

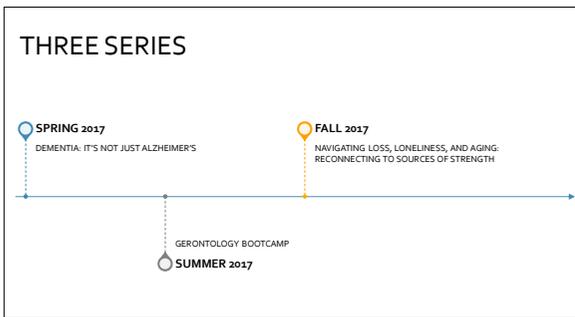



Navigating Loss, Loneliness, and Aging: RECONNECTING TO SOURCES OF STRENGTH

PART 4 – SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

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VCU Department of Gerontology
<http://www.sahp.vcu.edu/departments/gerontology/>


Virginia Department for Social Services
www.dss.virginia.gov/

A PROGRAM FOR PROFESSIONAL CAREGIVERS WORKING IN ADULT DAY CARE SETTINGS

A FOUR-PART WEBINAR SERIES



At the end of this series, YOU will have an increased understanding of:

the difference between grief and loss	the areas of life that loss can impact	how to work towards a "new normal"	activities and resources for navigating loss
person-centered care as it relates to loss	the relationship between loss, loneliness, and social isolation	risk factors for loneliness and social isolation	the health consequences of loneliness and social isolation
how loneliness and social isolation impact the body's immune system	the importance of self-care for the professional	the health benefits of social connectedness	activities for enhancing social connectedness

At the end of this webinar, you will have an increased understanding of:

- The relationship between **loss, loneliness, and social isolation**
- How loneliness and loss impact **health and mental health**
- The health **benefits** of **social connection**
- Activities for enhancing **social connectedness**
- The connection between **transitions and isolation**
- What influences transitions

SESSION 4 Learning Objectives



<p>LONELINESS</p> <p>The percentage of American adults stating they are lonely has soared from 20% to 40% in a generation. (U.S. Surgeon General, 2017)</p>	<p>Why is Connectedness Important?</p>
<p>HEALTH</p> <p>From immunity to inflammation, cognitive impairment to stroke, our social connections play a role in disease: risk and preventive.</p>	
<p>LONGEVITY</p> <p>People with strong social connections live longer. And without strong relationships, life expectancy shrinks.</p>	

The Connectedness Continuum

(Anshau, G., Hickey, R., Gendron, T., Link, S., MacDonald, C., Watson, T., Walkerford, E.A.)



Definition of social isolation:

- A state in which the individual experiences less social engagement with others than they would like, and they report that this interferes with their quality of life. *(based on Nicholson)*

Definition of social connectedness:

- A state in which the individual experiences a satisfying number of social gatherings, close relationships and/or satisfaction with social contacts and reports that these experiences maintain their quality of life. *(based on Toepoe)*

Who is at risk for social isolation?

1. Caregivers
2. LGBT Older Adults
3. Minority Older Adults
4. Trauma Survivors
5. Everyone

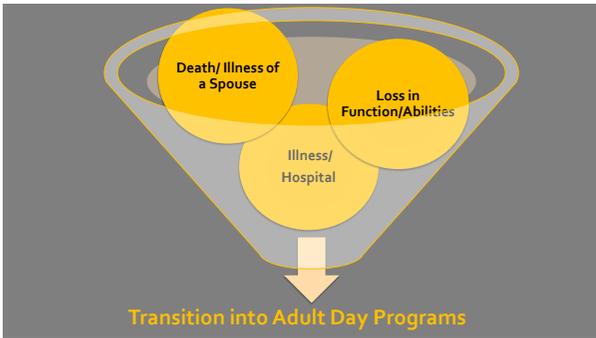
Risks for Social Isolation

1. Loss (of spouse, job, home)
2. Lack of Transportation
3. Living Alone
4. Recent trauma or transition

TRANSITIONS

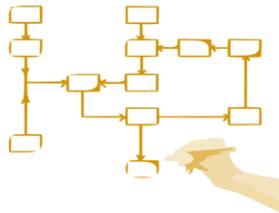
Transitions Overview

- A successful transition is a WIN – WIN!
- Grief and loss are among the most stressful life events we encounter
- Successful transitions are important and can determine older adults' long term success in the center
- Transition success may affect social engagement



Transition Role Mapping

- Define the roles you hold in your community.
- How is each role is responsible for in supporting transitions?



Transition Role Mapping Handout

The DON'Ts and DON'Ts of Transition Planning

Social Segregation:
The state or action of setting someone apart from other individuals or groups

Stigma:
A distinguishing mark of social disgrace



Reflection Exercise

Think back to your first day at your current job...

What was the biggest challenge of that day?

What did you do to overcome the difficulties/obstacles?

Did you experience a shift in empowerment and control?

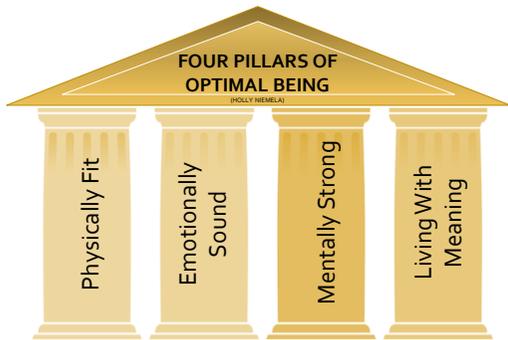
Did you feel as though you were segregated socially and practically?

Were you recovering from the stress of needing to change jobs or some other loss?

Helping to create successful transitions

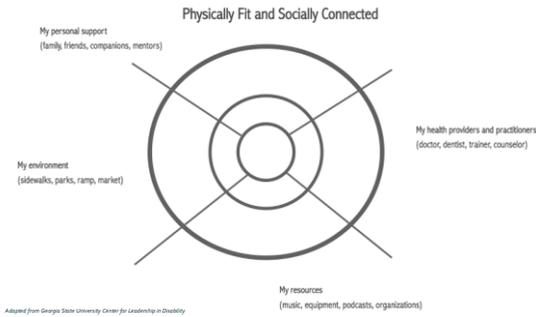






I Physical Fitness and Connectedness

<p>1. Immune system</p> <p>Loneliness activates a double whammy: increases inflammation, suppresses fighting off viral infections (Cole, 2015).</p>	<p>2. Chronic disease</p> <p>Strong social bonds are as good for you as quitting smoking. Weak social circle carries a health risk equal to smoking 15 cigarettes daily (Holt-Lunstand).</p>	<p>3. Built environment</p> <p>People want to "age in place," yet only 5% of U.S. housing stock is equipped with universal design features that make engagement easier.</p>
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“We forget that some of the oldest medicines that we have are, in fact, love and compassion. When these medicines are deployed, they can be deployed by anyone. When they are deployed they can provide an **extraordinary** source of **healing**.”

Vivek Murthy, former U.S. Surgeon General

II Emotional Soundness and Connectedness

<p>1</p> <p>1. Happiness 70% of our happiness comes from relationships (Murray & Peacock, 1996).</p>	<p>2</p> <p>2. Self-esteem Positive relationships help us thrive emotionally, increase our self-esteem and self-acceptance (Pinker, 2016).</p>	<p>3</p> <p>3. Affinity Singing in groups has been shown to improve happiness and well-being and to spark rapid social bonding (Pearce, Luanay, & Dunbar).</p>
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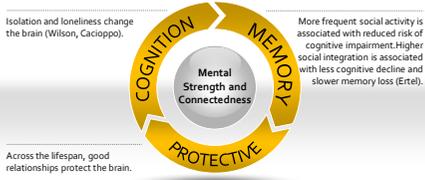
SOUL FRIENDS
SOUL FRIENDS

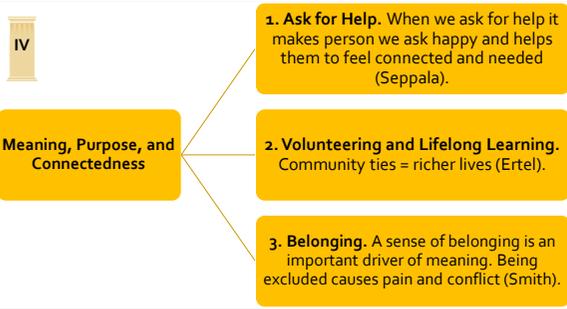
Soul Friends: 6 Mechanisms of Transformation

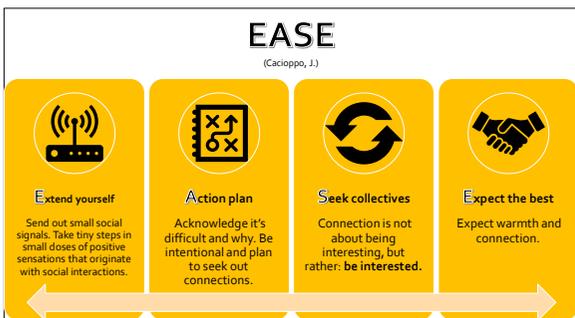
(Stephen Cope)

1. CONTAINMENT	2. TWINSHIP	3. NOBLE ADVERSITY	4. MIRRORING	5. MYSTIC RESONANCE	6. CONSCIOUS PARTNERSHIP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A safe holding environment within which you relax and expand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspires deep feelings of belonging and a sense of alikeness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenging or confrontational to your benefit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sees something special in you, reflects you back to you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A mysterious, mystic kinship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irreplaceable companion in your struggle to make meaning and express yourself.

III MENTAL STRENGTH AND CONNECTEDNESS







“When other people think you matter and treat you like you matter, you believe you matter, too.”

Emily Esfahani Smith

Now that you've completed the entire series, you may request your certificate!



1. Complete the Request Form here: <https://redcap.vcu.edu/surveys/?s=F417LPEgCP>

2. Following the certificate request, you must complete the required questions in order to receive your certificate.

3. All persons requesting a certificate will be cross-checked with the roster to ensure payment has been received. If payment has not been received, someone will be in touch.

What's Next?



Watch for future training opportunities from the VCU/DSS partnership!

Call us with questions at:
• 804.828.1565

Find us on
• Website: <http://www.sahp.vcu/gerontology/>
• Email: agingstudies@vcu.edu
• Be sure to "like" us on Facebook
• facebook.com/vcugerontology

We would appreciate any and all feedback about this program.

You have the opportunity to leave feedback via the evaluation form included after the certificate request form.

Please contact Jennifer Pryor with any questions:
pryorjm@vcu.edu

THANK YOU
