



August

Connection isn't a courtesy — it's a health strategy.

August is Connection Month at Healthy By Choice — and we're making the case that reaching out to a teammate isn't just good manners. It's good medicine.

The research is clear: strong social connection lowers cortisol, strengthens immune response, and speeds recovery from illness and stress. Loneliness, on the other hand, carries health risks on par with smoking. In a workplace, that means a real check-in, a shared win, or an honest ask for help is doing more for your body than you might think.

This month, we're pairing that science with action — the August GoPivot Buddy Challenge, the "Better Together" Buddy Movement, and a workshop built to help you practice connection like the health habit it is.

In today's issue:

- **Pillar #3: Connection** — why relationships are a health strategy
- **The "Better Together" How Teamwork Protects Your Health** — what teamwork does for the body and brain
- **Words From An Expert** — The Science of Connection
- **Community News** — Buddy Movement & Events
- **August Challenge** — GoPivot Buddy Challenge (Aug 17–21)
- **Workshop Invitation** — Better Together (Aug 14)
- **Wellness Word Game** — Connection Word Search
- **Recipe of the Month** — Summer Sharing Board

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Better Together:

How Teamwork Protects Your Health

We tend to file "connection" under nice-to-have — something for after the real work is done. The science says otherwise.

Decades of research point to the same conclusion: the strength of our relationships is one of the most reliable predictors of how long and how well we live. A landmark Harvard study that followed participants for over 80 years found close relationships — more than money, fame, or genetics — kept people happier and healthier throughout their lives. Loneliness and social isolation, by contrast, have been linked to health risks comparable to smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day, according to research from Dr. Julianne Holt-Lunstad and colleagues.

The physical case for connection

Connection isn't just emotional — it's physiological. Supportive relationships have been shown to lower cortisol, the body's primary stress hormone. Chronically elevated cortisol wears down the immune system, disrupts sleep, and raises the risk of heart disease. People with strong social ties tend to show stronger immune response to illness and faster recovery after surgery or medical setbacks. Even something as simple as a supportive conversation before a stressful task can measurably reduce the body's stress response.

At work, this shows up in ordinary moments: a coworker who checks in without being asked, a team that celebrates a win together, a teammate who says "let me help with that" before you have to ask. None of it feels like healthcare. All of it functions like healthcare.

Why this matters especially now

Hybrid schedules, faster workloads, and heavier reliance on async communication have made it easier than ever to go a whole week without a real conversation.

That's not a personal failing — it's a structural one. Which is exactly why connection has to be practiced on purpose, not left to happen by accident.

What this looks like in practice

You don't need a grand gesture. The research on social connection consistently points to small, consistent contact — not intensity, but frequency. That could be:

- A two-minute check-in that isn't about a deliverable



- Asking for help instead of quietly struggling
- Acknowledging someone's win out loud
- Eating lunch with a colleague instead of at your desk
- A real "how are you" — and staying for the answer

The takeaway

Connection is a health behavior with a body of evidence behind it — the same way movement or sleep is. This month, we're asking you to treat it that way: not as a soft skill, but as a protective one. Every check-in counts.

The Science of Connection

Loneliness doesn't just feel bad — it behaves like a measurable health risk. In 2023, the U.S. Surgeon General issued a formal advisory naming loneliness and isolation a public health epidemic, placing it alongside tobacco use and obesity as a driver of preventable illness. The advisory ties weak social connection to higher rates of heart disease, dementia, depression, and early death — and notes that roughly half of U.S. adults were already experiencing loneliness



before the pandemic made things worse. That's the headline. The deeper finding is about what connection does for the body.

In 2010, researchers Julianne Holt-Lunstad, Timothy Smith, and Bradley Layton pooled data from 148 studies and more than 308,000 people, tracked for an average of seven and a half years. Their conclusion: people with stronger social relationships had 50% greater odds of survival than people with weaker ones. That effect held up no matter someone's age, sex, health status, or cause of death — and it got stronger

for people whose social ties were more integrated into daily life, not just present on paper.

Why would relationships move a number like survival odds?

Holt-Lunstad's team pointed to something simple: feeling responsible for other people gives life a sense of purpose, and that sense of purpose tends to translate into people taking better care of themselves. Connection isn't just a buffer against stress in the moment — it appears to change the way people show up for their own health over time.



And it's not just an "older adults" story.

The protective effect of relationships shows up across the lifespan — which means it applies just as much to someone two years into their career as it does to someone nearing retirement.

What this means for us

None of this requires overhauling how we work. It means treating the small stuff — checking in, asking for help, noticing when someone's gone quiet — as what it actually is: a health behavior with real evidence behind it. That's the whole premise behind this month's Buddy Movement and GoPivot Buddy Challenge.

Better Together
BUDDY MOVEMENT



Better Together: Buddy Movement

"Connection, on purpose."

For one week, you're not doing this alone. Every employee gets paired with a buddy — a teammate to check in with, lean on, and show up for. No agenda required, just genuine contact.

Pairing opens: August 17

Celebration: August 21

How it works:

- Get matched with a buddy (or choose your own) when pairing opens
- Each day, do one small thing to connect — a call instead of a text, coffee together, splitting a task, or just a real "how's it going"
- Close out the week by celebrating your buddy publicly — a shout-out, a photo, a thank-you — as part of our company-wide celebration on August 21

Incentive: Both buddies complete GoPivot Challenge — 500 GoPivot points (each)

PICK AN EVENT, BRING A BUDDY

"Connection works better off-screen."

GoPivot isn't just where you log points — it's also where you can find something to actually go do. Browse GoPivot Events, pick something that looks fun, and invite your buddy (or anyone on your team) to go with you.

It doesn't need to be big. A concert, a local game, a comedy show, a class — anything that gets two people in the same room, off their laptops, for a couple of hours. That's the whole ask.

How to join in:

- Visit gopivotevents.com and browse what's available
- Pick an event that works for you and a buddy
- Go together, then share a photo for extra credit toward the Buddy Movement celebration on August 21

Why it counts: Shared experiences are one of the fastest ways to build the kind of relationship that actually shows up in the connection research — this isn't just a nice extra, it's the challenge in action.

EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS



All Locations & Remote

All locations

- Better Together Workshop — 8/14
- Buddy Movement pairing — opens 8/17
- GoPivot Buddy Challenge — 8/17-8/21
- Buddy Movement celebration — 8/21

TEAM COACHING GROUPS



Pillar #3 Connection:

Join FRI Aug 14 - 1:15 PM Session

Better Together

Come as you are - no prep, no pressure, just an hour set aside to think about connection as something we can actually practice. Grab a coffee, pull up a chair, and bring a buddy if you've got one.

Focus Areas:

- What actually happens in the body when we feel supported — the physiology of connection
- Naming loneliness at work, without the stigma
- Small connection habits you can use in under two minutes
- How to carry the practice forward into September

Open to all employees — no registration required.



WELLNESS CHALLENGES

Mini-Challenge: GoPivot Buddy Challenge

Duration: August 17 - 21

Points Available: 250 points per day | 1,250 total

Take 2-3 minutes each day to anchor your mental clarity, sense of identity, and human presence in a world that's moving fast. Designed for all employees — no AI expertise required.

Daily Prompts

Day 1 — Meet your buddy | *Mon, 8/17*

Send one message that isn't about work.

Day 2 — Ask your buddy a real "how are you" | *Tue, 8/18*

Listen for the actual answer.

Day 3 — Offer or ask for help | *Wed, 8/19*

With something small.

Day 4 — Share a win | *Thu, 8/20*

Yours or theirs — out loud with your team.

Day 5 — Celebrate. | *Fri, 8/21*

Post a photo or shout-out for the company-wide close.

Tips & Resources (3-5 actionable tips)

1. Replace one text with a call. Voice carries tone text can't.
2. Start meetings with 60 seconds of real check-in before jumping into the agenda.
3. Say the thank-you out loud, not just in a Slack emoji.
4. Protect one lunch a week for a colleague, not your inbox.
5. Notice who's gone quiet — a check-in text can be the whole intervention.

SHARE YOUR WINS!



We want to celebrate YOU! Whether you've achieved a fitness goal, started a new healthy habit, or accomplished something personal, we'd love to hear about it. submit it [Here](#) or Email us at wellness@procarerx.com to have your story featured in our next newsletter.



A FEW NOTES TO REMEMBER

Participation in wellness activities, including fitness classes, coaching sessions, 5k and wellness walks, helps us continue to grow and improve our offerings.

You can find the PDF version of the Newsletter for printing at hbc.procarerx.com under resources or [Here](#)

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

We couldn't be more excited to celebrate our August anniversaries! Your special shout-out is [right here](#). Cheers to another fantastic year ahead!

CONNECTION

Y	N	E	X	C	X	Y	O	S	U	V	W	L	C	Z
N	I	R	C	M	N	G	T	N	U	G	P	I	K	J
E	K	K	R	N	S	O	E	I	S	P	P	P	E	Z
T	C	K	V	B	E	Y	I	B	N	I	P	R	B	T
S	E	D	U	U	Z	I	O	T	H	U	A	O	R	A
I	H	D	F	D	O	O	L	S	C	C	M	U	R	A
L	C	N	G	D	W	E	N	I	U	E	S	M	J	T
Y	K	F	I	Y	C	O	U	L	S	T	N	I	O	C
L	H	R	G	N	I	G	N	O	L	E	B	N	V	C
U	F	T	O	T	B	M	U	J	X	W	R	Y	O	H
N	U	C	A	W	W	D	A	G	P	C	E	S	H	C
Q	V	L	O	P	M	A	E	C	N	E	S	E	R	P
A	E	W	K	D	M	A	T	O	G	E	T	H	E	R
R	N	W	E	P	C	E	E	H	M	C	X	Z	D	D
K	L	J	E	M	Y	Y	E	T	U	V	E	C	Q	S

WORD BANK

- CONNECTION
 - SUPPORT
 - TOGETHER
 - COMMUNITY
 - BUDDY
 - TEAMWORK
 - EMPATHY
 - CHECKIN
 - LISTEN
 - CARE
 - TRUST
 - PRESENCE
 - BELONGING
 - RELATIONSHIP
 - RESILIENCE
-

Summer Sharing Board



A build-your-own spread of summer fruit, veggies, cheese, and dips — made for two (or a whole team) to share. This month's recipe is less about the food and more about the company: pull it out at your Buddy Movement check-in, your Better Together workshop, or just lunch with a coworker.

Ingredients: (Serves 4)

- 2 ripe peaches, sliced into wedges
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 lb small watermelon, cubed
- 1 English cucumber, sliced into rounds
- 8 oz fresh mozzarella or burrata, torn
- 4 oz sharp cheddar, cubed or sliced
- 6 fresh basil leaves, torn
- 1/4 cup honey, for drizzling
- 2 tbsp balsamic glaze
- 1 cup mixed nuts (almonds, pistachios)
- 8 oz whole-grain crackers or sliced baguette
- 1/2 tsp flaky sea salt
- 2 tbsp olive oil

Built to scale

Double it for a team gathering, or keep it small for a one-on-one Buddy Movement check-in. Swap in whatever's freshest at your local market; the format matters more than the exact produce. No-cook, so it travels well to a breakroom or outdoor lunch spot.

Instructions:

1. Prep the produce

Slice the peaches into wedges, halve the cherry tomatoes, cube the watermelon, and slice the cucumber into rounds. Pat everything dry so the board doesn't get watery.

2. Arrange the cheese

Place the mozzarella and cheddar in a couple of small clusters around the board, leaving room to build sections around them.

3. Build the fruit and veg sections

Arrange the peaches, tomatoes, watermelon, and cucumber in their own loose clusters or rows across the board, alternating colors so it looks full and inviting.

4. Add crunch and scoop-ables

Fill in gaps with the mixed nuts and stack the crackers or baguette along one edge for easy grabbing.

5. Finish it

Scatter basil over the cheese and fruit, drizzle honey and balsamic glaze over the mozzarella and peaches, finish everything with a drizzle of olive oil and a pinch of flaky sea salt.

6. Share it

Set it in the middle of the table, hand someone a plate first, and let the conversation do the rest.



Thank you for reading!