

Community Engagement Webinar Series

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Introduction – Given some of the current realities that affect travel and gatherings, what follows is a prospectus for a webinar series that focuses on community building principles. These sessions will be an hour in length and can be recorded and archived for future use as stand-alone sessions or be used in a series format. Each session is titled with key objectives listed.

Session 1. **Addressing Loneliness and Social Isolation: The Key to a Better Life**

The notions of loneliness and social isolation have been clearly identified as vexing issues in our culture today. We know that when people are rendered isolated, bad things can follow including adverse health issues, unhappiness/depression, challenges with life success, and even shortened life expectancy. We also know that marginalized groups, folks with disabilities, seniors, those in poverty, and other minorities, are at greater risk of being lonely, isolated, or disconnected.

This session will do a deep-dive into understanding social isolation. Not only will we look at the research and data related to this concept, but we will explore strategies, and actions that can be employed in addressing loneliness by having social capital principles work for the people in your community. In an interactive format, we will examine ways and means to building more effective relationships.

Objectives

- Participants will be introduced to recent data and research on isolation/loneliness
- Ways to explore and measure loneliness will be introduced
- The construct of social capital will be overviewed
- Relationship-building strategies to combat social isolation will be examined

Session 2. **Building Community through Social Capital**

All individuals with disabilities and their family members (as well as professionals who are involved with the family) are interested in seeing themselves or their son/daughter/relative be successful in life. In fact, one of the biggest fear individuals and families have is that their loved one might be lonely or at serious risk when they are gone. Although none of us can predict the future, we can look at ways and means to better prepare for the future by understanding the impact of friendships in our lives. Sociologists call this "social capital" and it is amazing what our relationships do for us. This session will help you think about how friendships can be better developed over time, and, in turn, build a more inclusive community.

Objectives:

1. Participants will understand the historical development related to difference, disability, aging and other devaluing aspects.
2. Folks will be introduced to an Interdependent paradigm
3. Major elements of social capital will be overviewed
4. 4 key steps to developing more friendships will be explored

Session 3 – Addressing Loneliness and Isolation in a Pandemic

The antidote to loneliness and Isolation is to engage more with others. Yet, there are times when engagement is difficult or impossible. In these situations, we still need to find ways to incorporate supported people into the bigger mix. This session will look at creative ways and means to keep folks involved.

Objectives:

1. The realities of isolation will be examined
2. Research on ways and means to keep people connected will be reviewed
3. New ideas or suggestions will be solicited

Session 4 - MACRO CHANGE: The key Ingredient for Community Success

A key role for human service professions is to create opportunities for community participation and success for the folks they serve. Yet, many vulnerable clients remain isolated or off-set from community and struggle with the social ramifications of poverty, unemployment, difficulty with housing and transportation. It is clear that traditional methodologies have not brought many successes. To this end, this interactive session will introduce and explore this macro challenge and examine ways and means to greater community success for the people being supported or served. Clear strategies will be outlined and explored as we examine a more macro perspective on the notion of community building.

Objectives:

1. Participants will understand the micro and macro perspectives
2. Participants will be introduced to the Interdependent/macro paradigm
3. Major aspects of social infrastructure will be overviewed
4. The importance of Social Capital will be explored

Details/Costs - These sessions can be stand alone, or used in a series. Each session will have handouts and materials to supplement and compliment the training. Costs are listed per session and are inclusive of all preparation, the actual training, and then any follow-up that might be necessary.

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