

**Mon
Ami**



**COUNCIL ON AGING
OF CENTRAL OREGON**

**Measuring the impact of loneliness and
isolation interventions**

Caring Connections:

Research Overview



Agenda

- 1 Caring Connections: An Overview
- 2 Selecting the UCLA Loneliness Scale Tool
- 3 How Caring Connections Works
- 4 Data and Fundraising
- 5 Choosing a Research Partner

Quick Summary

- The Council on Aging of Central Oregon was founded in 1974 under the Older Americans Act (OAA) to respond to the needs of Americans 60+ in all local communities across the US
- We provide core Older Americans Act programs and services, the backbone of the nation's non-Medicaid home and community-based services for older adults
- Our main offices are in Bend, Oregon; and we support Deschutes, Crook, Jefferson and N. Klamath counties
- > \$3.0M per annum invested into the communities we serve
- 28 employees and 450+of volunteers across all our service territories

Caring Connections: An Overview

Caring Connections Snapshot

1. In order to understand and reduce the impacts of social isolation & loneliness in seniors in Central Oregon we conducted a volunteer calling program pilot with \$75k in funding from the Cares Act.
2. We partnered with two organizations: Mon Ami and the Oregon Health and Sciences University (OHSU) Clinical & Translational Research Institute's Community Research Hub in Central Oregon.
3. 38 older adults enrolled in the pilot, 22 older adults were assessed after the first 5 months of the pilot (Nov'20 - March '21).

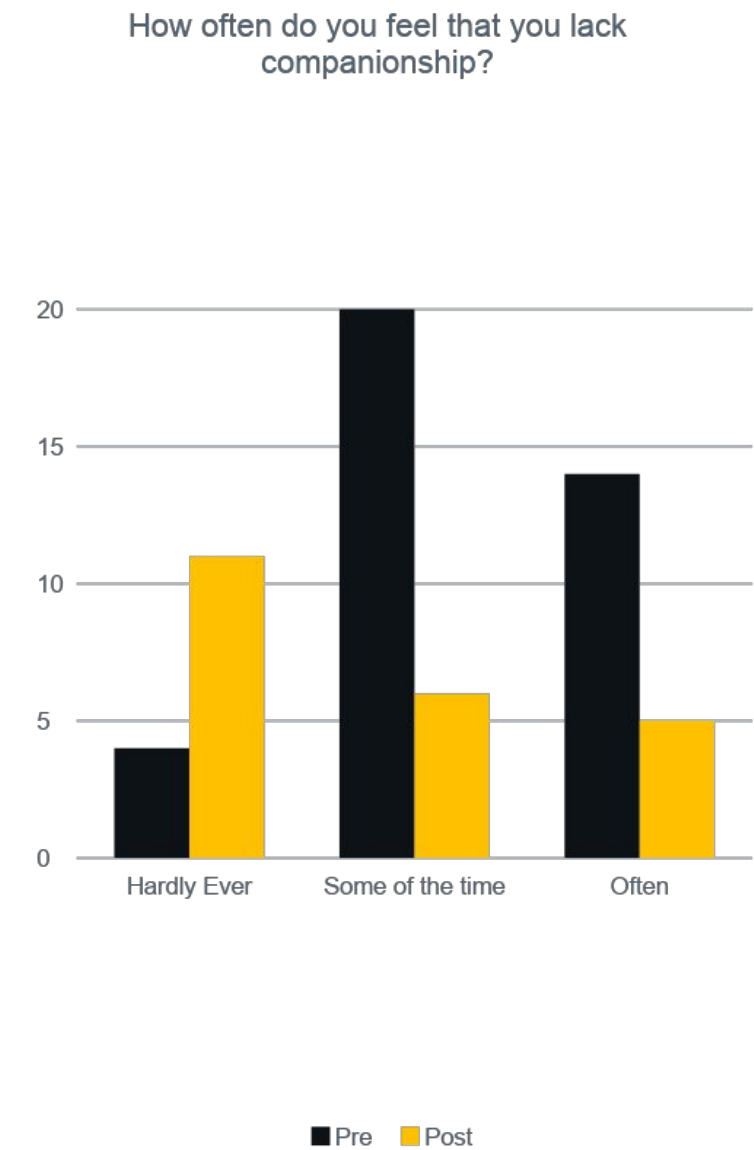
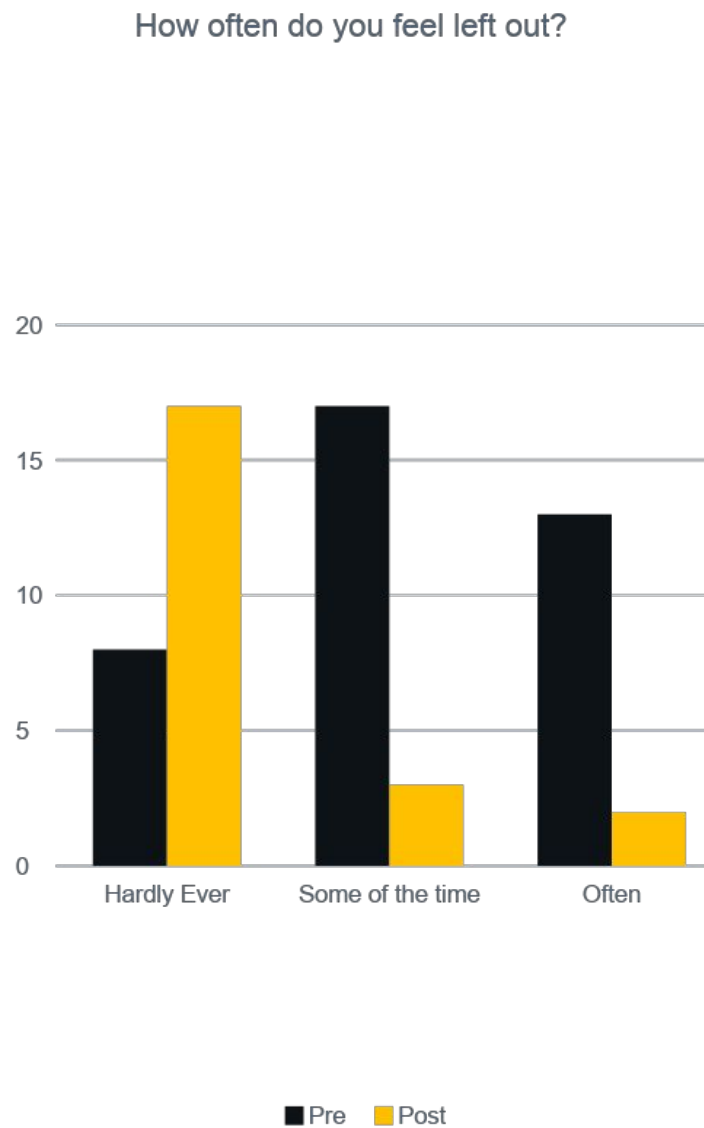
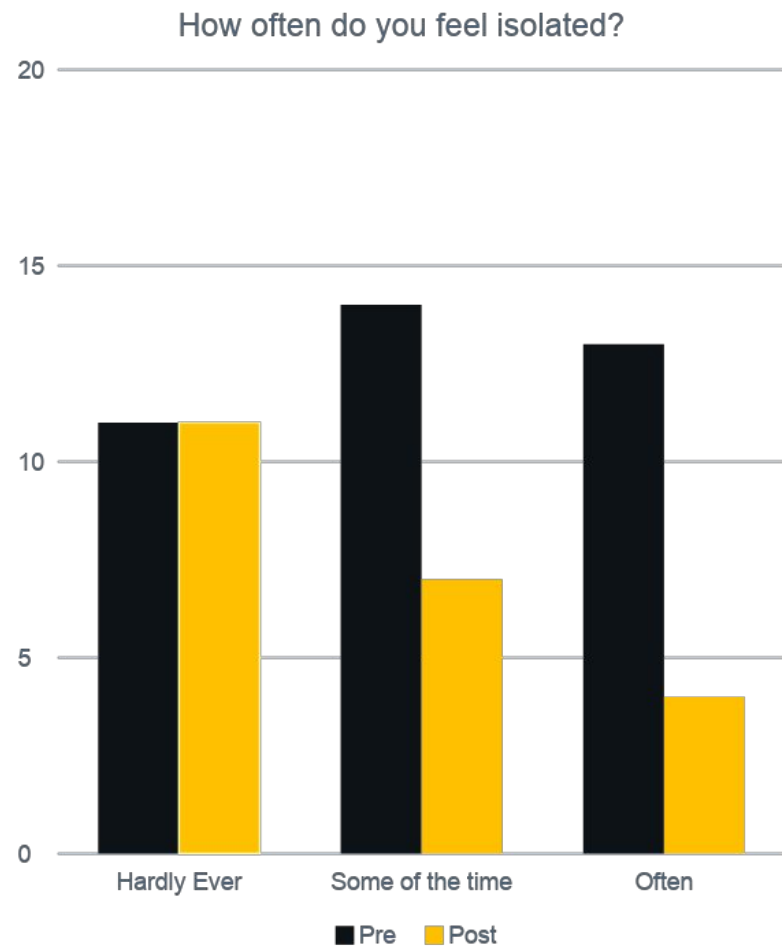


Caring Connections Snapshot

4. During the pilot period 447 calls were completed totaling 10,765 minutes; average call time per participant was 23 minutes.
5. By the end of the pilot period, more older adults experienced reduced feelings of isolation, feelings of being left out and, overall, they had experienced a new form of companionship with another individual.

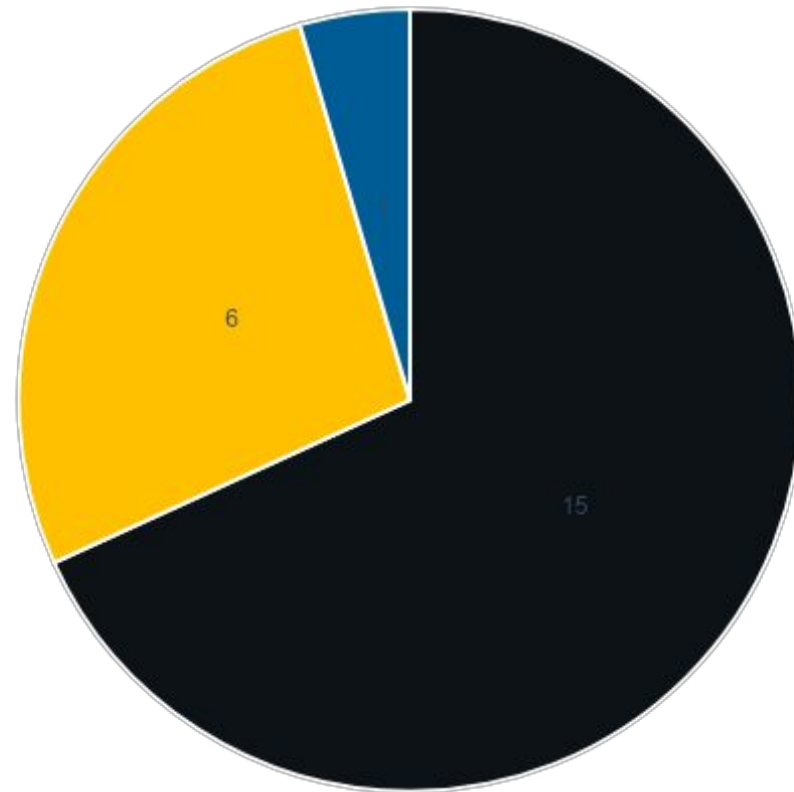


Pilot Results After 5 Months on the Program



Did older adults have reduced feelings of loneliness at the end of the program?

Understanding change between pre/post surveys



■ Positive ■ Neutral ■ Negative

1. 15 older adults had a *positive* result, meaning their scores *decreased* over time.
2. 6 older adults had a *neutral* result, meaning their score didn't change over time.
3. 1 older adult had a *negative* result, meaning their score worsened, or increased over time.

Volunteer Attrition During Pilot Period

None!



Caring Connections: Post Pilot

1. We received an additional \$132k from the Central Oregon Health Council to rollout Caring Connections from a pilot to a full program. Additionally the funding will allow us to expand into two rural counties over the next two years.
2. Funding includes continuing our partnerships with Mon Ami and with OSHU Clinical & Translational Research Institute's Community Research Hub.
3. As of November 19, 2021 we have 40 clients and 42 volunteers ; added tracking whether visits were in person or over the phone and if we referred clients to additional services.



Selecting the UCLA Loneliness Scale Tool

Loneliness and Isolation Tools

1. We reviewed four survey tools with the help of our OHSU partners.
2. There are pro's and con's to each survey tool.
3. We selected the UCLA Loneliness Scale tool as it had a simple scoring system and had plenty of data to back up its validity in measuring loneliness.

The Campaign to End Loneliness Measurement Tool Scale 1

Length: 3 Questions

Language: Positive wording

Initially developed for: Service providers

Does it mention loneliness? No

This scale is for you if: you want a short and sensitively-worded tool that is easy to use.

De Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scale Scale 2

Length: 6 Questions

Language: Mixes positive and negative wording

Initially developed for: Researchers

Does it mention loneliness? No

This scale is for you if: you want an academically rigorous tool that distinguishes between different causes of loneliness.

The UCLA Loneliness Scale Scale 3

Length: 3 Questions

Language: Negative wording

Initially developed for: Service providers

Does it mention loneliness? No

This scale is for you if: you want a short and academically rigorous tool, with a simple scoring system.

Single-Item 'Scales' Scale 4

Length: 1 Question

Language: Negative wording

Initially developed for: Researchers

Does it mention loneliness? Yes

This scale is for you if: you want to get to the heart of the issue with just one question.

UCLA Loneliness Scale

1. The three questions

- How often do you feel that you lack companionship?
- How often do you feel left out?
- How often do you feel isolated from others?

2. Scoring

Response	Score
Hardly ever	1
Some of the time	2
Often	3

The scores for each individual question can be added together to give you a possible range of scores from 3 to 9. Researchers in the past have grouped people who score 3 – 5 as “not lonely” and people with the score 6 – 9 as “lonely”.¹⁹



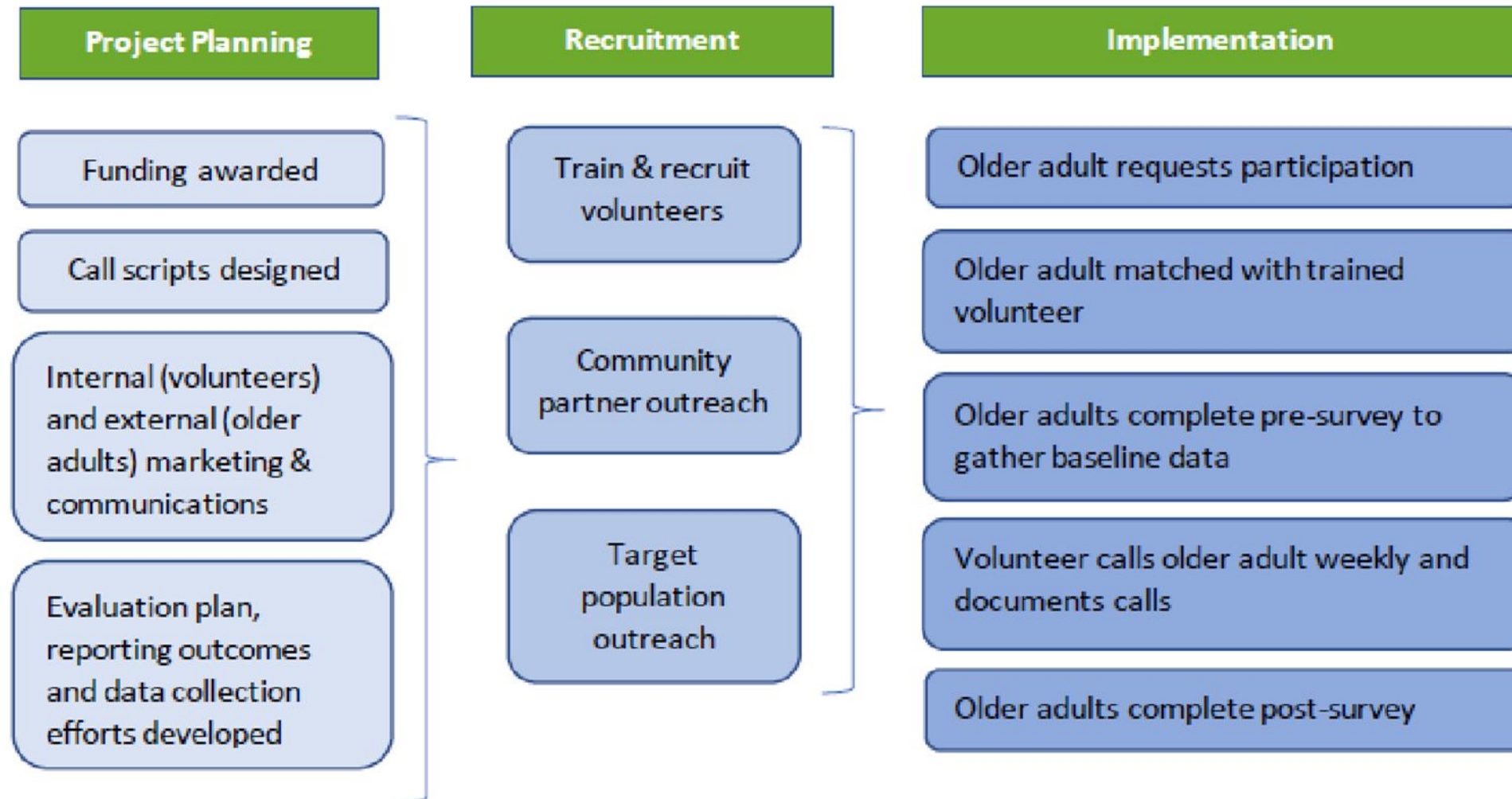
Review of Phone Based Calling Programs

1. We looked at research on successful phone based programs to reduce isolation and loneliness as we were setting up our pilot.
2. Characteristic of successful phone programs include regular, scheduled calls with the same person, creating a conversation environment that is “out-of-reach” of participant’s social circle and it is semi-structured and/or informal conversation.
3. The information helped us feel confident that phone only program could work, since we were in the early part of COVID 19 lockdowns.



How Caring Connections Works

Project Plan: Three Phases



Implementation Steps

Step 1: Find Seniors and Volunteers

Step 2: Match Seniors with Volunteers

Step 3: Program Manager Asks Pre-Survey Questions to all seniors

Step 4: Volunteers call seniors weekly

Step 5: Program Manager Asks Post-Survey Questions to all seniors

Step 6: Analyze the data and report findings

Step 7: At each assessment point (every 6 months) ask Post-Survey questions to seniors to gather longitudinal data on program effectiveness

The Data We Collect

PRE- (BASELINE) SURVEY (Need for every senior)

1. How often do you feel that you lack companionship?
2. How often do you feel left out?
3. How often do you feel isolated from others?
4. What are you hoping to get out of participating in the Caring Connections program? (open ended)

POST- (REASSESSMENT) SURVEY (Need for every Senior)

1. How often do you feel that you lack companionship?
2. How often do you feel left out?
3. How often do you feel isolated from others?
4. Did the Caring Connections program meet your expectations? (Yes, No, Unsure)
5. Please explain how it did or did not meet your expectations.
6. How did participating impact your feelings of loneliness/social isolation? (open ended)
7. Would you like to stay in this program? (Yes, No, Unsure)

The Data We Collect

OTHER DATA

1. Total number of seniors invited to participate in program, include locations for outreach and how you conducted outreach (fliers, Facebook, newspaper, etc.)
2. Total number of seniors enrolled in program to date
3. Total number of seniors who dropped the program and the reasons why they dropped
4. Total number of contacts made over the course of the program and length of each call (answer for each senior)
5. Senior to volunteer reassignment rate and reasons for reassignment

Data and Fundraising

How data helps with fundraising

1. Demand keeps growing for nonprofits to provide proof that what they are doing accomplishes something.
2. The Types of Data That Are Most Important
 - **Inputs:** The resources the organization commits to a program
 - **Outputs:** The immediate tangible results of the activity or program. Outputs are the most straightforward data to collect. They are apparent and countable.
 - **Outcomes:** The changes you plan to bring about in the short to medium-term
 - This is where we are today with our program.
 - **Impact:** The measurable long-term effect your program seeks to bring about
 - We are now embarking on 2 more years of assessments to see longer term effects of participating in the program

Choosing a Research Partner

Working With A Research Group/Consultant

1. Set your assessment goals
2. Identify potential consultants – LinkedIn? Craigslist?
3. Bid your project
4. Evaluate and score your options
5. Create a contract
6. Moving forward

Client Quotes

Client Quotes

“I get quite a bit out of it, and he has been a good fit. When I hang up the phone, I feel good about our conversations. It has helped a lot.”

“It's nice because I can't get out much, so it keeps me busy. It's nice to talk to someone other than neighbors.”

“Well she helped me get my COVID shot and she helped me with my dogs when they passed away and it's just nice to talk to someone.”

“It made me feel like I was more part of the world, not just in my little house.”

Thank You



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