

# Loneliness and Social Prescribing and Wellbeing

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# Often problems are not a person's fault

- Many things affect how healthy we are, and how we feel
- Not everything is within our control



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# Social determinants of health

The social determinants of health are shaped by the distribution of money, power and resources and are mostly responsible for health inequality. Inequality that is unfair and avoidable. Social determinants include: socioeconomic status, education, housing transportation, food security, and psychosocial risk factors.



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# Social Determinants of Health

- Our health is determined by the environments in which we live
- We need clean air, trees, nutritious food, shelter and money
- To thrive we need sources of joy, meaning and relationships
- Human beings are social creatures



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# Things you CAN change

- A summary of what you can do as an individual



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# 5 ways to wellbeing:

1. Connect
2. Be active
3. Take Notice
4. Keep learning
5. Give



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# What is mental health?

- What is: “good mental health?”
- Can you have a mental illness and have good mental health?
- Could you have mental illness and have poor mental health?



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# UK definition

- “Mental health is the emotional and spiritual resilience which enables us to enjoy life and to survive pain disappointment and sadness”



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## Aboriginal Definition

Not just the physical wellbeing of the individual but the social, emotional and cultural wellbeing of the whole community. This is a whole of life view and it also includes the cyclical concept of life-death-life (NAHSWP 1989).



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# 1. Connect

- with people around you
- with family and friends, colleagues and neighbours
- through causes, or in your local community



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- Think of these connections as the cornerstones of your life and make time to develop them
- Building these connections will support and enrich your life



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# What difference do groups make?

- Research from a long running study by Harvard University found that the single thing that best predicted a happy and long life was warm social relationships
- Professor Robert Waldinger tracked rich and poor men for over 75 years and found that relationships have a more powerful influence on our health than wealth, success, fame or cholesterol levels
- Joining a group halves your risk of dying in the following year by 50%
- Join groups!







# Be active

- Dance
- Go for a walk or do Tai Chi
- Step outside
- Cycle
- Play a game
- Swim



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# Be active continued

- exercising makes you feel good
- most importantly discover a physical activity you enjoy



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# Be active continued

- Any exercise is better than no exercise
- The more you do the greater the benefit
- Exercise within your capability
- Choose an exercise you enjoy
- Make it fun
- Do it regularly, if possible, outdoors
- The biggest benefit is going from **NO** exercise to **SOME** exercise—so take that first step



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# GET HEALTHY COACHING SERVICE

- Free Call: 1300 806 258
- [www.gethealthynsw.com.au](http://www.gethealthynsw.com.au)
- Free private telephone coaching service
- Monday – Friday 8 a.m. – 8 pm



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# Healthy and Active for Life Online

- the program will help you learn how to make small, sustainable changes in your lifestyle to improve your health.
- The program covers lots of topics including healthy eating and physical activity.
- No prior knowledge or exercise experience is required.



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# 3. Take Notice

- be curious
- catch sight of the beautiful
- talk about unusual things
- notice the changing seasons
- enjoy the moments when you are walking to the shops eating lunch or talking to a friend







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# Close your eyes

- put your hands together
- breathe in deeply, think about something nice you have noticed today
- Dadirri, pronounced “dudeerie” is inner deep listening, quiet, still awareness. It is the deep spring that Australia is thirsting for.



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# Take notice continued

- Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you



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# KEEP LEARNING



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Learning new things will make you more  
confident and as well as being fun



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# Keep learning

- try something new
- rediscover an interest
- sign up for a course
- volunteer
- fix a bike
- learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food



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- set a new challenges



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# GIVE

- Do something nice for a friend or a stranger
- Thank someone
- Smile
- Volunteer your time
- Join a community group or a **cause**
- Look out as well as in



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# Give continued

Seeing yourself and your happiness linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and create a connection with people around you



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- TO SUMMARISE



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# 5 ways to wellbeing:

1. Connect
2. Be active
3. Take Notice
4. Keep learning
5. Give



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# We are social beings

- We are herd animals
- Yet, it's getting harder to be connected to other human beings



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# Loneliness

- Is increasing
- Is as bad as smoking 15 cigarettes a day
- What are the social trends that make social connection harder?



# Hugh McKay

- shrinking households
- fractured relationships (35-40% of marriages end in divorce)
- falling birthrates (children are a social lubricant)
- increased mobility (moving house on average every 6 years)
- car ownership (fewer incidental encounters),
- elevating busyness to a social virtue (it is the enemy of social cohesion), and
- falling for the idea that connection via technology is just like face to face interaction – **eye contact is the essential ingredient in human interaction.**



# Social Prescribing

Is an approach that connects people to activities, groups and services in their community to meet the practical, social and emotional needs that affect their health and wellbeing.



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# Started in England

- Everyone can access a social prescribing service through their GP who refer them to link workers
- People can be referred to link workers by lots of services e.g. housing, pharmacies, health workers and hospital discharge services



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Social prescribing asks us to consider

Not “What is the matter with you?” rather,

“What matters to you?”



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# The practice began in the UK

- World's first nation to create a minister of loneliness
- Social prescribing is often done by a link worker – health professionals whose job is to listen to the patient, understand what matters to them, and connect them to community activities
- Gay Palmer one of the U.K.'s first link workers, says it's not going on Google that helps, but walking around the neighbourhood and understanding who is in the community.



# What's available here?

- Head to Health
- Council Services
- LiveUP



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# Liveup

- A free online healthy ageing guide funded by the Australian Department of Health and Aged Care, designed to help you stay independent and socially connected as you get older .
- [support@liveup.org.au](mailto:support@liveup.org.au)
- 1800 951 971



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# Community Centres

- Redfern Community Centre – groups include Barayagal First Nations Choir, singing lessons, and Gamarada – Community Healing and Life Training
- Ron Williams Community Centre - Redfern
- Cliff Noble Community Centre - Alexandria
- St Helen's Community Centre – Glebe



# New Older Person's Wellbeing Network

- Funded by the Central and Eastern Primary Health Care Network
- Run by Anglicare
- Offers free counselling, support groups, workshops, peer support training and Wellbeing Network Meetings
- Contact Catherine Lloyd 0429 034 483



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# What if I can't get out?

- Connecting online is still good
- 50% as effective as meeting face to face
- So worth it!



# Growing Older with Attitude and Gratitude

- A small happy group of older Australians who meet on Zoom once a week
- Get in touch with Marie-Christine Sancho:
- [growingolderattitudegratitude@gmail.com](mailto:growingolderattitudegratitude@gmail.com)
- Sponsored by the PHN, Inner West Suicide Prevention Collaborative



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# Take home message

- Social interactions are key to living a longer, healthier life
- Try to have social interactions in your week – no matter how small
- We are all each other's support network



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