

My post:

I've been teaching my Social Connection and Disconnection class/module for 3 years now, and the content seems to resonate with many of my students. Just in the last week, I've had two students tell me that they're really interested in the topic and wondering about what jobs/career paths they could investigate.

? Can you help me crowd-source some suggestions? "Go work for one of the wonderful non-profits/third sector organizations doing fantastic work in this space" is one answer, but what else could I recommend to a student who wants their career to focus on making the world a more human, connected place?

Thanks for your help! 🙏

The responses had a few themes. I ordered within each theme by the name of the suggestor. (And check out the suggestors themselves, and what kind of work they do!)

1) You can bring a focus on social connection to any kind of job!

Connie Noonan Hadley: Organizational Psychologist, Thinkers50 Radar Thinker

My wish is for students to turn ANY job into a platform for building social connection at work. Sure, there are wonderful organizations already listed in the comments that specialize in this. To make our world better, however, we need people at every organization to prioritize positive work relationships.

In our [Harvard Business Review article](#), my co-author Sarah Wright and I give advice to senior leaders on how to do this. But really, much of this advice applies to anyone, wherever they sit in the hierarchy: (a) self-assess, (b) take advantage of the opportunities your org offers, (c) ask for more opportunities, and (d) reach out to someone who seems disconnected. I hope your students can make a difference wherever they end up!

Johanna Badcock: Psychological Scientist | Co-Founder & Board Chair, Global Initiative on Loneliness and Connection

Follow your passion in whatever area of work that appeals to you, then look for the opportunities to weave in changes to policy, practice and training to improve social connection.

Kiffer G. Card: Blanche and Charlie Beckerman Public Health Innovation Scholar & Michael Smith Health Research BC Scholar

We need people passionate about social connection in every sector and role — doesn't have to be your primary focus, but wherever you are you can advance social connection in your work, especially in roles such as a researcher, public health specialist, wellbeing policy analyst, urban planner for social spaces, community development officer, social prescribing coordinator, population wellbeing data analyst, program evaluation specialist, education or youth program designer, student wellbeing strategist, digital community designer, user experience researcher, behavioural scientist, workplace culture consultant, belonging and inclusion specialist, knowledge translation specialist, social issues journalist, science communicator, foundation program officer, social enterprise founder, international development evaluator, health promotion practitioner, community or Indigenous liaison, social cohesion think tank researcher, responsible technology or AI ethics specialist.

I've met people advancing social connection in almost all of these roles and more!

Pete Bombaci: Founder and CEO of GenWell - Canada's Human Connection Movement, a registered Canadian charity, making the world a happier and healthier place one face-to-face conversation at a time. Humanitarian, speaker, visionary.

One thing to remember.

As the world becomes more conscious of the role social connection plays in supporting people who are struggling or thriving, I hope those looking to enter this space recognize that human connection is part of every role, whether for-profit or not-for-profit. It matters from leadership all the way down to the intern who started last week.

I spent 20 years working in the for-profit world, and social connection was my superpower. I did not recognize it as such at the time (and most others didn't either), but in hindsight, the ability to bring people together and genuinely connect with them was likely the greatest contributor to my success and to my organization.

So whatever job your students end up in, and Kiffer G. Card's list is a beauty, it is worth remembering that social connection is the foundational element of happiness and

success in any role they choose to toil away at, and don't get too focused on a particular job as THE job for social connection.

2) Having said that, there may be some jobs where social connection is more obviously relevant/centered:

Emma-Louise Singh MCIOF(AdvDip): Co-Director, Fundraising Consultant at Nova Fundraising helping charities shine brightly through fundraising | Chair of Trustees for UFAW and HSA | ❤️'s Charities doing mighty work and all things fundraising

Definitely look into a career in Fundraising - [Chartered Institute of Fundraising](#) 😊

Helen Rimmer ACC: I make work better. Burnout, Kindness and Wellbeing coach, keynote speaker and trainer. I transform Leaders / aspiring leaders to create sustainable organisations through kindness and wellbeing. The Kind Librarian.

Librarianship - a lot of our work is community building and connection. Particularly in public libraries.

Matthew Kalman Mezey: Online Community Manager, Systems Convener

They could all find ways to get involved in the growing shift towards 'Relational Public Services'?

Here's one related website: <https://www.humanlearning.systems/>

Read books like Radical Help, Systems Convening etc.

Meg Moss: Public Affairs, Advocacy, Comms & Strategy with Expertise in Counselling & Psychotherapy | AI & Therapy | Climate & Mental Health | Children & Young People's Mental Health

I feel like most of my work touches on this in some way, so I'd say to consider counselling & psychotherapy. Also, service design - that's one place we need people who see the importance of being human and connected :)

Nicky McCrudden: Doctoral Researcher | Host of Heart & Graft - The Podcast | Trainer | Speaker. Excited about humanity in the workplace, L&D, Realism & chocolate.

It is 'a wonderful third sector project', but I worked on an amazing project in my youth for the RNIB, helping visually impaired adults get into sport and leisure activities (a great way to create social connections). So, perhaps something in the sport and leisure sector.

Another option is where I started in the NHS - Health Improvement / Public Health. Alongside all the 'quit smoking and be more active', public health and health improvement will/should have a combat loneliness agenda because of its connection to poor health outcomes.

Paige Leggett: PhD Student at University of Essex

Definitely look into the public sector! My old job with a council did great work with Healthy Hubs (they looked at health inequalities but was their delivery was very community focused). I believe there are similar places around the country and typically have the role name I've detailed below. Jobs I've seen that might be applicable are community health and wellbeing worker, charity community engagement officer to name a few, they tend to be roles that focus on that connection element!

There's also: social prescribing and care assistants if you want that healthcare angle.

Paula Toledo: Award-winning Science of Well-being Consultant, Vancouver Art Gallery/Art of Wellbeing Lab | Social Prescribing Architect + PHS Workplace Advisor |

For those who want to go on to do post grad studies, the [Master of Applied Positive Psychology](#) at University of Pennsylvania was an amazing degree in learning the science of well-being, a lot of experiential learning where we did service learning projects with non-for-profits.

We were connected to a rich alumni community all over the world and faculty who supported us in our final capstone.

My area of focus was building well-being pathways for art-based museum social prescriptions using awe and wonder to buffer loneliness and enhance well-being. After having received an art and movement prescription during a vulnerable time in my life, I wanted to study and research social prescribing and social connection.

My capstone eventually ended up in the hands of the co-CEO, Sirish Rao at the Vancouver Art Gallery who envisioned an Art of Well-being Lab where the VAG could

work with doctors and healthcare providers to issue art prescriptions. He engaged me as their lead well-being consultant and as a social prescribing architect, I am mapping out the ecosystem of partners to build that well-being pathway and co-designing the art prescription experiences.

I am also seeing growth areas in teaching artists as well community connectors.

Sarah Brin: Exec Producer & Advisor for Creative Tech & Immersive Experiences | Clients & Partners include LEGO, Meow Wolf, PlayStation, SFMOMA & more | Expert, Skeptic, Occasional Optimist

[All Tech Is Human](#) is a great place to start, and I think generally the fields of interaction design/UX and game design can be great ways to do this work!

Or for a different idea:

Christian Langkamp: Implementation of Risk and Accounting of ETRM system - all posts on LinkedIn are private opinions - privately working to connecting people to reduce loneliness

Being very cynical - get a well paying job for bills and economic skills for 4 days a week and do a max impact volunteer unpaid job for 2 days a week - but on the long run it might be more sustainable than jumping from public grant to grant

3) There are organizations that you might want to check out:

Dr. Marisa G. Franco: Speaker on making friends & improving belonging for employees | NY TIMES Bestselling author of Platonic, on the science of making friends

[Foundation for Social Connection](#) is really great!

Thuy-vy Nguyen: Founder & Principal Investigator of Solitude Lab

[Annecy Behavioral Science Lab](#) !

And check out some of the organizations that the suggestors are part of (that weren't specifically mentioned in suggestions):

- [GenWell](#)
- [Global Initiative on Loneliness and Connection](#)

4) And there are things that you can do right now!

Hannah Withey: Marketing & Engagement Manager at Brighton Chamber. Helping businesses in Brighton to meet, learn and grow ✨

I am sure you have come across them but volunteering with the fab [Together Co](#) 😊 I've been a befriending volunteer for a few years and they match you up with someone who shares your interests - you can do in person or over the phone. I do an hour every other week on my lunch break, so it's super flexible!

Louise Thompson: Founder/CEO, Myfolks & Co-Founder of Thrombowatch. NHS CEP Patient Entrepreneur. Social Health. Wellness. Healthspan. Ageing well in place. Marmot. Commercial Director, Capita AIPO. AI for insights.

[Myfolks](#) !! With an enhanced DBS check, they can start in Uni in Sussex and other areas 'around the edges' of the UK.

Paige Leggett: PhD Student at University of Essex

A good stepping stone whilst still studying would be being a “befriender” that’s usually attached to a charity/hospice/carehome, they used to have a sign in my local supermarket asking for volunteers (they would state their interests and ask for a companion to spend an hour or two with them 😞).

5) Start by focusing on your connection to yourself and understanding what kind of career fits with your values

Lilith A. Whiley: Associate Professor in Occupational and Organisational Psychology at University of Sussex Business School

Anna Baumert’s work on moral courage could be helpful. Realising and exercising one’s own moral courage and (also prosocial motivation) could facilitate choosing values-based careers that make the world a more human, connected place. It’s not a suggestion in terms of occupation, more of a theoretical/conceptual framing.

Meral Alizada: Originator of Kindness-As-Infrastructure | Keynote Speaker | Civilisational Systems Architect | Thought Leader | Founder of Results of Kindness

Self-knowledge and inner work is key to unravelling the blocks from within that can block connection to the self and therefore connection with others. Investing in myself emotionally has enabled me to connect deeply and openly with others. Today, most places I walk into or around, I find myself in conversation. Because I've made myself available to it. This is so critical and key.