
COMPANION GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Module: Social Isolation

Overview

The module format is designed to provide general information, facts, and sample reflection/discussion questions about social isolation in older age.

Before the presentation, review the PowerPoint, especially the “notes” pages for a suggested script. You can customize and revise them based on community needs and your audience. You can remove and/or add information that is relevant for your community.

- For example: If you have a specific statistic relating to social isolation in your rural community, add that.
- For example: Add your local community resources to the Resources slide.

Introduction to This Module

Subject

This module focuses on social isolation and creating social networks. It illustrates the positive aspects of aging, describes the difference between loneliness and social isolation, and offers facts and statistics, risk factors, and approaches for prevention.

Intended Audience

The intended audience for all community education and awareness modules is older adults in the community in which you are serving. The audience may vary depending on whether you work in a rural, urban, small, large, etc. community.

Importance of Social Isolation and Older Adults

- According to AARP, older adults are more susceptible to social isolation.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) states that social isolation is associated with lower general well-being, more depression, higher level of disability, and increased rates of premature death.

Module Objectives

At the end of the presentation, the audience should be able to:

- understand how emotional well-being improves with age
- define loneliness and social isolation
- understand the differences between loneliness and social isolation
- identify and be aware of social isolation

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- understand why older adults are at a higher risk of social isolation
 - understand preventive factors for social isolation
 - reflect on social isolation concepts and apply them to their own lives

Module Layout

Module structure

Slide #	Slide	Key Points (For full script, please refer to note section on each slide)
1 (U)	<u>Title:</u> Is social isolation affecting your health?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenter self-introduction • Organization that presenter is representing
2 (U)	<u>Introductions</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants introduce themselves. • Consider the size of the group and adjust the introduction
3	<u>Good news</u> about emotional health improvement with age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set a stage to indicate that the majority of older adults are emotionally and mentally healthy. • Reasons why older people manage emotional well-being better than many others
4	<u>Transition slide:</u> From good news to social isolation	Some older adults experience loneliness and social isolation, along with health risks.
5	<u>Social isolation:</u> Loneliness and social isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions • Difference • Purpose: understand what social isolation is
6	Why be concerned?	Negative effects social isolation have on people's well-being
7	<u>Reasons:</u> Why are older adults more likely to experience social isolation?	In summary, losses in life, physical changes and medical conditions, and living arrangements are key reasons.
8	Could I be at risk?	Self-reflect on how the participants or someone they know are engaged in the community and obstacles they have in staying engaged.
9	<u>Prevention:</u> What can I do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals' actions to prevent being socially isolated • Introducing social network/support
10 (U)	<u>Story:</u> An older adult's experience of benefiting from strong social support/networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please revise as you see fit. • If you know another story and would like to add it, please do so.
11 (U)	<u>Prevention:</u> Resources available in your community	Specialist adds groups, programs, resources, and activities available in the particular community here.
12 (U)	<u>Resources</u>	One resource specifically for older adults is listed on this slide. You may want to add additional information here or have handout materials specifically for the general public or people at risk for social isolation.

13 (U)	<u>Interactive:</u> Reflection/Discussion Session	The interactive discussion session. Consider the size of the group and select the questions to facilitate engaged conversations with participants. For details, refer to the “interactive session” section after this table.
14 (U)	Thank you and questions	
15 (U)	Acknowledgments	PSU, authors of the slides

Interactive session

- The primary interactive activity in this module is the “Discussion” on slide 13.
- The goal of the interactive session is to engage participants in reflecting on their own social networks and/or socially isolated situation if applicable. Also, we expect participants to think about what they learned from this session and what they can apply to their lives or use to help other older adults who might be socially isolated.
- Please adjust the number of people in discussion groups and length of the discussion session according to the size of your audience and available space. For example, you can pair people or organize them in small groups.

Adjustments made by user(s) of the slides

- You are the key to making the presentation relevant and meaningful to your audience. Feel free to add, delete, modify, and rearrange slides according to your community’s situation.
- In the “Module Structure,” the capital letter “U” (for User) indicates the slides for which you may want to include information specific to your community.

Logistics

Length of Presentation

The presentation should take approximately 20 minutes, not including discussion. Please decide time for group discussion based on the interests and size of your audience. The whole session could vary from approximately 30 minutes to one hour.

Special Equipment Requirements

To have a productive presentation, you will need a projector, a laptop (or computer located at the presentation location), an Internet connection (optional, for videos,), note-taking paper for the audience, chairs, and handouts (to give after the presentation).

Other Considerations

Consider the following items for your audience and the meeting space:

- Is the space accessible?

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- Is there parking?
 - Is the presentation space large enough to accommodate the audience?
 - What kind of seating is available (suitable for older adults)?
 - Is there enough lighting, ventilation, air conditioning in summer or heating in winter?
 - Are there enough outlets, phone jacks, etc. to support equipment needs?
 - Can beverages/snacks be provided? Consider possible audience food limitations (i.e., provide fruit rather than cookies).

Local Resources

What local resources can you bring related to social isolation or social networks?

- Consider bringing brochures on community activity groups, community events flyers, community center brochures, etc.
 - Also consider helpful guides on social isolation such as: print outs of helpful awareness information on the subject.

Marketing Your Presentation

- Consider contacting your local community and/or senior center as a place to present.
 - Ask if they will advertise your presentation on their website or community board.
- Contact your community partners/contacts to market your presentation with their clients.
- Create and distribute a flyer for your event.

Supporting materials

Information sources

- Slides with information from the literature will name either an author or an organization at the bottom of that slide. Please see the references below for more information about any of these sources.
- We retrieved the information from nationally and/or internationally recognized organizations/publishers and made efforts to be sure the information in the slides is reliable and up-to-date (August 2015).

References

Resources for participants

Here are example resources for participants; feel free to add more:

- [Abrahms, Sally \(2015\). You Are Not Alone: 6 Steps to Reduce Senior Isolation, A Place for Mom.](#)
- [Bernstein, Elizabeth \(2015\). New Research on Overcoming Loneliness, Wall Street Journal.](#)
- [Gretchen Anderson \(2010\), Loneliness among older adults: a national survey of adults 45+, AARP.](#)
- [Lifeline \(2010\). What are Loneliness and Isolation?](#)
- [Ponton, Lynn \(2007\). Coping With Loneliness: Tips for Seniors, Everyday Health.](#)
- [Squires, Becky. \(2014\). A Purpose in Life Can Prevent Isolation. AARP.](#)

Resources (used for presentation and additional resources)

- [Anne-Marie Botek \(2015\), The elder loneliness epidemic, AgingCare.com.](#)
- [A review of social isolation \(2012\). Journal of Primary Prevention, Medscape.](#)
- [Carstensen, Isaacowitz, & Charles \(1999\). Taking time seriously. American Psychologist. 54, 165-181.](#)
- [Framework for isolation in adults over 50, AARP.](#)
- [Howden, L.M. & Meyer, J. A., Age and Sex Composition in the United States: 2010 Census Brief.](#)
- [Isolation in the elderly – the hidden dangers of loneliness \(2015\), Nobilis.](#)
- [Leland Kim \(2012\), Loneliness linked to serious health problems and death among elderly, UCSF.](#)
- [Loneliness Among Older Adults: A National Survey of Adults 45+, AARP, September 2010.](#)
- [NPR \(2013\), Andrew Steptoe, University College London, Isolation and loneliness: the difference and why It matters.](#)
- [Reconnecting those in isolation \(2015\), AARP.](#)
- [Report on social isolation of seniors, National Seniors Council, Canada.](#)
- [Sally Abrahms \(2014\), You are not alone: 6 steps to reduce senior isolation, Senior Living Blog.](#)

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- Singh, A., & Misra, N. (2009). Loneliness, depression and sociability in old age. *Industrial Psychiatry Journal*, 18(1), 51.
 - Social isolation among seniors an emerging issue (2004). Children's, Women's and Seniors Health Branch, British Columbia Ministry of Health.