

Java Groups:

*End Loneliness,
Spread Happiness*

SIGNE PERCEVAULT,
LOWER SIMILKAMEEN
COMMUNITY SERVICE

SARA DEAN,
KITSILANO NEIGHBOURHOOD
HOUSE

KRISTINE THEURER, PHD
JAVA GROUP PROGRAMS



*United Way acknowledges
the homelands
of the Indigenous Peoples
of this place we now call
Canada, and honour the many
territorial keepers of the Lands
on which we work.*



United Way
British Columbia

Webinar Instructions

- Everyone will **remain muted**.
- Feel free to **introduce yourself** in the Chatbox (e.g., name, pronouns, organization, territories you are calling from).
- You can turn on automatic closed captioning using the **CC feature** in the toolbar.
- There will be a **brief question period** at the end – please use the “**Q&A**” feature to ask questions at any time.
- The webinar is being recorded and will be posted on [Healthy Aging CORE](#) – slides will also be made available.



United Way
British Columbia

World Health Organization

Loneliness is an urgent public health concern

WHO has launched an International Commission on Loneliness, co-led by Dr. Vivek Murthy

*"If I disappear tomorrow,
no one will even notice."*

Report by
Dr. Vivek Murthy





The Impact of Loneliness

Study published last week in the journal
eClinicalMedicine

Chronically lonely older adults had a 56% higher risk of
stroke¹

Higher risks of heart disease, falls, diabetes,
addiction, suicidality and dementia²

¹[Chronic loneliness puts older adults at risk for stroke, study suggests | CNN](#)

²[Surgeon general lays out framework to tackle loneliness and 'mend the social fabric of our nation' | CNN](#)

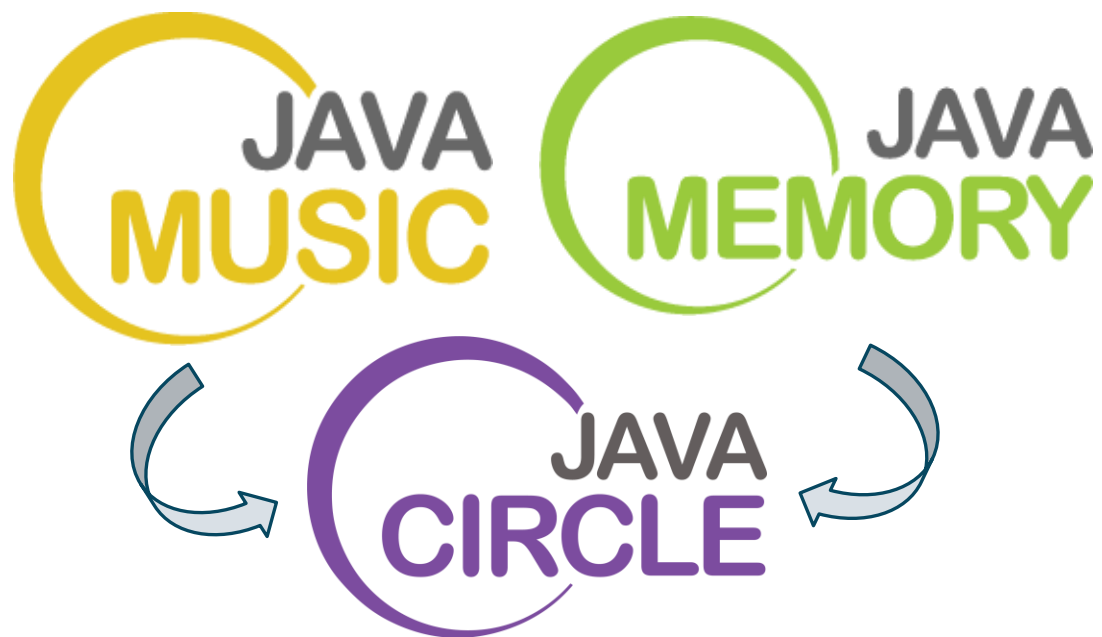


Why Peer Support?

Sharing experiences, challenges and wisdom peer to peer:*

- promotes social engagement
- builds friendships
- facilitates independence

*Older adults' perspectives regarding peer-to-peer support programs and maintaining independence. *Home Health Care Services Quarterly*. 2020 Oct-Dec;39 (4):197-209.



5 Java Programs



Java Music: 52 themes + music



Java Memory: for people living with cognitive changes



Java Circle: 52 new themes + new music (Jmusic 2-Jmemory 2 joined)



Java Social: 52 new themes (no music) for retirement or community



Java Mentors: residents helping residents (2 to 1 or group mentoring)

What is the Java Social?

- A weekly structured peer support program
- Emotion-based discussion topics
- Promotes sharing and friendships

Why is it unique?

- Not focused on a condition or illness
- Ongoing (most peer support groups only 6-12 weeks)



Java Social Program Materials

- Facilitator's guide
- Step by step guide
- Group Icebreakers and Group Energizers
- 'Java Reflections'
- 'Java Journals' and pens
- Welcome sign
- Singing bowl for getting centered



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Choosing Joy



Facilitator's Guide

The guide is divided into 2 parts:

(1) theme titles, plus helpful materials e.g., icebreakers, how to introduce the journal, etc.

(2) 52 themes, photographs, quotes and the reflections

Each theme has 3 questions and prompts



Java Reflections

Written by Dr. Kristine Theurer

"These reflections are meant to provide a jumping off point for discussions in support groups.

While your understanding of these topics may differ from mine, they can serve as food for thought."



Java Journal

A place to write their thoughts

Introduced after 4 sessions,
using the topic *Writing and
Healing*

Given to group members who
express interest

1. Being of service

When I feel lonely – I reach out to someone feeling lonely. When I feel broke – I go out of my way to give to the next person I see sitting on the street corner. I schedule regular times to call someone who needs support, even when I feel short on time. It feels good to be of service.



As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands one for helping yourself, the other for helping others [1].
Maya Angelou (2020)

Questions to reflect on

What does being of service mean to you?
What are your gifts?
How do you think your gifts could be of service to others?



How does Java Social work?

- Weekly 1-hour peer support program
- Led by your staff
- 1.5 hour training provided via Zoom by Java
- Facilitators follow a step-by-step guide

Group Ideal Set up

8-12 group members

- Length: 1 hour
- 1.5 hour training provided via Zoom by Java
- Facilitators follow a step-by-step guide



Step by Step Guide



Step by Step Guide

- Have coffee/treats ready before the group starts.
- Offer roles to group members coming in, if possible. For example, the first person in can welcome others coming in, the next person can be the guidelines reader, etc.

(In-person groups only: A member plays singing bowl 3 times slowly—like a gong.)

1. READ INTRODUCTION

Welcome everyone to Java Social! I am glad you are all here. Java Social is a community of people who meet regularly to connect and get to know one another. Our primary purpose is to share, to support one another and to reach out and help others. In these meetings we share on a different theme each week, and use quotes, a reading and a photo to inspire discussion.

2. WELCOME NEW PEOPLE

Do we have anyone here for the first time? If so, please introduce yourself and tell us something about you.

3. FACILITATE AN ICEBREAKER (choose from icebreakers list and do a quick round)

4. READ THE GROUP GUIDELINES (found in the Java Reflections booklet)

Could someone please read our group guidelines?

5. FACILITATE THE GETTING CENTERED PRACTICE (read out or play recording)

(In-person only groups): Could someone please play the singing bowl? Getting centred means putting all our worries aside for a little while and becoming present. It helps us to have understanding and compassion for ourselves, and for one another. People who are centred and present are happier. I now invite you to close your eyes for just a few moments.

- Take a deep breath in—and breathe out.
- Breathe in calm—breathe out worry.
- Breathe in peace—breathe out fear. Breathe in happiness—and relax.
- For those who wish, please join me in saying:

I am still, present and at peace, (together...) I am still, present and at peace.

(In-person only groups): Singing bowl again please.

Thank you, you may open your eyes.

THE GROUP GUIDELINES

1. We keep things we hear confidential and respect each person's right to their opinion.
2. We keep our sharing to a few minutes so that as many as possible have a chance to share.
3. We avoid controversy and discussion of political or religious causes.
4. We do our best not to interrupt, comment, or give advice while others are sharing.
5. We have one guiding principle and that is – loving kindness.

THE GETTING CENTERED PRACTICE





Choosing Joy

The Quotes



Joy does not simply happen to us. We have to choose joy and keep choosing it every day.

– Henri J.M. Nouwen



Choosing Joy

1. What does joy mean to you?
2. What would add more joy to your life?
3. What could you do to bring joy to another?



The 3rd question is about helping others

Helping others has a host of mental and physical benefits:*

- builds meaningful relationships
- reduces depression and loneliness
- increases social engagement

Theurer, K. A., Stone, R. I., Suto, M. J., Timonen, V., Brown, S. G., & Mortenson, W. B. (2020). Reducing loneliness and depression: The power of peer mentoring in long-term care. *Journal of the American Medical Directors Association*, 21(1), 137-139. doi:10.1016/j.jamda.2019.08.011



JAVA REFLECTIONS

CHOOSING JOY

Being a joyful person has often felt out of reach. Sometimes the thought would occur to me that I really should have more joy in my life, but then I would quickly relegate that to some future day when I had more time. A friend suggested that I pay more attention to joy. She told me that she looks for one thing each day that brings her joy. Now that felt manageable!

I try to remember to look for and notice something that brings me joy each day. It can be the smallest thing; a little ray of sunshine, my dog giving me a kiss, my granddaughter's smile. I say thank you for the joy I find daily, no matter how small or fleeting it is.

Kristine Theurer, PhD, Java Reflections 2022 (abbreviated)

SHARE ON THE PHOTO

I'd like to take a pause now from the sharing and take a look at the photo.

What do you see going on in this picture?



THE GRATITUDE PRACTICE

Could someone please volunteer to share one thing you are grateful for and why?



A GUEST FOR NEXT WEEK

(Share copied paper invites)

We have come to our closing. Is there someone we could invite from our community to join us next week as a guest—perhaps someone that you know?



THE CLOSING AFFIRMATION

(Singing bowl before and after)



Please join me in our closing affirmation:

I love, accept and appreciate all of me, just as I am today.

I bring understanding and compassion, and I receive understanding and compassion.

I bring love and I receive love.

I bring peace, and I am at peace.



Thank you

Thank you everyone for joining us. If you'd like to stay on to connect for a bit after the meeting, please feel free.

See you all at our get together next week!

PS: It's fun!



Java Social at Kitsilano Neighbourhood House

Fostering
Connection,
Reflection and
Community





Sara Dean,
Seniors Community Connector
Kitsilano Neighbourhood House

Why Java Social?

Reduces social isolation among seniors

Builds meaningful, lasting connections

Provides a safe, welcoming space for sharing

Empowers authentic, respectful dialogue

Goal: *Not just a program, but a true community.*



**A Facilitated Seniors'
Gathering for Dialogue:**
Engage, Discuss, Connect



Join the Conversation!

FRIDAYS FROM 10:00-11:00AM

LOCATION: SENIORS RESOURCE CENTRE
(2425 VINE STREET)

COST: FREE!

REGISTRATION REQUIRED-VISIT THE FRONT DESK
AT KITS HOUSE OR EMAIL SARAD@KITSHOUSE.ORG



The Power of a Welcoming Atmosphere

Small gestures with big meaning:
coffee, snacks, warmth

Consistent rhythm that builds trust

Space that says: *You belong here*

Participant Voice - Dorothy:

"I have enjoyed being a part of the program from the beginning. I like the social connection and the warm welcoming atmosphere."

Thoughtful, Engaging Conversations



Carefully selected themes and reflections



Structured yet flexible discussions



Encourages curiosity and open-mindedness



Respect for diverse viewpoints



Participant Voice – Val:



"I have enjoyed meeting new people and learning varying viewpoints."

Transformation Through Connection



From skepticism to meaningful participation

Safe space for vulnerability and self-reflection

Support for personal growth and new friendships

Participant Voice - Don:

"I went from being cynical about the program to it being one of the highlights of my week... a group where people reveal thoughtful feelings in a safe space."



A Home Away from Home

Emotional safety and genuine belonging

Strong bonds that go beyond the session

Space for peace, happiness, and friendship

Participant Voices:

Oliver: *"Exactly what I was looking for to give me connection, peace, and happiness. This place is like a home away from home."*

Kiersten: *"This group stopped me from completely losing my mind."*

Navigating Challenges with Empathy

Balancing individual expression
and group flow

Gentle interventions to guide
discussion

Supporting participants with
diverse needs

Viewing challenges as
opportunities for growth

Empowering Through Participation

Task-oriented roles build confidence

Inclusive approach to involvement

Small, meaningful contributions foster belonging

Encourages even the quietest voices to share

Key Takeaways

Human connection is essential and healing

Small gestures create big impact

Structure enables freedom and trust

Every challenge holds potential for growth

Together, we build spaces where everyone is seen, heard, and valued





LOWER SIMILKAMEEN
Community
SERVICES SOCIETY

United Way and LSCSS present

JAVA SOCIAL

**Discussion and reflection
peer social group for seniors**

Rotating locations:

September 17 at Mountain View Manor
September 24 at Kyalami Place
October 1 at Ambrosia Gathering Place
October 8 at Similkameen Rec Centre
October 15 at Mountain View Manor
October 22 at Kyalami Place
October 29 at Ambrosia Gathering Place

Tuesdays 2:00pm - 3:30pm

**Everyone welcome to attend at
all locations!**

250-499-2352 ext 101



Participant's Experiences

"Java Social is very good for a shy person to overcome the awkwardness because it is facilitated and easier to feel comfortable. Things you can say in this group you wouldn't say to anyone else. You can connect to one another's core. It's a deeper connection than just going out for coffee." - Bruce

"I feel I have grown because of my participation in these socials and I look forward to many more." - Devine

"I bring the takeaways from our discussions with me for a long time afterwards and it has been helping me have a more positive perspective." - Bruce




Participant Experiences Cont'd

"Because of the structure of the first hour, it feels like a mini group therapy session. As well, the groups are relatively small creating a feeling of safety as you get to know the "regulars" and the sharing of ideas/experiences is all the richer in depth." - Devine

"Java Social to me is like being a room that is filled with safety which are the people that you have created a bond with. I have learned so much from strangers that have become supporters.

The facilitator guides it with such grace and empathy for everyone and their ability to feel and say what they need while ensuring that time is fair and respected. I am so grateful for Java Social and all of the people involved." - Patti





**Signe Percevault,
Lower Similkameen Community
Services**

Facilitator's Experiences

- Training is effective and practical
- Ongoing Facilitator Support is helpful and responsive
- Package Materials make program delivery easy to prepare and schedule

Challenges and Lessons Learned



Transportation
(isolation)

Low
attendance

Political
Anxiety



What Stood Out

"THE LAUGHING CLUB"

Questions

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