ILC Friday three - 17 February 2023

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International Longevity Centre UK

Latest news

ILC Friday three

- Solution of the week - make that social connection, face to face if possible
- Men's Sheds - why might it be good to head to the shed?
- Loneliness on a global scale - where do people feel most lonely?

Solution of the week - make that social connection, face-to-face



Just "say hello". It should, in theory, be that easy but seemingly it is far from being so. Making friends has always required time and effort but perhaps as our responsibilities increase we prioritise the minutiae of work and duty over creating and maintaining friendships. And the digitisation of our interactions and the changes wrought by the pandemic have exacerbated our isolation.

According to the US Census Bureau's American Time Use Survey, a decade ago the average American spent 6½ hours per week with friends. Then, in 2014, time spent with friends began to decline and in 2021, the average American spent only two hours and 45 minutes a week with close friends (a 58% decline). Similar declines were seen even when the definition of "friends" was expanded to include neighbours, co-workers and clients. From and average of 15 hours per week a decade ago, to only 10 hours a week in 2021.

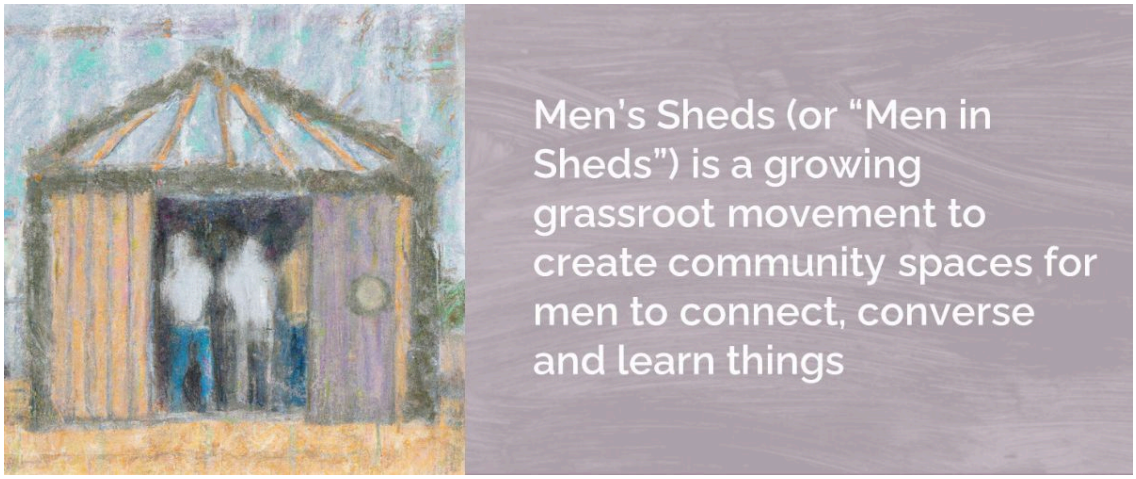
is loneliness causes us to withdraw and isolate making us even more more lonely. Research shows that people with richer social lives tend to have better mental well-being and lower stress, and to perform better at work. Missing out on interactions with friends, colleagues or even shopkeepers has a powerful impact on our health.

So be brave, take that time and that little bit more effort - head to the corner shop, sign up to that book club or simply smile and say hello. And - if you're lucky enough to never feel lonely - then do share.

What do you think? Over the next few months, we want to highlight examples of policy and practice which could help us adapt to increased longevity. We will collate ideas into a plan for the next Government and launch it at our Future of Ageing Conference on 7 December 2023. So, what do you think of this solution? Do you have different or better ideas? Let us know via events@ilcuk.org.uk

LET US KNOW

Men's Sheds - why might it be good to head to the shed?



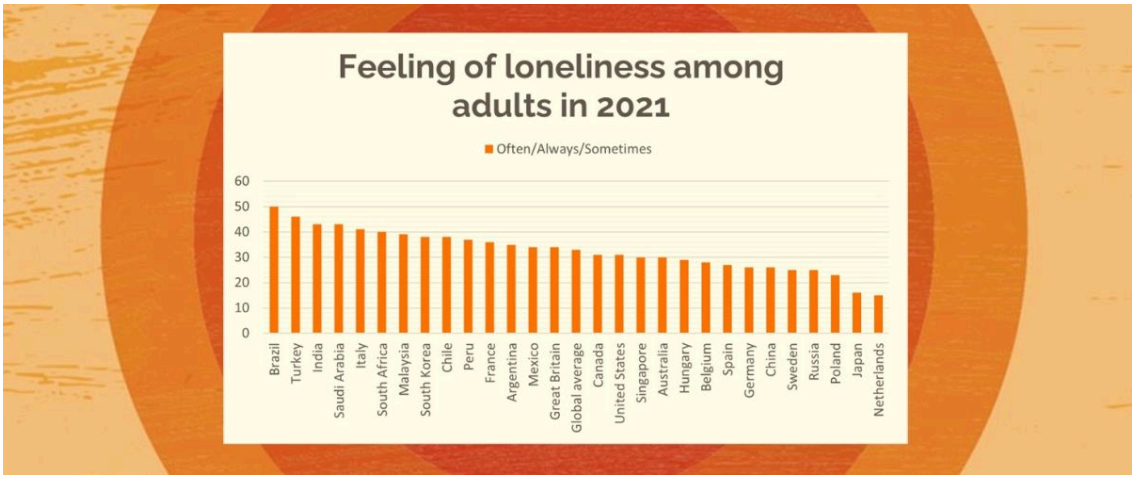
Many men find it difficult to make new connections when circumstances change, which can mean that they quickly become both isolated and lonely – even when they are living with spouses or families. This can then also result in declining mental and physical health, often prematurely ending what could be a productive, active and enjoyable lives.

Men's Sheds (also know as "Men In Sheds") is international grassroots movement, and there are now 557 of them in the UK with a further 130 being developed. They come in many different sizes and do different things, but in essence they provide community spaces for men to converse create and connect.

The benefits are many - men are also more likely to address health issues if they know that a male friend or colleague has a condition or is having tests for one. The

Men's Sheds Association estimate that 13368 families are benefiting directly. Many sheds also give back to their neighbourhoods by making items for schools or community groups.

Loneliness on a global scale - where do people feel most lonely?



Social isolation and loneliness are increasingly being recognised as a priority public health problem and policy issue. According to an Ipsos survey, published in February 2021, 33% of adults experienced feelings of loneliness worldwide. Brazil had the highest percentage of people experiencing this, with 50% of respondents declaring that they felt lonely either often, always, or sometimes. 34% UK respondents said they experienced loneliness at least sometimes, while only 15% and 16% people in the Netherlands and Japan reported feeling lonely.

According to another Ipsos survey conducted in February 2021 among G7 countries, seven in 10 respondents experienced a worsening of their psychological health during the pandemic. And a PwC study showed that during the pandemic patients have suffered more from feelings of loneliness, depression or anxiety, and burnout. The study also reported an increase in alcohol consumption, smoking cigarettes, poor nutrition, and use of other substances.

The ILC is developing a Healthy Ageing and Prevention Index to measure and rank 121 countries on six indicators including happiness. The Index brings together health, wealth and societal metrics providing a comprehensive picture of how sustainable countries are in the context of longer lives, and the extent to which governments are investing in efforts to prevent ill-health, including addressing wellbeing. If you'd like to be part of a Healthy Ageing and Prevention Coalition to demand action and hold governments to account let us know via the button below.

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To keep up-to-date with ILC events throughout the year, please continue to check our website on a regular basis.

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