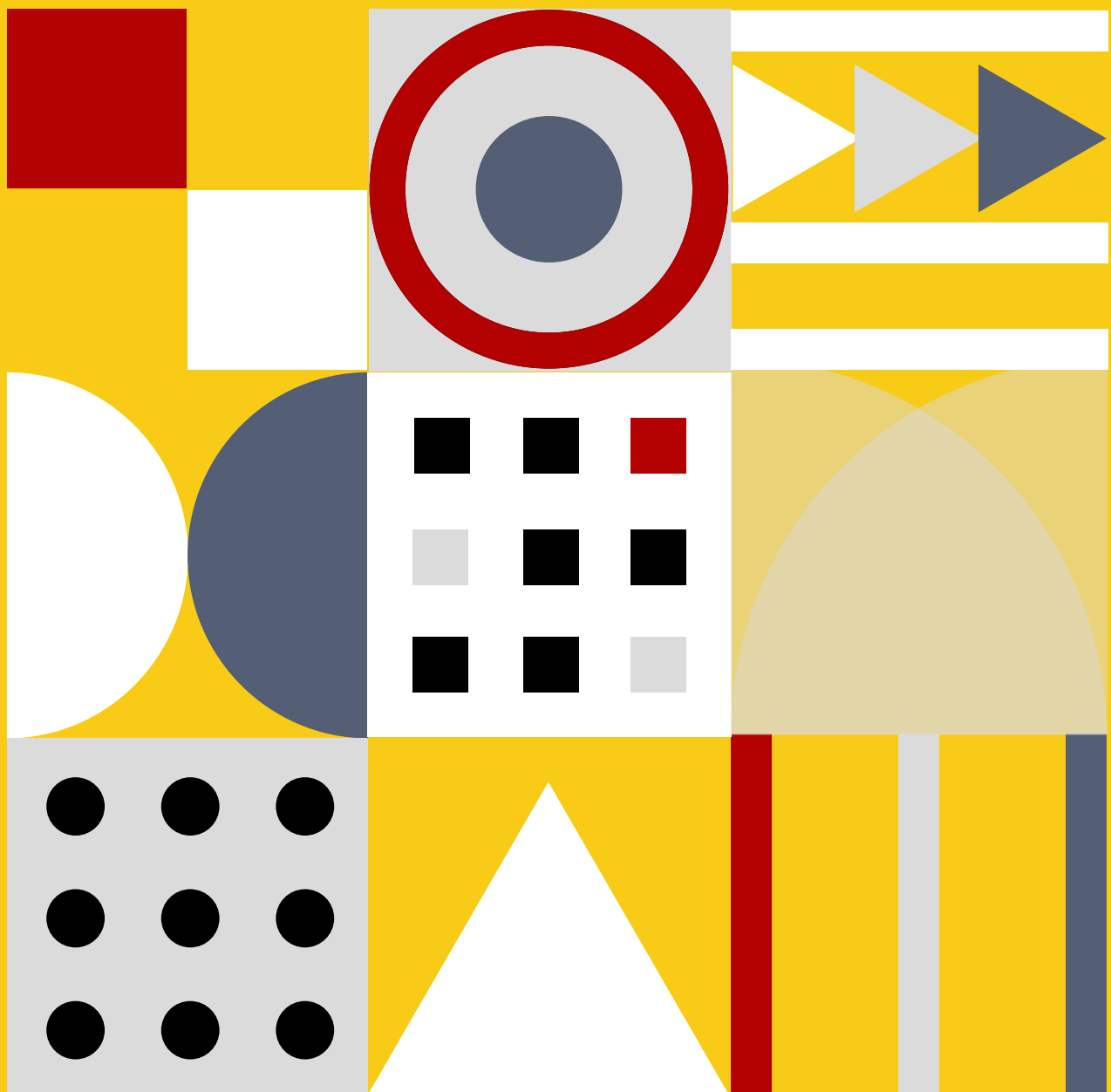# SOCIAL CONNECTION 101

VERSION 1

Jane Farmer, Tracy De Cotta, Catherine Hartung, Jasmine Knox, Callan Rowe & Christian Stenta

SWINBURNE — Social Innovation Research Institute

Australian Red Cross

SWINBURNE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

CENTRE for SOCIAL IMPACT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

We pay our respects to the traditional custodians of the lands on which we live and work, and acknowledge their Elders, past, present and emerging.

INTRODUCTION

So you want to connect people: here's a handy primer for the community connector

If you're reading this, you're probably looking for ways to improve social connection in your community. You might work or volunteer in health, the community sector, government, or any other organisation invested in peoples' health and wellbeing. What follows will give you a good understanding of what social connection is, how it works, and some ways that it can be activated.

Social Connection 101 is evidence-based and will save you the considerable effort of reading the huge volume of relevant research that exists from a range of fields. There can be a lot of misconceptions about how connection works, and it turns out to be a little more complicated than we might first think. Many of the common-sense interventions have proved ineffective (Cacioppo & Cacioppo, 2018).

This should give you a baseline understanding of social connection so you can identify the best way forward. It's a great place to start, but it is just that; a starting point. What's next is up to you.
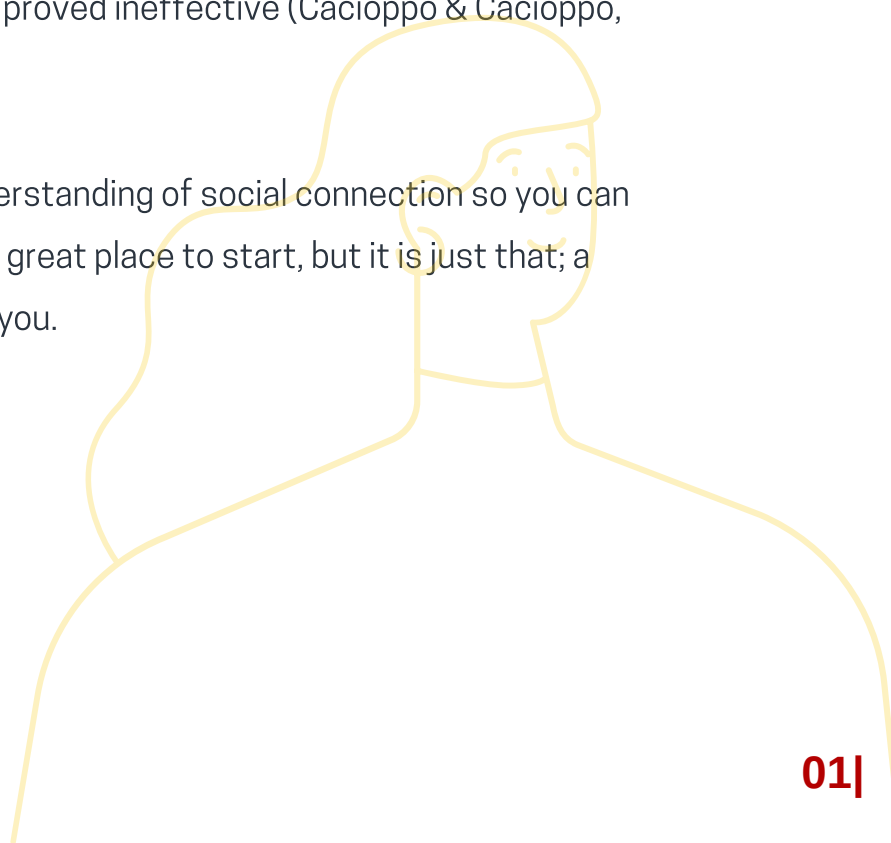
In the following chapters we will show you what works and examples of actions you can take to:

- Ensure your community has strong foundations to underpin social connection
- Include the kinds of spaces and places that help to foster connection
- Include the kinds of activities that help people to connect with each other
- Work with or employ people with key roles and skills to make connection happen for everyone

This can help you:

- Reflect on what you are doing already
- Identify gaps, creating space for new opportunities
- Design new, evidence-based programs or activities
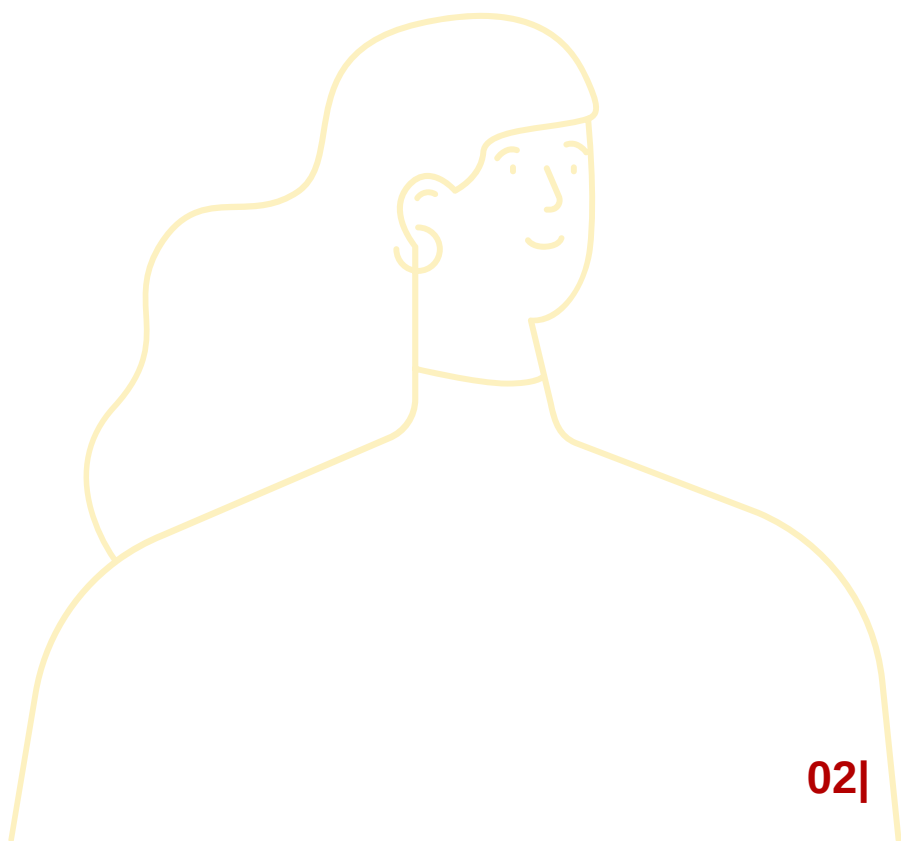
SOCIAL CONNECTION

What is it and how should I be thinking about it?

- Social connection is often thought of, very simply, as one-to-one connection

- Social connection is actually about more than that

- Social connection is about balance and quality across a range of types of connection that can be described as 'circles of connections'. It involves all of the things highlighted in the Social Connection for People diagram

Social connection for people

This helps you to reflect on what you need as an individual to help support building social connection.

I GET

CONNECTION QUALITY
+ ~ −

OUTPUTS
Wellbeing   Help   Belonging

SOCIAL CONNECTION CIRCLES
CLOSEST RELATIONSHIPS
GOOD FRIENDS
MY COMMUNITIES
THE WIDER COMMUNITY

INPUTS
Reciprocity   Time   Emotional attachment

I GIVE

Figure 1 - Social Connection for People
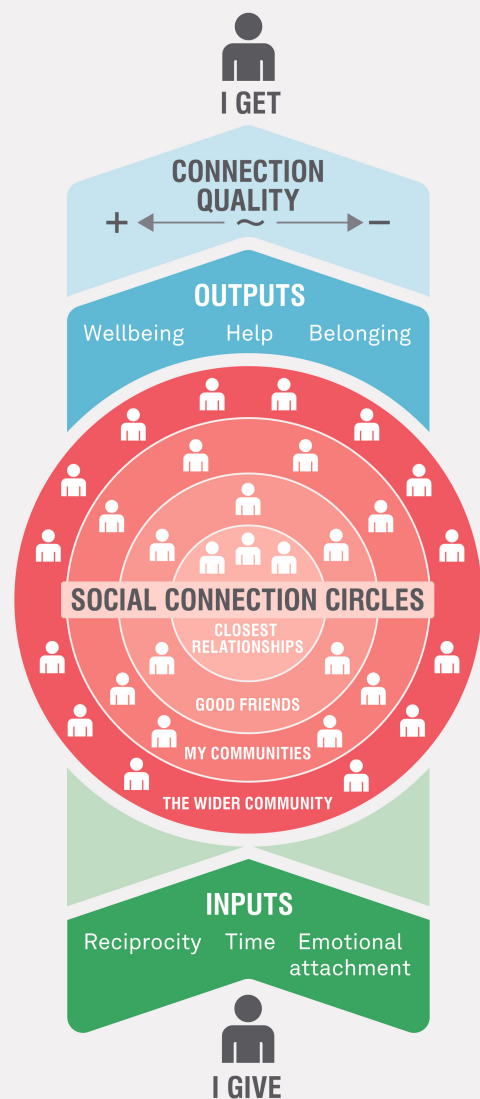
SOCIAL CONNECTION

Circles of connection

- If you think about your connections, there are people you are closer or less close to. Some of your connections are around a hobby, a shared place or helping each other, others are just people you regularly see in your community and others are close friends or family members.

- The people you are most close to tend to get more of your time – you are likely to be with them more frequently and for longer periods. This isn't always true, but it tends to be.

SOCIAL CONNECTION CIRCLE TYPES

'Closest relationships' are your inner circle that you have a strong bond of care for, with 'good friends' those you rely on for help of all kinds, and you help them too – your social allies.

'My communities' are the communities that make you who you are – they might form around different parts of your life that you identify with – like work, hobbies, online communities, or sports. These are people you share some interests with.

The 'wider community' are people around in your day-to-day life. You might recognise them to say hello. They make you feel like you belong in society – could be a local café or shop owner, friends of friends or the person at your yoga class.

SOCIAL CONNECTION CIRCLES

CLOSEST RELATIONSHIPS

GOOD FRIENDS

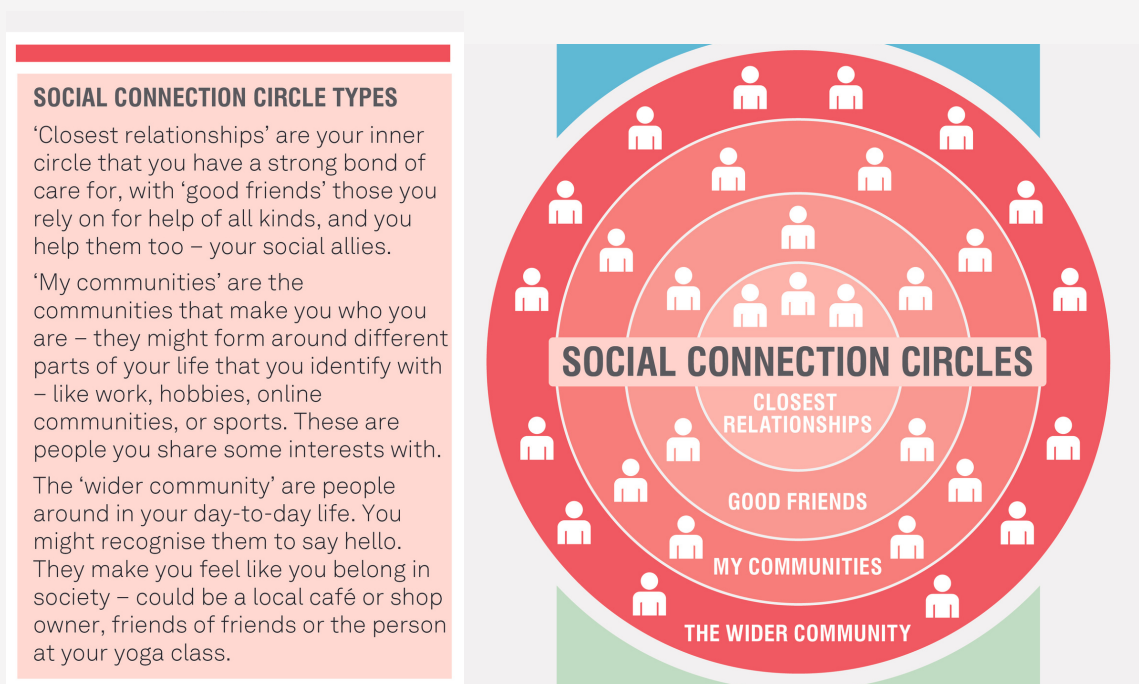MY COMMUNITIES

THE WIDER COMMUNITY

Figure 2 - Circles of Connection

SOCIAL CONNECTION

Connection quality

- With people you are closest to (your 'closest relationships' and 'good friends') you will tend to have 'communal relations' – that is, you will be inclined to help them without an expectation that they will help you in return. You have a strong bond of care or responsibility to them.

- The relations you have with people more on your outer circles of connection ('my communities' and 'the wider community'), are more likely to involve an element of reciprocity – i.e., 'I will help you, but I expect an equivalent amount of help back'.

- Relations with others benefit from a balanced exchange and reciprocity, otherwise you or the other person could start to get resentful and question what each other are getting out of the connection.

- It is important to realise that pretty much everyone has something to give or receive in their connections - these could be memories, stories, attention, care or kindness.

SOCIAL CONNECTION

What is it for? (What we get from connections)

As humans, we have some very basic needs and social connection is one of those that is fundamental to our physical and mental health.

Belonging: Humans have a deep-seated need to feel they belong in a group and a community. In evolutionary terms, if you didn't belong, you were out there on your own and had to fight off the woolly mammoths by yourself. On your own, you wouldn't last long so you needed to be with a group to keep you safe, gather food as a team and look after you when you were sick.

Wellbeing: because belonging is fundamental to human existence, evolution built in some physiological responses to encourage us to connect. When we are with people we like, engaging in team activities, being kind and helping others, our body gives us a hit of happy hormones – dopamine, oxytocin, etc. Yes it is really true, we are physiologically incentivised to be with each other.

Help: There are lots of things you need done, but you can't do all of these things by yourself. Humans are one of the few species where individuals specialise so that the whole team of people is greater than the sum of its parts. Connection helps us to work together or in teams which is partly why the human species has been so successful evolution-wise.

MYTH-BUSTERS:
COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

Here are common traps that people fall into when thinking about social connection. See where your thoughts sit on the solid evidence to misconception continuum.

MYTH 1. |
LONELINESS & SOCIAL ISOLATION ARE THE SAME THING

Technically speaking – social isolation is about being objectively isolated (being on your own) while loneliness is peoples' subjective assessments that they lack satisfying social relationships.

MYTH 2. |
OLDER PEOPLE ARE THE MOST SOCIALLY ISOLATED

Contrary to popular belief it isn't necessarily the case that older people living in the community have or perceive the biggest gaps in social connection. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare summary of statistical evidence, social isolation and loneliness are generally more common in young adults, males, those living alone and those with children.

Studies investigating the relationship between age and loneliness have inconsistent findings, some reporting high loneliness among older people and some, lower loneliness. There are few reported differences in loneliness levels between Australia's urban, regional and rural areas, but young men in regional areas report higher rates of social isolation than men in major cities. (Alberti, 2019; Hookaway et al, 2019)

MYTH 3. |
SOCIAL CONNECTION IS ALWAYS GOOD

Social connection doesn't always lead to positive consequences for individuals or society. This is because our deep desire to belong can lead to individuals finding belonging within harmful groups.

The classic story is that of a young person becoming involved in crime because they made the 'wrong' friends, or of someone struggling to rehabilitate due to their peer group's culture of substance abuse. Similarly, a sense of group identity is formed by juxtaposing the characteristics of the 'in-group' or group that you belong to, with one or more 'out-groups'. While this reinforces cohesion and connection within the in-group, it leads to conflict between in- and out-groups and creates an 'us versus them' mentality. Classic examples here include fights between rival gangs, or tensions between different religious and cultural groups. (Martin, 2018)

MYTH 4. |
PROMOTING ACTIVITIES AS SPECIFICALLY FOR LONELY PEOPLE HELPS TO CONNECT THEM

There's good evidence that even thinking you might be lonely has negative physiological effects. Identifying to oneself and others that you feel lonely is deeply stigmatising. So, setting up activities specifically targeting lonely or socially isolated people is both bad for peoples' health and unlikely to attract a mix of people.

Actually, it is best to target activities and programs around purposeful or meaningful reasons for all of us to connect, so that social connection can occur as a by-product. Some examples of this can include identifying an activity to improve the local social fabric, build a mural, clear a site for a garden, do an environmental project – an activity likely to engage a range of people with the intention that they meet, but also complete a local project. What we're saying here is don't advertise your activities as being for lonely people, stimulate projects and invite or take different people along.

MYTH 5. |
SOCIAL CONNECTION IS JUST ABOUT TALKING WITH PEOPLE

Not necessarily! Repeatedly seeing people in a place can also facilitate social attachments. Small acts of kindness can prompt reciprocity and belonging; a smile or a nod can build familiarity. People read into these acts a sense of belonging, liking, acceptance or caring.

Ultimately, "people determine their dispositions toward others according to motives attributed to these others, not solely according to actions taken" (Rabin, 1998, p.22). Not to mention synchronous activities like singing and dancing can generate a positive sense of connection.

MYTH 6. |
SOCIAL CAPITAL AND SOCIAL CONNECTION ARE THE SAME THING

Social connection is fundamentally about a satisfying quality and balance of interactions and relationships between individuals. Social connectedness is the 'the construction and successful maintenance of reciprocal interpersonal relationships' (Sapiro & Ward, 2020). Healthy social connections contribute to our sense of belonging, to our identity and to our access to resources.

Social capital on the other hand is a resource that is built out of networks among people; it could be understood as an output of social connections and can be used as a way to understand the value and resource of networks that exist at community level.

MYTH 7. |
IT'S UP TO THE PERSON THEMSELVES TO FIX THEIR SOCIAL CONNECTION GAPS

Our society is individualistic and loneliness tends to be targeted by psychologists as a problem for individuals themselves; however, social connection is actually about having a caring supportive community that is designed to foster and support social connection.

SOCIAL CONNECTION 101

Communities and community organisations can help to facilitate and support social connection by generating spaces, places and activities that encourage connection.

MYTH 8. |
THERE'S NEVER BEEN SO MUCH LONELINESS AS THERE IS NOW

To be honest, the jury is out on this one. There is a lot of discussion about loneliness in the media, lots of books and reports have been published recently, and there have been many contemporary surveys and an increase in research. All of this breeds more discussion of loneliness making the concept 'fashionable'. We do not, however, have the same research longitudinally, so it's hard to tell if things have got worse.

This is not to diminish social isolation and loneliness as issues. Relationships Australia highlights that feelings of loneliness and social isolation are associated with poverty, unemployment and making use of the healthcare system (Brook, 2018).

MYTH 9. |
TO STAVE OFF LONELINESS, PEOPLE NEED LOTS OF SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Healthy social connection is about having 'the right' level, quality and numbers of social connections to help you thrive and 'the right' level can depend on the individual.

Different people will perceive their needs differently, which makes loneliness a subjective perception of not having satisfying connections. Some people will thrive with just a few connections who provide all they need.

MYTH 10. |
OLDER PEOPLE LIKE BINGO, YOUNGER PEOPLE LIKE SKATEPARKS

Stereotypes abound when it comes to the assumed likes and dislikes of different groups of people. This is especially true for spaces that are deemed 'suitable' for older people or young people.

It is often assumed, for example, that older people prefer socialising in local parks or explicitly designated community or senior centres that provide structured 'senior' activities such as bingo or bowls. Yet, a study by Lee and Tan (2019) indicated that very few older adults identified parks and community centres as their main spaces for social connection. Rather, it was religious institutions, cafes, gyms/swimming pools, private households, shopping malls, and bookshops that were most popular.

Such spaces, far from being specifically designated to older people, have broad appeal across demographics, including children and young people.

HOW COMMUNITY CAN HELP TO MAKE SOCIAL CONNECTION HAPPEN

So now that you know some of the misconceptions around social connection, let's start to talk about how to make social connection happen successfully.

People make new connections by:

Literally 'bumping into' each other – i.e. in 'random meeting' spaces like workplace kitchens, art galleries, the local café, even small spaces in parks or corridors at the gym or yoga class, and public artwork can all support 'bumping' meetings.

Repeated sightings or 'bump ins' – means that over time, a person can become familiar and we might start saying hello or exchanging glances – an example of this is when parents start to chat to each other through repeatedly seeing one another whilst hanging around waiting to pick their children up from school.

Facilitated meeting – people are brought together via another person, app or group – mentoring could be an example here, or where people meet via Bumble or Meetups.

Community & Connection

Communities for social connection

This tells you what a community needs that can help to promote social connection. This can be facilitated by community groups and organisations.

PEOPLE
Community connectors

ACTIVITIES
Including problem-solving, negotiating, learning and synchronous activities (like dancing & singing)

SPACES & PLACES
Including bumping spaces, open green spaces and community hubs

FOUNDATIONS
Safe, accessible and flexible

Figure 3 - Communities for Social Connection

HOW THE COMMUNITY CAN HELP TO MAKE SOCIAL CONNECTION HAPPEN

FOUNDATIONS

Certain things about a community, place or group activity are foundational to making and maintaining social connections:

- People must feel physically **safe and secure**, culturally safe and secure and ontologically safe and secure (i.e. feel like they belong, are wanted there and that they understand and feel comfortable with, the routines and practices of a place)

- They must be **accessible**

- They must be **local**

- Preferably, there would be a **choice** of spaces and places (and activities) so people can find something suited to them

- If places, spaces and activities are **near other amenity** (shops, health centre, post office, pharmacy etc), they are more likely to be useful for connection

- Places and activities should have **regular** routines, approaches, activities and opening times

HOW THE COMMUNITY CAN HELP TO MAKE SOCIAL CONNECTION HAPPEN

SPACES AND PLACES

Places with super-connection sauce

Bumping or incidental spaces are great for new meeting – there is design guidance about how to create bumping spaces inside buildings and in public spaces (e.g. narrow corridors, cafes at the entrance to office buildings, etc).

Places of regularity – places with regular events and practices will encourage those kinds of connections that build up over time (e.g. gym classes, hobby groups, your regular café).

Gathering spaces – these are spaces where it is normal and justifiable for people to go to alone but then be able to strike conversations with others. For example, noticeboards, the water-cooler, parents meeting at the school gates, or regularly catching the same train or public transport etc.

Spaces normally associated with connection

- Meeting spaces – formal and informal
- Spaces to eat and drink
- Both noisy or more tranquil spaces
- Spaces where organised activities happen

Community & Connection

# HOW THE COMMUNITY CAN HELP TO MAKE SOCIAL CONNECTION HAPPEN

ACTIVITIES

Activities that are particularly useful for helping to build social connection:

- **Problem-solving** – helps to build relationships and trust between people who may not have previously met and who may be from quite diverse social or cultural backgrounds. Social connection occurs as a by-product of their common focus on meaningful activities and negotiating what to do.

- **Rituals** (i.e., regular activities and practices) – help to build a shared social identity and sense of team.

- **Synchronous activities** – often involving music and rhythm to create a shared, communal experience. These activities can generate positive hormone responses. Singing, dancing, making music, laughing, sharing stories, and team sports have been shown to create a sense of belonging together.

- **Small acts of kindness** – evidence shows considerable positive physiological responses for those who do small acts of kindness. These acts must be small or they confer the need to reciprocate on the part of the receiver. These acts can be as simple as holding a door for someone, offering to share an umbrella, or using helpful, supportive language.

- **Mentoring/facilitating** - pairing and peer activities are useful for forging new connections and building trust. Even if these connections don't 'stick', people will know more people (in their community).

- **Altruism/volunteering** - altruistic activity helps to build connection between people and place, occurs as a by-product from meaningful activity and creates positive physiological responses.

- **Events and festivals** - working with others to create an event/festival or attending one has been shown to foster new connections and strengthen existing ties.

Community & Connection

HOW PLACES + ACTIVITIES SUPPORT CONNECTION
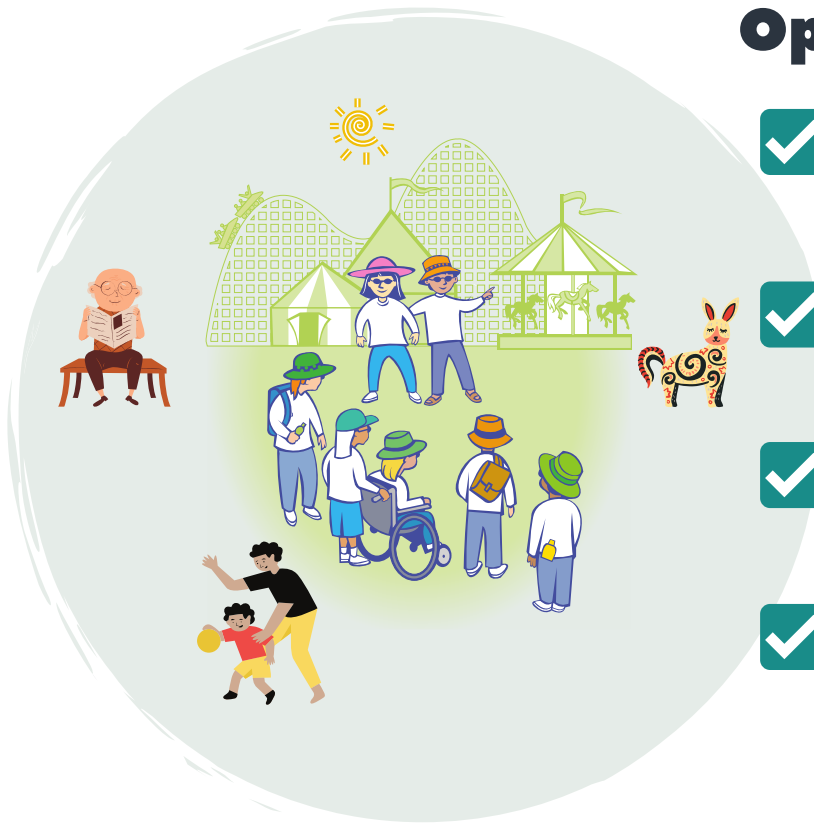
Open green space

- ✓ Events & festivals bring different people
- ✓ Public art invites people to bump into one another
- ✓ Regular visits build familiarity
- ✓ Different groups can exist in the one space

Connecting online

- ✓ Participating in synchronous activities like exercise, yoga or dancing
- ✓ Groups can meet regularly to try to solve or respond to community needs
- ✓ Online forums, groups or chatrooms can share local recommendations, offer or ask for help, and discuss local issues

Community & Connection

Community hubs

- ✅ Synchronous activities like dance classes or choir

- ✅ Opportunities for learning

- ✅ Kitchens or coffee/tea stands allow for people to bump into each other

- ✅ Access support groups

Community gardens

- ✅ Garden events bring new people

- ✅ Intergenerational and intercultural mixing

- ✅ Communal spaces like sheds and seats for bumping into each other

- ✅ Problem solving tasks and opportunities for mentorship

HOW THE COMMUNITY CAN HELP TO MAKE SOCIAL CONNECTION HAPPEN

PEOPLE: COMMUNITY CONNECTORS

As a community connector, it may be that you make your community and place safe and secure, ensure there are places to make new connections, organise activities and still you know there are people who are not making new social connections. This is because making new social connection is actually a very difficult thing to do. Many people are shy, lack confidence and many experience high levels of social anxiety.

This is where community connectors come in:

- Community connectors may be paid or volunteers or naturally occurring people in the community, whose role it is to connect people, with each other, into groups or services.

- This is becoming a popular idea and aligns with ideas of: community navigators, mavens and social prescribing.

Community & Connection

HOW SOCIAL CONNECTION HAPPENS

So far, we have looked at what social connection is, and how to set up the community to support social connection to happen, but there is one missing piece to understand.

That is, how the socialisation process actually happens. Socialisation is where a person goes from being not connected to a group or community, to feeling like they belong and are part of it.

Socialisation is something that community connectors can help with to support people as they move through a socialisation process.

In reality, socialisation is a complex process, with feedback loops, as well as stops and starts along the way. But for the sake of understanding the broad principles, see the diagram below about the socialisation process.
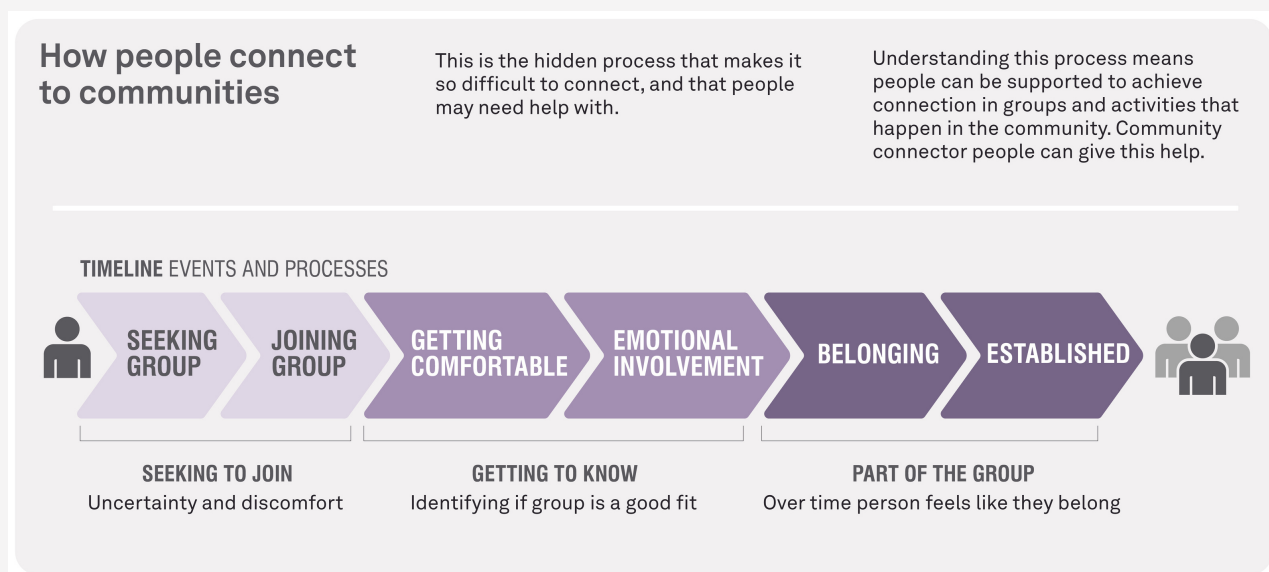
How social connection happens

How people connect to communities

This is the hidden process that makes it so difficult to connect, and that people may need help with.

Understanding this process means people can be supported to achieve connection in groups and activities that happen in the community. Community connector people can give this help.

TIMELINE EVENTS AND PROCESSES

| SEEKING GROUP | JOINING GROUP | GETTING COMFORTABLE | EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT | BELONGING | ESTABLISHED |

SEEKING TO JOIN
Uncertainty and discomfort

GETTING TO KNOW
Identifying if group is a good fit

PART OF THE GROUP
Over time person feels like they belong

Figure 4 - How People Connect to Communities

HOW PEOPLE CONNECT TO COMMUNITIES

01

SEEKING TO JOIN: A NEW ACTIVITY OR GROUP

How is someone feeling at this stage?: Not good. New, anxious about what to expect. Will I fit in? Will others think I fit in? The new person wonders if they will be useful or needed. They might be afraid that others will be more skilled than them (or less skilled!), others in the group might 'talk a different language' (literally or use a different technical language). It's a time of uncertainty and discomfort.

02

GETTING TO KNOW: THE TIME OF DECIDING IF YOU WILL STICK WITH IT OR 'IT'S NOT YOU'

During the early stages, although we are generally not looking at this consciously, we are working out whether our 'social identity' is a good fit for the 'social identity' of this group. The new person is looking at various 'social categories' about this new group and comparing those with their status on social categories. This might be around: language and accent, clothes, education, what media you consume, your interests, what sporting teams you support, etc. Of course this assessment is based on the perceptions of the person about both themselves and the new group. As time passes, the new person will become more comfortable with the group, start to feel a sense of involvement and have positive feelings about being with them; or decide to leave and not return, at this early stage.

**How social connection happens**

HOW PEOPLE CONNECT TO COMMUNITIES

03

PART OF THE GROUP: A TIME OF FEELING THAT YOU BELONG, AND ARE USEFUL AND VALUABLE

Over time, a person comes to know the group rituals and practices, how to interact with other people, how to feel comfortable, like they belong, and gains positive feelings of benefit and even happiness from being with the group.

They might start to influence what happens and be considered for, or included in, leadership.
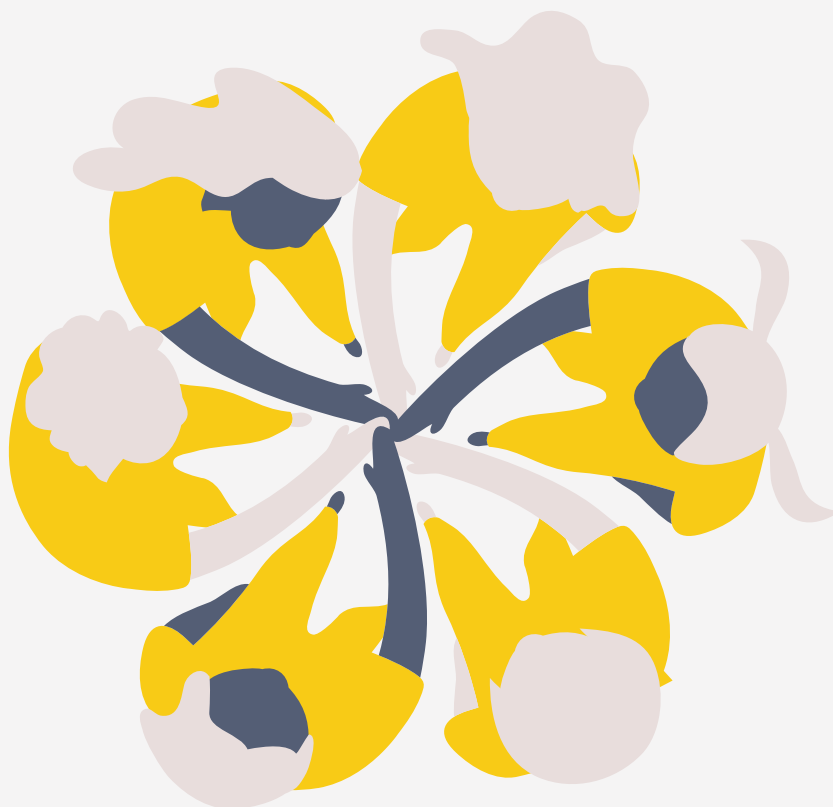
THOUGHT STARTERS: WHAT'S YOUR NEXT STEP?

So you've read through the handbook, let's get into action.

✎ I WANT TO <u>REVIEW</u> WHAT I AM DOING

Now you've read the evidence, you are probably already thinking things like:

- *"Oh – I understand now why that activity didn't work…"*
- *"Hmm – I can see we do some good things, but I think things could be better. Perhaps we could look at how to use the spaces in our community in a more targeted way?"*

🔧 I WANT TO <u>TWEAK</u> WHAT I AM CURRENTLY DOING

Now you have reviewed what you are doing, and you can see your successes and gaps, you might want to think about:

- *If I want to introduce or re-organise activities, re-imagine use of places or spaces, or even think about finding community connectors, how do I prioritise what could and should be done?*
- *How do I decide which activities we should try to build social connection as a by-product?*
- *How do I take my team, colleagues, and the community along with this to get the activities and outcomes most suitable for the context?*

Next Steps

💡 I WANT TO <u>DESIGN</u> NEW PROGRAMS

Your organisation might not have undertaken programs or activities targeting social connection before. Reading through this handbook has hopefully inspired you about evidence-based actions that you could embark on. But how to decide what to do?

You might be thinking some of these things:

- *Are there key groups, places, or communities that would benefit most?*
- *What is already going on – perhaps run by citizens and other community organisations, that could be complemented or extended?*
- *Are there others I could and should be working with?*
- *Do I know the change the community needs or wants?*
- *When I've implemented activities, how will I know a change in social connection has happened?*

Next Steps
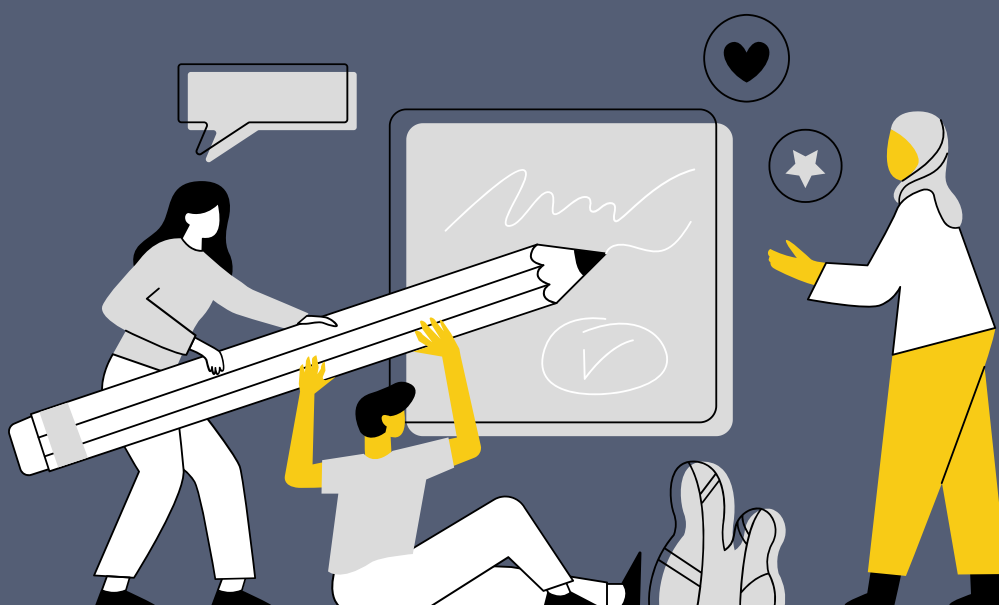
APPENDIX 1: COMMON CONCEPTS

Belonging

Belonging is an outcome of social connection. It helps to explain why people connect with groups where they see their identity accepted. In this sense, belonging might be understood as "one's subjective sense of acceptance by in-group members" (Hunter et al, 2017, p.137).

To satisfy the conditions for belonging, a person needs regular social contact with those to whom they feel connected and this contact needs to be frequent, pleasant interaction and within a temporally stable and enduring framework of concern for each other (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

Belonging leads to a cognitive merging of sense of self with others in the group – that is, subsuming the individual in the interpersonal unit.

Loneliness

Loneliness is a feeling based on a person's assessment that they are socially isolated. Weiss (1973, p.17) argues that 'Loneliness is caused not by being alone… it appears always to be a response to the absence of some particular type of relationship or, more accurately, a response to the absence of some particular relational provision.'

Cacioppo and Patrick (2008) suggest three factors affect an individual's assessment of their loneliness:
1. the level of vulnerability to social disconnection of an individual;
2. the ability to self-regulate the emotions associated with feeling isolated; and
3. the individual's mental representations and expectations of, as well as reasoning about, others.

Weiss (1973) differentiated between emotional loneliness, stemming from the absence of an intimate relationship or a close emotional attachment (e.g., a partner or a best friend), and social loneliness, stemming from the absence of a broader group of contacts or an engaging social network (e.g., friends, colleagues, and people in the neighbourhood).

SOCIAL CONNECTION 101

Social capital

Social capital is generally understood as a stock or resource (hence, capital) of social assets that is accrued through reciprocal helping between people in networks. Trust is significant to social capital and is built through the iterations of reciprocal helping. Social capital can be regarded as a community resource and is useful within communities because trust and networks ease the flow of information between people and means that people are able to mobilise to efficiently activate their collective resources. Individuals within networks of trusted connections are also held to have social capital. (See: Aldrich, 2012; Lin, 2002; Putnam, 2015; Woolcock, 1998)

Social cohesion

Social cohesion refers to the extent of connectedness and solidarity among groups in society. It identifies two main dimensions: the sense of belonging of a community and the relationships among members within the community itself (Manca, 2014).

Social identity

Social identity is a person's sense of who they are - based on their social group membership(s). Tajfel (1979, 1982) proposed that the groups (e.g. social class, family, football team etc.) to which people belong are an important source of pride and self-esteem. Groups give us a sense of social identity. Individuals have a fundamental need to belong. They need to belong to group(s) with which they feel comfortable (have shared identity). When they feel part of the group, they have belonging. Social identity is regarded as the link between sociological and psychological approaches to social connection. An unfortunate side effect of belonging to an in-group, is juxtaposition with out-groups. This is done to help reinforce peoples' group social identity.

Social inclusion

Social inclusion is focused on ensuring that those most socially, economically, politically, and culturally marginalised have the means to lead a dignified and enjoyable life in line with their basic human rights. Social inclusion occurs on small and large scales, the latter reflected in this useful definition frequently cited by the United Nations:

"Social inclusion is a process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living that is considered normal in the society in which they live. It ensures that they have greater participation in decision making which affects their lives and access to their fundamental rights" (Commission of the European Communities, 2003, cited in United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2016, p. 19).

Social integration

Social integration is a multidimensional construct that can be defined as the extent to which individuals participate in a variety of social relationships, including engagement in social activities or relationships and a sense of communality and identification with one's social roles (Holt-Lunstad & Uchino, 2015).

Social isolation

Social isolation is seen as the state of having minimal contact with others, refers to 'objective isolation' (compared with perceived or subjective isolation or loneliness). Objective isolation is often understood in relative terms and assessed by considering characteristics like: (a) unmarried/not-cohabiting; (b) had less than monthly contact (including face-to-face, telephone, or written/e-mail contact) with one's children; (c) had less than monthly contact with other family members; (d) had less than monthly contact (including face-to-face, telephone, or written/e-mail contact) with friends; and (e) did not participate in organizations such as social clubs or resident groups, religious groups, or committees (Zavaleta et al, 2017).

Social networks

Social networks are the networks to which people belong. These are sometimes measured using Social Network Analysis (SNA) which focuses on objective characteristics of a person's relationships (Scott, 1988).

Social status

Social status is the level of social value a person is considered to hold. Status is based on widely shared beliefs about who members of a society think holds comparatively more or less social value, in other words, who they believe is better in terms of competence or moral traits (Sauder et al, 2012).

APPENDIX 2: FURTHER READING

Social connection

Circles of connection

Dunbar, R. (2010) *How many friends does one person need? Dunbars number and other evolutionary quirks*. Harvard University Press.

Dunbar, R. and Shultz, S. (2007) Evolution in the social brain. *Science*, 317, pp. 1344-7.

Dunbar, R. and Spoors, M. (1995) Social networks, support cliques and kinship. *Human Nature* 6(3), pp. 273-290.

Hill, R. and Dunbar, R. (2002) Social network size in humans. *Human Nature*, 14(1), pp. 53-72.

Connection quality

Clark, M. S., and Mills, J. R. (2011) A theory of communal (and exchange) relationships. In P. Van Lange, A. Kruglanski and E. T. Higgins (Eds.) *Handbook of theories of social psychology* (Volume 1, pp. 232–250). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Press.

Fiske, A.P. (2004) Four modes of constituting relationships: consubstantial assimilation; space, magnitude, time, and force; concrete procedures; abstract symbolism. *Relational Models Theory: A Contemporary Overview*, p.61.

What we get from connections

Belonging
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CONTACT

Professor Jane Farmer

Director,
Swinburne Social Innovation Research Institute

Email: jcfarmer@swin.edu.au
Web: www.swinburne.edu.au/research/institutes/social-innovation/social-connection/

Social Connection 101 V1