

INTERVENTIONS TO ALLEVIATE SOCIAL ISOLATION

- Group interventions shown as more effective (Cattan et al., 2005) – education/support
- Reminiscence work
- Telephone schemes e.g. Silverline
- Befriending services – useful? Research shows reduction in loneliness but not in depression
- Intergenerational contact (Age UK) - reciprocity shown to be important – bonding (contact with similar people) and bridging (connecting with people in wider social context)
- Age friendly cities (Barusch, 2013) – urban areas may lack ‘community’ – neighbourliness – safety – activities that increase involvement with community

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- Pets – parasocial relationships (Pikhartova et al., 2014) - pet-based therapies may be less welcomed by men
- Activities for men – reflect their interests e.g. Men in Sheds
- Pay it forward model – e.g. coffee shop initiative to bring people into social and public spaces
- Computers, TV, social media, Skype – useful? Risks? Socio-economic/accessibility factors
- Volunteering, community activities, social groups – provide purpose, raise self-esteem
- People are experts of their own experiences – imperative to planning – respect for lifestyle choices – avoiding pathologising loneliness
- Positive psychology movement – aim to understand factors that predict wellbeing.



KEY FINDINGS FROM RESEARCH

Loneliness is a subjective experience that requires a personal response

- Not a static state – fluctuates over time depending on mood, circumstance, even time of year
- There is no ‘one size fits all’ solution to tackling loneliness and isolation – complex issue demanding differing solutions
- Solutions need to be personal – challenging to provide services to address loneliness
- Solutions - focus on building, maintaining and re-establishing meaningful relationships – not just opportunities to meet/speak to people - the quality of relationships is critical
- Social workers: awareness of the impact of loneliness as part of assessment - be proactive in developing services\directing to services – campaigns to de-stigmatise loneliness – support for voluntary sector service development/provision