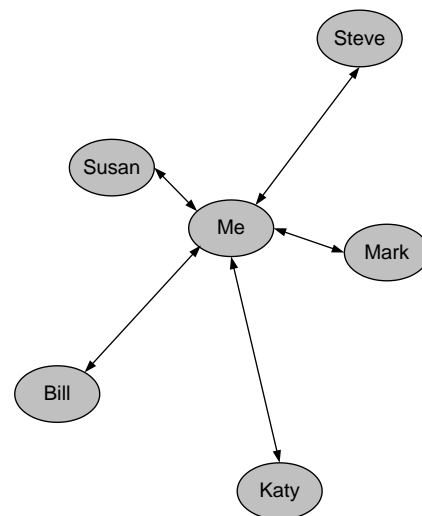
Being Socially Connected, however, does not mean that a person's social network must be large — only that this network is meaningful and supportive. One or two *close* friends with whom a person can share his or her anxieties, fears, stressors, opportunities, joys, and so forth is far better than having numerous but superficial (aka “skin deep”) relationships.

Strategies for Developing the Socially Connected Dimension

Strengthening a person's social connectedness involves strategies that guide the individual in reflecting upon the existence and depth of his or her social network. While a coach or workshop leader cannot help someone *develop* friendships, the coach or workshop facilitator can emphasize the value and role of social connections to help enhance a person's resilience.

- Take a blank piece of paper and make a list of people within your social network to whom you feel comfortable sharing thoughts, feelings, frustrations, and so forth. (a) Place your name at the center of the page and then identify others with whom you might feel comfortable talking about the challenges, frustration, and so forth that you are facing. (b) Write the names of these other individuals on the page — with those with whom you feel closest located closer to your name, with other names located at further distances from you and lines connecting each person to your name. See the example to the right.

(c) Write next to these people's names the nature of your relationship with each person and the areas of your life that you would feel most comfortable talking to this person about. Next, (d) reflect upon these relationships and the degree to which you are able



to utilize the benefits from these relationships as you face the challenges ahead. Finally, (e) identify some actions that you can take to either add new people to your social network or to strengthen the existing relationships. Note that social networks depend upon reciprocity, so be available, supportive, and encouraging to others in your network when they may need this from you.

- Identify one thing that you could do to strengthen your social networks with others at work or in your non-work life.
- Identify the single greatest obstacle that you see to successfully building a strong personal social network of people that you could go to when needed—and actions that you will take to reduce or eliminate this obstacle.
- If you are facing a significant challenge or crisis, develop a personal plan for connecting with others that involves first identifying (a) *what* aspects of the challenge you want to share with others and *why*, (b) what you need from others (e.g., a shoulder to lean on, help in understanding the challenge or the way out of or through the challenge, someone to problem solve with, and so forth), and then (c) strategize how best to approach others in your social network regarding this issue. Note: focus on problem solving and solutions vs. “venting” to others. Venting is a critical first step in the healing process—but it is only the first step. If you are to find your way toward identifying and realizing a healthy personal outcome from your challenge, then the venting must transition into exploring solutions and pathways toward a healthy result.