SOCIAL ISOLATION, ITS IMPACT ON THE ELDERLY AND THEIR SUSCEPTIBILITY TO ELDER ABUSE

June 14, 2018 21st Annual Elder Abuse Conference World Elder Abuse Awareness Mary Anne Croissant

What We Will Be Discussing Today

- ■What is Social Isolation?
- ■What Leads People to Be Socially Isolated?
- What are the Medical and Psychological Outcomes for Individuals Who are Socially Isolated?
- How are Older, Socially Isolated Individuals More Susceptible to Elder Abuse?
- ■What are Some Possible Solutions?

We Are Social Beings

- "Man is by nature a social animal" Aristotle
- "We human beings are social beings. We come into the world as the result of others' actions. We survive here in dependence on others. Whether we like it or not, there is hardly a moment of our lives when we do not benefit from others' activities. For this reason, it is hardly surprising that most of our happiness arises in the context of our relationships with others." Dalai Lama XIV
- Happiness is about meaningful social relationships. Robert Waldinger, Harvard Longitudinal Study.

What is Social Isolation Like For People? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V5EsxU84ay4	
How would you define social isolation?	
Defining Social Isolation Social isolation can be defined structurally as the absence of social interactions, contacts, and relationships with family and friends, with neighbors on an individual level, and with "society at large" on a broader level. (NYS APS) Social isolation: the voluntary or involuntary absence of having contact with others. (Psychology Dictionary.)	

Defining Social Isolation

- Social isolation has been defined as, "the objective absence or paucity of contacts and interactions between an older person and a social network" (Cattan, White, Bond, & Learmouth, 2005)
- Social isolation is, "a state in which the individual lacks a sense of belonging socially, lacks engagement with others, has a minimal number of social contacts and they are deficient in fulfilling and quality relationships" (Alspach, 2013)

How Widespread Is the Problem of Social Isolation?

- ■An estimated one in five adults over age 50—at least 8 million— are affected by isolation.
- 27-28% People Over 65 Live Alone (11 to 12 Million People)
- Prolonged isolation can be as bad for your health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.
- Social Isolation is Like Chronic Stress

"Framework for Isolation in Adults Over 50," AARP Foundation (May 2012), Perspectives on Psychological Science, Holt-Lunstad-10(2), 227-237 (2015)

How Do Individuals Become Social Isolated?

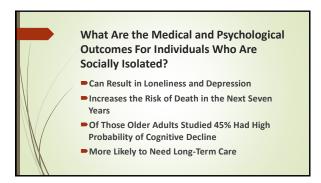
What Leads to Social Isolation? Living Alone Mobility or Sensory Impairment Major Life Transitions or Losses Low Income or Limited Financial Resources Being a Caregiver for Someone With a Serious Condition	
What Leads to Social Isolation? Psychological or Cognitive Challenges Inadequate Social Support	

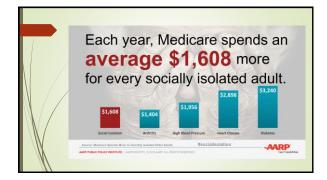
■ Transportation Access Challenges

Age, Racial, Ethnic, Sexual Orientation and/or Gender Identity Barriers

■ Language Barriers

	What Are the Medical and Psychological
	Outcomes For Individuals Who Are
	Socially Isolated?
	■Increases the Risk of Heart Disease by 29% and Stroke by 32%
	■Increases Systolic Blood Pressure
	■Weakens Immune System
	■Twice As Likely to Die Prematurely
	■Increases Hospitalization and Re-Hospitalization
//	







■ Both living with someone else and being socially isolated have been associated with higher elder abuse rates. These seemingly contradictory findings may turn out to be related in that abusers who live with the elder have more opportunity to abuse and yet may be isolated from the larger community themselves or may seek to isolate the elders from others so that the abuse is not discovered. https://ncea.acl.gov/faq/index.html#faq4	
Social Isolation and Elder Abuse Living Alone Mobility or Sensory Impairment Major Life Transitions or Losses Psychological or Cognitive Challenges Inadequate Social Support Transportation Access Challenges Language Barriers Age, racial, ethnic, sexual orientation and/or gender identity barriers	
How and Why Are Elderly Social Isolated Individuals More Vulnerable to Abuse?	

	How and Why Are Elderly Social Isolated Individuals More Vulnerable to Abuse?	
	►More vulnerable to:	
	Financial Exploitation	
	► Physical Abuse► Emotional/Psychological Abuse	
	Sexual Abuse	
///		
111		

Possible Solutions Keep Adults Mobile Exercise Take a Class Visit a Senior Center Eat Well Volunteer Skype With Family and Friends Let People Know That You Are Lonely

	Possible Solutions
	 ► Homebound ► Invite People Over For Coffee ► Schedule a Time Each Day, If Possible to
	Connect By Phone With Someone Allow Others to Visit
	► Let People Know That You Are Lonely Skype With Family and Friends
//	

As a Community How Can We Address Social Isolation? See Something, Say Something Recognize Social Isolation Work Together To Identify Possible Solutions Office for Aging APS AARP Medical and Mental Health Providers Senior Centers

As a Community How Can We Address Social Isolation? Identify and Attend to Older Individuals Who are Living Alone Who Have No Meaningful Social Contacts Support Programs Like Senior Companions – That Provide Meaningful Social Contacts Ask the Question – "Are You Lonely?" Be Prepared To Help

How Can You Help? Check On Elderly Neighbors, Family Members Regularly Ask Them If They Are Lonely Ask Them What Would Make Them Less Lonely See Your Neighbor, Family Member Regularly – Even if it Is Only a Brief Visit Invite Them To Take the Questionnaire

