



SUMMARY: Partners’ Gathering June 14, 2017 Burnaby Neighbourhood House

Session Goals

1. Strengthen connections across Allies in Aging Partners.
2. Collaborate to address gaps in our work with isolated seniors.

We welcomed 35 partners from 19 different organizations. After brief networking, we shared updates about collaboration and evaluation before group activities. Q & A triggered conversation about challenges of measuring seniors’ social isolation, including the risk that seniors may present a rosy outlook about their level of connectedness in pre-surveys, which might impact project outcome results. Other factors beyond project influence that can impact isolation include seniors’ changes in health, relationships, housing or income.

Group activities were based on our Theory of Change and focused on how we identify seniors who may be socially isolated. Activity results and the session evaluation are detailed below. Our next gathering to strengthen connections and collaboration on reducing seniors’ isolation will be in the fall.

Theory of Change

Population Outcomes	Reduce seniors’ isolation by reducing the proportion of seniors 75+ who do not: Have support for daily living when they need it; participate in activities; feel connected; feel valued.			
Project Outcomes	Seniors are identified, their needs are understood and they are connected to appropriate services.	Seniors are engaged in meaningful opportunities for participation, which leads to strengthened social networks.	Service providers work collaboratively to effectively support seniors through age-related changes.	Key stakeholders influence public policy and advance innovative partnerships to support lasting systemic change.

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ACTIVITY RESULTS

A. Share existing or new approaches to identifying seniors who may be isolated.

Outreach

- By staff and volunteers
- Through peer-to-peer programs
- Door knocking and telephone
- Through spontaneous contact in the community, i.e. when walking, shopping or working

Places (go where seniors go)

- Malls, fast food/affordable restaurants, laundromat, parks.
- Food banks, transitional housing, shelters
- Hospitals, doctors' office and other health care facilities
- Pharmacy
- Strong Start programs, preschools and daycares (with grandchildren)
- Cultural or faith-based locations
- Language programs

Host seniors' gatherings—offer welcoming spaces

- Provide food or other incentive for attending
- Encourage people to bring someone new
- Community walks to raise awareness of seniors' isolation and resources

Allied programs and services

- Home library
- Tax clinics
- Caregiver support
- Better at Home
- Block Watch
- Lifeline
- Meals on Wheels
- Wellness, flu shot or hearing clinics
- Alzheimer Society, Parkinson Support, Heart and Stroke, etc.
- Service clubs (Rotary) or the Legion
- Residents' associations

Allied projects

- UBC Hip Health and Mobility
- Divisions of Family Practice Frail Elderly Network
- Raising the Profile (Provincial)
- SILAS: Social Isolation and Loneliness Among Seniors (Vancouver)

Allied sectors

- Healthcare services and programs, including home health, mental health and substance use, assisted living, residential care, hospice
- BC Housing, seniors housing
- Immigrant, Settlement, Refugee
- Transportation hubs

Private businesses

- Grocery shopping or delivery programs
- Banks, financial and legal advisors, notaries
- Home services such as furnace maintenance or lawn care
- Personal care services, such as hairdressing or manicures
- Physiotherapists, occupational therapists
- Realtors

Media (traditional and contemporary)

- Newspapers, including community papers and dailies like 24 and Metro as well as regional and national papers
- Radio, television
- Facebook, Twitter, WeChat, Live

B. How can we work together more effectively?

Share information, resources, expertise, and information tools

- Include all staff and volunteers and community contacts in distribution
- Share ideas between groups, in conversations, standing agenda items, leveraging relationships
- Share best practices in new staff orientation
- Share resources and capacity, possibly through Allies in Aging website

Connect, collaborate, and leverage through networking, referrals, and training

- Joint training events for volunteers, staff and community members
- Joint ad campaigns
- Tour of agencies working together
- Develop stakeholder map
- Increase opportunities for volunteers to come together
- Increase referrals across agencies
- Agencies providing similar services coordinate to reduce duplication of services

Communicate through stories, public education initiatives, advertising

- Allies newsletter
- United Way do more community advertising
- Seek funds for advertising
- Include seniors in distribution
- Engage journalism students to capture seniors' stories

Engage

- Engage decision-makers in health, housing and income supports for policy change
- More opportunities to deepen relationships with other partners
- Seek, develop and mentor community champions
- Use human centred design (<https://www.ideo.com/post/design-kit>)
- Participate in Innoweave Innovation Labs

Centralize by creating seniors' service hubs

- One stop shopping, one-call for services
- Resource mini-book, agency relationship maps
- One regional coordinator of ride shares, with online schedules

Systems and policy

- Identify systemic bottlenecks
- Reduce duplication of services
- Advocate for longer funding cycles as it can takes 5+ years to get collective impact up and running

Challenges/barriers to overcome when engaging partners and stakeholders

- Familiarity with one organization or community may be less likely to participate in other orgs' programming; personal approach needed, i.e. buddy system)
- Lack of funding for outreach programs
- Lack of funding for advertising, promotions and social media
- Fragmented services due to geography, demography
- Training to recognize isolation / staff turnover
- Providing services and materials in different languages
- Research initiatives often beyond scope of existing programs, i.e. home library or health authority
- Insularity: cultural, faith groups
- Overcome topic specific / spot funding – focus on demographics

C. Which stakeholders can help?

Community

- Support and social services
- Seniors' centres
- Libraries
- Better at Home
- Caregiver groups
- BC 211
- Volunteer bureaus and training programs
- The Alzheimers Society of B.C., Parkinson Society BC, Heart and Stroke Foundation of B.C., etc.

Diversity, multicultural

- Settlement, immigrant or refugee service providers
- ESL Programs
- Programs for specific groups, such as immigrant grandparents

Education and childcare: Strong Start, preschools and daycares

Emergency: Police, fire, crisis lines

Faith: Church, temple, mosque

Food, nutrition: Meals on Wheels, grocery stores, food delivery services

Funders: Vancouver Foundation, United Way, New Horizons, etc.

Government

- Ministries of Health, Housing and Transportation (Deputy and Assistant Ministers)
- Seniors Advocate
- Municipal councils, planning, engineering, development
- Emergency responders: Police, fire, ambulance, E-Comm, crisis lines
- Neighbourhood and community associations

Health

- General practitioners, home health, geriatric clinics, palliative and hospice care
- Hospitals and residential/care facility social workers
- Divisions of Family Practice
- Pharmacists
- Occupational therapists, physiotherapists

Housing: BC Housing locations, building managers, community developers

Information sharing, media

- Public service campaigns using radio, television, newspaper, Facebook, Twitter
- Note that different cultural groups may prefer different social media apps such as WeChat, Weibo, LINE or KakaoTalk.

Private sector: Businesses and service providers that work with or serve seniors

- Home nursing care
- Personal care (hair, nails, feet)
- Banks, tax preparers, financial advisors
- Lawyers, notaries
- Home maintenance and yard services (furnace, roof, lawn and garden)

Research: Universities, colleges, community research organizations

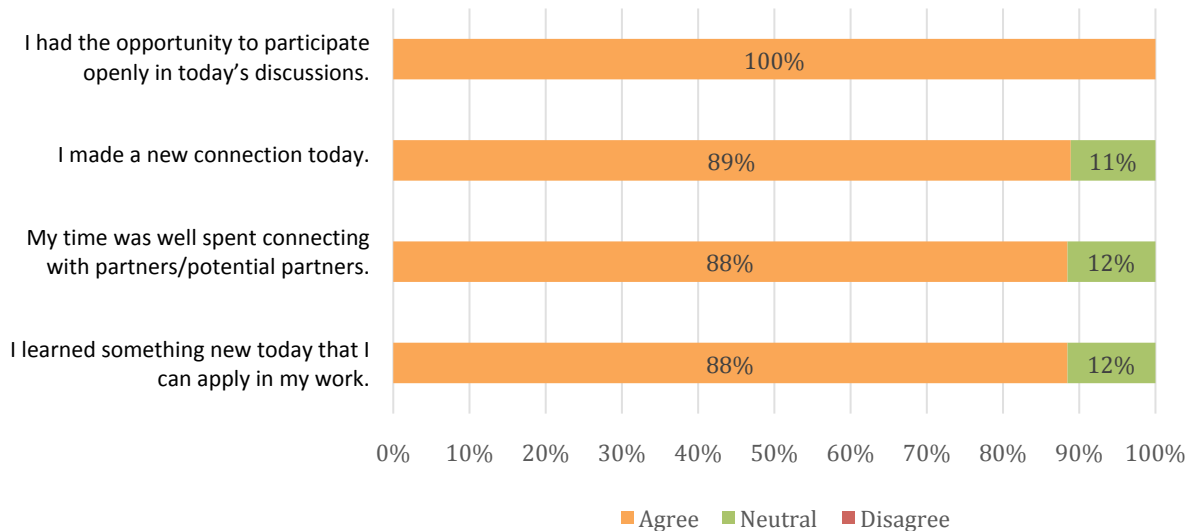
Transportation: Car shares, MVT HandyDart, taxi, TransLink, Access Transit



Partners' Gathering Evaluation Findings N=26)

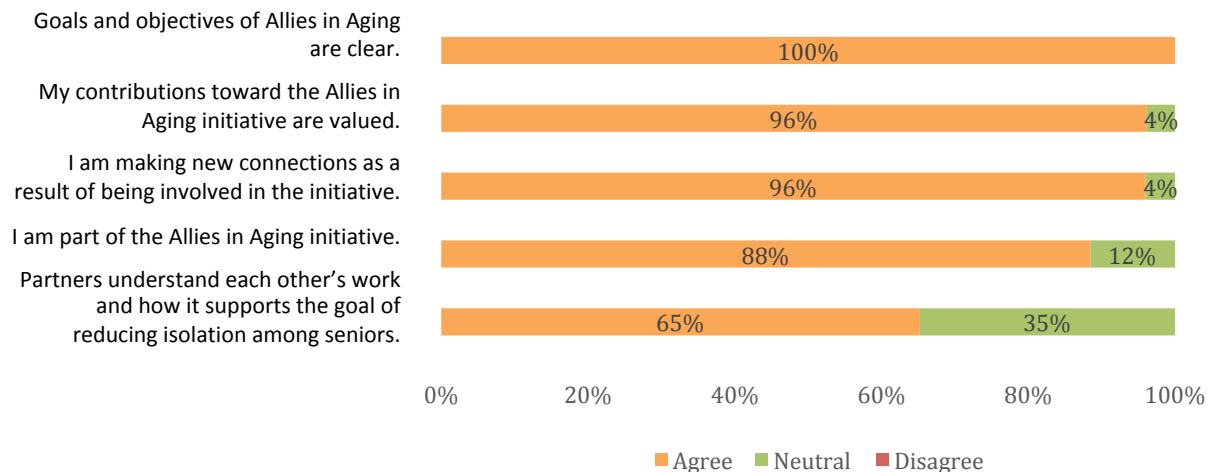
About the session

Participants rated the session positively, reporting they had the opportunity to participate openly, make a new connection, that time was well spent connecting with partners and that they learned something new to apply in their work.



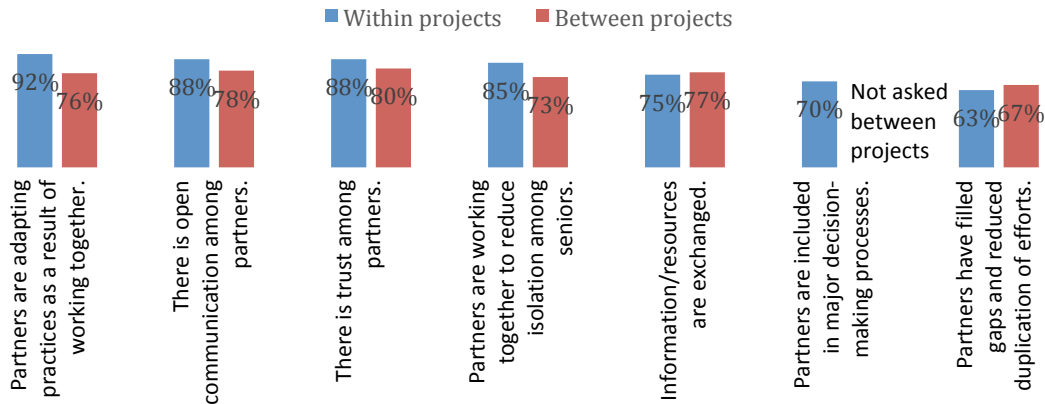
About the Allies in Aging initiative

All Allies in Aging partners that attended the session feel the goals and objectives of the initiative are clear. Nearly all feel their contributions toward the initiative are valued, that they are making new connections as a result of being involved in the initiative, and that they are part of the initiative. Two thirds feel that partners understand each other's work and how it supports the goal of reducing isolation among seniors (one third is neutral).



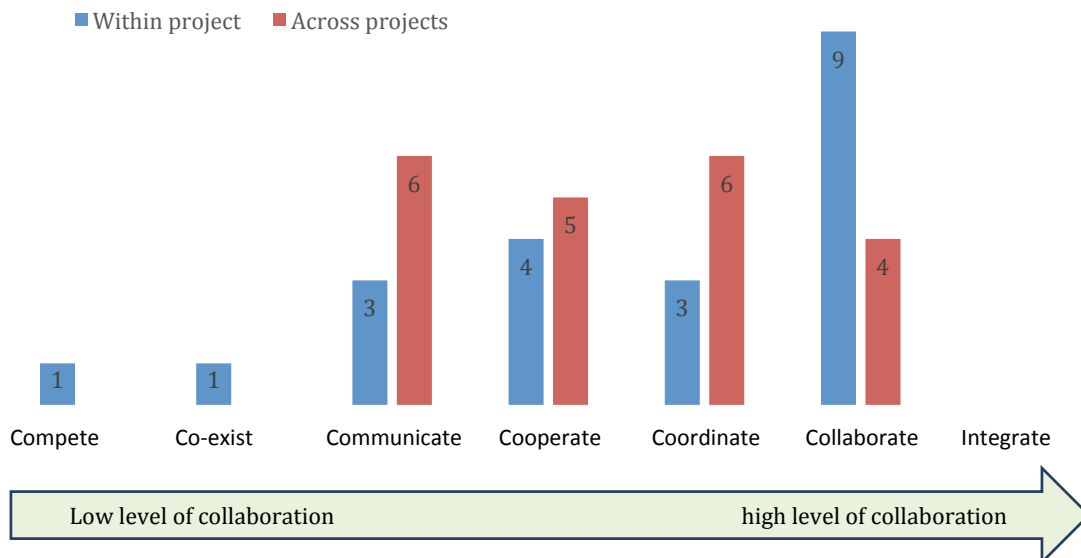
Connections within and between projects

Partners positively rate their experience working together within their projects. The majority feels that partners are adapting their practices as a result of working together (demonstrating behaviour change). Partners report a high level of trust, communication and working together to reduce isolation among seniors. Three quarters report satisfaction with respect to exchange of information and resources and inclusion of partners in decision-making. Just under two thirds feel that partners are filling gaps and reducing duplication of efforts. (For those participants who did not agree, their responses were neutral, rather than in disagreement.)



Partners report trust, open communication, sharing of information and resources, adaptation of practices as a result of working together, and that partners are working together to reduce isolation among seniors between projects, i.e. across the Allies in Aging initiative. Just under two thirds feel that partners are filling gaps and reducing duplication of efforts. (For those participants who did not agree, their responses were neutral, rather than in disagreement.)

Level of collaboration between and across projects



The majority of Allies in Aging partners feel there is **collaboration** (*'longer term interaction based on shared goals, decision making and resources'*) within their projects. There are differing opinions as to the level of interaction across projects, ranging from **communication** (*'inter-agency information sharing and networking'*), **cooperation** (*'informal interaction on discrete activities or projects'*) and **coordination** (*'organizations systematically adjusting and aligning work with each other for greater outcomes'*).

Key learnings from the session

- Discussing how to reach isolated seniors
- Feeling re-enthused about the project as a result of coming together
- Learning about the evaluation findings thus far
- Learning from each other (i.e. new outreach strategies)
- Meeting people and hearing about their roles in the initiative
- Making connections with partner agencies
- Open concept for shared learning
- The willingness of coming together and reinforcing the need to collaborate and decrease seniors isolation

Greatest strengths of Allies in Aging

- Through collaboration, having an opportunity to make an impact on addressing senior isolation
- Sharing of best practices
- Narrowing the focus on barriers and working collaboratively to overcome barriers
- Reducing duplication of services
- The establishment of a network of service providers
- So many people working together with differing viewpoints and ideas
- Communication
- Supporting each other through collaboration

Thanks for bringing us together today.

I enjoyed the casual atmosphere. The session had good energy and I appreciated the welcoming hosts at the Burnaby Neighbourhood House

Suggestions to enhance engagement of partners

- Quarterly gatherings
- Workshops to learn about each other's projects
- Develop a joint curriculum to train volunteers
- Opportunities for more decision making
- Invite seniors to meetings to directly share their stories
- Invitation to occasionally attend leadership meetings from all projects

Allies in Aging has an awesome brand and provides a space to try something new and different.

Ideas for improvement

- Opportunities for more in-depth discussions on key topic areas (i.e. outreach, training materials, volunteer recruitment)
- Longer session next time (including opportunities for networking)
- Resources to support reaching isolated seniors

Our next gathering...

We look forward to gathering again in the fall. Details will be shared through projects, email and in our e-newsletter. Activities will continue to explore how we bring our Theory of Change to life and include more time for networking!