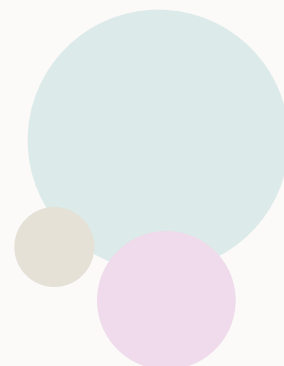


Small-group conversation circles for older adults

An opportunity for community organizations serving older adults



A simple opportunity for social connection

Many older adults have regular contact with community services and programs, yet still have limited opportunities for meaningful social connection. Silver Sips creates a regular opportunity for a small group of older adults to talk, get to know one another and develop relationships over time.

What is a Silver Sips circle?

A circle typically includes 8-10 older adults, including the host, who meet online twice a month for a 60-75 minute hosted conversation.

The emphasis is not on instruction, presentations or formal programming. It is on good conversation and getting to know one another. A host helps create a welcoming environment and uses conversation prompts or themes to encourage participation.

Over time, the intention is for participants to become familiar with one another and for genuine relationships to develop.

Circles can bring together people from the same community or organization. Over time, there may also be opportunities for circles from different communities to connect for selected sessions, giving participants a chance to meet people beyond their own community.

What makes it different?

Silver Sips is not intended to replace existing community programs. Rather, it offers another way for older adults to build and maintain social connection through a simple, recurring opportunity for conversation.

How a circle works

01 The community organization

The model is designed to require relatively little administration from the participating organization. A community organization would typically:

- identify older adults who might enjoy participating;
- help identify a suitable host, if appropriate;
- support the initial introduction of participants to the program;
- provide any local support it feels is appropriate.

Organizations may choose to have a volunteer host or a paid host, depending on their circumstances.

02 GatherBridge / Silver Sips

GatherBridge provides the structure and support that allow the circles to operate, including:

- online meeting technology using Zoom;
- scheduling and session administration;
- participant communications and reminders;
- host preparation and conversation resources;
- support for hosts;
- coordination of connections between circles where appropriate.

What would it take to get started?

A community organization identifies a group of older adults who may enjoy participating and, where appropriate, identifies a potential host. GatherBridge works with the organization to establish the circle, provides host preparation and session resources, and handles scheduling and participant communications.

The aim is to make participation simple for both the organization and the older adults it serves.

A flexible approach

The model is intended to be practical and adaptable. Participating organizations can provide feedback about what works for their community and help shape how the approach develops.

Who might enjoy a circle?

Who might enjoy a Silver Sips circle?

Silver Sips may be particularly useful for older adults who:

- would welcome more opportunities for conversation and connection;
- have experienced changes in their social networks;
- live in rural or smaller communities;
- have difficulty accessing conventional group activities;
- simply enjoy meeting and getting to know other people.

What happens next?

If you think a Silver Sips circle could be useful to people your organization serves, we would welcome the opportunity to talk about what that might look like.

Participation arrangements are designed to be flexible depending on the needs and resources of the participating organization. Details can be discussed with GatherBridge.

About GatherBridge

Silver Sips is a GatherBridge initiative focused on creating opportunities for meaningful social connection.

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