Webinar
Making social connections for community health
July 19, 2022

countyhealthrankings.org

Health means the collective wellbeing of all living beings and the earth. We recognize and embrace that we are connected and linked to one another.
Social connection & belonging: Why they matter

• Strong social ties → longer lifespan

• Belonging and inclusion → greater participation in social and political structures that influence norms and policies

• Social isolation → stress with physiological consequences or harmful coping strategies contributing to poor health outcomes.

Questions we will explore...

What is the difference between loneliness and social isolation?

What are the root causes of social isolation?

Who is more likely to experience social isolation?

How can we create opportunity for all residents to connect and belong?
Our guests

Help us welcome....

Edward Garcia
Founder and Executive Director, Foundation for Social Connection & Partner, Healthsperien

Coalition to End Social Isolation and Loneliness (CESIL)
Foundation for Social Connection (F4SC)
Global Initiative on Loneliness and Connection (GILC)
Community Connect (w/HPbD)

Levels of Influence: Individual Interpersonal Community Organization Society

Omnidirectional learning and collaboration
Our guests

Help us welcome....

Edward Garcia
Founder and Executive Director, Foundation for Social Connection &
Partner, Healthsperien

Risa Wilkerson
Executive Director of Healthy Places by Design

Advancing community-led action & proven, place-based strategies to ensure health & wellbeing for all.

www.healthyplacesbydesign.org
Join Us!
Discussion Group

When: Immediately following the webinar

What: Interactive learning experience, opportunity to share ideas and ask questions

How: Zoom

Why: Deepen the webinar learning, allow further exploration

Loneliness
(subjective: perceived discrepancy between actual and desired levels of social connection)

VS.

Social Isolation
(objective: few social relationships, roles, memberships; infrequent social interaction)
The Impact of Social Isolation & Loneliness on Health and Economy

Physical Health
- 26-32% higher risk for Premature Mortality
- Cardiovascular Disease
- Type2 Diabetes
- Immune & Respiratory illnesses

Economic Health
- $6.7B in Medicare Spending
- Lower productivity
- More Absenteeism
- Lower quality of work

Mental & Behavioral Health
- Depression & Anxiety
- Suicidality
- Addiction

Cognitive Health
- Cognitive decline
- Dementia
- Alzheimer’s Disease
Who experiences social isolation?

- New mothers and those with young children
- LGBTQ and other at-risk youth
- Recent immigrants
- Older adults
- Those reentering society after being incarcerated
- Rural communities
- Patients and their caregivers

Social isolation is not a personal choice or individual problem, but one that is rooted in community design, social norms, and systemic injustices.
System Designs that Lead to Isolation and Oppression

- Culture
- Education
- Health Care
- Housing
- Internet Access
- Public Space
- Justice
- Security
- Transportation

“Connection builds a virtuous cycle: when people feel valued and cared for within the community, they are more likely to contribute and participate in creating healthy, equitable places.”

— Belonging & Civic Muscle, Thriving Together
**SOCIAL Connection Framework**

**Modalities**
- Research/Evidence
- IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, & Access)
- Lifespan
- Socially Connected Person
- Level of impact
- Sector/Multi-Sector Approaches
- Cross Cutting Applications

**Cross Cutting Applications**
- Health
- Employment
- Education
- Housing
- Transportation
- Food
- Leisure

**Developed by the Foundation for Social Connection's Scientific Advisory Council**

**HOW DO WE USE THE FRAMEWORK?**

Identify where your perspectives currently exist within the framework. Where might you expand your focus to address gaps and improve impact?

**CONSIDER FULL SCOPE**

The socio-ecological model enables a systems approach. Identify areas to expand efforts to fill gaps in your approach.

**CONSIDER LIFESPAN**

Infant caregivers, children, adolescents, young adults, adults, older adults, adult caregivers

**1. Consider Mission**
Evaluate your mission to elucidate opportunities for greater impact and collaboration.

**2. Consider Full Scope**
The socio-ecological model enables a systems approach. Identify areas to expand efforts to fill gaps in your approach.

**3. Consider Lifespan**
Infant caregivers, children, adolescents, young adults, adults, older adults, adult caregivers

**4. Consider Inclusivity**
Might you be able to better address equity and disparities?
Policy, Systems, and Environment (PSE)

Social Connectedness

Policy change examples include:
- Provision of county or city public land (or previously vacant land) for green spaces or farmers’ markets
- Passing a law allowing residents to plant community gardens in vacant lots

System change examples include:
- Creating a community plan to account for social health impacts of new projects
- Develop a referral system in local hospitals to help patients access further social connection resources

Environmental change examples include:
- Incorporate spaces specifically designed for gathering
- Co-locate adult and childcare centers, or senior centers within schools

National Policies

Transformational Change for Social Connection:

1. Establishing a Nationally Coordinated Response to Address Social Isolation and Loneliness
2. Expanding Access to Behavioral Health through Medicare and Medicaid and Enforcing Parity
3. Increasing access to Social Determinants of Health broadly
4. Direct Funds for Public Health at the State and Local Level; Including Supporting Schools and CBOs
5. Address the Evidence Base through Funding Research
6. Requesting the GAO to Conduct a Comprehensive, Governmental-Wide, Study
Public Spaces

- Co-create inclusive, healthy public spaces
- Design safe places for all ages to gather
- Equitably maintain the quality of public spaces
- Activate public spaces to encourage healthy social interaction

Transportation

- Think "people first"
- Use policy levers to promote health and equity
- Support elements that enhance public life
Housing

- Strengthen and safeguard inclusive, affordable housing
- Include spaces specifically designed for gatherings
- Zone to encourage diversity

Community-Led Solutions

- Shift power to community members
- Elevate practices rooted in culture
- Harness creative communications channels
- Create universal broadband access
Community Norms

- Use a “social in all policies” framework
- Implement trauma- and resilience-informed practices
- Declare community values

Tips for Overall Success:
- Build partnerships within the state and community.
- Prioritize social connectedness

Tips for Enhancing Representation:
- Think through a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens.
- Capture diverse views to inform your ongoing efforts.

Tips for Intergovernmental Partnerships:
- Reach out to contacts within DHS, DOH, and AAA’s.
- Ask questions about what they are doing to address social isolation and loneliness.
- Utilize a feedback loop to inform state level policies.
- Develop cross agency trainings or webinars.
Tips for Rural Communities:
- Set incremental, realistic goals.
- Build partnerships with rural stakeholders.
- Work with partners to expand broadband and connective services.

Tips for Engaging Seniors:
- Partner with your Department of Aging, Medicaid department.
- Meet seniors where they are and offer solutions based on their lived experience.
- Integrate with other trusted programs and services.
- Focus on institutional long-term care.

Get Started!
- Host conversations in your community
- Join us as part of the Local Leader for Socially Connected Communities Network (email: gabriellap@healthyplacesbydesign.org)
- Commit to Connect Nationwide Network of Champions
POLL

Do feel you could adapt the strategies shared during the webinar to use within your community?

Yes
No
Maybe

Questions?
Click on survey link in the chat

Assimilation efforts have lasting consequences
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Building a Culture of Health, County by County