Social Seniors on Snowshoes: Supporting Community Health Through Collaboration

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Question Time!

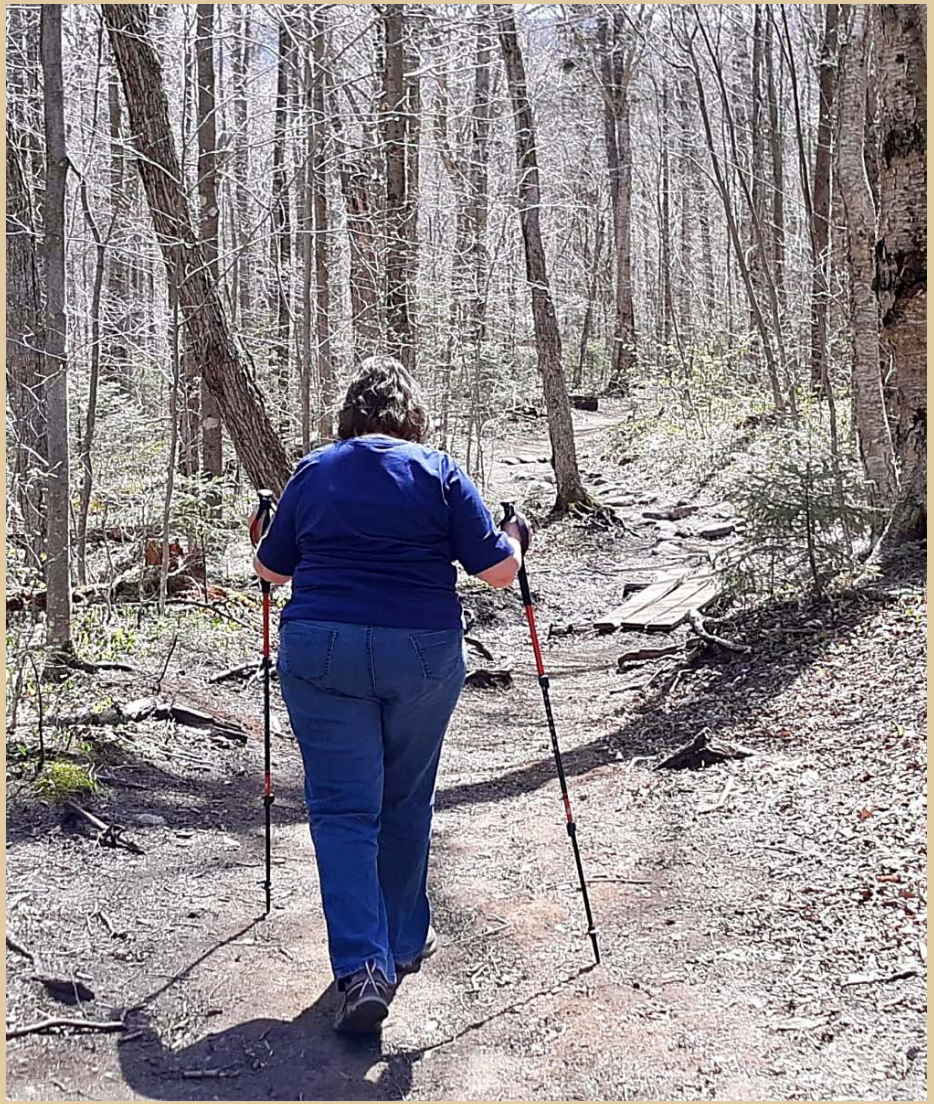
Think about some of the seniors in your life. What are some of the struggles that they face?

Examples are welcome!

The Problem

Rural seniors (in NYS):

- **Are more likely to die early from: heart disease, cancer, respiratory disease, stroke**
- **Are more likely to experience: obesity and diabetes**
- **Have less access to broadband internet, healthcare, food security, and family caregivers**
- ***NIH, AARP, NRHA**



Question Time!

What are some specific issues that you have noted rural seniors facing that were not mentioned in this list?

Not Just Seniors:

Generational Patterns of Unhealthy Behavior

The Problem

There are resources for Adirondack-based rural NYS seniors – senior centers, Office of the Aging meals, multiple healthcare access through Hudson Headwaters, but unhealthy characteristics still exist.

Research

The problem that was addressed in this study: The non-compliance of many rural seniors to implement public health practices.

Research Methodology

- Framework:
  - Hermeneutic Phenomenology
  - Qualitative
  - Theoretical: Maslow's Theory of a Hierarchy of Needs (1954)
- IRB Approval Granted:
  - Participant recruitment
- Data Collection:
  - Survey, In-person Interviews, Focus Group
  - Qualtrics used to collect open-ended survey responses
  - Zoom used to conduct interviews and focus group
  - Researcher journaled experiences

Research Results

Themes:

(a) The importance of personal connectedness

(b) The importance of the personal applicability of information

(c) Making good choices promotes good health

(d) The ability to ask questions is important

(e) The preference for interactive education

Follow-up

- Conversations are important
- Community is important
- Relationships are important

Significance:
Community Focused Design

POOL HOUSE
PLAY AREA
PICNIC PAVILION

GIMMY DEBALI
SIRUIS PLAYER
BIFF FRATGRAD
OVERGROWN
BOYS

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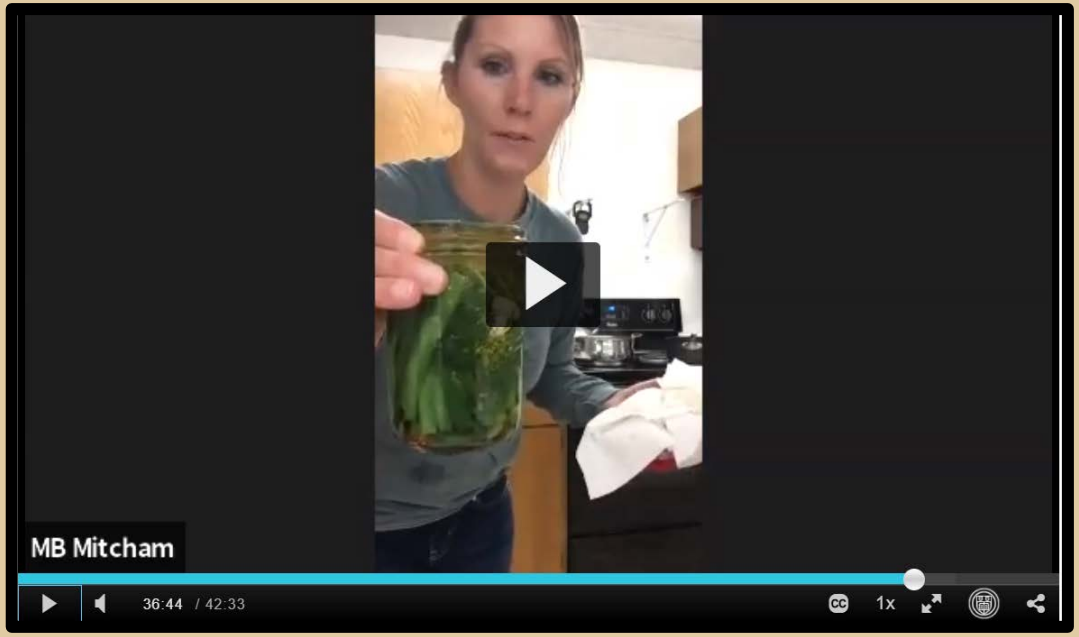
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How Does This Happen?

Program Results

- Hudson Headwater mobile health unit – improved healthcare access
- Increased distributed meals through Office of the Aging – improved food access
- Continued high attendance at Senior Center – regular participants bring others!
- Continued self-engagement in physical activity – walking groups, snowshoeing, yoga, osteobusters
- Participant feedback – lower A1C levels, maintained weight loss, lower blood pressure, more energy

Lessons Learned

- Rural residents value storytelling and community
- Incorporating community into events and activities will make rural seniors more likely to attend events
- Connected rural seniors will be healthier rural seniors
- Innovation and collaboration are key
- Laughter is a must!

Question Time!

Based on what we discussed today ,what are some strategies to encourage active senior health you think might be effective in your community?

Final Thoughts

Questions for MB:
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