



WELCOME!

Connected *Fox Valley*

Meeting #3

Aug. 21, 2025

First Five Fox Valley Building

(Check out this amazing community space!)





Our agenda today:

1:00 PM – Welcome & Recap

1:10 PM – Spotlight Round: Share an Existing Program/Strategy or Dream for a New One

2:10 PM – Listening Sessions Updates

2:30 PM – Report Planning & Feedback

2:45 PM – Emerging Themes for Breakout Work Groups

2:55 PM – Next Steps & Closing



Summary of Key Barriers

- Lack of accessible, reliable, affordable transportation
- Housing instability
- Discrimination and identity-based barriers
 - Racism
 - LGBTQ+ discrimination
- Language and literacy barriers
- Safety and trust
- Digital and tech access
- Systems navigation and services gaps
- Stigma around mental health and help-seeking behaviors

Summary of Opportunities

- Housing as a catalyst for connection
- Neighborhood-level connection
- Volunteerism and peer support
- Youth and young adult supports
- Inclusive, shared and nontraditional spaces
- Events and programs to remove barriers

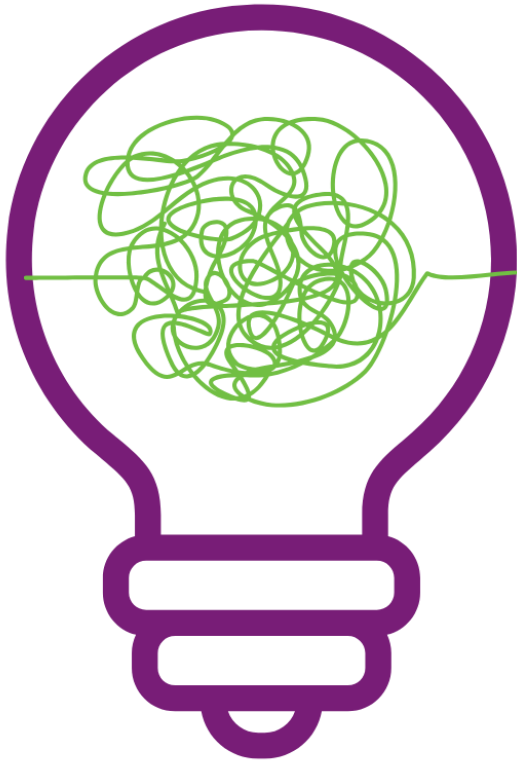
Spotlight Round!

Tell us, in 2 minutes...

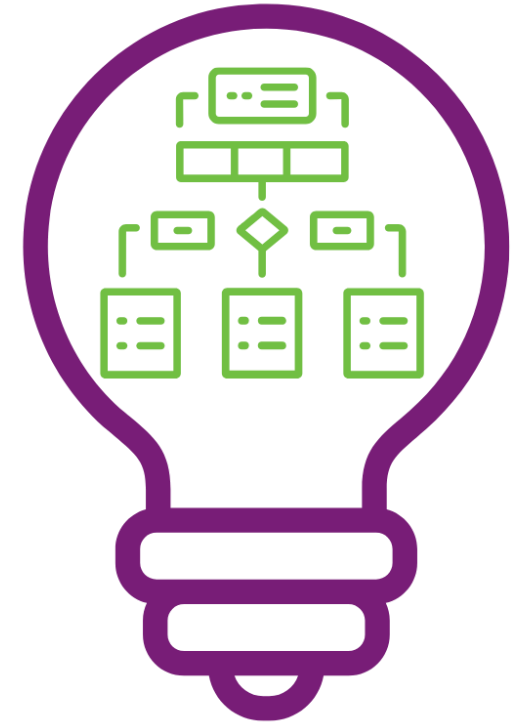


- Name and organization
- A program, service or initiative that you are involved with that
 - Is working, making an impact, or has strong potential for growing social connection
 - You feel the community should know about, and is worthy of expansion, investment, or sustainability.
- You may also “dream out loud” by sharing a new idea you’d love to see created or built - something you believe could improve social connectedness in our community.

So Many Possibilities!



How do we organize
and prioritize them?



Interactive Database of Social Connectedness Strategies

- Living inventory of local programs and initiatives
- Searchable by strategy type, sub-category, age group & demographics
- Helps identify gaps, overlaps, and opportunities
- Highlights promising strategies for investment and growth
- Includes summary, outcomes, lessons learned, resources

Social Engagement Innovations Hub



About

The Social Engagement Innovations Hub is a clearinghouse of social connection best practices and evidence-based interventions, programs, and services. The Innovations Hub is intended to provide practitioners, implementers, and researchers with information on social connection interventions, programs, and services to encourage replication. The Innovations Hub is a joint activity of Commit to Connect and [engAGED: The National Resource Center for Engaging Older Adults](#).

The Innovations Hub is searchable by a variety of filters and each summary contains important details to help support replication, including an overview of the example, role of partners involved, outcomes achieved, lessons learned, resources needed, and contact information. Read through our [Innovations Hub instructions](#) before getting started. If you have a social connection intervention, program, or service, consider [submitting](#) it to the Innovations Hub.

The screenshot displays the Social Engagement Innovations Hub interface. At the top, there is a search bar and navigation options: Filter, Sort, and a menu icon. Below the navigation bar, four strategy cards are shown, each with the following fields:

- Caring Together, Living Better**
 - Organization Name: AgeOptions
 - City, State: Oak Park, IL
 - Brief Description: Partnering with faith-based groups to offer social engagement activities for Black and Hispanic family caregivers.
 - Intervention Type: Intergenerational, Technology, Vol
 - Population Served: Older Adults, Caregivers
 - Geographic Population Served: Suburban, Urban
 - Organization Type: (empty)
- Friendly Phone Calling**
 - Organization Name: Decatur Catholic Charities – Faith in Act...
 - City, State: Decatur, IL
 - Brief Description: Older adults who are homebound receive phone calls from friendly volunteers.
 - Intervention Type: Intergenerational, Volunteerism, H
 - Population Served: Older Adults, Adults Living with Disab
 - Geographic Population Served: Rural, Urban, Suburban
 - Organization Type: (empty)
- COAST-IT (Connecting Older A...**
 - Organization Name: University of Colorado Anschutz Multid...
 - City, State: Denver, CO
 - Brief Description: Pairs college health professional students with older adults for weekly intergenerational social phone calls and mentorship.
 - Intervention Type: Health and Wellness, Intergeneration
 - Population Served: Older Adults
 - Geographic Population Served: Rural, Frontier, Suburban, Urban
 - Organization Type: (empty)
- Making Aging More Engaging**
 - Organization Name: SeniorAge
 - City, State: Springfield, MO
 - Brief Description: Interactive blog with online activities to help older adults stay connected.
 - Intervention Type: Arts and Creative Expression, Health a
 - Population Served: Older Adults, Adults Living with Disab
 - Geographic Population Served: Rural, Suburban
 - Organization Type: (empty)

At the bottom of the interface, there is an 'Airtable' logo and a 'Download CSV' button with a 'View larger version' link.

<https://committtoconnect.org/innovations-hub/>

Eight Ways Community Build Connection

Action Guide for Building Socially Connected Communities

Foundation for Social Connection

<https://action4connection.org/promising-strategies>

- **Work** – Helping workers connect beyond their organizations
- **Built Environment** – Using housing, transportation, and public spaces to foster connection
- **Civic Engagement** – Encouraging participation in community and civic life
- **Safety** – Promoting physical safety and feelings of security
- **Technology** – Expanding access to digital tools that connect people
- **Education** – Leveraging schools as hubs for skills and connection
- **Health** – Using healthcare and interventions to strengthen connection
- **Cultivating Skills** – Building individual and community skills for connection

Sub-Categories | Demographics | Identity Group

Sub-Categories

- Arts & Creative Expression
- Health & Wellness
- Intergenerational
- Lifelong Learning
- Policy
- Social Engagement
 - Active Community
 - Neighborhood Cohesion
 - One-on-One
 - Community of Identity
- Support
- Third Space - Fee
- Third Space - Free
- Volunteerism

Age Groups

- All
- Early Childhood (0 to 5)
- Childhood (6-12)
- Teens (13-19)
- Youth Adults
- Mid-Life
- Older Adults

Race/Ethnicity

- All
- BIPOC
- Black
- Hispanic
- Asian
- Native American

Identity Groups

- All
- LGBTQ+
- Grief & Loss
- Disability - Developmental
- Disability - Mental Health
- Disability - Physical Health
- Immigrants
- Marginalized Communities
- Parents/Caregivers
- Veterans
- Housing Insecurity
- Financial Insecurity

Possible Work Groups:

- Transportation
- Neighborhood Cohesion

Next steps...

- Next in-person meeting will be held in October. Date and location to be determined. Doodle Poll coming soon!
- We will reach out to you to PLAN LISTENING SESSIONS, and our one-one-one conversations in between now and our next meeting as we dig deeper and hone in on strategy recommendations

Project team will continue to:

- Develop web-based interactive strategy hub
- Create progress report for the community by year's end

Need a recap?

Visit www.newmentalhealthconnection.org

> Initiatives > Connected Fox Valley



The screenshot shows the website for 'The Connection N.E.W. MENTAL HEALTH'. The header includes a navigation bar with links: Home, About Us, Membership, Initiatives, Resources & Training, News & Events, and Contact Us. The main content area features the title 'Connected Fox Valley' in a large, stylized font. Below the title, a paragraph states: 'The Connection is excited to be launching a new initiative this year (2025) that will build a "roadmap" for our community on social connectedness. We are working to develop a set of recommendations of actionable strategies that foster social connectedness and belonging across the tri-county region of Calumet, Outagamie, and Winnebago counties.' To the right of this text is a video player showing a news segment with a man in a military uniform speaking at a podium. Below the paragraph, there are two sections: 'Project Summary' and 'Advisory Group'. The 'Project Summary' section describes the initiative's goal to bring together a diverse group of community leaders to guide the work, including those who work with communities disproportionately affected by disconnection and isolation. The 'Advisory Group' section lists the members: ADRC (Aging & Disability Resource Center) of Calumet County, Appleton Pentecostal Assembly, Appleton Health Department, Chilton Public Library, Diverse & Resilient - Appleton, ESTHER, First Five Fox Valley, Fox Valley Literacy Coalition, Heads Up, LEAVEN Fox Cities, Long Chen Senior Center, Menasha Joint School District, Multicultural Coalition, NAMI Fox Valley, NEW Hmong Professionals, and Oshkosh Community YMCA.

The Connection
N.E.W. MENTAL HEALTH

Home About Us Membership Initiatives Resources & Training News & Events Contact Us

Connected Fox Valley

The Connection is excited to be launching a new initiative this year (2025) that will build a "roadmap" for our community on social connectedness. We are working to develop a set of recommendations of actionable strategies that foster social connectedness and belonging across the tri-county region of Calumet, Outagamie, and Winnebago counties.

Project Summary

We are bringing together a diverse group of community leaders to guide this work, including those who work with communities disproportionately affected by disconnection and isolation (i.e. folks from LGBTQ+ and BIPOC communities, immigrants, older persons, people with disabilities, among others). We know that social connectedness looks different for different communities. This initiative will work to identify and recommend a range of best-practice and promising strategies – a play book of "what works" – for our many communities in Northeastern Wisconsin. The culmination of this work will be a detailed report, outlining recommended actions to improve social connectedness at individual, community, and systemic levels. The report will be shared widely with local nonprofits, health systems, schools, funders, and other stakeholders, providing a guide for future projects and sustaining/expanding existing efforts. We plan to hold a dissemination event in early 2026 to present the findings and mobilize local leaders to act on the recommendations.

Advisory Group

We have assembled a diverse advisory group of community representatives who will serve as thought leaders to:

- Review and map social connectedness projects, programs, and initiatives currently taking place in our community and explore what's working, where efforts can be aligned, and how we can build on

Participating organizations include:

- ADRC (Aging & Disability Resource Center) of Calumet County
- Appleton Pentecostal Assembly
- Appleton Health Department
- Chilton Public Library
- Diverse & Resilient - Appleton
- ESTHER
- First Five Fox Valley
- Fox Valley Literacy Coalition
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