

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

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**Connecting for Better Health Project Study 5:
Understanding preferences for social connection programs
- Discrete Choice Experiment Survey – Direct recruitment**

Principal Researcher: **Dr Lidia Engel**
Monash University
School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine
553 St Kilda Road, Melbourne VIC 3004
Phone: (03) 9903 8961
lidia.engel@monash.edu

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Targeted Call for Research: Loneliness, social isolation and
chronic disease management 2022 grant

Invitation

Thank you for your interest in taking part in this research project. This sheet gives you information about the project, so that you can decide if you want to take part. Please read this information carefully. You can also contact the researcher, Lidia, to ask questions about anything that you don't understand or to ask for more information. Lidia's contact details are at the top and bottom of this sheet.

Why are we asking you to take part?

We asked you to take part because you have been lonely or socially isolated, or have in the past, and have had a health condition for 12 months. Examples of health conditions are heart disease, diabetes, mental health conditions (e.g. anxiety, depression), arthritis and asthma. You do not have to have used a program to reduce loneliness or social isolation to take part.

What is this research about?

This project is part of a large, 5-year, Australian government funded project called the [Connecting for Better Health project](#). This project is about finding programs to help people who feel lonely or are socially isolated that work well. Loneliness is when you do not feel connected or like you belong with other people and this makes you feel unhappy. Social isolation is when you do not see or have much contact with other people.

There are good programs to reduce loneliness or social isolation in the community, but some community members do not want to use them. It is very important to hear from community members who feel lonely or socially isolated about why they don't want to use programs and

what can be done to make these programs better. In this project we want to find out which parts of loneliness and social isolation programs community members like best.

What will I be asked to do?

Once you have read this Participant Information Sheet and agree to take part, we would like you to do an online survey. We will assume that if you start the survey you consent to taking part. The survey will take about 25 minutes to do. You do not have to complete the survey all in one go, and you can come back to it. Your participation in this survey is your choice and you can stop the survey at any time, by closing the website.

The survey has two parts. In the first part, we will ask you about which parts of programs to help people who are lonely or socially isolated you like best. Some of the questions may seem to be the same, but they are different and have different answers you can choose. Please complete all questions. In the second part of the survey, we want to collect some information about you (e.g. how old you are, whether you are married, or have a job and whether you live alone), the services you use and your health.



After completing the survey, you will be given the chance to enter into a draw to win one of ten \$50 e-gift cards. You will need to provide your name and email address in order to receive this reimbursement, which will be kept separately and will not be linked to your survey responses.

The survey will remain open until enough responses are received. The prize draw will be run after we have checked all responses to make sure they are valid. To be fair to everyone, we will remove any duplicate, ineligible, or fake responses before the draw. However, the draw is not expected to take place before August 2026. Winners who are eligible will be contacted using the email address they provide in the survey.

What benefit will I gain from taking part in this project?

Taking part in this survey may not help you, but the answers you give us will help us understand which are the best programs for people who are lonely, isolated and have health problems. This may mean these programs will be able to help more people.

What are the possible risks?

The survey will take up some of your time and energy and may make you reflect on your life and how you feel about your loneliness, social isolation or health. If you feel upset during or after the survey, you can contact Beyond Blue Support Line on 1300 22 4636, Lifeline Australia on 13 11 14 or your General Practitioner (GP). Your GP can refer you to other counselling services.

Do I have to take part?

Taking part in this research project is your choice. If you choose not to take part this will not disadvantage you in any way. You can also stop the survey at any time by closing the website. Please note, as your responses will be nameless, we may not be able to remove your answers once the survey is done.

What will happen to information about me?

Your responses will be kept confidential. No information that could identify you will be used when reporting research findings. The online survey will be facilitated via the platform SurveyEngine, which provides a secure online environment to protect your information from misuse, corruption and unauthorised access. Once the survey has closed, the data will be exported and stored electronically on a password-protected Monash University network drive, called Google Drive. Only the researchers can look at Google Drive, including researchers working on this project outside of Monash University. To obey Australian law, we will store all information securely for at least 5 years after our last paper. The files will then be deleted.

It is possible that future researchers working on related projects might ask to look at the survey data. Therefore, we would like your approval to share the anonymous survey data with other researchers, if this happens. We will make sure that any data we publish cannot identify you.

Will I hear about the results of this project?

The results of the project will be published in academic papers, presented at conferences and posted on the [Connecting for Better Health project website](#) once the project has ended. All information that could identify you will be removed before reporting the research findings, so we will not be able to send you individual results.

Where can I get further information?

If you are interested in participating in the survey and have any questions or want more information about this project, you can contact:

Dr Lidia Engel
Senior Research Fellow at Monash University
Telephone: (03) 9903 8961
Email: lidia.engel@monash.edu

Who can I contact if I have any concerns about the project?

This research has been reviewed and approved by an internal review committee of the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee. This committee ensures that research participants are protected.

If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact:

Executive Officer
Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Room 111, Chancellery Building D,
26 Sports Walk, Clayton Campus
Research Office
Monash University VIC 3800
Tel: (03) 9905 2052
Email: muhrec@monash.edu
Please quote project ID: 47080.