The Wisconsin Story to End Social Isolation and Loneliness

Background

According to the Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness, “Loneliness can increase your risk of death by 26%.” The Wisconsin Coalition to End Social Isolation and Loneliness (WCESIL) uses a collective impact approach to bring together community organizations and individuals to identify and deploy meaningful responses to the negative health impacts of social isolation and loneliness among older adults and adults with disabilities in Wisconsin.

From September – December 2022, the Access and Detection Work Group launched the social isolation and loneliness pilot project with six organizations in Wisconsin that serve older adults and/or adults with disabilities. The pilot project utilized the UCLA 3-Item Loneliness Scale to screen, identify and refer individuals that scored in the isolated/lonely category. One goal of the project was to determine how easily the tool could be implemented into existing workflows within organizations serving older adults and/or adults with disabilities. Seventy-five percent of pilot participants were Aging Units and Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC). Another goal of the project was to implement the screening tool to raise awareness of the individual’s level of connectedness, how it affects their lives, and help facilitate changes through actionable next steps when appropriate and desired. The pilot aimed to evaluate the following measures:

- Percent of pilot organizations who were able to implement the scale into an existing process.
- Number of clients who accepted or declined to participate.
- Number of referrals made by screener to their agency or other organizations. (i.e. Home-Delivered Meals, Evidence-based health promotion services, friendly caller program, etc.)

Pilot Project Results

- 41% of screenings indicated the screening was easy to implement into existing work functions
- 78% of screeners indicated the screening was easy to implement into existing work functions
- 5.4 was the average score of participant screenings
- 46% were provided resources to get more connected

"The screening opened the door for further discovery of how to assist a customer's relationship with their community."
- John P., Brown County ADRC

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