



National Summit to Increase Social Connections

Welcome to Day 2!

Summit Housekeeping

Recording and Slides

- The recording and slides from both days of the Summit will be shared following the event on our website:
www.committtoconnect.org

Q&A

- You can submit questions for the speakers at any time. On the Zoom module on the bottom of your screen, click the Q&A icon, type your question in the box and submit.

Chat

- Engage in the chat to connect with other attendees and conveners.



Accessibility and Support

ASL/CART Services

- ASL/CART services will be provided for this event. A video stream of an ASL interpreter will be pinned on the screen so all attendees can view the interpreter.
- To access CART live transcription of the event, click on the CC Live Transcript button in the control bar at the bottom of the Zoom window.

Technical Assistance

- To get our attention if you need tech assistance: Raise or Lower Hand: Alt + Y

Screen Reader Users: Reduce unwanted chatter

- Request speech on demand: Insert, Spacebar, “S”



Outreach and Partnerships

- Moderator: Risa Wilkerson, Executive Director, Healthy Places by Design
- Natalia Ospina, Senior Program Manager, National Recreation and Parks Association
- Melissa Harris, Director of Government Affairs, American Association of Service Coordinators



Supporting Healthy Aging Through Parks and Recreation

Strategies to Promote Healthy Aging and Social Connection



NATIONAL
RECREATION AND PARK
ASSOCIATION



Natalia Ospina

(she/her)

Senior Program Manager

National Recreation and Park Association

nospina@nrpa.org



ABOUT NRPA



The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) is the leading not-for-profit organization dedicated to building strong, vibrant and resilient communities through the power of parks and recreation. With more than 60,000 members, NRPA advances this mission by investing in and championing the work of park and recreation professionals and advocates — the catalysts for positive change in service of equity, climate-readiness, and overall health and well-being. For more information, visit www.nrpa.org. For digital access to NRPA's flagship publication, *Parks & Recreation*, visit parksandrecreation.org.



Parks and Recreation is Vital to Community Health and Well-Being



Park and recreation professionals are uniquely suited to serve as stewards of **Community Wellness Hubs** – trusted gathering places that connect every member of the community to essential programs, services and spaces that improve health outcomes and enhance quality of life.



Specific to Older Adult Programming...

- **92%** of agencies offer facilities, activities, and programming dedicated to older adults.
- **95%** of agencies say that promoting social connection and addressing social isolation are top of benefits of older adult programming.
- **71%** of agencies report satisfaction with attendance at older adult programs during the past year.



NRPA Healthy Aging OBJECTIVES FOR FY25-FY29

Goal 1: By 2029, provide direct support up to 150 park and recreation agencies to implement welcoming and innovative programs and practices that enhance quality of life for older adults and people with chronic conditions.

Goal 2: By 2029, provide tools, resources, and training to address social isolation and foster social and intergenerational connectedness through park and recreation programming and spaces, increasing the number of agencies providing intergenerational programming by 10% (currently 30%).

Goal 3: By 2029, support park and recreation agencies to center the well-being of older adult initiatives by increasing the number of agencies implementing key well-being strategies by 10%.



The Seven Pathways for Supporting Older Adults Through Parks and Recreation

- Centering community voices and access
- Engagement of Key Stakeholders
- Partnership Building
- Co-Location of Services and Spaces
- Empowerment and Reciprocity
- Key Messaging and Mindsets
- Diversity of Programs

Partnering with Your Local P&R Agency

Tips to Consider



Attend P&R Events

Attend community events or meetings that P&R voices lead. Invite P&R to attend your events as well!



Tour P&R Facilities

Schedule a tour with your local P&R agency to learn more about their sites, facilities, and operations. Invite P&R to learn more about your organization too!



Welcome P&R Voices

Invite P&R voices to join advisory boards, task forces, or committees. Inquire about joining P&R advisory boards.



Explore Similar Goals

Explore like-minded goals or outcomes to identify areas of collaboration.

THANK YOU

FEDERALLY SUBSIDIZED HOUSING AS A PLATFORM FOR SERVICES AND SUPPORTS



HUD and USDA are the primary providers of housing assistance to low- and very-low-income Americans.



Assistance can be provided through vouchers or through place-based subsidies to affordable housing providers.



More than half of HUD Public Housing units are headed by an older adult and HUD has a flagship program for individuals aged 62+.



Many Section 202 affordable housing sites have service coordinators to assist residents to meet their basic needs, including social connection.

SERVICE COORDINATORS IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- Connect residents to services and resources to assist them with aging well in their communities
- 5,000+ HUD Section 202/Multifamily properties for older adults with service coordinators
- 500 Public Housing sites serving families with self sufficiency service coordinators
- Find Properties in Your Community
<https://resources.hud.gov/>



OLDER ADULTS IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

75 years old

Lives alone

Average monthly
income of \$1,000

4 chronic health conditions



HOW SERVICE COORDINATORS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Identifying	Identifying services for which residents are eligible
Educating	Educating residents about available services and support application/recertification
Advocating	Advocating for age-friendly communities and resources
Organizing	Organizing property-wide programming aimed at resident meeting needs, including social connection

Collaboration With Health Care Through Community Care Hubs

- Moderator: Will Bleser, Whole Person Health Lead, ACL
- Nikki Kmicinski, Chief Executive Officer, Western New York Integrated Care Collaborative, Inc.
- Leigh Ann Eagle, Director of the Health and Wellness Programs, MAC, Inc.



WNY Integrated Care

Collaboration With Health Care Through Community Care Hubs



Nikki Kmicinski, CEO



WNY
Integrated Care
COLLABORATIVE

Better Health with Integrated Care.

Community Care Hub

Award-winning Business Model

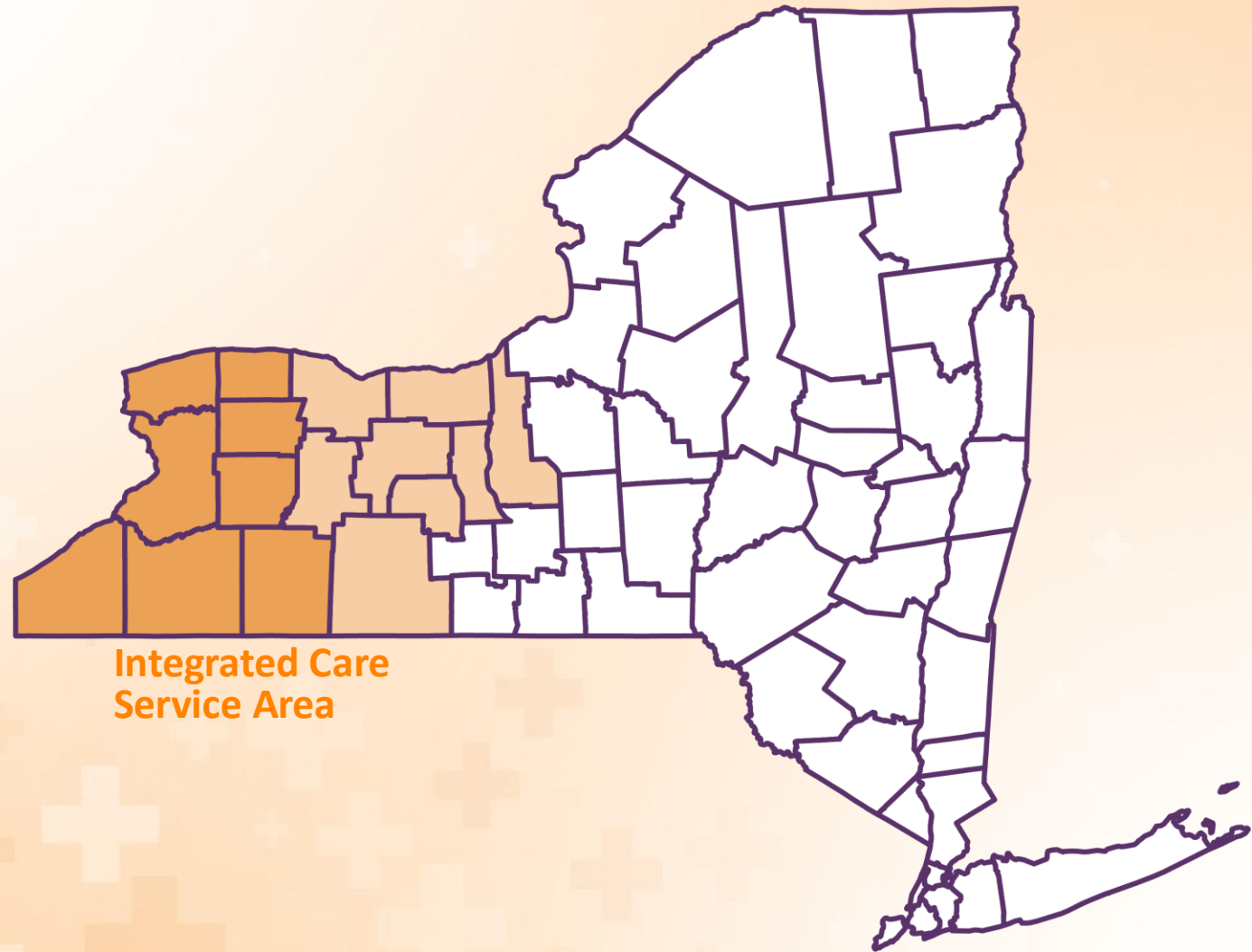


- Better Quality of Life
- Improved Outcomes
- Reduced Healthcare Costs

Integrated Care

165+ Network Members

- **County-based AAAs**
(Area Agencies on Aging)
- **Independent Living Centers**
- **County-based Health, Social Service, and Mental Health Departments**
- **100+ Non-profit CBOs**
(Community-based Organizations)
- **Allied Partners:** including healthcare providers, behavior health and health plans.





Leigh Ann Eagle

MAC-Inc Living Well Center of Excellence
Chief Operating Officer

MAC, Inc – Who We Are

- Area Agency on Aging (AAA) headquartered in Salisbury MD. Four rural counties comprise jurisdiction
- Nonprofit 501(c)(3) established in 1973.
- Core services offered under the Older Americans Act: Elder Rights, Caregivers, Nutrition, Health & Wellness, and Supportive Services.
- Aging and Disability Resource Center – Maryland Access Point (MAP) - a one-stop source of information and assistance helps navigate long-term care services and connects with local and state programs.
- Senior Day Program, Fitness Gym, co-located Assistive Technology, Village model, Ombudsman, RSVP, Senior Centers.
- Over 30 program, approximately 11,000 seniors served, 27,734 congregate meals, 177,526 home delivered meals.

Living Well Center of Excellence

- Community Care Hub – statewide-Established 2015.
- Care Transitions Program – Referrals to hospital systems.
- Evidence-based programs: Falls Prevention, Caregiver Supports, Medication Management, Depression (PEARLS), Chronic Conditions (General, Diabetes, Pain), Arthritis management.
- Virtual Hub – workshops, fidelity, workforce management and training.
- Diversified projects include, State Alzheimer's Research Support (StARS) Program, Vaccine grant, Falls Prevention Innovation Lab, Falls Coalition, Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program. Co-Developed social isolation tool USIRS (Upstream Social Interaction Risk Scale), CODI (Childhood Obesity Data Initiative) Project with ACL.

Community Care Hub

Contract with health care organizations

- Coordinated access to and delivery of social care programs
- Care Transitions
- Evidence-based Programs
- Behavioral health
- OAA (Older Americans Act) services and more

Provides

- Leadership and governance
- Strategic business development and contracting
- Payment operations
- Management of bi-directional, closed-loop referrals
- Fidelity and quality oversight
- Technology and information security
- Data Collection and Reporting

Benefits

- System efficiency
- Expand community-based organization capacity
- Address health related social needs
- Engage communities
- Create financial opportunities



Examples of Impact

Program/Service	Outcome
Vaccine Grant	Over 110,000 seniors vaccinated
Chronic Disease Self-Management (12 months)	Return on Investment \$208,391
Stepping On Falls Prevention (12 months)	Return on Investment \$356,477
Overall Served	



thank you

LEIGH ANN EAGLE

410-742-0505

laeagle@macinc.org

macinc.org-Mac Inc.

mdlivingwell.org-Maryland Living
Well Website





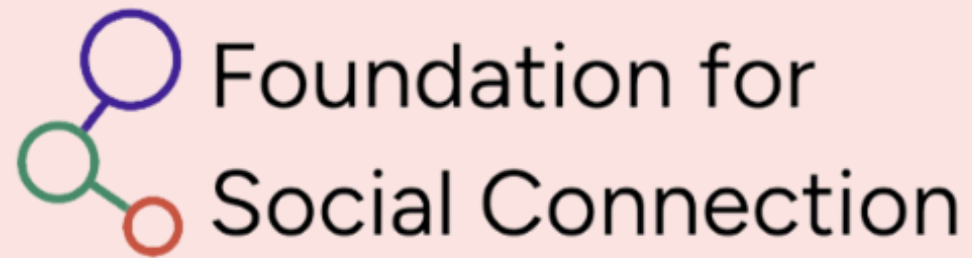
National Summit to Increase Social Connections

Please enjoy a brief break.

Lessons From Building Statewide Coalitions

- Moderator: Jillian Racoosin, Foundation for Social Connection
- Jill Renken, Wisconsin Coalition for Social Connection
- Sandra Harris, Massachusetts Coalition to Build Community and End Loneliness
- Megan Byers, South Carolina Operation to Confront Social Isolation and Loneliness



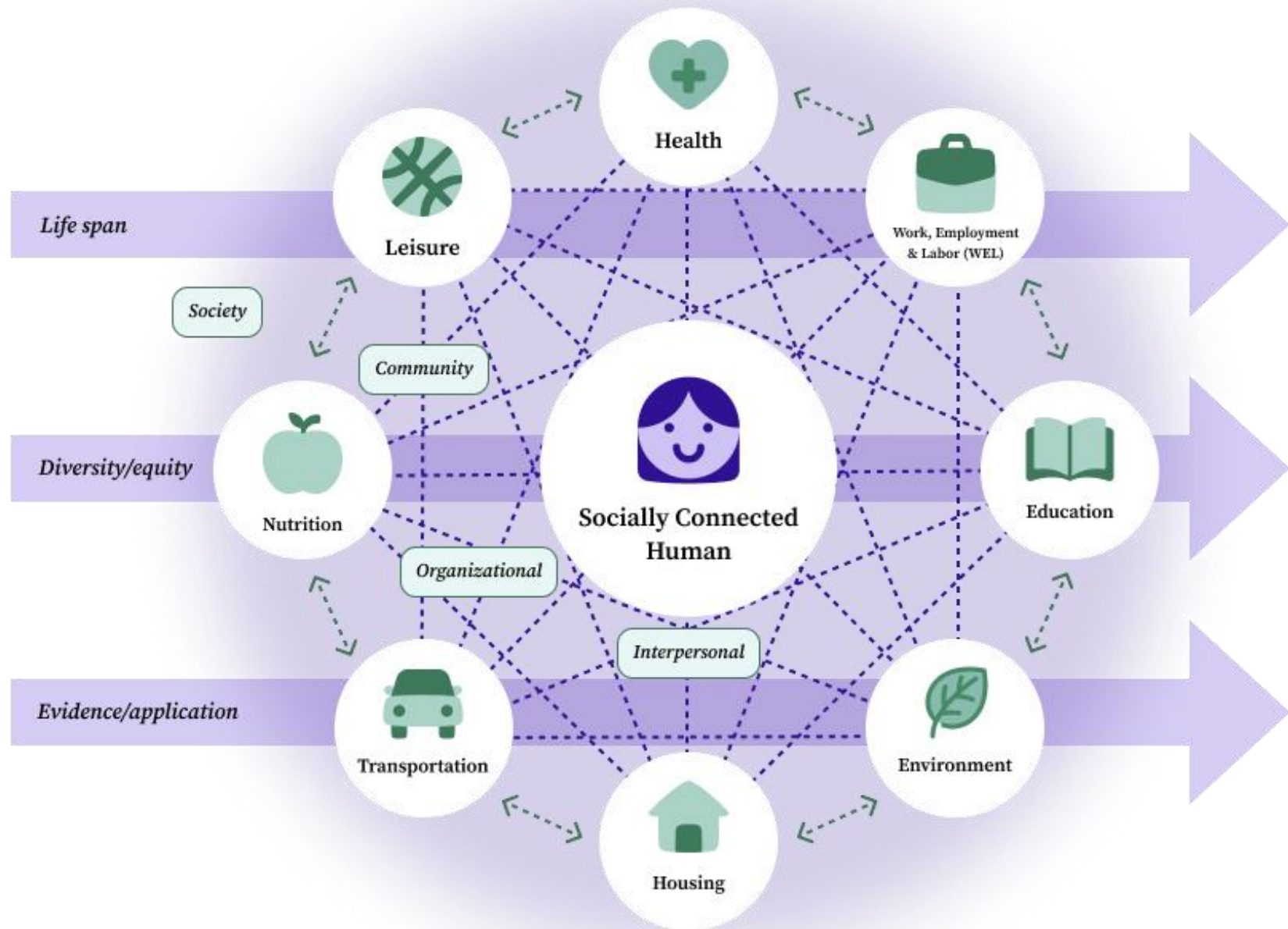


Mission: Advance social connection nation-wide rooted in evidence for our collective well-being.

Vision: A vibrant society where social connection is at the heart of how we live.

SOCIAL Framework

Systems
Of
Cross-Sector
Integration and
Action across the
Lifespan



Action Guide for Building Socially Connected Communities

Step 1

Reflect

Step 2

Review

Step 3

Collaborate

Step 4

Plan

Step 5

Evaluate

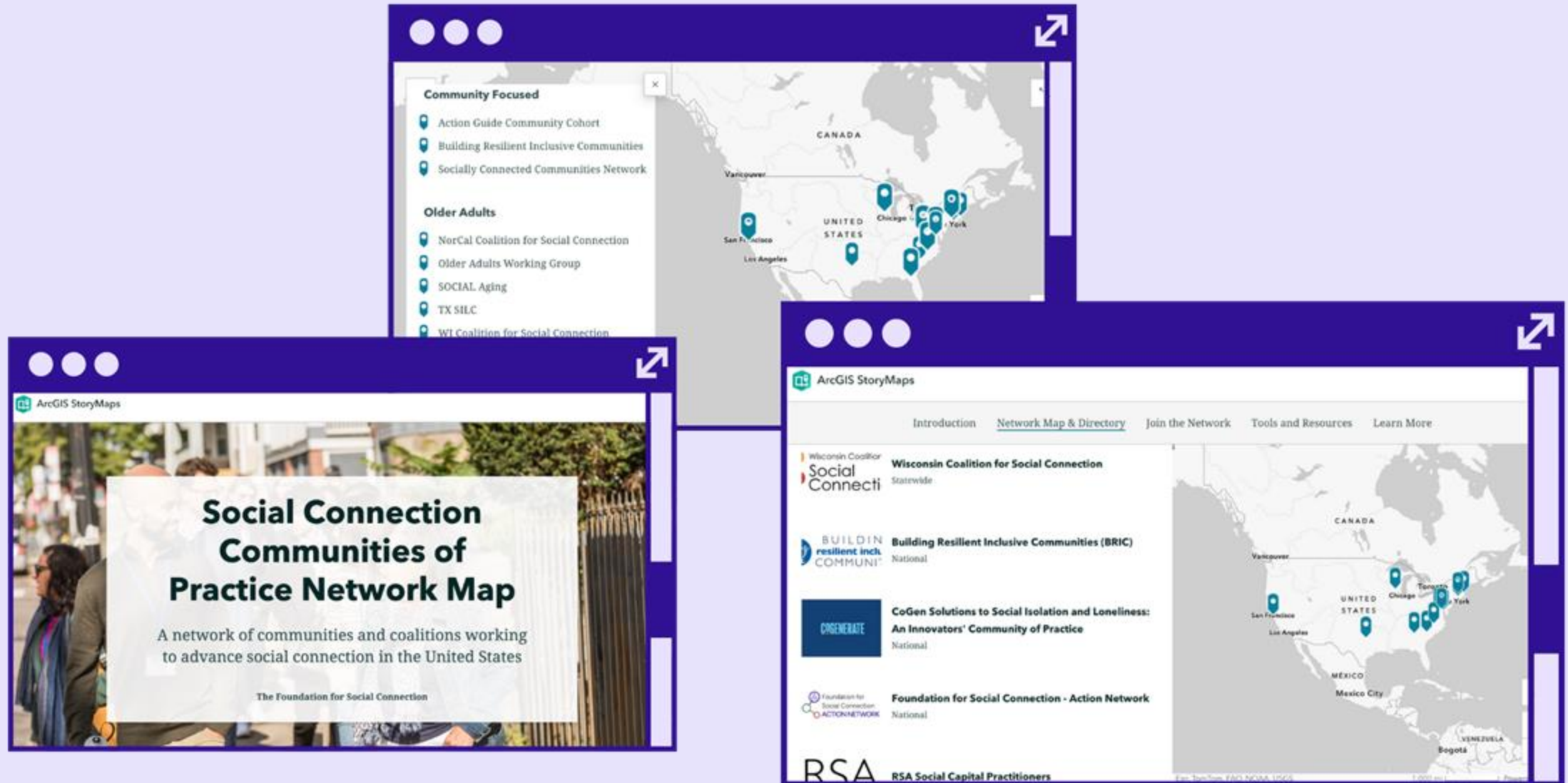
Step 6

Share

Adjust &
Grow



Social Connection Communities of Practice Network Map





SOCIAL CONNECTION CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 28-30

SEEDS OF CONNECTION

OCTOBER 28-30 | ATLANTA, GEORGIA

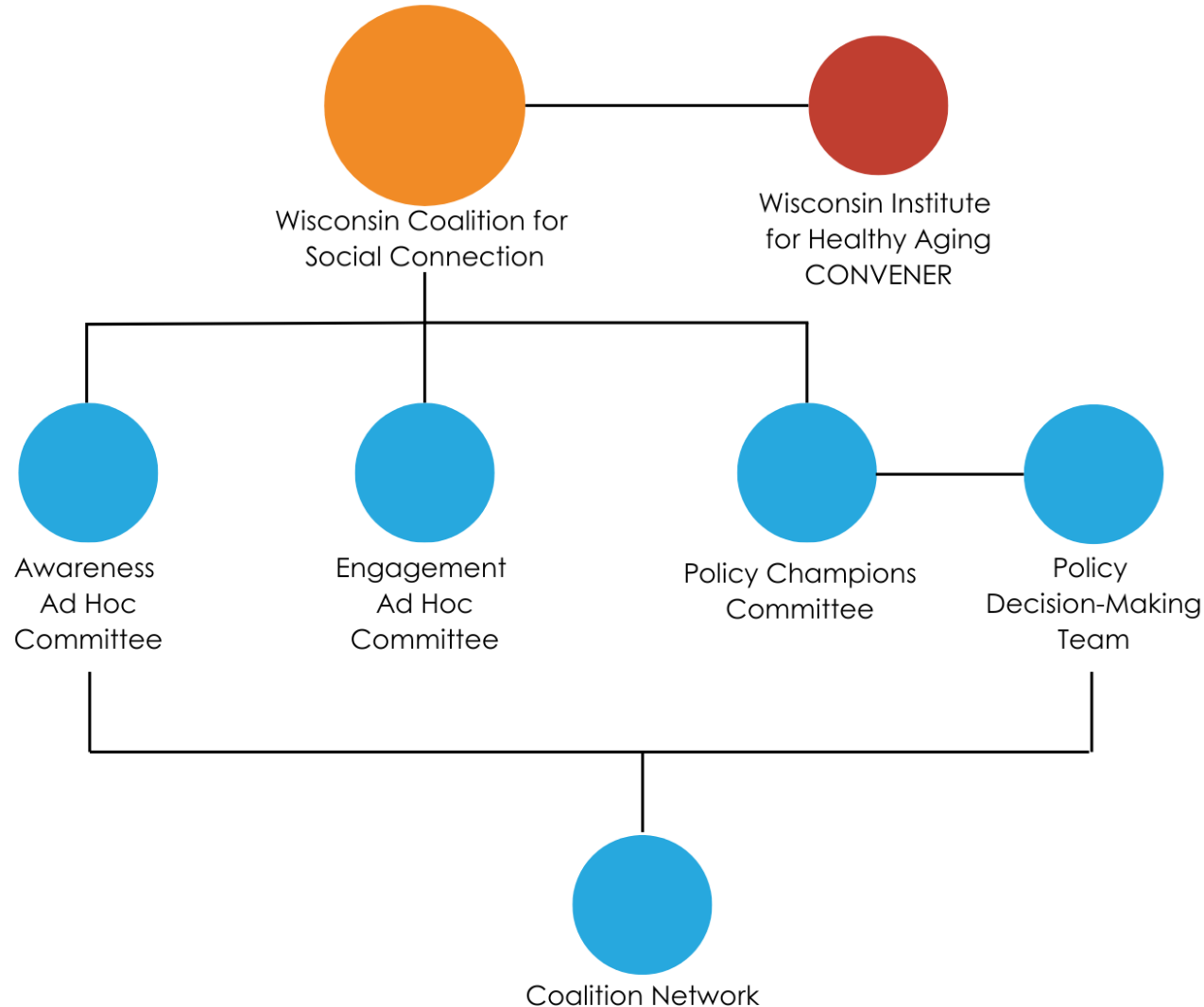
 Foundation for
Social Connection

 **HEALTHY
PLACES
BY DESIGN**

Join Us!



Wisconsin Coalition for Social Connection



Mission: Engage diverse partners in reimagining how we can combat the root causes and adverse consequences of social isolation and loneliness among older adults and people with disabilities in our state.



connectwi.org



The Massachusetts Coalition to Build Community & End Loneliness



**From Loneliness to Belonging:
Massachusetts' Journey To
Social Health**

**National Summit to Increase
Social Connection
September 10, 2025**

Sandra B. Harris
Co-founder & Co-leader

From many paths one destination: belonging.



The Massachusetts Coalition to Build Community & End Loneliness

Our Mission

A statewide coalition dedicated to ensuring that all residents of the Commonwealth feel connected to their community and enjoy a strong sense of social health.



360 individuals representing 201 statewide organizations

Our Foundation



- ❖ **Promote social health.**
- ❖ **Activate communities from the ground up.**
- ❖ **Build state-wide, cross-sector partnership.**
- ❖ **Foster intergenerational connections.**
- ❖ **Promote a culture of connection, kindness & belonging.**



Our Leaders



Sandra Harris
Co-Founder & Co-Leader
Former AARP Massachusetts
State President



Jennifer Raymond
Co-Leader
Chief Strategy Officer,
AgeSpan



Jean Bushnell
Co-Leader
Former Billerica COA
Director



300 members, representing 300+ state-wide organizations

Massachusetts Councils on Aging

State-wide non-profits/community organizations

State and local governments

Researchers

Academic institutions/ Students

Healthcare professionals

Libraries

YMCAs

Residents



Our Priorities

- ❖ **Raise Public Awareness**
- ❖ **Strengthen Social Infrastructures and Environments**
- ❖ **Promote Connection in all Policies**
- ❖ **Cultivate a Culture of Kindness and Connection**
- ❖ **Mobilize the Healthcare Sector**



Learn More

***Massachusetts Journey to
Social Health***

www.endlonelinessma.com

**Sandra B Harris
Sandra@endlonelinessma.com**



Massachusetts Coalition to Build Community and End Loneliness

*”If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”
-African Proverb*

Massachusetts - going far, together!

THANK YOU



Call to Action and Commit to Connect Resources

- Katie Clark Wheeler, Program Analyst, ACL





Commit to Connect

COMBATting SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS IN ALL COMMUNITIES





Commit to Connect

www.committoconnect.org/resources

- Technical Assistance and Training
- Events
- Communities of Practices on outcome evaluation
- “Innovations Hub” to encourage replication
- Engage an online Nationwide Network of Champions



Professional Resources

www.committoconnect.org/resources

TOPICAL GUIDE

Intergenerational Engagement

COMMITTO Connect

Introduction to Social Isolation and Loneliness

Social isolation and loneliness are increasingly recognized as critical and growing public health issues impacting the lives of millions of Americans. While social isolation and loneliness are related, they are different. Loneliness is defined as a subjective feeling of being alone or separated while social isolation is the lack of social contacts and having few people to interact with regularly.¹

In a May 2023 Surgeon General Advisory, United States Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy warned about the public health crisis that loneliness, isolation, and disconnection pose to the American public. Prevalence of social isolation and loneliness in the U.S. now surpasses smoking (13 percent), diabetes (15 percent), and obesity (42 percent).^{2,3,4} These are significant issues for older adults and people with disabilities. Although individuals of all ages and backgrounds can be lonely and isolated, groups at higher risk include people with poor physical or mental health, people with disabilities, those experiencing financial insecurity, those who live alone, as well as single parents, older adults, and adolescents.⁵



Social engagement improves quality of life and people with strong connections experience better physical and mental health outcomes.⁶ In addition, when people are socially engaged in their communities, they provide important contributions to their communities through sharing their knowledge, talent, skills, experience, and wisdom with others.

Intergenerational Programming for Social Engagement

Intergenerational relationships between young and older people have the potential to promote social connection. Generations United (www.gu.org), a leading national organization on intergenerational strategies in the U.S., and a partner of Committo Connect, defines intergenerational programs as ones that "unite generations in ways that enrich participants' lives and help address vital social and community issues while building on the positive resources that young and old have to offer each other and to their communities."⁷ To be intergenerational, programs need to "bring people of different generations together for ongoing, mutually beneficial, planned activities that are designed to achieve specified program goals [to] promote greater understanding and respect between generations."⁸ Successful intergenerational programs center on "reciprocity, sustainability, intentionality, training, support, and viewing younger and older people as assets."⁹

Through either regular programming or informal encounters, intergenerational programs are an opportunity for individuals of varying ages to interact, gain social connection, and contribute to their communities.

Intergenerational Engagement Program Examples

Committo Connect convened a community of practice focused on intergenerational engagement aimed

Visit www.committoconnect.org for more on how to stay connected.



TOPICAL GUIDE

Rural Communities and Building Social Connection for Older Adults and People with Disabilities

COMMITTO Connect

Introduction to Social Isolation and Loneliness

Social isolation and loneliness are increasingly recognized as critical and growing public health issues impacting the lives of millions of Americans. While social isolation and loneliness are related, they are different. Loneliness is defined as a subjective feeling of being alone or separated while social isolation is the lack of social contacts and having few people to interact with regularly.¹

In a May 2023 Surgeon General Advisory, United States Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy warned about the public health crisis that loneliness, isolation, and disconnection pose to the American public. Prevalence of loneliness and social isolation in the U.S. now surpasses smoking (13 percent), diabetes (15 percent), and obesity (42 percent).^{2,3,4} These are significant issues for older adults and people with disabilities. Although individuals of all ages and backgrounds can be lonely and isolated, groups at higher risk include people with poor physical or mental health, people with disabilities, those experiencing financial insecurity, those who live alone, as well as single parents, older adults, and adolescents.⁵

Social engagement improves quality of life, and people with strong connections experience better physical and mental health outcomes.⁶ In addition, when people are socially engaged in their communities, they provide important contributions to their communities through sharing their knowledge, talent, skills, experience, and wisdom with others.



What Defines a Rural Community?

The U.S. Census Bureau considers areas that are not urban to be rural, and it defines the smallest urban areas (urban clusters) as having at least 2,500 people.⁷ The Federal Office of Rural Health Policy uses Census data and considers all non-metropolitan counties to be rural, whereas the Office of Management and Budget considers counties rural if they are micropolitan, with an urban core of at least 10,000 and fewer than 50,000 people, are not part of a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), or are not classified.⁸ Although federal agencies offer differing definitions of rural, professionals who work with older adults and people with disabilities in rural areas have their own practical definitions. Rural residents cannot easily access services such as transportation, health care, jobs, education, and groceries (S. Roytzer, personal communication, April 24, 2023; M. Willard, personal communication, April 24, 2023; L. Kays, personal communication, April 10, 2023). Simply reaching a bus line to connect to services may require dozens of miles of travel.⁹

Challenges and Opportunities for Social Engagement in Rural Areas

Older adults and people with disabilities who live in rural communities face unique barriers to social connection. Distance and limited resources shape rural living. People living in rural areas are more likely to experience poverty and to be socially isolated.¹⁰ Yet the strength of rural communities may also help facilitate solutions.

Visit www.committoconnect.org for more on how to stay connected.



TOPICAL GUIDE

Supporting Social Connection of People Living with Dementia

COMMITTO Connect

Introduction to Social Isolation and Loneliness

Social isolation and loneliness are increasingly recognized as critical and growing public health issues impacting the lives of millions of Americans. While social isolation and loneliness are related, they are different. Loneliness is defined as a subjective feeling of being alone or separated while social isolation is the lack of social contacts and having few people to interact with regularly.¹

In a May 2023 Surgeon General Advisory, United States Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy warned about the public health crisis that loneliness, isolation, and disconnection pose to the American public. Prevalence of social isolation and loneliness in the U.S. now surpasses smoking (13 percent), diabetes (15 percent), and obesity (42 percent).^{2,3,4} These are significant issues for older adults and people with disabilities. Although individuals of all ages and backgrounds can be lonely and isolated, groups at higher risk include people with poor physical or mental health, people with disabilities, those experiencing financial insecurity, those who live alone, as well as single parents, older adults, and adolescents.⁵



Social engagement improves quality of life and people with strong connections experience better physical and mental health outcomes.⁶ In addition, when people are socially engaged in their communities, they provide important contributions to their communities through sharing their knowledge, talent, skills, experience, and wisdom with others.

Supporting Social Connection of People Living with Dementia

Dementia is the general term for loss of memory, language, problem-solving and other thinking abilities that are severe enough to interfere with daily life and activities.⁷ The most common form of dementia is Alzheimer's disease. Other forms of dementia include frontotemporal dementia, vascular dementia, and Lewy body dementia.

People living with dementia are at risk of experiencing social isolation and loneliness for reasons that include cognitive changes, relinquishing driving or lack of transportation, and changes in employment or volunteer status. Dementia can make it more difficult for someone to communicate, and it can also change how a person interacts and connects with others. A person living with dementia may have difficulty remembering conversations, have trouble following new activities, or fear the ongoing stigma that is associated with dementia. As a result, people living with dementia may withdraw from social activities or connections leading to social isolation and loneliness.

Friends, family, coworkers, and neighbors can feel uncomfortable or unfamiliar when learning how best to interact and communicate with someone living with dementia, further contributing to the person's feeling of isolation and loneliness.

Remaining socially connected is vital for people living with dementia and their care partners because it supports quality of life and enhances health and

Visit www.committoconnect.org for more on how to stay connected.





Consumer Resources

www.committoconnect.org/connect-with-others/

Social Isolation: What's in a Name?

Although related, social isolation and loneliness are not the same thing.



SOCIAL ISOLATION is the lack of social contacts and having few people to interact with regularly.

Social isolation is objective, with measurable factors such as the size of one's social network, the frequency of contact with that network, or the availability of transportation.



LONELINESS is the distressing feeling of being alone or separated.

Loneliness is subjective and more personal. It's the feeling of not having the connections, companionship or sense of belonging that we all need as humans. You can live alone and not feel lonely or socially isolated, and you can feel lonely while being with other people. Both experiences – social isolation and loneliness – are harmful to overall wellbeing, which is why it's so important to build and maintain social connections.



SOCIAL CONNECTIONS are called many things:

- Social inclusion
- Social cohesion
- Social support
- Social integration
- Community connectedness
- Social networks

No matter what you call it, social connectedness is about the relationships we have with others – and how those relationships are helped or hurt by social, economic and political factors.



PRO TIP: Never call people who are socially isolated "hermits" or "loners."

Such labels wrongly cast blame and suggest that someone experiencing social isolation is at fault due to their own decisions or traits.

Social isolation isn't a personal choice or individual problem, but rather an issue that's rooted in community design, social norms and systemic injustices.

Sources: The Social Isolation Learning Network; "Unlabeled: A Primer on Social Isolation" by David Hsu.

CommitToConnect.org

The Gift of Connection

Connecting with others is essential to our health and well-being. There are many ways we can connect, even if we're physically apart. Whether you're looking for the perfect present, or simply want to brighten someone's day, you can't go wrong with the gift of connection.



Send a Letter-Writing Kit

Gift a kit so you can keep in touch with someone you care about. Buy a ready-made kit or make one yourself. Include stationery and envelopes, postage stamps, and a pen. Make it even more personal with a list of monthly themes for your letters.



Share a Recipe

Make a batch of your favorite cookies or bake a pie using a family recipe. Send through contactless delivery with a copy of the recipe so they can recreate it.



Make a Keepsake

Share memories and celebrate special connections with a scrapbook, photo album, or keepsake box. Include cherished mementos, pictures, and news clippings.



Create a Video

Pass on memories, wisdom, and values through a video recording. Find websites and templates that can help, or just record and send on your phone.



Make Connecting Easier

- Improve someone's virtual experience by gifting accessories like a phone stand, webcam, or headphones.
- Check out free or low-cost conference call options that friends and family can use anytime.
- Connect with friends and family online through photo-sharing sites, private chat rooms, and social media groups.



Show You Care in Real Time

Simply reaching out can be a gift. Count down to a special event like a graduation or birthday with a series of calls, emails, or texts. Or gift a digital photo frame you can update from a distance, or pairs of lamps that light up in one location when touched in another.




Visit ACL.gov/CommitToConnect for more on how to stay connected.



10 Benefits of Social Relationships

People thrive when we get and give ample social support — that feeling of being cared for, listened to, and loved.

Having a good quantity and quality of social relationships enriches our lives in numerous ways.




Strong social connections can:


- 1 Increase your lifespan by 50%¹
- 2 Improve your physical health
- 3 Brighten your mental outlook
- 4 Boost your self-esteem
- 5 Facilitate greater empathy
- 6 Help you better recover from disease
- 7 Foster a sense of meaning and purpose in your life
- 8 Trigger the release of stress-reducing hormones²
- 9 Provide a heightened sense of security and belonging
- 10 Shape your health throughout the course of your life³

Sources: ¹Scientific American; ²Harvard Medical School; ³National Institutes of Health.

Discover the steps you can take to build and strengthen social connections at CommitToConnect.org.



Social ties affect our mental and physical health, as well as our mortality risk.



CommitToConnect.org



Webinars and Office Hours

www.committoconnect.org/events

- **Webinars**

- *UPCOMING: Caregiver Social Connection through Peer Support (September 26th)*
- *Promoting Social Connection Among Veterans (June 2025)*
- *Social Connection as a Protective Factor for Fraud and Exploitation (December 2024)*
- *Outcome Evaluation in Social Connection Programming (September 2024)*
- *Advancing Social Connection Through Art and Creative Expression (June 2024)*
- *Strengthening Social Connection in Housing Communities (April 2024)*
- *No Wrong Door Virginia's Social Health Connector Platform (December 2023)*
- *Supporting Independence and Inclusion through a Community Participation Measure: A University and CIL Collaboration (April 2023)*

- **Office Hours**

- *Social Connection and Nutrition (April 2025)*
- *Intergenerational Engagement (January 2024)*
- *Outreach and Social Engagement (April 2023)*

Community of Practice: Assessing the Retrospective Impact of CDSME on Social Connection



committoconnect.org/communities-of-practice

- **Goal:** Assisting Community Care Hubs with measuring the impact of CDSME programs on social connection
 - Building and following an implementation plan
 - Collecting retrospective data from at least 50 clients with the *Upstream Social Interaction Risk Scale (U-SIRS-13)* and *Retrospective Assessment of Connection Impact (RACI)*
 - Receiving secure data reports
 - Engaging with technical assistance on understanding and using the data
- **Participating Community Care Hubs**
 - Mid-America Community Support Network, Missouri
 - Get Healthy North Country Community Integrated Health Network, New York
 - Partners in Care Foundation, California
 - Illinois Pathways to Health Age Options, Illinois
 - Healthy Living for ME, Maine
 - Lumber River Council of Governments, North Carolina



Innovations Hub

committoconnect.org/innovations-hub

FilterSort

Caring Together, Living Better

ORGANIZATION NAME

AgeOptions

CITY, STATE

Oak Park, IL

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Partnering with faith-based groups to offer social engagement activities for Black and Hispanic family caregivers.

INTERVENTION TYPE

IntergenerationalTechnology

POPULATION SERVED

Older AdultsCaregivers

GEOGRAPHIC POPULATION SERVED

SuburbanUrban

ORGANIZATION TYPE

Area Agency on Aging

PARTNERS INVOLVED

Aging and Disability Resource Ce...

FUNDING SOURCE

Private/philanthropic grant

DESCRIPTION

Program Description

AgeOptions, an Area Agency on Aging based in Oak Park, IL.

Friendly Phone Calling

ORGANIZATION NAME

Decatur Catholic Charities – Faith in...

CITY, STATE

Decatur, IL

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Older adults who are homebound received phone calls from friendly volunteers.

INTERVENTION TYPE

IntergenerationalVolunteerism

POPULATION SERVED

Older AdultsPeople with Disabilit

GEOGRAPHIC POPULATION SERVED

RuralUrbanSuburban

ORGANIZATION TYPE

Other Community-Based Organi...

PARTNERS INVOLVED

Area Agency on AgingFaith-base

FUNDING SOURCE

Older Americans ActPrivate/phila

DESCRIPTION

Program Description

Faith in Action of Macon County provides friendly phone calling

ONEgeneration Letters to O...

ORGANIZATION NAME

ONEgeneration

CITY, STATE

Van Nuys, CA

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

This letter writing program allows older adults and students to connect without using technology.

INTERVENTION TYPE

IntergenerationalArts and Creati

POPULATION SERVED

Older Adults

GEOGRAPHIC POPULATION SERVED

SuburbanUrban

ORGANIZATION TYPE

Aging Services Provider

PARTNERS INVOLVED

Intergenerational groupsNutritic

FUNDING SOURCE

Private/philanthropic grantOther

DESCRIPTION

Program Description

In a world where access to digital resources can improve overall social

COAST-IT (Connecting Olde...

ORGANIZATION NAME

University of Colorado Anschutz Mu...

CITY, STATE

Denver, CO

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Pairs college students studying health with older adults for intergenerational social phone calls.

INTERVENTION TYPE

Health and WellnessIntergenera

POPULATION SERVED

Older Adults

GEOGRAPHIC POPULATION SERVED

RuralFrontierSuburbanUrt

ORGANIZATION TYPE

University

PARTNERS INVOLVED

Aging and Disability Resource Ce...

FUNDING SOURCE

Other

DESCRIPTION

Program Description

The University of Colorado (CU) Anschutz Division of Geriatrics and

Fairfax County Virtual Cent...

ORGANIZATION NAME

Fairfax County Department of Neig...

CITY, STATE

Fairfax, VA

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Virtual senior center developed in response to closures of in-person senior centers and adult day health centers due to the COVID-19 ...

INTERVENTION TYPE

Arts and Creative ExpressionHeal

POPULATION SERVED

Older AdultsPeople with Disabilit

GEOGRAPHIC POPULATION SERVED

Suburban

ORGANIZATION TYPE

Senior Center

PARTNERS INVOLVED

Aging and Disability Resource Ce...

FUNDING SOURCE

...

DESCRIPTION

Program Description

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, senior centers, adult day



Innovations Hub

committtoconnect.org/innovations-hub

- **Community-Based Wellness Programs**, Sportable (Richmond, VA)
 - Adaptive sports and recreation for adults with disabilities
- **Connecting Older Adults and Students Through Intergenerational Telecare**, University of Colorado (Denver, CO)
 - Pairs college health professional students with older adults for weekly phone calls
- **Caring Together**, Living Better, Age Options (Oak Park, IL)
 - Partnering with faith-based groups to offer activities for caregivers
- **PEARLS**, University of Washington (Seattle, WA)
 - Teaches problem-solving and activity planning skills



Innovations Hub: Submit for Consideration






■ Criteria:

- Intervention, program, or service aimed at promoting social connection or addressing social isolation and loneliness
- Serves older adults, people of all ages with disabilities, and/or caregivers
- Developed and administered by an organization
- Operation for 6 + months
- Innovative
- Measurable positive social connection outcomes
- Could be replicable by broad organizations



Share Your Innovations!



Quick Links

-  My Profile
-  My Inbox
-  My Communities
-  My Settings
-  Help

Recent Blogs

-  Meet a Commit to Connect Champion:
Lori Murphy
By Ali Fehlhaber
-  Meet a Commit to Connect Champion:
Jan Amys
By Ali Fehlhaber

Recent Activity

 **RE: Engaging Rural Older Adults**
Posted by: [Robert Lefkowitz](#), 22 hours ago

Posted In: [Open Forum Discussions](#)
Hi Carol, I'm a volunteer for Conversations to Remember. We're using virtual visits to reach seniors all over the country. All the senior needs is a tablet or computer, and they can meet with a set of ...

 **RE: Engaging Rural Older Adults**
Posted by: [Keith Moore](#), 3 days ago

Posted In: [Open Forum Discussions](#)
Blooming Health offers a messaging platform optimized for older adults that can send group texts, emails and voice calls in over 70 languages. It can be used for event reminders, wellness checks, and surveys, ...

 **RE: Engaging Rural Older Adults**
Posted by: [Robert Signore](#), 3 days ago

Posted In: [Open Forum Discussions](#)
Hi Carol. Technology can help with rural older adults since transportation can

Take Action!



Nationwide Network of Champions

www.networkhub.committtoconnect.org





Who are “Champions?”



Amy Ballinger, Community Engagement Manager at Independence, Inc. (Lawrence, KS)



Diane Cohn, Support Coordinator, Meals on Wheels of Loveland & Berthoud



Erica Carroll, Founder and CEO of StudentsCare (Philadelphia, PA)

<https://network.committtoconnect.org>



Discussions

1. Engaging Mayors to Promote Social Connection & Physical Activity

1 Recommend

EW

[Emma Waugh](#)

Actions ▾

Posted 04-23-2025 01:10 PM

Reply ▾

Hi Everyone! My name is Emma Waugh, and I am an Evaluation Consultant with the National Forum for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention. The National Forum is a non-profit organization whose mission is to spark and lead collaborative action to achieve health equity and optimize cardiovascular health and well-being throughout the lifespan. As part of their Move with the Mayor ® program, the National Forum runs annual physical activity challenges with mayors from across the country. During each challenge, mayors host events to bring their community together around physical activity. They're also encouraged to share messages to promote health and physical activity. Last year, we also incorporated messaging to promote the linkages between physical health, mental health and social connection.

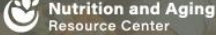
I'm reaching out to see if anyone has any resources, messaging or recommendations on the linkages between mental health, physical activity and social connection. I'd also be curious if there are others who engage mayors and local leaders on these topics. Last year 47 mayors from 24 states hosted over 100 events. Mayors were eager to talk about mental health and we're excited to build on this momentum in the coming year. Thank you!

Emma Waugh
Evaluation Consultant
GA

<https://network.committtoconnect.org>



Resource Library



The Benefits of Eating With Others: Connecting Nutrition and Socialization for Better Health

THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF EATING TOGETHER

Studies show that people who dine with others regularly eat healthier and report a better quality of life. It provides a sense of structure and belonging while offering greater opportunities for improved nutrition. Coming together over a meal can also provide meaningful ways to connect with others over shared beliefs and cultural interests. Benefits may include:

Physical Health

- Improved nutrition
- Reduced risk of chronic conditions
- Better mobility

Mental Health

- Increased self-care
- Sense of well-being
- Reduced anxiety and depression

Social Health

- Opportunities to connect
- Stronger relationships
- Reduced loneliness

REDUCED HUNGER IS MORE COMMON AS WE AGE

As a result, some older adults skip meals or eat in an unbalanced manner when eating alone. When we eat with others, our nutrition intake improves. Examples may include:


Eating better overall
or certain food groups like protein and vegetables.

Consuming more calories
to provide needed energy.

Taking in more nutrients
like iron, calcium, and folate.

Sources cited


- Gender differences in longevity in free-living older adults who eat-with-others: A prospective study in Taiwan. 2017.
- A systematic review and meta-analysis of the social facilitation of eating. 2019.
- Social influences and eating behavior in later life: a review. 2011.
- "You've got to be old to go there": psychosocial barriers and facilitators to social eating in older adults. 2020.
- Living alone but eating together: exploring lunch clubs as a dining out experience. 2017.
- Eating alone or together among community-living older people - a scoping review. 2021.



Funded by the Administration for Community Living, the Nutrition and Aging Resource Center builds the capacity of senior nutrition programs funded by the Older Americans Act to provide high-quality, person-centered services and enhance program sustainability and resiliency.

TOPICAL GUIDE

Six Considerations for Outcome Evaluation of Social Engagement Programs Serving Older Adults and People with Disabilities



Introduction to Social Isolation and Loneliness

Social isolation and loneliness are increasingly recognized as critical and growing public health issues impacting the lives of millions of Americans. While social isolation and loneliness are related, they are different. Loneliness is defined as a subjective feeling of being alone or separated while social isolation is the lack of social contacts and having few people to interact with regularly.¹

In a May 2023 Surgeon General Advisory, United States Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy warned about the public health crisis that loneliness, isolation, and disconnection pose to the American public. Prevalence of social isolation and loneliness in the U.S. now surpasses smoking (13 percent), diabetes (15 percent), and obesity (42 percent).^{2, 3, 4} These are significant issues for older adults and people with disabilities. Although individuals of all ages and backgrounds can be lonely and isolated, groups at higher risk include people with poor physical or mental health, people with disabilities, those experiencing financial insecurity, those who live alone, as well as single parents, older adults, and adolescents.⁵


Social engagement improves quality of life and people with strong connections experience better physical and mental health outcomes.⁶ In addition, when people are socially engaged in their communities, they provide important contributions to their communities through sharing their knowledge, talent, skills, experience, and wisdom with others.

This topical guide is part of a series on themes critical to addressing social isolation and loneliness across the U.S. It is intended for staff and volunteer leaders interested in outcome evaluation of social isolation and loneliness programs and interventions supporting older adults and people with disabilities.


In addition to building an evidence base for health outcomes associated with social isolation and loneliness, it is also critical to collect data on effective programs and interventions. This document outlines key considerations and resources in measuring outcomes for programs promoting social connections.

1. Measure Program Outcomes.


Measuring outcomes is essential to demonstrating program impact on reducing social isolation or loneliness. Evaluations often measure program implementation (e.g., number of people who attended and satisfaction levels) or social participation (e.g., involvement in activities that provide interaction with others) rather than outcomes that show whether a program is achieving its goals (e.g., reduction in loneliness). While output measures provide important contextual information, outcomes demonstrate a program's impact. Outcome evaluations:



Visit www.committtoconnect.org for more on how to stay connected.



Administration for Community Living



Leaders in Aging Well at Home



Social Connection Awareness Week Summit 2024

Back to the Basics: The Building Blocks of Connection

Looking for ways to support those who are lonely and/or isolated in your community?

Join us for **FREE** lunch & learn webinars

- November 11 - 15th
- 12:00 - 1:30pm each day

Learn about state and local efforts to provide meaningful connections for older adults and people with disabilities.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11
The Power of Connection

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12
Accessible Recreation

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13
Coalition & Community Building

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14
Intergenerational Programs

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15
Technology for Connection

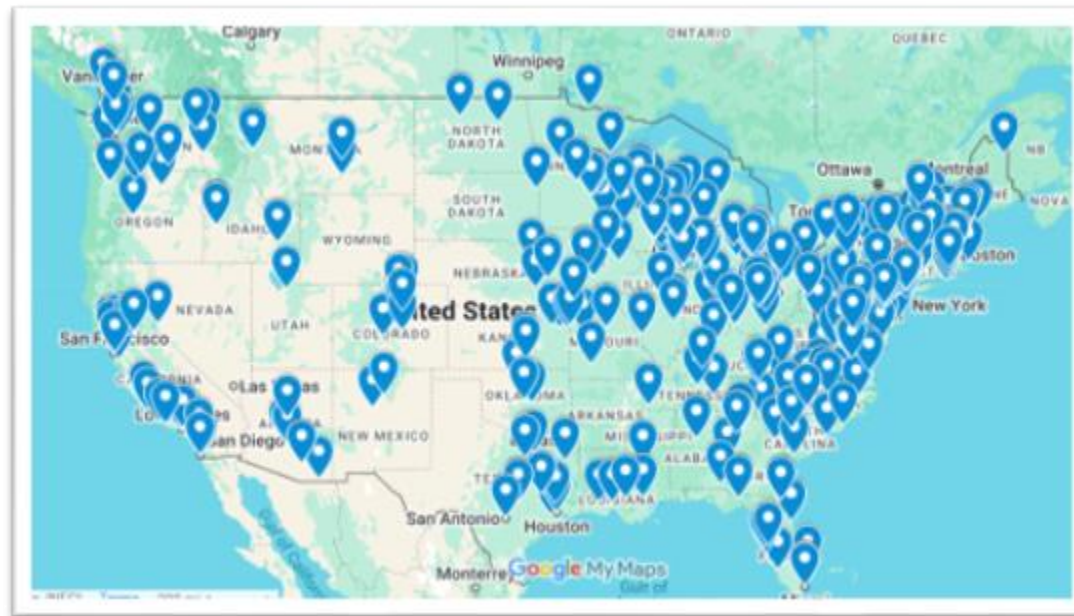
Wisconsin Social Connection Awareness Week November 10 - 16, 2024



<https://network.committtoconnect.org>



Directory



Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center

Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
United States

Big Sky Senior Services

Big Sky Senior Services
United States

Blooming Health Inc

Blooming Health Inc
United States

B'nai B'rith Senior Apartments

B'nai B'rith Senior Apartments
United States

Boise City/Ada County Housing Authorities

Boise City/Ada County Housing Authorities
United States

Boone County Council on Aging

Boone County Council on Aging
United States

<https://network.committotconnect.org>

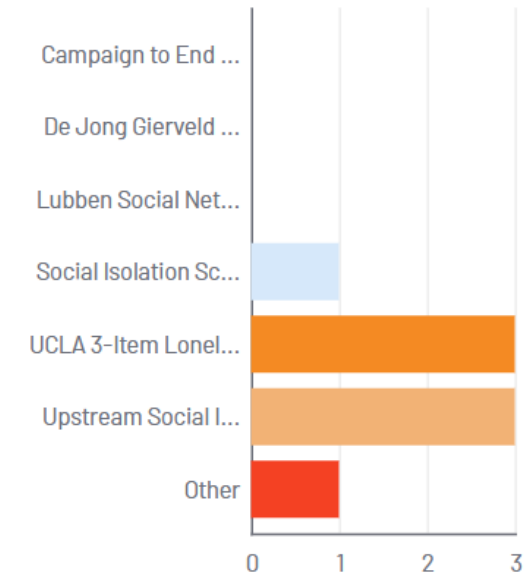


Other Features

- “Meet the Champion” Blogs
- Share and view events
- Polls
- Fact sheets
- Directly message and connect with other member Champions

Polls

What validated tool do you use to measure outcome evaluation for your social connection programs?



<https://network.committtoconnect.org>



National Summit to Increase Social Connections



Calls to Action

1. Join the Nationwide Network of Champions
2. Submit your social connection programs to the Innovations Hub
3. Sign up for our newsletter to stay engaged with our work



National Summit to Increase Social Connections



Calls to Action

4. Create a culture of connection
5. Establish, grow, and measure community connection programs
6. Invest and grow cross-sector partnerships

Thank You!

- We will send a follow up email containing links to slides and recordings from both days.
- The email will also include a survey evaluation link. Please take a moment to complete that survey as your feedback will help shape our future events and offerings.
- The slides and recording will be available soon:
www.committtoconnect.org/virtual-summit
- For further questions, contact the CTC team at:
info@committtoconnect.org