

SASH NEWS

Support and Services at Home

February
2018

SASH is a caring partnership among Vermont [Nonprofit Housing Providers](#) | [Area Agencies on Aging](#) | [Home Health Providers](#) | [Mental Health Providers](#) | [Vermont Hospitals](#) & Primary Care Providers



SASH-sponsored gatherings like this, hosted at Town Meadow Senior Housing in Essex, are among the ways SASH helps combat loneliness and isolation among older adults -- particularly those who aren't typically "joiners."

Combating Isolation = Improving Health

Especially at this time of year, older Vermonters are more likely than other age groups to stay indoors and become isolated -- and suffer significant health consequences as a result. Research has attributed social isolation to conditions including depression, dementia and early death. In fact, the AARP Foundation equates the health consequences of prolonged isolation to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

SASH is well-positioned to address this issue head on, since it's based in housing communities throughout Vermont, right where people live. This makes it easy for participants to join in SASH-sponsored events and helps SASH coordinators get to know each person's challenges and needs. Moreover:

- **SASH wellness nurses screen each participant** for loneliness and isolation using two different measures.
- For participants who enjoy group activities (which research shows to be more effective than one-on-one interventions) there's no shortage of SASH programs and activities to join. **One new initiative at Bennington SASH sites is a program specifically targeting social isolation and loneliness called "Call Me Friend."**
- For participants who prefer to keep to themselves, **SASH is an ever-present companion** that checks in on them regularly.
- A number of **SASH partners have strong initiatives of their own to counter isolation**, such as the community meals and volunteer-companion programs run by Vermont's [area agencies on aging](#).



- AARP notes that **poor physical and mental health and poorly designed communities are contributing factors** to isolation among older adults -- all of which SASH addresses.

These are just some of the ways the [statewide network of SASH partners](#) in affordable housing, home health, agencies on aging, developmental/mental health/addiction services, and community and primary care -- is helping Vermonters get and stay healthy, live longer at home, and save Medicare costs.

Resources on the Dangers of Social Isolation -- and Cures!

Here are some resources about the health consequences of loneliness and isolation -- and how SASH is helping to nip the problem in the bud.

- SASH Fact Sheet: "[Combating Social Isolation & Loneliness](#)"
- January 2018 report from The Commonwealth Fund: "[Sick & Alone: High-Need, Socially Isolated Adults Have More Problems but Less Support](#)," which notes that three out of four high-need, socially isolated adults have mental-health problems and that 40 percent of them earn less than \$15,000 a year.
- Research manuscript published in the October 2010 Annals of Behavioral Medicine and on the National Institutes of Health website: "[Loneliness Matters: A Theoretical and Empirical Review of Consequences and Mechanisms](#)"
- The AARP Foundation's website devoted to the health impacts of isolation among older adults: "[Connect 2 Affected](#)"
- A November 2017 qualitative study of older adults in England, which among other things found that elders felt "primary care practitioners lack understanding of non-physical problems and that a good relationship is necessary to discuss sensitive issues like loneliness": "[What do older people experiencing loneliness think about primary care or community-based interventions to reduce loneliness?](#)"
- A review of 32 studies on interventions to combat loneliness among older adults, which indicated better outcomes for group-based participatory interventions than non-participatory interventions -- and also better outcomes for group interventions that did not explicitly target isolated/lonely older people (80%) vs. those that did (58%): "[Interventions targeting social isolation in older people: a systematic review](#)"
- A far-reaching initiative in the United Kingdom called the [Campaign to End Loneliness](#) (Connections in Older Age), which offers a number of resources, including a compilation of case studies in "[Promising Approaches to Reducing Loneliness in Later Life](#)," and for caregivers, "[Measuring Your Impact on Loneliness in Later Life](#)," which among other things explores the tools for measuring loneliness and offers one of its own.



Professional Development Opportunities

Click on the [SASH Forum Calendar](#) for details about these and other opportunities.

- February 16 - **CARE: A Documentary Film** (NHPBS, The Endowment for Health and the Tri-State Learning Collaborative on Aging), online
- February 20 - **New England's Fall Prevention Coalitions - A Panel Discussion**, webinar
- February 27 - **Parkinson's Disease Psychosis: Hallucinations, Delusions and Paranoia** (ASA), webinar
- March 6 - **Culinary Medicine: Mediterranean Diet in Clinical Medicine** (UVM Integrative

Health), Burlington

- March 7 - **Holistic Aging: Mind, Body and Soul** (ASA & Home Instead Senior Care), webinar
- March 14 - **Stepping Forward Together - The Conversation Continues** (Vermont Care Partners), Burlington
- March 22, 23, 29 & 30 - **Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) Leader training** (UVM Health Network), Bennington
- March 26 - **2018 Gerontology Symposium: *Caregiving for Persons Living with Dementia: Families and Professionals Working Together*** (UVM Center on Aging), Burlington
- April 5, 6, 12 & 13 - **Diabetes Self-Management Program (DSMP) Leader training** (UVM Health Network), Waterbury
- April 7 - **Integrative Pain Management Conference: National Experts, Local Focus** (UVM Integrative Health), Burlington
- April 11 - **13th Annual Vermont Geriatrics Conference** (VT Area Health Education Centers Network), Colchester
- April 11 - **FreshStart Leader training** (UVM Health Network), Rutland
- April 16-20 - **WRAP Facilitator Training** (Copeland Center for Wellness and Recovery), Waterbury
- April 21&22 - **NAMI Provider Program Teacher Training**, Rutland

SASH Online Resources

SASH Website: For the most up-to-date **contact list** and referral forms, visit sashVT.org.

SASH Forum: For current **training information** as well as staff tools and resources, visit the [Forum](#) on the SASH website.

SASH Job Opportunities: Learn about [available positions](#) with SASH organizations statewide.



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