



A Vibrant Communities - Tamarack Institute Webinar

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO ENDING SOCIAL ISOLATION IN CANADA

With Lisa Richmond, Sonia Hsiung and Dr. Trevor Hancock

Gratitude & Acknowledgement

We begin this workshop by acknowledging that we are meeting on Indigenous land. We are grateful for the opportunity to meet and we thank all the generations of Indigenous peoples who have taken care of this land.

Our recognition of the contributions and historic importance of Indigenous peoples must be clearly and overtly connected to our collective commitment to make the promise and the challenge of Truth and Reconciliation real in our communities.

Today's Speakers



Lisa Richmond

VP of Research
Cardus



Sonia Hsiung

Project Lead, Policy & Communications
Alliance for Healthier Communities



Dr. Trevor Hancock

Retired Professor and Senior Scholar
University of Victoria

Social Prescribing in Ontario:

Addressing social isolation through integrating health & social care

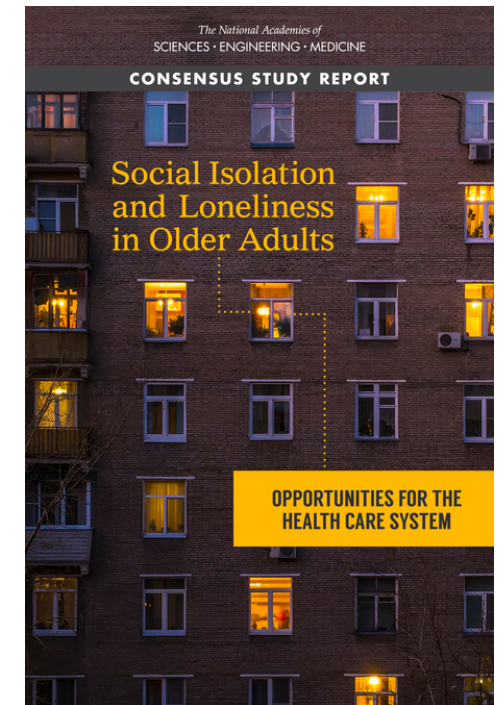
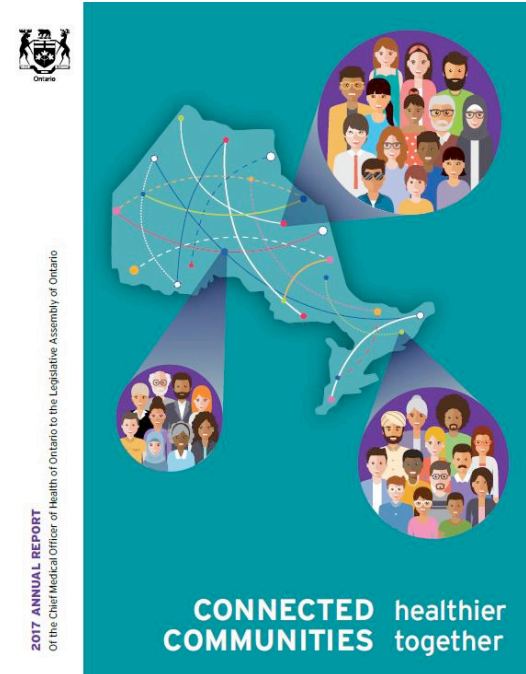
Sonia Hsiung, Project Lead
Alliance for Healthier Communities



Alliance for Healthier Communities
Alliance pour des communautés en santé

Social isolation and loneliness are determinants of health

- 50 per cent greater risk of dying early
- Negative impact on health equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day
- Twice as deadly as obesity and as big a killer as diabetes
- Increases the risk of dementia by 64 times
- Likely to be in top 5% of users of the healthcare system



Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010; Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health Annual Report, 2019; Social Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults: Opportunities for the Health Care System, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2020



NEWS RELEASE 21-APR-2020

Social isolation linked to higher risk of hospital admission for respiratory disease in older adults

Risk independent of other potentially influential factors, such as general health and lifestyle



Frailty Combined with Loneliness or Social Isolation: An Elevated Risk for Mortality in Later Life

Loneliness, physical activity and mental health during Covid-19: a longitudinal analysis of depression and anxiety in adults over 50 between 2015 and 2020

Published online by Cambridge University Press: 17 December 2020



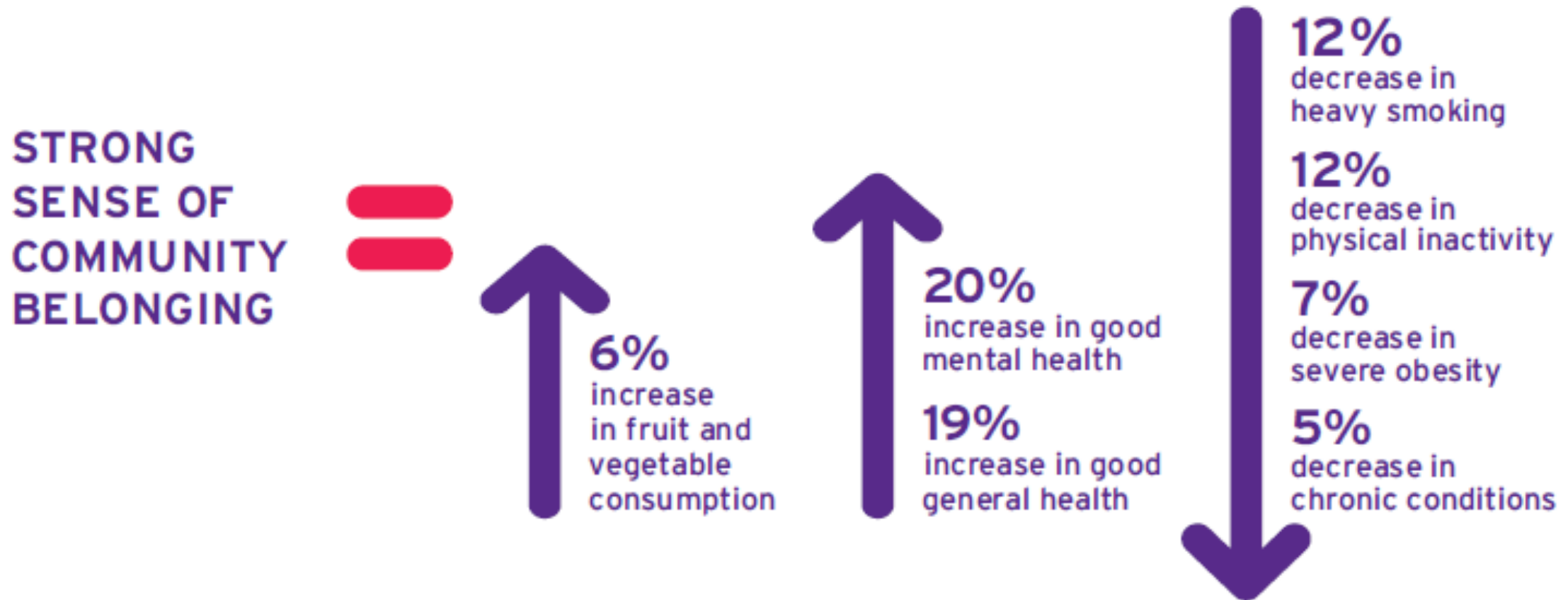
THE LANCET
Healthy Longevity

ARTICLES | VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2, E70-E77, FEBRUARY 01, 2021

The longitudinal relationship between loneliness, social isolation, and frailty in older adults in England: a prospective analysis

Figure I: Association of Community Belonging with Health and Health Behaviours

Adjusted prevalence ratios using the 2013/14 Canadian Community Health Survey cohort



Rx: Community – Social prescribing research pilot in Ontario



**Social prescribing:
Connecting social care ('social') and
medical care ('prescribing')**



Social prescribing:

A pathway to integrate health and social care

We would go to a program with clients to introduce that program to them, because there is a fear of the unknown... It's getting them into the room to understand what it was like and to see what a vast range of people were there, and that they did fit in

Client

Individual with social and medical needs, interests, and gifts

The excitement of saying, we can actually translate this into health outcomes, into data! We already do this, but do we do it the best way possible? I don't know, because we're losing out on the linking and follow-up.

Having the primary care provider suggest something else that will help instead of a prescription – that validity from a primary care provider has been the biggest reason that people will come and take it more seriously, with the sense that 'participating in this group will help me get out of the house or more healthy.'

al prescription

connected to social and supports, with invitation to co-create, and give back

Deeper integration: clinical, social, and ecological



Co-creating purpose and belonging

“This program said, ‘In fact, you identify the different needs in your local community, and then create the solutions they need.’ There’s no prescribed solution, it was a philosophy that we are creating the solution for each other. That really spoke to me. It’s given back to me so much.”

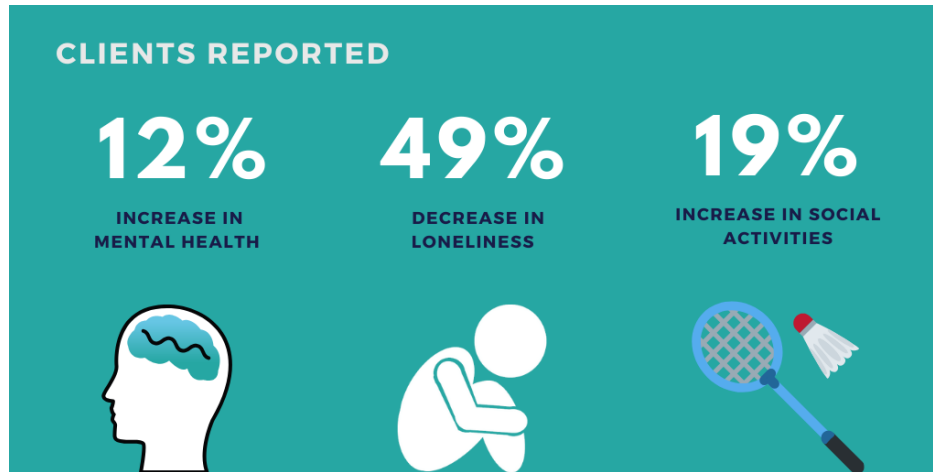


**Friendly Visitor
Program
in Collingwood**

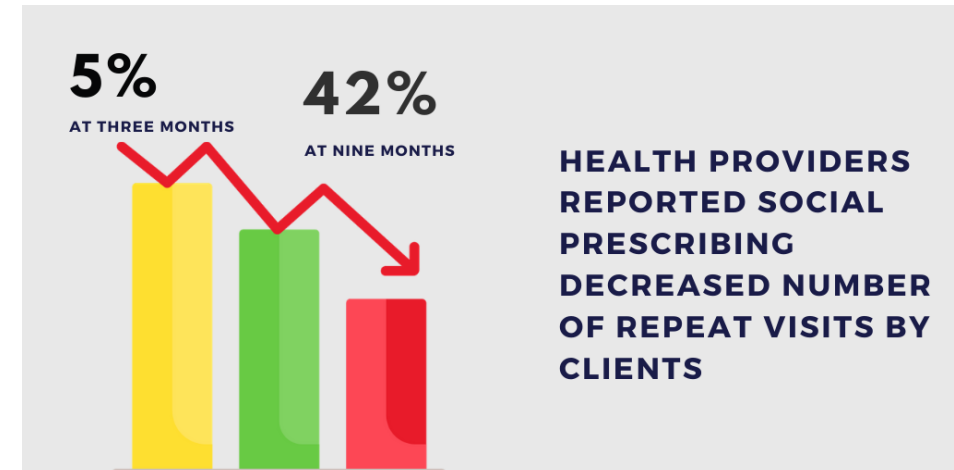
**Soup and
Crochet with
Grandma
Penny**



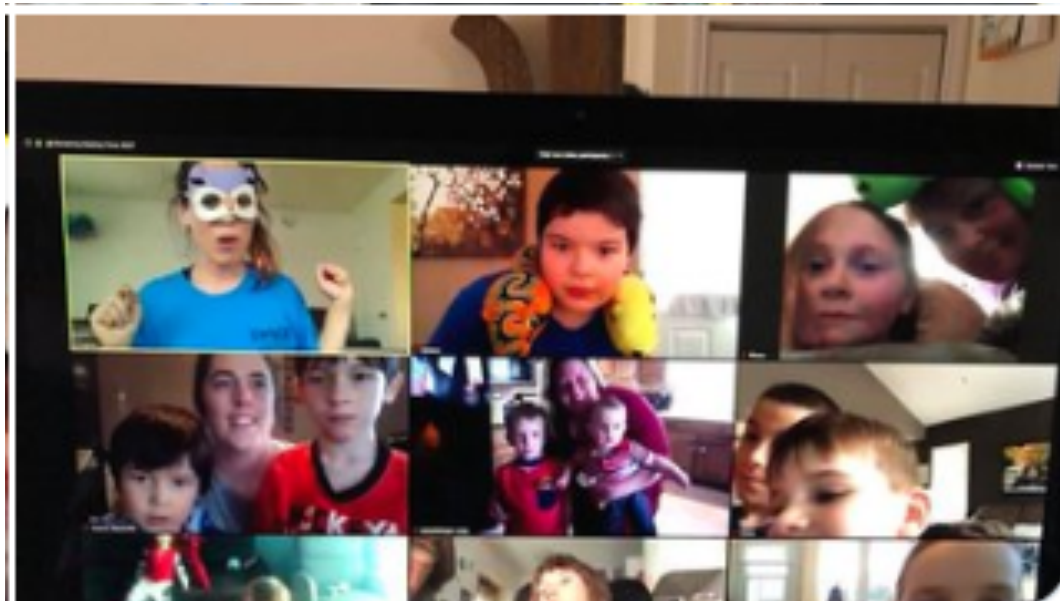
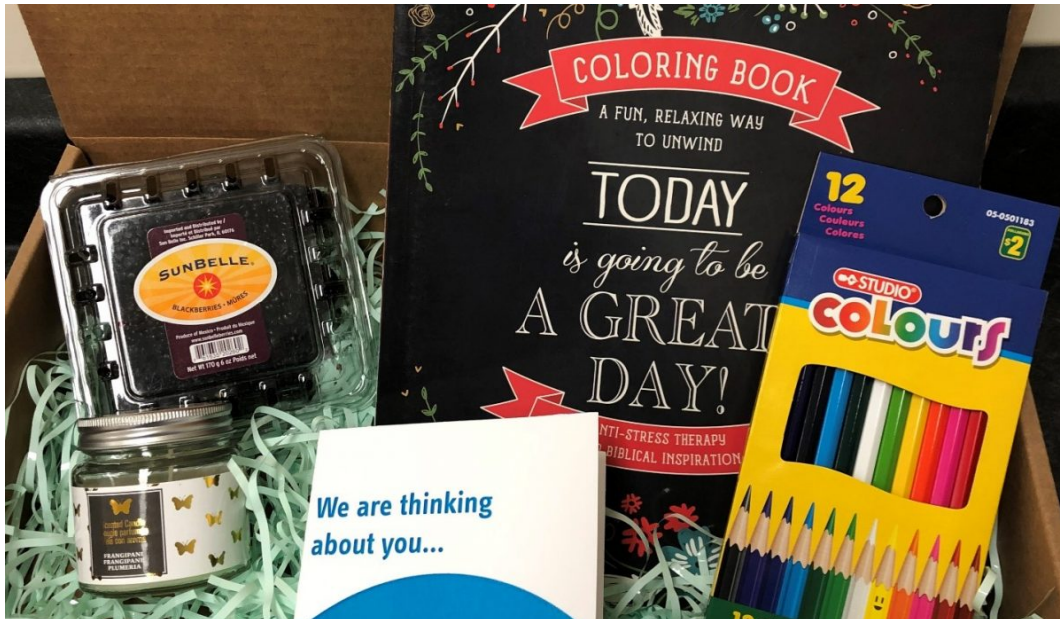
Result: Positive impact clients and healthcare providers



“Before... I wasn’t very good at accepting myself and looking after myself, and what I was taught here helped me realize that I could do something to look after myself, to improve my health.”



For more details, read Rx Community Final Report: allianceon.org/Social-Prescribing



Free Webinar

Creating safe virtual spaces for marginalized older adults

Adapting to new technology quickly can be difficult for everyone, and especially a challenge for older adults. Join a discussion by Alliance members on some strategies for creating safe and engaging online spaces for building connections.

July 29, 2020 | 12PM - 1:00PM



What's next?



Some key lessons learned

- Communicate, communicate, communicate – regular sharing of vision, progress updates, success stories and lessons learned increase team uptake and collaboration.
- Clinical and interprofessional champion are key to engaging their peers.
- Support and follow-up with clients to reduce barriers (shyness, transportation, stigma, etc).
- A common language helps to visualize and share the work with clients, staff, and cross-sectoral partners.
- Be open to culture change – shifting perception from “patients with needs” to “person with gifts”
- Build long-term processes – make collaboration and co-creation between health and social care the norm rather than the exception.

Challenges



- “Too medical” or “Not medical enough”
- Robust research evidence
- Data tracking
- Digital integration
- Pilotitus
- Common language

Opportunities



- Global movement towards integrated social+health care
- National interest
- Public awareness and demand
- Proof of concept in Canada
- Emerging research and evaluation
- Policy window emerging from COVID-19



Send any questions to:

Sonia Hsiung

sonia.hsiung@allianceON.org

allianceon.org/Social-Prescribing

THANK YOU



Social prescribing and the Great Reconnect

Social Prescription in Canada

Tamarack Institute,

17 Feb 2021

Dr. Trevor Hancock

**Retired Professor and Senior Scholar
School of Public Health and Social Policy
University of Victoria**



Social prescribing

- In the UK about 1 in 5 patients consult their family physician for what are mainly social problems
- SP is “a means of enabling GPs, nurses and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services”
- Useful for those with “mild or long-term mental health problems, vulnerable groups, people who are socially isolated, and those who frequently attend either primary or secondary health care”

King's Fund, 2017



What is social prescribing?

- **Seeks to address people's needs in a holistic way**
- **Aims to support individuals to take greater control of their own health.**
- **Involves a variety of activities**
 - e.g. volunteering, arts activities, group learning, gardening, befriending, cookery, healthy eating advice and a range of sports.
- **Typically provided by voluntary and community sector organisations**



Social prescribing in the UK

- Listed as one of the 10 high-impact actions in the General Practice Forward View;
- The Royal College of General Practitioners have called for every GP practice to have access to a funded social prescriber
- Secretary of State Matt Hancock stated that he saw social prescribing as becoming indispensable for GPs, 'just like a thermometer or a stethoscope might be seen today,' and announced a National Academy for Social Prescribing.

Beccy Baird, Kings Fund, December 2018



National Academy for Social Prescribing (UK)

- To help more people improve their health and wellbeing by participating in arts, sport and leisure activities across the UK.
- The Academy will help deliver on the Government's ambition for every patient in the country to have access to social prescribing schemes on the NHS as readily as they do medical care.
- Social prescribing involves helping patients to improve their health, wellbeing and social welfare by connecting them to community services. This can include activities such as art and singing classes.

October 2019



Social prescribing is mainly about social connection

- **To a fair extent, social prescribing is really about making connections.**
- **Its something we all need to do, to various degrees and at various levels**



3 forms of re-connection and finding balance

- **Within ourselves (Sanity)**
 - Mind and body
 - Emotion and reason
- **Between ourselves and other people (Humanity)**
 - Where we live
 - Across all humanity
- **Between humankind and all of nature (Ecology)**
-

Based on
James Robertson (1978) The Sane Alternative
Jeremy Lent (2017) The Patterning Instinct



Three suggestions for Social Prescribing

- 1. Men's (and Women's) Sheds**
- 2. Nature prescribing**
- 3. The Great (Post-Covid) Reconnect**



1. Men's (and Women's) Sheds

Men's sheds began in Australia in the 1980s mainly to address a specific problem among older men:

- **“men at risk of social isolation, low income and/or those living in rural or remote areas”. (Men's Health Research Network, UBC)**
- **Inter-generational mentoring is an emerging trend**
- **It is in part a recognition of the “men's health gap”**
 - **“In most parts of the world, health outcomes among boys and men continue to be substantially worse than among girls and women” (Baker et al, *Bull. WHO*, 2014)**



What is a Men's Shed?

- Any community-based, non-profit, non-commercial organization that is accessible to all men and whose primary activity is the provision of a safe and friendly environment where men are able to work on meaningful projects at their own pace in their own time in the company of other men. **A major objective is to advance the well-being and health of their male members.**

Australian Men's Shed Association



Men's Sheds Canada

- Doug Mackie founded the first Canadian shed in 2011 in Winnipeg. **Doug recognized that many men in his community had both time on their hands and a tendency to suffer from isolation, loneliness, and depression. This was especially true after they retired . . .**

<http://menssheds.ca/>

- Currently 8 each in BC and ON, 7 in MB, 5 in AB, 2 in QC



Women's Sheds (‘She Sheds’)

- **Began around 2015 – see Golding, 2020**
- **“Women's Shed: Constructing community connection and confidence” – Pearce, 2016**
 - **From power tools to empowerment**
 - **Mental health and metal work**
 - **Socialisation and sawing**
 - **Confidence building**



2. Nature prescribing

- **How many of you have house plants?**
- **Why?**
- **Could it be an expression of . . .**



Biophilia

“the connections that human beings subconsciously seek with the rest of life.”

E.O. Wilson

- We evolved in natural environments**
- We may have an innate need for nature**



Nature prescribing

- **Have a plant or pet to look after**
- **Nature walks – alone or in a group/club**
- **Gardening**
- **Community gardens**
- **Birding etc**



- **Nature prescriptions were named one of the top 8 global wellness trends in 2019. And it's no surprise—research shows that kids and adults who spend more time in nature are happier and healthier.**
- **PaRx is breaking ground as Canada's first national, evidence-based nature prescription program.**
- **<https://www.parkprescriptions.ca/>**

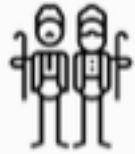


PaRx
A Prescription
for Nature

- **People who spend at least two hours in nature each week report significantly better health and wellbeing.**
- **From diabetes and heart disease to anxiety and depression, research shows that connecting to nature is a powerful way to improve your health.**
- **Kids who play in green spaces focus better, master motor skills faster and move more.**



Side effects of Nature Prescribing may include



Living longer



Increased energy



Reduced stress and anxiety



Better mood



Pain reduction




Improved heart health

<https://www.parkprescriptions.ca/>

PaRx
A Prescription
for Nature



Nature Connection – The Big Picture



Two-thirds of the U.S. population and more than one-half of the European population have already lost the ability to see the Milky Way with the naked eye.
(World Atlas of the artificial night sky brightness, 2001)

Light map courtesy Marc Imhoff of NASA GSFC and Christopher Elvidge of NOAA NGDC. Image by Craig Mayhew and Robert Simmon, NASA GSFC



**But if we can't see the
stars at night . . .**

**. . . how do we know our
place in the universe?**



The Great Reconnect

- **Grew out of a discussion about the film “The Great Disconnect”**
- **Following Covid, we all need to re-connect.**
- **A couple of early thoughts:**
 - **Block parties all over Canada**
 - **Human chains**



Contact

Dr. Trevor Hancock

Thancock@uvic.ca

Website:

<https://trevorhancock.org>



UPCOMING WEBINAR:

Democracy - A New Idea

Date: April 7, 2021 | 2:30 - 3:30 p.m. ET

Speakers:

David Mathews, President & CEO, Kettering Foundation

John McKnight, Asset-Based Community Development
Institute

<https://events.tamarackcommunity.ca/democracy-a-new-idea>

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View our free community building webinars:

<https://bit.ly/tamarackwebinars>

A silhouette of a group of people walking along the crest of a dark hill against a soft, hazy sunset sky. The figures are small and dark, moving from left to right. The sky is a mix of light and dark purple and pink tones. The text 'THANK YOU' is written in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the middle of the image, partially overlapping the silhouettes of the people.

THANK YOU