

Connecting Older Adults and Boosting Social Engagement

2024 National Healthy Aging Symposium:
Innovation Across the Age-Friendly Ecosystem



#HealthyAging2024



Office of
Disease Prevention
and Health Promotion



Today's Speakers



Moderated by:
Adrienne Smith
*Office on Women's Health,
HHS*



Eddie Garcia
*Foundation for Social
Connection*



Emily Greenfield
*Hub for Aging Collaboration,
Rutgers University*



Rebecca Freeman
*North Carolina Department
of Health and Human
Services*



Deborah Lee
*Positive Aging Consortium,
Middle Tennessee State
University*



Office of
Disease Prevention
and Health Promotion



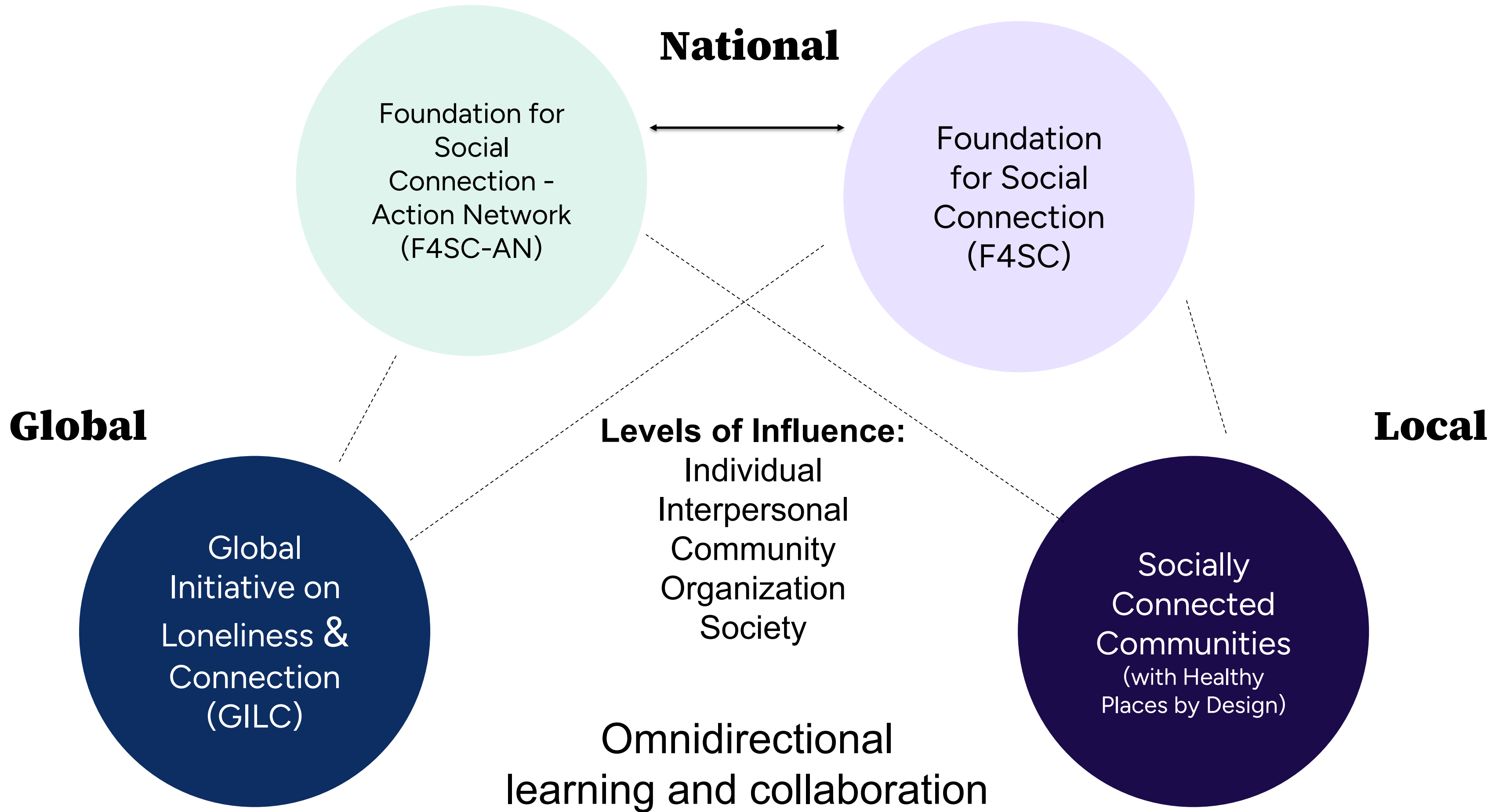
National Healthy Aging Symposium:
Innovation Across the Age-Friendly Eco-System

Addressing Social Isolation, Loneliness, and Connection on a Global, National, and Local Level:

Promising Strategies for Older Adults

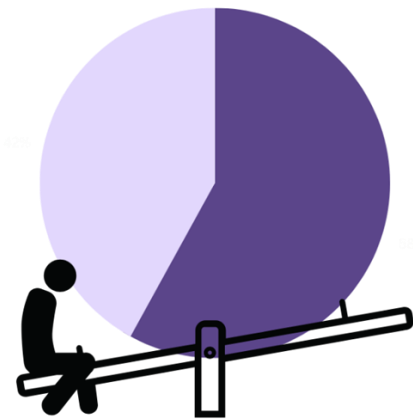
Edward Garcia III, Founder and Board Secretary



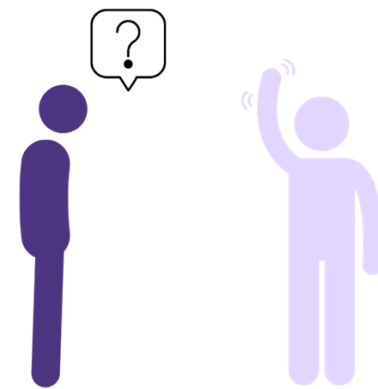


We are facing a global crisis of disconnection.

Millions of Americans are socially isolated, lonely, or both, which negatively impacts quality of life and health outcomes. This is common across the globe.

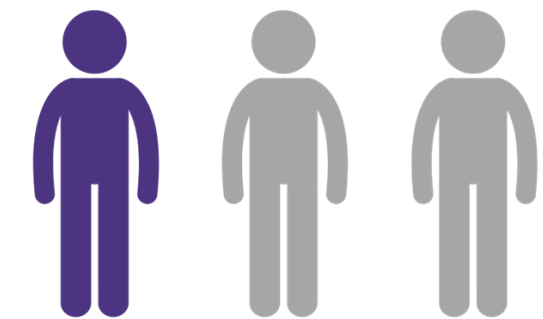


In post-pandemic research, **58% of American adults reported loneliness**, which is consistent with pre-pandemic rates of loneliness.



57% of Americans report that they know some of their neighbors and only 31% say they know most.

23% of young adults aged 18-29 say they don't know a single one of their neighbors.



In the 1970s, 50% of Americans felt that “most people can be trusted.” In 2012, this figure had **declined to a third of Americans.**

Terms and Definitions

Loneliness is a *subjective* unpleasant or distressing feeling of a lack of connection to other people, along with a desire for more, or more satisfying, social relationships

vs.

Social Isolation refers to having *objectively* few social relationships, social roles, group memberships, and infrequent social interaction.

Social Connection means having a variety of relationships you can rely on that are high quality.

Social Connectedness is the degree to which one is socially connected.

Belonging is the feeling of being an accepted member of a group

Root Causes

- Hyper-individualism
- Mobility
- Speed & Efficiency
- Religious Disaffiliation
- Civil Society Deserts
- Technology Distractions
- Overwork and Precarity
- Valuing Youth over Aging
- Tribalism

Isolation in Older Adults

- In 2023, **1 in 3** adults age 50-80 reported feeling isolated from others.
- Over **70%** of adults aged 50-80 with poor/fair mental health, and **55%** with poor/fair physical health reported feelings of isolation and loneliness in 2023.



The Impact on Our Health and Economy



Physical Health

- 26-32% higher risk for Premature Mortality
- Cardiovascular Disease, Type 2 Diabetes, Immune & Respiratory illnesses



Mental & Behavioral Health

- Depression & Anxiety, Suicidality, Addiction



Economic Health

- \$6.7B in Medicare Spending, \$150B to Employers
- Lower productivity, More Absenteeism, Lower quality of work

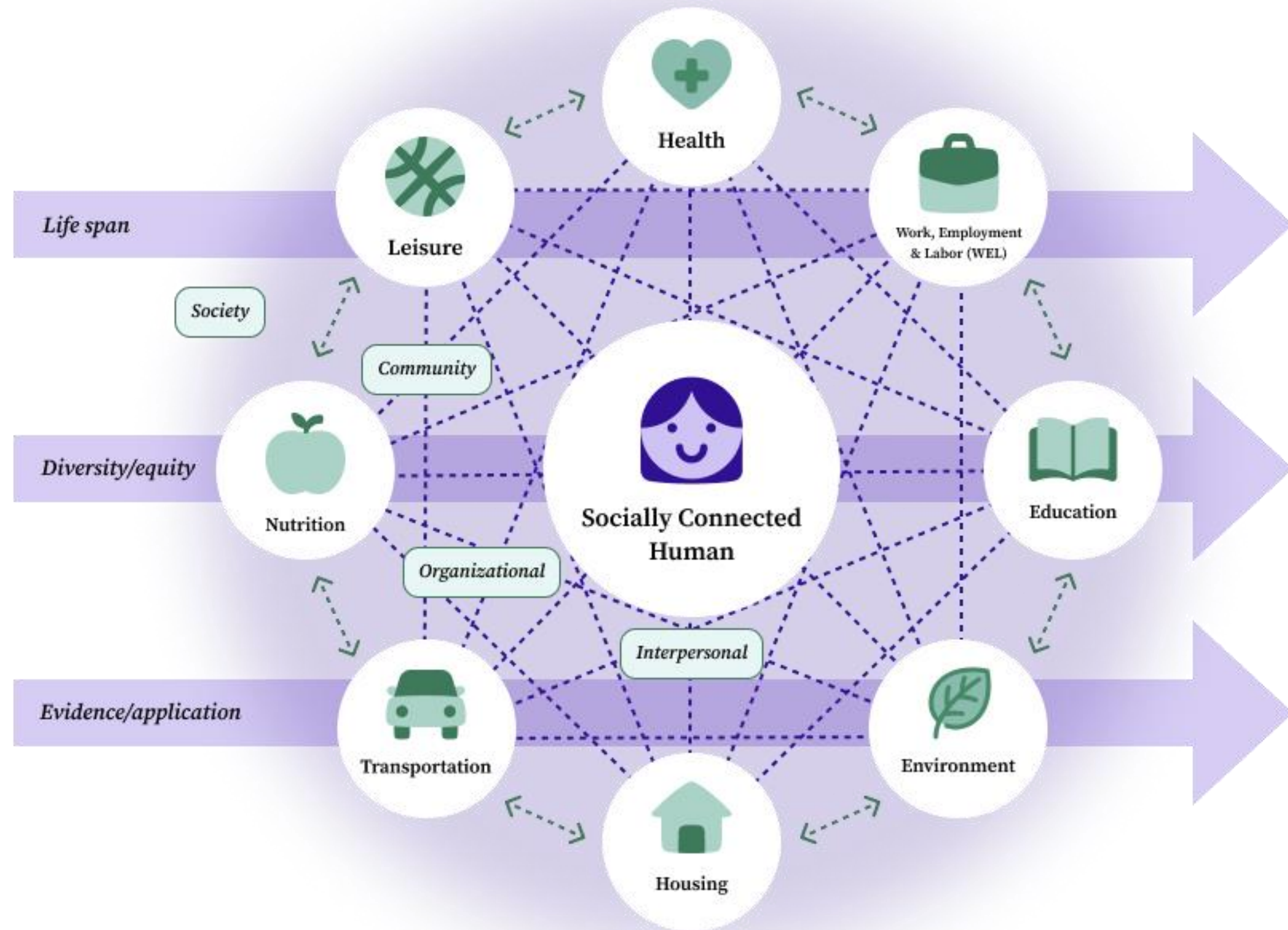


Cognitive Health

- Cognitive decline, Dementia, Alzheimer's Disease

SOCIAL Framework

Systems
Of
Cross-Sector
Integration and
Action across the
Lifespan



Translating Research to Practice



Action Guide for Building Socially Connected Communities

Strategies based on our Research and Practice

- Volunteer
- Build intergenerational and age-friendly communities
- Improve broadband access and affordability
 - Offer digital literacy programs
 - Offer and expand telehealth services
- Improve transportation access and affordability



RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
Hub for Aging Collaboration
School of Social Work

Community-Centered Models for Fostering Connections as We Age

Emily Greenfield, PhD | Professor and Director
Rutgers School of Social Work, Hub for Aging Collaboration
National Healthy Aging Symposium | September 26, 2024



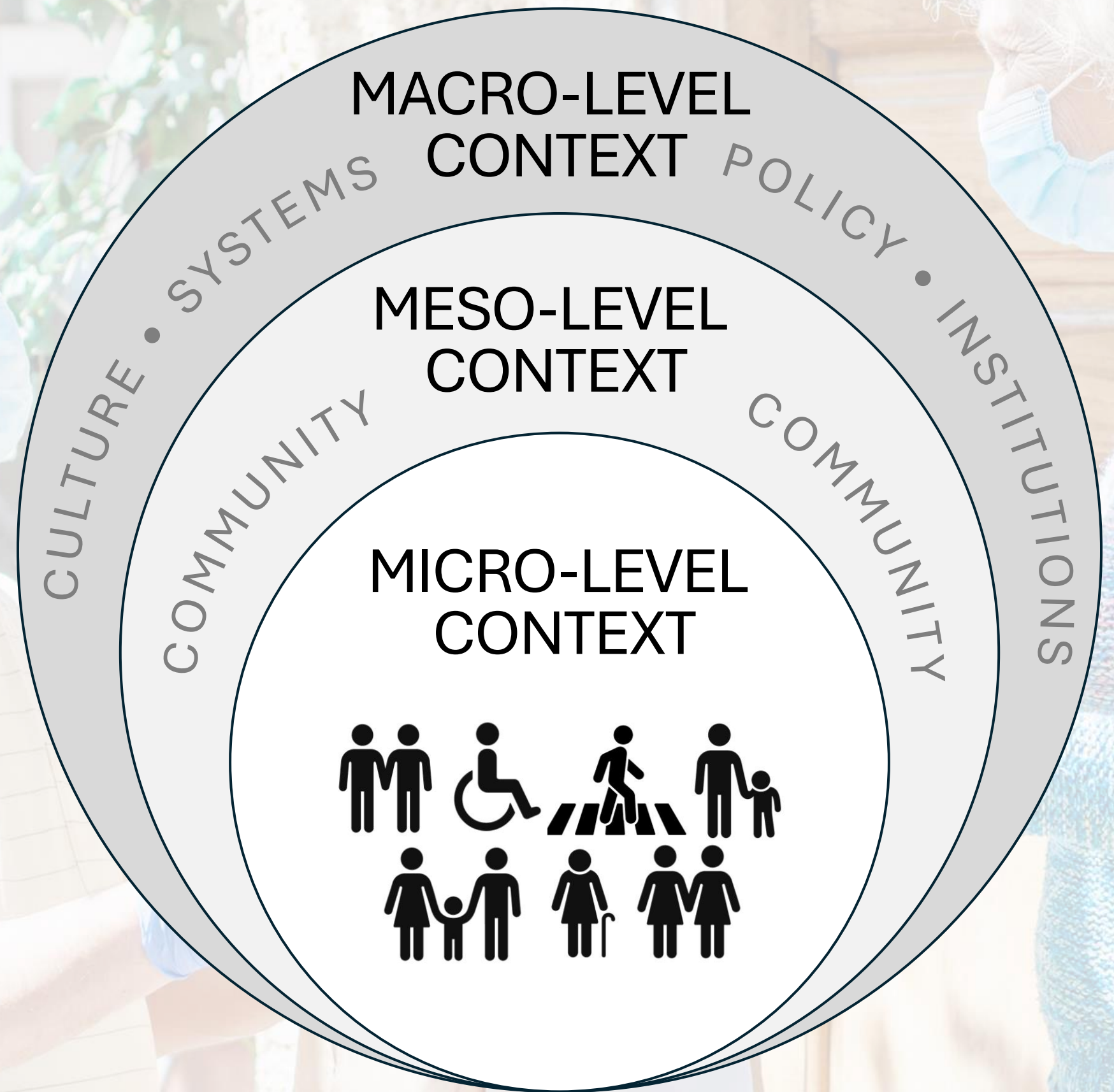
Connection Goes Beyond Interpersonal Relationships

“When we talk about loneliness, what we’re actually talking about are all the issues that swirl perilously underneath it: alienation and isolation, distrust and disconnection and above all, a sense that many of the institutions and traditions that once held us together are less available to us or no longer of interest.”

- Matthew Shaer, *New York Times*, Aug 27, 2024



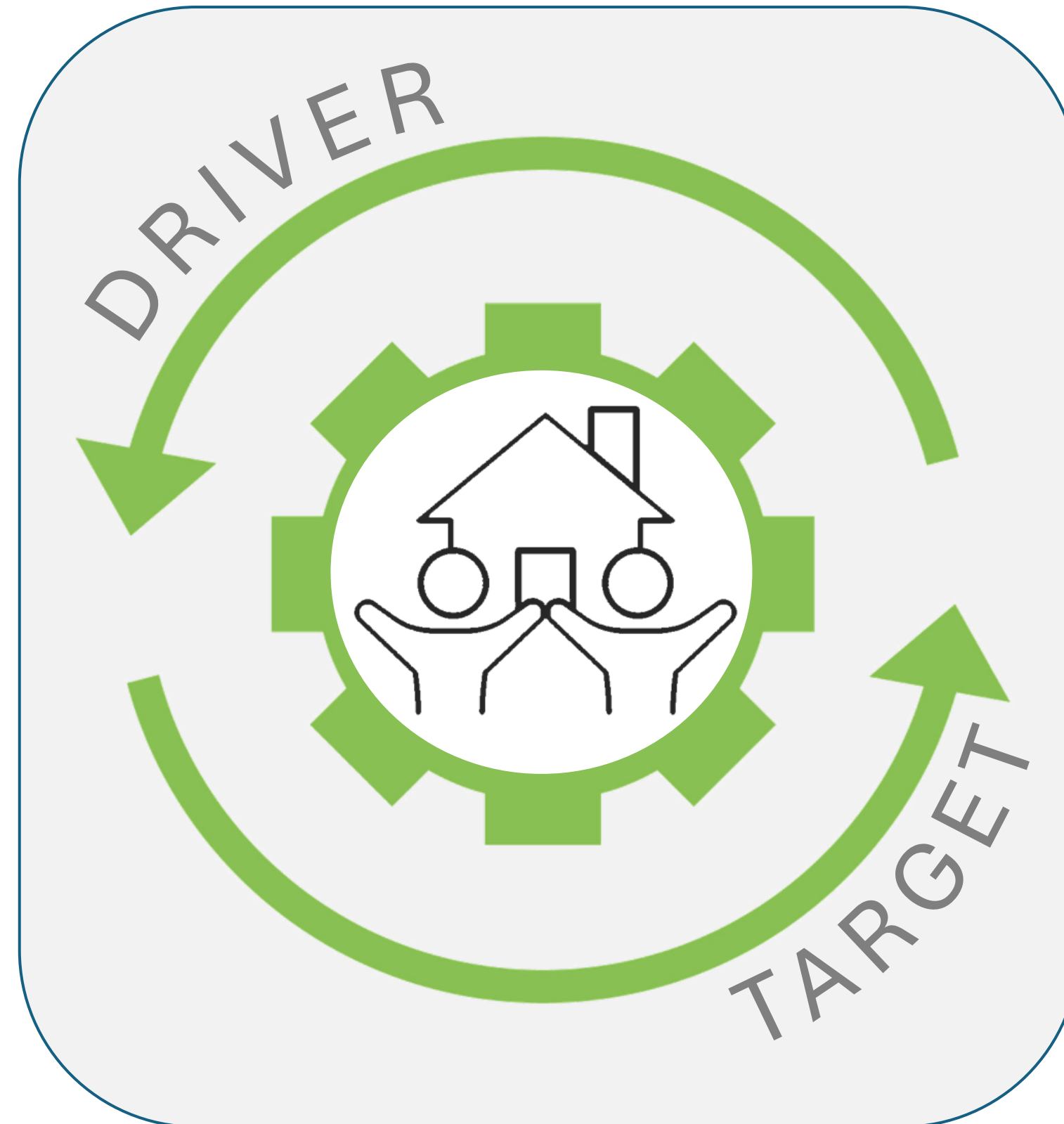
Communities as a Social Structure



Community-Centered Models

CORE PRINCIPLE:

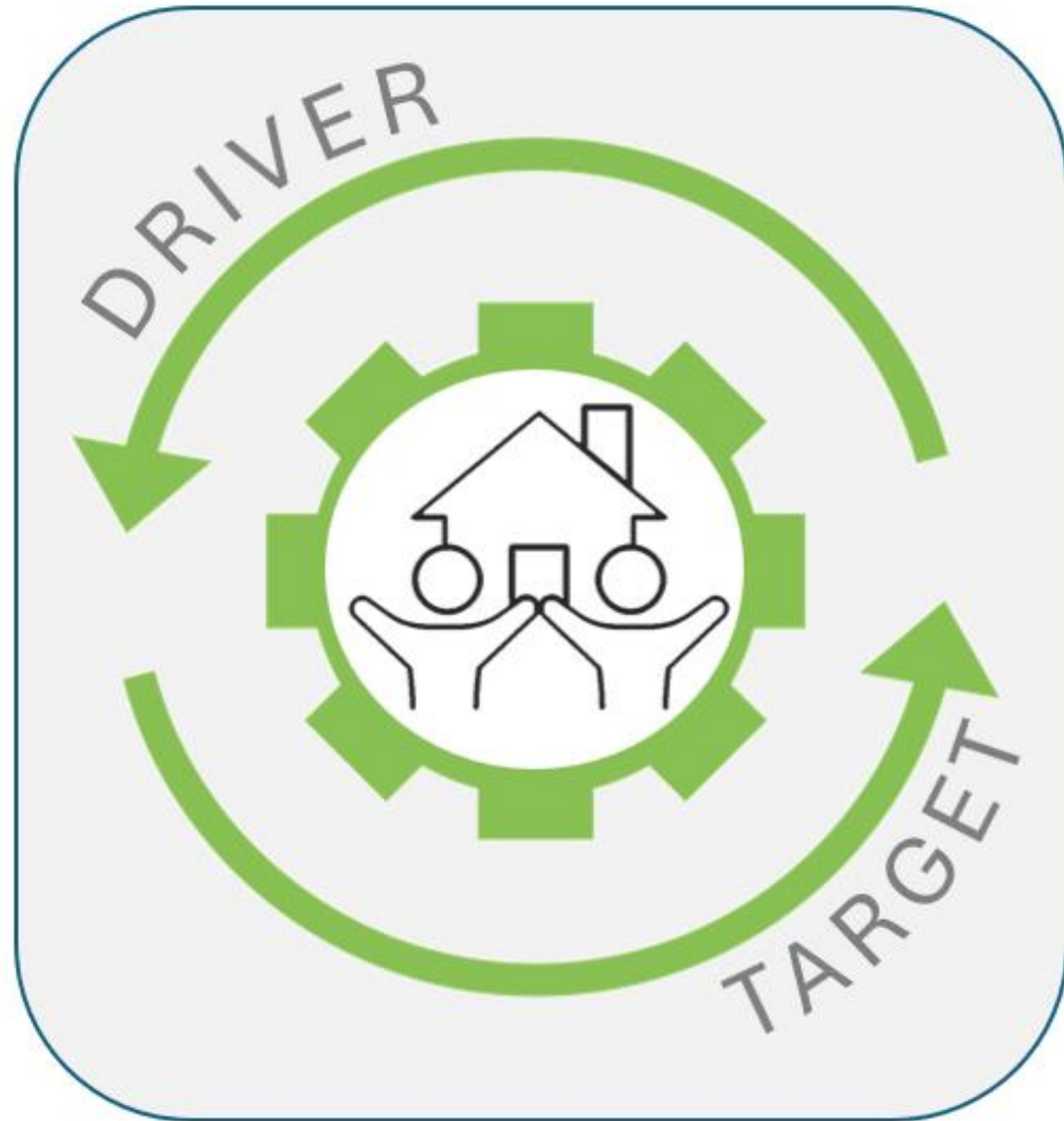
Work with communities as both a driver *and* target for change



EXAMPLE: PUBLIC HEALTH ENGLAND

- Enhance a community's capacity to change social determinants of health
- Tap community members' networks and information channels
- Encourage multisectoral collaboration
- Facilitate civic engagement as a means for health

Community-Centered Models on Aging



+



Photo Credit: <https://ageingbetter.resourcespace.com/pages/search.php>

Examples of Age-Friendly Community Initiatives

New Jersey

Five-Year+ Report
to AARP

2018
-
2024



AGE-FRIENDLY ENGLEWOOD
ENGLEWOOD, NJ

www.age-friendlyenglewood.org/

Illinois



Municipalities throughout the metropolitan Chicago region – like regions throughout the country – are experiencing substantial growth in the number and percentage share of their older adult populations and are looking for strategies to help address these shifts. Two partner organizations – the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (MMC, serving the region’s 275 cities, towns, and villages), and Planning/Aging (a consultancy focused on the intersection of city planning and the growing aging population) – received funding from the **RRF Foundation for Aging** to assist municipalities’ support of Aging in-Community.

<https://mayorscaucus.org/initiatives/aging-in-community/aging-in-a-changing-region/>

California



Inland Coalition
on Aging

About IE-MPA Events Media  

Inland Coalition on Aging

Formed in 2008, the **Inland Coalition on Aging (ICA)**, formerly the IE-LTSS Coalition, brings together the expertise of diverse health care entities, community-based organizations, public officials, and stakeholders to better serve older adults, adults with disabilities, and caregivers in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties.

Mission

The Coalition is committed to facilitating systems change across networks and developing improved integrated care and service delivery of long-term services and supports.

Vision

A community where older adults, adults with disabilities, and caregivers age well.

Get Involved

Professionals

[Join the Coalition](#)

General Public

[Stay Informed](#)



<https://www.inlandaging.org/>

How Do Age-Friendly Community Initiatives Foster Connection?

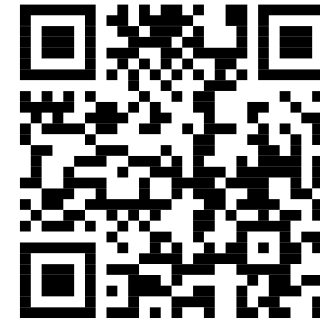
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Focal goal: Make communities more inclusive and accommodating of people's active engagement and community participation as they age

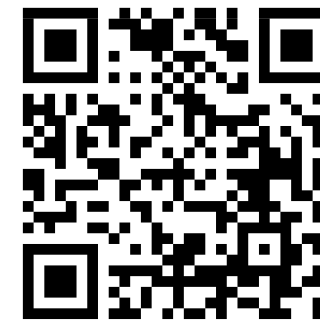
2

Focal principle: Position older residents as participants and leaders for community-wide change

Resources on Age-Friendly Communities and Social Connection



Greenfield, E. A., Black, K., Oh, P., & Pestine-Stevens, A. (2022). Theories of community collaboration to advance age-friendly community change. *The Gerontologist*, 62(1), 36–45. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnab136>



Menec, V. H. (2017). Conceptualizing social connectivity in the context of age-friendly communities. *Journal of Housing For the Elderly*, 31(2), 99–116. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02763893.2017.1309926>



Greenfield, E. A., & Reyes, L. (2022). Characterising older adults' engagement in age-friendly community initiatives: Perspectives from core group leaders in the Northeast United States. *Ageing & Society*, 42(6), 1465–1484–45. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X2000166X>

Examples of Villages



Oregon

Villages NW

Villages are powered by active people like you.

Connect with your Village to find how to become a member or volunteer.

CLICK HERE for the Village in your Neighborhood

Home About Villages + NW Villages + About Us + What We Do + Resource Library + Donate/Get Involved! +

<https://villagesnw.org/>



Pennsylvania

I'm a Downtowner!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=McxKjAAZbcc&t=145s>



A LITTLE HELP

calendar donate login

about us how we help support us events & programs receive help volunteer contact us

Colorado

Care & Give & Help.

SERVICE SATURDAY

CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE

<https://alittlehelp.org/>

How Do Villages Foster Social Connection?

1

Connections
with community
volunteers

2

Connections with
opportunities for
civic participation &
social contribution

3

Connections
with resources
for aging

Resources on Villages and Social Connection



Graham, C. L., Scharlach, A. E., & Price Wolf, J. (2014). The impact of the “village” model on health, well-being, service access, and social engagement of older adults. *Health Education & Behavior, 41*(1_suppl), 91S-97S. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1090198114532290>



Lehning, A. J., Scharlach, A. E., & Davitt, J. K. (2017). Variations on the village model: An emerging typology of a consumer-driven community-based initiative for older adults. *Journal of Applied Gerontology, 36*(2), 234–246. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0733464815584667>



Graham, C., & Guzman, S. (2022). *The village model: Current trends, challenges, and opportunities*. AARP Public Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.26419/ppi.00169.001>



PUBLIC SECTOR



JULY 2024

PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE

Aging Well in America:
AARP's Vision for a National Plan on Aging

Community-Centered Models and the Future of Aging in Community

AGING IN THE UNITED STATES:
A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
FOR A NATIONAL PLAN ON AGING

THE INTERAGENCY COORDINATING COMMITTEE ON HEALTHY AGING
AND AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

CHAIRIED BY THE ADMINISTRATION FOR COMMUNITY LIVING

REPORT TO CONGRESS

MAY 2024



PRIVATE SECTOR





RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
Hub for Aging Collaboration
School of Social Work

**THANK
YOU**

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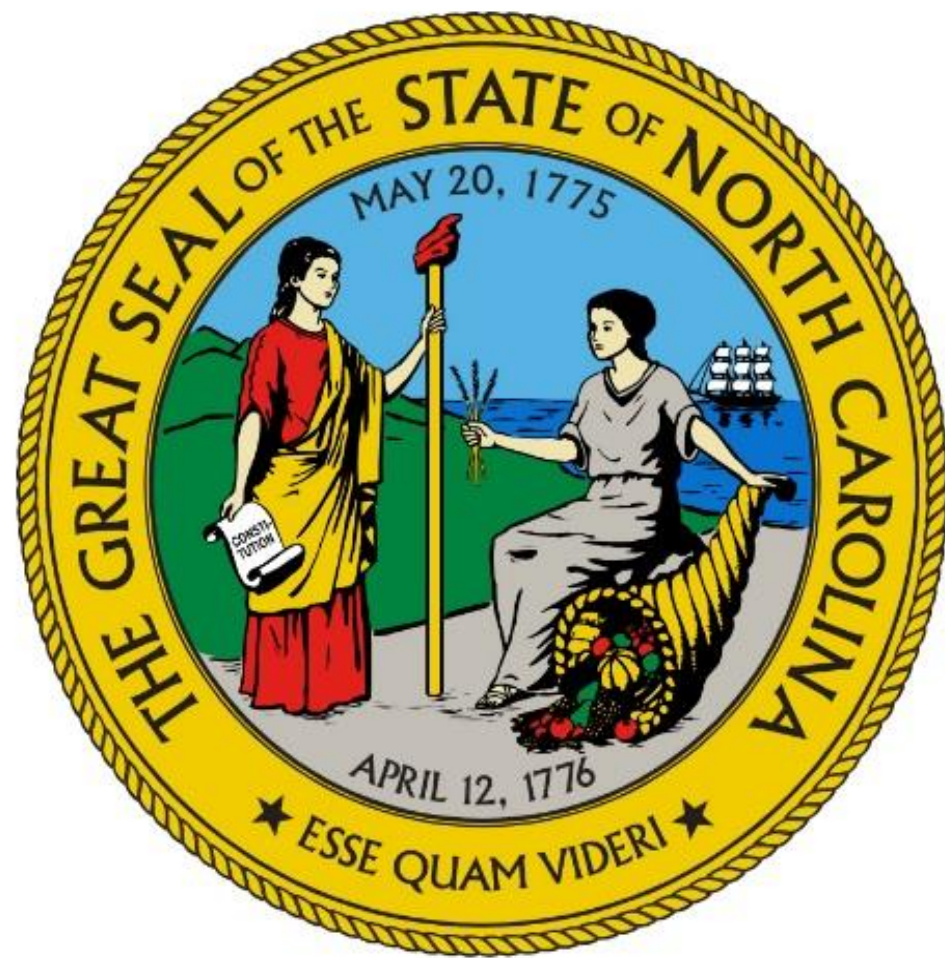


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Thank you to Natalie E. Pope, Senior Program Coordinator, for assistance with slide creation and design.



Social Bridging NC

Rebecca Freeman

NCDHHS, Division of Aging

September 26, 2024

Multipurpose Senior Center

“...community facility for organization & delivery of broad spectrum of services, ... & recreational activities for older individuals”

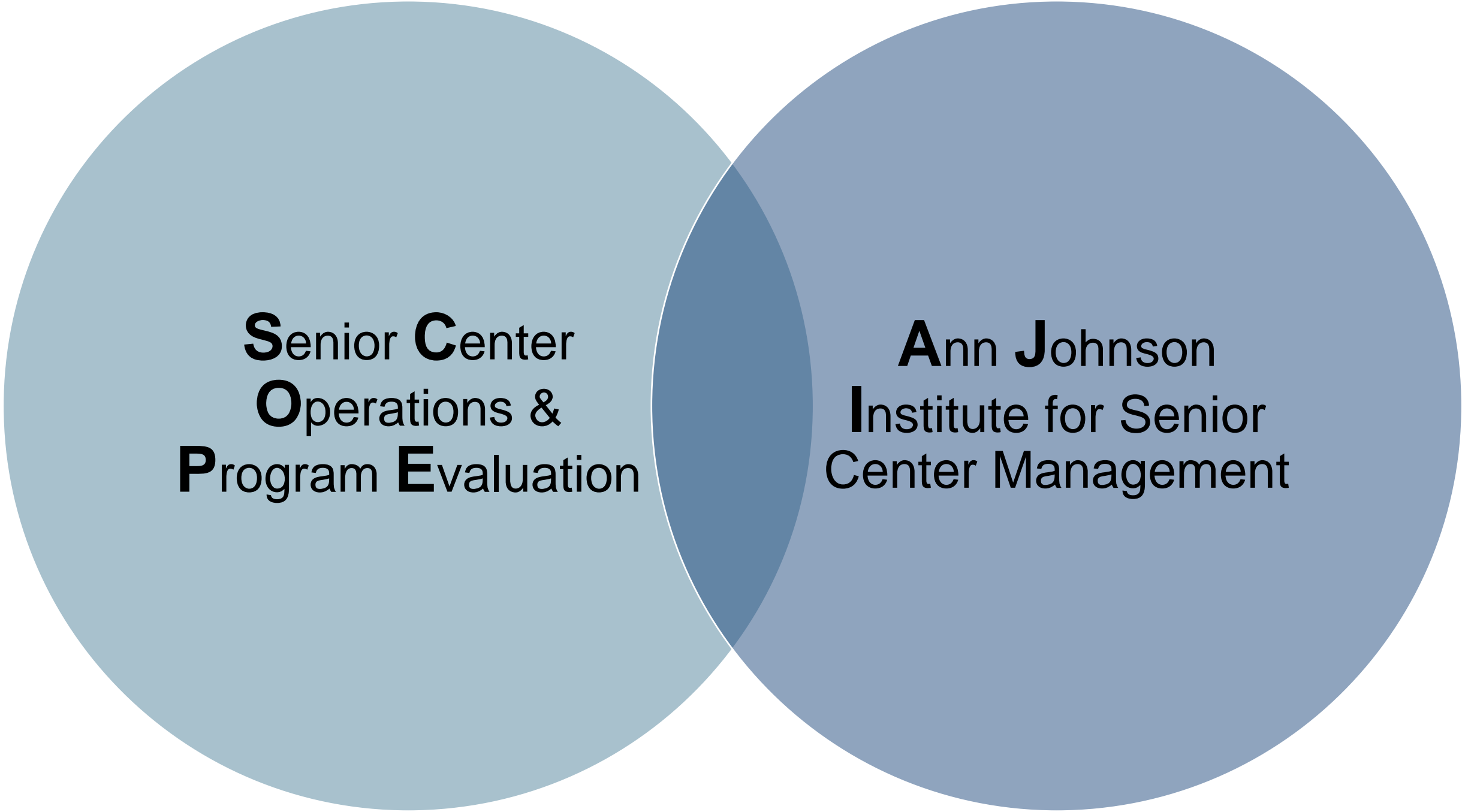


Focal Point

NC Senior Center Model of Excellence

CERTIFICATION

TRAINING



Senior **C**enter
Operations &
Program **E**valuation

Ann **J**ohnson
Institute for Senior
Center Management

Benefits to Participating at NC Senior Center

Based on survey of 7000 NC senior center participants

The collage consists of 12 benefit cards arranged in a grid. Each card features a title, an icon, and a small photograph illustrating the benefit.

- Improvement in well-being**: Icon of two interlocking puzzle pieces (green and blue). Photo shows four women in red shirts smiling.
- Learning new information & skills**: Icon of a blue hand with a white heart in the palm. Photo shows a woman reading a book.
- Development of stronger support systems**: Icon of a green network of nodes. Photo shows a group of people holding up their artwork.
- Less loneliness and feelings of isolation**: Icon of a green puzzle piece. Photo shows a woman sitting at a table, looking thoughtful.
- Increased volunteerism**: Icon of a blue hand with a white heart in the palm. Photo shows a woman sitting at a table with food.
- Better and easier access to services**: Icon of a green network of nodes. Photo shows a woman sitting at a table with food.
- Better management of health**: Icon of a purple heart. Photo shows a woman sitting at a table with food.
- Increased physical activity**: Icon of an orange stick figure with arms raised. Photo shows a woman sitting at a table with food.
- Increased creativity**: Icon of a purple paintbrush. Photo shows a woman sitting at a table with food.
- Improvement in advocacy skills**: Icon of a green bar chart with an upward arrow. Photo shows a woman sitting at a table with food.

“I found the center and I believed it saved my life.”

“I have new friends and don’t feel as isolated and lonely as I did before”.

“I feel less depressed since coming to the center.”

Pandemic Response: SILES Efforts



Social Bridging NC

Web-Based
Resources

Digital Navigator
Program

Training for Aging
Network

For More Information

[Social Bridging NC](#)

North Carolina Medical Journal

[Impact of Social Isolation on Older Adults in North Carolina](#)

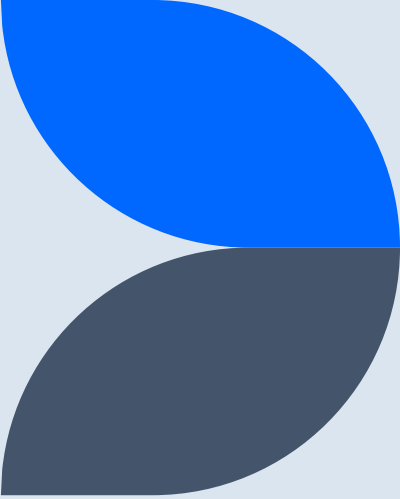
Rebecca Freeman

Rebecca.freeman@dhhs.nc.gov

984-328-2497

Aging with Optimism







Positive Aging Consortium

Who we are

1

20 faculty representing
3 Colleges- Behavioral and
Health Sciences, Liberal Arts,
Business

2

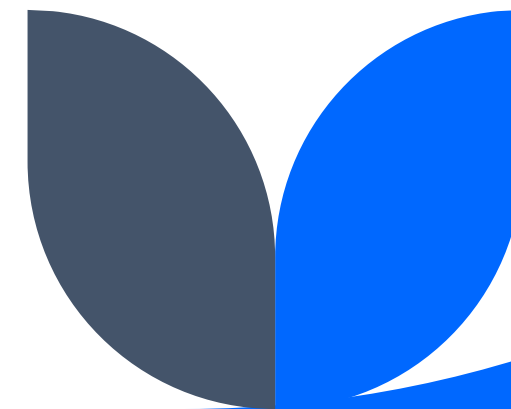
Nursing, Psychology, Exercise
Science, Nutrition, Child
Development/Family Studies,
Sociology, Social Work, Marketing,
Economics and Finance

3

4 community partners representing
Skilled Nursing/Assisted Living
Facilities, Home Care Services, Senior
Center, TN State Government

4

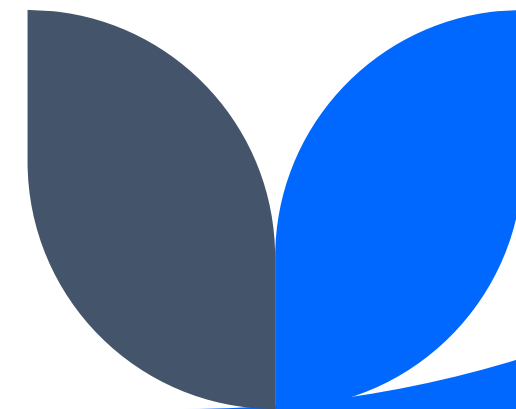
Mission- Enhance the health and
well-being of older adults by
emphasizing positive aging through
research, education, service,
workforce development and
advocacy.



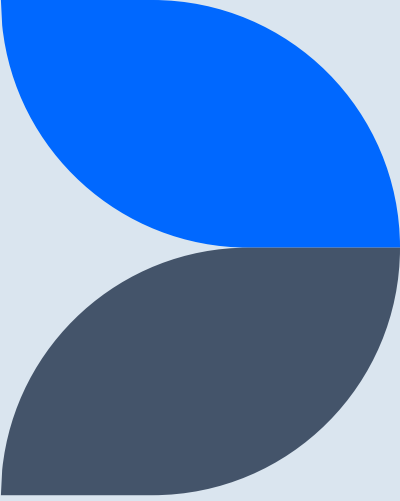


Positive Aging Conference

June 2022 and April 2024



Focus for conference planning to make it inviting and engaging



Provide a venue for older adults to come together and get information on topics of interest. Easy access with free parking

Use research and make it interesting and not academic.

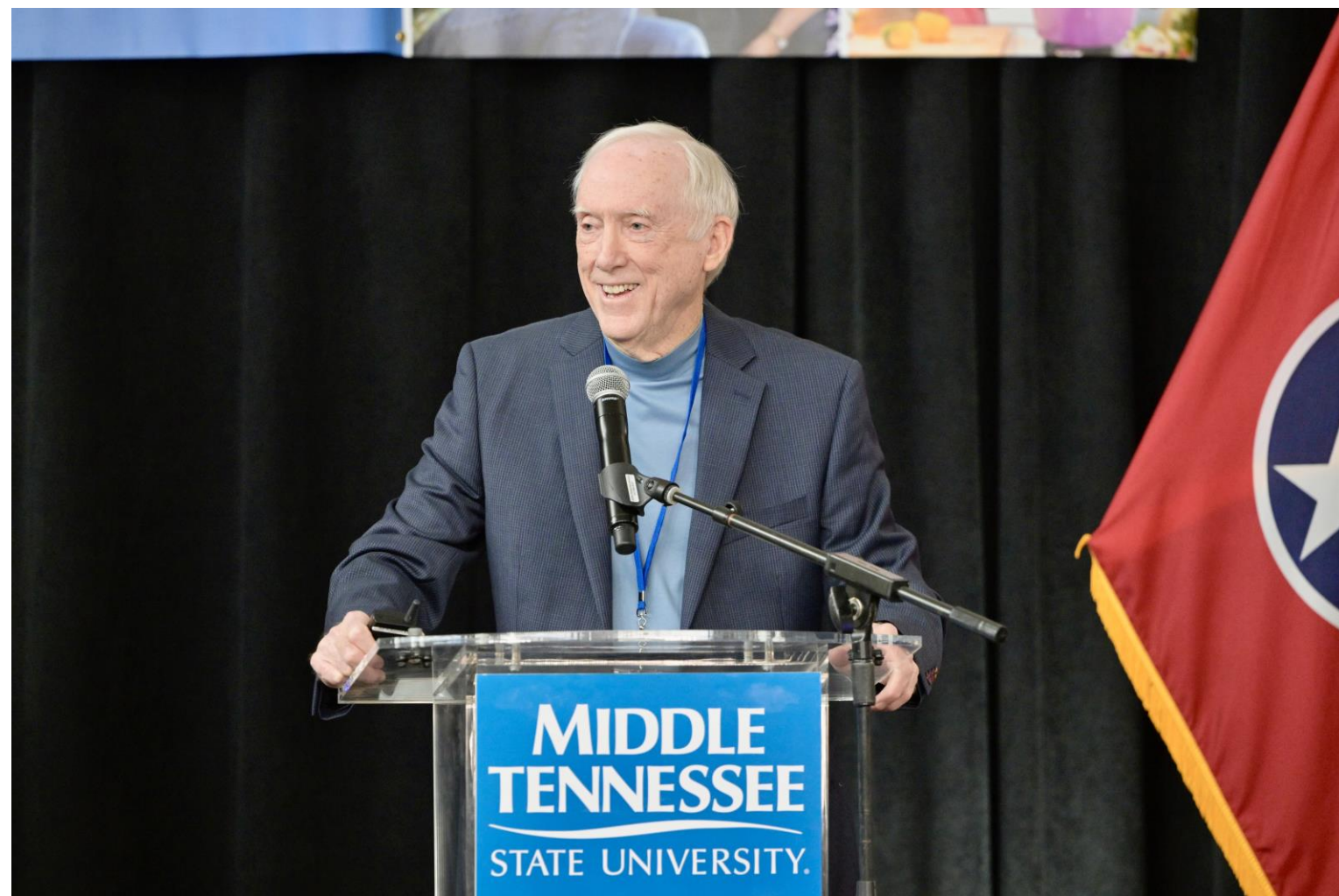
Affordable for older adults to attend.

Hold the conference in-person.

Provide a variety of topics that focus on positive aging. Include topics to engage certain audiences.

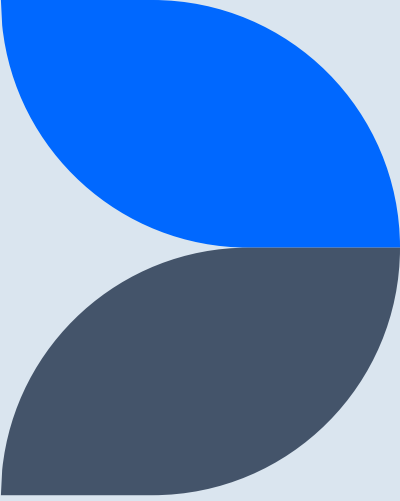
Use volunteers, especially students.

Provide lots of healthy food!



Cruising- Engaging students and older adults





Thank you

- Deborah Lee, PhD, RN, NBC-HWC
- Professor and NHC Chair of Excellence in Nursing
- Middle Tennessee State University
- 615-904-8059
- Deborah.Lee@mtsu.edu
- mtsu.edu/pac

Moderated Question and Answer

Please submit questions via the Zoom Q&A feature.



Office of
Disease Prevention
and Health Promotion



Next Up at 3:15 pm ET:

Transforming Transportation for Older Adults

Ensuring a Skilled Workforce to Improve the Lives of Older Adults

Go to your Whova platform to join!



Office of
Disease Prevention
and Health Promotion



Thank You!

OASH

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Disease Prevention
and Health Promotion

