



LONELINESS

Loneliness and Social Isolation

- Loneliness can manifest itself at various stages in our life
- Findings show that 1 in 5 people in the UK are always or often lonely
- Loneliness and social isolation can have major health impacts and long-term effects

2 out of 10

people in the UK are always or often lonely.



Source: VHS, 2016.

What Causes Loneliness?

- Lack of connections or the type of connections one wants to have
- Society has lost its ability to make social connections (due to technology or time)
- Issues around identity (retired, socio economic status, culture, education level, etc.)
- Life events (bereavement, empty nest, moving away, becoming a student, etc.)

WHY SHOULD WE
CARE?



Health Impacts

- Poor social relationships have been linked to a **29% increase in risk of coronary heart disease** and a **32% increase in risk of stroke** (Valtorta et al, 2016)
- Loneliness among elderly can lead to a substantial increase in risk of developing **dementia** and specifically **Alzheimer's disease** (Collins, 2014)
- Shankar et al (2011) found that loneliness and social isolation can be linked to the **development of cardiovascular disease** in older adults

Health Impacts

- In cases of chronic loneliness, it can **affect sleep quality and lead to anxiety, increased blood pressure, and suppression of the immune system** (Befriending Networks, 2016)
- Holt-Lunstad et al (2010) even reported that individuals with stronger social relationships had a **50% increased likelihood of survival** than individuals with weaker social relationships, and compared the influence of social relationships on risk of mortality to well-known risk factors such as **smoking and alcohol consumption**
- Loneliness and social isolation should therefore be taken seriously as a **public health issue**

Economic Implications

- People suffering from loneliness are more likely to make **use of health services, medication and social care services**, and tend to have **earlier admissions to residential or nursing care** (Local Government Association, 2016)
- Among younger people, loneliness can lead to a **suppression of future employment opportunities** (ACEVO, 2016)
- As loneliness can be linked to crime and unemployment, it can **contribute massively to yearly, nationwide government spending** (ACEVO, 2016)

Economic Implications

- Helping individuals (re)gain community connections can actually **give renewed access to their economic and social capital** (Local Government Association, 2016)
- Investment to combat loneliness **can be kept minimal** by collaborating effectively among different sectors and making more effective use of existing resources
- Due to the relatively high costs associated with loneliness and social isolation, there is a **strong case for investment in the area** (Local Government Association, 2016)

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Lets fight it!



Public Sector

- Focus on Youth Loneliness
- Social Marketing Campaign

Voluntary Sector

- Collaboration is key
- Supporting Role

Health Sector

- Identify and Recognise
- Provide Support



PUBLIC SECTOR

Opening up about Youth Loneliness

- Focus on the issue of youth loneliness
- The public sector can use its influence to reach this risk group
- Create Social Marketing Campaign aimed at youths and young adults
- Use Social Media as the main channel for reaching target audience

Why focus on youths and young adults?

- There remains a high degree of discomfort in discussing the issue of loneliness among young people
- Still widely held beliefs that young people have to have a rich social life
- Due to the stigma around the issue, many young people do not openly admit to experiencing loneliness
- ACEVO (2016) found that loneliness can suppress future employment opportunities for young people, as well as negatively affect their physical and mental health

How could the campaign help?

- Reducing the stigma could help young people open up and seek help
- It can help raise awareness about loneliness among young people in our society
- Linking the campaign to voluntary organisations can help young people identify where they can seek support

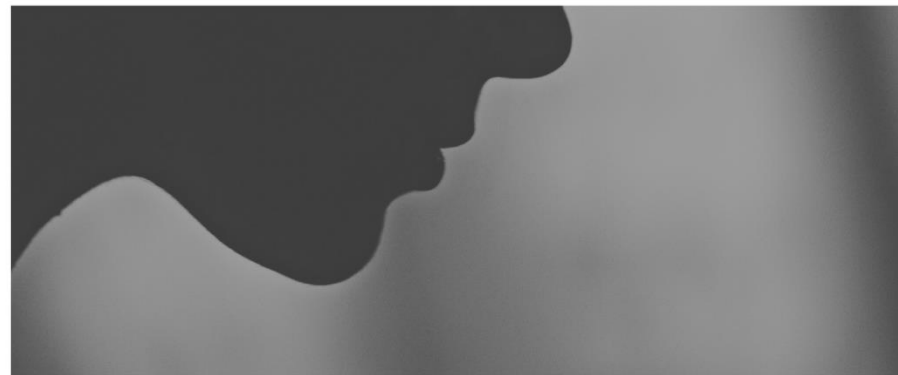
Keeping costs minimal

- ACEVO (2016) found that the health, crime and unemployment costs, in part associated with loneliness, among people aged 16 to 32 years old can amount up to over £150 billion a year in the UK
- Reflects the gravity of the issue of youth loneliness
- Through using the relatively cost-effective channel of Social Media Marketing, a large audience can be reached while keeping costs minimal



LONELINESS
CAN MANIFEST
ITSELF AT
ANY TIME
IN YOUR LIFE.

SEEK HELP. DON'T BE SILENT.



WE CAN HELP

212-580-7182 | 212-580-7183



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HEALTH SECTOR

Identification of eligible patients

- NHS can play a vital role in recognising and identifying symptoms of loneliness among its patients
- Provide training for staff to help them recognise symptoms and identify eligible patients, especially among risk groups
- Use time effectively by training staff to interact with patients during regular check-ups, vaccinations and assistance
- Create an internal campaign to raise awareness among NHS staff of the symptoms and ways of identifying them

How could this be implemented?

- Develop a risk stratification tool to be used among staff to identify eligible individuals
- Use tools like the Campaign to End Loneliness Measurement Tool in designing the methods of interacting and communicating with possible eligible patients (Campaign to End Loneliness, n.d.)

IT'S ALL ABOUT ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Use positive and non-intrusive language

Avoid causing embarrassment or distress

Avoid using too direct language or questions

Support

- NHS can also play a vital role in providing support
- After identification, NHS can refer eligible patients to befriending services or other voluntary organisations
- In collaboration with voluntary organisations, NHS can develop an online counselling project to provide individuals with a safe online space



NHS

YOUNG OR OLD, NO-ONE CHOOSES LONELINESS

Free and Confidential Online Counselling

VISIT

WWW.NHSONLINECOUNCIL.COM

WE CARE. WE LISTEN. WE SUPPORT.

In collaboration with

Campaign to
EndLoneliness
CONCERNED BY OLDER AGE

 **BritishRedCross**


voluntary health scotland

 **ageUK**

Costs

- It is estimated that the cost to the public sector of chronic loneliness among older people is around £12,000 per person, based on costs associated with GP and A&E visits (Befriending Networks, 2016)
- Implementing the strategy would involve costs associated with developing a training programme, internal campaign and the creation of an online counselling project
- However, due to the high costs associated with loneliness, there is a strong case for investment

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VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Collaborate with Public Sector

- Collaborate with public sector on social marketing campaign to raise awareness on youth loneliness
- Being advocated by the public sector as organisations that could provide support
- In turn provide public sector with more in-depth knowledge and first-hand experience on the issue

Collaborate with Health Sector

- Collaborate with NHS on their training programme by providing valuable insights and guidelines
- Collaborate with NHS on creating and maintaining an online counselling service
- Increase awareness of and referrals to voluntary organisations through collaborations with NHS

Collaborations among Voluntary Organisations

- Voluntary organisations can collaborate on the creation of services that help people retain and regain community connections
- Launch a wide-spread platform of local matching websites aimed at bringing people together, focusing on friendships and activities



VHS

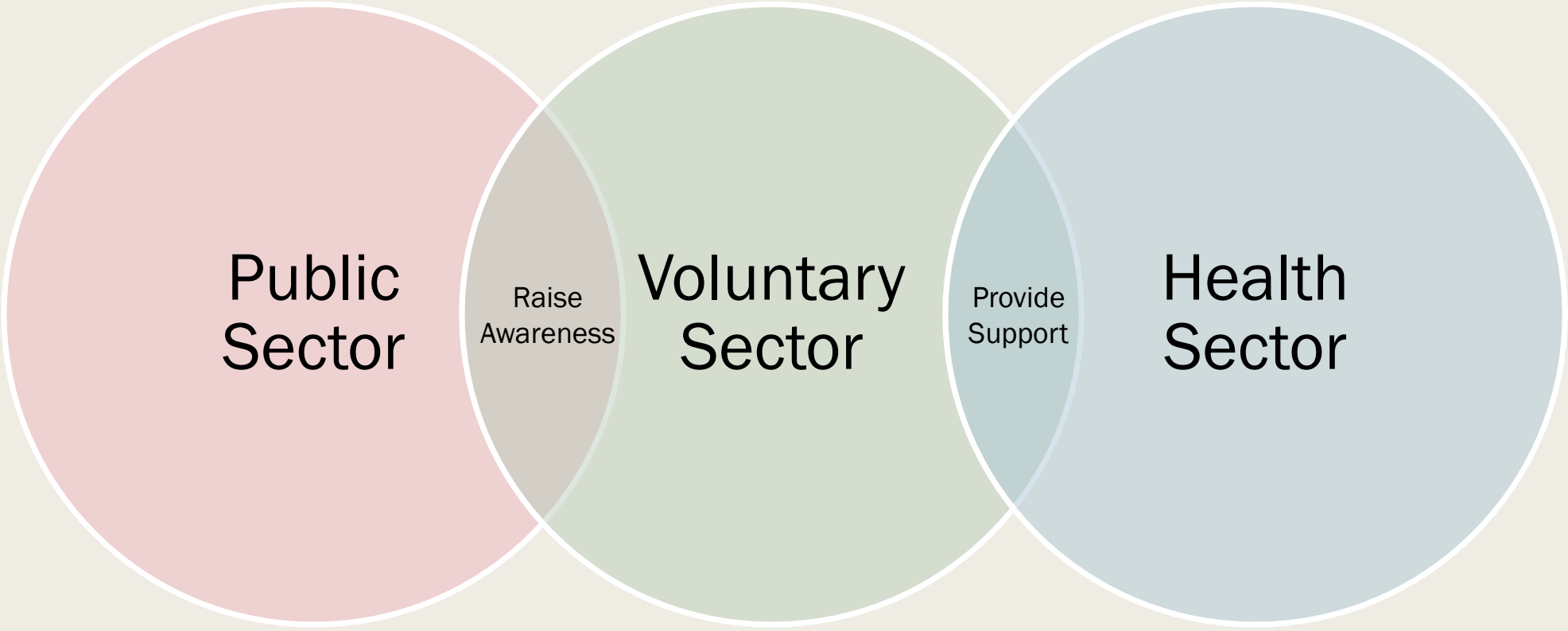


Adopt a Coordinating Role

- Due to VHS's first-hand experience with and extensive knowledge on the issue of loneliness and social isolation, they could adopt a coordinating role
- VHS's collaborative nature and experience with working in partnerships make it the right organisation for synchronising the different efforts throughout all sectors
- Can assign a small team to monitor performance and interact with key figures in the different sectors
- Ensures that the different sectors are aligned and working towards a common goal



COLLABORATION IS VITAL



**Public
Sector**

Raise
Awareness

**Voluntary
Sector**

Provide
Support

**Health
Sector**



CONTROL AND MEASUREMENT



Monitoring

- VHS has key role in monitoring efforts throughout the three sectors
- Emphasis should be on measuring social interaction and engagement
- Collecting and evaluating feedback from within the three sectors is vital

Evaluation

- Assess if increase in level of awareness of the issue of loneliness has been achieved by conducting (online) survey
- Assess if increase in level of engagement with voluntary organisations has been achieved
- Evaluate the collaborative efforts of the three sectors through regular feedback
- Set a timeframe for periodic (re)-evaluation

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CONCLUSION

Key points

- Loneliness is an issue that needs to be addressed effectively and immediately
- Tackling this issue has various economic and social benefits for all of us
- Collaboration between the three sectors is vital
- VHS can synchronise the different efforts throughout the sectors
- Assessment of level of awareness and engagement is important



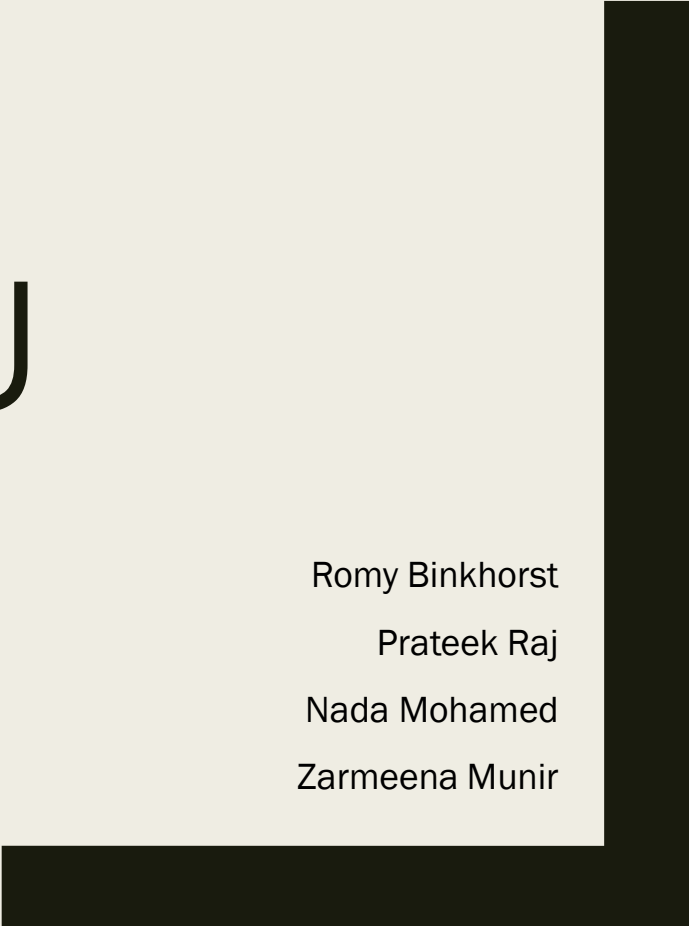
THANK YOU

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