

Adopt a Grandparent, Powell Wyoming



Caden Crooks | RUOP III | 2025 | UW School of Medicine

Hypothesis

In adults aged 65 and older in Powell Wyoming, participation in an intergenerational volunteer program (IVP), compared to no structured intergenerational engagement will reduce self-reported levels of depression and loneliness over a three-month period.

Background

Location: Park County, Wyoming (population: 30,735; 44.4% rural)

Loneliness Rate: 30% of adults reported loneliness (3% higher than state average)

Risk Factors: Higher loneliness risk associated with rural areas

Health Impact: Increased loneliness correlates with more severe depression symptoms. Strong social relationships significantly reduce mortality risk, comparable to quitting smoking or reducing alcohol consumption.

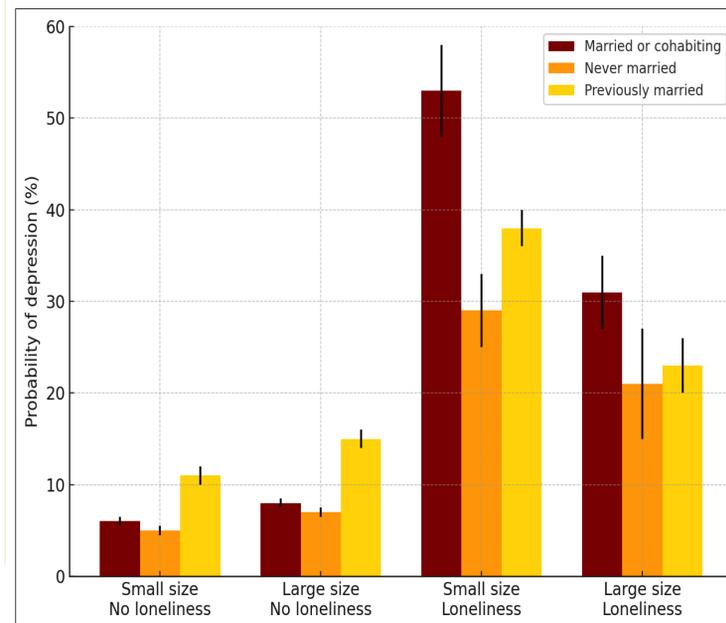
IVP Logic Model: Whear R, Campbell F, Rogers M, et al. What is the effect of intergenerational activities on the wellbeing and mental health of older people?: A systematic review. Campbell Syst Rev. 2023;19(4):e1355. doi:10.1002/cl2.1355

Powell Picture: Powell Tribune
Graph: Doménech-Abella J, Lara E, Rubio-Valera M, et al. Loneliness and depression in the elderly: the role of social network. Soc Psychiatry Psychiatr Epidemiol. 2017;52(4):381-390. doi:10.1007/s00127-017-1339-3

Literature Review

- IVP have effectively improved participants' social connections, sense of belonging, and overall self-esteem.
- IVP shows a 60% reduction in reported loneliness
- A notable limitation of existing studies includes small sample sizes, resulting in limited statistical power. Despite this, consistent positive outcomes highlight the potential value and encourage further exploration of intergenerational program effectiveness.

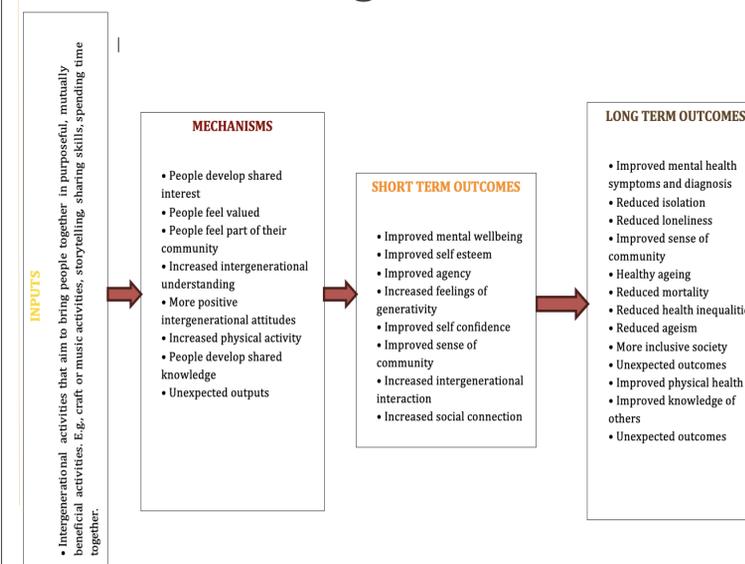
Graph Showing those with Large social groups vs those who have small social groups in seniors age 65+



Interventional Design

- This intervention is based on Contact Theory, which supports that regular, meaningful interactions reduce social isolation.
- Older adults (≥ 65) in Park County will be paired with younger volunteers (e.g., students, local clubs, church groups) to engage in weekly or biweekly activities such as walking, painting, or reading over three months.
- Participants will complete pre- and post-intervention surveys assessing loneliness (1–10 scale), preferred activities, and program feedback.
- The program will operate in three-month cycles, with new participants recruited each round.

IVP Logic Model



Sustainability Considerations

Recruitment Challenges:

Prioritize in-person outreach at senior centers and long-term care facilities. Use active methods rather than passive (e.g., flyers). Recruit at community fairs and local events.

Suggested Volunteer Activities:

These could include visits to parks, sharing meals, walks, painting sessions, card games, sharing personal stories and memories etc.

Transportation:

Volunteers encouraged to assist with transportation for elderly participants unable to drive.

Program Evaluation:

The Powell Senior Center will reassess program effectiveness after two years to decide future steps and take over project.

