Key Terms

Social connectedness is an umbrella term that encompasses the structural, functional, and quality aspects of how individuals connect to each other.

Social isolation is the objective lack of (or limited) social contact with others.

Loneliness is the perception of social isolation or the subjective feeling of being lonely

What Goes Into Your Health?

- Socioeconomic Factors — Education, Job Status, Family/Social Support, Income, Community Safety
- 40%
- 10% — Physical Environment
- 30% — Health Behaviors — Tobacco Use, Diet & Exercise, Alcohol Use, Sexual Activity
- 20 % — Health Care — Access to Care Quality of Care

Source: Institute for Clinical Systems Improvements, Going Beyond Clinical Walls: Solving Complex Problems (Oct 2014)
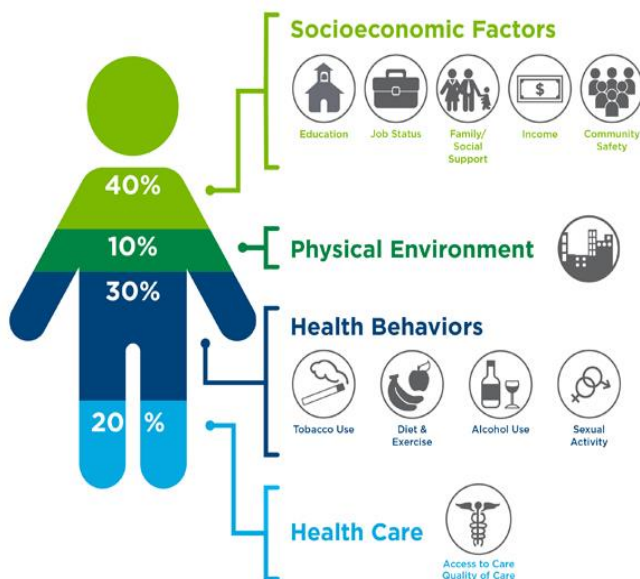
The Bridgespan Group

In recent years, research on the connection between social connectedness and health have highlighted the following key facts:

- Loneliness, living alone, and poor social connections are as bad for your health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.[1]
- One in three adults over 50 lack regular companionship.[2]

With support from the AARP Foundation, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine formed an ad hoc committee to study how social isolation and loneliness affect health and quality of life. They made the recommendations below:

1. Develop a more robust evidence base for effective assessment, prevention, and intervention strategies for social isolation and loneliness
2. Translate current research into health care practices in order to reduce the negative health impacts of social isolation and loneliness
3. Improve awareness of the health and medical impacts of social isolation and loneliness across the health care workforce and among members of the public
4. Strengthen ongoing education and training related to social isolation and loneliness in older adults for the health care workforce
5. Strengthen ties between the health care system and community-based networks and resources that address social isolation and loneliness in older adults

Links/Resources for NWD Systems

Screening: National Academies Press (NAP) - This chapter from the NAP discusses the pros and cons of scales to measure social connectedness/isolation https://www.nap.edu/read/25663/chapter/8#121

Interventions: Older Adults Technology Services

Leading Age Center for Aging Services Technologies

ADvancing States -Addressing the Social Isolation of Older Adults during the COVID-19 Crisis

References
[1] Holt-Lunstad, Julianne; Smith, Timothy B.; Baker, Mark; Harris, Tyler; and Stephenson, David, "Loneliness and Social Isolation as Risk Factors for Mortality: A Meta-Analytic Review" (2015)
[2] Available at https://www.aarp.org/health/conditions-treatments/info-2019/study-isolation-health-risks.html

Notes

Use this space to take notes from the interview, your break out session, or the large group de-brief.

Discussion questions to consider:
1. What were your reactions to the interview with Virginia?
2. Did anything sound like something you would try?
3. What would you need to get started?
4. Anyone want to share something similar they are doing?
5. What excites you about this topic area?