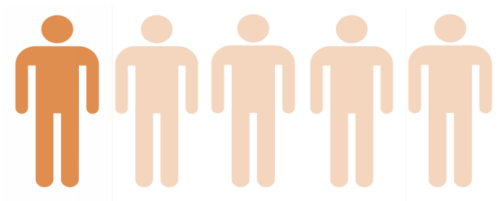


Seeing Beyond Isolation

Resources and Referral Tips

FriendshipWorks envisions a world where no senior is socially isolated. Social connection is a basic human need. We thrive with social support and positive relationships; and we suffer without them.

Limited social networks are as damaging to health as smoking 15 cigarettes per day and exceed the influence of physical inactivity and obesity. We can all do more to assess and address the social needs of seniors.



1 in 5 seniors is socially isolated.



Half of adults 80+ live alone.

Assessing Elder Social Connectedness

It can be hard to bring up social isolation and loneliness with a senior.

You do not have to ask directly, “Are you socially isolated or lonely?”

The following can give you a lot of information:

- Do you live alone?
- Do you have family or friends who live nearby?
- Are you recently retired?
- What kinds of activities do you enjoy doing?

For doctors:

- How did you get here today?
- Do you need help getting to your appointments?

Addressing Social Isolation

If you ask about social isolation, be ready to address it. There are a variety of supports that can help a socially isolated elder including FriendshipWorks **FREE** volunteer services.

Volunteers visit seniors weekly in their homes and share in meaningful activities like reading mail, listening to music, walking and playing games together. They also help with short-term tasks like organizing papers, cleaning out a closet or escorting someone on a medical or non-medical appointment.

General Referral Tips

Close the Loop

Give the senior information about the organization you are referring to, including who specifically they should call and talk to, and that person's direct phone number.

Make the Referral Directly

You can also make the referral yourself with the senior's approval.

Do Your Homework

Double check the referral criteria of any organization you are referring to and make sure the senior qualifies for their services.

Follow-Up

The next time you see the senior, ask them, "Did you get a chance to call Bryan at FriendshipWorks?" and "How is that going?"

FriendshipWorks Referral Tips



We match on a completely volunteer basis. Providers should first confirm with the senior that they are open to receive volunteer services. If you need help framing this conversation, please reach out to us.

Some seniors may feel uncomfortable requesting social support but may be more open to the idea of someone coming to engage in a particular activity like reading mail, organizing papers, going for walks or listening to music. Try to discover activities the senior would like to do and see if a volunteer can help.

FriendshipWorks Referral Guidelines

FriendshipWorks serves seniors who:

- ✓ Are over 60 years of age
- ✓ Live in Boston or Brookline
- ✓ Are free from moderate to severe cognitive impairment and drug or alcohol addictions
- ✓ Are over 55 years of age with vision or hearing loss



You can refer to FriendshipWorks:

By phone at **617-482-1510**

Online at www.fw4elders.org/make-a-referral/