

CASE STUDY

Building Consensus

Aligning the Field on Person-Centered Measures of Social Connection



ADVISORY SERVICE

FIELD BUILDING & CONVENING

The Opportunity

Loneliness and social isolation are increasingly recognized as urgent public health challenges, yet the field still lacks alignment on person-centered measures of social connection. Researchers, clinicians, and community organizations rely on different tools, making it hard to compare findings, evaluate interventions, or know what works for whom, and people with lived experience have largely been left out of decisions about what to measure. To move the field forward, F4SC set out to bring these groups together around shared measurement priorities and work toward a national research agenda.

Our Approach

F4SC and our Scientific Leadership Council hosted **Building Consensus: Aligning on Person-Centered Social Connection Measures**, a **two-day national convening** in Washington, DC. The convening combined expert presentations and lived-experience perspectives with highly participatory working sessions. Attendees identified and prioritized measurement questions, explored feasibility and gaps in existing tools, and developed action plans around areas requiring further research. Discussions also examined measurement across diverse populations and contexts, including culturally and linguistically diverse communities, technology-mediated connection, and serious illness. F4SC also launched the **Scholars on the Path to Advance Research and Knowledge on Social Connection (SPARKS) Program**, connecting early-career investigators with established researchers for mentorship and collaboration.

The Impact

64	Research questions identified and prioritized across six domains
11	Early-career investigators mentored through SPARKS
12	Priorities synthesized into a national research agenda for social connection measurement

Building Consensus gave the field a shared set of priorities for advancing social connection measurement. The resulting research agenda identifies where existing measures can support progress now and where new approaches are needed, including for populations such as people living with dementia. F4SC is now **replicating the convening model** to align researchers on the measurement challenges facing other populations and **continuing to support SPARKS scholars** in their research careers.

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