



Commit to Connect Office Hours: Resource Recap

Topic: Advancing Social Connection as a Public Health Priority

Brief Overview:

Commit to Connect hosted an Office Hours session on March 19, 2024 on the topic of "Advancing Social Connection as a Public Health Priority." Office Hours provide a virtual forum for anyone interested in improving social connection. During the sessions, participants network, share ideas, and exchange resources. Kina White (Director, Office of Community Health Improvement, Mississippi Department of Health) and Diana Parra Perez (Assistant Professor, Washington University in St. Louis), who implemented the Building Resilient Inclusive Communities (BRIC) program, shared examples of strategies employed in their communities to reduce social isolation and loneliness. Katie Clark, with the Administration for Community Living, and Mara Galic and Joann Donnelly, from the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD), facilitated the discussion on advancing social connection as a public health priority.

This document provides a list of resources that were shared during this Office Hours call.

BRIC/NACDD Resources:

- The [BRIC page](#) on the NACDD website contains information about the BRIC program, including a map of the 20 state health departments involved, and information on how the states addressed social connectedness through these efforts.
- The [Center for Advancing Healthy Communities webpage](#) also contains information on work NACDD is doing related to social connection such as its Walkability Action Institute, Worksite Wellness efforts, and Healthy Military Communities initiative.

Resources Shared from the Mississippi and Missouri BRIC Programs:

- The Mississippi BRIC program partnered with researchers at Brown University School of Public Health to develop a [training video](#) to provide individuals who may regularly interact with homebound older adults (e.g. home-delivered meals drivers, community health workers, and transportation vendors) with information and tools to improve the lives of the people they serve by reducing social isolation.

- The Missouri and Mississippi BRIC programs reported developing partnerships with other sectors in the community as essential for bolstering their social connection efforts.
- NACDD shared information on the [collective impact framework](#) with BRIC grantees. Collective impact offers a framework to spur coalition building, consider power imbalances, and ensure all voices are heard. Additional information on the collective impact framework and the considerations of using such a model can be found [here](#).
- The [8 to 80 Cities initiative](#) offers an example of a program that builds and promotes communities that are accessible to people of all ages and abilities.
- The BRIC program speakers also shared the public health department's communication office is a good initial contact when looking to establish an initial partnership with a local public health department.

Additional Commit to Connect Resources:

- Join the [Nationwide Network of Champions](#) and connect with peers across the country interested in addressing social isolation and loneliness. This free virtual platform hosts an open forum where leaders can engage in discussions, share resources, and find events related to social connection.