

RVA Reassurance Roundtable



Social Isolation may occur when people become disconnected from family, friends and community. Any number of changes that are common to aging can trigger this issue.

Recent research has focused on the connection between social isolation and poor health. Studies have found that social isolation negatively impacts a person's health equal in consequence to smoking, high blood pressure and obesity. People who are socially isolated may have weaker immune systems and recover more slowly from illness than people with strong social connections. People who are socially isolated are also more likely to suffer from depression and anxiety.

Older adults who live alone are especially at risk for social isolation and reduced quality of life if there are co-existing conditions such as poverty, lack of transportation, illness, disease or disability.

Several organizations in the greater Richmond area are combating social isolation through volunteer telephone reassurance and friendly visiting programs, and other creative solutions.

Did You Know?

- *In our region, more than 1 in 4 older adults (ages 65 and over) live alone. That's 42,521 older adults who may be at risk for social isolation.*
- *Older adults are the fastest growing age segment of the U.S. population. The older adult population is projected to more than double over the next 20 years. For the first time in our region, the number of people ages 60 and older will outnumber school-age children.*

The RVA Reassurance Roundtable's mission is to improve social connectedness among those experiencing or at risk of social isolation.

Richmond Area Reassurance Program Providers:

Chesterfield County Telephone Reassurance Program: Participants will receive a phone call daily or weekly from a trained volunteer. The call is placed between 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, and between 12-2 p.m. on Tuesdays. This program serves residents in Chesterfield County. Contact: Debbie Preston - prestond@chesterfield.gov. 804-768-7878.

Commonwealth Catholic Charities Call Reassurance: Caring volunteers call seniors and persons with disabilities to chat with them and check on their well-being. Participants are called twice per week. This program serves the greater Richmond area. Contact: Diane Hargraves - diane.hargraves@cccovva.org. 804-545-5916.

Family Lifeline; Visiting Volunteers: Trained volunteers create connections, build relationships and provide companionship through weekly social visits. This program serves older adults and persons with disabilities in the greater Richmond area. During COVID-19 they have shifted to phone calls – resuming in person visits when it's safe to do so. Contact: Caitlin Reynolds - creynolds@familylifeline.org 804-402-6338.

Henrico County EngAGEing Conversations: EngAGEing Conversations is a telephone reassurance program serving Henrico County residents. Participants receive a friendly, social phone call from a volunteer up to 3 days a week. Participants may choose to receive calls on Monday morning or afternoon, Wednesday morning or afternoon and Thursday morning. Contact: Sara Morris, mor141@henrico.us 804-501-5065. .

JFS Richmond: Friendly Visitors make weekly social visits with older or home-bound adults. Telephone Reassurance volunteers call every weekday morning to check in, chat and make sure everything is okay. Contact: Teresa Baldwin, vol1@jfsrichmond.org. 804-282-5644, ext 244.

Senior Connections' TeleBridges: The TeleBridges program provides friendly, concerned, volunteers who will stay in touch with seniors two to five times per week. Each phone call provides reassurance- offering a listening ear and an encouraging word. This program serves the greater Richmond area. Contact: Shana Beverly - sbeverly@youraaa.org. 804-343-3024.

RVA Roundtable Member Organizations

Kathleen Klassen, Intake Coordinator, Meals on Wheels/ Feed More, Inc., 804-934-1945, kklassen@feedmore.org.

Roxann Wardally-Mboto, Case Manager, Meals on Wheels/ Feed More, Inc., 804-934-1937, rmboto@feedmore.org.

Dee Caras, Senior Connections, Caregiver Support Specialist, 804-672-4498, dcaras@youraaa.org.

Lee Owens, Senior Connections, CNCS Coordinator, 804-343-3050, lowens@youraaa.org.

Eve Flippen, M.S., Aging Life Care Coordinator | Senior Services and Continuum Integration, VCU Health. 804-348-0157, Eve.Flippen@vcuhealth.org.