



# **Social connections and positive well-being**

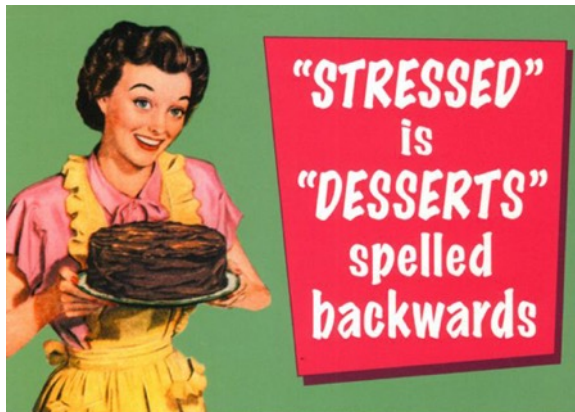
Nancy Sin, PhD

Department of Psychology  
University of British Columbia

Mar 4, 2020

Wellness Wednesday

# What makes you happy?



# What is positive well-being?

*More than the absence of mental illness*

## Hedonia

*Examples:*

- Happiness
- Life satisfaction

## Eudaimonia

*Examples:*

- Purpose in life
- Personal growth



# Positive well-being & health

- Longevity
- Lower risk and better outcomes for health conditions
- Better self-rated health
- Good health behaviours



# Measuring well-being (Cantril Ladder)

*Which step of the ladder do you feel you personally stand at the present time?*

Best possible life: 10

9

8

7

6

5

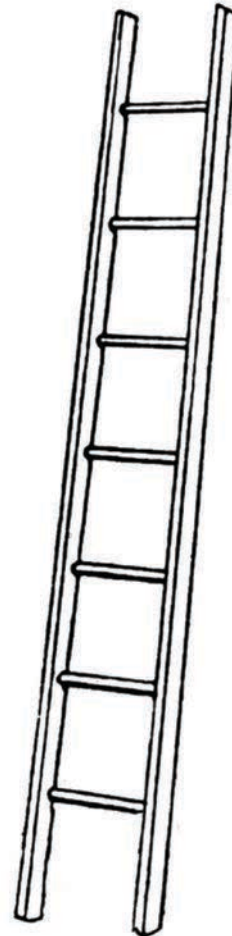
4

3

2

1

Worst possible life: 0



10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

0

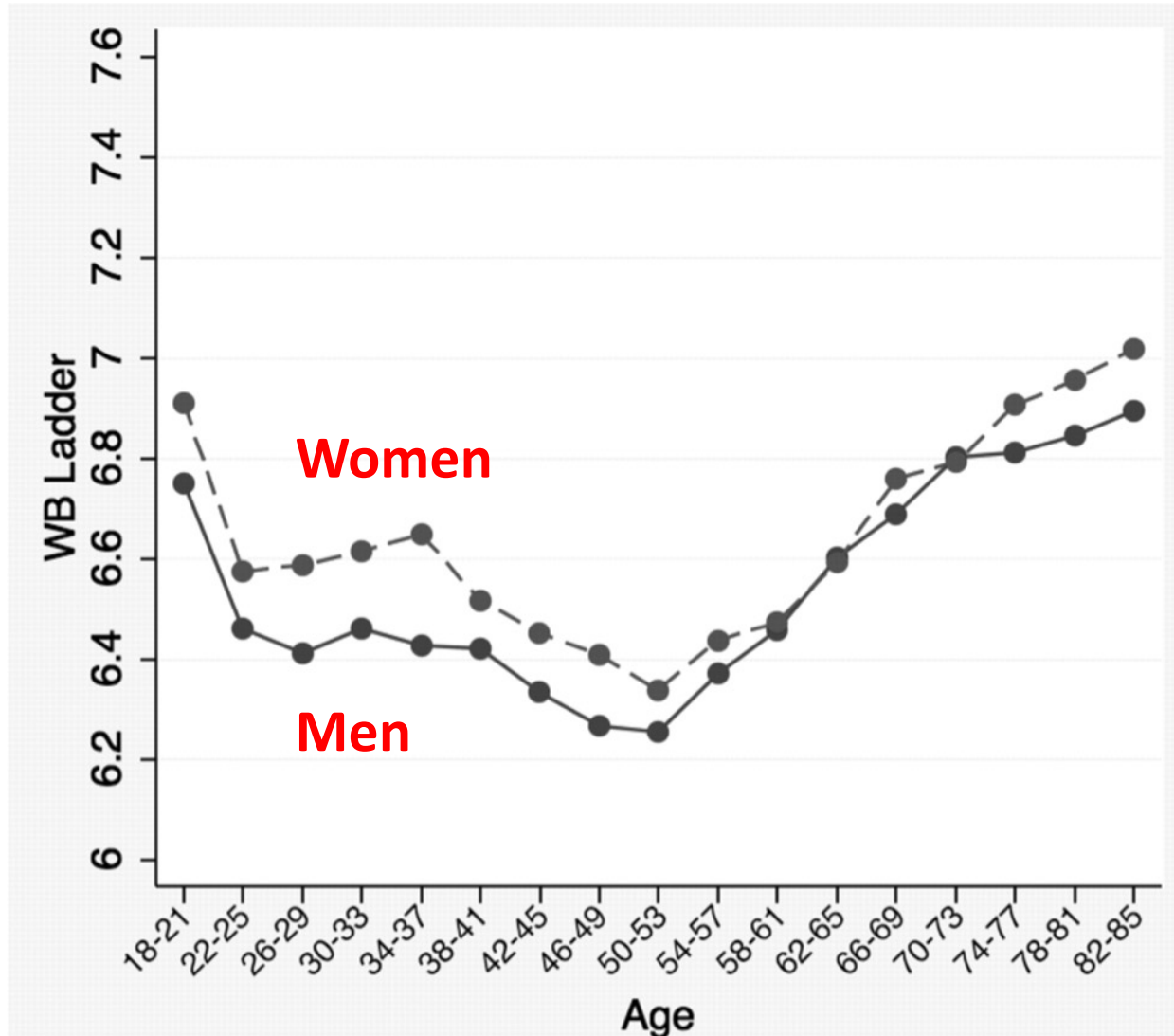
Scores 7-10 =  
**Thriving**

Scores 5-6 =  
**Struggling**

Scores 0-4 =  
**Suffering**

# Age distribution of well-being

340,847 adults in the U.S.



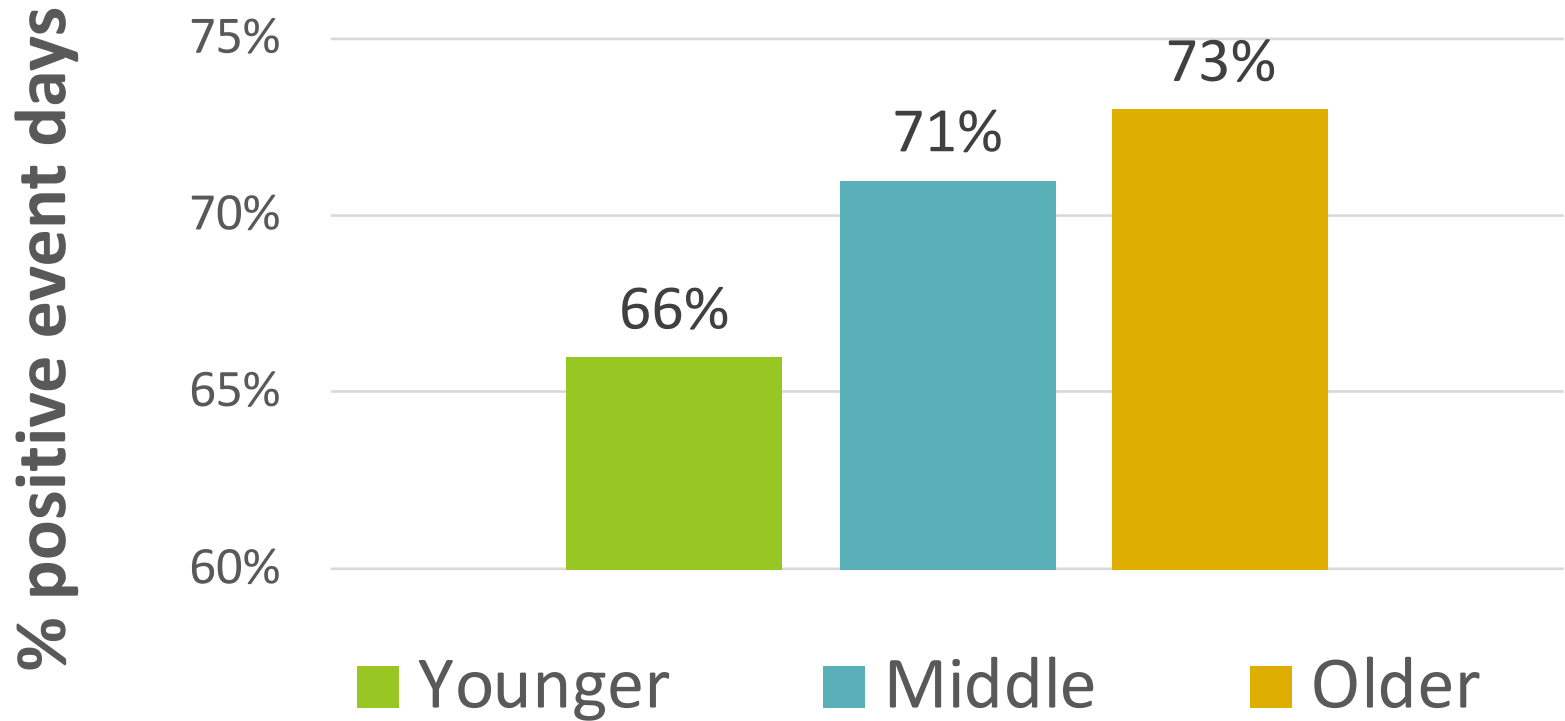
# The “paradox of aging”

---

*Why are older adults happier?*

- Life lived and life left
- Better emotion regulation
- Positive events in daily life?

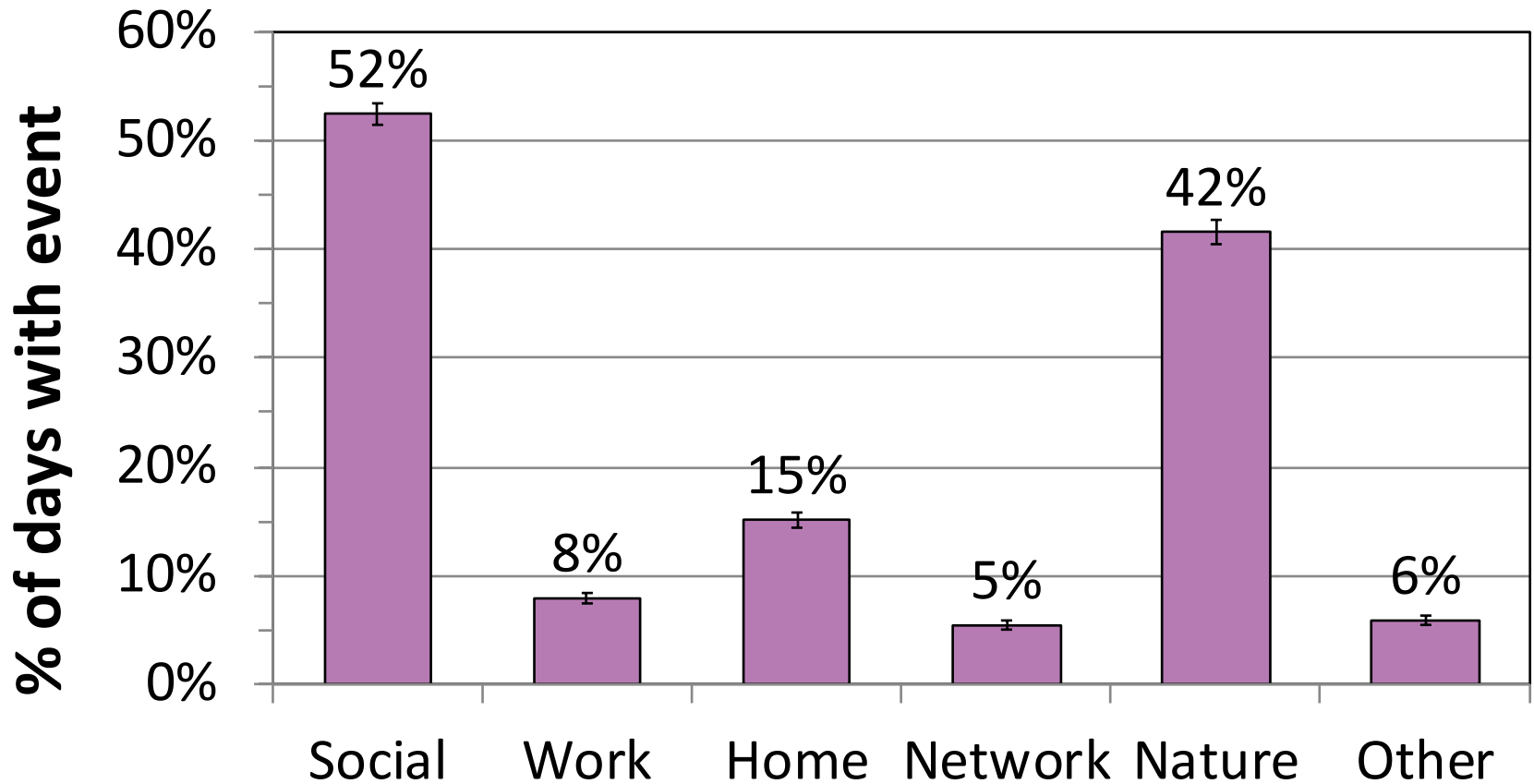
# Positive events occur more often with age



Sin & Almeida (2018)

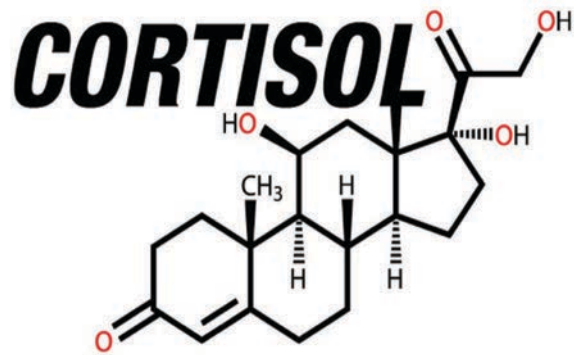


# Types of positive events



Sin & Almeida (2018)

# Why are daily positive events protective for health?



Sin, Ong, et al. (2017). *Psychoneuroendocrinology*.



## INFLAMMATION

Sin et al. (2015). *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity*.

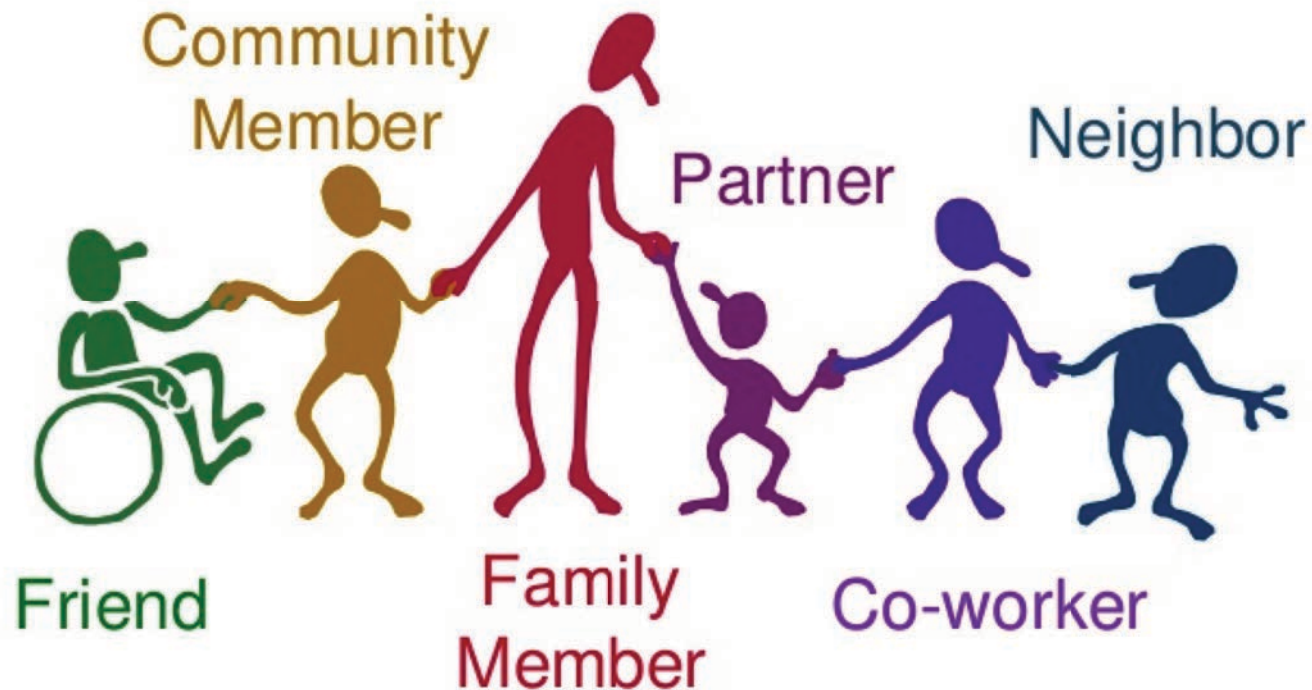
## SLEEP



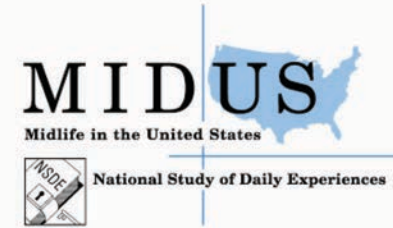
Sin, Almeida, et al. (2017). *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*.

# How do social relationships benefit health?

## Social Support Network



# Midlife in the United States Study (MIDUS)



- Two studies of ~2800 U.S. adults ages 26-85



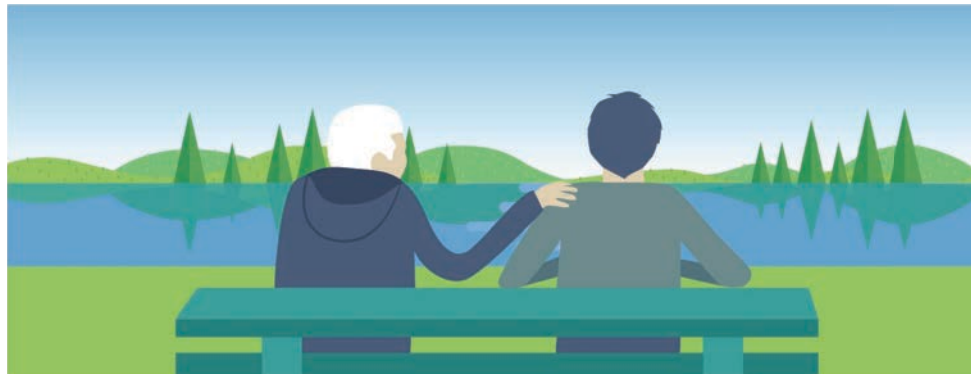
# Prosocial activities



Volunteering



Unpaid assistance



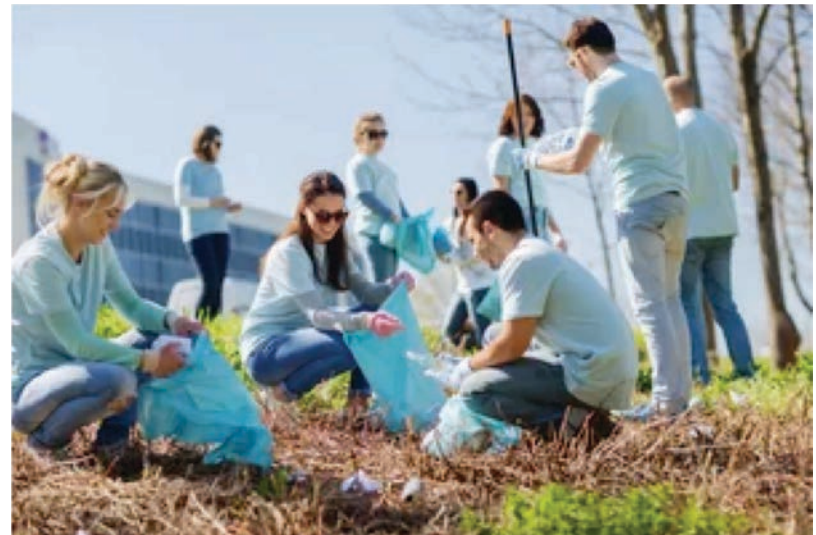
Providing emotional support

# Prosocial activities and well-being

**People who  
engage in these  
activities**



**On days when  
these activities  
occur**



# Enhancing social relationships

- Prioritize your most meaningful relationships
- Generativity: contribute to the next generation
- Volunteering
- Prosocial actions (such as acts of kindness)
- Express your gratitude

# Engaging in positive events



- Notice them
- Seek out or create positive experiences
  - Examples: Social interactions, spending time in nature
- They co-occur with stressful events
  - Challenges can be rewarding!



# Please consider joining our research!

- ❑ **Purpose:** To examine how the ups and downs of daily life influence health
- ❑ Participation involves smartphone surveys, sleep watch & physical activity monitors, saliva samples
- ❑ For more info: <https://blogs.ubc.ca/dailyhealth/>



**Interested in learning more?**

## **UPLIFT Health Lab**

**Website:** <http://uplift.psych.ubc.ca>

**E-mail:** [uplift@psych.ubc.ca](mailto:uplift@psych.ubc.ca)

**Phone:** **(604) 827-2241**



## DID YOU KNOW?

- [Social isolation is worse than smoking 15 cigarettes a day?](#)
- Two-thirds of Canadian postsecondary students aged 18-24 reported feeling “very lonely” in 2016 and 88% of respondents reported to having felt lonely in the past 6 months. **\*\*2019 SFU Students-Oxford Global Map**
- In 2013, 15% of total population are seniors. This number is expected to rise by 23 and 25% in 2036. So in 2038, for 100 adult Canadians 40 are seniors ++ since 2013. **\*\*<https://bit.ly/2I7HlsZ>**

**Social isolation** means someone is receiving low quantity and quality of contact with others in mutually rewarding relationships.

**Loneliness** is the result because of the lack of interaction quantity or quality of mutual contact that reward the efforts.

**Beyond the Conversation exists to fill in the gap since 2016. We are changing the landscape of loneliness, social isolation and mental health through connectedness built on trust!**

### THE CONSEQUENCES WHEN NOT CONNECTING:

- Dis-engagement can lead to social isolation and loneliness
- Diminishing the quality of life
- ...and early death

### BENEFITS OF CONNECTING:

- Become more empathetic
- Happier
- Buffer to chronic illness

### RE-FRAMING SOLUTIONS TO MEET THE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS:

- Emphasis on quality conversation
- Seek out your passion first
- Avoid prolong idleness
- You are never alone

**How can we inspire people to engage and work for the common good?**





**BEYOND THE  
CONVERSATION**

Ending Social Isolation

424—2818 Main Street  
Vancouver, BC, V5T 0C1  
contact@beyondtheconversation.ca  
778.710.1499

# **Amie Peacock**

## **Founder & Chief Storyteller**

Phone: 778-710-1499

E: [amie@beyondtheconversation.ca](mailto:amie@beyondtheconversation.ca)

[linkedin.com/beyondtheconversation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/beyondtheconversation)

<https://twitter.com/BeyondtheConve2>

<https://www.facebook.com/beyondtheconversation>



**BEYOND THE  
CONVERSATION**

Ending Social Isolation