

LET NO ONE BE ALONE

Reaching out and connecting with older adults
to reduce isolation and loneliness



RESOURCE 4



Create circles of support

Viv, in her 90s, lives alone in her own home. At the start of the pandemic, she and three other single older adults without immediate family created their own safe “bubble” so they could socialize together two times a week. They continue to do so to keep an “eye on each other” and provide mutual support by talking about community resources that could support them (health care phone numbers, free deliveries, online events, etc.)

A Circle of Support increases **Social Participation** and **Respect & Social Inclusion** — two components of the **Age-Friendly*** program. How can your Age-Friendly Committee or other community organizations promote the support and feeling of community that

Viv experiences? Are you able to identify isolated adults who could benefit from informal support groups?

Create a New List of Volunteers While Ending Isolation

Many community organizations struggle to find volunteers. Rather than asking the busiest people in the community who can “always get things done”, how about asking someone who is not an active volunteer to become involved with your efforts?

David is an isolated senior who has no interest in coffee-row or playing cards at the Seniors’ Centre. He is a physically healthy man who has basic carpentry skills. David was asked to help clear snow from sidewalks at a seniors’ residence in the winter, and to repair raised wooden garden beds in the summer. Residents stop by to chat with him as he works, and David receives some valuable social contact. One day, he agreed to sit down with coffee.

**Age-Friendly is a global program to make communities of all sizes more inclusive of everyone who lives there.*

There are 5 **LET NO ONE BE ALONE** resources. All 5 resources can be found on the SSM website: skseniormechanism.ca

Watch SSM’s Facebook page through the year for suggestions about dealing with social isolation, and check for posts every February for Let No One Be Alone Week: skseniormechanism.ca. Please repost on your Facebook page! Thank you!



YOU could be the reason someone feels **seen, heard, and respected** today.



RESOURCE 4

David's story shows that we need opportunity to engage in life to build confidence. The more isolated we feel, the more difficult it is to connect. The more we connect, the more confidence we gain to reach out to others.

How could your Age-Friendly Committee identify isolated older adults who want to feel VALUABLE including "doing something to help" just as much or more than they need to talk to someone who has been designated to "check in" with them? What volunteer work might these isolated older adults do?

Involve Groups of Volunteers to Carry Out Community Work

One Age-Friendly Committee has harnessed the skills of a variety of older adults and provided social interaction as they conducted a survey on community needs. Care home residents folded the surveys during an afternoon recreation activity. The Walking Club in groups of 2-3 delivered the surveys to 400 in-town households. Volunteers who dropped into the Seniors' Centre inserted the survey in the Rural Municipality's monthly mailing to rural residents. A designated group walked the sidewalks and mapped them for the town for needed maintenance information. This wide-ranging involvement of older adults shows how social activities can help those involved feel valuable and included in the work of the community.

Work With Local Businesses

Age-Friendly Committees and other local organizations can work with local businesses to identify residents who are isolated to ensure they receive needed services (pharmacy, grocery, hardware, driving to health appointments). In addition, they may help find volunteers who can

deliver and take time for a personal chat with someone who is lonely. Resource #5 in this series provides suggestions of how businesses can help end isolation and loneliness.

Sign up Together To Do Online Activities

The Canadian Cyber-Seniors program provides free support and training for older adults to learn to use digital technology. Their program provides one-on-one tech call support, Zoom programs on using technology, and daily webinars of personal interest such as fitness, meditation and virtual tours of favourite tourist destinations. A strong sense of community has developed among older adults across Canada and the USA who participate in this program once or more each week.

Often we are hesitant to sign up for something new if we have to do it alone. How could Age-Friendly Committees or other organizations support TWO or more people signing up together to participate? For more info, check out: <https://cyberseniors.org> Consider taking 5-10 minutes to check out the vast opportunities through this organization.

Age-Friendly Committees and other community organizations can play a significant role in ending isolation and loneliness that leads to **Social Participation** and **Respect & Social Inclusion!** Why not add this as an agenda item for your next meeting?

For more info about the Saskatchewan Age-Friendly program and how your community can get involved, click on: <https://agefriendlysk.ca>

Access the 5 **LET NO ONE BE ALONE** resources:



skseniormechanism.ca



skseniormechanism

