

Socialization
A Human Need





Why do we need to socialize?

- Humans need engagement and the human touch to survive.
- Babies that are not held or touched will not grow even if they receive nutrition.
- Children that have been raised in total isolation did not develop cognitive abilities. Studies on children that were raised without human interaction showed a lack of language and the ability to function as human beings.
- Studies show that 10 minutes of social interaction a day can improve memory and mental performance.
- While memory games are good for the brain socialization is better and uses more of the brain.



Older Adults and Socialization


- Older adults and caregivers can lose their social networks.
- Mobility challenges and cognitive decline reduces socialization.
- Isolation can lead to depression and the more a person is depressed the less motivation they have to engage in social activities.
- Older adults who live in facilities many times will isolate as they feel they are housed waiting to die.
- Aging in place is preferred with a variety of social networks for a balanced Elderhood.
- People need spontaneity to keep their brains young and their spirits fresh.



Isolation

Can:

- ☉ Cause Loneliness
- ☉ Increase depression & anxiety
 - Depression can increase your chances of having a stroke!
- ☉ Negatively impact sleep
- ☉ Raise blood pressure
- ☉ Increase stress
- ☉ Shorten your life!



Road Blocks to Socialization

- ☛ Transportation
 - Wheel chair accessible vans
 - Uber and Lift have helped people who are mobile
 - Cost – Trips to medical appointments can be covered by Medicaid but trips to social events are not.
 - CVAN is wonderful for many people but people who live in rural areas struggle with accessibility.
- ☛ Institutional Living
 - People who live in independent living and assisted living many times do not socialize even though there are activities offered.
- ☛ Mental Health
 - Many times people struggle with depression, grief and loss and anxiety and these are roadblocks to socialization.



Having a Social Network

- Improve mood and combat depression
 - Socialization can be as effective as medication for some!
- Improve cognition-keep your brain healthy!
 - Can also decrease the likelihood of dementia
- Increase self-esteem
- Improve your immune system
- Improve nutrition
 - Appetite can decline as we age, eating with friends can boost intake



Ideas for Socializing

- ☯ Volunteer – give back – share your knowledge
- ☯ Join clubs and groups – take a class
- ☯ Stay connected with friends and family
- ☯ Get a pet
- ☯ Attend a church
- ☯ Learn new skills- excellent for the brain
- ☯ Learn to use the internet



Volunteering “Selfishly”

- Volunteering is a wonderful way to connect with and help others, but it can also help you!
 - Look for volunteer opportunities in areas you are passionate about, not just where help is needed.
 - Helping others can keep you healthier: Studies have shown a correlation between volunteering and longer life, decreased depression, even lower cholesterol!
 - Make sure to maintain balance-it can be very easy to over-commit and burn out or become overwhelmed.



- Our Elders have lived through many changes in this world and deserve honor and respect. They hold the keys to our past that will unlock our future.
- We need as a society to make room in our hearts and utilize their wisdom and not lock them away in facilities.
- Our Elders need to engage with all age groups and share their knowledge of how to live in this world simply without judgment. We need to welcome them into all social networks, listen and honor them.



Thank you!

Judy Canter LICSW, GMHS, CSW-G

Mindful, Inc.

