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Tip Sheet


Community Tools

2019

Tip Sheet – Staying Socially Connected

Sheridan Centre for Elder Research

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Building Connected Communities:
Tip Sheet:
Staying Socially Connected



To access this resource and
the Toolkit visit:

[https://source.sheridancollege.ca/
centres_elder_building_connect-
ed_communities/](https://source.sheridancollege.ca/centres_elder_building_connected_communities/)

Tip Sheet:

Staying Socially Connected

Loneliness is defined as a mismatch between the quantity or quality of social connections a person has and what they would like to have. Below are some ideas that have helped other older adults to stay socially connected. If you are lonely or would like to be more socially connected maybe some of these ideas can work for you?



Go for a walk on a nice day to **get to know your community** and the landmarks in it (i.e. parks, libraries, community centres, senior's centres, cultural/religious centres).



Phone someone that you haven't talked to in awhile. Consider sending a letter or an email if you are anxious about calling.



Check an **online community service directory** for programs in your community:

Halton: www.hipinfo.ca Peel: <https://peel.cioc.ca/>



Check your **local community newspapers** and **community bulletin boards** for information on events and programs you can get involved in.



Visit your **local library or a coffee shop** and read a book or magazine. If you go regularly you may notice some people you can connect with or activities you can join, or just enjoy being in the company of strangers.



Familiarize yourself with the **local public transportation** system and other transportation options in your community. You can **call 3-1-1** for information.



Look for **community lunches and dinners** available to the public, it is a wonderful way to meet people. Consider checking your local legions/naval clubs, places of worship, and cooperatives.



Volunteer with an organization, community group, or charity that interests you, whether it be a cause that you are passionate about or focused on a unique skill that you can offer.



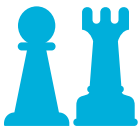
Reach out to organizations that have a **volunteer visiting program**, you can either be a client or a volunteer visitor depending on your comfort level.



Visit **local places of worship**, ask about opportunities to volunteer, join a program, or attend a special event.



Pets can make good companions. If interested you can adopt a pet or offer to house sit a family or neighbours' pet while they are on vacation. Be sure to consider the financial requirements and time commitments involved with owning a pet and make an informed decision.



Start a new hobby, perhaps one that you can do with other people. Find out about local clubs or groups that share your interests.



Explore how you can **use technology** to connect with others. Consider using email, Skype, Facebook, Wechat and/or Whatsapp. If you need help using technology, check if your local library has classes.



Consider therapeutic options. Speaking to a mental health professional (i.e. therapist, counsellor) can help with persistent feelings of loneliness. Talk to your family doctor or local medical centre for a referral.



If you have tried many things and you are still feeling lonely, consider a guided **self-reflection** exercise like the ***Coping with Loneliness Resource***. Ask the person who provided you this tip sheet if you would like a copy.

If any of these tips peak your interest, feel free to search your local community resources. You can also check out the Building Connected Communities Asset Maps to find programs and services located within the Peel and Halton regions https://source.sheridan-college.ca/centres_elder_building_connected_communities_maps/

Note

This tool was developed by the Centre for Elder Research, Oakville ON, Canada from 2015-19. It is part a 4-year research project called Building Connected Communities: Improving Community Supports to Reduce Loneliness and Social Isolation in Immigrants 65+. This project was focused specifically on the experiences of older immigrants in the Regions of Peel and Halton. This tool is not a standardized or validated treatment for loneliness and it is also not a substitute for mental health advice. The inclusion of any agency or service in this tool does not constitute an endorsement of the service.

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