

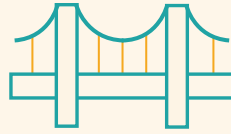
What is Social Prescribing?

Social prescribing uses the familiar, trusted process of writing a prescription to refer patients to local, non-clinical services that empower them to improve their health and build invaluable connections within their community.

In doing so, social prescribing:



Gives a structured pathway for healthcare providers to address the **social determinants of health**.



Bridges the gap between **clinical** and **social care**



Empowers people to be **co-creators** in improving their own health and wellbeing

How does social prescribing work?

A healthcare worker sees a need and refers the patient to a link worker



The link worker connects with the individual to understand their needs and interests



The link worker connects the patient to a wide range of community supports and follows up

What kinds of social prescriptions are there?

Together with a link worker, clients are encouraged to co-create social prescriptions that help them to develop their interests, goals and gifts while connecting with their community. Among other things, a social prescription could look like:



Art class, dance lesson



Community garden, hiking group



Good Food box to support food security



Bereavement network or support group



Caregiver or newcomer support

Why is Social Prescribing Needed?


The effect of social isolation on mortality is comparable to that of other risk factors such as smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity, according to research from the WHO.

Addressing the social determinants of health (political, socioeconomic, cultural factors) is crucial to an individual's well-being.

80% of an individual's health are related to the social determinants of health

47% of socially disconnected older adults rate themselves as being less healthy overall

The echo pandemic of COVID-19 restrictions means that experiences of social isolation are common. Throughout the pandemic, in Canada:

 **43%** showed symptoms of moderate to high depression

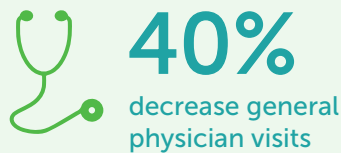
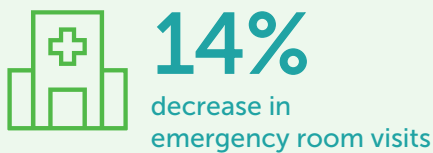
 **54%** say their mental health has worsened

The Impact of Social Prescribing

Participants in the Alliance for Healthier Communities' research pilot
Rx: Community – Social Prescribing reported



The impacts of social prescribing go beyond each client's individual health and well-being. Healthcare systems also benefit from social prescriptions. Results from programs in Shropshire and Frome, UK (2017-2019) meant that from social prescribing, the healthcare system saw a:



Social Prescribing in Ontario

In partnership with the Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario (OACAO), the Alliance of Healthier Communities supports participating Community Health Centers (CHCs) and other primary care providers in prescribing social programs to older adults at Seniors Active Living Centers.



How Can I Learn More?

Visit allianceon.org/Social-Prescribing to find out more and join a community of practice

References

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