

23 October 2014

Connecting for Successful Ageing – free public seminar

Current research shows that older people who are socially isolated are at greater risk of physical and mental health problems. Socialising and social group activities for older people not only prevents loneliness, but positively impacts on general health and well-being.

A free public seminar to promote the importance of social engagement for older people will be held at The Juniors Rugby League Club on 12 November.

The seminar, which will focus on how older people can stay socially connected, is a joint project of the Aged Care Psychiatry Service, Eastern Suburbs Mental Health Service and the Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing (CHeBA) at UNSW.

Scientia Professor Henry Brodaty, Consultant Psychogeriatrician, Aged Care Psychiatry Service, Eastern Suburbs Mental Health Service and Co-Director CHeBA, who will chair the event, said loneliness and social isolation can reduce older people's well-being and affect their physical and mental health.

"The health consequences of social isolation for older people are significant. Researchers have reported that lack of social connectedness is associated with disrupted sleep, elevated blood pressure, raised levels of the stress hormone cortisol, altered gene expression in immune cells, increased depression and lower overall wellbeing," Professor Brodaty said.

With his new book, *The Art of Belonging*, focusing on the importance of connecting with communities, acclaimed social researcher and author Hugh Mackay, will present the keynote address at the forum.

"Doing a daily crossword is all very well, but if you really want to stay alert and alive – stay connected. We are social creatures by nature, and what we most need is each other - face-to-face," Mr Mackay said.

Other speakers at the seminar include: Peggy Roberts - 2013 NSW Health Volunteer of the Year, Dr Carmelle Peisah - UNSW Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Dr Judy Chen - Senior Physiotherapist, Prince of Wales Hospital and Nan Bosler - President, Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association.

The panel will present on topics ranging from connecting and technology to mind-body connectedness and will be available to answer questions.

The seminar is sponsored by Genworth, the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District Mental Health Service, The Juniors Rugby League Club and the Dementia Collaborative Research Centre, UNSW.

Event: Connecting for Successful Ageing – a free public seminar*
Date and time: Wednesday, 12 November, 10am-1pm.
Venue: The Juniors Rugby League Club, 558A Anzac Parade, Kingsford

**The event is free, however seating is limited and bookings are essential. For reservations, please call 9382 3753 or email ACPSforum@gmail.com. Morning tea will be provided.*

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