WellbeingTREE
Teaching Resilience to Empower Elders

Session 5: Effective Approaches for Reducing Loneliness in Nursing Home Residents

- Understanding the challenge of combatting loneliness and social isolation in nursing homes.
- Exploring strategies to reduce loneliness and social isolation in nursing homes, and
- Discovering innovative and unconventional approaches to help elders establish meaningful social contacts.

Best Practices:

4 Ways to Help Reduce Social Isolation and Loneliness in Nursing Homes	
1	**Improve Awareness**: Teach staff to be observant of the causes and effects of Social Isolation and Loneliness in the nursing home.
2	**Assess the Physical Environment**: Dining rooms and common areas can be configured to provide small group seating that best supports interaction between elders.
3	**Enhance Social Connections**: Provide support for making new social connections and provide support for enhancing existing ones. Help elders learn new ways to foster their social connections in meaningful ways
4	**Support Personal Preferences**: Elders who are empowered with personal choice and who direct their care and their recreation may experience less loneliness and social isolation.

Helpful Interventions that May Decrease Social Isolation and Loneliness	
Electronic Interventions	**Creative Interventions**
• Video conferencing	• Animal Assisted Therapy
• Smartphones with Video App	• Laugh Therapy
• Social Robotics: Care Partners and Pets	• Gardening Therapy

Links to Supporting Documents
- Social Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults: Opportunities for the Health Care System
- Laughter Therapy: A Humor-Induced Hormonal Intervention to Reduce Stress and Anxiety
- Real-Life Examples of How Residents Were Engaged During Covid

Discussion Questions:
- How might large groups contribute to greater loneliness for some individuals?
- We've learned that three effective interventions for improving social isolation and loneliness are to provide interactions that are:
  - Group-based and targeted toward a specific group
  - Focused on a shared interest with an educational focus
  - Older people in the running of the group
- Review your activity calendar. See what activities on the calendar have components of the interventions within them. In what ways can programs be enhanced to support the goal of improving social interactions for elders?