

## **Food for Thought (1)**

**When analysing factors that lead to "social distance", the importance of various "resources" becomes clear. For example, social resources take on an important role in our daily lives. Social resources can be divided into different dimensions. Social participation, social networks and social support are important for people's health. Social participation describes a person's involvement in a community, for example his or her social integration. It also includes the co-creation of this community and thus enables participation.**

**Community is understood as a network of social relationships. It includes family, friendships, neighbourhood, school, but also life in cities or villages and society as a whole: social participation takes place in everyday life and in the concrete living environment. It is a prerequisite for the emergence of social networks: Social networks describe the structure and characteristics of relationships between people. The number, type and quality of relationships are important characteristics of a social network.**

**Social support is understood as a function of the social network, namely the mediation of help between the members of the network. As early as the 1940s, the American psychologist A. Maslow conducted research in the area of social resources and outlined needs in this area. Current studies take up this approach and show that people with a high level of social participation, for example, have a better state of health.**

**Unfortunately, not all people have equal access to these resources. Differences occur in age, origin or even place of residence, among other factors. One of the consequences of this unequal accessibility is social distancing, which is becoming increasingly prevalent in urban areas. In the context of pandemic-related measures, which also led to the phenomenon of distancing, psychological stress among those affected increased drastically, among other things.**

**Modern health promotion picks up on these data and increasingly focuses on the goal of strengthening the social participation of as many people as possible. Therefore, an analysis of these social structures at the different locations seems to make sense.**

**The availability of social resources should be checked. In addition, the partners involved should research examples of social social arrangements (youth centers, senior cafes, certain cultural activities, etc.) and document them in an appropriate manner. This should initiate a process of noticing and grasping these social resources in the participating institutions.**

**Social distance leads to increasing loneliness. This applies to both young and older people. In addition to origin and age, the place of residence also determines to a large extent whether one can participate in social resources to a greater or lesser extent. In urban areas, weak ties are the predominant social resource to a much greater extent than in rural areas, for example.**

**People who are well connected, who are involved in a system of give and take, expect and experience to be helped in a difficult situation. They have demonstrably better health prospects, live longer, feel healthier, lead happier lives that are more meaningful to them, and suffer significantly less often from depression. Conversely, however, this also means that people who are poorly connected, who suffer from feelings of loneliness, who expect and receive little help, have significantly lower chances of good health and a high quality of life. Loneliness makes people mentally and physically ill in the long term.**