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## WORKSHOP ABSTRACT

### Caring neighbourhood and loneliness: Importance of applying a place-based perspective.

23<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Integrated Care, Antwerp, Flanders, 22-24 May 2023

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**Background:** Loneliness is recognized as an important societal challenge, with high policy attention the last years. In Flanders an important policy objective is to counteract loneliness by investing in so-called caring neighbourhoods. Although some research indicates that physical and social neighbourhood characteristics (e.g. public parks, public transportation) affect loneliness, little is known in this respect.

**Aim:** The goal of this workshop is to gain more insight into the relation between the neighbourhood and loneliness. Further, much loneliness research is limited to specific age groups and does not take into account the different dimensions of loneliness (emotional, social and existential). This distinction is nevertheless crucial because interventions that aim to counteract loneliness must be tailored around the unique needs of the individual and must consider specific dimensions of loneliness.

**Participants:** The workshop is for everyone interested in how neighbourhood characteristics impact loneliness among people of all ages, and on how to deal with this in research and practice. Both people with and without experience in the subject are welcome.

#### Design of the workshop:

##### 1. Inspirational presentations (40')

- Insight into loneliness prevalence. Hannelore Stegen conducted a systematic literature review and meta-analysis on the prevalence of loneliness among community-dwelling older people. We will discuss how different measurement instruments and modes of data collection lead to different results.

- Presentation of the FWO-SBO project 'A Lonely Planet?'. In this part, we discuss which neighbourhood characteristics relate to the risk of loneliness. Leen Heylen, Liesbeth De Donder and Jasper De Witte present the first results of the interuniversity research project A Lonely Planet? Addressing LONELIness from a PLace-based perspective: research on the influence of

Neighbourhood and Environment. Goal is to increase our understanding on the role of neighbourhood characteristics in loneliness.

- Third, SAAMO Limburg & West-Vlaanderen (i.e. Community Building Organisation) add a practitioner perspective. Together we dive into possibilities on how to deal with tackling and preventing loneliness in caring neighbourhoods. Which neighbourhood level practices can prevent or alleviate loneliness? They present their experiences with several practical projects.

- After each presentation, space is reserved for questions and reflections of the audience.

2.Interactive work-tables. Through interactive “work-tables” with the participants, we aim to formulate specific recommendations on how to prevent and counteract loneliness from a neighbourhood perspective. (35’)

Table 1: Which neighbourhood characteristics relate to the risk of loneliness among adults?

Table 2: How do neighbourhood characteristics relate to the risk of loneliness among adults?

Table 3: In which manner can loneliness be prevented and alleviated on a neighbourhood level?

3.Closing: plenary ‘sharing’ session (15’)

A participant of each table shares the main take-away-home messages from their table.

**End goal:** The goal of this workshop is to create awareness among the participants about the impact that neighbourhood characteristics can have on the level of loneliness among people of all ages, as well as on how to deal with it in practice, research and policy. The co-created content of the workshop will be gathered in a report and shared on the website of “A Lonely Planet”.