






Community Aged Care	Mental Health Services	Lifestyle Home Services
Homelessness and Housing Support	Disability Services	Clergy and Congregational Care

Strong Lives Inclusive Communities 1800 225 474  
www.catholiccommunityservices.com.au




# RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES


Richard Kindness  
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

## Outline



- Introduction
- Enabling
- Volunteer program
- Background to project
- Method
- Case studies




# ENABLING our philosophy of care




## Enabling as a philosophy of care

### “Strong Lives Inclusive Communities”





## Volunteer Program

- Volunteers are active members of the Community who partner with us
- enhance our service to our clients.
- a great sense of mutual fulfilment

Community Services currently has over 600 volunteers and this is growing especially as we extend into the rural and regional areas.

Two streams for Volunteers

1. Long Term Roles/Relationships
2. Short term Goal Orientated Projects/Relationships






# Background to the project






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## Social Isolation

- Growing number of people living alone
- Ageing population will contribute to higher levels of people living alone
- 783,000 people aged over 65 yrs lived alone in 2006
- Over 900, 000 people over 75 yrs living alone by 2026
- Trends towards living alone




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## Social Isolation (Cont'd)

### State coroner reports in NSW

- 2007 – **283** decomposed or decomposing bodies
- 2006 – **299**




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## Social Isolation (Cont'd)

### MEDIA HEADLINES

- “lonely deaths” anonymous society blamed after an 86 year old woman was discovered 8 months after her death.
- “isolated and lonely. The unnoticed death of the elderly”
- “Lonely deaths of elderly prompt soul searching”




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## Changes Needed

- Reduce feeling of isolation and loneliness.
- Support opportunities for people to gain access to their community.
- Build friendship/support networks.
- Contribute to creating a positive community environment.
- Involve and enable community members (volunteers) to share their skills and strengths.



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## What is Social Rehabilitation?

### Model developed by Age Concern UK


“to complement health and social care services for older people by providing a structured input to help support the achievement of desired social roles and activities, and thereby improve the psychological as well as the social well being of service users”

### Piloted in 5 sites in England

“projects have been successful in helping many older people to address problems of confidence and motivation, as well as environmental, circumstantial and personal problems that have prevented them from participating a fully as possible in the life of their choosing”




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**Social Rehab Volunteer** 

Strategies for the social rehab volunteer may include but are not limited to...


- being an advocate
- a resource of knowledge of local services and facilities
- providing educational assistance
- building confidence to help the client acquire skills which are required to adapt to changing abilities and circumstances
- to help reacquire skills forgotten or lost through lack of confidence or practice.
- It is important to emphasise that the volunteer is "doing with rather than doing for" the client.

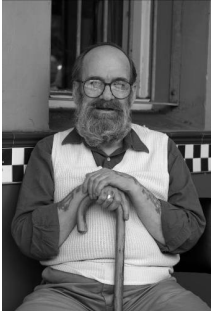
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**Method** 




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**Method: Participants** 



- 11 clients
- Client Directed Goal Planning

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**Method: Participants** 



- **Eligibility Criteria**
  - breakdown in relationships or routine
  - permanent changes in physical ability
  - loss of confidence due to experience of ill health/injury
  - bereavement
  - other circumstantial factors that inhibit social engagement

Clients will also need to be

- motivated to work on goals to improve social wellbeing
- able to identify goals that can be delivered in a short term program
- currently receiving services


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**Method: Participants** 




- **Exclusion Criteria**
  - a diagnosis of dementia would not exclude a person
  - Clients with complex mental health or physical issues

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**Method: Measures** 

- **PWI (Personal Wellbeing Index)**  
(Pre and post self completed questionnaire)
- **Confidence in Social Participation Measure**  
(Pre and post self completed questionnaire)

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**Confidence in Social Participation Measure**

**Reconnecting Communities**

**Confidence with Social Participation Measure**

To help improve our services please answer the follow questions. Choose a number following the question on a scale of 0 (not very confident) to 10 (am very confident).

How confident are you that you could:

1. Contact someone you know by telephone, letter, internet, etc...  
 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
 Not very confident Very confident

2. Contact someone you don't know to make an inquiry  
 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
 Not very confident Very confident

3. Visit a friend or family member  
 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
 Not very confident Very confident

4. Attend an activity where you don't know anyone  
 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
 Not very confident Very confident

**In the last week...**

5. How often did you contact someone you know (telephone, internet, letter, etc...)?  
 No contact  Once or twice  Three or more

6. How often did you contact someone you don't know?  
 No contact  Once or twice  Three or more

7. How often did you meet with a friend or family member?  
 No contact  Once or twice  Three or more


8. How often did you attend a community activity outside the home?  
 No contact  Once or twice  Three or more

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**Method: Qualitative**

- Exit interview
- Client and volunteer diary

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**"Dancing keeps me young" - Client 91 yrs**

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**"The one thing that can solve most of our problems is dancing"**

James Brown



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**Case study 1**

- 30 year old female
- Brain injury following surgery
- Short term memory loss

**Goals**

- I want to make friends with people of my own age
- I want to use my skills as a fitness instructor to help others

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**Conclusion**

What we have learned so far...

- Labour intensive
- More support needed than for typical volunteer role
- Requires high level of engagement
- Limited by infrastructure

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Reconnecting Communities 



THIS IS AN  
INNOVATIVE  
MODEL THAT  
CAN AND  
DOES WORK



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**Contact us**

Richard Kindness  
Volunteer Coordinator  
Catholic Community Services  
E: [rkindness@chcs.com.au](mailto:rkindness@chcs.com.au)  
P: (02) 9855 2542

[www.catholiccommunityservices.com.au](http://www.catholiccommunityservices.com.au)



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