



Promoting Connectedness for Trauma and Suicide Prevention

Needs and Opportunities to Address
Social Isolation During a Pandemic

December 8, 2020



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Polling Question: Who is in the audience today?

- A. City/county government
- B. CBO/nonprofit
- C. K-12 education
- D. College/university
- E. Funder/foundation
- F. Healthcare
- G. State or federal government
- H. Tribal organization
- I. Faith-based organization
- J. Other/not applicable





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Needs and Opportunities to Address
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This project is supported by Cooperative Agreement No. 6 NU38OT000305-02-03 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The views and information provided in this web conference do not necessarily represent the official views of the Department of Health and Human Services, the CDC, or Prevention Institute.

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**Text Chat Question:
What is one source of
connection in your
community during the
COVID-19 pandemic?**

Objectives



- Describe the importance of social connection for preventing trauma and suicide amidst the pandemic.
- Explore how agencies and organizations have adapted their efforts to support social connection among different populations.
- Identify roles for local leaders, including local government and community-based organizations, in supporting wellbeing.
- Discuss opportunities for long-term recovery and systems change that supports social connection across diverse populations.



Evidence points to a significant portion of the American population as socially disconnected in some way.

Julianne Holt-Lunstad in "Social Isolation And Health,"
Health Affairs Health Policy Brief, June 22, 2020.



Connecting the dots

Types of Childhood Adversity



Image: KVC Health Systems

Social isolation increases families' risk of exposure to **ACEs**.

Social isolation and ACEs are risk factors for **suicide**.

Barriers to engaging with others

Transportation
issues

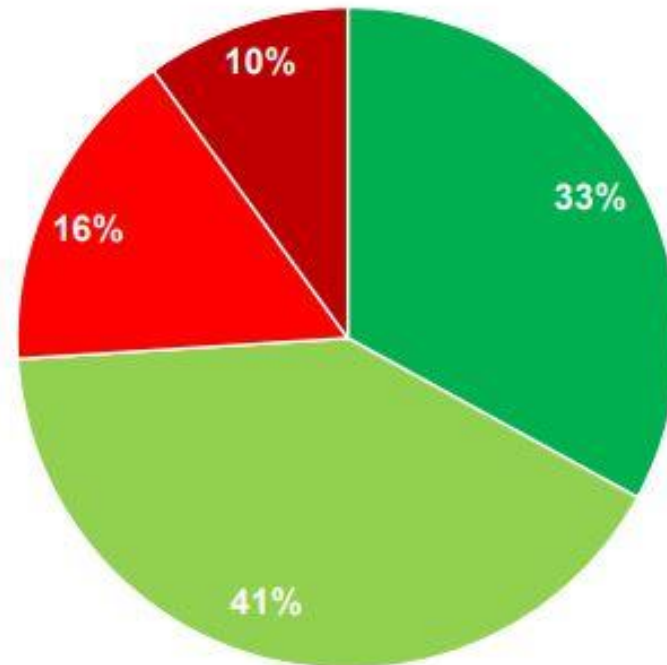
Long-term
illness

Exposure to
domestic or
community
violence

Disabilities

Unemployment

More than seven in 10 adults agree that the pandemic has made it more difficult for them to connect with friends



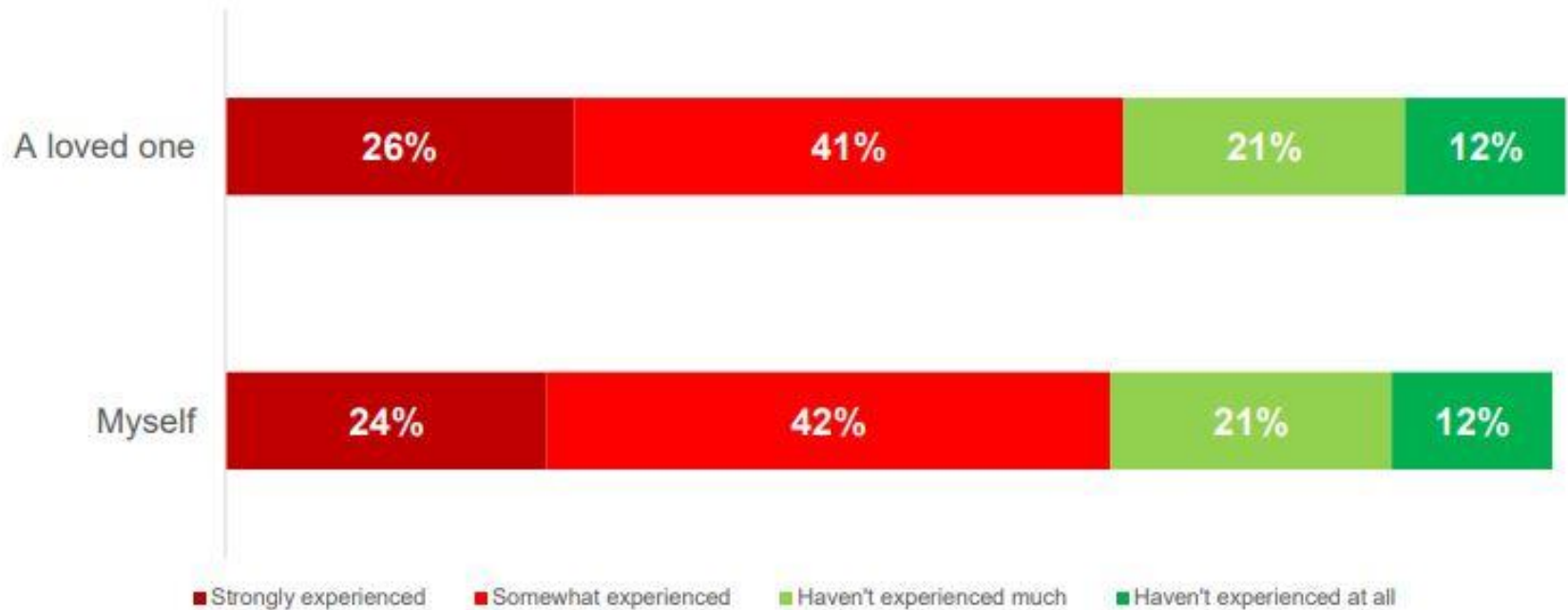
■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Thinking about your experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The pandemic has made it more difficult for me to connect with friends. (N=2,010)

AARP Foundation
For a future all about senior quality

UNITED HEALTH FOUNDATION

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, two thirds of adults report having experienced social isolation, and around the same amount also reports that a loved one has experienced social isolation as well



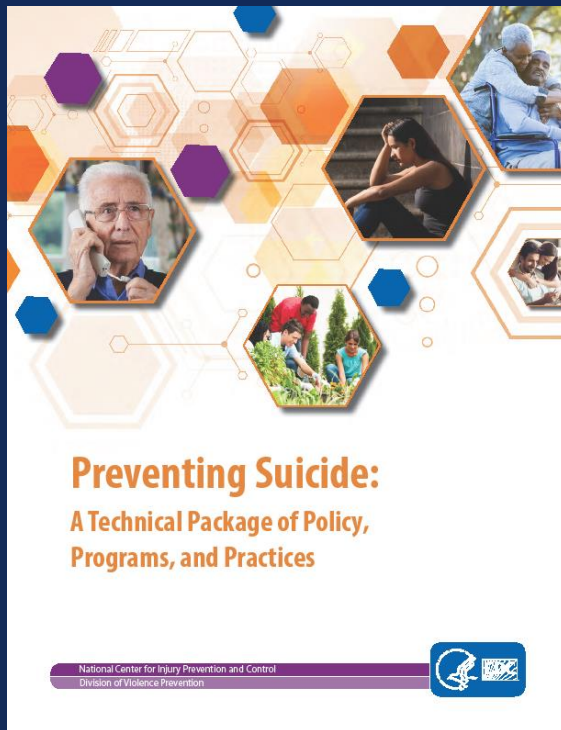
Thinking about the definition of social isolation that you just read, to what extent have you or a loved one experienced social isolation since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic? (N=2,010)

AARP Foundation
For a future all about senior quality

UNITED HEALTH FOUNDATION

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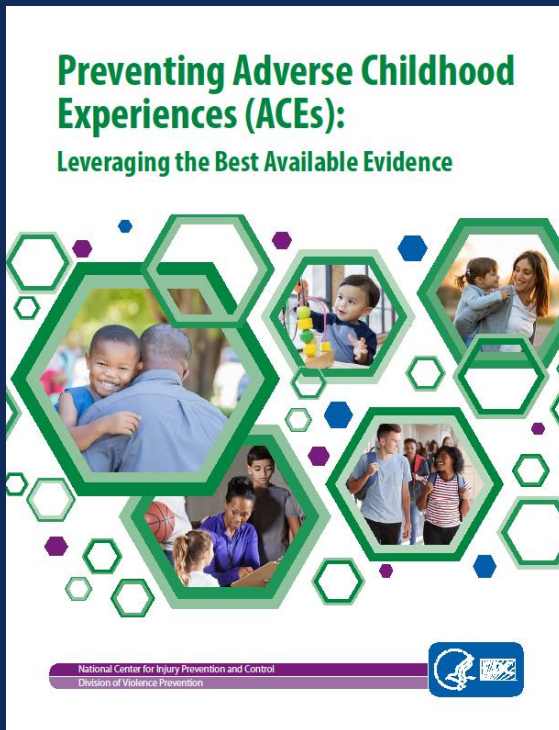
Social Connection: A Key Strategy to Prevent Suicide



Promote Connectedness

- Peer norm programs
- Community engagement activities

Social Connection: A Key Strategy to Prevent ACEs



Connect Youth to Caring Adults and Activities

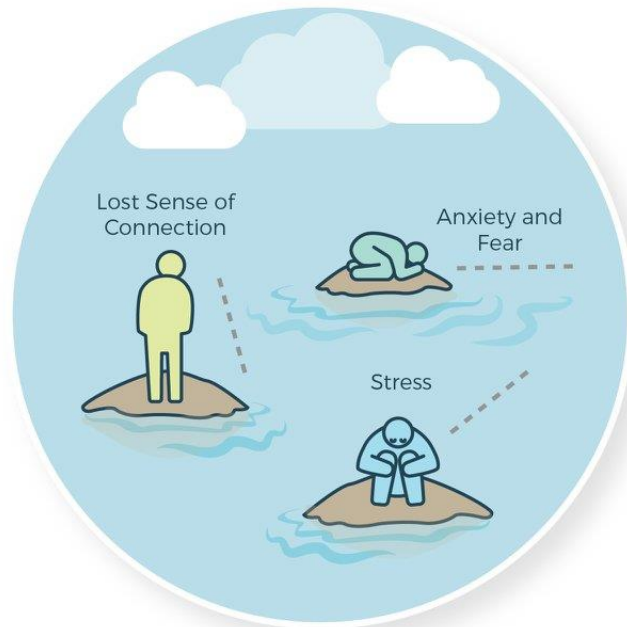
- Mentoring programs
- After-school programs

COVID-19: **PHYSICALLY DISTANT,** **SOCIALLY CONNECTED**

Physical distance with
social isolation



Physical distance with
a widening social circle



Guests



Edward Garcia
Co-Director, CESIL



Kris Bifulco
Connect Postvention
Coordinator, AOCMHP



Tony Diaz
Senior Program Director
After School Matters



Annette Marcus
Suicide Prevention Policy
Manager, AOCMHP



Emily Allen
Senior Vice President of
Programs, AARP Foundation



Edward Garcia

Co-Director

Coalition to End Social Isolation and Loneliness

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@ENDSOCISOLATION

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What is Social Isolation and Loneliness? What are the differences?

Social isolation

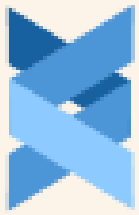
A state in which the individual lacks a sense of belonging socially, **lacks engagement with others, has a minimal number of social contacts** and they are deficient in fulfilling and quality relationships.¹

Loneliness

- Can occur in the presence or absence of social isolation.
- Some early definitions characterized it as a lack of social intimacy or as a deficiency in social relationships.
- **Often described as a subjective feeling of isolation, not belonging, or lacking companionship.**²

¹ Social isolation in older adults: An evolutionary concept analysis. J Adv Nurse. Nicholson, N. 2009

² Social isolation, loneliness and their relationships with depressive symptoms: A population-based study. PLOS Medicine. Hafiz T.A. Khan, Editor. 2017.



Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness

Our Mission

To engage diverse stakeholders, promote innovative research, and advocate for policy change that combats the adverse consequences of social isolation and loneliness and advances approaches that improve social connectedness for Americans.

Our Vision

For all Americans to have the opportunities and supports necessary to be socially engaged in society.

Our Members

Stakeholders include: Consumers, health Plans, health systems, providers, employers, community-based organizations, non-medical organizations and entities, etc.

Scientific Advisory Council

***Convening to
develop a set of
principles and
criteria for
meaningful
intervention.***



Foundation for
Social Connection

Innovation Network

***A forum committed
to acting as a
cross-sector
incubator for Social
Isolation &
Loneliness
intervention
development.***

Coalition Policy Goals



Increase public awareness for social isolation and loneliness and its effect on health and wellbeing



Enhance social services and supports to address social isolation and loneliness



Advance health services and supports that address social isolation and loneliness



Leverage innovative technology solutions that foster connection and social integration



Advance research to develop the evidence base necessary to design effective programs and policies

Real Time Adaptations to Support Connection: *A Shift to Virtual*





Edward Garcia

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Text chat question: What types of actions have you taken to support social connectedness in your community amidst the pandemic?



Kris Bifulco

Connect Postvention Coordinator
Association of Oregon Community
Mental Health Programs



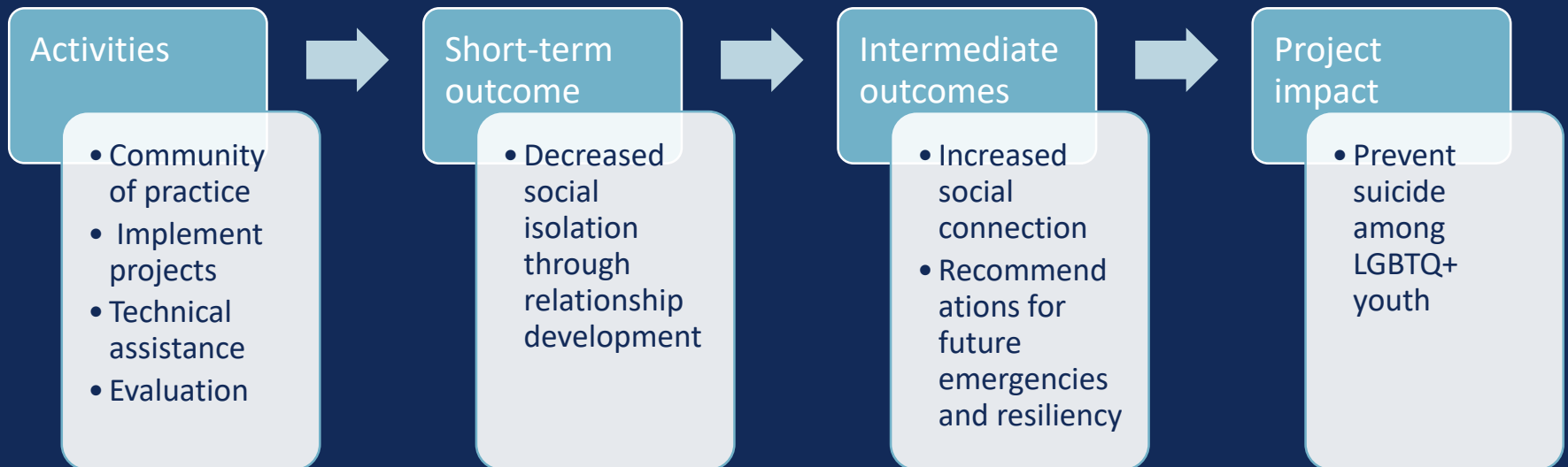
Annette Marcus

Suicide Prevention Policy Manager
Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide

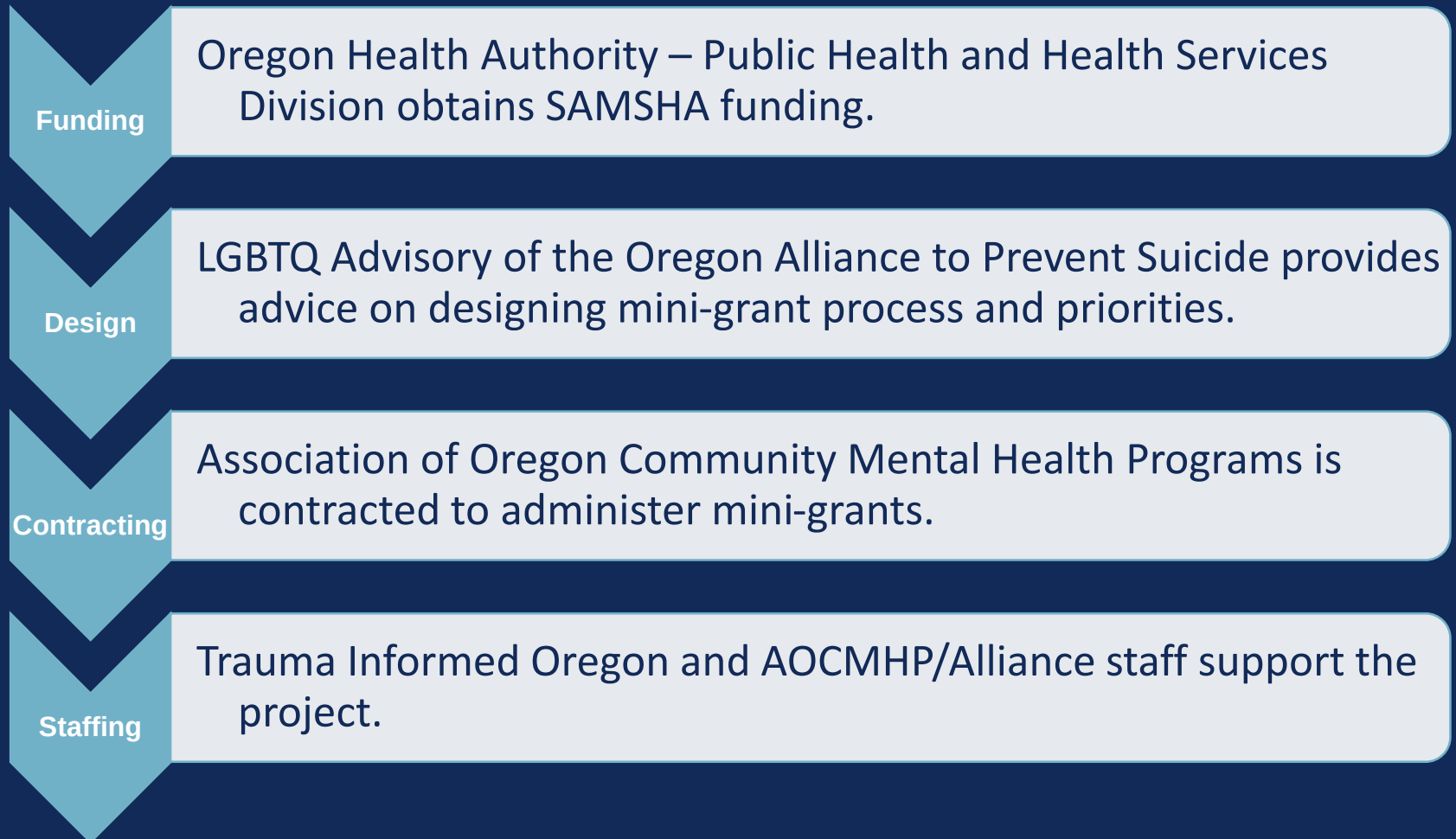
LGBTQ+ Minigrant Program

Purpose: to provide a low-barrier process for community organizations to receive funds to assist and uplift marginalized people as an approach to suicide and ACES prevention

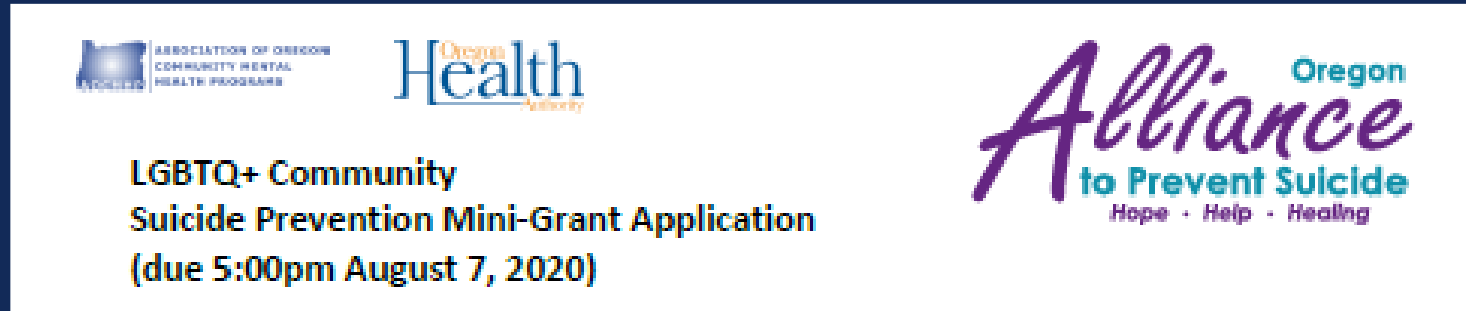
Excerpt from program logic model:



Process



The Application



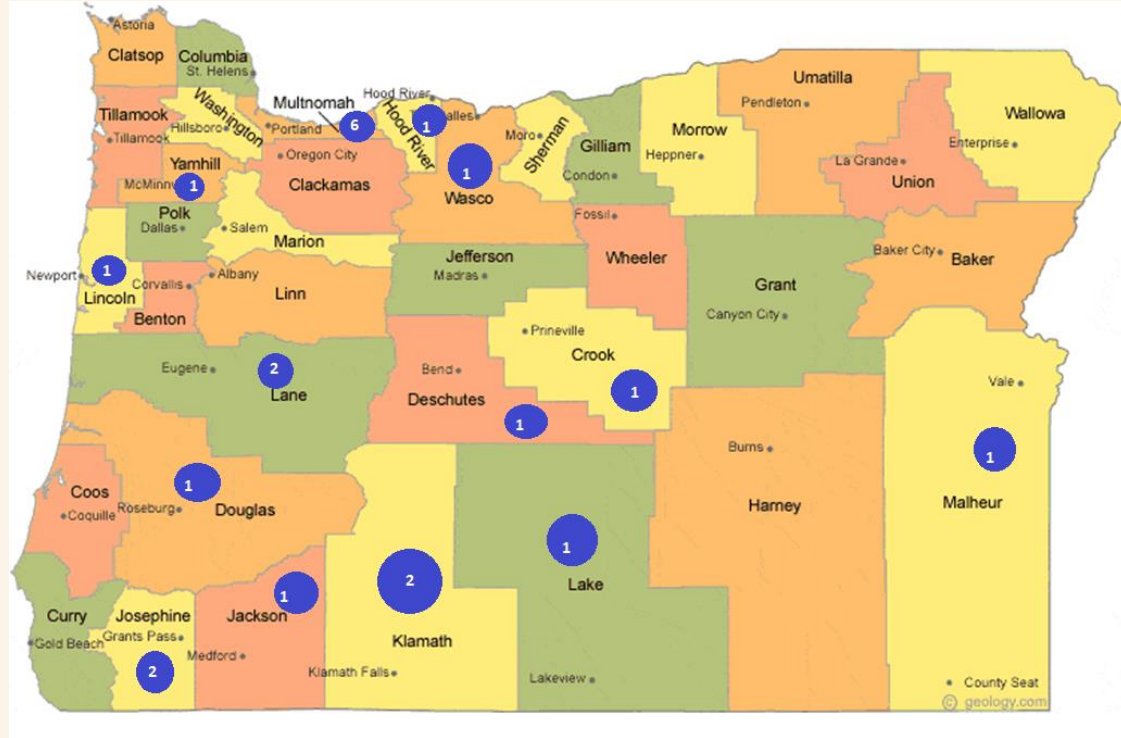
“We encourage organizations and community groups who have not previously focused specifically on suicide prevention work to consider applying. Applications for small projects and out-of-the-box ideas are welcome.”

- **Criteria:**
 - Increases protective factors for the LGBTQ+ community
 - Commitment to racial equity
 - Creative collaboration with local partners
 - Trauma-informed
 - COVID-responsive
- Priority given to historically under-resourced communities such as BIPOC, disabled, rural and frontier

4 have statewide reach

60% of Oregon's population is in the Portland-Metro Area (Multnomah County)

- 25% of all applications from Multnomah
- 30% of all grantees from Multnomah





HIV Alliance and TransPonder are honored to offer support to trans/gender diverse Oregonians during this critical time. Our Eugene-Springfield community has experienced so much trauma over the last months. With wildfires now displacing many in our community and burning through our cities' backyard, the need to come together is more important than ever.

HIV Alliance, microgrant recipient



Project Partners





Tony Diaz

Senior Program Director

AFTER
SCHOOL matters®

About After School Matters

After School Matters® is a non-profit organization that provides after-school and summer programs in the arts, communications and leadership, sports, and STEM to approximately **20,000 Chicago high school teens each year.**



Former Chicago First Lady Maggie Daley, pictured here with teens in 2009, co-founded Gallery 37 in 1991.

Reach and Impact

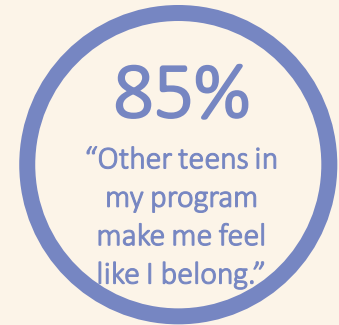
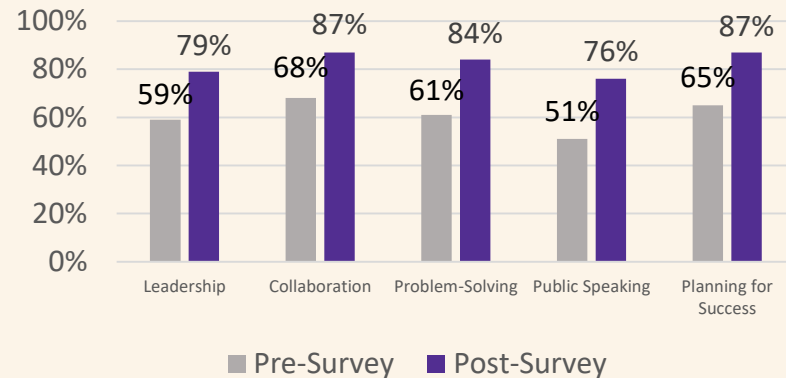
A Look at ASM Teen Demographics:

- 54% Black/African American; 34% Hispanic/Latinx; 5% Asian; 4% White
- 59% Female; 39% Male; 2% Other/Did Not Answer

High School Impact Compared to Non-Participating Peers:

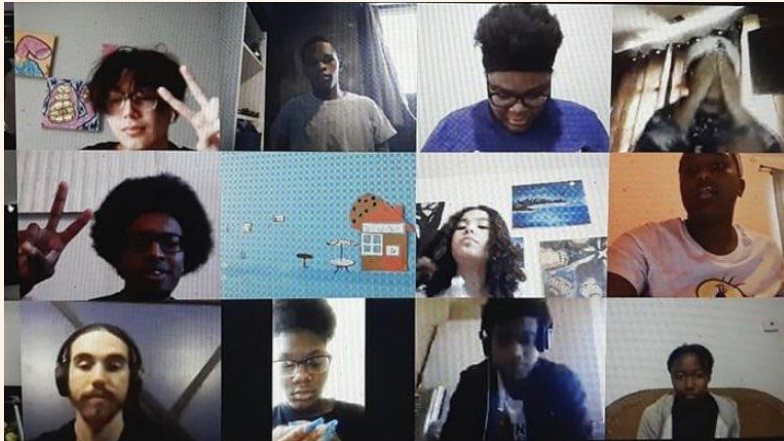
- Higher Freshmen On-Track Rate
- Better School Day Attendance Rate
- Higher Graduation Rate

Our Teens Develop 21st Century Skills



COVID-19 Response

After School Matters re-envisioned programs to provide safe, equitable and innovative remote learning opportunities during the pandemic for 10,000 Chicago teens in summer 2020, build bridges across the city, and increased accessibility.



Summer 2020 By the Numbers



120,000+ meals distributed



10,000 teens participated



5,000 supply packets delivered



1,100 devices provided



500 Google classrooms



139 partner organizations



90% daily attendance rate



79% of teens surveyed felt more hopeful about the future after completing programming



74% of teens surveyed used their stipend to help pay for necessities or help support their family

COVID-19 Response

After School Matters focused on 3 priority areas:

- **Program Continuity**
 - Quickly reorganized to provide remote learning programs for the first time starting with the Spring 2020 program session
- **Financial Assistance**
 - Continued paying teens and instructors through the spring (even during program pause) and summer sessions
 - These funds meant millions of dollars going back into the communities we serve
- **Additional and Critical Support Services**
 - Relieving Food Insecurity
 - Closing the Digital Divide
 - Providing Mental Health Support in Partnership with Adler University





Tony Diaz

Senior Program Director

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SCHOOL matters®

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**Text chat question:
Who are some partners
that you're working with
to promote
connectedness?**



Emily Allen

Senior Vice President of Programs

AARP Foundation

About AARP Foundation

AARP Foundation works to end senior poverty by helping vulnerable older adults build economic opportunity and social connectedness.

As AARP's charitable affiliate, we serve AARP members and nonmembers alike. Bolstered by vigorous legal advocacy, we spark bold, innovative solutions that foster resilience, strengthen communities and restore hope.

Increasing Economic Opportunity

Empowering low-income older adults with the skills and resources to increase their financial stability and overcome existing or future challenges.



Increasing Social Connectedness

Humans need connection. That's why we're exploring creative ways to help older adults connect and stay connected — to each other and to their communities.





Social isolation affects
nearly *1 in 5* older adults.

Isolation is a health issue.

Research shows that the negative health effects of chronic isolation and loneliness, while harmful at any age, are especially dangerous for people over 50. Social isolation and loneliness are associated with:

- Higher blood pressure
- Increased susceptibility to the flu
- Greater risk of heart disease
- Earlier onset of dementia

Social isolation among older adults is associated with an estimated **\$6.7 billion** in additional Medicare spending annually.

Social isolation
is as bad for
health as smoking
15 cigarettes
a day.



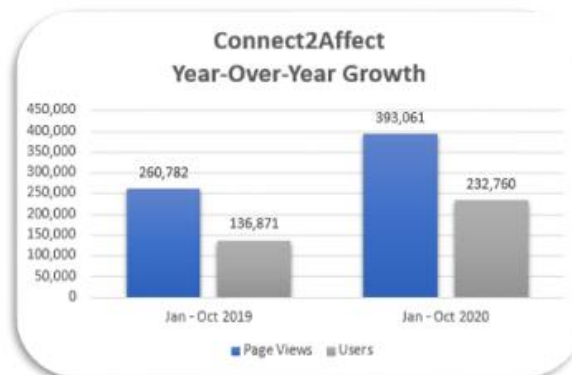
Connect2Affect features tools and resources to help evaluate isolation risk, reach out to others who may be feeling lonely and disconnected, and find practical ways to reconnect to the community.

- Increase social connectedness by addressing the root causes of social isolation through a **consumer portal** of curated evidence-based content and activities
- An easy-to-use **online assessment** and content that offers **recommendations for programs, activities and resources** that can help users connect to others and engage in the community, based on their individual needs, interests, and abilities
- A center of excellence and **clearinghouse of best practices and evidence based solutions** to address social isolation

Highlights

Connect2Affect Version 2.0 Launch

Web traffic has **increased 50%** year-over-year and assessment completions have doubled in the last year. **Over 100,000** individual assessments have been completed since the feature launched in 2017.



March

October

Connect2Affect Chatbot Launch

127,872 individuals have initiated conversation over text.



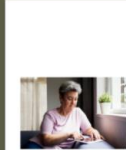
Social Check-In Voice Skill Promotion Begins



5 out of 5 stars
customer reviews on Amazon Marketplace



Recent Research



The Pandemic Effect: A Social Isolation Report

OCTOBER 6, 2020

AARP Foundation
For a future without senior poverty. UNITED HEALTH FOUNDATION



REPORT

The Pandemic Effect: A Social Isolation Report

This report explores the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on adults of all ages, to understand levels of social isolation during the pandemic, and to assess knowledge of how social isolation can impact a person's health.

Funded by AARP Foundation with the support of a grant from United Health Foundation.

AARP FOUNDATION



The **health care system** is poised to develop methods that identify **social isolation and loneliness** in health care settings.

[#isolationandloneliness](#)



REPORT

Social Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults Opportunities for the Health Care System

How health care providers can help reduce the adverse health impacts of social isolation and loneliness.

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES



**Text chat question:
What are some resources
you've found helpful to
promote connectedness
during the pandemic?**

Building a National Network



A driving force for health equity



CENTER FOR INNOVATION
AND WELLBEING



Coming Together



Edward Garcia
Co-Director, CESIL



Kris Bifulco
Connect Postvention
Coordinator, AOCMHP



Tony Diaz
Senior Program Director
After School Matters



Annette Marcus
Suicide Prevention Policy
Manager, AOCMHP



Emily Allen
Senior Vice President of
Programs, AARP Foundation



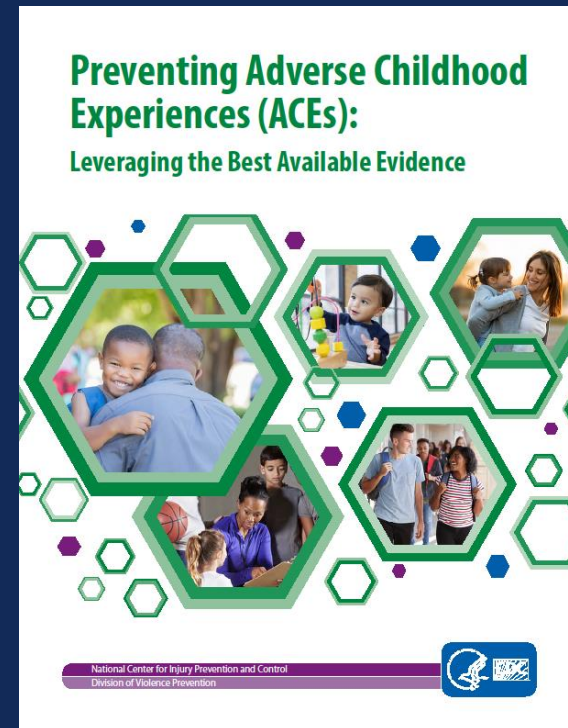
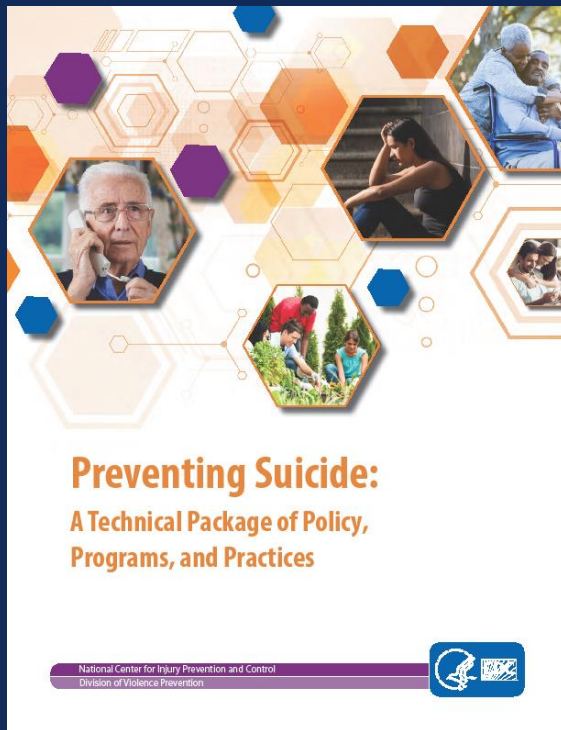
**Text Chat Question:
What would be most
helpful to you in terms
of next steps?**



Resources

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CDC Technical Packages



RWJF Community Grantees

Adapting Social Connection Strategies from Abroad



Webinar Recording: Solutions for Social Isolation

Oswaldo Mestre, Jr. of the City of Buffalo, Stephanie Allen of United Way of Mat-Su (Alaska), and RWJF Director Karabi Acharya, ScD, discussed what we can learn from other countries about building meaningful social connections to improve health and well-being.

▶ Play now

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HqqvrJK508E&feature=emb_logo

5TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
HEALTH AND... Social Connectedness
OCTOBER 20 & NOVEMBER 16, 2020





Mission: VetCheck

During the COVID-19 crisis, veterans are making supportive check-in calls to other veterans through Mission: VetCheck. A collaboration between the NYC Department of Veterans' Services, the Mayor's Office of ThriveNYC, and veteran-serving organizations, these calls provide veterans with information about how to access vital public services, including free meals, COVID-19 test sites locations, and mental health resources.



<https://thrivenyc.cityofnewyork.us/mission-vetcheck>

Community Development

September 2020

A Collaboration Between

Build Healthy Places Network

NeighborWorks AMERICA

Community Development Counteracts Isolation

Community Development can address the negative health impacts of isolation

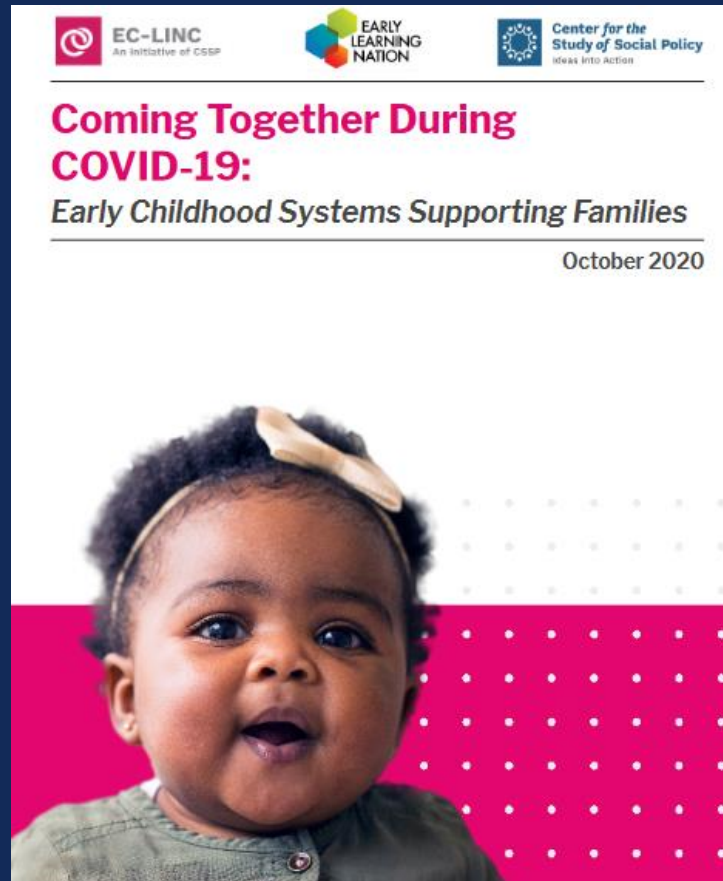
Found in both urban and [rural communities](#), social isolation can reduce access to support systems, sense of security and affordable community services, undermining mental and physical health and reducing quality of life. As a [growing epidemic in the US](#), social isolation is as significant a [health hazard](#) as alcohol and smoking, and more hazardous than obesity. [Social isolation and loneliness increase a person's risk](#) of premature death, is associated with increased risk of dementia, and can lead to higher rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide.

Multiple factors can contribute to social isolation: from [redlining](#), [discriminatory housing policies](#), [living in rural areas](#) and [gentrification](#), to [resource constraints](#) and [societal barriers of aging](#). Isolation disproportionately affects marginalized communities including older adults, minorities, rural residents, LGBTQ+, people with disabilities, and immigrants.

When it comes to determining one's health, ZIP Code is more important than genetic code; Community Development is in the ZIP Code improvement business. This series of fact sheets from NeighborWorks America and the Build Healthy Places Network highlights the common aims, evidence base, and what works for health and community development.

[https://buildhealthyplaces.org/content/uploads/2020/09/BHPN_Factsheet-The Intersection of Community Development Mental Health.pdf](https://buildhealthyplaces.org/content/uploads/2020/09/BHPN_Factsheet-The%20Intersection%20of%20Community%20Development%20Mental%20Health.pdf)

Early Childhood Systems



<https://cssp.org/resource/coming-together-during-covid-19/>

Need Help? Know Someone Who Does?



Online Lifeline Crisis Chat: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/>