Montgomery County Commission on Aging
Aging in Community & Health and Wellness Committees joint Task Force on:

Social Isolation and Loneliness of Seniors (SILoS)

November 9, 2020 "Virtual Meeting" 4:00 pm

Topic: Countering Social Isolation and Loneliness of Seniors

Goal: Create Awareness and Community Outreach to counter Social isolation and Loneliness of Seniors (SILoS)

AGENDA

- Introductions

- Definition of terms

- Presentation of issues

- Interventions / Outreach Plans / Final Products

- Collaborations, Communications and Coordination

- Committee feedback, questions, and assignments

- Next meeting day / time

DEFINITIONS

Social Isolation

- Social Isolation is a lack of social connections. Social Isolation can lead to loneliness in some people, while others can feel lonely without being socially isolated.

- Objective isolation involves quantifiable measurements such as engagement with one's social network.

Loneliness

- Loneliness is the state of distress or discomfort that results when one perceives a gap between one's desires for social connection and actual experiences of it. Even some people who are surrounded by others, still experience a deep and pervasive loneliness.

Isolation is a growing health epidemic

- More than 8 million adults age 50 and older are affected by isolation.

- The estimated additional costs to Medicare are over 6.7 billion dollars annually.

- Isolation in older adults is rarely caused by a single event. More often, it is the result of multiple causes, including poor physical and mental health, poorly designed communities - transportation, and major life events such as leaving the workforce, becoming a care giver, or loss of a partner or friend.

Subjective feelings of loneliness can increase the risk of death by as much as *45 percent*.

17% of adults age 65 and older are isolated.

46% of women age 75 and older live alone.
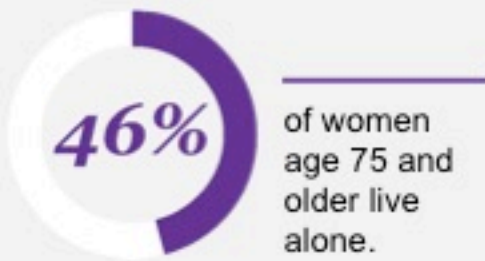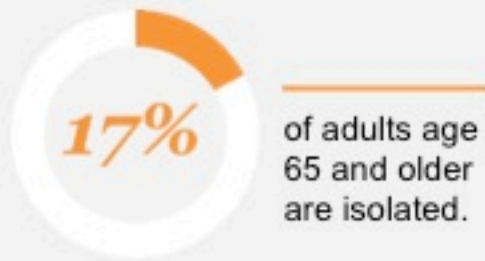
Older adults who describe themselves as lonely have a *59% greater risk of functional decline* and a *45% greater risk of death*.

59%

45%
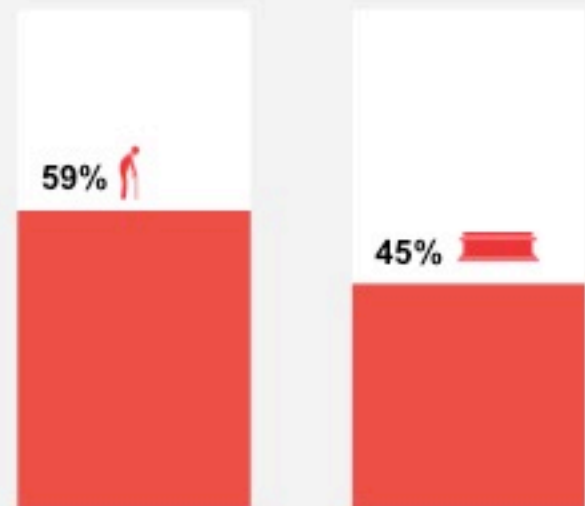
COVID-19 Social Connectivity Paradox

- How do we quickly and effectively modify our existing strategies to improve connectivity in a time of recommended and required physical distancing?

- How do we introduce and implement opportunities for meaningful connectivity without physical interactions?

- How do we capitalize on the strengths of older adults and their contributions to society during crisis to ensure they support their loved ones and facilitate connectivity among their peers?

Identifying the vulnerable and at risk

- Use of County demographic data
  - Populations
  - Incomes
  - Housing burdened 30%+
  - Limited English Proficiency
  - LGBTQ+
  - Veterans

- Care Givers, formal & informal, medical, home care

- Health care, mental health, law enforcement, EMS

Use of a validated assessment tool

Identifying the vulnerable and at risk

- ☐ UCLA Loneliness Scale

- ☐ DeJong Gierveld Loneliness Scale

- ☐ U-SIRS – upstream social isolation screeener

- ☐ www.connect2affect.com screener

- ☐ The Campaign to End Loneliness Scale

- ☐ The Single – Item Scales

Who will administer and who will process them?

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

- Improve awareness

- Identify and classify those vulnerable and at risk

- Help people get and stay connected

- Fix broken connections
  - Provide support through major life transitions
  - Change policy to support older adults in the workforce
  - Ensure availability of services for a diverse community
  - Create affordable and accessible transportation

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

- Improve awareness
  - Create and distribute a **FACT SHEET**

  - Develop **a web resource** like: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/ADS/Disability/DisabilityNetworkDirectory.html

  - Promote Community Outreach Programs

  - Produce a MoCo SILoS Report

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

- Identify and classify those vulnerable and at risk
  - Evaluate assessment tools

  - Select tools that would work best for different departments in County services (including Recreation, EMS, Social Services, Villages, MVA, Veteran's Assoc., Transportation)

  - Train providers how to use the assessments

  - Map offline and online resources and programs based on assessments. Create: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/seniors/ **GETCONNECTED**

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

◻ Help people get and stay connected

- ◻ Work with private organizations: Oasis, Senior Planet, Caring Matters, Montgomery Hospice, Hospitals, Rehab centers, GROWS, Older Adult Living Communities, IL & AL

- ◻ Work with the Villages, Age Friendly, Vital Living Network, Volunteer Center, LTC Ombudsman

- ◻ Work with EMS, APS, HHS, Recreation, Social Services, Veterans, African American Health Program, Asian American Health Council, American Muslim Society, MoCo A &D, Latino Health Initiative, Law Enforcement, Food and Nutrition programs

- ◻ Add SILoS to Health Care records

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

◻ Fix broken connections

   ◻ Look for opportunities to change MoCo Budget policy

   ◻ Connect through Inter-generational programs

      ◻ COVID CORPS

      ◻ https://bigandmini.org

      ◻ https://www.readytocare.com/aging-crisis/

      ◻ Home sharing programs

      ◻ Villages

   ◻ Technology based tools for communication

      ◻ Gogograndparent.com (transportation)

      ◻ Grandpad.net (Ipad style communication device)

      ◻ MD Senior Call Check

      ◻ Seniors Today / Engage@home

There exists an immense amount of data & research

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

Create a repository for articles, research and web resources
Create a single source for the Task Force Work and research

- Combatting Social Isolation Among Older Adults in a Time of Physical Distancing: The COVID-19 Social Connectivity Paradox Matthew Lee Smith,[1,2,*] Lesley E. Steinman,[3,4] and E. A. Casey[5]

- Administration on Aging. *A Profile of Older Americans: 2017* (PDF, 712K). April 2018.

- Cacioppo JT and Cacioppo S.
Older adults reporting social isolation or loneliness show poorer cognitive function 4 years later. *Evidence-Based Nursing* 2014;17(2): 59-60.

- Portacolone E, Johnson JK, Covinsky KE, et al.
The effects and meanings of receiving a diagnosis of mild cognitive impairment or Alzheimer's disease when one lives alone. *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease* 2018;61(4):1517-1529.

Transportation

Cause of SILoS

- Lack of accessible and affordable options

- Driving retirement

Common response that may prevent or reduce isolation

- Volunteer-based ride programs

- Livable/ age-friendly community initiatives

Mapping to: Resources that currently exist

- Web page: DOT-transit/seniors
- Ride On
- Metro Access
- Call-n-Ride
- Connect-A-Ride
- Medical Assistance Transportation Program
- Volunteer Transportation (Senior Connection)
- www.gogograndparent.com
- Viillages

Poor Health and Well Being

Cause of SILoS

- Untreated hearing loss

- Mobility Impairments, Frailty

- Poor mental health

Common response that may prevent or reduce isolation

- Falls prevention programs

- Chronic disease self-management

Mapping to: Resources that currently exist

- MoCo Active Aging Week
- Dementia Friendly Initiative
- AARP Community Connections
- Thrive at home
- Senior Helpline
- MoCo Senior Centers
- Senior Nutrition Program
- Bone Builders

Life Transitions, Role loss or change

Cause of SILoS

- ☐ Leaving the workforce

- ☐ Loss of a partner of friends

- ☐ Becoming a caregiver

Common response that may prevent or reduce isolation

- ☐ Support programs

- ☐ Lifelong learning

- ☐ Senior centers

- ☐ Creative/ artful aging

Mapping to: Resources that currently exist

- Senior News email newsletters
- MoCo Senior Centers/ Libraries
- Lifelong Learning in MoCo
- Caregiver support program
- ARC
- Oasis
- Senior Call Check MD
- Nextdoor
- Caring Matters
- Leisure World Rec Centers

Societal Barriers

Cause of SILoS

- Ageism

- Lack of opportunity for older adults to engage and contribute

Common response that may prevent or reduce isolation

- Intergenerational programs

- Lifelong learning

- Policies to support an older workforce

Mapping to: Resources that currently exist

- Teens helping Seniors
- SP COVID Corps
- Vital Living Network
- Seniors Today Broadcast
- Engage@Home
- MoCo Rec Room Seniors Team
- Senior Calendar
- MoCo Career Center
- bigandmini.org
- www.readytocare.com

Lack of Access and Inequality

Cause of SILoS

- Poverty

- Marginalized groups (racial inequality, ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+)

Common response that may prevent or reduce isolation

- Resiliency & empowerment models

- Home-sharing models

- Technology training

Mapping to: Resources that currently exist

- MoCo 311
- MoCo Aging & Dis. Services
- Muslim Community Centers
- MoCo Homesharing Pilot Program
- Senior Planet
- SP Covid Corps

Committee feedback, delegation of tasks

- Volunteers

- Specialists

- New ideas

- Speakers

- Next meeting