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University College Cork, Ireland
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Title

The Symbolic Representation of Community in Social Isolation and Loneliness among Older People: Insights for Intervention from a Rural Irish Case-Study

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Abstract

Social isolation and loneliness are common experiences of ageing in rural communities. Policy responses and interventions for social isolation and loneliness in later life are shaped by socio-cultural understandings of place, relationships and social interaction. This study examined how representations of rural community in Ireland influenced the focus, relationships and activities within a befriending intervention designed to tackle social isolation and loneliness. Through a qualitative case-study conducted in 2014, the symbolic meaning of the intervention was explored using interviews and focus groups with participants (eight befriended, eleven befrienders, and three community workers) from one befriending programme in rural Ireland. Reflected in the programme was a representation of a rural community in decline with concern for the impact on older people. There was a valuing of the traditional community defined by geographical place, perceptions of similarity among its members, and values of solidarity and mutual support. The befriending intervention represented a commitment to intra-community solidarity and a desire by many for authentic befriending relationships that mirrored understandings of relationships within the traditional community. Identifying and alleviating social isolation and loneliness imply a set of normative values about community and the optimal social relationships within community. This paper proposes that there is a need to consider the role played by understandings of community in shaping context-sensitive interventions to counter social isolation and loneliness in later life.

Key-words

Community, Loneliness, Neighbourhood-Based Initiatives, Older People, Social Support, Qualitative Methodologies.

a) What is known about the topic:

- Social isolation and loneliness are risk factors for a range of serious health outcomes in later life.
- Place and community are associated with social isolation and loneliness in terms of the strength of older people's social networks and sense of connectedness and belonging.
- Community-led interventions such befriending are common responses to social isolation and loneliness.

b) What this paper adds:

- Rural social isolation and loneliness were examined in relation to understandings of community which underpinned the befriending intervention.
- An emphasis on place-based, authentic ties, shared activity and intra-community solidarity informed the befriending intervention.
- Identifying understandings of community can help explain programme engagement, expectations and experiences of intervention.

Introduction

Social isolation and loneliness are common concerns in later life. Social isolation refers to the structure of a person's social network, pointing to a lack of meaningful social contact with others, while loneliness captures the subjective expectations of relationships, qualitatively depicting a discrepancy between actual and desired interaction with others (Dahlberg & McKee, 2014; Victor, Scambler, Bond, & Bowling, 2000). Both social isolation and loneliness are risk factors for a range of serious adverse health and welfare outcomes (Cacioppo & Cacioppo, 2013; Holt-Lunstad, Smith, Baker, Harris, & Stephenson, 2015; Holwerda, et al., 2014; Holwerda, et al., 2012; Luanaigh & Lawlor, 2008; Perissinotto, Cenzer, & Covinsky, 2012; Shankar, Hamer, McMunn, & Steptoe, 2013). Six per cent of older women and seven per cent of older men were identified as socially isolated in an Irish longitudinal study (Timonen, Kamiya, & Maty, 2011). An estimated twelve per cent of older people across Europe are lonely most or almost all of the time, and a further twenty-nine per cent experience loneliness some of the time (Sundström, Fransson, Malmberg, & Davey, 2009). Despite loneliness also being a common problem among young adults (Yang & Victor, 2011), stereotypes that associate loneliness with later life are common. These appear to reflect processes of internalised ageism: Pikhartova, Bowling, and Victor (2016) found people who held stereotypes that associated loneliness with older age were far more likely to experience loneliness in later life. This suggests a need to critically understand how social problems are defined and understood within specific socio-cultural contexts, examining how older people identify with the experience of loneliness or are identified by the community as lonely or socially isolated.

Perceptions of place inform understandings of social isolation and loneliness. Nyqvist, Victor, Forsman, and Cattan (2016) found loneliness in later life was associated with low levels of social trust within communities. In the United Kingdom, Curry & Fisher (2012) identified strong connectivity among older people with close social ties in rural communities but highlighted the exclusionary nature of connectedness based on similarity of social identity. Similarly, an Irish study, Walsh, O'Shea, Scharf, and Murray (2012), found that lower perceptions of integration among people not indigenous to the rural community reflected community insularity and limited availability of social opportunities. Their study also identified high levels of volunteering and reciprocity within communities, representing a commitment to community.

The concept of community is complex and can be represented in many different ways (Jacobs, 2001). Cohen (1985) described how the meaning people make of their experiences and behaviours is shaped by social interaction within communities. A study by Neal and Walters (2008) explored how activities, connections, behaviours and a sense of belonging to community were shaped by people's understandings of what the ideal rural community should be. Understanding a sense of belonging within rural community may enhance understanding of the problems of social isolation and loneliness. Documenting older people's needs and aspirations for community is important to developing successful local interventions to tackle these problems according to Heenan (2011) in a study of rural social isolation in Northern Ireland.

There is considerable concern for social isolation and loneliness internationally, evident in its inclusion in the *Political Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing* (United Nations, 2002). Ageing policies internationally place

emphasis on the significance of social connectedness for health and welfare and give weight to community participation (for an Irish example, Department of Health, 2013). Befriending programmes have become a common response to social isolation and loneliness. These interventions are diverse but typically comprise of non-directive befriending in dyadic or group format, friendship skills and mentoring, or technology to facilitate social interaction (Masi, Chen, Hawkley, & Cacioppo, 2011). Systematic reviews of befriending programmes suggest the research is at an early stage; study weaknesses make it difficult to draw conclusions about their effectiveness (Morris et al., 2014). The focus of this study was on the socio-cultural context of intervention, examining the underlying understandings of social isolation and loneliness within a rural community, and the implications of these for intervention design, context-sensitivity and acceptability.

Methodology

The study aimed to explore constructions of rural community and how these constructions are embedded within a befriending programme designed to tackle social isolation and loneliness. The study drew upon an interpretivist lens that understands culture to be continuously recreated through social interaction (Geertz, 1994), involving the symbolic construction and transaction of meanings that are shaped by language, tradition and beliefs (Cohen, 1985). The interpretive tradition involves documentation and analysis of subjective attitudes towards the world, meanings attached to social interaction and the constructions people place upon their experiences (Weber, 1949). Community was understood as a repository for such meaning-making and was a central conceptual focus within the study (Cohen, 1985).

Conceptually, the study also drew upon Taylor's (2004) theorising of the social imaginary, which is defined as a common set of beliefs and/or expectations shared amongst a group of people. According to Taylor (2004: 22), a social imaginary involves 'the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations'. Therefore a social imaginary is both factual and normative, regarding how things are and how they ought to be (Taylor, 2004).

The research site was selected on the basis of area rurality and type of befriending services. The service primarily consisted of a weekly home visiting service led by volunteer befrienders with a sole focus on social interaction as well as community-based social groups, activities and outings. This aimed to yield richer data relative to less intense services such as telephone befriending services. Additionally, as a local service where befriended and befrienders were embedded in the same community, choice of research site enabled exploration of the implications of constructions of community for intervention.

Users of the service were primarily older people but included some younger people identified as isolated on the basis of a health issue. Efforts were made to select participants that would elicit a diversity of perspectives; sample selection aimed to include women and men, people who lived alone and those who had lived away from the area for a period of time. Participants were identified purposively through the service's coordinators. A sample size of twenty-two helped to 'enhance the validity of fine-grained, in-depth inquiry' (Crouch and McKenzie, 2006: 483).

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were carried out with eight participants to facilitate participant-led responses broadly on the themes of social interaction and connectedness, loneliness and their experience of befriending. These were expanded upon as themes emerged at interview. The interview was generative and aimed to reflect socio-cultural understandings of rural community in Ireland that hold relevance beyond the research site (Yeo et al., 2014).

Two focus-groups, comprised of ten befrienders, were also conducted, with each lasting circa sixty minutes. To facilitate participation, one further semi-structured interview was completed with a befriender. Focus groups were generative; the group context enabled participants to draw out similarities and differences of perspectives (Morgan, 1996). Themes explored the relationships and interaction generated through befriending and the community context of the intervention.

Three community workers were selected and interviewed on the basis of their role in coordinating volunteer befrienders. These interviews were semi-structured, aiming to shed light on constructs of befriending, the issues targeted by the programme, and how people came to be identified as befrienders and befriended.

All data were audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed through QSR NViVo 10 software. The analytical framework of the study was an 'interpretive one in search of meaning of people's conceptual worlds' (Geertz, 1994: 214). It involved interpreting the 'webs of significance' spun (Geertz, 1994: 214) by the befrienders, the befriended and the community workers across two themes: 1) the symbolic construction of social isolation and loneliness through the lens of community and 2) the representation of community within the befriending intervention. The data were independently analysed by two researchers in stage

one and the analysis was collaboratively combined by the research team and consensus on findings reached in stage two.

This study received ethical clearance from the Social Research Ethics Committee, University [name removed for peer review process] (19/05/2014) and data collection was carried out between June-September 2014. Written informed consent was facilitated by the researchers through written participant information and opportunity was afforded to participants to discuss their involvement in the project with the researcher and the befriending service. While research themes were derived subsequently in line with an interpretive analytical strategy, participants were made aware in advance of the focus on understanding the meaning of loneliness, social isolation and befriending in the context of community. All participants could avail of support from the befriending service if the interviews raised sensitive issues.

Sample

Research was carried out in a rural area with a dispersed small settlement pattern and an average population density of 46 persons per square kilometre (Central Statistics Office, 2011). The area has historically a high dependence on agriculture and underdevelopment of industrial, commercial and professional service sectors.

In total, twenty-two people participated in the study, comprising of eight in receipt of befriending, eleven volunteer befrienders and three community workers. The befrienders had been in their role for a minimum of three months and a maximum of three years. Participants in receipt of befriending included six women and two men, aged 58 to 92 years (median 76.88 years). Pseudonyms have been used to protect participants' identity; see Table 1.

Please insert Table 1 here

Findings

The findings demonstrated that social isolation and loneliness were understood with reference to a social imaginary of community that idealised former times. Key strands within this construction were place, sameness and solidarity. Social isolation and loneliness were the normative antithesis of community and were perceived to arise from an erosion of traditional community. Self-identifying or being identified as lonely or isolated reflected perceptions of the fit between the person and the idealised community, namely a sense of belonging and engagement in shared activity, as well as a wider discourse about contemporary risks within rural communities. Constructs of community infused the intervention in which a weighting was put on place-based, authentic ties, shared activity and intra-community solidarity.

Idealised community

Place

Attachments were intricately tied to place; as Catherine described, "*you can't eat scenery…but I love it".* Many described living in the area all their life and some had returned to live there in later life. Relationships were woven into place, perceived as strengthening community bonds. The shared experience of place supported relationships within the befriending intervention: *"we understand what older people living here feel… because we all come from rural areas as well, we understand"* (Befriender 3). Place connected people within the intervention. Old photographs and poetry from the local area (Maureen, Michael) created a sense of common ground within the relationship: "*they found out that they came from around the same [place]…. and she brought down a book of poems about [name of place] and they'd read those*".

Geographical spaces, such as shops, churches and community halls, held meaning of communal gathering and togetherness. As illustrated by Maureen, some of the participants described how significant church attendance was for social connectedness: "*So many people came up to me in the church and everything and said 'It's nice to see you out."* However, reference to focal points of social interaction were often described as places lost. Church was described as *"very scarce now"* (Mary), and many shops had closed down (Bernadette). Bernadette described the community hall as once a place of social activity, now replaced with emptiness. Her account of the demise of the community hall conveys a fractured connection with past community; her husband, along with other members of the community, built the hall: "*Every Saturday night … there were crowds coming to the hall, but like other places opening up, then it dwindled away."*

Self-identification with loneliness or isolation was tied up with participants' relationship to geographical community. Catherine described herself as an 'outsider', arising from formerly living away from the area. She connected more with another 'outsider': "*I don't know enough other people. I guess I was away for so long, she's a blow in like I am, I don't know a lot of other people"*. Wider recognition of and concern for social isolation and loneliness reflected perceptions of contemporary risks within the rural community. Rural isolation was compounded by the perceived loss of neighbours, eroding a sense of community and personal security. The fear of crime was a significant factor in perceived isolation, especially at night with participants describing themselves as *"afraid"*: as community worker three said, "*it wouldn't matter who was coming, if Jesus himself was coming down to the village, you know they wouldn't go out at night".* Despite the fear of rural crime, Catherine portrayed an intricate

connection with the landscape: *"at night, it's all been locked and locked and locked. I open everything up and go outside and breathe air, I love the place."*

Changing demographics, deficiencies in public transport and migration were perceived to weaken place-based community: *"they're all new neighbours now….There is a share of young people; we have a new estate up here. They don't mix at all, you see. They're young and not interested in the likes of the old" (Bernadette).* A sense of geographical isolation was compounded by poor rural transport supports, making it difficult to participate in social activities. Befrienders highlighted this issue many times: *"transport is affecting people's loneliness and isolation. None of my clients drive and they are certainly worse off for it"* (Befriender 6). Therefore, while physical place was the locus of relationships and activity, perceptions of the risks in contemporary rural communities impeded engagement in these activities. These posed challenges for interventions that sought to generate social activities and community relationships.

Sameness and Difference

Sameness sustained community bonds and was represented through the identification of shared histories and interests. Co-constructing a shared history connected people within the befriending relationship: *"We talk about memories and about people we know and years ago when we were young"* (Bernadette). In so doing, a coherent sense of community, rooted in ties and events of the past, was co-created through interaction. Similarly, Maureen described a sense of connection with her befriender:

> *"and you can talk to her on anything you know and she's interested in GAA [national sport] and talking about the children and what they are doing and cookery and I have a granddaughter who loves cooking and she has children now who like cooking".*

Shared interests were reflected in shared activity, helping to sustain a sense of togetherness and belonging. Befrienders and befriended described the connections created through activities such as knitting, baking, bingo, dancing and gardening, and how these were then used to develop the befriending relationship. A description of one befriender discussed reflects this: *"she's a great baker and she bakes with the elderly people she visits. Sure the therapy in that"* (Befriender 8).

A sense of shared interests was gendered whereby men and women were attributed with different interests. Men were perceived to require more *"stimulating"* activity than women such as historical talks or tours (Befriender 1). Sameness was sustained through gendered interests: conformity entailed men not deviating into the realm of "*women's*" activities (Befriender 8) such as baking or crafts. However, choice was valued and where choice of activity did not align to a person's sense of self, their engagement in the intervention was low. Community worker two described a man who thought *"he'd be forced into doing, I don't know, does he think exercises or what, I don't know but anyway he never came".* Catherine explained that "*it's important to have a social grouping which allows you to express your interests and hobbies. One can get isolated without such things*". While sameness was framed as a facilitator of connectedness, community worker three identified the restrictions placed on intervention by this sense of sameness: *"is it old Ireland, do you know this fear of what will the neighbours say and I can't be seen to be doing this".* This suggests adherence to community expectations restricted engagement in more diverse activities which may in turn influence the acceptability of social interventions.

Some of the befrienders linked social isolation to older people feeling excluded if they did not involve themselves in the mainstream social activities: "*an awful lot of people feel very ostracised in their communities because they're not part of the clique that are involved in everything*" (Befriender 4). Catherine described feeling disconnected from community in part attributing it to her disinterest in available social opportunities, "*quite a group of them belong to the active retired group, but that's bingo mad*." In contrast Rita identified shared activity as a means of bridging difference and shared her experience of dancing with a man she described as "different" based on being "English": "*we used to be trying to dance together, he would be so gentle, real English like you know, but I'd still get up with him like and we would potter along*".

Perceived difference also influenced people's capacity to draw upon informal social support. Catherine was reluctant to ask a neighbour to drive her to mass even though she routinely brought her to other places: "*I find the weekends are fairly lonely and I haven't been able to go to mass …there's no neighbour really that I can ask and [neighbour] is not a Catholic anyway*". At times, responsibility for being an 'outsider' was attributed to the older person deemed isolated rather than the community. Community worker three gave the following account of a woman's non-participation in the intervention:

> *"I've a feeling she's English or something, and I don't know if she's always felt an alien but oh my God, she's making it hard on herself. But she's never come. She's never come, that's the bottom line."*

This suggests a belief that community did not position people as 'outsiders' but people held agency to define their relationship with community. However, sameness and engagement in shared activity were the primary routes to inclusion which may not have been universally accessible or desirable. This posed

challenges for interventions that sought to engage people from diverse groups through social activity.

Solidarity

Solidarity underpinned a practice of community in this rural neighbourhood. This was reflected in the extent of discussion about organic supports from informal social networks relative to discussion on support derived from formal social interventions. In keeping with the significance of place-based ties, ties with kin and neighbours were valued. Bernadette described family support, equating it with proximity and non-aloneness: "*they [her children] make sure that I'm never left really alone".* Neighbouring acted as a symbol of solidarity, reciprocity and inter-dependence: *"I always say if you haven't neighbours, who have you? You're there for each other* (John). Neighbouring held meaning of friendship and companionship. Neighbourly support was notable in its loss: "*she's [neighbour] moving which is sad, that is the biggest problem I have at the moment*" (Catherine). Similarly, Rita shared her experience of loss:

> "*I said I'd never be lost only since the day she [neighbour] passed away, because she would be always in and out to me and indeed I'd never be five minutes without good company*" (Rita).

Intra-community solidarity, not dissimilar from positive neighbouring, was embedded within the intervention in which community members provided support to community members experiencing loneliness. The befrienders were typically constructed as younger and active:

> "*people in their 50s/60s who are maybe winding down work or retired and I kind of assume it's because their own parents are in that 70s/80s/90s bracket and they've either recently seen them get old or they're getting old now and they're more familiar with all the issues*" (Community Worker 1).

As an intervention where befrienders and befriended were rooted in the same community, intervention benefit appeared to extend beyond those in receipt of

the service. Volunteer befrienders described positive experiences arising from the intervention. One befriender spoke about how her role as a volunteer befriender had given her a new status within the community: "*the confidence within my own community and my own parish and my own village to be an advocacy for these people*" (Befriender 5). Community worker one expanded on wider target of intervention benefit: "*there're support aspects to having older people volunteering, and we would, like we would target sometimes more vulnerable older people, who might find themselves isolated, to see if they can get involved in volunteering*." The shared experience of friendship formed a very significant strand of reciprocity and mutual benefit in the befriending relationship, illustrated in one befriender's account of "*the trust and the love that I share with those women every week, and they with me*" (Befriender 6). Her account suggests an authenticity within the relationship that mirrored some of the norms of social connections within traditional community. Sharing of the personal self provided the basis for this authentic exchange within the befriending relationship. Maureen described this: *"I sort of know all her family now as such ... I never met them but I know all about them".*

However, some described a befriending relationship that was not in sync with constructs of traditional community ties. One befriender conveyed a negative account of befriending which ascribed passivity to the service recipient: *"they [befriended] become dependent and the whole lot and the other person can't function unless they have you"* (Befriender 9). Many of the befrienders implied there were boundaries on the relationships that demarcated befriending from organic friendships. Sharing of telephone numbers was a symbolic marker that differentiated the relationship from organic friendships or neighbouring: "*there has to be boundaries, I wouldn't give him my number"* (Befriender 4). However,

those who placed weight on reciprocity and mutual benefit within the relationship seemed to share their telephone numbers. Befrienders grappled with the ethical implications arising from this gap between the befriending relationships and organic community ties: "*do you know it's terrible to be opening up somebody's hopes and then well, sorry, I'm gone now, good luck"* (Befriender 1). While the befriending intervention incorporated many of the characteristics of social connections within community, it was not fully aligned with normative community networks. The befriending relationship was not initiated organically and being externally defined, the older person did not ordinarily have the choice to sustain the friendship when the volunteer role ended. However, older people did not describe the befriending relationship as inauthentic and for many older people and the volunteer befrienders, the relationship was highly prized.

Discussion

This study examined how understandings of social isolation and loneliness are shaped by representations of community and how these in turn, shape the focus of intervention. The befriending intervention in this study reflected concern for the erosion of an idealised community based on place, sameness and solidarity. These features influenced the relationships and activities within the intervention. Older people who were non-indigenous or return migrants, or those who did not engage with normative social activities, either described experiences of loneliness or were identified by befrienders/community workers as lonely or socially isolated.

An imagined community, framed by place-based ties, perceived sameness and commitment to solidarity, was reflected in participants' aspirations for community. Social isolation and loneliness were an affront to this vision of

community. Representations of community connectedness and isolation in this befriending programme reflected wider concerns in contemporary society about modernisation and its impact on rural communities (Machielse, 2015). The intervention was imbued with normative values about optimal social connections and interaction. These normative expectations were historically and geographically situated, imposing boundaries and tacit rules on social engagement that were gendered and similar to Curry and Fisher (2012) and Walsh, et al. (2012), positioned non-indigenous members on the peripheries. This corresponds with Barrett and Mosca (2013) who found greater levels of social isolation amongst older return migrants in Ireland than older people generally. Perceptions of social trust, based on shared expectations underpinning community connections (Putnam, 2000), impacted social engagement. Limits to social trust were reflected in fears for personal safety and in accounts of new neighbours who did not engage in neighbouring. Reflecting bonding capital, perceived homogeneity helped to connect people within the intervention; shared histories, experiences of place and shared interests supported meaningful social engagement. This is also reflected in Heenan's (2011: 484) study which found a strong valuing of community by older rural residents who particularly valued interaction with people from a "similar background" through shared interests and activities. Shared activity supported bridging capital. However, choice of activity within this befriending intervention was constrained by community homogeneity and gendered norms, rendering choices inaccessible or undesirable to some.

Eliciting representations of community can contribute to the design and development of context-sensitive social interventions for social isolation and loneliness. These problems relate to the structure of a person's social networks and/or satisfaction with these networks and interactions (Dahlberg & McKee,

2014; Machielse, 2015; Victor, Scambler, Bond, & Bowling, 2000). Subjective evaluation of social networks and interactions is filtered through the lens of the normative relationships and interactions within a particular community context. Therefore, intervention developers need to elicit a sufficiently rich understanding of the normative values, relationships and interactions within a community to ensure interventions align with the preferences of those targeted by intervention. Understanding community in the context of this Irish study has deepened understanding of what is valued in the intervention. Notably, mutually beneficial, informal relationships between befriender and befriended were sought out by most of the participants and this reflected a wider attachment to traditional place-based ties. Traditional constructs of intra-community solidarity supported the volunteer model underpinning this intervention. A sense of sameness that connected people within this community may help to explain why some activities were more acceptable than others particularly when these activities were considered gender-bound. Similarly, community homogeneity could explain non-engagement by some in the socialising activities particularly by non-indigenous members of the community. This mirrors the findings of an Australian study by Winterton and Hulme Chambers (2017) that highlights some of challenges of developing inclusive social programmes for ethnic rural-dwelling older people. Understanding community context can therefore elicit richer understanding of the target problem, inform the activities of intervention and explain varying levels of programme engagement by community members.

Limitations

This was an exploratory study based on one large befriending service. As such, there are a number of limitations. The study elicited the experiences of key actors

in befriending which meant that the sample size of constituent groups was small; however this enabled in-depth, fine-grained analysis (Crouch and McKenzie, 2006). The study aimed to be generative, depicting interpretive insights into how constructions of community shape intervention and how, in turn, socialisation interventions sustain particular idealised communities. In this way, this supports contextual and interpretive examination of interventions elsewhere. While focus groups were used to generate similarities and differences of perspectives, the unit of analysis was the group; future research may benefit from greater depth through individual interviews. Furthermore, efforts were made to elicit the views of men but most of the participants were women; this was an issue also encountered by Heenan (2011). Participation by men in this study likely reflects broader challenges engaging men in socialising interventions which in itself makes men an important group to include in future research.

Conclusion

The symbolic representation of social isolation and loneliness, as embedded in socio-cultural understandings of community, are important to understand when designing or adapting social interventions. Intervention responses, including befriending, reflect assumptions about optimal relationships and interactions within the target community. These normative values, expectations and preferences put shape on the intervention experience and the meaning made of socialising interventions by service recipients, volunteers and professionals. With a well-established discourse of ageing-in-place in Western social policies, greater interpretive attention needs to be paid to social networks and relationships, both real and normative that shape older people's experience of place. Understanding of these normative conditions may be particularly significant for intervention

developers seeking to engage older people who do not conform to dominant constructs of community. An interpretive lens puts in to focus the symbolic dimensions of social isolation and loneliness. Social isolation and loneliness cannot be singularly viewed as symptomatic of the demise of the social self in later life but as part of a symbolic construction of community. Understanding these symbolic constructions of community can enrich contextual examination of interventions that seek to counter these experiences in later life.

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TABLE 1

Sample of Participants in Receipt of Befriending Service

Participants in receipt of befriending service		
	Sex	**Age**
Mary	F	72
John	M	85
Michael	M	75
Catherine	F	83
Rita	F	68
Maureen	F	82
Bernadette	F	58
Ellen	F	92