

Healthier Black Elders Center

Covid-19 Telephone Outreach Project

Overview and Next Steps
January 13, 2021

Community Liaison and Recruitment Core



Project Overview

- Purpose of Project
 - 1) Decrease social isolation
 - 2) Broker resources
 - 3) Stay in touch with our members
- Start Date: April 20th, 2020
- End Date: January 29th, 2021
- Number of callers: 19
 - CAB members, IOG staff, WSU students (medical school, social work, research assistants)



Methods

- Caller orientation and trainings
 - Intro to HBEC program, CITI training, survey script, contact list, resource lists, Qualtrics
- Monthly caller debrief meetings
 - Recorded
 - 3 survey scripts
- Monthly gift card drawings




Telephone Survey Questions

- **Wellness check-in:** ‘How are you doing?’
- **Strengths & Challenges:** ‘What has helped you **cope** the best during this time?’, ‘Are there **new things or skills** you have learned as a way to get through the pandemic?’, ‘What are some **needs** you may have that are not currently being met?’
- **Access to services:** Meals on Wheels, SNAP, grocery delivery
- **Family & Social Life:** standardized abbreviated version Lubben Social Network Scale (LSNS-6)
- **Mental Health:** ‘Since the pandemic started, have you experienced **any loss of friends or family** members?’, ‘please tell me how many days you have **felt depressed** in the last 30 days?’
- **Access to healthcare:** Covid-19 testing, tele-health, in-person appointments, flu shot
- **Access to technology:** ‘Do you regularly use any of the following? Internet on a computer, cellphone, tablet, e-mail, video conferencing.’



Survey Data

- Attempted calls: ~2000 (1200 active PRP members in registry)
 - Completed surveys: 556
 - Left message: 509
 - Disconnected phone: 106
 - Declined to participate: 60
 - Resources shared: 81 (mental health services, masks, grocery delivery, financial services, caregiver support)



How Are You Getting Through COVID-19?

Detroit Seniors' Response From a Telephone Outreach Program | APRIL - JULY 2020

HEALTHIER BLACK ELDERS CENTER

Our telephone outreach project aims to address the implications of loneliness, social isolation, and limited access to resources among older African American adults living in Detroit during Covid-19. By capturing both positive and negative experiences of the pandemic in their own voices, our telephone outreach records the impact on physical and emotional wellbeing, and resilience of the members of the Healthier Black Elders Center (HBEC). These members are African American, ages 55 years and older, and reside in Metro-Detroit, Michigan. Members of HBEC participate in a research registry as a resource pool for gerontological research. This fact sheet includes responses from 315 HBEC members that were interviewed via telephone survey.

Impact on Physical Wellbeing – When asked what the biggest challenge has been for you, many reported concerns for their physical wellbeing and the inability to be in physical spaces and contact with others. Almost half of those surveyed (n = 147) responded with the inability to go outside and participate in activities, including the stress associated with essential activities such as shopping. Several respondents shared concerns on becoming infected with Covid-19 and worry for family members and friends who either were infected by the virus or lost their life as a result. Following CDC recommendations of social distancing and wearing masks and gloves were particularly difficult for these seniors, as many discussed dealing with isolation and upset for not being able to receive help, have physical contact with family and friends, and not being able to mourn the loss of loved ones.

Impact on Emotional Wellbeing – Majority of respondents feel Covid-19 has been a significant change to many activities of daily living, primarily limiting attending religious

"I miss not being able to go out when I want to."

"I don't really have help at this time because I cannot let anyone in the house. Some days are harder than others."


"I have not been able to see or talk to my daughter. She has Covid-19."

"Every time I go to the store, I have to put on the mask and gloves and it's a lot of trouble."

"I am afraid to pass away."

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JOURNAL OF GERONTOLOGICAL SOCIAL WORK
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01634372.2020.1793254>



LETTER TO THE EDITOR [Check for updates](#)

An Innovative Telephone Outreach Program to Seniors in Detroit, a City Facing Dire Consequences of COVID-19


Dear Editor,

We write this letter to call attention to the implications of loneliness and social isolation to the wellbeing of minority older adults, especially during the time of Covid-19, and describe our program aimed at mitigating these challenges. Although loneliness is an important emotion to think about at any age, countless studies have shown the detrimental effects loneliness and social



Progress & Next Steps


1. Analyze results at closing of survey
2. Developed weekly Party Line program
3. Training to WSU SSW Caregiver Hotline callers
4. Wellness follow-up with 81 PRP members
5. Submitted abstract to The Journal of Urban Health on the Recruitment and Retention of African Americans in Biomedical Research, Title: Reaching out to older Detroiters in a pandemic: Telephone outreach as a modality to sustain interest in research



Party Line

A Social Group for Older Detroiters
Join us by phone or computer!

A virtual social group for anyone feeling isolated. Hosted by the Healthier Black Elders Center at Wayne State University. There will be icebreakers, games, poems, videos, and general topics. Our first meet up is **Tuesday, December 15, 1-2 pm** and then in January we will be getting together on Zoom **every Tuesday starting January 5th through April 20th.**




Join Us Here:
<https://bit.ly/hbecparty>

Call in:
1-646-876-9923

Meeting ID:
438 691 8233

Questions? Contact:
Call 313-664-2616
Hannah Gianfermi at fz8926@wayne.edu
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Healthier Black Elders Center
Wayne State University
Institute of Gerontology

Sample Agenda

- Introductions
- Icebreaker
- Potential Topics:
 - Ways to have Fun
 - Physical Health
 - Mental Health
 - Ways to De-Stress
 - Exercise and Activities
 - Cognitive Activities
 - Careers and Retirement
 - Hobbies
 - Things that give life meaning
- Games
- Concluding Remarks & Next Week's News

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