

HEY 
NEIGHBOUR! Collective

Living Together Symposium

May 5th & 6th, 2025



Elder Syexwaliya (Ann Whonnock)

Skwxwú7mesh Uxwumixw
(Squamish Nation)



Dr. Rebecca Hasdell

Health Equity and Determinants of Health
for Population and Public Health Lead,
BC Centre for Disease Control



BC Centre for Disease Control



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Max Bell Foundation

A large, dark blue abstract shape in the top-left corner of the slide.

How might
we...

How can we **work together**
to foster more multi-unit
housing communities

which are **socially
connected, age-friendly,
neighbourly, health-
promoting and resilient?**

A large, yellow abstract shape in the bottom-right corner of the slide.

Purpose



- **STRENGTHEN CONNECTIONS AND SHARED UNDERSTANDING** across diverse actors, sectors and roles.
- **LEARN** about what's working and what the barriers are.
- **EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES** for “joined up” efforts that will move the needle.
- **CO-CREATE CALLS TO ACTION** for our next steps as a movement

Day 1

WHAT are we
seeing?

SO WHAT are
learning together?

Day 2



NOW WHAT can
we do together?

Agenda - Day 1



9:00 - 10:30 AM- Welcome & Getting Started

10:30 - 10:45 AM - *BREAK*

10:45 - 11:45 - What are we seeing & learning?

11:45 - 12:45 PM - *LUNCH*

12:45 - 2:15 PM - 3 Concurrent Breakout

Workshops- Block A

2:15 - 2:30 PM - *BREAK*

2:30 - 4:00 PM - 3 Concurrent Breakout

Workshops- Block B

4:00 - 4:15 PM - *BREAK*

4:15 - 5:00 PM - Learning Pod Dialogues &

Closing

5:00 PM - onwards - *Optional: Post-event Social
@ Wings Tap & Social*



VIDEO BOOTH!

Day 1:

- **Lunch**
- **5:00pm - 6:00pm**

Day 2:

- **Lunch**
- **4:00pm - 5:00pm**

Tell us what you're thinking? Any revelations? Anything you're dying to share about your work? Don't be shy. **Visit 2nd floor outside elevators.**

Roundtable Intros

A decorative graphic featuring a large blue circle in the top left, a large yellow circle in the top right, a yellow speech bubble in the middle left, and a dark blue speech bubble in the bottom left. A curved arrow points from the 'AS A TABLE' text to the sticky note instruction.

ROUNDTABLE: Introduce yourself - *What drew you here?*

AS A TABLE: *What's one common thing that drew you all here?*

WRITE THIS ON A STICKY NOTE (ONE QUESTION PER STICKY NOTE)

Menti Code:
4541 7604



Scan this code with your
smartphone or go to [menti.com](https://www.menti.com)
and enter the code.



Practice Building Social Connections!

Symposium Bingo

PLAY FOR A CHANCE TO WIN A \$50 or \$100 GIFT CARD TO RED CAT RECORDS!

Told a speaker they did a great job	Is following HNC on LinkedIn	Checked out the poster presentations	Gave out your 'old school' business card	Met someone who works in public health
Is subscribed to the HNC Newsletter	Met someone who works in housing	Is going to the optional social	Is following HNC on BlueSky	Met someone in person for the first time
Scanned a QR code	Was introduced to a new person by someone else	Free Space	Learned something new	Attended an HNC event for the first time
Asked for someone's contact information	Stopped to listen to the live music	Has been to the Wosk centre before	Stopped by the videography booth	Met someone who lives on Vancouver Island
Are friends with your neighbours	Put a dot on the dot matrix	Met someone who plays an instrument	Took a picture at the symposium	Laughed out loud during a session



A very special thank you to Red Cat Records!
Claim your prize at 4386 Main Street, Vancouver, BC



Housekeeping

Gracious Space

Setting & Spirit

- Invite the “Stranger”
- Learn in Public
- Safe & Productive Container for Creativity and Difference
- Share the Airtime!



Collaborative Agreements



- Be for each other, be present
- Listen well and be curious about others' experiences
- Share the airtime
- Confidentiality: What is said here stays here, what is learned here leaves here
- Take care of your needs and the needs of the group

Setting the Context



Michelle Hoar

Project Director, Hey Neighbour Collective

HEY 
NEIGHBOUR! Collective



Origin Story





Chronic loneliness and social isolation can be as damaging to health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day and increases risk of premature death by as much as 50%.



Strong social connections and supports are protective for physical and mental health and against cognitive decline.

Intended Impact

- ✓ Measurable increase in social connectedness and resilience
- ✓ Positive transformation on the ways multi unit buildings are engaged, managed and designed
- ✓ Shifting attitudes, beliefs and values about desirability of living in multi-unit buildings



ECONOMY

Vancouver is in a 'full-blown crisis' for housing affordability: Report

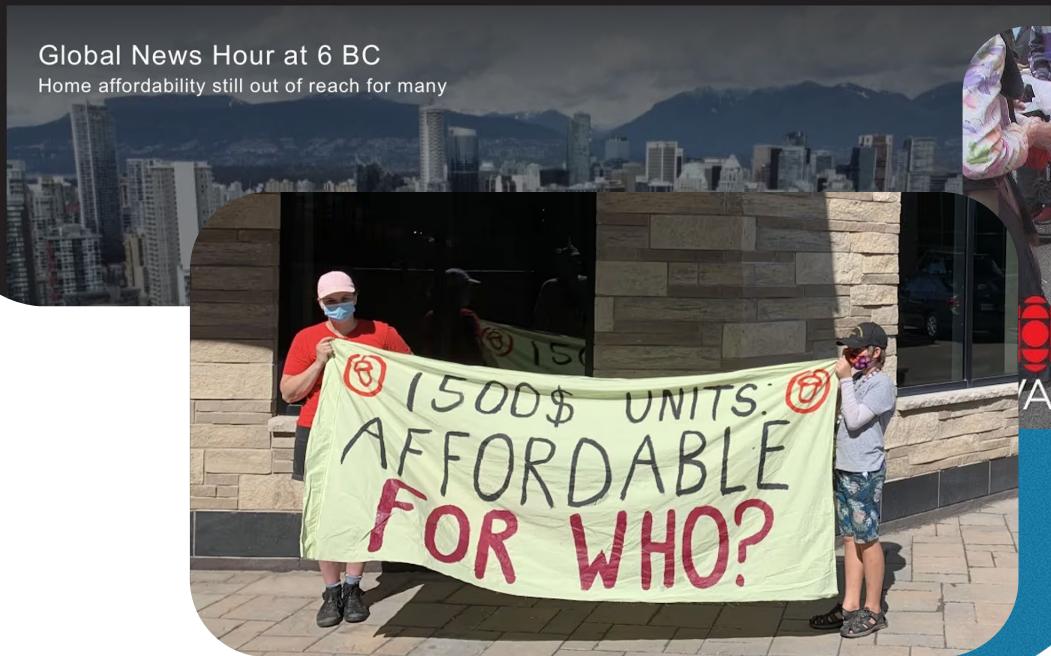


By Amy Judd & Angela Jung • Global News

Posted April 3, 2024 6:52 pm • 4 min read

Global News Hour at 6 BC

Home affordability still out of reach for many





FOR SUBSCRIBERS THE THIRD ACT

We need to start treating loneliness like a public health challenge. Here's why

As Canada shifts toward "super-aged" status, it needs a national strategy on loneliness, advocates say.

© Updated Sept. 20, 2024 at 2:34 p.m. | April 5, 2024 | 3 min read



A group of researchers, advocates, policymakers, physicians, health-care workers and social service providers is calling on the federal government to create a national strategy to combat loneliness.

British Columbia

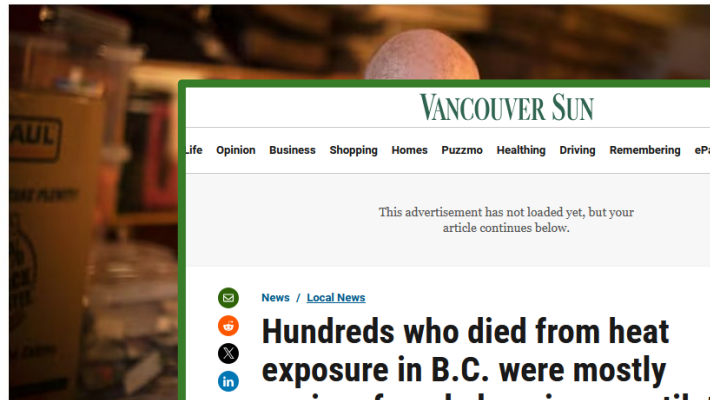
Seniors' advocates fear a growing wave of homeless people over 60 as stock of affordable housing dwindles

The 2023 Homeless Count in Greater Vancouver showed 22% w

2023



Hannah Mondlwa - CBC News - Posted: Dec 23, 2023 10:00 AM PST | Last Updated: December 23, 2023



Cran Campbell, 75, said he apartment in Langley is sla (CBC)

VANCOUVER SUN

Life Opinion Business Shopping Homes Puzzmo Healthing Driving Remembering ePaper Newsletters

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News / Local News

Hundreds who died from heat exposure in B.C. were mostly seniors found alone in unventilated suites, says coroner

At least 486 sudden and unexpected deaths have been reported since Friday — a number which is likely to grow

David Carrigg

Published Jul 01, 2021 • 3 minute read

31 Comments

2021

The Bigger Picture

And the Moment We're In

2019

**Social
connectedness
helps people be
less lonely and
improve health**



2025

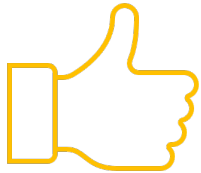
**Social
connectedness
saves lives and
creates
resilience to all
kinds of
challenges:
climate change,
health, aging,
etc.**





POLYCRISIS:

A time of great disagreement, confusion, or suffering that is caused by many different problems happening at the same time so that they together have a very big effect (*Cambridge dictionary*)



MULTISOLVING:

When people work together across sectors to address multiple problems with one policy or investment (*Multisolving Institute*)

Never waste a Polycrisis.

**‘Multi-solving’s time has come, and
fostering neighbourly social
connectedness and resilience in multi-
unit housing is a cross-cutting solution.**

Dr. Meg Holden

Professor of Urban Studies and Resources
and Environmental Management
(Planning), Simon Fraser University



SIMON FRASER
UNIVERSITY



Research Goals within HNC



Understand and apply existing research on housing, social well-being, and neighbourliness



Work in partnership with housing providers to open feedback loops with residents, research and engagement activities



Work in partnership with advocates and planners to advance knowledge-based policies and programs for sociability within housing and neighbourhood plans



Build a place-specific knowledge base to inform better policies and collective initiatives





- **Sense of belonging** and **social connection** increases with age and income.
- Renters (48.7%), those new to the neighbourhood (46.5%), students (43.2%), and those new to Canada (41%) report unusually **low** sense of belonging.
- Retirees (73.4%) report unusually **high** sense of belonging.

Health and Social Connection are Positively Related

- Individuals with a strong sense of community belonging had **2 times higher odds** of reporting excellent/very good mental and general health (vs. weak).
- Individuals with 4+ confidants had close to **1.5-2 times higher odds** of reporting excellent/very good general and mental health respectively (vs. 0-3 confidants).



Introduction

Social connectedness plays a crucial role in urban quality of life and well-being.

But the likelihood of valuing and maintaining social connections is declining.



- Socially connected individuals and communities have more resilience to everyday stressors and acute emergencies.
- Strong social supports are protective for physical and mental health and cognitive decline.
- Conversely, loneliness and social isolation can increase one's odds of developing depression, experiencing heart problems, and viewing one's own health more poorly



- Canada's multilevel response to housing crisis is toward increasing housing and neighbourhood density
- Growing shares of the population live in higher-density neighbourhoods, with growing rates of rental tenure
- High-density and rental-dominated neighbourhoods have been associated with lower social capital and increased social isolation, findings that are now being challenged
- Canada has undergone a surge in immigration. This compounds demographic and socioeconomic changes in urban neighbourhoods.
- Effects on social quality of life are poorly understood.

3 Rounds of Resident Surveys – Hey Neighbour Collective

- Door to door survey with engagement events - residents were surveyed in 2021, 2022 and 2023
- Community housing buildings located in Vancouver, Port Coquitlam, Burnaby, North Vancouver, and Surrey.



Target Population: community housing and rental buildings

Response Rate: 30.8%

Survey Tools: Paper, Online, and Phone

Survey Sections:

- Housing & infrastructure
- Communications and Operations
- Health & Well-being
- Social connection, Sense of belonging, Safety
- Neighbours in your Building
- Demographic information



619 residents of multi-unit rental housing in BC participated in the 2020-2021 Hey Neighbour Collective survey



Half of respondents are willing to get to know their neighbours better.



Over half of respondents have conversations with their neighbours several times per week or every day.



30% of respondents feel lonely often or some of the time.



26% report having no close friends at all.

A PICTURE IS WORTH 1000 WORDS

A Photovoice Exploration into Social Connections at Home



Photos taken by the participant, winter 2020



Those tenants who **had fewer than 2-3 conversations per month** were **1.9 times** more likely to feel **lonely** often, compared to those who had conversations with their neighbours every day or a few times per week.

The High Density + Social Quality Nexus

Knowledge Synthesis for the Imagining
Canada's Future Challenge of the
'Emerging Asocial Society'

Download the report!

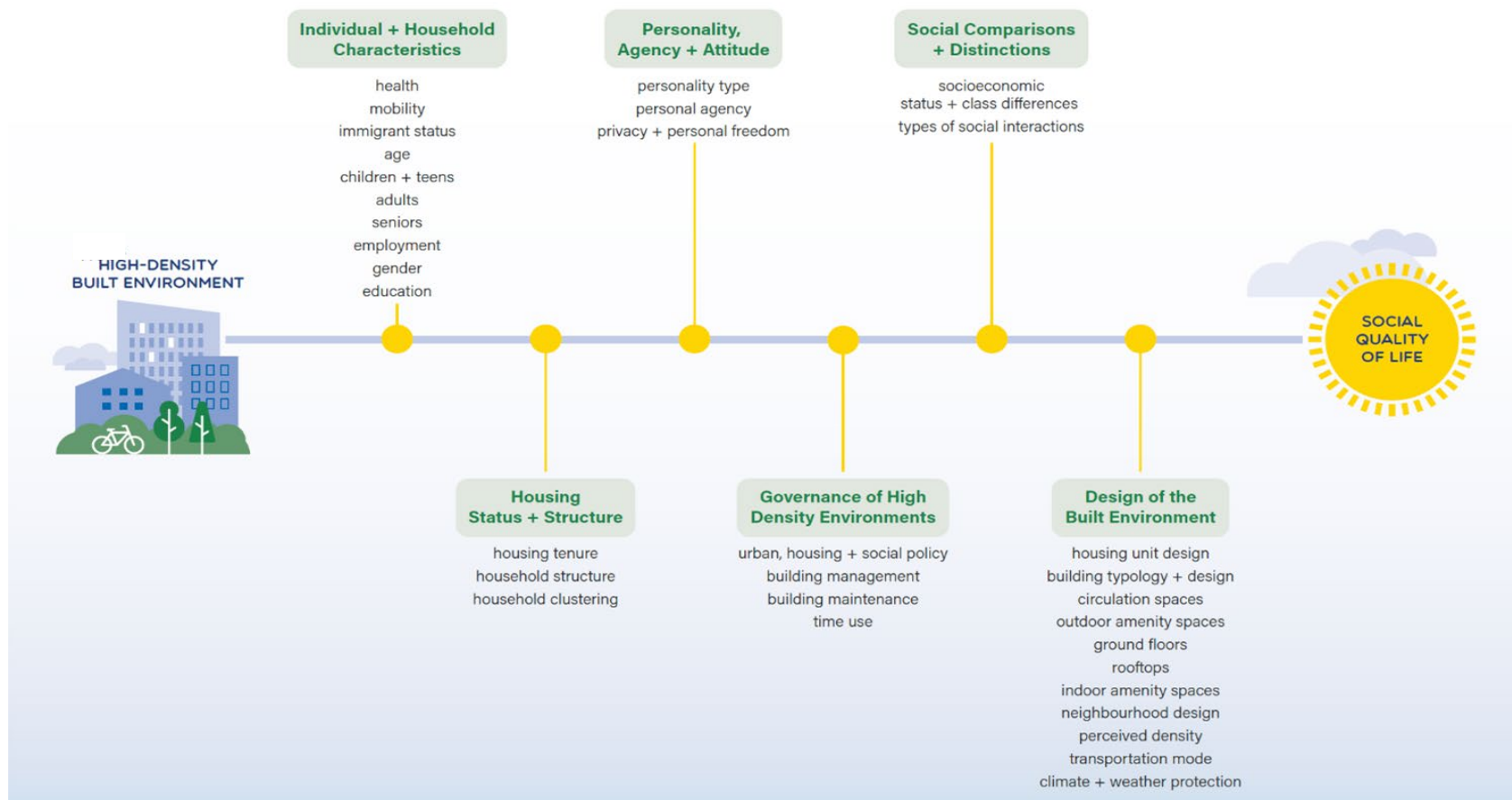
<https://summit.sfu.ca/item/35349>



KNOWLEDGE SYNTHESIS FOR THE **EMERGING ASOCIAL SOCIETY**

Social Quality of Life in High-Density Built Environments

RESULTS: WHAT KEY FACTORS INFLUENCE SOCIAL QUALITY OF LIFE IN HIGH-DENSITY BUILT ENVIRONMENTS?



Pro-Neighbouring Index

Total Number of Close
Friends



Conversations with
Neighbours



Attendance of Community
Meetings

Measures within-
group bonding and
attitudes towards
socializing



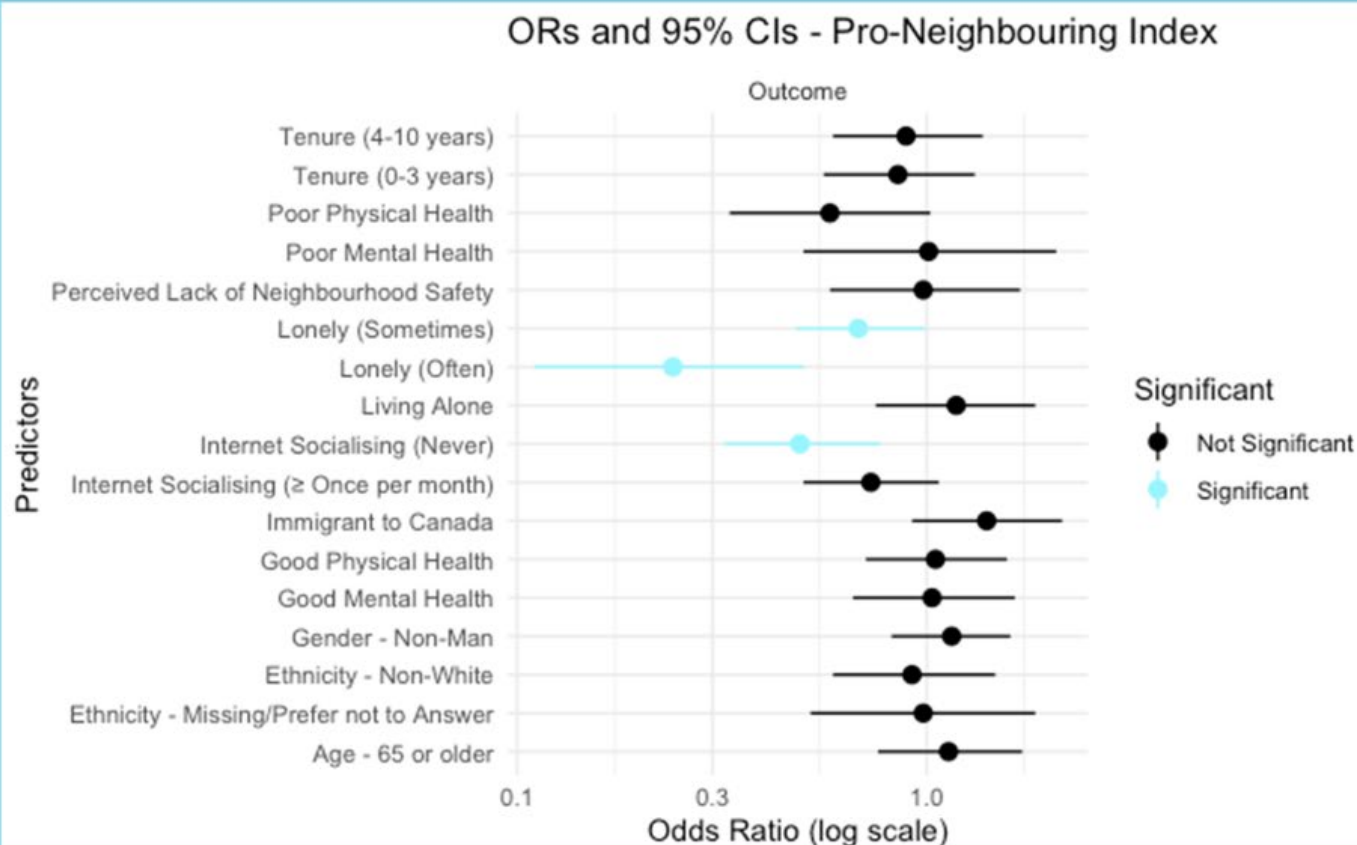
Gauges social
bridging
and social
connectedness in
the building



Indicates formal
social participation
in organized
groups



2023 Pro-Neighbouring Index Results



Discussion Questions

1

Why does social connectedness in multi-unit housing matter in your community context and what is motivating you to be part of this work?

2

What's changed about these issues in the last 5 years from your perspective?



Break!

Learnings from our first 5 years



Stacy Barter

Director of Learning & Evaluation,
Hey Neighbour Collective

Executive Director, Building Resilient
Neighbourhoods

HEY 
NEIGHBOUR! Collective



**No clear
vision**



**Disorder and
Confusion**

**Different
visions**



**Individual
Impact**

**Agreed
vision**



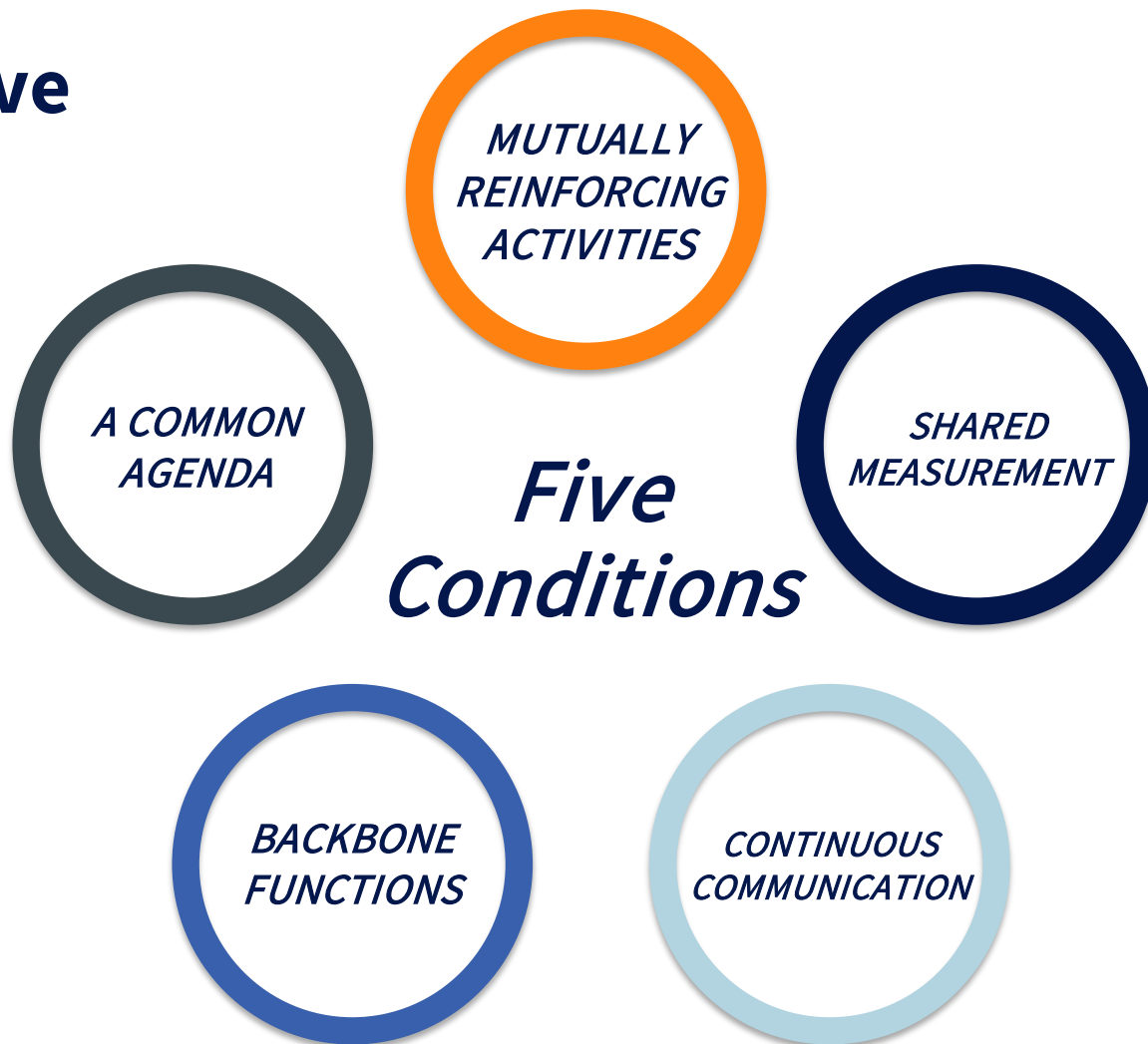
**Coordinated
impact**

**Agreed vision -
skills and resources
pooled**



**Collective
Impact**

Collective Impact



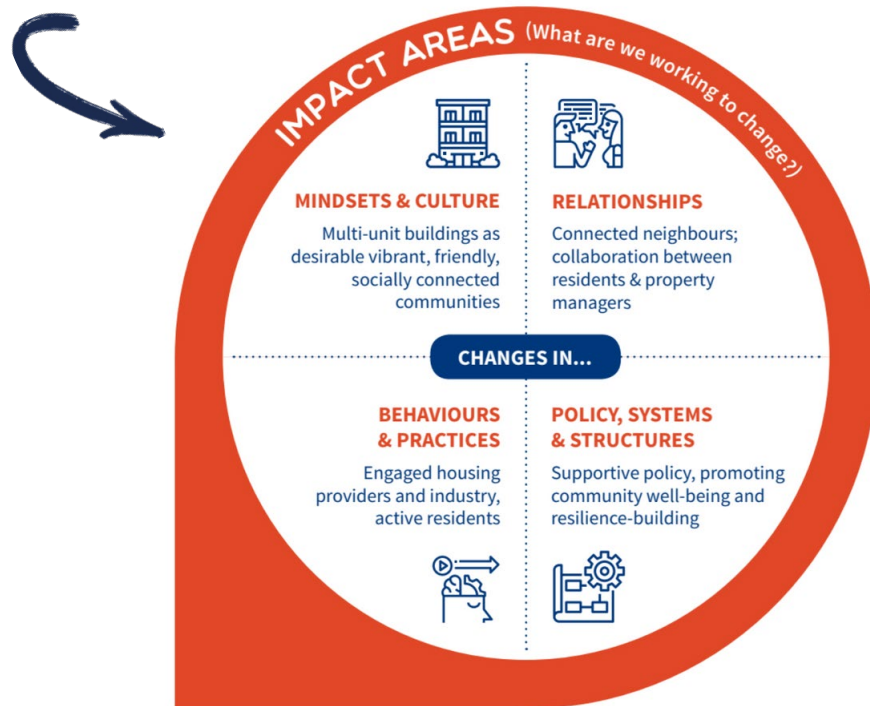
Adapted from:
John Kania and Mark Kramer,
Stanford Social Innovation
Review, Winter 2011

HNC brings together...



Theory of Change

Impact Areas



What supports these changes?

- ✓ *Engaged, Safe & Empowered Residents*
- ✓ *Pro-active Landlords & Property Owners*
- ✓ *Improved Housing Design*
- ✓ *Supportive Policy*

Key strategies

How do we do this?

1

PROTOTYPING AND PILOTING COMMUNITY- BUILDING PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Test, evaluate and share learnings about diverse activities and approaches to increasing neighbourliness, social connectedness and resilience in multi-unit housing pilot sites.

2

ACTION RESEARCH & LEARNING

Generate evidence-based data and inspiration for residents, housing operators and cross-sectoral policy makers which highlights professional practice, systems and culture change opportunities.

3

STORY SHARING & KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

Showcase and engage others in learning about promising practices and policy solutions through sharing stories and evidence related to improved programming, management, design, and community culture of multi-unit housing.

4

HOUSING INDUSTRY & POLICY ENGAGEMENT

Engage housing professionals and cross-sectoral policy makers in understanding and implementing opportunities to foster healthier and more resilient communities through shifts in policy, programming and practice.

Impacts and Learnings



*Demonstration
Programs*



*Policy &
Systems
Change*



*Working
Together*

Demonstration programs





7 **Demonstration
programs**



Led by...

3
**Housing
operators**

*2 Non-market rental
housing, 1 market rental
housing*

3
Community-
based
organizations



*Made Up
of...*

90+
Buildings

6,300+
Households

Demonstration Programs



**Brightside
Community
Engagement**

**Building Resilient
Neighbourhoods –
Connect & Prepare**



**Concert
Properties –
Community
Connectors**



**Catalyst
Community
Developments**

Community
Connections



**Building Resilient
Neighbourhoods –
Neighbours-
Helping-Neighbours**



**West End
Seniors
Network
Close to
Home**

**Seniors Services
Society and City of
New Westminster**

*Integrated Services
Program*



Social Connectedness Programming Works!



70 - 100%

New or deeper connections



70-90%

*Increased sense of
belonging*



70-73%

*More likely to ask for
or offer help to a
neighbour*



60-90%

*Increased leadership
capacity*



60-86%

*Increased sense of
safety*



30 - 100%

*Gained access to
additional community
services*

Beyond the numbers



“When we gave the go-bags away in the lobby that day, there were a lot of people who came out and were talking to me that normally won’t say hi... We’re trying to get a system going where everyone who’s handicapped has a backup neighbour to make sure they’re all right...I’m definitely motivated to keep going.”

-BC Housing resident



“It’s been a lot of fun! And everyone felt more connected even when we weren’t seeing each other so much.”

-Community Connector

“It’s a lot less work to manage a happy building than an unhappy one.”

-Housing Operator

Beyond the numbers

“The real work for developers, landlords, and property managers is to facilitate the creation of relationships that allow people to care for and about one another.” -- Catalyst facilitator.



“As more seniors began to participate, it was incredibly rewarding to see gradual progress. It was heartening to see the transformation of isolated seniors into active participants and contributors within their communities.”--SSSBC facilitator.

Impacts on Housing Operators

- **Improved relationships with residents.**
- **Enhanced brand profile.**
- **More stable tenancies.**
- **Supportive benefits from partnerships.**
- **Better emergency preparedness.**
- **Reduced conflict.**
- **Happier staff.**
- **Organizational policy change and improvement.**

“

Reputationally, it's fantastic if we're the landlord of choice for people... there are intangible benefits that come from that through recommendations and referrals and those sorts of things.”

“It's a lot less work to manage a happy building than an unhappy one.”



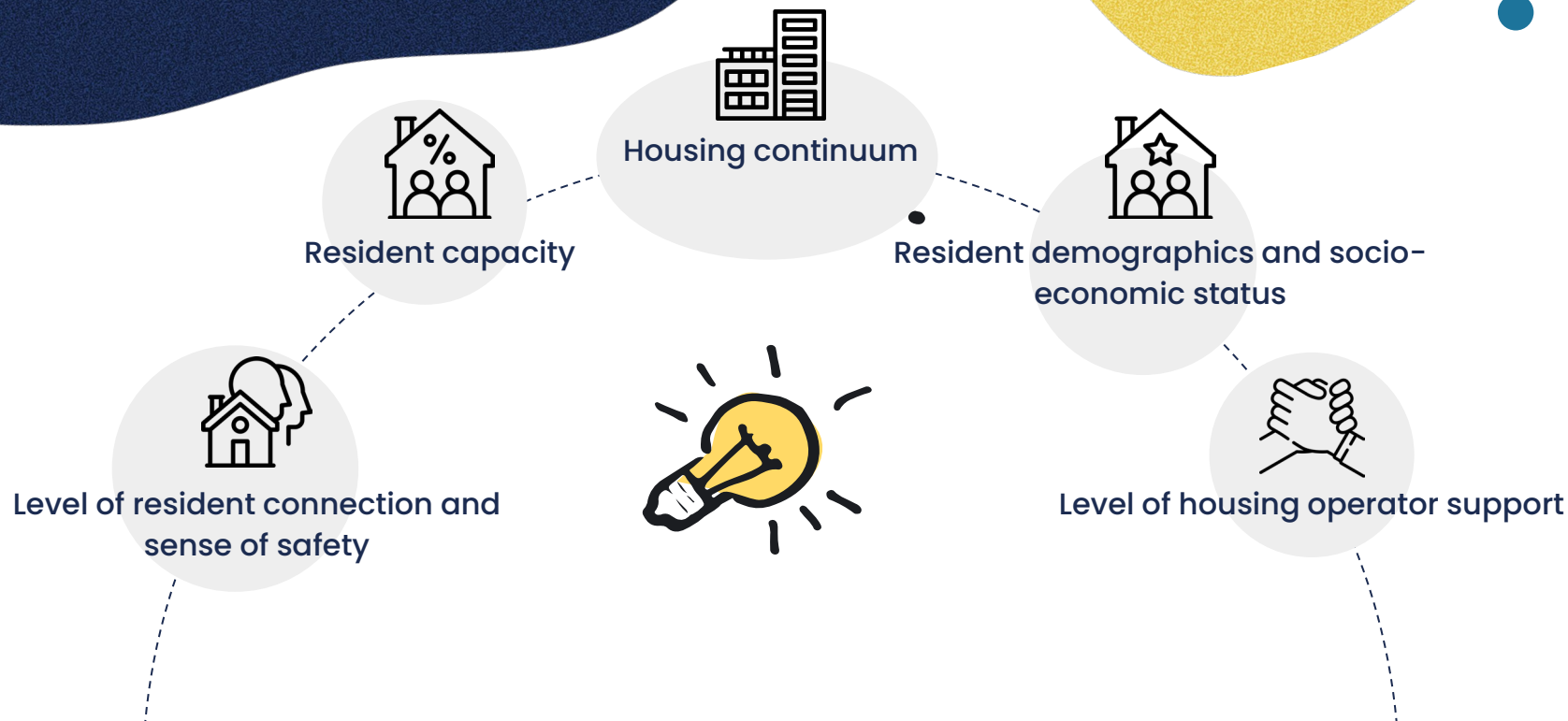
Impacts on Community-based Organizations

- Expanded reach/outreach.
- Better leveraging of resources.



**Diverse contexts
need diverse
approaches**

Learning



Social connections are a critical first step to move along the continuum towards “helping” and neighbourly mutual support



**Emergency preparedness is
a popular “gateway” to
building connections**



Partnerships are Powering this work!

Housing operators can be “enabling hosts” (and benefit from third party partnerships).

Place-based community organizations can bring community development expertise and connections to other local resources...

BUT are chronically under-funded and often unable to sustain the work over time.





Sociable Design, **Policy and Systems Change**

Work with
**local/regional
governments** on
**sociable design
policy**

6

Metro
Vancouver
Local Govt
Partnerships

1

**Policy Discussion
Paper**

Resulted in enabling
**Regional Policy in
Metro 2050**

*Metro Vancouver' Regional
Growth Strategy*

Research paper with
21 market and
nonmarket housing
operators

11

Workshops and
Webinars

64

Communities
across Canada

*Engaged
1050
people*

7

articles,
papers, reports,
toolkits/guides

1

**Housing and Health
Research Round Table**

*engaging **4** housing and **7**
health organizations*

Impacts on Systems & Policy:

We're making change!

- Expanded reach and awareness.
- Social connectedness in regional and local policy.
- Growing housing industry and local government engagement in sociable design.
- Linkages and action between housing, health, aging and social connectedness.





Sociable design for new housing is increasing – *but getting support for linked social programming remains challenging.*

Retrofitting **existing buildings** for increased sociability is both an

- opportunity and a challenge.



Leaders and policy makers recognize the value of social connectedness BUT...

1

Local governments are often
siloed and stretched to meet other
needs

and not currently well-structured
to resource this work.

2

Health and housing sector leaders are caught in “crisis intervention”

which still drives a lot of their
policy, funding, and
decision-making.

So...

**Strengthening social connection
is important for everyone –but
belongs to no one**

when it comes to key funding and
policy decisions.



Working Together

We're building a field!

138
publications

Engaging
13
research
assistants

*A wide range of articles,
learning reports, practice
guides and toolkits.*

31
research
reports and
publications

*including 2 comprehensive
reports on resident surveys at
Housing Operator Partners' sites*

2

building audits on sociable
design for aging in place

2

HNC evaluations (3 year and 5
year), plus ongoing
developmental evaluation

Hosting
50
Community of Practice
(CoP) Sessions

Including...

25
Hey Neighbor
Collective CoPs
(2019-2021)

8
Neighbours Helping
Neighbours CoPs
(2023-2024)

17
Connect &
Prepare CoPs
(2022-2024)

Impacts on Partner Organizations:

It's better together!

- Leveraging resources and expertise.
- Uplifted and inspired by each other.
- Internal and external advocacy.
- Peer and cross-sectoral learning.

HNC Partners agree...

95% HNC is contributing to **greater impact** by working collectively, as opposed to single organizations working on their own on these issues.

Source: 2024 HNC Partners' Survey

Discussion Questions

ROUNDTABLE: *Based on your role/experience, what stands out for you about what we are learning collectively?*

What else are you seeing or learning about HOW to increase social connectedness & resilience in multi-unit housing?

GROUP DISCUSSION: *What are one or two burning questions **you are all holding** about how to move the needle together to increase social connectedness and resilience in multi-unit housing?*



WRITE THIS ON A STICKY NOTE (ONE QUESTION PER STICKY NOTE)



Lunch!



Concurrent Breakouts

12:45 - 2:25 PM - Session 1

12:15 - 2:30 PM - BREAK

2:30 - 4:00 PM - Session 2

**4:00 - 4:15 PM - BREAK &
Travel back to plenary**

4:15 PM - Plenary Session Starts

Breakouts Rooms

Room

320

420

Concourse

420

Concourse

12:45 - 2:25 PM - Session 1

From green spaces to connected places: Pathways to more resilient multi-unit homes

The role of housing operators as 'enabling hosts' and partners

Age-friendly approaches to building social connections

2:30 - 4:00 PM - Session 2

Building momentum for policy change through partnerships and collaboration

Protective social infrastructure: the role of neighbourly social connections and mutual support for health and climate resilience

Learning Pod Dialogues

Harvesting and making
sense of the day

1

Roundtable: One take away or something you are chewing on from today?

2

Group Discussion:

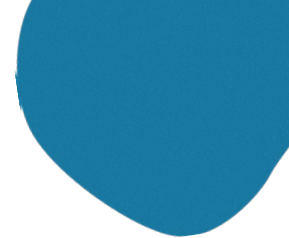
- What *collective opportunities* are emerging? What is *ONE THING* we can work on together to make a difference or help move the needle on these issues? (write on a sticky note)
- What is a *hope or aspiration* that you share for the future of this work? (write on a sticky note)



WRITE THESE ON A STICKY NOTE (ONE QUESTION PER STICKY NOTE)



**Thank you
for joining
us today!**



Let's keep talking! Join us
for a post-event social at

WINGS TAP + SOCIAL
5:00PM

580 W Pender St, Vancouver,
BC V6B 1W7

