

preventing loneliness and social isolation for older people



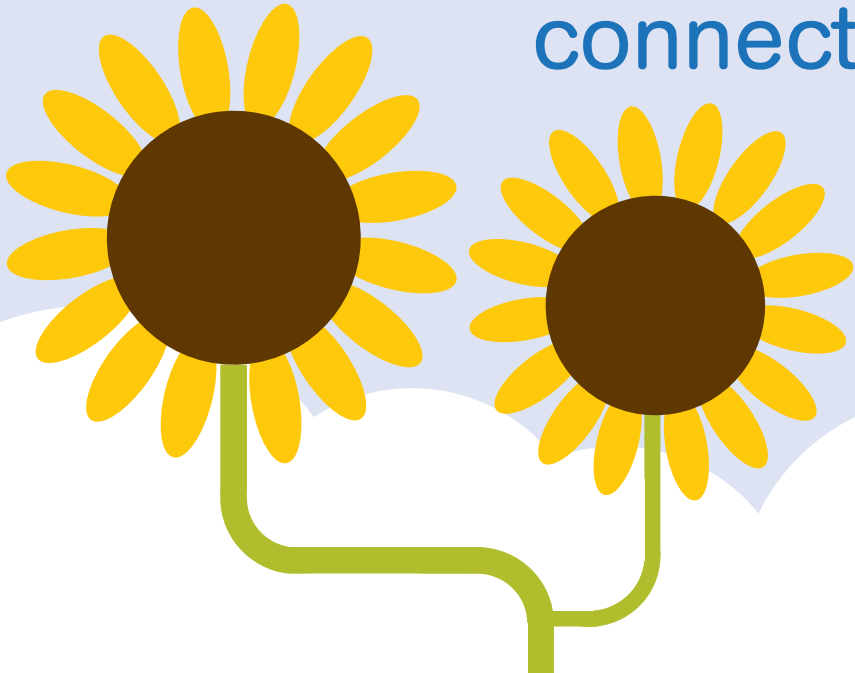
Many older people in Scotland feel lonely

Social isolation and loneliness are associated with poorer health and well-being.

A preventative approach looks for ways to maintain and build social and community connections for older people.

These cards are reminders to think about ways you can work with people you support to help them keep connected.

keeping
connected



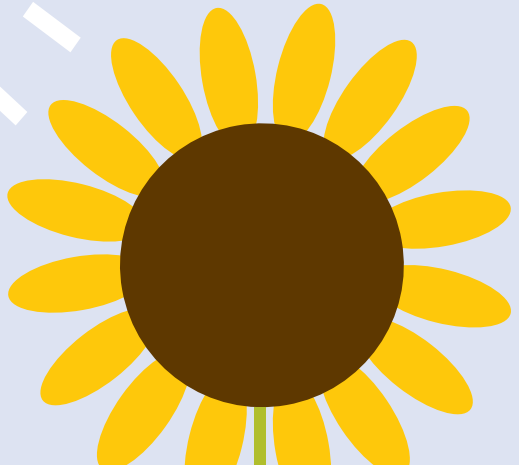
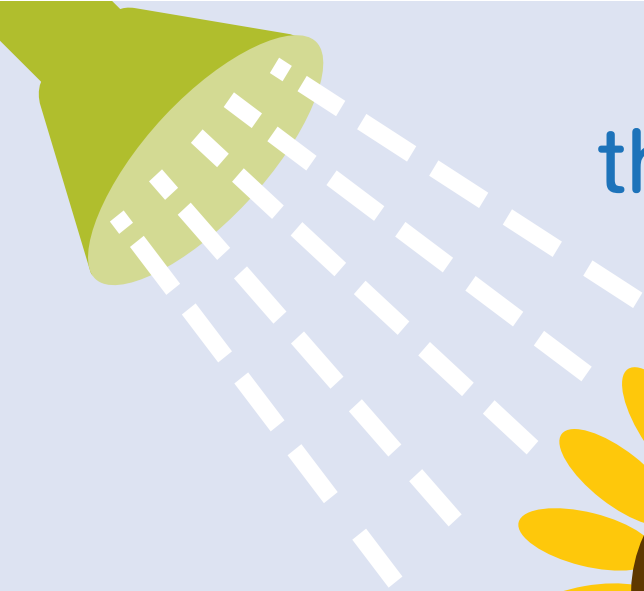


Think about an older person you support:
**Have they lost or are they losing
contact with friends, family
or a social group?**

Changes to health or family circumstances can affect an older person's social connections and building new relationships can be difficult.

- * Talk about existing connections that are important to the person and how these can be strengthened
- * Discuss alternative ways to keep in touch (e.g. telephone or skype)
- * Think about ways to overcome any barriers to spending time with others (e.g. transport, finance or confidence)

having
things to do





Think about an older person you support:
What are their interests or hobbies (old and new)?

Being involved in groups with a shared interest is enjoyable and satisfying. This also provides an opportunity for older people to get together and make new friends.

- * Ask about any activities they would like to be doing now
- * Consider ways of supporting them to do what they are interested in
- * Find out if they have an old interest or hobby that could be rekindled

recognising challenges



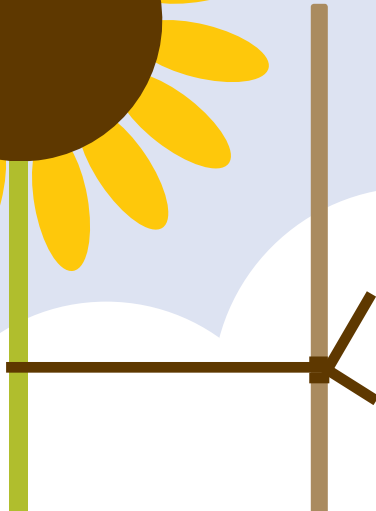
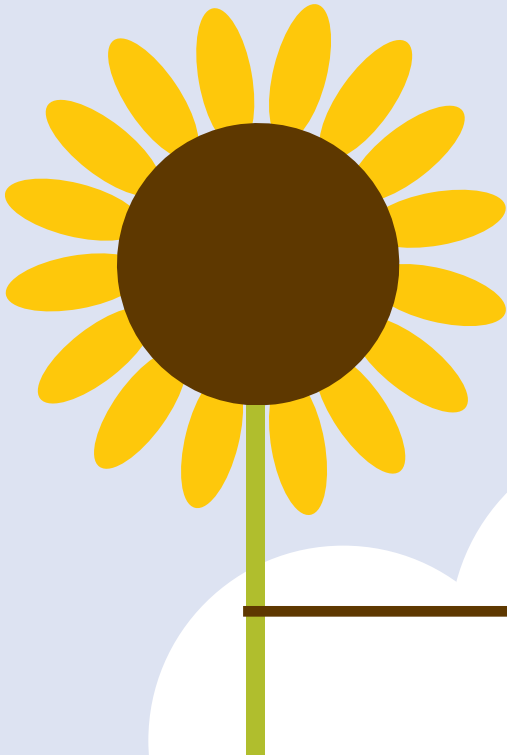


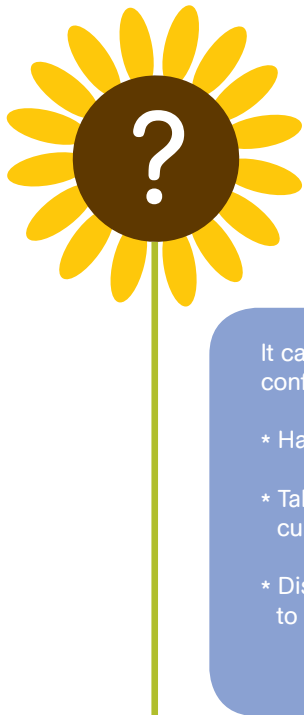
Think about an older person you support:
Are they losing hearing or eyesight, mobility, strength or dexterity?

Loss of strength or ability may mean that people can't get to places or do things they used to enjoy. They may be less able to communicate in social situations.

- * Discuss how they feel about any changes in capability
- * Find out how this is affecting them (e.g. are they still able to drive)
- * Ask them what they think might help and how you can make things better together

building
confidence



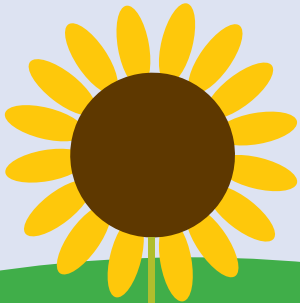


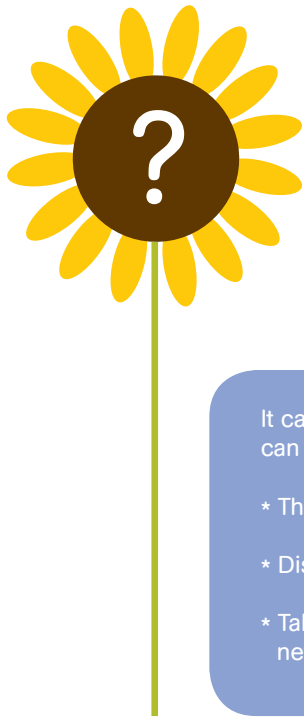
Think about an older person you support:
Do they appear to have lost confidence?

It can be hard to build and maintain social relationships without confidence.

- * Have a conversation about past achievements in their life
- * Talk about personal strengths that could help them cope with current challenges
- * Discuss supports that might help, including what they can offer to others

adapting to
change



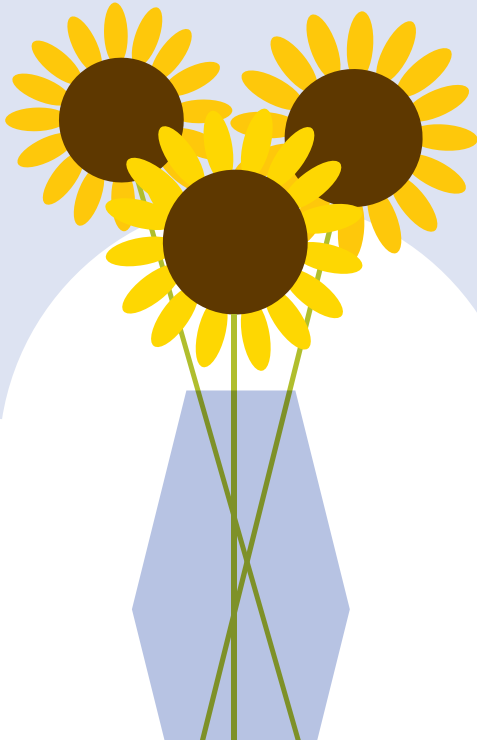


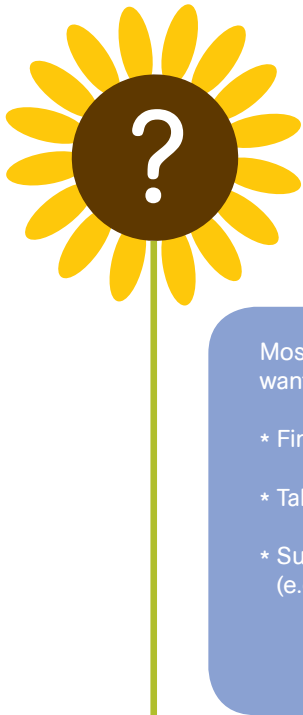
Think about an older person you support:
Are their living arrangements changing (e.g. downsizing or moving to residential care or supported accommodation)

It can be very isolating to leave a familiar environment and people can feel lonely despite being surrounded by others.

- * Think about how you can support them to plan for their move
- * Discuss their wants and needs for their new home
- * Talk about ways they can maintain existing friendships and build new ones

being
valued
and
needed



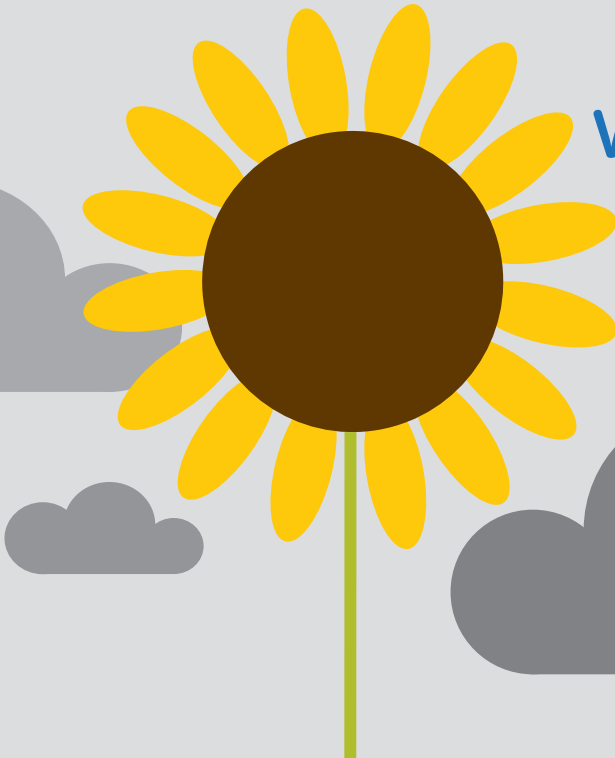


Think about an older person you support:
**Would they like to do something
to benefit others?**

Most people like to feel needed and some older people may not want to accept help but may be willing to offer help to others.

- * Find out about their skills, knowledge and personal interests
- * Talk about the value of those skills to others in the community
- * Suggest ways they can share their skills and meet new people (e.g. time banking, telephone support networks and local groups)

coping with life events





Think about an older person you support:
Have they lost someone close to them or is there a chance this may happen in the near future?

Bereavement, especially loss of a life partner, increases the risk of loneliness and isolation. Accepting support from friends and family can be important in helping people cope.

- * Listen to how they are feeling and think about what they may need to help them stay connected
- * Think about planning for the future when the course of events can be predicted
- * Encourage them to accept offers of support from friends and family

being open to
different perspectives



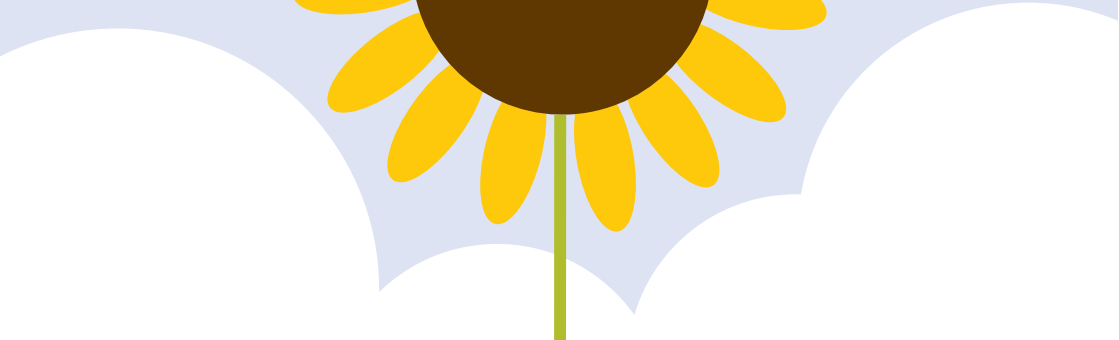
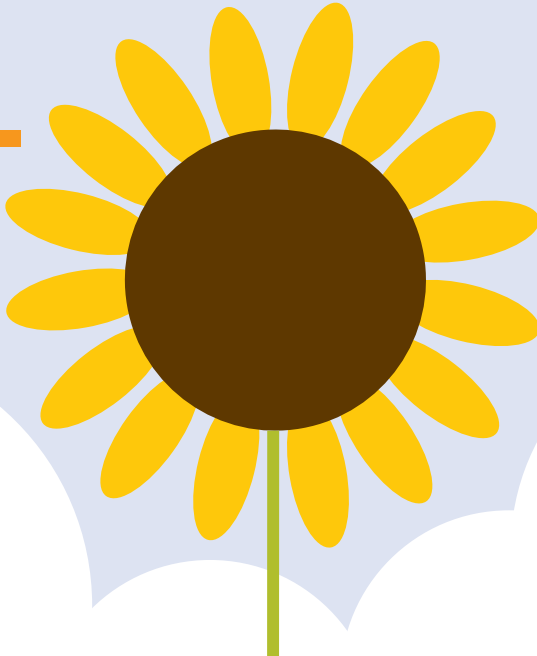
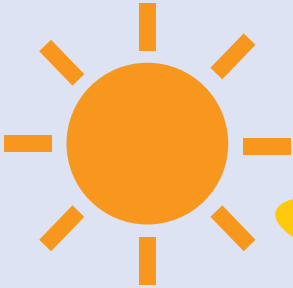


Think about an older person you support:
**How does their perception
differ from yours?**

Activities that reflect the views of older people themselves, rather than service providers, are more effective in preventing social isolation.

- * Listen to what the older person and their family want
- * Try to be open to different ways of thinking about things
- * Discuss and build ideas together

working collaboratively





Think about an older person you support:
Could a colleague, another organisation or group provide some knowledge or support?

Collaborative working and sharing of information and resources are essential for achieving positive outcomes.

- * Explore the resources available from other organisations
- * Talk to older people about services and community resources that could provide support
- * Develop networks to share knowledge and ideas

trying something new





Think about an older person you support:
Do you feel able to try new approaches?

It can be challenging to implement changes to established ways of working.

- * Think about different ways to gather and present evidence that can make the case for change
- * Document your successes
- * Initiate discussion within your team about new ways of working

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Design by Andy Archer, IRISS.

With thanks to the Master of Design for Services students at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, University of Dundee, for their contribution.

Produced as part of Plan P - an IRISS project about building connections and preventing social isolation and loneliness for older people.

July 2014

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The Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (IRISS)
is a charitable company limited by guarantee.

Registered in Scotland: No 313740.

Scottish Charity No: SC037882.

Registered Office:

Brunswick House, 51 Wilson Street, Glasgow G1 1UZ

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