

# SOCIAL

MEETING THE NEED FOR INTERACTION BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY



**AGING TEXAS WELL** MEANS THAT TEXANS PREPARE FOR AGING IN ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE AND THAT STATE AND LOCAL SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITATES AGING WELL THROUGHOUT THE LIFESPAN.

## TRENDS

- Older adults have an average of 11 people in their social circles.
- Older adults who engage in social activities are more likely to remain mentally and physically active, maintaining better overall health and quality of life.
- Some older adults become socially isolated due to factors beyond their control such as loss of a family member or friend, disability, reduced mobility, financial barriers, sensory loss, illness, or institutionalization.
- Isolation often creates feelings of loneliness and depression.

Daily contact with a family member or friend may make the difference between living independently in the community and being institutionalized.

## POLICIES, PROGRAMS & SERVICES

- Many opportunities are available for older adults to remain socially active and engaged in the community, such as recreational activities, volunteerism, employment, spiritual or religious activities, and education.
- Many area agency on aging programs provide social engagement opportunities for older adults through congregate meals, in-home services, and transportation services.
- Some area agency on aging programs are designed specifically to promote social engagement. These include senior centers, telephone reassurance/visiting, and volunteer services.
- Online relationships may be a substitute for, or an addition to, face-to-face supportive relationships for people whose social networks are limited by loss of mobility or other factors.

## GET INVOLVED!

- Recognize the importance and benefits of social engagement on health and wellness.
  - Promote services and programs in the community to reduce isolation (e.g., telephone reassurance and volunteerism).
  - Encourage multicultural, intergenerational programs, activities, and services.
  - Promote the utilization of technology such as the Internet.

Volunteer to support the area agency on aging telephone reassurance and visiting program.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Contact your local **area agency on aging** at: **800.252.9240** for Aging Texas Well resources and services in your community. Or, visit TDoA at **[www.tdoa.state.tx.us](http://www.tdoa.state.tx.us)** for this and other Aging Texas Well publications.