The Conversation Project: Reaching and Supporting Solo Agers
Welcome to today’s session!

- Click the *Participants* and *Chat* buttons
- Please Chat to “Everyone” for questions
- For technology issues only, please Chat to “Host”
- *Raise hand* if you would like to speak your question
The Conversation Project Field Team

Patty Webster
Improvement Advisor

Karen Barnett
Project Assistant
Ice Breaker Question

Type into the chat box your response to the following question:

Your name, organization (if any), and where you are calling from?

Make sure you send your message to “Everyone.”
Where are you located on the map?
Let’s get started!

- Background, experience on the call
- Carol Marak: perspectives, issues to consider
- Q&A and Discussion
A public engagement campaign dedicated to assure that everyone’s wishes for end-of-life care are expressed and respected.
Everyone: not just those with loved ones

Health & Science

‘Elder orphans,’ without kids or spouses, face old age alone.

About 22 percent of older adults in the United States fall into the category of being “elder orphans” or are at risk of doing so in the future, according to a 2018 study (5lines).

By: Judith Graham

Oct. 13, 2018 at 3:00 p.m. EDT

It was a memorable place to have an “aha” moment about aging.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/elder-orphans-without-kids-or-spouses-face-old-age-alone/2018/10/12/a2c9384a-cb24-11e8-a3e6-44daa3d35ede_story.html
Urgency

The prevalence of being at high risk for elder orphan status is to be as high as 22.6% (2016)
Big questions across TCP Community:

- How to support this population, ensure they are listened to, given opportunities to express wishes for care through the end-of-life?

- How to ensure they have someone to speak for them (health care agent/proxy) if they are unable to speak for themselves to make care decisions?
Pause and hand raise

Do you have experience on this topic already?
Pause and Chat

If experience, is there anything specific you’d like to share on today’s call during discussion?

What do you hope to learn on today’s call? What are you grappling with?
Supporting this population: What we’ve heard

- Faith community
- Connecting with other local groups:
  - Local senior center
  - Caregiver support groups
  - Nearby Area Agency on Aging
  - Your county’s department of aging
- Some states: agencies that play proxy role (paid)
Supporting this population: What we’ve heard

Downstream via improved hospital support
e.g. Boston Medical Center

Perspectives and Issues to Consider when Reaching out to Solo Agers

Carol Marak,
Solo Aging Expert and Advisor, CarolMarak.com and Founder, The Elder Orphan Group
Study: Understanding Older Adults that are Aging Alone*

*Over 500 members from the Elder Orphan Facebook Group answered the mixed-methods study's 89 questions. Members of the elder orphan group are more educated than most (71% have at least a bachelor's degree - compared to 32% of the general population), mostly female (98%), mostly Caucasian (97%) and proactively joined the group to discuss aging alone issues (Non-random sample)
Q&A and Discussion

Any questions for Carol?
Open Discussion

- How are you or others supporting this population?

- What is working - or not - in your area?
Resources

facebook.com/groups/elderorphans/

Elder Orphans

Private group

About This Group

Description
The group is restricted to individuals over 55 who live without the help of a spouse, partner, and children. If you feel you're aging alone, with little support, you belong. From time to time, academia or a company may surve... See More

Related Subscription Group

Empower'd Aging

Request Free Trial

HISTORY:
Group created on January 24, 2016

Suggested Groups

CREATE NEW GROUPS
Groups make it easier than ever to share with friends, family and teammates.

See All
Spearheaded by 4 orgs:
- The Oasis Institute
- The Caregiver Action Network
- The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
- The Altarum Institute

To learn whether Service Corps’ companion program is near you, use a new tool on its website: nationalservice.gov/programs/senior-corps/get-involved/senior-corps-pathfinder.

ACL’s Eldercare Locator can help you identify these organizations.

National Volunteer Caregiving Network: ~700 programs, most of them church-based.
Other resources?
Wrap up/Next steps

- Questions for Carol Marak: carebuzz@gmail.com
- Share any additional questions, resources, thoughts or successes with us: pwebster@ihi.org
- Share learning and make a plan with your circles/network/organization to reach solo ager(s)
TCP Community Updates

New Blogs:

- Death is Not a Game: Well, Sometimes It Is
  [https://theconversationproject.org/tcp-blog/death-is-not-a-game-well-sometimes-it-is/](https://theconversationproject.org/tcp-blog/death-is-not-a-game-well-sometimes-it-is/)

- Testimonials from the field: A CEO’s Insight on The Conversation Project
  [https://theconversationproject.org/tcp-blog/testimonials-from-the-field-a-ceos-insight-on-the-conversation-project/](https://theconversationproject.org/tcp-blog/testimonials-from-the-field-a-ceos-insight-on-the-conversation-project/)

- Resource Recap and Highlights of the Month: October 2019
TCP Community updates: Monthly Call Changes!

- **December break (no call) – Happy Holidays!**

- **2020: Rotation of calls/social media chats – dates TBD**
  - **Jan:** Getting started with TCP – tips/tricks and orientation to TCP resources
  - **Feb:** Topic-specific coaching/peer-to-peer learning call - Preparing for National Healthcare Decisions Day (NHDD)
  - **March:** Twitter chat and/or Facebook live event
TCP Conversation Champions Map

- Search, connect/network and learn together

Conversation Champions Map

- Connect with others doing similar work in your area.
  - You can search by location, organization, name, and filter by setting: faith, health care, or community. Feel free to reach out directly to members on the map via their listed contact information.
- Apply here to be listed on the map if you are actively sharing TCP resources and/or messaging.

The Conversation Project (TCP) relies on the Conversation Champions, like the ones listed on the map below, to help spread the importance of end-of-life care conversations in their communities. These groups plan their own programming using TCP resources or messaging (in addition to their own). As a reminder, TCP has no preference for when someone’s wishes for end-of-life care should be voiced just want folks to start talking about it. Please read more about our principles HERE.

Add your pin!

https://theconversationproject.org/get-involved
Stay Connected!

- Twitter: @convoproject
- Facebook: The Conversation Project
- Instagram: convoproject
- Newsletters
  - General
  - Community Engagement
  - Conversation Sabbath
  - NHDD
We want your feedback!

After this call please take our survey (link in chat!)

Please take a few moments to answer the following questions:

- How useful was this session on a scale from 1-5?
- Given today’s topic, what would you like to learn more about?
- Any other comments on today's session?
Thanks and appreciation

The John A. Hartford Foundation
Dedicated to Improving the Care of Older Adults