WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for June 17, 2024
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll talk about loneliness, and as always look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

A few years ago, I listened to a radio interview with the newly appointed Minister of Loneliness for the United Kingdom. At the time it sounded bizarre. An actual political leader to address feelings of isolation for its country's citizens? That was six years ago. After seeing the effects of the pandemic, Japan created a similar cabinet position for their government in 2021.

Dr. Julianne Holt-Lunstad, Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience at Brigham Young University, has been researching the connections between loneliness and health for many years. Her work revealed that the top predictors for how long and how well we will live include things like clean air, medication for high blood pressure, being lean versus overweight, having cardiac rehab, getting a flu vaccine, exercise, not drinking, and not smoking.

She found that loneliness and social isolation were the top two factors that had the greatest direct impacts on our physical health. Her definition of loneliness is the unpleasant perception that results when there is a difference between an individual's desired and actual level of social connection. It is subjective- the way we feel. Social isolation is when an individual has few social relationships or roles, and infrequent social contact. It is objective- it can be observed by others.

The US Surgeon General's Advisory suggests that the mortality impact of lacking social connection is about like smoking up to 15 cigarettes per day, which is even more significant than the risks associated with obesity and physical inactivity. Do you need some ideas for connecting with others? Naomi Brower of Utah State University has these suggestions for combatting loneliness.

1. Join a class or club. Whether it's an exercise class or book club, joining an existing group can help you find others who share your interests. Our Senior Center and Library always have opportunities to learn or be active.

2. Volunteer. Volunteering for a cause you believe in can help you feel a deeper sense of gratitude for what you do have. It can also help you find more meaning in your life and connect you with other volunteers that have similar altruistic goals as you. Whether it is with people or plants or food or some other interest, there are lots of ways to serve others.

3. Adopt a pet. Pets offer companionship, unconditional love, and can potentially provide ways to connect with others.

4. Practice self-care. When you are feeling lonely, be sure to take care of yourself. Eating nutritious foods, exercising, spending time in the sunshine, and getting enough sleep can boost your mood.

5. Seek help. Sometimes getting out to meet people isn't enough. Seeking the help of a professional can give you the tools needed to combat the challenges you are facing.

And now let's see what else is new from OSU Extension.

This year the OSU Extension Food Preservation Team is offering free webinars covering the "Traditions and Trends in Home Food Preservation." I will be teaching about Trending Recipes in Food Preservation tomorrow Tuesday, June 18 from 12:00-12:30 PM. Sign up for this free webinar on our website or Facebook page.

This summer, I will teach a Freeze Drying Fundamentals class at Schumaker Farms on Tuesday, July 16 from 6:00-7:30 PM. We'll talk about equipment, logistics, and taste some freeze dried foods. I will also teach a Canning Basics workshop at Schumaker Farms on Wednesday, August 7 from 6:00-7:30 PM. These classes are free, but registration is required at coshocton.osu.edu.

And remember, pressure canner dial gauges should be tested for accuracy each year. Please call our office to schedule a free appointment to test your dial gauge. I am available for calls and questions any time. I especially like to troubleshoot any challenges you are having.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help educate and empower our families, individuals, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Make it a healthy day!