





Social Connectedness, Health, and Wellbeing

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Objectives

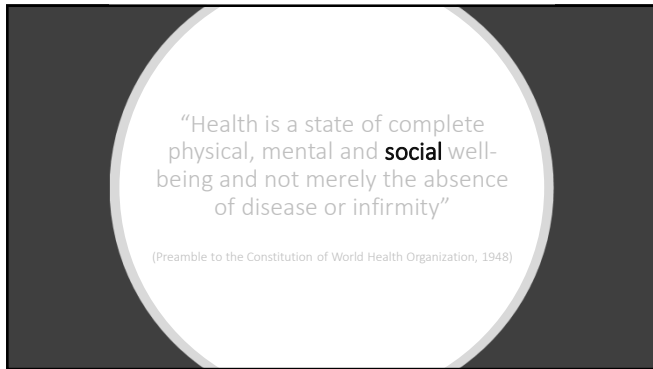
1.	2.	3.	4.
Examine social connectedness as a multi-level idea.	Reflect on positive social connectedness as part of a trauma-informed toolkit.	Learn how social connectedness impacts health and well-being.	Explore our individual social networks.

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“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”

(Preamble to the Constitution of World Health Organization, 1948)

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Why is Connectedness Important?

PREVALENCE - 25% of American adults claim that they have no one with whom to share a personal problem (AARP Foundation, 2018).

43% of elders have reported being lonely (Perissinotto, Stijacic Cenzer, & Covinsky, 2012).

HEALTH BENEFITS & CONSEQUENCES - From immunity to inflammation, cognitive impairment to stroke, our social connections play a role in disease: risk and preventive.

LONGEVITY - People with strong social connections live longer. And without strong relationships, life expectancy shrinks.

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Significance for our community-based work

OLDER AMERICANS ACT

2020 reauthorization emphasizes screening, assessment, education, and intervention at the federal, state, and local levels related to social isolation and loneliness

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Momentum to create specific diagnosis, treatment, and thus, reimbursement for SDOH.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Socially isolated hospital patients or those at high risk experience delayed hospital discharge (Landeiro, Leal, & Gray, 2015).

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SOCIAL ISOLATION AND HEALTH CARE UTILIZATION

PHYSICIAN VISITS

- More likely to seek medical attention for social interaction.

HOSPITAL LENGTH OF STAY

- Smaller social networks associated with longer hospital stays.

HOSPITAL READMISSIONS

- Weaker social relations linked to increased rates of hospital readmission.

DELAYED HOSPITAL DISCHARGE

- Average cost of stay of patient with delayed discharge: 77.5% higher

POORER MEDICAL SELF-MANAGEMENT

- Lower adherence to medication management, follow-up care, prevention-screening.

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Social Connection

STRUCTURAL

MARITAL STATUS
SOCIAL NETWORKS
SOCIAL INTEGRATION
LIVING ALONE
SOCIAL ISOLATION

FUNCTIONAL

RECEIVED SUPPORT
PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT
PERCEIVED LONELINESS

QUALITY

MARITAL QUALITY
RELATIONSHIP STRAIN
SOCIAL INCLUSION OR EXCLUSION

Holt-Lunstad, 2018

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The Connectedness Continuum

(Amato, G., Hickey, P., Gendron, T., Link, S., MacDonald, C., Watson, T., Wellford, E.A.)

Definition of social isolation:

A state in which the individual experiences less social engagement with others than they would like, and they report that this interferes with their quality of life. (based on Nicholson)

Definition of social connectedness:

A state in which the individual experiences a satisfying number of social gatherings, close relationships and/or satisfaction with social contacts and reports that these experiences maintain their quality of life. (based on Toepoel)

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Who is at risk for loneliness or social isolation?

1. Family Caregivers
2. LGBTQ Older Adults
3. Minority Older Adults
4. Trauma Survivors
5. Life Stages:
 - late 20s
 - mid50s
 - late 80s

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ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIETAL RISK FACTORS

1. LACK OF TRANSPORTATION

2. BUILT ENVIRONMENT

3. POVERTY

4. NEIGHBORHOOD ISOLATION

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INDIVIDUAL RISK FACTORS

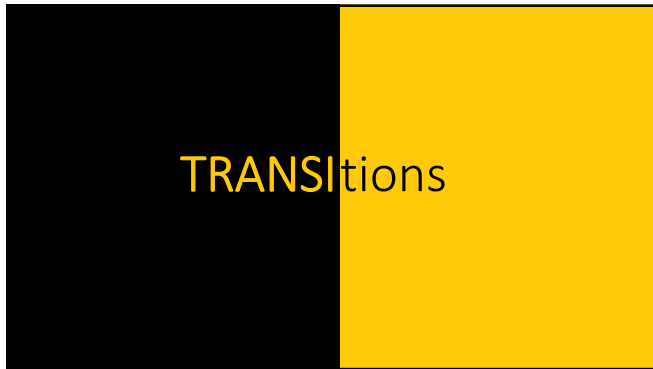
1
Loss
(of spouse, job, home)

2
Less than high school education

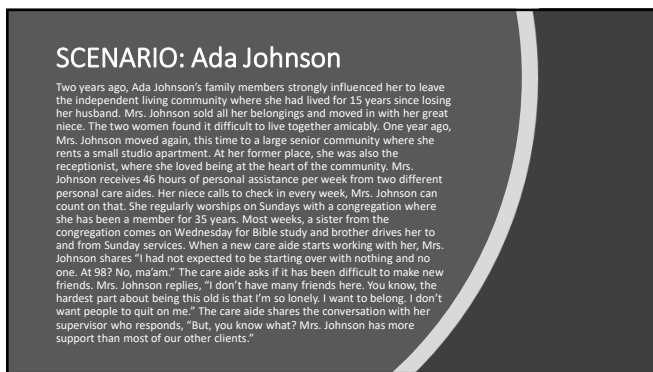
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Living Alone

4
Recent trauma or transition

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Think about the 3 attributes of social connectedness: structural, functional, and quality.


With which of these are you most concerned for Mrs. Johnson?




A. STRUCTURAL




B. FUNCTIONAL



C. QUALITY



D. ALL



E. NONE. MRS. JOHNSON HAS STRONG SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS.

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FOUR PILLARS OF OPTIMAL BEING
(HOLLY NIEMELA)

Physically Fit

Emotionally Sound

Mentally Strong

Living With Meaning

17

FOUR PILLARS OF OPTIMAL BEING
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Physically Fit

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Physical Health and Connectedness

1. Immune system

Loneliness increases inflammation AND suppresses immunity (Cole, 2015).

2. Chronic disease

Strong social bonds are as good for you as quitting smoking. Weak social circle carries a health risk equal to smoking 15 cigarettes daily (Holt-Lunstad).

3. Built Environment

Living in neighborhoods with low social cohesion and in fear of crime accelerates cellular aging (Blackburn & Epel, 2017).

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VAGUS NERVE, THE WANDERER

- Deep breathing
- Singing
- Laughing
- Exposure to cold
- Positive social connections

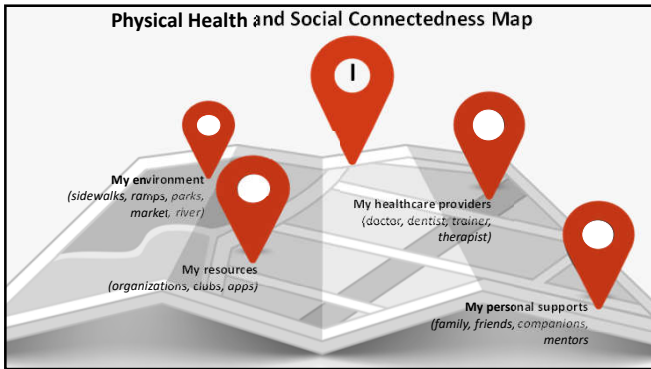
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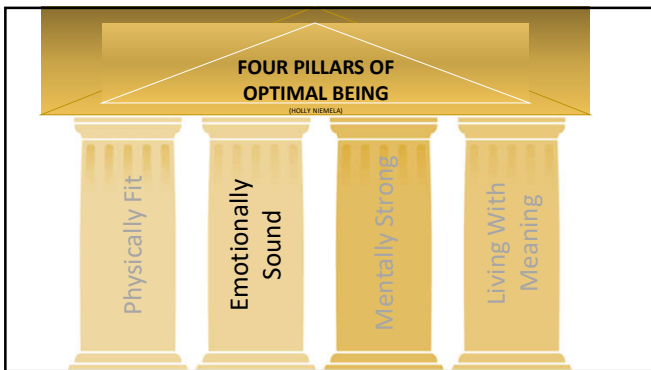
VAGUS NERVE, THE WANDERER

- Deep breathing
- Singing
- Laughing
- Exposure to cold
- **Positive social connections**

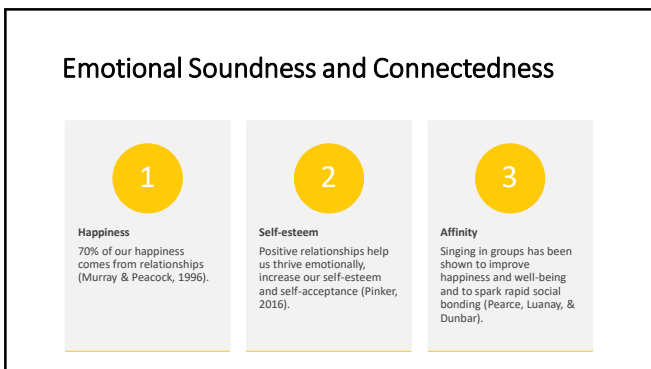
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“Good **relationships** keep us healthier and happier. Period.”

Robert Waldinger, Harvard University

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Soul Friends: 6 Mechanisms of Transformation

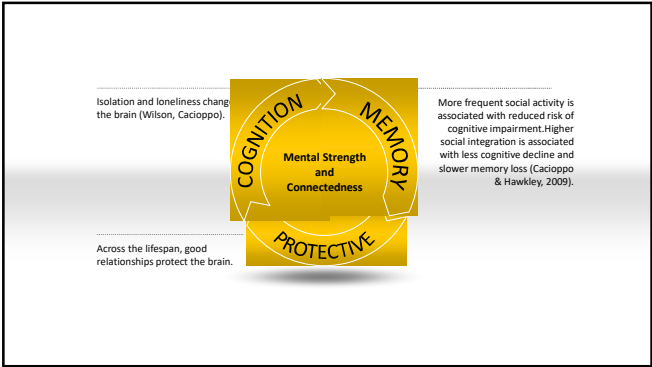
1. Containment	2. Twinship	3. Noble Adversary	4. Mirroring	5. Mystic resonance	6. Conscious partnership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A safe holding environment within which you relax and expand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspires deep feelings of belonging and a sense of alikeness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenging or confrontational to your benefit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sees something special in you, reflects you back to you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A mysterious, mystic kinship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irreplaceable companion in your struggle to make meaning and express yourself.

Cope, 2017

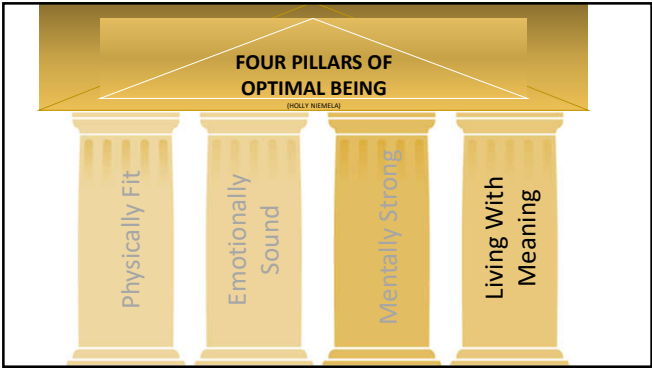
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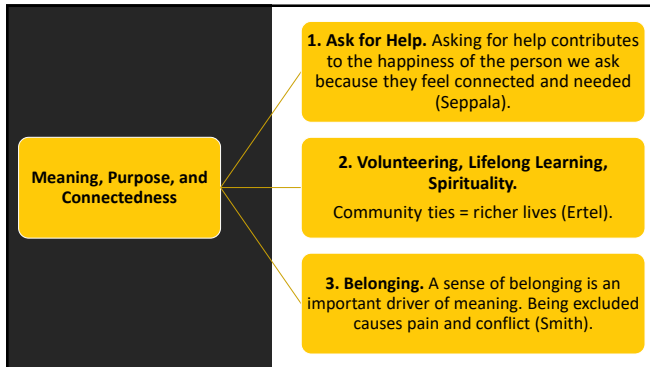
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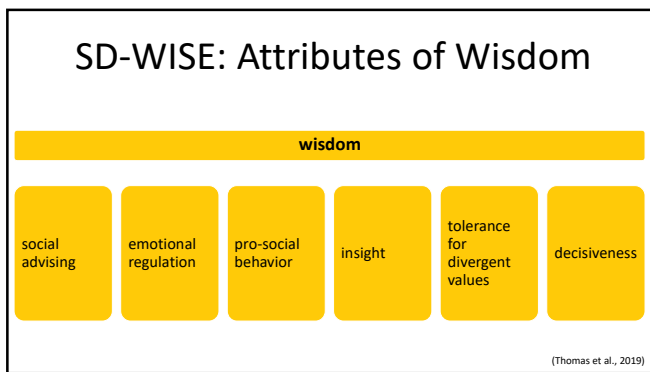
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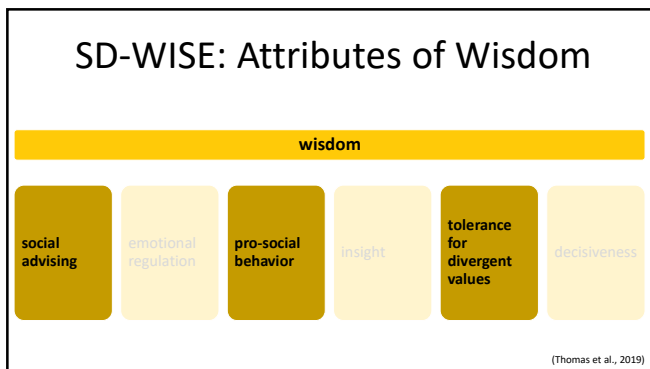
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<p>ACCESS From picking up prescriptions to transporting to appointments</p> <p>ENCOURAGEMENT Positive reinforcement when we need it and when we don't.</p> <p>BUFFERING Protection and relief from stress.</p> <p>PEER HEALTH BEHAVIORS Healthy social patterns: food, activity, self-care.</p> <p>ADVOCACY Intervening, navigating, and representing our best interests</p> <p>ACCOUNTABILITY Positive peer pressure to follow up, comply, monitor</p> <p>PERSONALIZED INFORMATION Customized ideas, connections, resources about our lives and situations, on-demand.</p>	<p>HOW POSITIVE SOCIAL SUPPORTS WORK TO IMPROVE OUR HEALTH</p>
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EASE

(Cacioppo & Patrick, 2008)

Extend yourself

Send out small social signals. Take tiny steps in small doses of positive sensations that originate with social interactions.

Action plan

Acknowledge it's difficult and why. Be intentional and plan to seek out connections.

Seek collectives

Connection is not about being interesting, but rather: **be interested.**

Expect the best

Expect warmth and connection.

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SUMMARY

- Think about social connectedness as made up of structure, function, and quality.
- Experiencing trauma, loss, and transitions increase our risk of impaired social connectedness.
- Positive personal relationships are protective and promote resilience, well-being, and growth.
- The extent of our positive connectedness impacts all dimensions of health and functioning.
