

**‘Saying Hello Everyday’:
towards the enhancement of social
capital among lonely and
isolated older people in industrial
societies**

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Social Capital

'definitions of social capital vary, but the main aspects include citizenship, 'neighbourlines', social networks and civic participation.'

'a means by which policy makers seek to increase economic gains and to foster improvement in the quality of life.'



Key Facts

- Three and half year project completed in July 2007
- Funded by the Big Lottery (Community Fund)



The Team

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Wigan



An Aging Society



- Ageing demographics in the UK need to be viewed within the context of an ageing Europe and Global ageing.
- It is undisputed that the United Kingdom has an ageing population. In 2003, two percent of the population were over 85 years old, but projections suggest that this will grow to 2.5 per cent by 2020 and 3.2 per cent by 2031 (Singleton & Painter, 2003, p. 6). This in the population that are aged over 50 already outnumber children under 16 by almost 2 to 1 – some 19 million over 50s compared with 10.7 million children. By 2021, there will be more people over 80 than there are children under 5.

Project Aims



Promote Positive Strategies

- Combat loneliness, isolation and the fear of loneliness and isolation by promoting existing successful coping strategies adopted by older people in Wigan



Integration

- Integrate the daily experiences of older people into the wider community to support healthy and active ageing



Challenge dependency

- Challenge the dependency making social structures which have excluded older people from everyday life



Influence Policy

- Influence local, regional and national policies and practices with respect to the aspirations of older people

Key Features

User Involvement

- Older people were recruited from Voluntary Agencies and the public in Wigan in both capacities of investigators and respondents

Methods

- A range of methods used, including individual and group interviews and personally written narratives

Dissemination

- Disseminated in both innovative ways such as the Talking Play and more traditional ways such as reports and presentations

The Project Phases

One

- Recruitment and Training, included undertaking preliminary focus groups to raise issues, identifying and training volunteer researchers, reviewing literature, publicising the project and a stakeholder workshop

Two

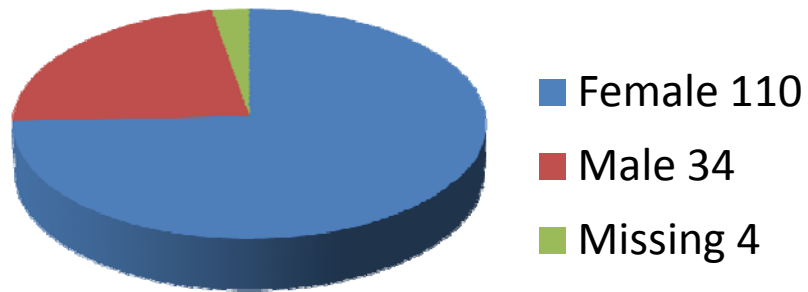
- Engagement and Exploration, obtained the views of 149 individuals on how they cope with and prevent loneliness

Three

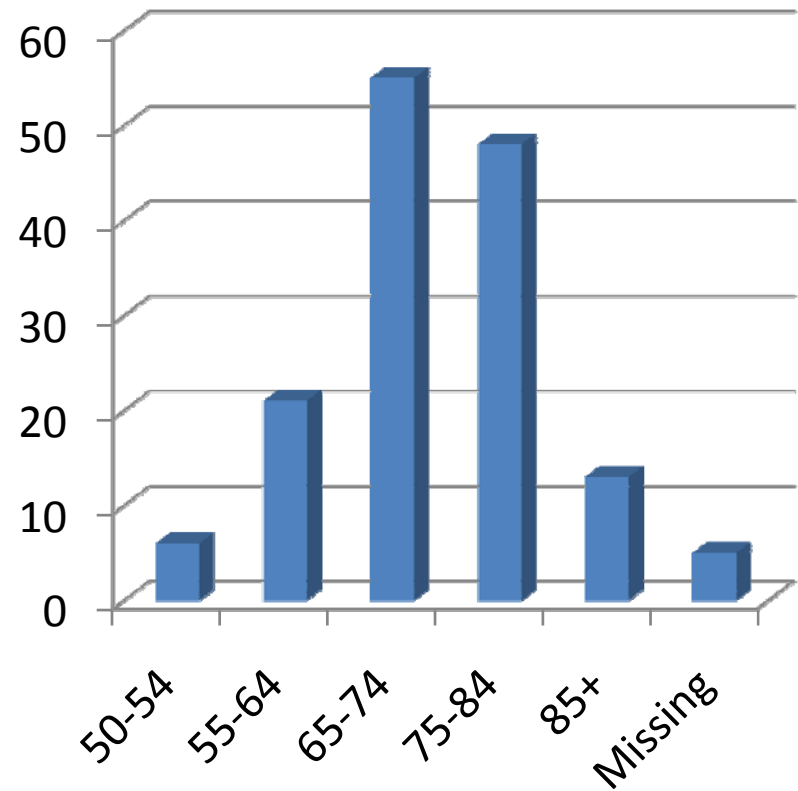
- Community Involvement, Analysis and Dissemination, comprised of analysis, report writing and a wide range of dissemination activities to involve the community of older people, voluntary services, social and health care agencies and academics

Saying Hello Respondents 1

Gender (n=148)

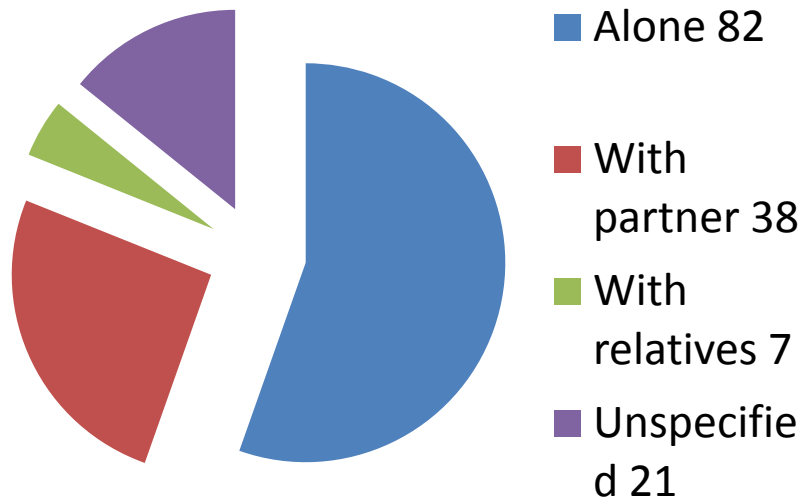


Number (n=148)

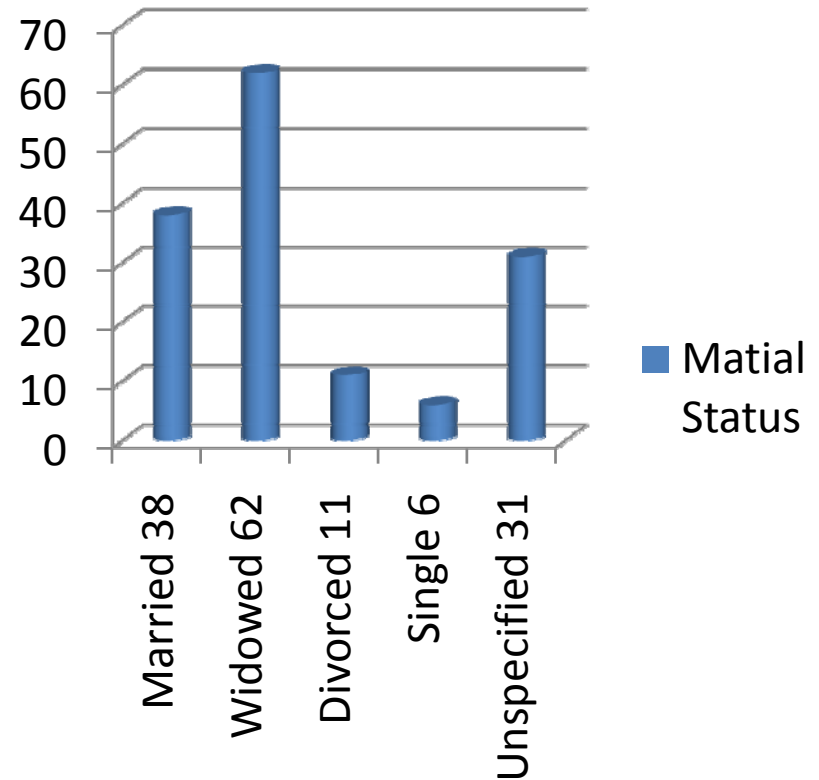


Saying Hello Respondents 2

Living arrangements (n=148)



Marital Status



Few Ethnic Minorities



- Of Lancashire Mill Towns Wigan is demographically unusual having a very small minority ethnic community. For example the nearby Towns of Bolton, Burnley, Blackburn with Darwen and Rochdale all have significant minority communities of up to 20% of the population. Less than 1.23% of people in Wigan MBC describe themselves as of non-white ethnic background. 1.1% are described as 'white Irish' or 'other white'. That said, it remained important to access the views of people from the non-white minority given that the networks and communities for such people may well be even less well developed, so an effort was made to include members of the small South Asian Community resulting in three respondents.

Key Areas Explored with Respondents



Loneliness

- How do you spend your time?
- What does loneliness mean to you?

Strategies

- What do you do to prevent or cope with loneliness?
- How useful do you find these strategies?

Services

- What services would you like to be provided that are not currently available?

Others

- How would you advise others to prevent or cope with loneliness?

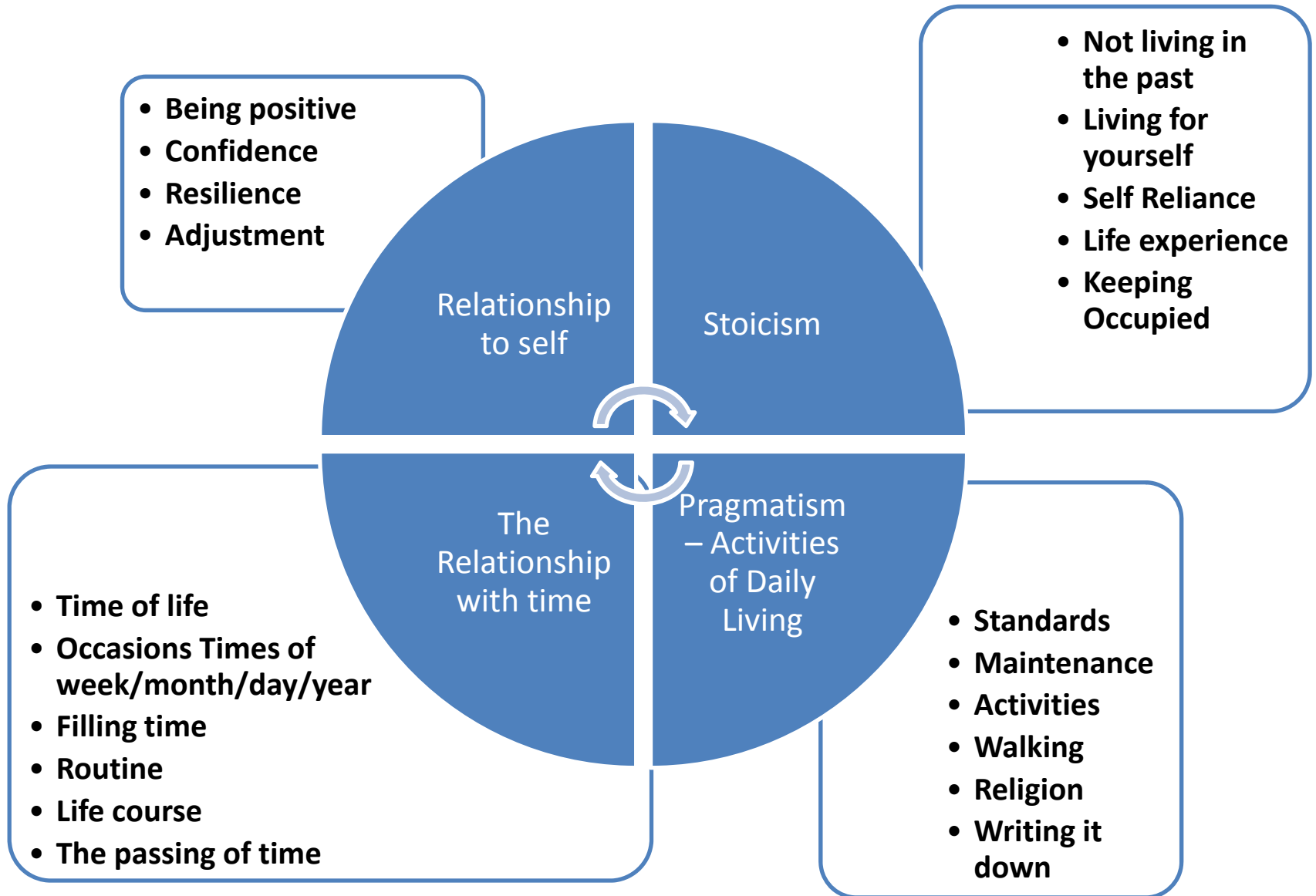
Defining Loneliness and Isolation (Bowling, Bond and Scrambler 2001)

Functional definitions of loneliness were articulated in terms of the loss of a range of abilities and the loss of practical aspects of daily life, such as a combination of health and financial losses.

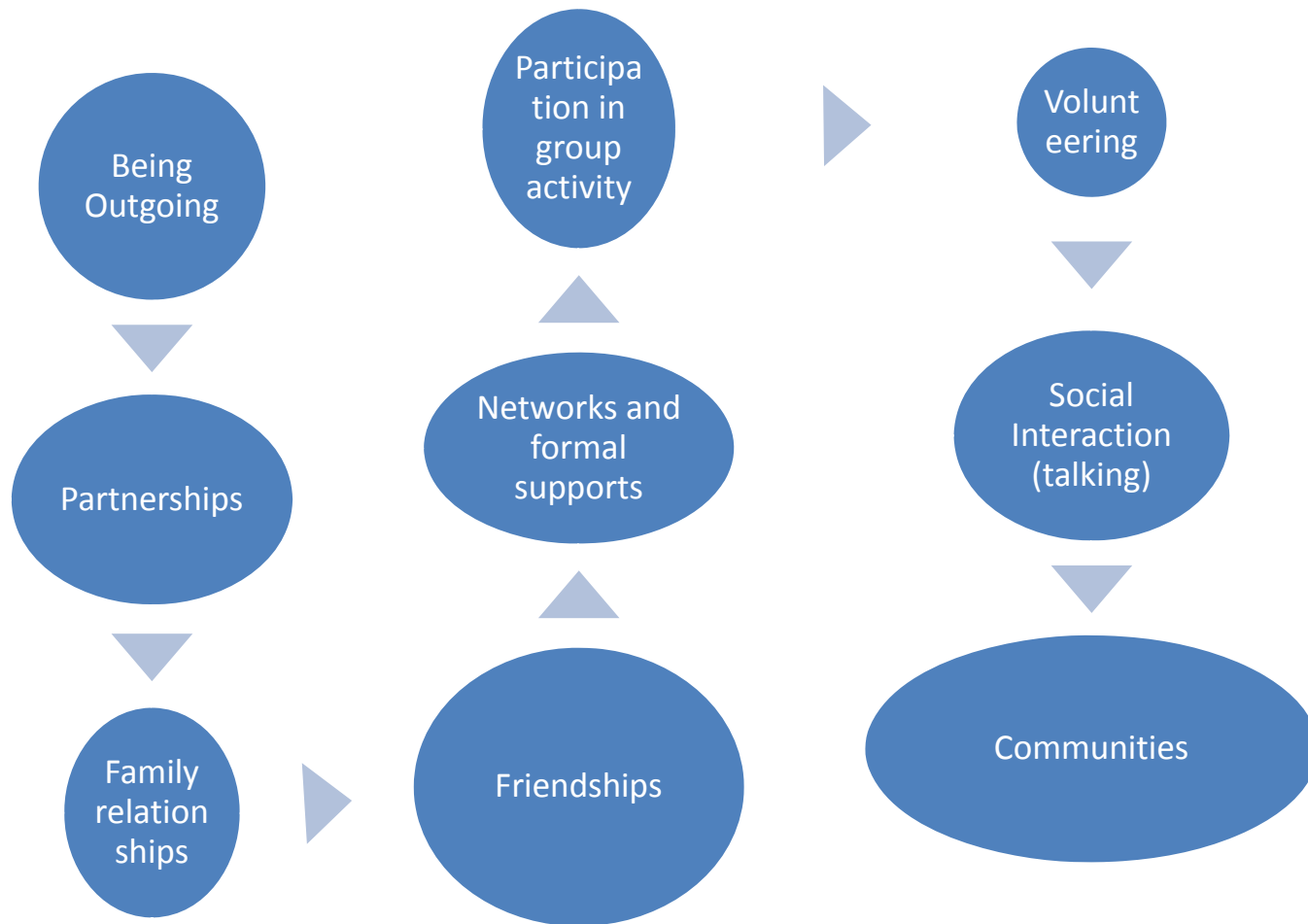
Loneliness as a state of mind reflected an individual's ability to find ways of filling time, happiness at spending time alone or the ability to motivate oneself to do things or meet new people

The network definition saw loneliness as related to the size and closeness of the social network around individuals. The presence or absence of a confidant and the loss of a life-long partner were especially important in this definition

The Individual



Connectedness – A Sense of Belonging



Saying **hello** Batik



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