

# NEIGHBOURHOOD TOOLKIT

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*Ideas, strategies and  
resources to strengthen  
seniors' social connection  
in neighbourhoods*

**February 2019**

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## I. Neighbourhood Toolkit:

### Purpose & Background

This toolkit brings together ideas, strategies and resources to strengthen social connections among seniors and others in their neighbourhoods. It will be useful to local community interest groups including neighbourhood associations, seniors' organizations, community services, faith-based groups, and to citizen groups and individuals.

Developed under the Nanaimo Seniors Connect project, with a focus to reduce social isolation in seniors, this toolkit includes real examples successfully delivered in Nanaimo neighbourhoods as a part of this project, as well as best practices from other parts of Canada and abroad.

Examples and strategies are drawn from the experience of groups working in neighbourhoods to increase seniors' social inclusion.



Useful tools, website links and resources are marked with this icon, and a list of resources are included in appendices.

### Why is Social Connectedness Important?

Strong social connections and a sense of belonging among citizens is important to communities for many reasons:

- A sense of belonging is essential for the vitality of communities and community organizations, and facilitates greater connection, happiness and increased contributions to society and community.<sup>1</sup>
- A strong caring community has been identified as one of the most effective tools in preventing crime.
- Further, when neighbours are friendly and interact positively with each other people feel more satisfied with where they are living, contributing to neighbourhood stability.<sup>2</sup>

This document focuses on seniors and how their social connections and participation can be facilitated/increased at the neighbourhood level, but ultimately can positively impact all age groups.

### Seniors are important community members

- Seniors who are engaged in their communities contribute to its' vibrancy with their skills, knowledge and time as volunteers or workers.
- Seniors are often the backbone of community/service organizations, and as consumers, support businesses and services.
- Seniors spend more time in their immediate neighbourhood and often feel a higher degree of commitment to their neighbourhood than other age groups.<sup>3</sup>

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## When seniors do not fully participate in their community

- There is a loss to the community's volunteer sector and the paid economy.
- Communities can suffer from a lack of social unity, higher social costs, and the loss of the wealth of experience that seniors bring to their neighbourhoods and communities.<sup>4</sup>

## Neighbourhood associations and other community groups are well positioned to increase social connections amongst seniors and others, and to benefit from doing so:

- By strengthening relationships between seniors and others in communities, a sense of neighbourhood safety and a sense of community pride develops.
- By including seniors, they feel they belong and are more likely to volunteer, donate to the community, and be involved in community governance.<sup>5</sup>

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## Social Isolation and Seniors

It is estimated that 30 percent of Canadian seniors are at risk of becoming socially isolated<sup>6</sup>, with negative impacts for themselves and their communities. Social isolation among seniors can be a result of personal, social and/or systemic factors, often in combination. Many seniors experience physical changes (such as vision or hearing losses, or reduced mobility) and life changes (such as the loss of a spouse, caregiving, relocation), which can reduce the number of social contacts and limit activities.

Social and environmental factors, such as low income, inadequate transportation and difficulty in accessing information about activities/resources/services may also increase a senior's chance of becoming socially isolated. How much these factors affect people depends on the economic, personal, material and social resources that they have available to them. Although seniors' life experience in managing earlier difficult times can be helpful in managing changes/losses, when challenges outweigh the resources available, social isolation may occur.



***Neighbourhood Associations and other community groups can have an impact on reducing the risk or degree of seniors' social isolation.***

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## Example: Facilitating Social Connection at the Neighbourhood Level



Mary Hunt is a retired widowed secretary and has been an active volunteer in neighbourhood activities (salmon habitat reclamation, community barbeque) and a supportive neighbour (driving others). Now over 80 and with few age peers left, Mary has developed low vision. She is no longer able to drive or to use her computer to obtain information about local activities. She is lonely, misses making a contribution to her community, and feels as

though her world is rapidly shrinking.

Community groups can reduce the risk of social isolation Mary and other seniors face if they support seniors' capacity as active neighbours/community members. Doing so will reap the benefits of seniors' wisdom, experience and volunteerism, and of a more stable, secure and caring neighbourhood.

Mary's neighbourhood association had been collecting information about their neighbourhood and its' members for some time. When Mary stopped coming to meetings, they were able to find someone who would drive her, and to provide her with large-print notices about neighbourhood community events. They recruited her to the membership engagement committee, and she is responsible for calling members to alert them to events. Discovering there are many members who cannot attend due to transportation she organized a carpooling bank.

Both Mary and her neighbourhood have benefitted from the initiatives taken by the neighbourhood association. If the neighbourhood association partnered with other community groups, more benefits would accrue. For example, if information about the neighbourhood association, its events and opportunities to ride share were publicized in local businesses, on local radio and public TV, both membership and participation would increase, building capacity to do more. A partnership with the local food bank to obtain free food for peer led cooking classes for single seniors and younger adults would increase connections between generations.

### What is a Neighbourhood?

A neighbourhood, for the purpose of this toolkit, can be a bounded geographic entity within a municipality/city, or less formally it can be a mobile home park, a vertical building, a street or city block of interest. Each of these will differ in scale and size of population, and in approach required. Community refers to a town or city, or to a neighbourhood as defined above.

A focus on neighbourhoods provides a manageable scale where people can often see first-hand the impacts of their actions. This, in turn, has the potential to create more attachment to people and place, strengthen pride, and promote more engagement. Shared connection to place helps engage residents and organizations in building long-term resilience to respond to a multitude of changing situations. Using a "place-based approach", supports people, organizations and groups in neighbourhoods to build relationships and social capital where they live ([www.resilientneighbourhoods.ca](http://www.resilientneighbourhoods.ca)).

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Neighbourhood Associations and other community groups have an advantage in engaging residents to increase social connection and participation in that they are recognized entities. Organizations from the outside lack local roots and will need to spend considerable time networking, gathering information and building trust. Partnerships can however expedite this and have the advantage of sharing knowledge, volunteers, skills, space and other resources that can be put towards the common goal.


## II. Let's Get Started!

### 1. Know the Neighbourhood

Knowing who lives in the neighbourhood and demographic and contextual factors that might combine to increase the risk of social isolation can help target efforts.

- Information about household sizes, ownership/rental, length of residence, ages, income levels and ethnicity can be obtained from the municipality or regional district.
- The local health authority may be able to share information about the parts of the neighbourhood where there is a concentration of frail seniors receiving community services.

Likewise, understanding the geography and transportation systems in different neighbourhood areas can help locate where seniors who do not drive are most likely to be limited in getting around the community. Mapping where services and businesses are located can identify under-resourced areas where good transportation is a necessity.

 **Community Needs Assessment Walking Survey** is a tool for enlisting older adults and others to assess the age - friendliness of a neighborhood or community. Focusing on such areas as safety, the presence of retail amenities and the availability of community services, the survey is designed to be completed by volunteers walking designated areas and recording their observations. The observations, when compiled, can be used to identify and begin a dialogue on areas in need of improvement. Visit [www.Nyam.org](http://www.Nyam.org), and other resources [here](#) for more on walking and windshield surveys.

### 2. Engage Residents

#### **Build Awareness About Advantages of Strong Neighbourhood Connections**

To engage neighbours in increasing their social connections amongst seniors and others, they first need to recognize the value of doing so, and that there is room for improvement in their neighbourhood.

The City, as part of its age friendly community initiative, is well positioned to raise awareness about the value of social connection to communities. The Health Region is well equipped to raise awareness about the negative health consequences of social isolation. To build on this, Neighbourhood Associations, community groups and community services can share information from the campaign with their members/clients and host speakers.

## Find Out What Neighbours Think

Residents can be asked directly about social connection in their neighbourhoods at small meetings/focus groups, at larger community meetings or through surveys mailed out, on line or at carried out at community events or gathering places. A variety of approaches is most likely to garner the broadest/most information—for example not everyone can access/use on-line surveys, a number of meetings may be required to accommodate different schedules. Regardless of the methods used it is important to gather information from diverse residents (e.g., all ages, home owners and renters, income, etc.).

See Appendices 1-3:



- Neighbourhood Connection Survey
- Barriers to Participation Survey
- Exploring Neighbourhood Needs & Assets

## Reaching Out to Seniors

To reach seniors, a peer-to-peer approach is often most effective. In one community, trained volunteers with identifying badges go door-to-door in their own neighbourhoods to introduce themselves to seniors and offer them information about community activities and a resource card of local services. They offer to return to discuss social opportunities with them and, where appropriate, accompany the senior to an event and at which they will ensure connections are made.

Town Hall meetings can also harness the energy and creativity of large numbers of people.



[The Social Isolation of Seniors: Ideas Exchange Events toolkit](#) is designed to help people and organizations host effective town hall meetings to exchange ideas and respond to the social isolation of seniors in their communities. It contains tools, templates and support resources for hosting an ideas exchange event. It supports large and small events, half day to 2-day events, and includes facilitator notes, tools for planning, event process and documentation.

### Example: Rallying Around a Common Concern

A rash of home robberies and a home invasion involving seniors left residents in a neighbourhood very concerned and anxious to increase their security.

One resident contacted the Neighbourhood Association and a meeting was organized to which the community policing representative was invited. He provided tips on home security and information about Block Watch, following which residents formed a committee to implement Block Watch.

Once this was accomplished, the resident group turned to the City to learn about Emergency Preparedness. The City provided space for the meeting and expertise. The residents' efforts in themselves brought neighbours together, strengthened their connections, and fueled a desire to maintain/build neighbourliness through an annual street party, funded through a City grant.

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## Support Champions

Opportunities to engage residents sometimes come from residents themselves. Issue-based initiatives occur when a community concern emerges that is important to residents, such as increased crime in a neighbourhood. The issue gives residents a shared purpose, reason to come together and energy to take action. The Neighbourhood Association, or other local community groups, can provide support for Champions who emerge, or provide leadership until they do.

Previous to the example activity (right column p. 6), the Neighbourhood Association was somewhat stagnant and had difficulty building its' membership. The concerns about security gave them a point around which to rally residents and led to a renewed relationship with the City, more members, and a greater recognition by all that being a good neighbor benefits everyone.

Once the primary issues brought up by residents are addressed, Neighbourhood Associations/community groups can use the momentum to focus directly on strengthening social connections amongst seniors and others. Following are some strategies that community groups have found successful in increasing connections in their neighbourhoods.

## III. Strategies for Facilitating/Supporting Social Connections

### 1. Neighbourhood Meeting Spaces

Capitalizing on natural meeting places in the neighbourhood, or creating new spaces is a simple way to promote neighbourhood connections.



#### Pop-up Street Libraries

Pop-up street libraries are small dry storage areas, usually built by individual residents, and often placed in their yards, close enough to the street to be visible. The pop-up is used freely by neighbours to exchange books informally—no records or regulations. It provides a place for casual meet-ups and a focus for conversation to “break the ice”. There can be as many pop-ups in a neighbourhood as residents feel like building. Seniors who may not be able to build a pop-up might be willing to host one if someone else provided the unit. Here are some additional ideas and resources [here](#).

#### Notice Boards

Notice boards can also serve the purpose as a gathering and conversation point for neighbours as well as a source for neighbourhood communication. Some pop-ups are used as information boards too. Identifying a good location and procuring permissions to place the notice board can be a neighbourhood activity in itself that facilitates connection. Stratas and condo/apartment buildings are obvious spots for notice boards; elsewhere local businesses, churches or schools may provide space.



### **Buddy Bench**

A [Buddy Bench](#) is any bench to which people naturally gravitate. This can be capitalized on by encouraging neighbours of any age to strike up conversations with older adults sitting on the bench, and/or share community information about activities and services.



### **Neighbourhood Outreach Ambassadors**

A more expanded version of the community bench is a formal volunteer outreach initiative. The [Burnaby Neighbourhood House program](#) has trained senior volunteers to identify and approach older adults in their neighbourhoods who appear lonely. The volunteers frequent coffee shops, libraries, parks and other public spaces, but will approach seniors they see in the course of their regular personal routines too. These volunteers, who wear identification badges, strike up a conversation and provide information when appropriate about community services. They will also offer to accompany the senior to a community event and ensure they make connections.



### **Social Connectedness Training Workshops**

These free workshops are designed to teach the public how to identify and respond to seniors who appear at risk of social isolation, are led by trained facilitators and offered free of charge in British Columbia by [COSCO](#). Contact COSCO by email: [ws\\_coord@coscoworkshops.org](mailto:ws_coord@coscoworkshops.org).

## **2. Neighbourhood Events**

Neighbourhood events can bring neighbours together with very little commitment required, but still providing opportunity for connection. Simply putting a name to a face and/or address can break down barriers among neighbours so they can say “hi” and perhaps converse the next time they see each other.

### **Block or Street Parties**

These are a traditional way of bringing people of all ages together. Municipalities often have guides for planning these events, and sometimes even offer small grants. Frequently the municipality can close streets and provide some equipment (e.g., ropes for “tug- a- war”). Tents for shelter can sometimes be obtained as well, and if not, local businesses can be approached. Local grocery stores or restaurants may also be willing to donate food and or beverages for recognition and goodwill in the neighbourhood.



**Vancouver Foundation** [Neighbourhood Small Grants](#) program offers grants to a number of communities (not just Vancouver area).



**Genwell Project** is a Canadian NFP organization whose mission is to make the world a happier, healthier place through face to face social connection and inspiring action. While not focused specifically on seniors, the [website](#) has some excellent ideas, resources and templates for neighbourhood gatherings and more.



### Local “Living History” Series

Local history events are often popular, formal archival history as well as the personal stories of older residents. Living History is an oral history series that features local residents telling true stories to a live audience. Presentations are usually about 20 minutes and audience gets to ask questions and to add their own stories.

### Eating Together

Events that bring neighbourhood people together are a tried and true way of securing participation and facilitating conversation.

### Neighbourhood Tasks/Activities

People are most likely to participate in activities that are meaningful to them and where results can be seen. Community activities where participants work together on a common task can bring neighbours together who want to contribute to their community’s well-being. These events are bonding opportunities and often lead to more social connections and neighbourhood engagement.

Multigenerational work parties provide opportunity for generations to get to know each other and can reduce ageism. Examples are:

- Removing invasive weeds and plant native plants in parks and other public spaces. Seniors who are unable to participate may have local knowledge about native plants to share.
- Removing garbage from parks, play grounds and other public places.
- Co-creating street banners or murals.



**The “Street Art Team”** was a partnership between a neighbourhood and students from City Studio in Vancouver to co-design a vibrant on-street mural around an intersection. The pilot project hosted four community meet-ups for residents to brainstorm design ideas and to form new relationships. The results were a vibrant mural, painted over the summer, that serves as a symbol of neighbourhood identity and connectedness<sup>8</sup>. Visit the website [here](#).

### Example: “Come to the Table” Project

A collaboration between the City and several community groups and funded through [PlanH](#), this project leveraged meals to bring the community together.

Three meals were hosted under tents in a low income, neighbourhood with a high number of seniors: Breakfast (a casual “come and go” event), Lunch (picnic/BBQ); and a dinner (sit-down “fancy” meal on the street). This initiative aimed to generate ideas for neighbourhood improvements and how to overcome social barriers to connectedness.

All residents on that block were invited in advance to every event, through flyers, posters and going door-to-door. Each event was progressive both in terms of the level of familiarity between participants, and the depth of the facilitated conversation about neighbourhood connections. Participants were told that there will be an opportunity to decide on and spend a small amount of money (~\$1,000) on a neighbourhood improvement of their choosing.

In effect, every meal served as a focus group with a facilitated discussion and a data recorder, without the sterile feeling of a meeting room.

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Gardening is a popular hobby that can involve all generations. Sometimes residents lack the space to garden, the tools, the expertise or physical stamina to garden. Experienced gardeners, often seniors, can share their knowledge with others. Neighbourhood Associations and community groups can partner with others to develop multi-generational gardening projects.

- Local elementary schools where space can be exchanged for teaching children about gardening
- The City to procure space for a community garden
- Residential care facilities where space can be exchanged for the opportunity for residents to participate in gardening.
- Seed and plant exchanges among neighbours
- Gleaning fruit trees where residents cannot pick or use it all. Gleaners and residents share the bounty with excess going to food banks.

Walking groups are simple to organize and promote good health and social connections. Informal coffee meet-ups are another way for neighbours to meet. Sometimes all it takes is someone to initiate activities like these and they continue on their own.

A Vancouver resident initiated a project to develop a mini-park at a traffic circle that has since attracted neighbours and is a popular place to connect. The mini-park has a table, artwork, and well-tended plants. Neighbours collaborate to store the table and chairs and to supply water and a kettle. A local business supplies coffee. Every Sunday during the summer, residents serve free coffee to passer-bys. Local neighbours know about the mini-park through notices delivered every few weeks. Within the neighbourhood, the mini-park has an additional benefit because it acts as a traffic calming measure.

### **Neighbourhood Exchanges**

When neighbours are socially connected and trust has been established, opportunities arise for cooperative projects to support each other around common interests, needs or concerns. For example:

- Bulk and/or organic food clubs
- [Block Watch](#)
- Tool Exchanges



**The Vancouver Tool Library** is a cooperative tool lending library in East Vancouver. The library is based on a vision of a community empowered by having the tools and skills needed to transform their homes and communities into vibrant and sustainable spaces. The tool library aims to reduce the costs of improving and greening places by sharing a variety of tools. Members can borrow tools for home repair, gardening, bicycle maintenance and more. The tool library also acts as a community space, as it offers affordable workshops, hosts community events, and provides volunteer opportunities. [www.vancouvertoollibrary.com](http://www.vancouvertoollibrary.com)



### **Support Exchange**

[Neighbourhood Connections](#) is a program run by the Jewish Family Service Agency, which is about linking seniors with volunteers in their neighbourhood.

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Volunteer teams respond to seniors' requests for assistance with one-off tasks, such as picking up dry cleaning, shopping for groceries, or taking a vacuum to be repaired. Volunteers are trained and dedicate 1 to 2 hours per month. The program allows people to volunteer in a way that is convenient to them, as it is based in their own neighbourhood. The program also provides the opportunity for neighbours to get to know each other through a giving relationship.

### **Supporting Social Connection in Congregate Neighbourhoods**

Town home stratas, mobile home parks and vertical building have the advantage of being self-contained/bounded neighbourhood "captive audiences", often with common issues. They can however be difficult to engage, and lack of common meeting spaces often must be overcome. Research from the Vancouver Foundation has found that apartment residents are more isolated from their neighbours than residents living in town houses or single detached homes. They also noted that those who rent have weaker connections with neighbours compared to those who own.

It often takes a champion (resident, building manager, or property manager) to bring neighbours together by creating social spaces for neighbourly interactions, or introducing neighbours directly. Community groups/neighbourhood associations may be invited in to these neighbourhoods when there is a common issue to be addressed with which residents want help. Parachuting in without an invitation does not usually work unless time is taken to identify a champion who can then be supported to drive actions or projects. Here are a few examples:

- **Ask Lauren**, a community concierge project, aims to help residents get to know the neighbourhood and each other. The project was designed to create a welcoming and friendly atmosphere in vertical apartment buildings. The building management championed the initiative and partnered with City Studio Vancouver students. This toolkit describes how to implement the [Community Concierge project](#).
- **Project Change** is a personal pursuit of a Vancouver resident living in a Vancouver apartment building who initiated actions to bring his neighbours together. He donated a coffee card for neighbours, organized residents to write a thank you card for their postman and started a book exchange in the lobby. These actions led residents to leave more sticky notes and letters for each other as well as to create an apartment Facebook page. In addition, another resident was inspired to host an apartment party in their unit to develop neighbourly relationships<sup>9</sup>.
- Another champion, a single senior, moved into a small strata and set out to meet her neighbours – her motivation was to meet people with whom to socialize, but also to have neighbours whom she could call on for help or perhaps borrow a cup of sugar. To her surprise, very few neighbours seemed to know each other, perhaps because many of the town homes had recently turned over as residents aged out. Additionally, there was no common room for gatherings. She began by organizing a summer BBQ. She found two like-minded people and they went door-to-door inviting people. About one third of residents attended. She initiated a book

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library. She proposed starting a social committee to the strata council. They surveyed residents re their interests. There is now a regular pot luck/BBQ and plans for a community garage sale. The key was the champion!

## IV. Promoting Neighbourliness



### **Say Hi" Campaign**

This initiative encourages people to break the ice with their neighbours by simply acknowledging each other by saying Hi. It is also promoted in schools. The campaign promotes a sense of caring and belonging that strengthens community. The organizers state that a strong, caring community is one of the most effective crime prevention tools. Visit the website [here](#).



### **SHINE Movement**

The Share In Neighbourliness or [SHINE Movement](#) is intended to engage residents in the promotion of small acts of kindness. The SHINE Movement focuses on encouraging residents to take the initiative to forge neighbourly ties on a personal level with the people staying nearest to them. Residents are encouraged to join the SHINE Movement by saying "Hello" or "Thank You" to a neighbour by giving them a SHINE card with personalized messages. Every card entry is put into a lucky draw with 30 winners. A photo contest is also held for the most creative or touching photo entries of good neighbourliness. Since the launch of the SHINE Movement, over 23,800 neighbourly acts have been registered.

### **How Well Do You Know Your Neighbours?**

An older woman in a townhouse strata took the initiative to increase social neighbourliness between herself and neighbours, to be Good Neighbours.



She asked herself: What can I do to make my neighbourhood a kinder place? Her experience is summarized [here](#) as part of the JRF's programme on 'Risk, Trust and Relationships'.

## V. More Resources

### **Hidden Citizens: How Can We Identify the Most Lonely Older Adults?**

[The Hidden Citizens project](#) explores current understandings of and approaches to identifying loneliness and aims to provide innovative insights into how outreach can be improved. The report summarizes what is known about the factors that influence pathways into loneliness, how existing interventions and programs identify lonely older people, and what tools are currently available for identifying lonely older people. It also provides examples of good practice for 'pathways out of loneliness', which are presented with illustrative quotations from the research.

### **How You Can Reduce Loneliness in Your Neighbourhood**

A how to guide (based on key learnings from the above report) for reducing loneliness in neighbourhoods can be found [here](#).

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## **Resilient Streets**

The Resilient Streets initiative is part of the Building Resilient Neighbourhoods Project, which is led by the Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria and Transition Victoria. The program offers the [Resilient Streets Toolkit](#) for residents, which is a guide about how neighbours can begin hands-on projects with limited funding. The toolkit provides examples of projects in the areas of gatherings and celebrations, placemaking, the sharing economy, as well as peer learning and action.

## **Building Resilient Communities: Four Years of Learning 2012-2016**

Description of project, including examples of activities, and summary of learning: what it is that makes citizens and organizational representatives become interested and more involved in building resilience, what helps keep them engaged and taking action, and what helps them sustain their resilience efforts. Visit the website [here](#).

## **Ideas Exchange Event Toolkit**

Designed to help people and organizations host effective town hall meetings to exchange ideas and respond to the social isolation of seniors in their communities. [The Social Isolation of Seniors: Ideas Exchange Events toolkit](#) contains tools, templates and support resources for hosting an ideas exchange event. It supports large and small events, half day to 2-day events, and includes facilitator notes, tools for planning, event process and documentation.

## **Making Your Community Livable for All Ages: What's Working!**

Describes some key strategies in the US for effectively developing [Livable Community initiatives](#). This report draws from the experiences of local communities—those that have taken major steps forward and those that have struggled; all of these communities have learned important lessons along the way. There is an assessment tool and examples of the work of six communities. They have identified and discuss 10 strategies for advancing livability for all ages in community.

## **Building Neighbourhood Social Resilience**

This reference from the [UBC Sustainability Group](#) provides valuable insight into what is being done, and what is suggested to create more connected neighbourhoods.

## **City Studio Vancouver**

[City Studio Vancouver](#) aims to shift the way students, City staff, faculty and community members work together to co-create solutions for our city.

This resource provides diverse examples of small neighbourhood-based projects.

## **Social Isolation of Seniors: Understanding the Issue and Finding Solutions**

Provides information about senior's social isolation and about the need for multi partner collective socially innovative approaches to address it. Examples of strategies/projects across Canada are provided. Visit the website [here](#).

## **Plan H**

[PlanH](#), implemented by BC Healthy Communities Society, facilitates local government learning, partnership development and planning for healthier communities where we live, learn, work and play. Working together with health authorities, UBCM and the Ministry of Health, PlanH supports the Province's health promotion strategy. Visit the [Age Friendly Streets-The campaign for small acts of neighbourliness](#).

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## References:

- <sup>1</sup> <http://www.newstorygroup.ca/resources/enhancing-belonging-resource-guide/>
- <sup>2</sup> Chia, E. (2014). [Building Neighbourhood Social Resilience, UBC Sustainability Group.](#)
- <sup>3</sup> Age UK (2015) [Promising approaches to reducing loneliness and isolation in later life, p44](#)
- <sup>4</sup> [Social Isolation of Seniors: Understanding the Issues and Finding Solutions](#)
- <sup>5</sup> [Social Isolation of Seniors: Understanding the Issues and Finding Solutions](#)
- <sup>6</sup> [Social Isolation of Seniors: Understanding the Issues and Finding Solutions](#)
- <sup>7</sup> Social Isolation of Seniors: Volume II – [Ideas Exchange Event Toolkit](#)
- <sup>8</sup> Chia, E. (2014). [Building Neighbourhood Social Resilience. UBC Sustainability Group](#)
- <sup>9</sup> Chia, E. (2014). [Building Neighbourhood Social Resilience. UBC Sustainability Group](#)

For questions about this toolkit, please contact: [bettertogethernanaimo@gmail.com](mailto:bettertogethernanaimo@gmail.com).

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**Appendix1: Neighbourhood Connection Survey**

**Neighbourhood Connections**

We would like to learn more about the things that would help your neighborhood create better social connections.

A little about you and those close to you:

Age:  16-23  24-54  55-64  65-74  75-84  85+

Children and youth who live with you:

Age:  0-5  6-11  12-15

A little about you and your community:

1. How long have you lived in this neighbourhood? \_\_\_\_

Rent  Own

2. How many neighbors do you know by their first name?

3. How many neighbors have you spent time with socially?

4. How connected do you feel socially in your neighbourhood?

1 2 3 4 5

(Please Circle One. **1**= disconnected and **5**=Very connected)

Is there anything else you would like to add?

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## Appendix 2: Barriers to Participation Survey

### BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION SURVEY

Age: (please circle) under 35- 55; 55-70, 70 – 80, over 80 Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

I participate in recreation activities	3 x per week	2 x per week	1 x per week	Rarely	Never
What are the barriers to my participation?	Time	Money	transportation	Health	Other (please explain)

I participate in cultural activities	3 x per week	2 x per week	1 x per week	Rarely	Never
What are the barriers to my participation?	Time	Money	transportation	Health	Other (please explain)

I participate in social activities	3 x per week	2 x per week	1 x per week	Rarely	Never
What are the barriers to my participation?	Time	Money	transportation	Health	Other (please explain)

I have opportunities to lead activities and contribute my skills or knowledge to my community	3 x per week	2 x per week	1 x per week	Rarely	Never
What are the barriers to my participation?	Time	Money	transportation	Health	Other (please explain)

If activities were offered in your neighbourhood, would you attend? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_.

What kind of activities would you attend? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



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## **Appendix 3: Exploring Neighbourhood Needs & Assets**

### **Exploring Neighborhood Needs/Assets**

Early contact with the community can soften the way for future engagement and learn about neighbourhood needs and strengths.

**Purpose:** Early conversations in the neighborhood are expected to do the following:  
Develop goodwill and positive relationships:

Create interest in local seniors' well-being and barriers they face  
Identify seniors' unmet needs particularly social isolation  
Identify community strengths & assets (space, groups, involvement opportunities)

**Possible Conversation Openers:** "I am a volunteer/student interested in learning more about how seniors manage in your community. Do you have a few minutes to talk to me about this?"

What programs/services/amenities are easily available to seniors?

What gets in the way of seniors participating in the community?

What needs do seniors have that currently aren't met here?

What opportunities do you see for seniors to participate more fully in the community?

What do you like best about your local community?

**Documentation:** It is important that you listen attentively to the speaker and let the conversation flow naturally (e.g. all questions may not be appropriate). You can ask if it is ok to make a few notes as they speak or wait until afterward to capture the essence of the conversation & possibly use quotes. The attachment can help organize the comments into key categories.

### **Summary of Neighborhood Conversations:**

**Date:**                      **Recorder:**                      **# in Conversation:**

**Strengths:**

**Barriers:**

**Unmet Needs:**

**Improvement Opportunities:**

**Other: (Use back of sheet as needed)**