

THE POWER OF HUMAN CONNECTION

BUILDING A CULTURE OF
HUMAN CONNECTION
WHERE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY THRIVE



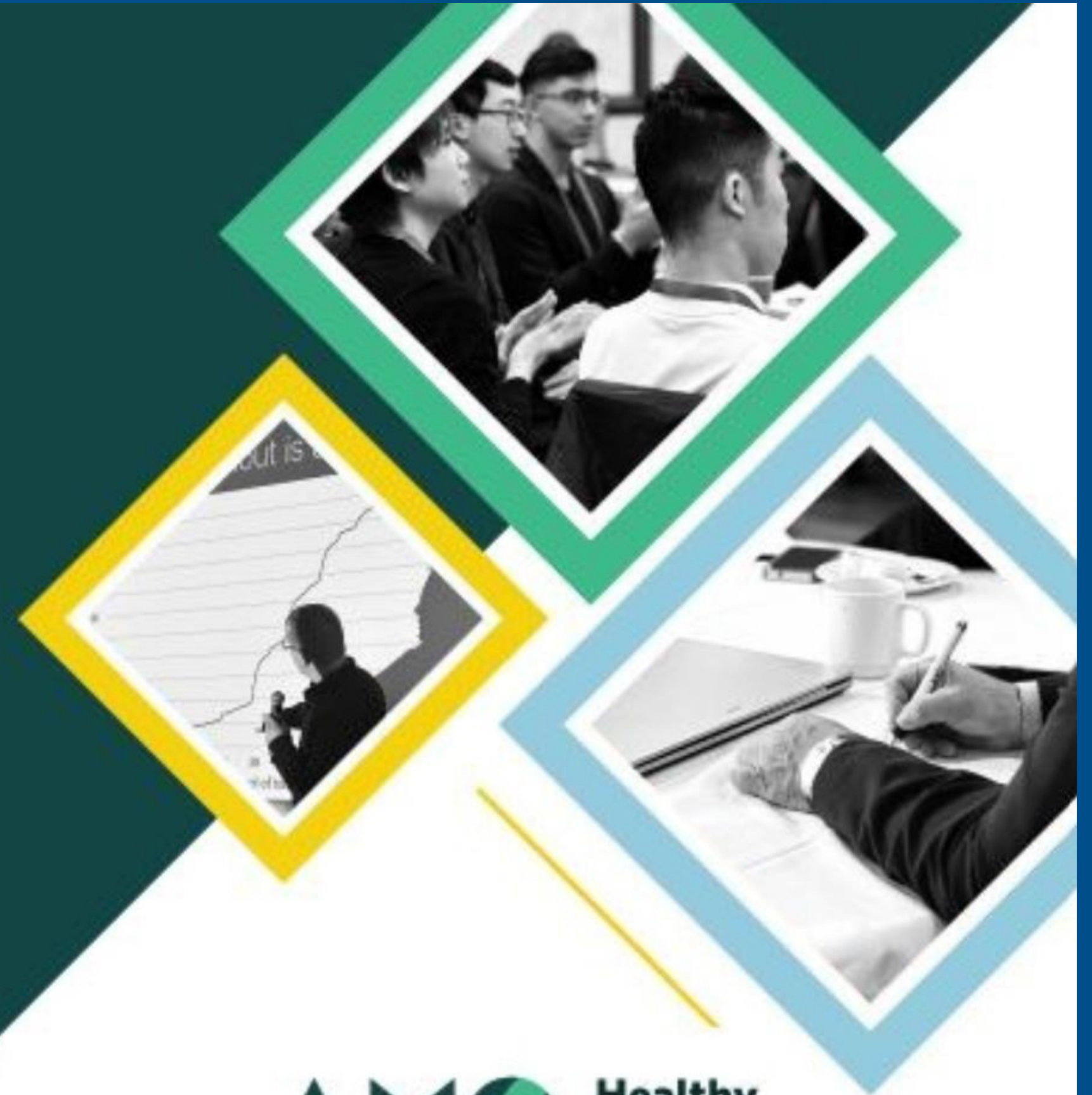
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Rural Healthy Democracy Forum

June 11, 2025
8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Almonte Old Town Hall





52% of Canadians report
being lonely on a
regular basis.

54% of students said they felt
lonely on a regular basis.

47% of seniors believe that others are very likely or likely not to know how lonely they are.

62% of people experiencing homelessness said they felt lonely on a regular basis.

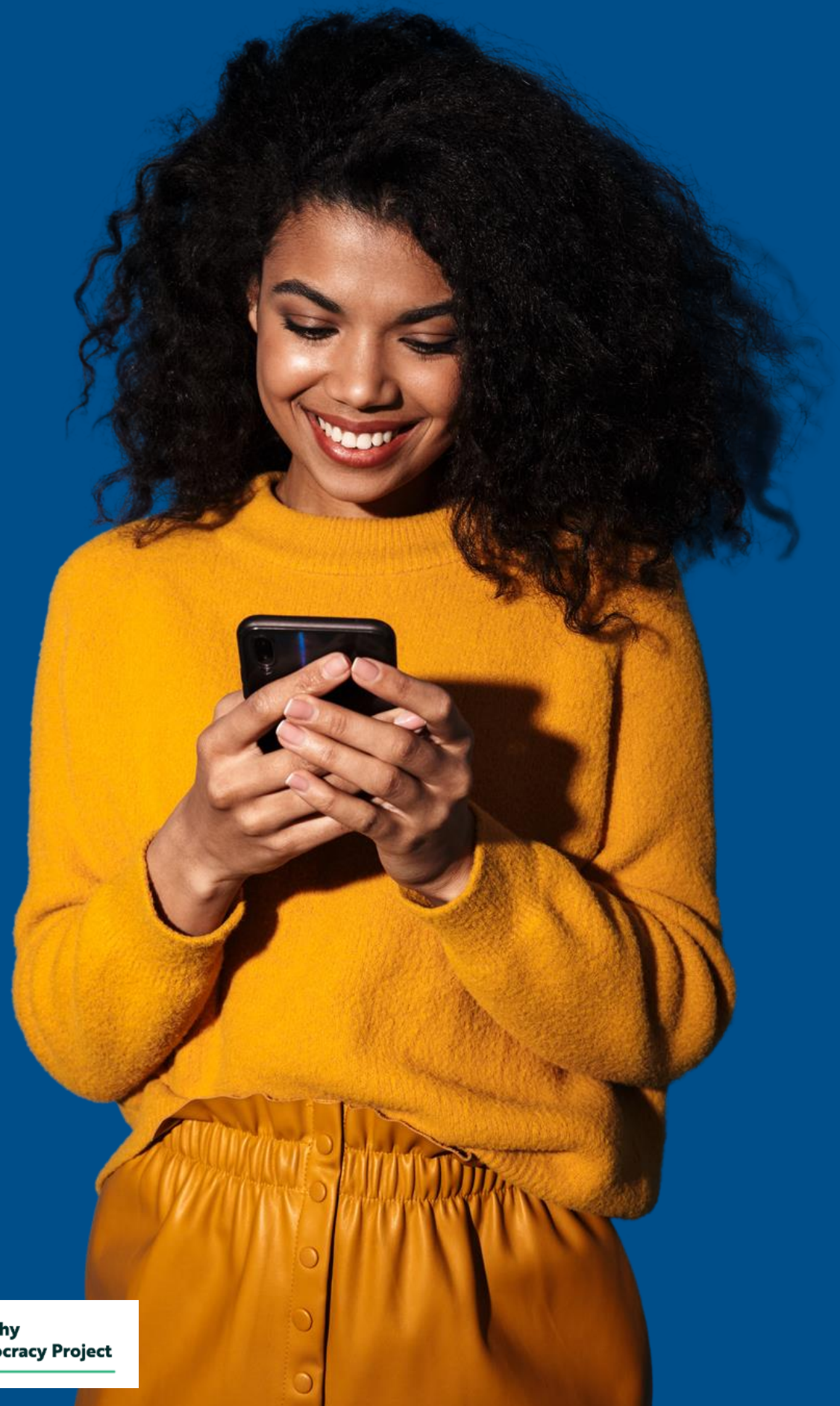
74% of people with a mental illness report being lonely on a regular basis.

61% of lawyers report being
lonely on a regular basis.

50% of entrepreneurs and
CEO's report being lonely.

51% of people in the service industry report being lonely on a regular basis.

45% of people in education
report being lonely on a
regular basis.



#GOFIRST



**SEND A QUICK MESSAGE
TO SOMEONE YOU'VE
BEEN MEANING TO SEE.**

THE IMPACT MIGHT SURPRISE YOU



I'm Pete, your...

- 20 years in marketing and sales roles in beverage alcohol
- Five years leading Movember Canada and raising \$142M for men's health
- On the Board of Directors for the Global Initiative for Loneliness and Connection
- Eight years leading Canada's Human Connection Movement
- Husband, father, hockey lover, and former Elvis impersonator



AGENDA

- The history of human connection.
- The negative impact of a disconnected world and the positive impact of human connection.
- Why might we still be struggling to connect post-pandemic?
- Where might connections be for us?
- How social connection can drive stronger communities and business.
- Q&A and a few prizes

3 KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

The turmoil we have all been under for the last four years has made many vulnerable, and the turmoil continues.

3 KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 The turmoil we have all been under for the last four years has made many vulnerable, and the turmoil continues.
- 2 Human connection is the unknown superpower we all have that can see us succeed as individuals and as leaders in community.

3 KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 The turmoil we have all been under for the last four years has made many vulnerable.
- 2 Human connection is the unknown superpower we all have that can see us succeed as individuals and as leaders in community.
- 3 Human connection is the foundation for happy, healthy humans, streets, workplaces, classrooms, communities, and society.



**“THE MOST CONNECTED SOCIETY IN
HISTORY IS NOW THE MOST
DISCONNECTED EVER.”**











**HUMAN CONNECTION TRANSCENDS
ALL ILLNESS, CAUSES AND CRISIS.**

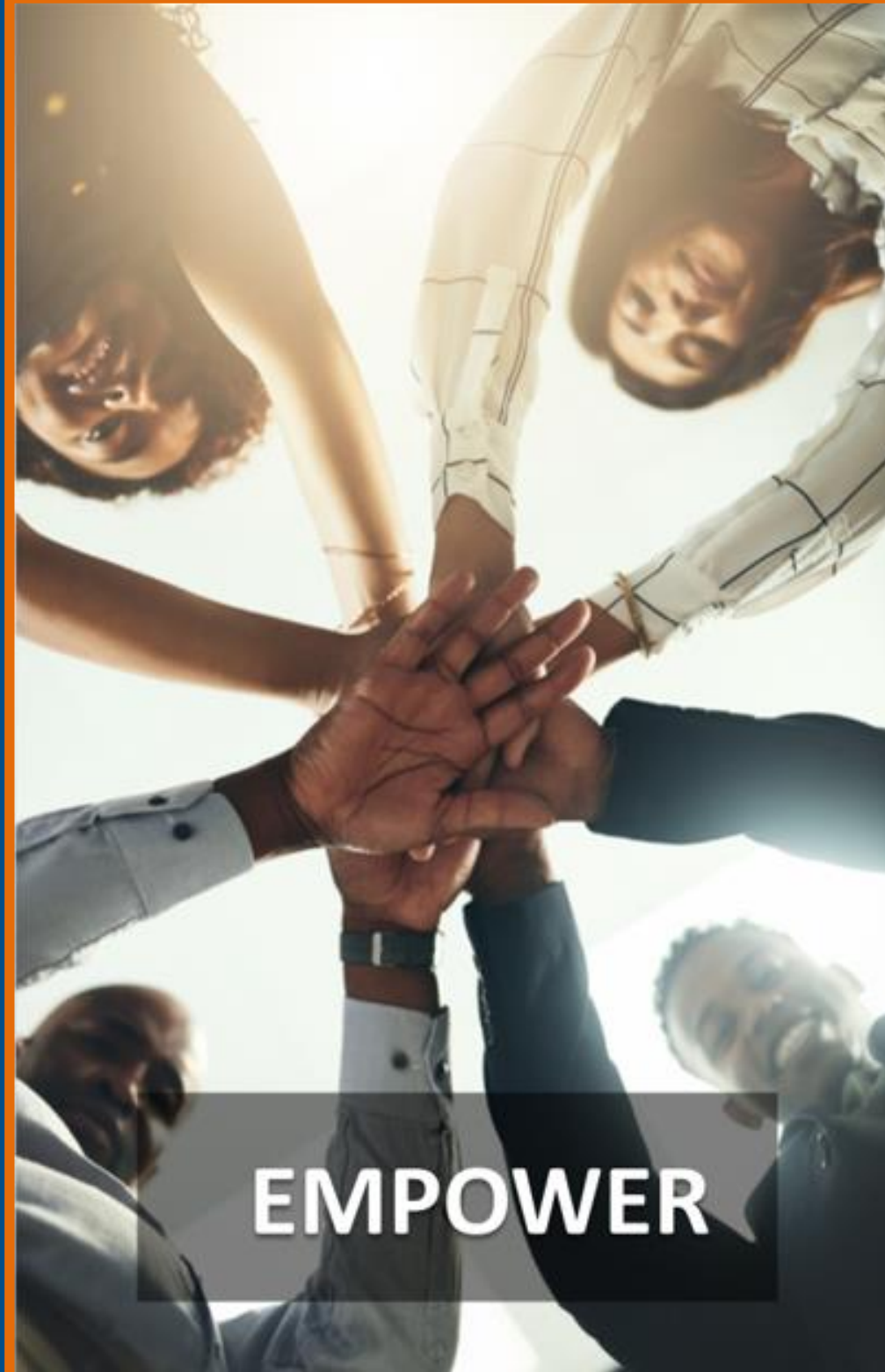


CANADA'S HUMAN CONNECTION MOVEMENT

genwell^o
HUMAN CONNECTION MOVEMENT



EDUCATE



EMPOWER



CATALYZE

GENWELL EDUCATION & EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS

Social health begins by educating people on the importance of human connection and its impact on our mental and physical well-being.

genwell^o
WORKPLACE

genwell^o
COMMUNITY

genwell^o
CLASSROOM

genwell^o
SENIORS

genwell^o
MUNICIPALITIES

GENWELL CATALYTIC

CONNECTION CAMPAIGNS



Face-to-Face February (Feb. 1-28)

A month-long integrated campaign that focused on getting students to build healthy connection habits.



GenWell Weekend (May 3-5)

Catalytic weekends that encourage people to connect with family, friends, neighbours, classmates, and colleagues.



Loneliness Awareness Week

(June 13-17)

A campaign specifically focused on building more connection for seniors.



GenWell Weekend (SEPT 20-22)

Catalytic weekends that encourage people to connect with family, friends, neighbours, classmates, and colleagues.



Talk to a Stranger Week (Nov. 18-24)

A week-long habit-building campaign focused on engaging Canadians in the many benefits of talking to strangers.



GenWell Digital Detox Days

(First of every month)

These days are focused on providing tips, tools and inspiration for Canadians to better manage their digital distraction.

CANADA'S

SOCIAL CONNECTION SURVEY

CANADIAN SOCIAL
CONNECTION SURVEY  SONDAGE SUR LES
CONNEXIONS SOCIALES AU CANADA

The 4th Annual Canadian Social Connection Survey

genwell
HUMAN CONNECTION MOVEMENT

SFU



CASCH
Canadian Alliance for
Social Connection and Health

CANADIAN SOCIAL
CONNECTION SURVEY  SONDAGE SUR LES
CONNEXIONS SOCIALES AU CANADA

Canadian Social Connection Guidelines

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SOCIAL CONNECTION GUIDELINES

ARE NOW HERE

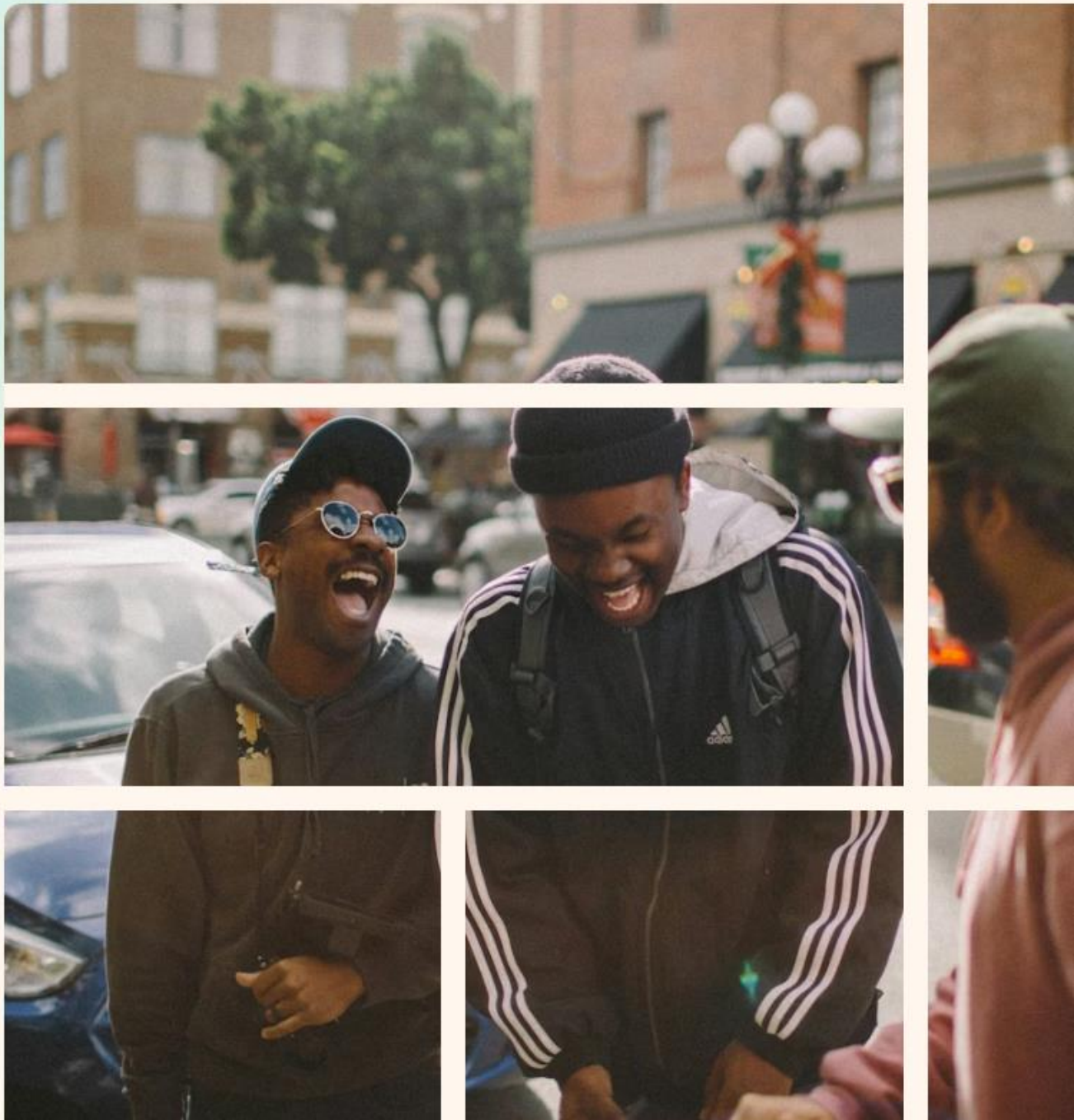
Learn more about our guidelines and their development. [Read →](#)

Did you know social connection is the key to living a happier, healthier, and longer life?

Like food and exercise, social connection is a fundamental determinant of our health, happiness, and longevity. Our recommended public health guidelines for social connection provide evidence-based guidance for fostering healthy social lives at the individual and community levels.

Individual guidelines

Community guidelines



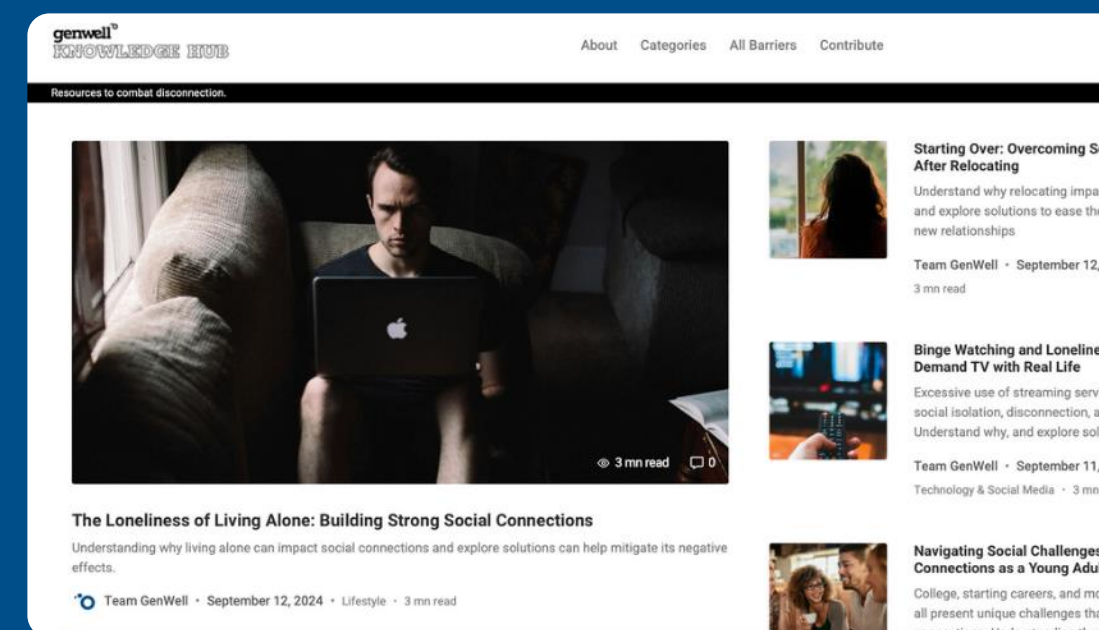
GENWELL

RESOURCES FOR CANADIANS



Visit our website

 genwell.ca



Visit our Knowledge Hub

 hub.genwell.ca

THE WORLD IS **AWAKENING...**

- U.S. – declared a loneliness epidemic in 2017
- UK – Minister of Loneliness 2018
- Japan – Minister of Loneliness in 2021
- WHO Commission on Social Connection 2023
- Australia, Japan, the Netherlands, & the US have
declared national strategies

TWO BIG UPDATES...



May 23, 2025



June 30, 2025

WHAT ARE WE

WORKING TO OVERCOME?

WHAT IS SOCIAL ISOLATION?

Social isolation is a lack of social contacts and having few people to interact with on a regular basis.



WHAT IS DISCONNECTION?

Disconnection is the lack of belonging. The human emotional need to be accepted as part of a group or community.



WHAT IS LONELINESS?

The difference between the relationships you have and the relationships that you desire.



LONELINESS IS SOMETHING WE ALL EXPERIENCE

THIRST



HUNGER



LONELINESS



AND HOW WILL WE OVERCOME IT?

HUMAN CONNECTION



Is the energy exchange between two people that are paying attention to one another. As simple as a smile, a head nod or a hello at the very least.

AND HOW WILL WE OVERCOME IT?

HUMAN CONNECTION



Is the energy exchange between two people that are paying attention to one another. As simple as a smile, a head nod or a hello at the very least.

It includes:

- Deep meaningful connections
- Casual collisions
- Connecting with strangers

WHAT ABOUT

INTROVERTS?

Introverts vs. Extroverts?



Introverts need human connection as much as extroverts but may have some criteria that they need to follow.

WHAT ABOUT

INTROVERTS?

Introverts vs. Extroverts?



Introverts need human connection as much as extroverts but may have some criteria that they need to follow.

It includes:

- ❑ Less often
- ❑ Smaller groups
- ❑ Controlled setting

WHAT ARE WE ARE REALLY

SPEAKING ABOUT IS...



SOCIAL HEALTH



MENTAL HEALTH

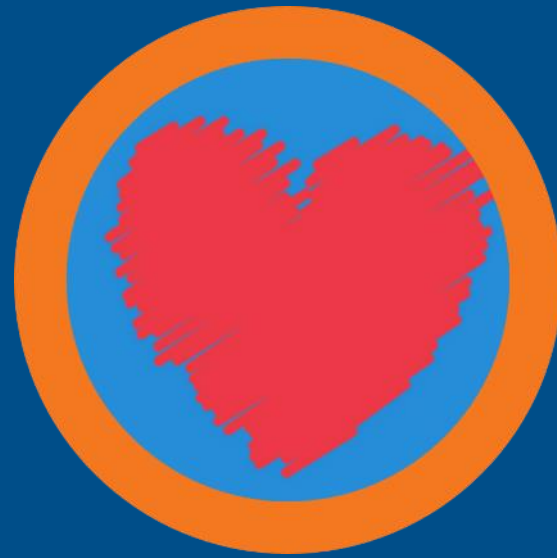


PHYSICAL HEALTH

IMPACTS OF LONELINESS ON ADULTS



+50%
risk of early
onset
dementia



+29%
risk of heart
disease

+32%
risk of stroke



higher rates of
depression,
anxiety, and
suicide



2X
risk of Type 2
diabetes after
age 50



+68%
risk of
hospitalization

+57%
risk of emergency
room visits

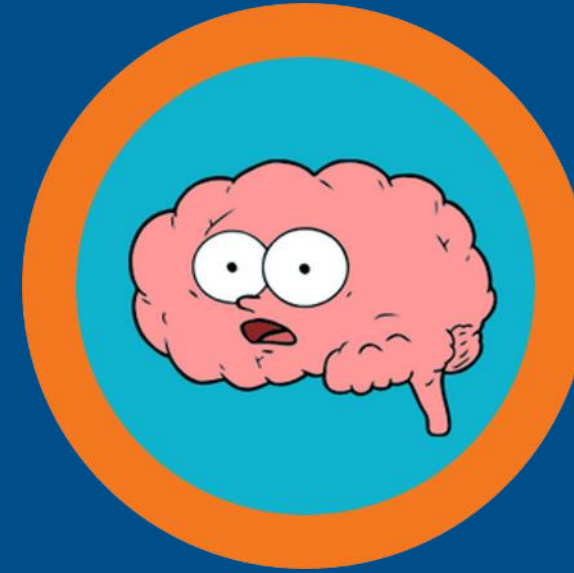
IMPACTS OF LONELINESS ON YOUTH



persistent and
cumulative
detrimental effects
on adult health



higher rates of
stress, anxiety,
and depression



impairs the
development of
the brain's
structure



can have a
negative impact
on academic
performance

IMPACTS OF LONELINESS ON SOCIETY



Research finds that lacking a fundamental need, meaningful connections, and normative structures is associated **with violent extremism.**



Researchers have found that long-term chronic isolation causes the build-up of a chemical in the brain **that increases stress, aggression, and fear.**

IMPACTS OF LONELINESS ON ECONOMY



\$2.7B to healthcare
(\$1,565 per person)

\$60B to overall economy



£2.5B to employers



\$4B to healthcare

\$1.4B to employers
\$89B to overall economy

ANY

SURPRISES?



LET'S TAKE A MOMENT

PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

WHO ARE YOU CONNECTING WITH?

Who would benefit from
your outreach?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Who have you been meaning
to connect with?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What is your first action step to start
focusing on your social health?

1. _____
2. _____

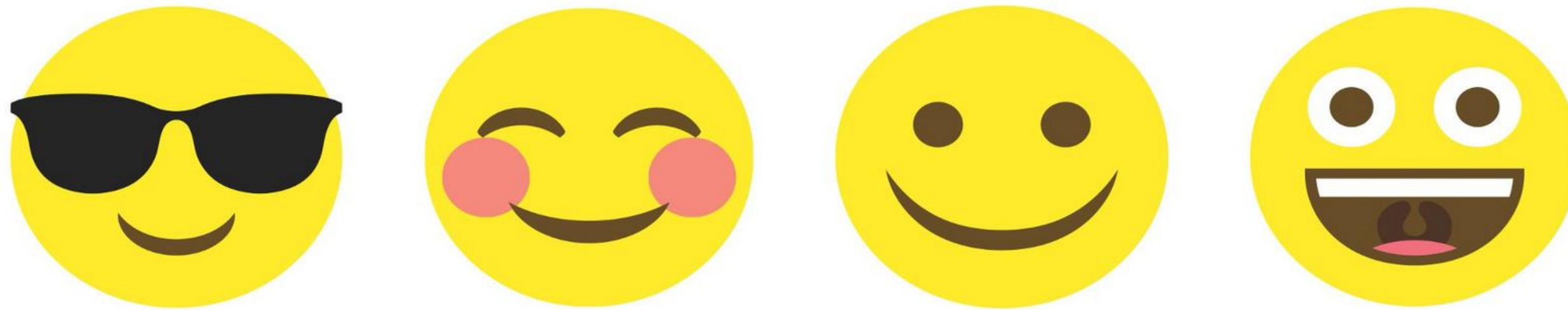
Idea box:

- Family
- Friends
- Neighbours
- Classmates
- Extended family
- Old friends
- Old colleagues

Idea box:

- Elderly
- Young
- Digital distraction
- Loss of loved one
- Overworked
- Job loss
- Homeless
- Financial pressure
- Divorce
- Any life challenges

SPECIAL **TIME** EDITION



THE SCIENCE OF HAPPINESS

NEW DISCOVERIES FOR A MORE JOYFUL LIFE

RELATIONSHIPS • EXERCISE • INNER LIFE • DIET • MEDITATION



**SINGLE LARGEST INDICATOR
OF HAPPINESS IN OUR LIVES**



**REDUCES ANXIETY
& DEPRESSION**



**INCREASES EMPATHY,
COMPASSION & RESILIENCE**



**STRENGTHENS YOUR
IMMUNE SYSTEM**

A silhouette of a person standing on a rocky outcrop with their arms raised in a 'V' shape, set against a vibrant sunset sky transitioning from purple to orange. The person is wearing a long-sleeved shirt and pants. The rock they are standing on is dark and jagged, with other rock formations visible in the background.

**INCREASES YOUR
SELF-CONFIDENCE**



**REDUCES PREJUDICE
& DISCRIMINATION**



**INCREASES YOUR CHANCES OF
LIVING LONGER BY UP TO 50%**

A group of four young adults (two women and two men) are sitting on the grass in a sun-dappled park, smiling and talking. A small, fluffy dog is sitting in front of them. They are holding red plastic cups. The background is filled with tall trees and green foliage.

**ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL
ACTIONS WE CAN TAKE TO
PREVENT & TREAT ANXIETY**



SINGLE LARGEST PREVENTATIVE ACTION TO AVOID DEPRESSION

WHAT ABOUT SOME OF **SOCIETY'S GREATEST CHALLENGES**



**CREATES SAFER &
STRONGER-KNIT COMMUNITIES**



**CAN PREVENT &
OVERCOME HOMELESSNESS**



**CAN PREVENT & REDUCE
FOOD INSECURITY**

A group of diverse people are sitting in a circle in a modern room with large windows. One person, wearing a white shirt and glasses, is placing their hand on the shoulder of another person who is wearing a blue denim jacket. The group appears to be engaged in a supportive conversation or a group therapy session.

CAN PREVENT & SUPPORT THOSE LIVING WITH ADDICTION



**STRENGTHENS INTERPERSONAL,
INSTITUTIONAL & SOCIETAL TRUST**



**CAN REDUCE FAMILY
& DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**



**CAN ASSIST IN DEVELOPING
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**



**CAN HELP PREVENT AND
OVERCOME BULLYING**



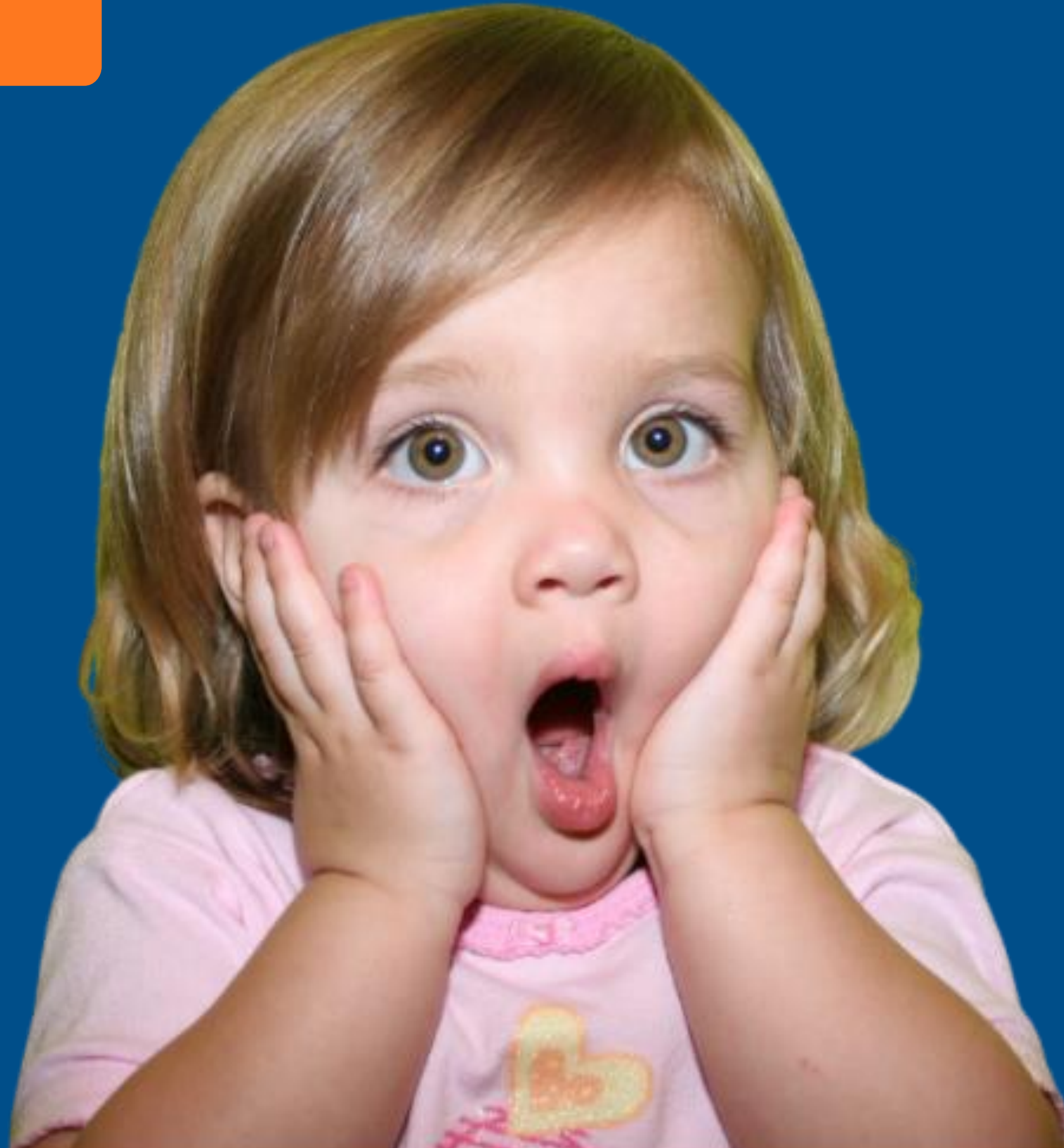
**A DEFENCE AGAINST
MIS AND DISINFORMATON**



**ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL
PROTECTIVE FACTORS AGAINST SUICIDE**

ANY MORE

SURPRISES?



LET'S TAKE A MOMENT

PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

HOW CAN YOU BUILD A MORE CONNECTED EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY?

Personal actions:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Team actions:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

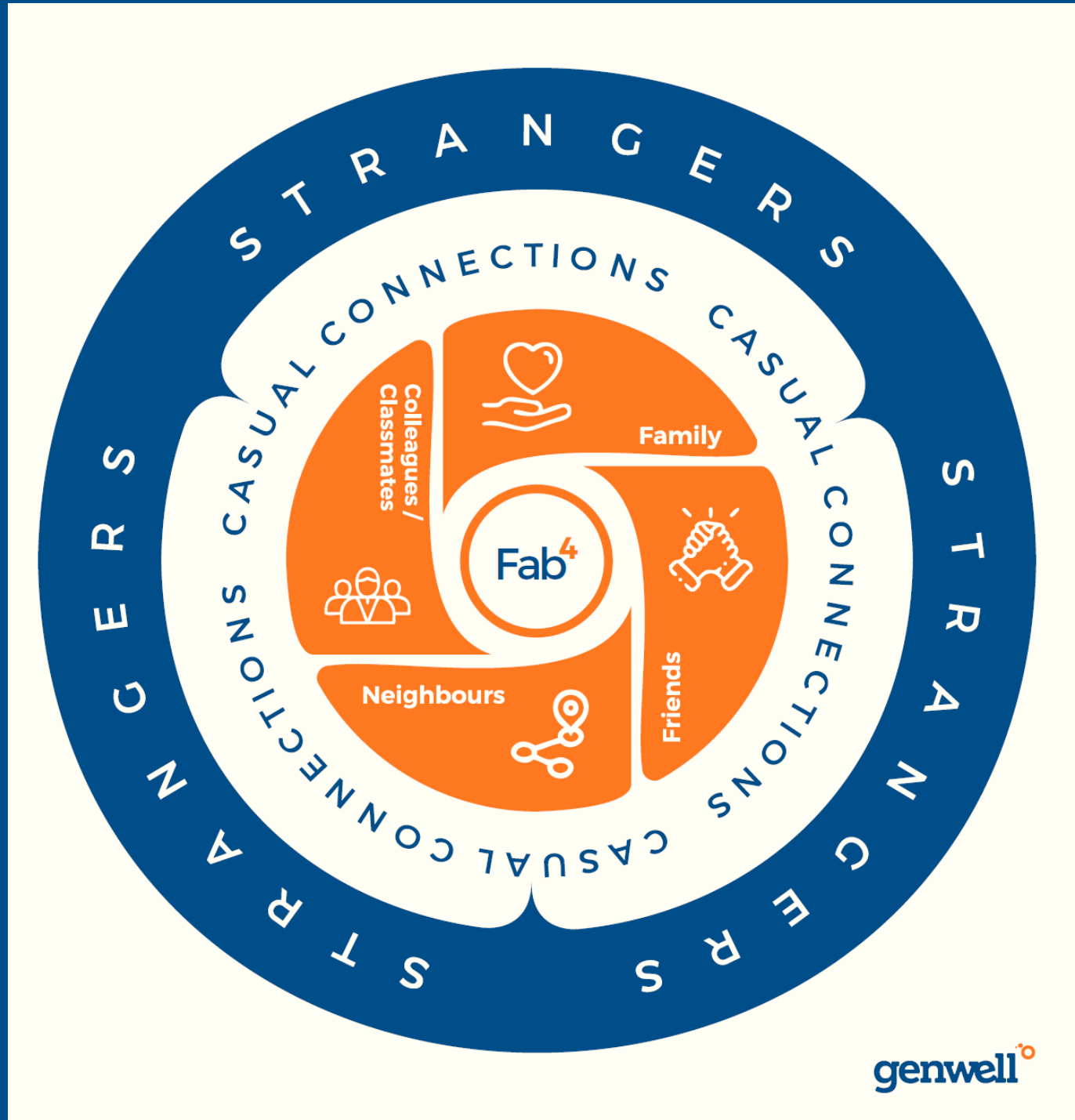
Community actions:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Idea box:

- Schedule time to outreach
- Recurring connections
- Daily check-ins
- Weekly coffee
- Weekly meeting
- Gratitude circle
- Birthdays and anniversaries
- Monthly social activity
- Monthly learning/growing activity
- Sport activities

GENWELL CONNECTION COMPASS



WHO MAKES UP YOUR
SOCIAL CONNECTION
SUPPORT SYSTEM?

LET'S TAKE A MOMENT

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HOW CAN YOU BUILD A MORE CONNECTED EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY?

Personal actions:

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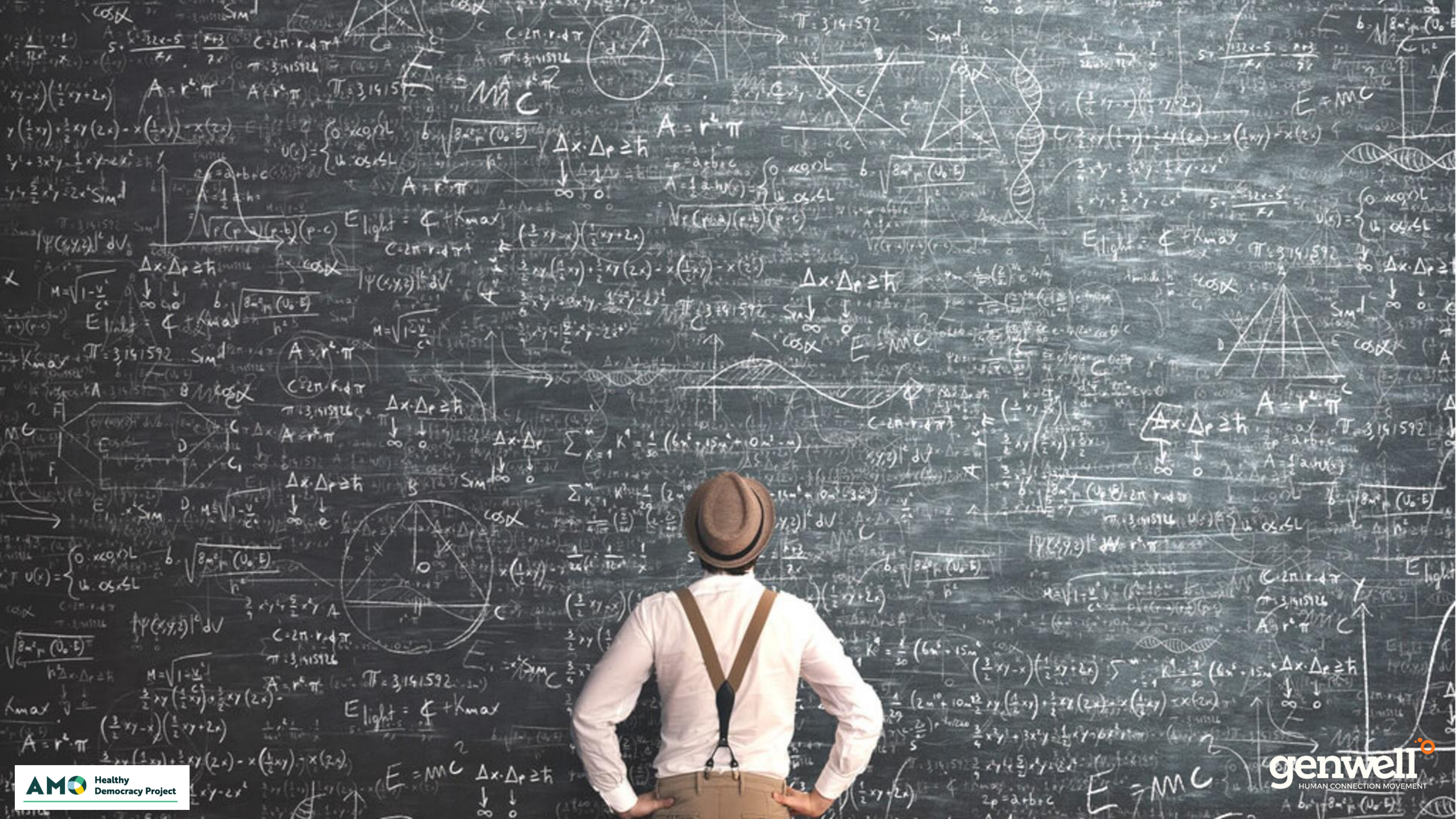
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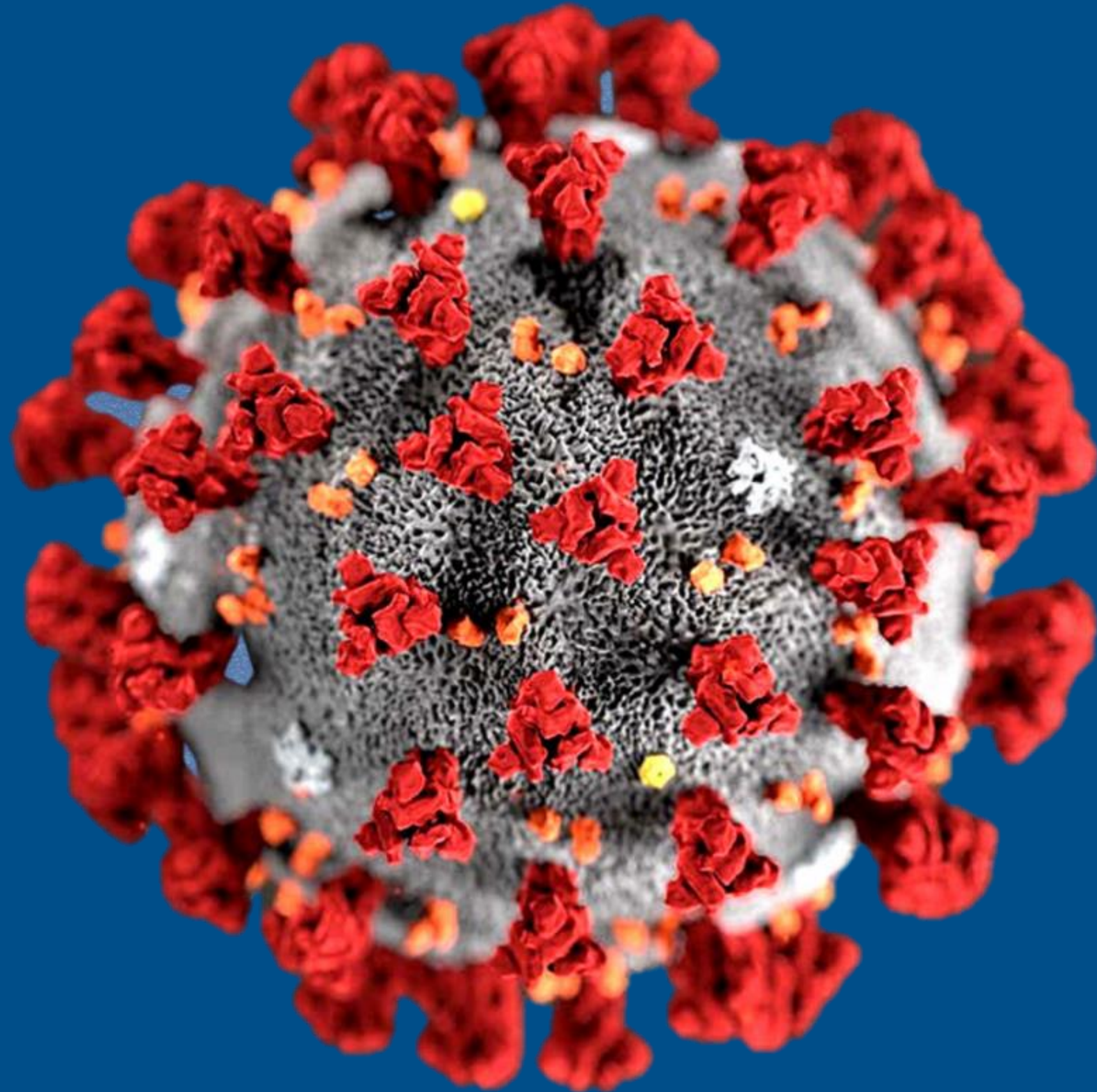
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WHY MIGHT I NOT BE **FEELING MYSELF?**

MANY OF US HAVE LIVED IN A
STRESSFUL STATE FOR MUCH OF
THE LAST 4 YEARS.



Our bodies and minds may still
be tired, and we are still
working to adapt to the new
world that we have awoken to.

AND MANY CONNECTIONS

ARE NOT BACK YET...

+60%

Over 60% of the people
we saw each day before
the pandemic were not
in our calendars

TECHNOLOGY IS ONLY
A SUPPLEMENT.

9 TO 1

Researchers have observed
nine important “cross-brain
links” between participants
during in-person
conversations.

TECH IS INCREASINGLY

DIFFICULT TO MANAGE.



7 hours per day on net
2 hours on social media
Touch our phones 2600 times

**WE ARE IN THIS
TOGETHER.**

WE NEED A NEW NORMAL.



We are out of the habit of human connection, and we need each other to help rebuild the social health that makes us happier and healthier

**SO, WHERE MIGHT I FIND MY
CONNECTIONS?**

CANADIAN SOCIAL
CONNECTION SURVEY

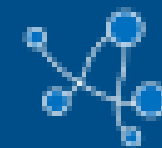


SONDAGE SUR LES
CONNEXIONS SOCIALES AU CANADA

The 2nd Annual Canadian Social Connection Survey

genwell^o
HUMAN CONNECTION MOVEMENT

SFU



CASCH
Canadian Alliance for
Social Connection and Health

THE POWER OF STRANGERS



**Those who greeted strangers
at least once per week
were nearly 3X
more likely to
be happy.**

THE POWER OF NEIGHBOURS



**Those who spent 1 to 4 hours
with their neighbours
in the past week were
3 times less likely
to be lonely.**

THE POWER OF FRIENDS



Those who spent 5 or more hours with friends in the past week were 1.62 times less likely to be lonely.

THE POWER OF FAMILY



**Those who spent between 1
and 4 hours per week
socializing with family
members were 1.47 times
more likely to
be happy.**

WHAT ABOUT WORKPLACE BENEFITS?



THE POWER OF COLLEAGUES



Those who spent 5 or more hours with coworkers in the past week were 1.73 times less likely to be lonely.

THE POWER OF COLLEAGUES



Those who spent at least 5 hours per week socializing with coworkers were 1.51 times more likely to be happy.

THE POWER OF COLLEAGUES



65% of respondents felt that others were either "definitely" or "probably" not aware of how lonely they felt.

**42% of Canadians
say they are burnt out.**

**And globally,
over 48% of employees
experienced burnt out
in the last year.**



**Amongst Canadians
who are most burnt out,
92% are lonely.**

**THIS MESSAGE IS MORE RELEVANT TO
YOUR PEOPLE, TEAMS, BUSINESS AND
SOCIETY THAN EVER BEFORE.**

LET'S TAKE A MOMENT...

WORKPLACE CONNECTIONS

HOW CAN YOU BUILD A MORE CONNECTED EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY?

genwell^o
HUMAN CONNECTION MOVEMENT

Personal actions:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Idea box:

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Team actions:

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3. _____

Community actions:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

AMO Healthy
Democracy Project

LET'S REVIEW...



AGENDA

- The Good.
- The Bad.
- Where we need to go from here.
- Why we need each other more than ever.
- How we can use social connection for community and business.
- We recognize connection everywhere and practiced how to connect.

3 KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

None of us knows what is going on in another life, but we can help everyone cope with their challenges and thrive with human connection

3 KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

None of us knows what is going on in another life, but we can help everyone cope with their challenges and thrive with human connection

2

Everyone in this room is a Superhero and each of us can use our new understanding of social health to change lives and the society in which we live.

3 KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 None of us knows what is going on in another life, but we can help people cope with their challenges through connection.
- 2 Everyone in this room is a Superhero and each of us can use our new understanding of social health to change lives and the society in which we live.
- 3 We are in this together and human connection is the foundation for happy, healthy homes, streets, workplaces, classrooms and communities.

5 TIPS FOR IMPROVED

SOCIAL HEALTH

- 1 Educate the people you lead and love about the importance of human connection for their well-being, business and life.
- 2 Make time to connect a priority in your workplace, home and community. Because people need it and so do you.
- 3 Make it regular and put it in the calendar. What is the right cadence for you and others?
- 4 Recognize the impact that you do have on others each day through human connection.
- 5 #GoFirst

LEVERAGE OUR DIGITAL

SOCIAL HEALTH TOOLKIT



- A list of additional suggestions on how you can build a culture of human connection.
- Resources to better understand the impact of social isolation, disconnection and loneliness on you and your people.
- A selection of ongoing opportunities to leverage GenWell for your organization.

FOLLOW US ON OUR SOCIAL PLATFORMS



@genwellproject



@genwellproject



@genwellproject



@genwellproject



@thegenwellproject

Let's connect on LinkedIn!
www.linkedin.com/in/petebombaci

SENIORS LONELINESS AWARENESS WEEK

JUNE 9-15, 2025



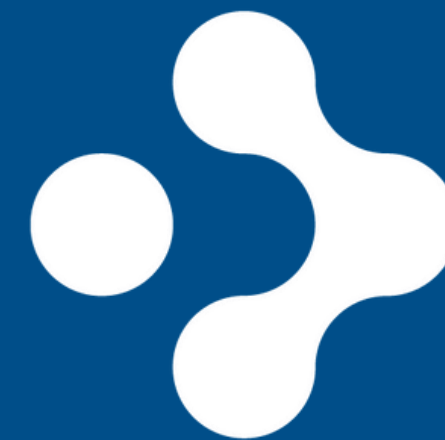
A week when we want to inspire all Canadians to be more conscious of the growing issue of social isolation, disconnection, and loneliness experienced by seniors.



The goal is to get all Canadians to think about taking one of the following actions to get seniors connected.



Every one of us has the opportunity to be part of the solution to seniors' loneliness by reaching out and building connections that make our seniors happier, healthier, and live longer.



**Seniors
Loneliness
Awareness
Week**



GENWELL IS

BRINGING COMMUNITY TOGETHER



Building Community Through Social Health

A New National Initiative by GenWell – Canada's Human Connection Movement



The Vision

GenWell is bringing Social Health Workshops to community gathering spaces in municipalities across Canada — a full-day, two-part workshop experience designed to unite local leaders and residents around a shared understanding of the importance of social health and empower everyone to play a role in fostering connection in their own lives and the lives of others. Equipping business, community and classroom leaders with the science, tools, and inspiration to build more connected, resilient communities.

The Cost of Inaction

Individuals



+29%
Risk of Heart Attack



+32%
Risk of Stroke



2x
Risk of Type 2 Diabetes



Increased
Anxiety and Depression



+50%
Risk of Early Onset Dementia



UP TO 50%
Risk of Early Death

Society



Increased
Incivility and Polarization



Reduced
Empathy and Compassion for Others



Increased
Demand and cost to health care system



Reduced
Individual and Institutional Trust



Increased
Risk of Hate, Racism and Aggression



Increased
Vulnerability to Misinformation

GenWell is Canada's Human Connection Movement.

Since 2016, we've been educating, empowering and catalyzing Canadians about human connection and our broader social health through national campaigns and education programs.



Workshops

Municipal Leaders Workshop

A practical and inspiring session for cross-sector leaders to explore:

- The science of social health and why it matters
- How disconnection affects their sectors and services
- Practical strategies and tools to create more connected communities
- New opportunities for collaboration across sectors

This session also creates a rare opportunity for inter-sector networking and collaboration, often missed due to the pressures and pace of post-pandemic recovery.

Community Leaders Workshops

Municipal Leaders Workshop

An inclusive session open to all community members who recognize the need for greater connection in their lives, neighbourhoods, classrooms and workplaces — and want to be part of the solution.

Invitees may include:

- Libraries
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Rotary and Service Clubs
- Community Foundations
- Emergency Services (Police, Fire, Paramedics)
- Community & Social Service Organizations
- Volunteer Coordinators and Networks
- Newcomer Support Services
- Accessibility Advocates and Leaders
- Transit Commissions
- Business Leaders (Chambers of Commerce, BIAs, Pharmacists)
- Senior Centres and Caregiver Organizations
- Youth Sector Leaders (Schools, Youth Groups)
- Healthcare Leaders (Hospitals, Mental Health, Family Medicine)
- Cultural institutions, Zoos, and other community gathering places
- University and College Administration



**WE NEED EACH OTHER
MORE THAN EVER**



#INTHISTOGETHER



**THE BEST MEDICINE FOR
PEOPLE... IS PEOPLE**



**ANYONE HEAR BACK
FROM SOMEONE?**



LET'S STAY CONNECTED



**YOUR
FEEDBACK
PLEASE**



**REGISTER
FOR OUR
NEWSLETTER**

THANK YOU





LET'S STAY CONNECTED



**YOUR
FEEDBACK
PLEASE**



**REGISTER
FOR OUR
NEWSLETTER**