



SOCIAL HEALTH Toolkit

SENIORS EDITION

*Empowering seniors across
Canada to build stronger
connections, stay engaged, and
live more fulfilling lives.*

KING TOWNSHIP





The Importance of Connection

Did you know?

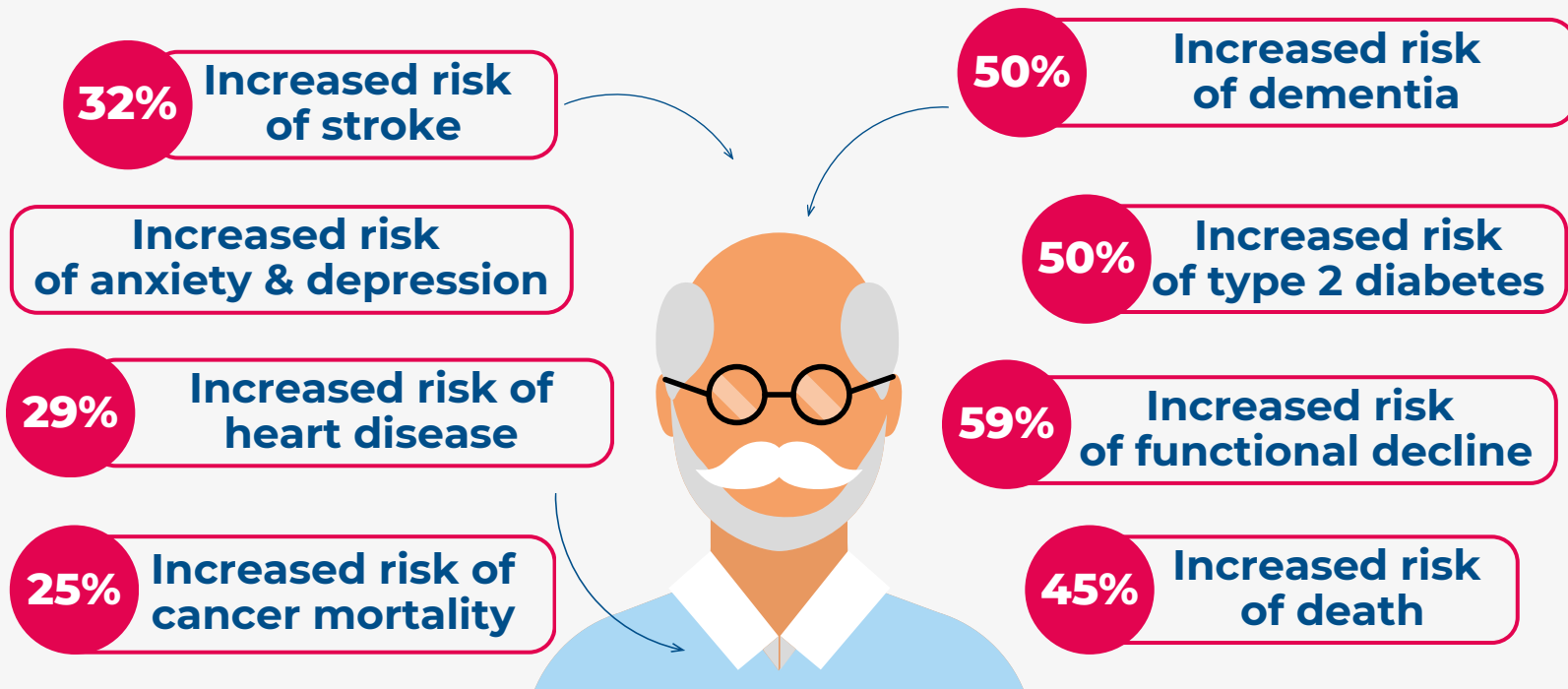
- More than 50% of Canadians aged 65 and older feel lonely often (Canadian Social Connection Survey, 2021).
- Feeling lonely and being disconnected from others can be as bad for your health as obesity, high blood pressure, alcohol addiction, or smoking 15 cigarettes a day. It can also increase your risk of stroke, heart disease, anxiety, depression, and dementia. (US Surgeon General Advisory, 2023).

Growing older doesn't mean you have to feel lonely or disconnected. The challenges we face today are chances to remember what's most important. Relationships are what keep us going, especially as we get older. They are not just extras—they are important for our health.

Research shows that building even a few more connections can improve your physical and mental health, and can help you live up to 50% longer.

Staying connected by making friends, joining activities, volunteering, and getting involved in your community can help fight loneliness. The simple steps in this toolkit can help you feel healthier and happier for many years to come.

■ Loneliness and Isolation for Older Adults' Health



■ The Negative Impacts of Loneliness on Society



Research shows that not having close relationships or a regular social routine can be linked to more aggressive and violent behaviours.



Long-term loneliness can cause chemicals to build up in the brain, leading to more stress, anger, and fear.



People who feel very lonely have a 68% higher chance of going to the hospital and a 57% higher chance of needing emergency care.



A recent study found that severe loneliness can cost about £9,900 per person each year because it affects their health, well-being, and ability to work.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Can you describe a time when you felt disconnected or lonely? What did you do (or wish you had done) to feel more connected?

In what ways has loneliness impacted your overall well-being, and what small steps could you take to invite more social connection into your daily life?

This image shows a single page from a notebook or ledger. The page is white with rounded corners at the top. It features 18 horizontal blue lines spaced evenly apart, providing a guide for writing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.



■ What is Human Connection?

Two or more people paying attention to each other.

A connection includes:

- Physical interactions- wave, smile, head nod, or conversation
- Verbal Communication- hello, how are you, what's on your mind?
- Sense of safety, acceptance, understanding

■ What is Social Health?

Our ability to build and maintain meaningful relationships.

It includes:

- The number and types of relationships we have
- How often we interact with others
- The quality of our relationships
- How we communicate and handle social situations

■ What Are We Looking to Overcome?



ISOLATION = ALONE



**LONELY = NOT HAPPY
WITH RELATIONSHIPS**



**DISCONNECTION =
DON'T BELONG**

Improve your social health today

with the GenWell Social Health Survey!

This assessment will provide you with a snapshot of your current social health and guide you on the next steps to build stronger, healthier connections in your life.

Your score will help you compare your social well-being to other Canadians and offer personalized suggestions to improve your health, happiness, and well-being.



Click here to take the GenWell
Social Health Index Survey

■ Why Your Social Health Score Matters

Research shows that social connection is essential for maintaining both mental and physical health.

Here's why your score matters:

- 5% lower risk of depression for every 1-point increase in your score.
- 7% higher odds of having high life satisfaction with stronger social health.
- 6% higher odds of being very happy

Those small increases in social health add up to big benefits!

Those small increases in social health add up to big benefits! Let's get started today on building stronger, healthier connections.

■ Customized Suggestions Based on Your Score

Poor Social Health (0-15): If your score is in the lower range, don't worry—this is the perfect time to begin strengthening your social connections. Here are some practical steps you can take:

— Reach out to a friend or family member and make plans to connect this week.

— Volunteer in your community to meet new people while making a difference.

— Join a local club to engage with people who share similar interests.

Fair Social Health (16-20): Your social health is already on track, but there's room for growth. Try these actions to further boost your social well-being:

— Increase the frequency of your interactions with neighbours or coworkers.

— Organize a regular social event, such as a weekly coffee meetup or game night.

— Engage in more meaningful conversations with friends or family & ask deeper questions.

■ Customized Suggestions Based on Your Score

Good Social Health (21-25): You have a solid social foundation! To maintain or improve your social health, consider:

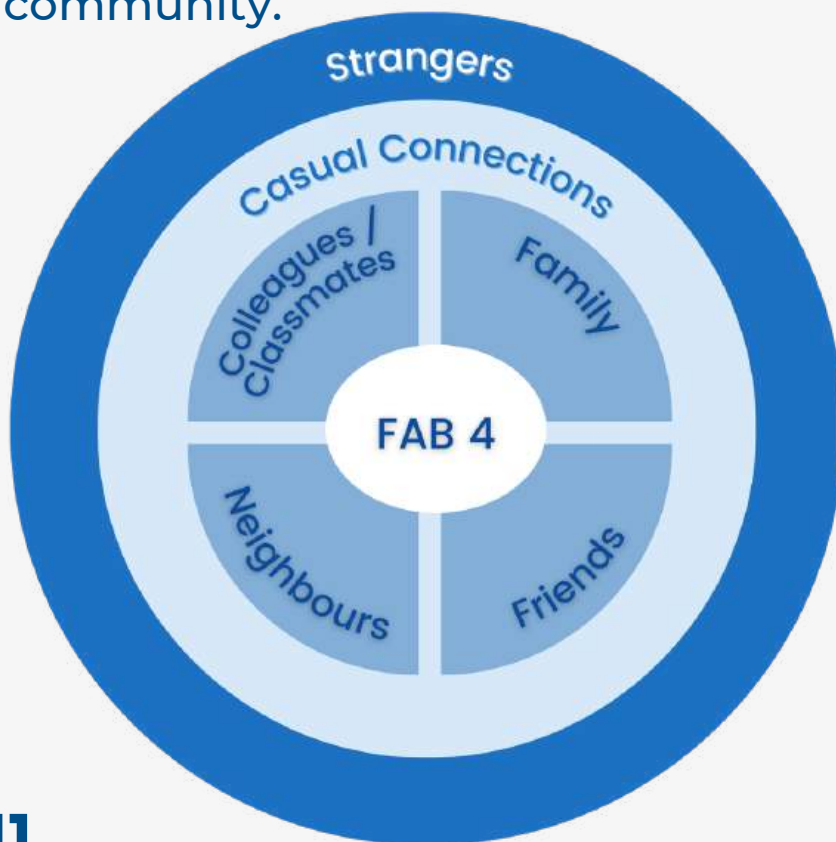
- Strengthening connections by organizing group activities or dinners with friends.
- Check in regularly with people you haven't spoken to recently, whether by phone or in-person.
- Help others get connected by introducing them to social opportunities in your community.

Excellent Social Health (26-30): Congratulations! Your social health is strong, but there's always more you can do to benefit others:

- Become a community leader by organizing local events to help others feel connected.
- Mentor someone who may be struggling with loneliness or isolation.
- Spread the word about social health and help others improve their connections through GenWell.



Building a strong social network is important for your health and happiness. Having 3 to 5 close people in your life—whether they are family, friends, or neighbours—gives you support when times are tough and helps you feel connected. These relationships can improve your mental and physical health and make you feel happier every day. It's also important to build relationships in each of the 4 quadrants, which you can do by getting more involved out in your community.



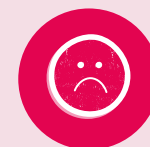
■ The Benefits of Social Connection



Single greatest contributor to happiness



Reduces anxiety & depression



Reduces burnout



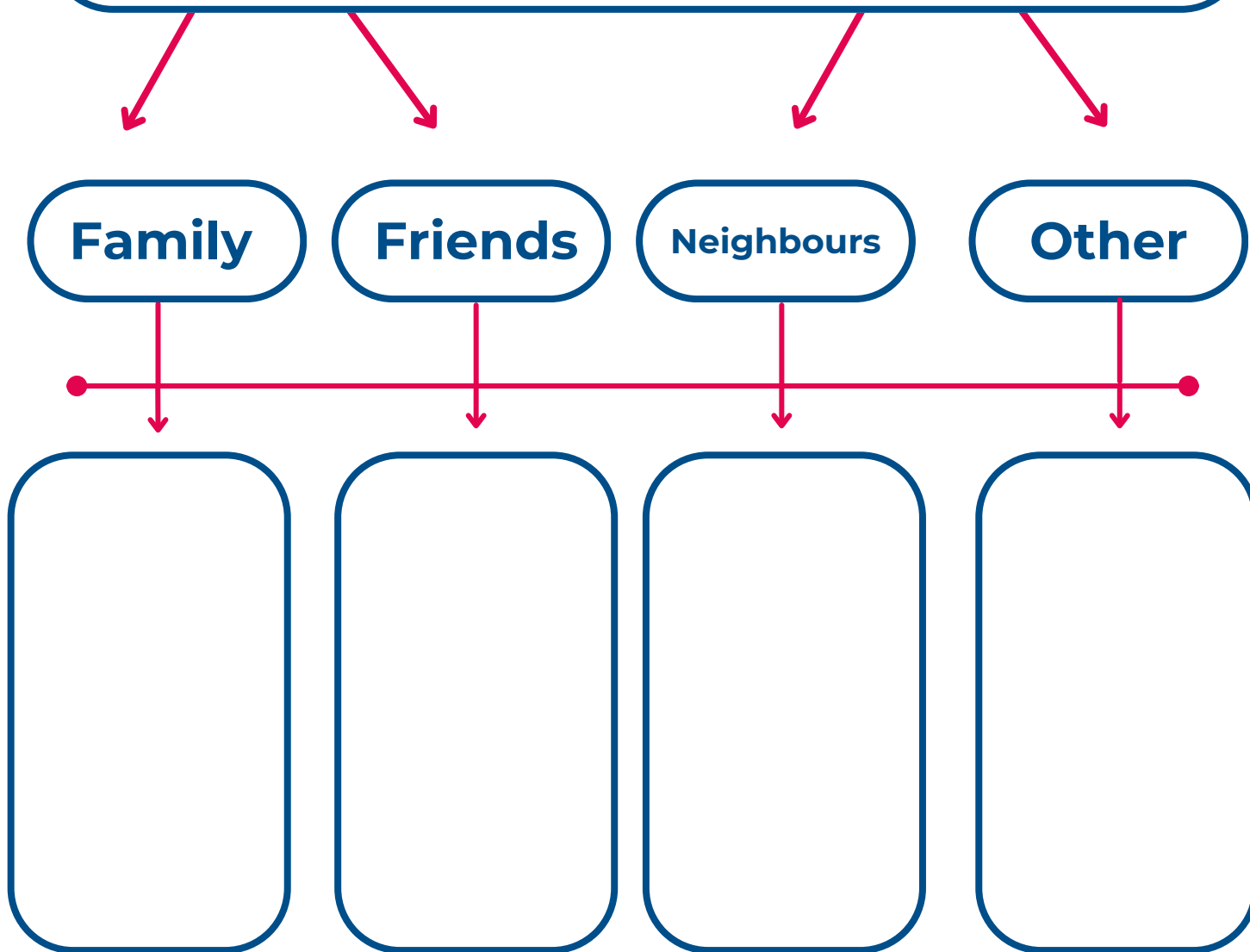
Strengthens your immune system



Builds resilience

My Social Connections

genwell[®]
SENIORS



Who do you connect with regularly?
Where do you not have many relationships?
Who would you like to reconnect with?

GROUP QUESTION REFLECTION

What are some ways you currently connect with others?

What's one tip you heard in the workshop that you would like to try out this week?

A blank sheet of lined paper with horizontal blue lines and rounded corners. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. The corners of the paper are rounded, while the lines themselves are straight.

SOCIAL CONNECTION CHALLENGE

DAY 1



- ☐ Day 1: Ask a grandchild or young person in your life to teach you something new.

DAY 2



- ☐ Day 2: Send a card to a friend or someone you've been meaning to reconnect with.

DAY 3



- ☐ Day 3: Invite a neighbour for a cup of tea or coffee.

DAY 4



- ☐ Day 4: Give someone you don't know a compliment or offer them a smile.

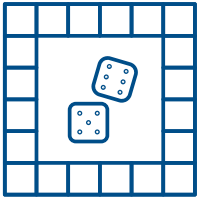
SOCIAL CONNECTION CHALLENGE

DAY 5



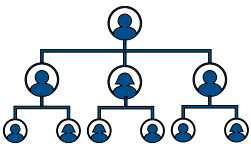
☐ **Day 5: Visit a library and join a book club.**

DAY 6



☐ **Day 6: Play a board game with friends or family.**

DAY 7



☐ **Day 7: Write down your family history and share it with younger relatives.**

BONUS



☐ **BONUS: Volunteer at your favorite local charity or attend a cultural event in the neighbourhood.**

■ 10 Tips for Better Relationships

1. Understand the Importance of Relationships

Learn why staying connected with others is important for your well-being. Talking to people regularly helps you feel happier and less alone.

2. Make Time for Socializing

Set aside time each week to talk with friends, family, or neighbours. It can be as simple as a phone call or meeting up for tea.

3. Reach Out First

If you want to connect with someone, don't wait for them to come to you. Take the first step and invite them for a chat or a walk.

4. Join or Start Conversation Groups

Get involved in a weekly or bi-weekly group where you can talk about different topics. If none exist, try starting one! Topics can include your favourite childhood memory, family traditions, or life in Canada.

5. Celebrate Special Moments

Take part in community celebrations, like birthday parties, cultural events, or holiday gatherings. These are great opportunities to meet new people and strengthen relationships.

6. Share Gratitude

Practice saying thank you to the people around you. You could write a small note or simply express your appreciation when someone helps you.

7. Support Others Who Bring People Together

If you notice someone who is good at organizing events or connecting people, offer them help or support. This could be as simple as volunteering to help at an event they organize.

8. Check In on Your Friends

Make it a habit to ask your friends how they are feeling. This small action can help strengthen your relationships and show that you care.

9. Lead by Example

Show others how important it is to stay connected. Smile, greet people, and start conversations. Your actions can inspire others to do the same.

10. Get Involved in Your Community

Join a local group, volunteer, or take part in community events. Activities like gardening, walking groups, or arts and crafts sessions are great ways to meet new people and stay connected.

If health, technology, or accessibility issues make connecting hard for you, get the supports you need.

You can find more help at 211ontario.ca

REFLECTION CARD

Task: Write down one thing you can do to strengthen your relationships

To build more connections, I pledge to...



About King Township

King Age Friendly Community - Becoming an Age Friendly Community is a key result identified in the 2023-2026 King Township Corporate Strategic Plan. King Township will work towards this goal through collaboration between municipal staff, the King AFC Advisory Committee, and local stakeholders. The township will collect relevant information from stakeholders to develop a King Age Friendly Community Action Plan, which will help enhance senior programs and services throughout King Township. For the most up-to-date information, please visit www.king.ca/seniors

■ Upcoming Events

See a Senior Initiative – *Starting Oct 01*, community members are encouraged to pick up a Senior Socialization Kit at designated locations to share with a senior they know—be it a neighbour, friend, or family member. These kits are designed to promote social interaction and include educational materials that highlight the importance of social health and human connection. Seniors will learn about the negative effects of loneliness and social isolation and discover ways to foster new connections within their community. Together, we can create a more connected and resilient community, one senior at a time.

■ Upcoming Events

Letter to Senior Program – *Starting Oct 01*, seniors can engage with the community through a letter exchange program. By sending a letter to the King City Senior Centre, seniors will receive a thoughtful message from a community member. These letters can include stories, drawings, inspirational quotes, and practical tips, all aimed at sparking joy and connection.

Join in nurturing connections and supporting communities. To sign up or learn more, call 905-833-6565, email seniors@king.ca, or visit www.king.ca/seniors





Platforms to Build Connections

1

Aintro

Aintro is a free, social platform that connects you to other adults 50+ who share your interests, hobbies, and aspirations. **Visit: amintro.com**

2

CompanionLink ☎ +1 647-699-8685

CompanionLink connects isolated persons, particularly seniors and elderly, with volunteers to make great social connections. **Visit: www.companionlink.org**

3

One-to-One Program

One-on-one visits allow caregivers to respond to the needs of those who avoid social settings & create fun one-on-one social activities to enjoy.

Visit: www.goldencarers.com/one-on-one/

4 Volunteer Canada ☎ (800) 670-0401

Volunteer Canada is a registered charity, providing national leadership and expertise on volunteerism to increase the participation, quality and diversity of volunteer experiences. **Visit: volunteer.ca**

5 Recreational Respite ☎ 1-877-855-7070

Recreational Respite promotes inclusion, encourages community participation and nurtures social health and connectivity for children, youth and adults, across Canada. **Visit: www.recrespite.com**

6 KinCapsule

KinCapsule is a Family Tech & AgeTech storytelling platform, purpose-built for life story, legacy and to drive meaningful social and intergenerational connection. **Visit: kincapsule.ca**

7 Society of Sharing ☎ 416 413 0380

Provides free services to isolated, lonely, and frail seniors. All programs are designed to reduce social isolation, promote social connection, and improve the well-being of housebound clients. **Visit: societyofsharing.org**



General Support & Information

211 Ontario 📞 Dial 211

A free helpline that connects seniors with community services and programs, including social support, transportation, housing, and health services.

Visit: www.211ontario.ca

Toronto Seniors Helpline 📞 416-217-2077

Provides seniors with support, information, and access to community services. Available for seniors and caregivers looking for help in Toronto.

Visit: www.torontoseniorshelpline.ca

Ontario Seniors' Secretariat

Offers resources, programs, and services for seniors, including information on health, transportation, and community programs.

Visit: www.ontario.ca/page/information-seniors

Good Companions Senior Services

Provides a variety of social, recreational, and educational programs for seniors. Services include transportation, meals on wheels, and community support.

Visit: www.thegoodcompanions.ca

Seniors Safety Line (SSL) ☎ 1-866-299-1011

A 24-hour confidential helpline providing information, referrals, and support for seniors experiencing abuse.

The Friendly Neighbour Hotline (Through the UHN OpenLab) ☎ 1-855-581-9580

Volunteers deliver groceries and other essentials to low-income seniors during times of need.

Social & Recreational Programs

Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario (OACAO)

A network of over 170 senior centers across Ontario offering recreational programs, educational workshops, and social events for seniors. **Visit: www.oacao.org**

Toronto Council on Aging (TCA)

Provides education and advocacy for aging issues. Offers programs that help seniors stay engaged and connected. **Visit: www.torontocouncilonaging.com**

Retire-At-Home Services (GTA)

Offers personalized home care services for seniors, including companionship and support with activities of daily living. **Visit: www.retireathome.com**

Community Centres in King Township

Be sure to visit your local community center & YMCA for programs like fitness classes, art, and social activities.

Examples include:

Nobleton Arena

Location: 15 Old King Rd, Nobleton, ON

Zancor Centre - Coming soon to King City!

Trisan Centre

Location: 25 Dillane Dr, Schomberg, ON

Phone: +1 905-939-1216

King City Community Centre and Arena

Location: 25 Doctors Ln, King City, ON

King Heritage & Cultural Centre

Location: 2920 King Rd, King City, ON

Nobleton Community Hall

Location: 19 Old King Rd, Nobleton, ON

Mental Health & Wellness

Distress Centres of Greater Toronto 📞 416-408-HELP (4357)

Provides 24/7 telephone support for individuals in emotional distress, including seniors.

Visit: www.torontodistresscentre.com

Senior Persons Living Connected (SPLC)

Offers social, physical, and mental health programs to support seniors in the GTA, helping them live independently and with dignity.

Visit: www.splc.ca

Alzheimer Society of Ontario

Provides support, education, and advocacy for individuals and families dealing with Alzheimer's and other dementias.

Visit: www.alzheimer.ca/en/on

Mindfulness Everyday – Seniors Programs

Offers mindfulness workshops tailored for seniors to help manage stress, anxiety, and overall mental health.

Visit: www.mindfulnessseveryday.org

Canadian Mental Health Association - Ontario

Provides mental health programs and services, with a focus on seniors' well-being, including support groups and wellness programs.

Visit: www.ontario.cmha.ca

Volunteering & Community Engagement



— Volunteer Toronto - Seniors Volunteering Programs

Provides volunteer opportunities for seniors who want to stay active and engaged in their communities.

Visit: www.volunteertoronto.ca

— Neighbourhood Link Support Services (NLSS)

Offers seniors' programs, including meal delivery, transportation, and volunteer services for community involvement.

Visit: www.neighbourhoodlink.org

— Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP)

A national, non-profit organization advocating for the rights and well-being of older Canadians. They offer events, educational resources, and volunteering opportunities.

Visit: www.carp.ca

Health & Home Care Services

Home and Community Care Support Services (Ontario)

Helps seniors receive care at home or find care in the community, including nursing, therapy, and personal support services.

Visit: www.healthcareathome.ca

Circle of Care

Provides home care services, social programs, transportation, and health support for seniors across Toronto and York Region.

Visit: www.circleofcare.com



King Township Resources

King Township Public Library (KTPL) ☎ +1 905-833-5101

The library offers a variety of programs designed to foster social connection, including book clubs, educational workshops, and social events for different age groups.

Location: Multiple branches in King City, Nobleton, and Schomberg

Visit: www.kinglibrary.ca

King Township Seniors Centre ☎ 1-905-833-6565

Provides activities, social gatherings, and fitness programs tailored for older adults, which promote social interaction and reduce isolation.

Location: 30 Fisher St, King City, ON (King City Arena & Community Centre)

CHATS (Community & Home Assistance to Seniors)

☎ 1-877-452-4287

Offers services like friendly visiting, transportation, and social and wellness programs for seniors, helping them stay connected and supported in their community.

Location: Serving York Region, including King Township

Visit: www.chats.on.ca

King Township Food Bank - Community Outreach & Social Supports

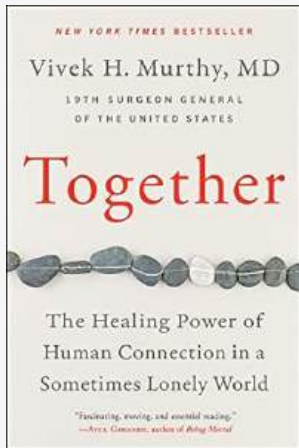
☎ +1 905-806-1125

In addition to providing food services, the food bank helps connect residents with additional social services, volunteer opportunities, and community support groups to reduce isolation.

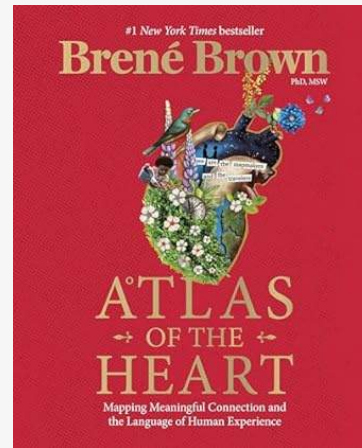
Location: 12935 Keele St, King City, ON

Visit: www.kingtowshipfoodbank.ca

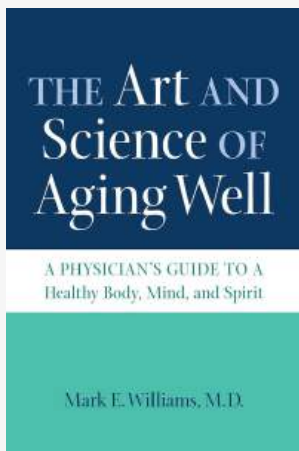
■ Books We Love



Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World



Atlas of the Heart: Mapping Meaningful Connection and the Language of Human Experience



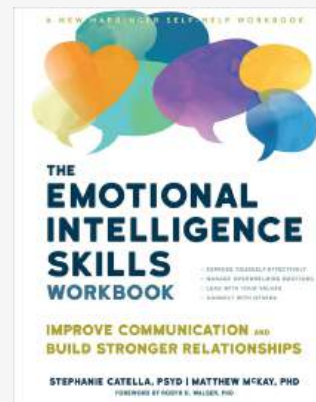
The Art and Science of Aging Well: A Physician's Guide to a Healthy Body, Mind, and Spirit



The Art and Science of Connection: Why Social Health Is the Missing Key to Living Longer, Healthier, and Happier



My Memoir Journal: Large Print



The Emotional Intelligence Skills Workbook: Improve Communication and Build Stronger Relationships

■ Video Resources



Rethinking Health, Wellness & Aging in America Today

tinyurl.com/HealthWellnessAndAging



Healing the Epidemic of Isolation for Senior Citizens

tinyurl.com/EpidemicOfLonelinessForSeniors



Social Support & Wellness

tinyurl.com/SocialSupportAndWellness

Want to learn more?

Access these video resources for more information on the importance of human connection:

- [Power of talking to strangers](#)
- [Connected, but still alone](#)

■ The Power of Human Connection for Life

Looking for content that can help you gain a better understanding of the power of human connection, its importance, and the barriers to connecting with yourself and the people around you?

Check out our collection of resources below:



▶ Video and audio resources:

- The Inspiration of GenWell

tinyurl.com/GenWell-Inspiration

- What makes a happy life?

tinyurl.com/What-Makes-A-Happy-Life

- The impact of loneliness

tinyurl.com/Impact-of-Loneliness

- Power of talking to strangers

tinyurl.com/Talking-to-Strangers

- Power of volunteering

tinyurl.com/Power-of-Volunteering

- The power of active listening

tinyurl.com/Power-Of-Attention



Video and audio resources:

- **Why our tech makes us lonely**

tinyurl.com/TechMakesUsLessHappy

- **The opposite of addiction is human connection**

tinyurl.com/Addictionandconnection

- **Connected, but still alone**

tinyurl.com/ConnectedButStillAlone

- **TELUS Talks with Tamara Taggart**

tinyurl.com/TelusTalks



Free courses you may enjoy:

- **The Science of Well-being - Dr. Laurie Santos**

www.coursera.org/learn/the-science-of-well-being

- **Mind Control: Managing Your Mental Health During COVID-19**

www.coursera.org/learn/manage-health-covid-19



Who is GenWell?

GenWell is Canada's Human Connection Movement. Since 2016, we've been working to make the world a happier and healthier place. Our goal is to teach people how to build strong, face-to-face relationships to improve their health and happiness.

We share tips, resources, and research every day through our website and social media to help people build healthy relationship habits.

We also organize different events during the year to encourage people to connect with their family, friends, neighbours, classmates, coworkers, strangers, and broader communities.

We offer workshops for schools, communities, seniors, and workplaces to help people learn how to create strong and meaningful relationships.

Find out more about the GenWell Project at www.genwell.ca

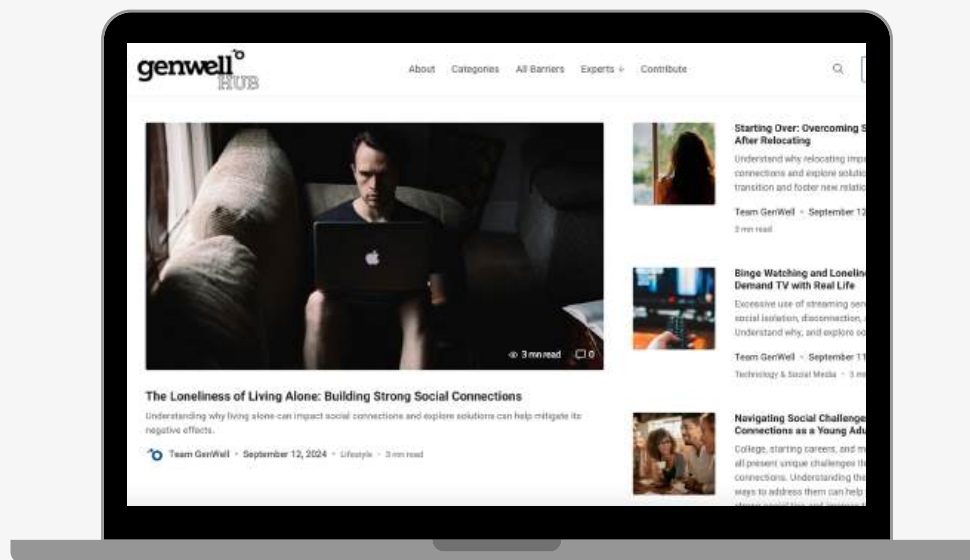
Pete Bombaci



GenWell's Knowledge Hub

Our Knowledge Hub is a section of our website that includes several resources and helpful suggestions that Seniors can access.

We have articles, videos and other content that we have selected to highlight the ongoing struggle of social isolation, disconnection and loneliness experienced by seniors and all Canadians.



Visit: hub.genwell.ca

Ways to Stay Connected

Here are three ways you can join Canada's Human Connection Movement and help build better relationships for everyone:

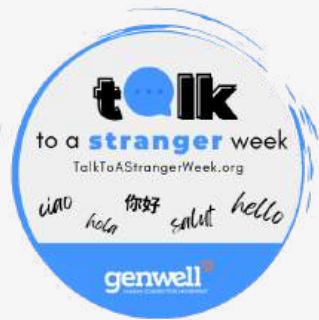


Get Connected on GenWell Weekend

Every spring and fall, GenWell hosts GenWell Weekends. These weekends are all about encouraging people to connect with others. The next GenWell Weekend is May 3-5, 2025. Use this weekend as an excuse to connect with others!

For more info:

<https://www.genwellweekend.org>



Talk to a Stranger Week

From November 18-24, join us for Talk to a Stranger Week! This week helps people understand the benefits of talking to strangers. See how talking to new people can improve your social health and well-being.

Learn more at: talktoastrangerweek.org



Sign Up for Our Monthly Newsletter

If you want to help us make the world a happier and healthier place, join our newsletter! We will send you updates on events, projects, and more ways to get involved. Thank you for being part of building a more connected world where everyone can thrive.

Sign up at:

<https://genwell.ca/about/mission/#newsletter>

■ GenWell Social Events - '24

At GenWell, we help people take part in activities throughout the year that help build better relationships and improve their social well-being.

Each campaign is designed to reduce isolation, disconnection, and loneliness by offering solutions that work for different groups of people.



Red January January 1-31

Helps Canadians get active together and build better social, physical and mental health.



GenWell Weekend (Sept. 20-22)

Catalytic Weekends when Canadians are encouraged to reach out and connect.



Face-to-Face February (Feb. 1-28)

Educating, empowering and catalyzing greater social health for students across Canada.



Talk to a Stranger Week (Nov. 18-24)

An annual week focused on educating and catalyzing Canadians around the many benefits of talking to strangers.



GenWell Weekend (May 3-5)

Catalytic Weekends when Canadians are encouraged to reach out and connect.



GenWell Digital Detox Days

(First of every month)

We want to inspire Canadians to think more consciously about their tech use and how it may impact their social health.



Loneliness Awareness Week (June 13-17)

Raising awareness and catalyzing Canadians around the growing issue of loneliness in Canadian seniors.

■ Contact Information

**BOBBIE
BRECKENRIDGE**

DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMMING,
GENWELL

✉ BOBBIE@GENWELLPROJECT.ORG



Learn more about our social health programming at:
genwell.ca/programs/

Check out our social channels for daily tips, tools and inspiration on
building and maintain healthy connection habits.



@genwellproject



@genwellproject



@genwellproject



@genwellproject



@thegenwellproject

THANK YOU

for your interest in being part of the solution to a more connected world in which everyone has an opportunity to thrive.

To make a donation to Canada's human connection movement visit: genwellproject.org/donate/

