



5.3.2 Friends

Friends enriched the lives of the research participants. For example:

I've also got another friend... she's got children the same age as me. They go to the same school, we live round the corner from each other, so we're notorious for meeting up for lunch and having a glass of wine and having a good moan and talking about how we're progressing, or not!... she's doing a PhD, we got to meet at an induction... realised that we had these things in common, and ...it just developed from there... We send each other emails... we're supposed to be submitting our draft theses in March, so we're both under the same pressure ...and it is just nice to have somebody who understands, who is in the same position as you. (Elizabeth, social scientist, PhD researcher)

My housemate ...because he's a really easy-going good egg who's...[good to] hang out with at the weekend ...and also, the thing is, he isn't a scientist ...most of the people I know are scientists or were scientists, whereas he's not – he's a medic. So, yeah, he's really good to kind of get a break from being too sciency, too geeky, so ...that's good (TDB, scientist, PhD researcher)

Friendships deliver relational strengths that can supplement, or even surpass, those provided by family. Healthy friendships create a sense of belonging and connectedness, offer a source of enjoyment, present opportunities to rest from work or study, and provide support in times of need. The following resources may help you to cultivate, nurture and sustain a positive network of friends.

Useful resources

Mayo Clinic: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/friendships/art-20044860> Article on how friendships enrich your life and improve your health

Helpguide.org <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/relationships/how-to-make-friends.htm>: How to make good friends

Taking Charge of Your Health and Wellbeing (University of Minnesota)
<http://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/wellbeing/relationships>: Personal Relationships – tips on friendships and family ties, including nurturing your relationships and communication for healthy relationships

Succeed Socially <http://www.succeedsocially.com/sociallife>: How to make friends and improve your social life

15 reasons we need friends <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/fulfillment-any-age/201303/fifteen-reasons-we-need-friends>: 'Why and how friends can shape your life' by Susan Krauss Whitburn



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