



CENTRALINA
Area Agency on Aging

**SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS
AMONG AGING ADULTS**



CENTRALINA

Area Agency on Aging

Our purposes are to Plan, Develop, Coordinate, and Deliver a wide range of long-term senior services and supports to consumers in the region.



800.508.5777

www.centralinaaging.org

Centralina Regional Council is a nine-county member government organization based in Charlotte, N.C.

**Dr. Vivek H.
Murthy, U.S.
Surgeon
General**

“The health and societal impacts of social isolation and loneliness are a critical public health concern.”

The image is a composite graphic. On the left, a portrait of the U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek Murthy, is shown from the chest up. He is wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie. To his left, a portion of the U.S. flag is visible. On the right, there is a dark rectangular area containing the title 'Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation' in white text. Below the title, there is a smaller line of text and a colorful illustration of a group of diverse people. At the bottom of the image, a purple banner contains the text 'A message from the U.S. Surgeon General' in white.

Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation

A message from the U.S. Surgeon General

What is the difference between Social Isolation and Loneliness?

Social isolation is the lack of social connections and/or contacts and having few people to interact with regularly.



Loneliness is the distressing feeling of being alone or separated.

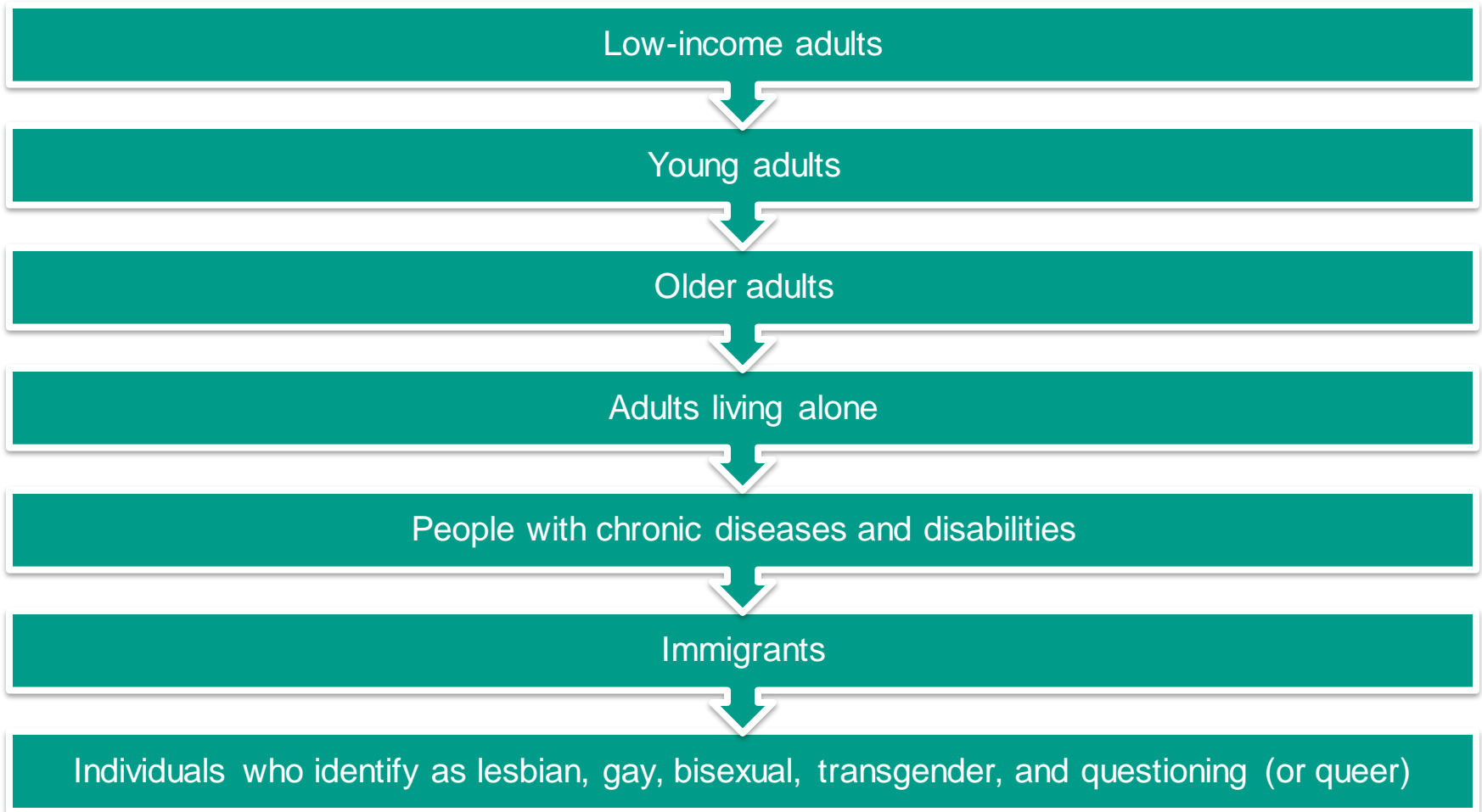


Target Population and Statistics

In North Carolina,
26.8% of **people 65**
and older **live alone**
and are vulnerable to
social isolation.

Of the socially isolated
population, **21.4%** of
people aged 65 or older
are part of **a racial or**
ethnic minority
population.

Groups at highest risk for social disconnection



Risk factors

Live alone

Can't leave your home

Had a major loss or life change, such as the death of a spouse or partner, or retirement

Struggle with money

Are a caregiver

Have psychological or cognitive challenges, or depression

Have limited social support

Have trouble hearing

Live in a rural, unsafe, and/or hard-to-reach neighborhood

Have language barriers where you live

Experience age, racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity discrimination where you live

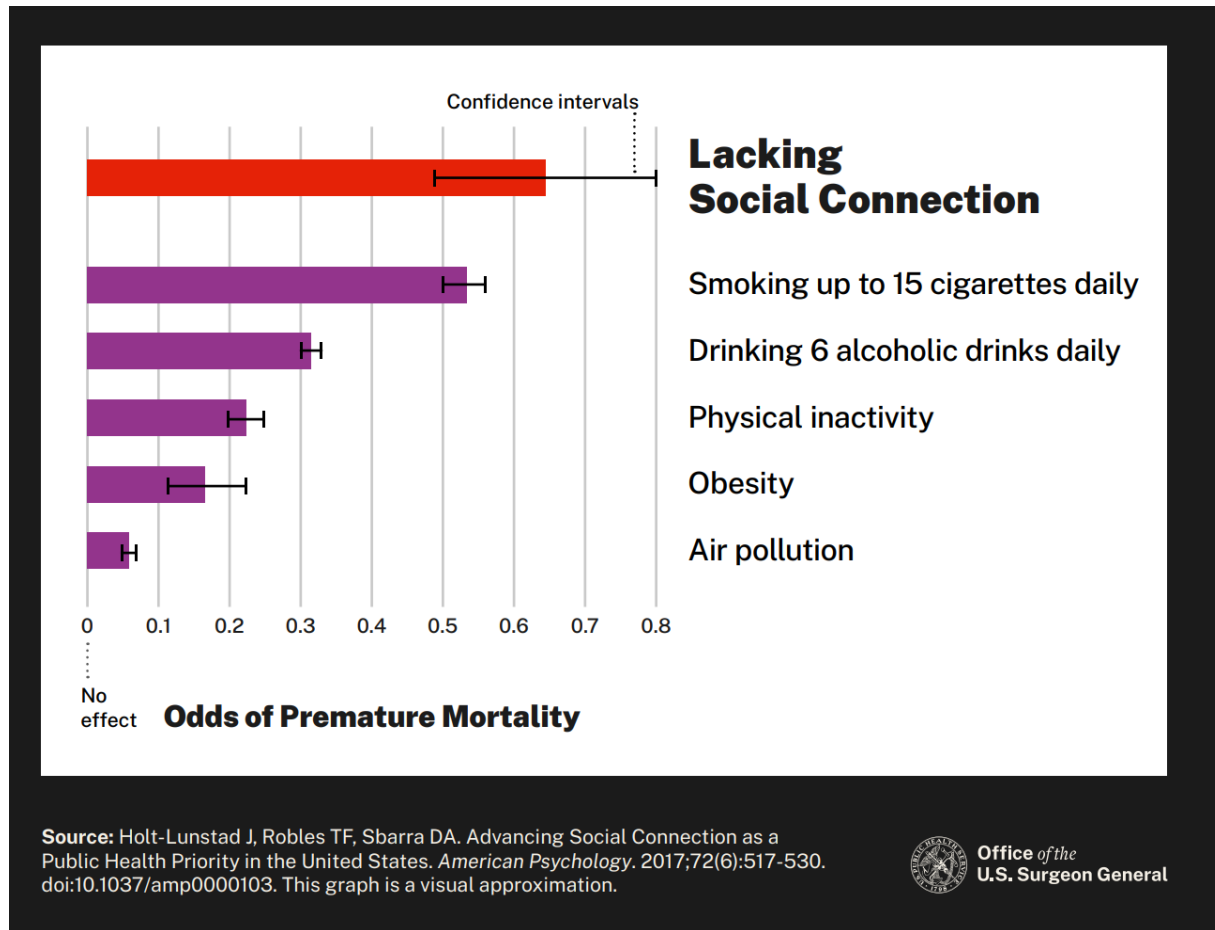
Are not meaningfully engaged in activities or are feeling a lack of purpose

Health Impact

“Over four decades of research has produced robust evidence that lacking social connection and in particular, scoring high on measures of social isolation – is associated with a significantly increased risk for early death from all causes”

-2020 Consensus Study Report

Health Impact



Health Risks

High blood pressure

Heart disease

Obesity

Weakened immune function

Anxiety

Depression

Cognitive decline

Dementia, including Alzheimer's disease

Premature death

Health Risks

Loneliness among heart failure patients was associated with a nearly:

- 4 times increased risk of death.
- 68% increased risk of hospitalization
- 57% increased risk of emergency department visits.



Socially Connected Communities



Decades of research across disciplines show that higher levels of social connectedness suggest better community outcomes, ranging from population health to community safety, resilience, prosperity, and representative government.



These studies establish that social connection is vital not only to our physical, mental, and emotional health, but also to the health and well being of our communities

Page 36- Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community. 2023

The Six Pillars to Advance Social Connection

1

Strengthen Social Infrastructure in Local Communities

Design the built environment to promote social connection

Establish and scale community connection programs

Invest in local institutions that bring people together

4

Reform Digital Environments

Require data transparency

Establish and implement safety standards

Support development of pro-connection technologies

2

Enact Pro-Connection Public Policies

Adopt a “Connection-in-All-Policies” approach

Advance policies that minimize harm from disconnection

Establish cross-departmental leadership at all levels of government

5

Deepen Our Knowledge

Develop and coordinate a national research agenda

Accelerate research funding

Increase public awareness

3

Mobilize the Health Sector

Train health care providers

Assess and support patients

Expand public health surveillance and interventions

6

Build a Culture of Connection

Cultivate values of kindness, respect, service, and commitment to one another

Model connection values in positions of leadership and influence

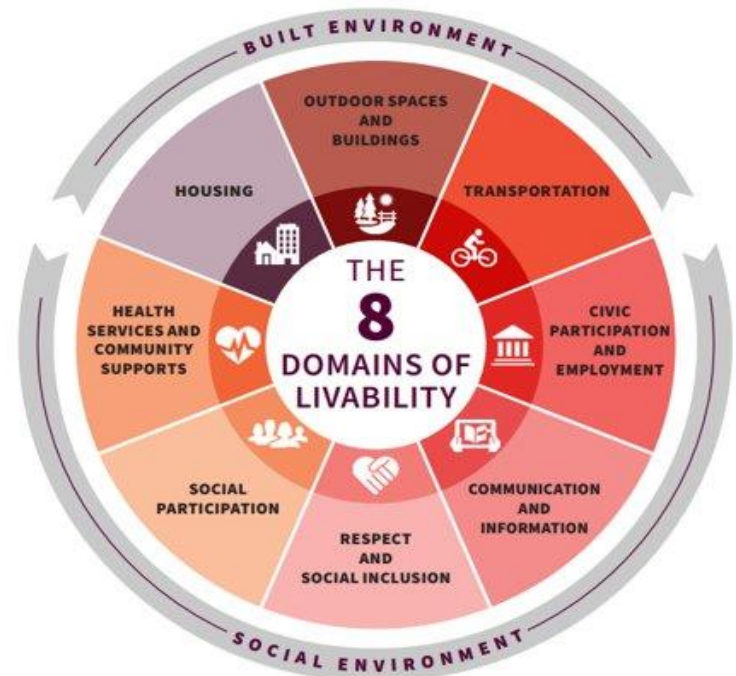
Expand conversation on social connection in schools, workplaces, and communities



Age-Friendly Communities

- Social Connectivity plays an important part in Age-Friendly Communities.
- Domains include:
 - Respect & Social Inclusion
 - Social Participation
- Other domains can support social connectivity such as:
 - Outdoor spaces and Buildings
 - Transportation
 - Etc.

The **8 Domains of Livability** is the framework used by states and communities enrolled in the network to organize and prioritize their work. The availability and quality of these community features impact the well-being of older adults and people of all ages.



Recommendations for Stakeholders

National, Territory, State, Local, and Tribal Governments

Health Systems & Workers

Public Health

Workplaces

Community-Based Organizations

Caregivers

Individuals



**What can you
do to build
social
connectivity?**

Health Workers, Health Care Systems, and Insurers



Explicitly acknowledge social connection as a priority for health.



Provide health professionals with formal training



Insurance companies should provide adequate reimbursement for time spent assessing and addressing concerns about social disconnection



Facilitate inclusion of assessment results in electronic health records



Providers and insurers can educate and incentivize patients to understand the risks



Integrate social connection into patient care



Work with community organizations



Create opportunities for clinicians to partner with researchers to evaluate the application of evidence-based assessment tools and interventions within clinical settings

Public Health Professionals and Public Health Departments



Establish social connection as a priority health indicator and social determinant of health



Develop, lead, and support public education programs, awareness campaigns, and health professional training programs

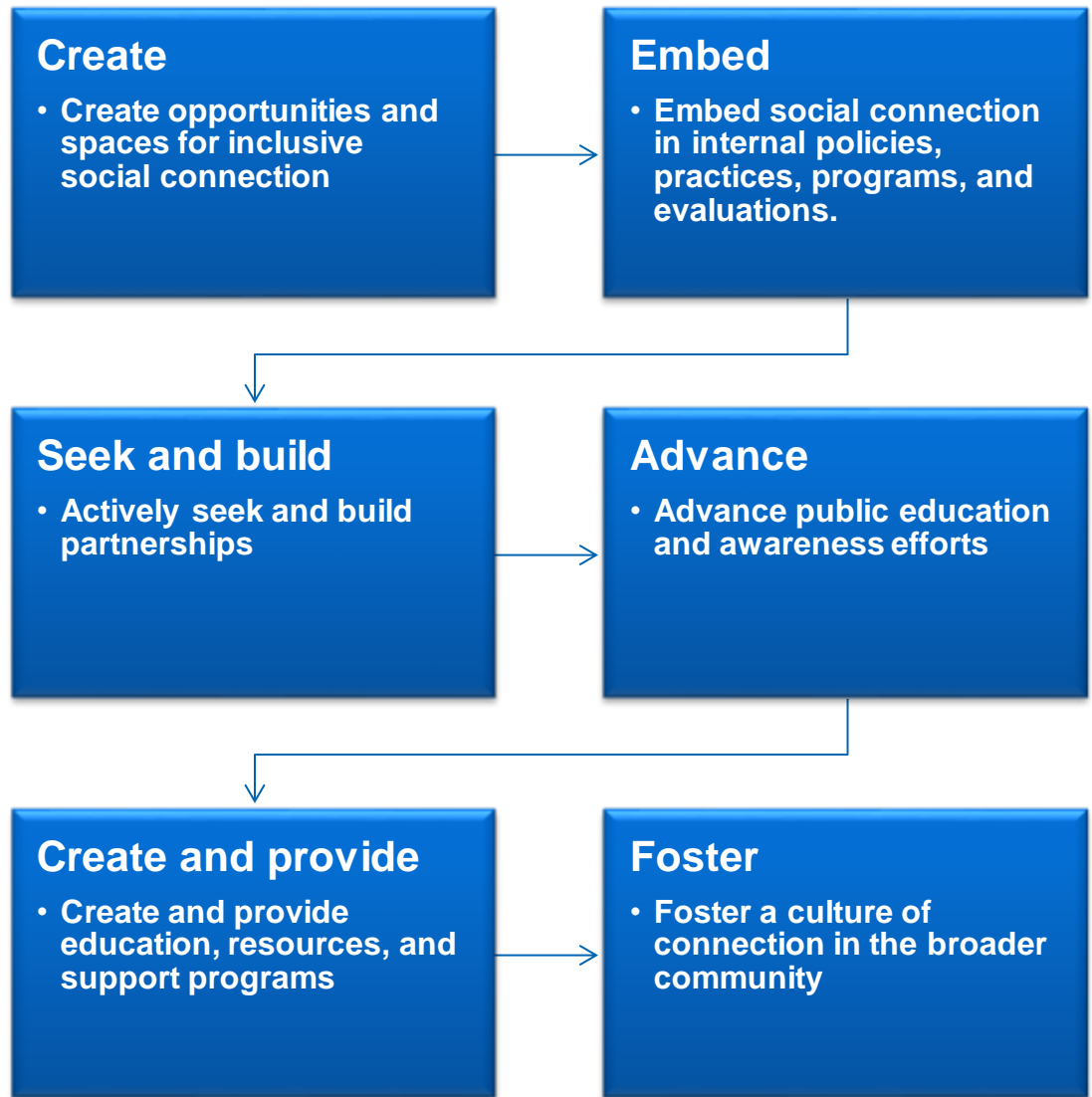


Study and support research on the causes of social disconnection



Evaluate, develop, and implement sustainable interventions and strategies (e.g., programs, campaigns, tools, partnerships)

Community-Based Organizations



How do you know you're at risk?

UCLA 3 Questions Loneliness Scale

Questions

1. How often do you feel that you lack companionship?

Hardly ever		1
Some of the time		2
Often		3

2. How often do you feel left out?

Hardly ever		1
Some of the time		2
Often		3

3. How often do you feel isolated from others?

Hardly ever		1
Some of the time		2
Often		3

The scores for each individual question can be added together to give you a possible range of scores from 3 to 9. Researchers in the past have grouped people who score 3 – 5 as “not lonely” and people with the score 6 – 9 as “lonely”.

Healthy Aging NC

Social Engagement Self-Assessment

This assessment, the Lubben Social Network Scale (LSNS-6), is a validated tool designed to measure social isolation risk by measuring the number and frequency of social contacts with family and friends. This brief, six question assessment can be self-administered. Scores of 0-12 suggest that an individual is at-risk for social isolation. Scores of 13-30 suggest stronger social connectedness.

FAMILY: Considering the people to whom you are related by birth, marriage, adoption, etc.

1. How many relatives do you see or hear from at least once a month? (Required)

none 1 relative 2 relatives 3-4 relatives 5-8 relatives 9+ relatives

2. How many relatives do you feel at ease with that you can talk about private matters? (Required)

none 1 relative 2 relatives 3-4 relatives 5-8 relatives 9+ relatives

3. How many relatives do you feel close to such that you could call on them for help? (Required)

none 1 relative 2 relatives 3-4 relatives 5-8 relatives 9+ relatives

Weblink: <https://healthyagingnc.com/social-engagement-landing-page/>



Healthy Aging NC

Social Engagement Self-Assessment

FRIENDSHIPS: Considering all of your friends including those who live in your neighborhood.

4. How many of your friends do you see or hear from at least once a month? (Required)

none 1 friend 2 friends 3-4 friends 5-8 friends 9+ friends

5. How many friends do you feel at ease with that you can talk about private matters? (Required)

none 1 friend 2 friends 3-4 friends 5-8 friends 9+ friends

6. How many friends do you feel close to such that you could call on them for help? (Required)

none 1 friend 2 friends 3-4 friends 5-8 friends 9+ friends

Results

Weblink: <https://healthyagingnc.com/social-engagement-landing-page/>



Strengthening Social Connections

- Invest time in nurturing your relationships
- Seek out opportunities to serve and support others
- Check out resources and programs at your local social service agencies, community and senior centers, and public libraries
- Reduce practices that lead to feelings of disconnection from others
- Use communication technologies to help keep you engaged and connected.
- Consider adopting a pet
- Stay physically active
- Seek help during times of struggle




NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF AREA AGENCIES ON AGING (NC4A)

- Website:
 - <https://www.nc4a.org/>
- Contact Information:
 - Email: Nc4a.org@gmail.com
- NC4A is to build capacity and coordinate the activities of the 16 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) in North Carolina.
- AAAs are charged with helping older adults and people with disabilities, along with their caregivers, live in their communities in the least restrictive environment with maximum dignity and independence for as long as possible.





advocacy | action | answers on aging

Health Promotion & Disease Prevention Programs/Workshops

 <p>Living Healthy</p>	<p>If you have conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, high blood pressure, this workshop can help you.</p>	<p>6 Sessions 2.5 Hours per Session 12-15 Participants</p>
 <p>Living Healthy with Diabetes</p>	<p>This workshop is designed to help you better manage your diabetes and gain control of your health.</p>	<p>6 Sessions 2.5 Hours per Session 12-15 Participants</p>
 <p>Living Healthy with Chronic Pain</p>	<p>This workshop helps people who experiencing a wide range of pain conditions.</p>	<p>6 Sessions 2.5 Hours per Session 12-15 Participants</p>

Health Promotion & Disease Prevention Programs/Workshops

 <p>Building Better Caregivers</p>	<p>A workshop designed for caregivers to help you reduce stress, manage difficult behaviors, increase communication skills, and locate needed local resources.</p>	<p>6 Sessions 2.5 Hours per Session 12-15 Participants</p>
 <p>A Matter of Balance</p>	<p>This workshop can help reduce the fear of falling and increase the activity levels of those concerned about falling.</p>	<p>8 Sessions 2.0 Hours per Session 8-12 Participants</p>

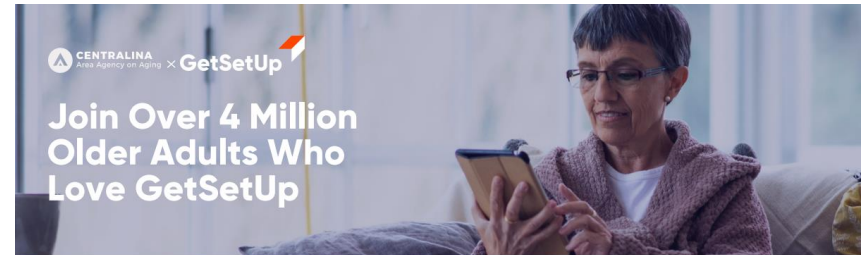
For more information and to register for a workshop please visit: <https://centralinaaging.org/what-we-do-services/health-wellness/>

Get Set Up

- The Centralina Area Agency on Aging has partnered with GetSetUp to provide free virtual classes for older adults taught by peers.

Website & Access Code:

<https://www.getsetup.io/partner/centralina>

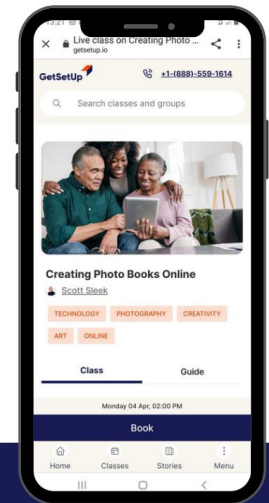


The Centralina Area Agency on Aging has partnered with GetSetUp to provide free virtual classes for older adults taught by peers - ask questions, make new friends, learn new things and have fun.

Try an Online Class Today!
www.getsetup.io/partner/centralina

Live Classes Taught by Older Adults Across Multiple Categories

- Aging in Place
- Communication
- Cooking
- Creativity
- Financial Planning
- Health and Wellness
- Fitness
- Music
- Photography
- Social Hours
- Social Media
- Technology
- Travel
- Business



Terri T.
GetSetUp Ambassador

"I'm leading groups, taking nursing and social work classes to build my curriculum, and using my new Google Slide skills to present. Thank you, GetSetUp, for helping me to get my life back."

PEARLS

(Program to Encourage Active, Rewarding LiveS)

A community-based program (evidence based) designed to reduce depressive symptoms, isolation, and improve quality of life in older adults.

PEARLS coaches will provide six to eight in-home or virtual sessions to help you:

- Recognize the symptoms of depression
- Use a seven-step approach to identify and solve problems
- Plan social and physical activities, which often improve the mood of people living with depression

Who is eligible?

- 60 years of age and up
- Adults who have minor depression or persistent depressive disorder (PDD).
 - An ongoing, low-grade depression of 2 or more years.
- Adults who have major depression.
- Adults with epilepsy and co-occurring depression.

Contact Kamiya Crawford for more information.

kcrawford@centralina.org / 704-688-7036

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT



Don't Face Depression Alone

Did you know that one in five older adults experiences depression? It's the most common mental health problem among those age 65 and older.



Social Bridging Project

The Social Bridging Project is a free service that pairs older adults who feel isolated with trained callers who can provide the following:

- A conversation and friendly check-in.
- Help using your technology devices to connect with loved ones, remotely access fitness classes or faith communities, access medical care via telehealth, and more.
- Referrals to resources such as transportation services, meal deliveries, no-cost wellness programs, and more.

Send an email at socialbridge@unca.edu or call at **(828) 250-2399**



Healthy Minds

The Healthy Minds Program gives seniors free short meditations to develop four skills of well-being:

- Awareness
- Insight
- Connections
- Purpose
- Website:
 - <https://hminnovations.org/>

healthyminds program™ *Well-Being for Older Adults*



A FREE Healthy Minds phone App based on neuroscience to supplement your current programming with well-being tools!

Free short meditations to develop the four skills of well-being:



Awareness

Be more calm and focused by practicing mindfulness & strengthening attention.



Connections

Learn simple skills to build healthy relationships & foster caring interactions with others.



Insight

Increase the skill of self-inquiry to understand how our thoughts, emotions, and beliefs shape our experience.



Purpose

Clarify and deepen your personal values and principles to bring depth to relationships & meaning to your pursuits.



Healthy Minds - <https://hminnovations.org/>

Get the Healthy Minds Phone App Today
"Well-being is a skill."

- Dr. Richard J. Davidson, Neuroscientist,

The Center for Healthy Minds at the University of Wisconsin- Madison



www.healthyagingnc.com

HEALTHY AGING NC Permission granted to NCCHW by Healthy Minds Innovations to share.



One Hope/NCBAM

- One Hope helps those who are experiencing social isolation and loneliness. They connect the lonely with community resources, and with Christ.



Contact: Phone: (877)506-2226

(onehopencbam.org)

NCBAM
201-A Idol Street
Thomasville, NC 27360

A ministry of Baptist Children's
Homes of NC

If you or a loved one are experiencing social isolation and/or loneliness:



Talk to your provider



Look into state, county, and local resources that may be offered to you



Contact someone if you need help

THANK YOU

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Suite 250, Charlotte, NC 28262 | www.centralina.org