

Isolation and Loneliness

Nancy Newall, PhD, Associate Professor
Psychology Department

Brandon University, Brandon, Manitoba

Research Affiliate, Centre on Aging, U of Manitoba



Go **bold** or go home



<http://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/>

MB, Brenda Tonn, Seniors Resource Coordinator

<https://www.facebook.com/LetNoOneBeAlone/>

Original Article



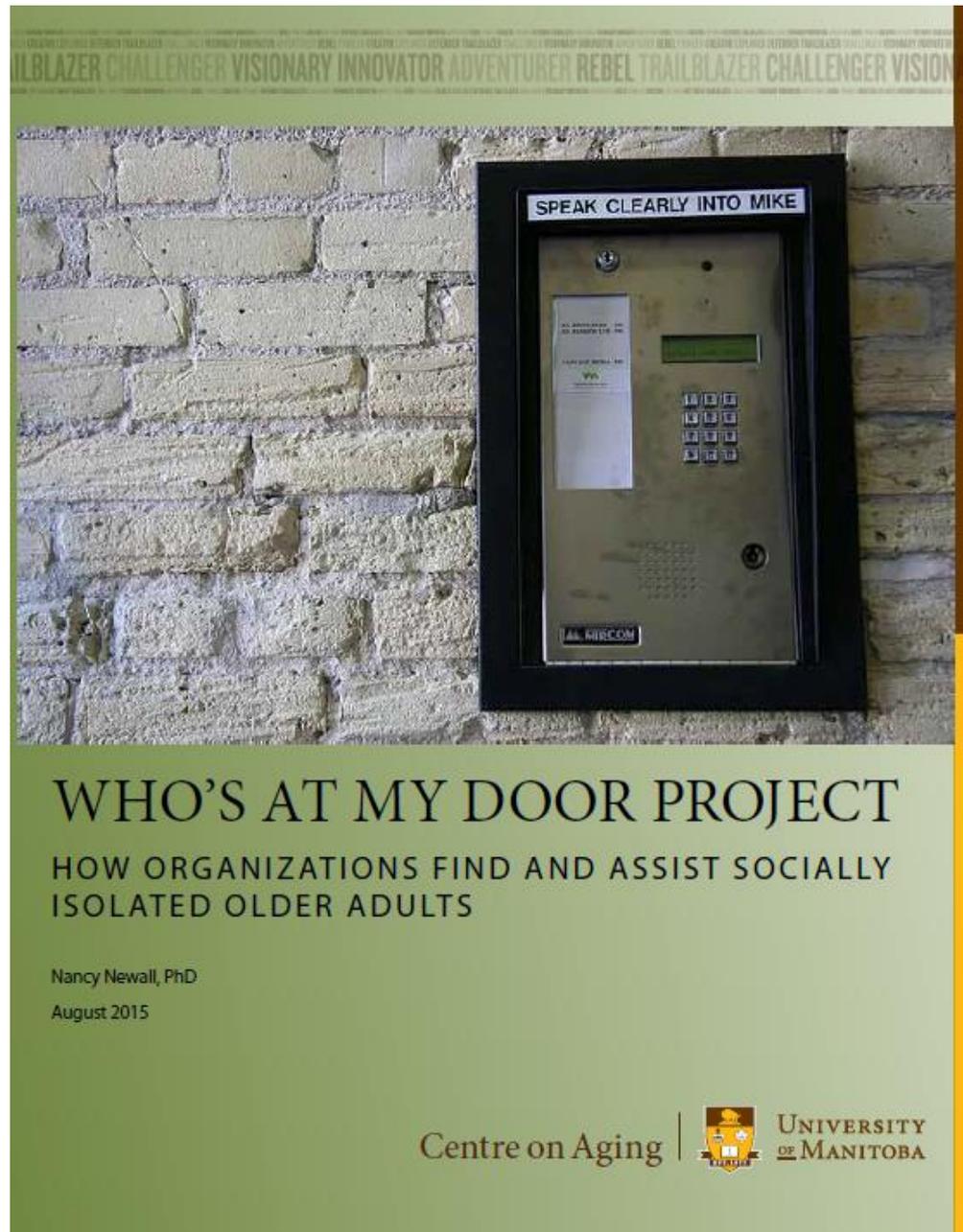
Targeting Socially Isolated Older Adults: A Process Evaluation of the Senior Centre Without Walls Social and Educational Program

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Nancy E. G. Newall¹ and Verena H. Menec¹

Interviews

- Winnipeg Housing
- Meals on Wheels
- Winnipeg Police
- Winnipeg Fire
Paramedic Services



Loneliness descriptors

“...drowning in absence

E. White, Maclean's Magazine, July 2010

Emptiness

Missing People

FEELING REJECTED

Describing our social world: loneliness and social isolation

SOCIAL ISOLATION

Concerns the **objective** situation of a person and refers to the absence of social relationships and contact.

LONELINESS

An unpleasant **subjective** experience resulting from perceived mismatch between the relationships we *want* compared to what we *have*.

Social Isolation Indicators

Social networks

Social support

Live alone Social integration

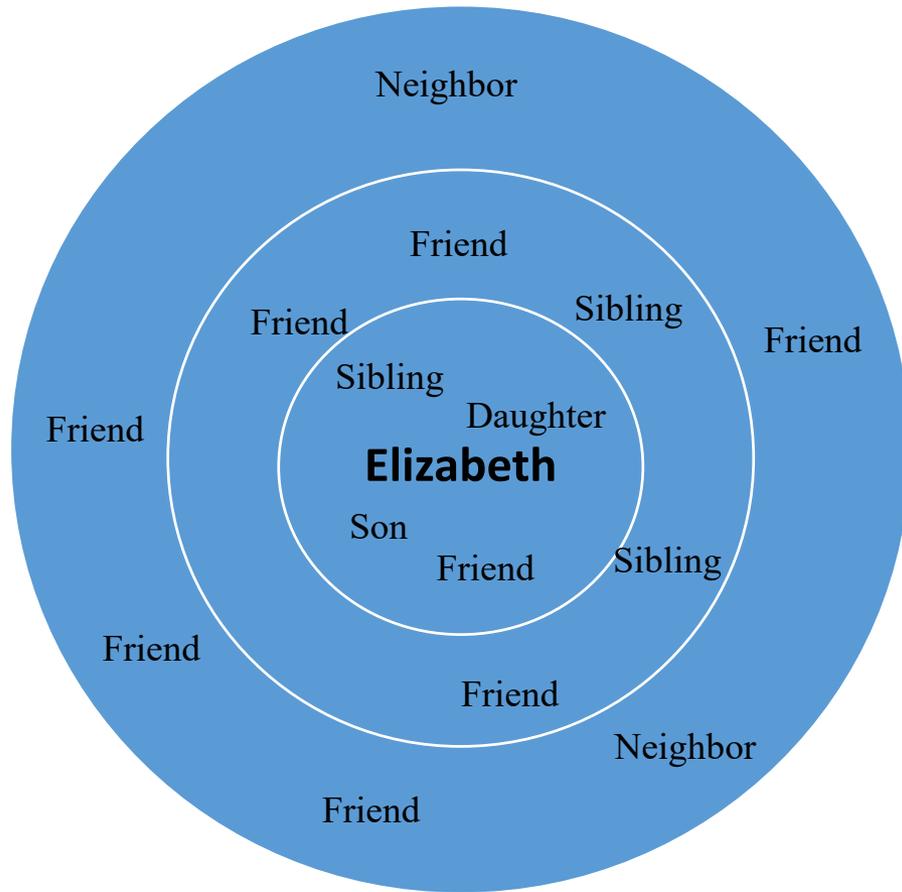
Social isolation

Social exclusion/

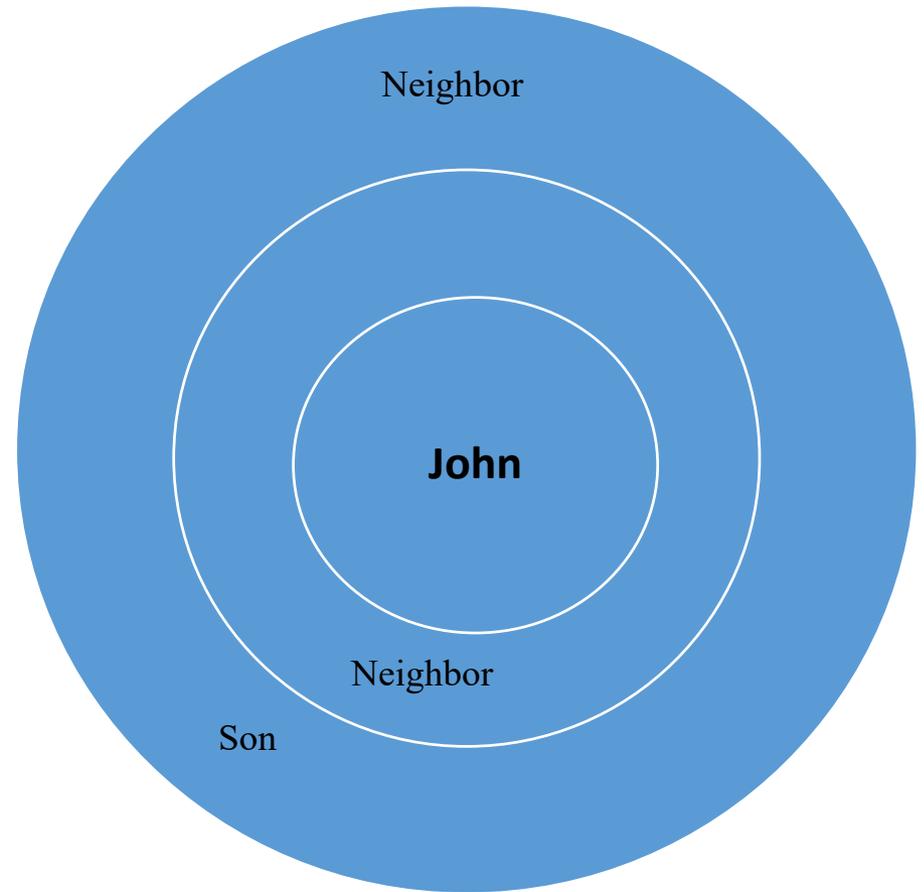
Social participation inclusion

Social contacts

Social network: numbers and contact



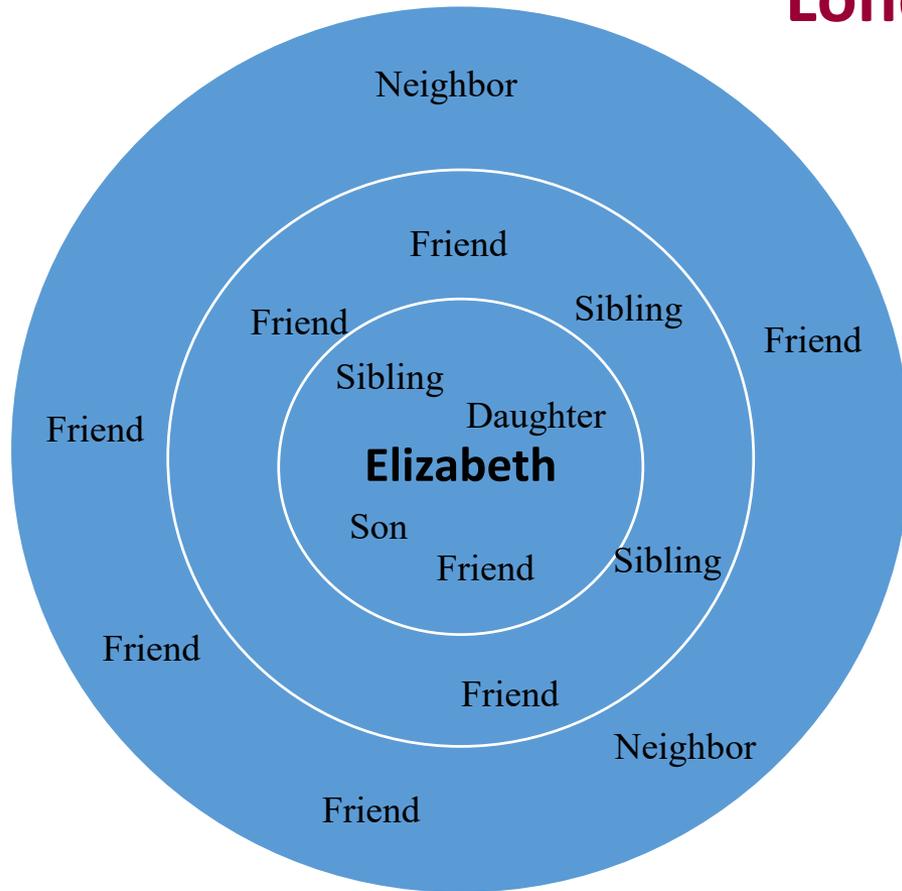
Less isolated



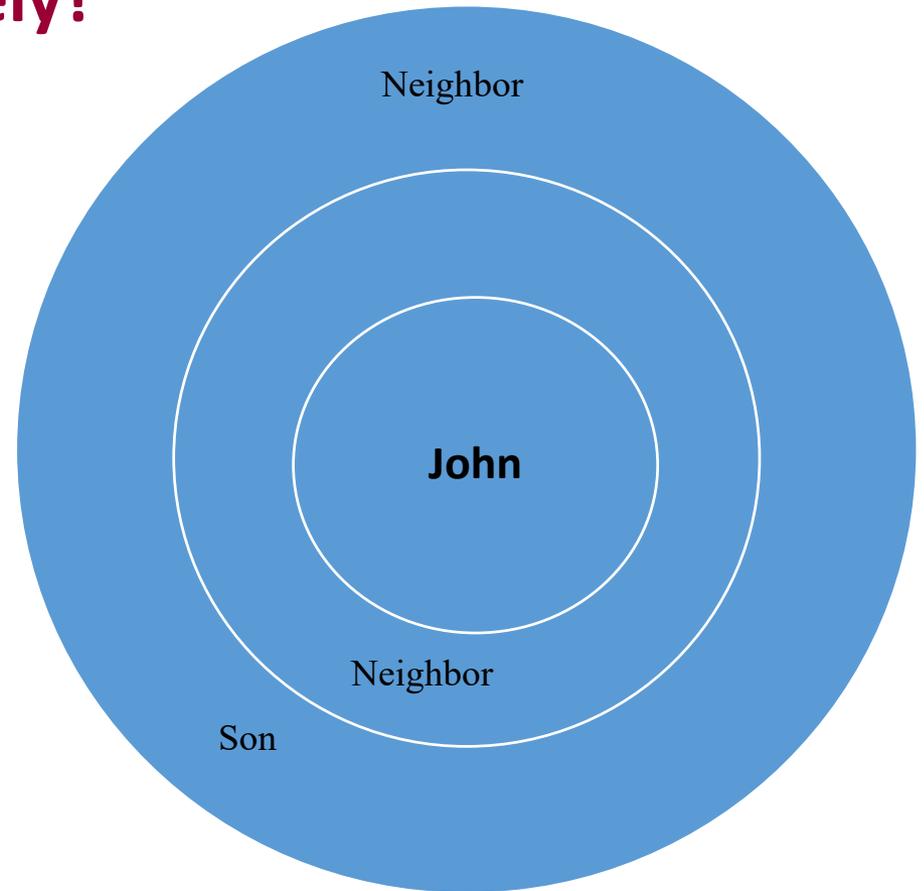
More isolated

Lonely/Isolated

Lonely?



Less isolated



More isolated

A person could have few relationships and NOT be lonely.



“Loner”

A person could have lots of relationships and be lonely.



“Lonely in a crowd”



“Vulnerable”

Some people will be lonely and isolated.

The majority of people will be neither lonely nor isolated.



“Majority group”

One in 3

older Canadians want
more social activity

About 11% of Canadians aged 65 or older say they are lonely 3+ days per week.

About 8% of Canadians aged 65+ are socially isolated.

Loneliness and Social Isolation are Common

25% of Canadians aged 65+ say they don't have anybody who could help them if they were sick in bed.

18% say they don't have anybody they can confide in or talk to.

Loneliness and Social Isolation Pose Risks to Health and Well-Being

- Quality of life
- Physiological responses, immune system, sleep
- Cardiovascular diseases and stroke
- Dementia
- Health services use
- Longevity
- Etc.



E.g., Cacioppo et al., 2002; Hawkey et al., 2003; Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010; Newall et al., 2012; Pressman et al., 2005

Causes = Solutions



Why become lonely? Why stay lonely?

- Target groups
- Psychological barriers
- Environment barriers



Some Risk Factors for loneliness and isolation (older pop.)

- Living alone
- Poor health
- Sensory loss (vision/hearing)
- Older (age 85+)
- Widowed
- Caregiver
- Low income
- (Gender - mixed results)

Potential Target
Groups for prevention



Psychological barriers for participation

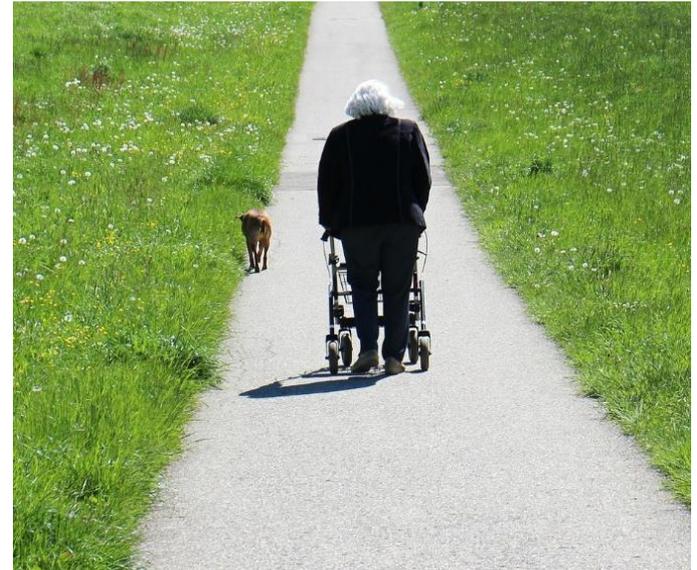
- Feeling lack of control
- Hyper-vigilance
- Social anxiety/mental illness
- Etc.



A & O Making and Keeping Important Connections
Counseling, support groups

Health, and Environment-Level barriers for participation

- Transportation
- Income/costs
- Lack of social contacts
- Mobility/vision/hearing
- Housebound
- Accessibility
- Unsafe neighbourhood
- Inclusion & diversity
- Etc



A & O Seniors Centre Without Walls, A & O CONNECT Age-Friendly Communities, Senior Resource Coordinators Associations focused on: Hearing, Vision, minority populations, anti-poverty, Etc.

Importance of Environment

Ideally, our policies, living spaces, communities, and cities are designed FOR people who live there



**Reduce barriers for
Social participation**

Create social and physical
environments to suit residents

What individual-level barriers are there to participation?

Can you help address any of these barriers?

What environment-level barriers are there to participation?

Can you help address any of these barriers?

What expertise/partnerships might you offer senior-serving organizations or committees in your region?

E.g., Emphasizing issues of housing for older adults; partnerships for space or programs; key insights into the spaces and places in which people live

Thank you!

Nancy Newall, PhD

Email: newalln@brandonu.ca

