

The Case for Connections for Caregivers

The Science, Health
Impact and
Movement to Support
People Who Are
Lonely and Socially
Isolated



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Overview

- What we know about the scope and public health impacts of social isolation and loneliness
- National, state and local efforts
- Wisconsin Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness

Definitions

Social isolation is an objective measure of the number of contacts that people have.

Loneliness is a subjective feeling about the gap between a person's desired levels of social contact and their actual level of social contact.

Both are associated with negative physical and mental health impacts.

Definitions

Social Connectedness refers to the ways that people can be physically, emotionally and culturally connected to others, and the impact that connection has on health and well-being evidenced by:

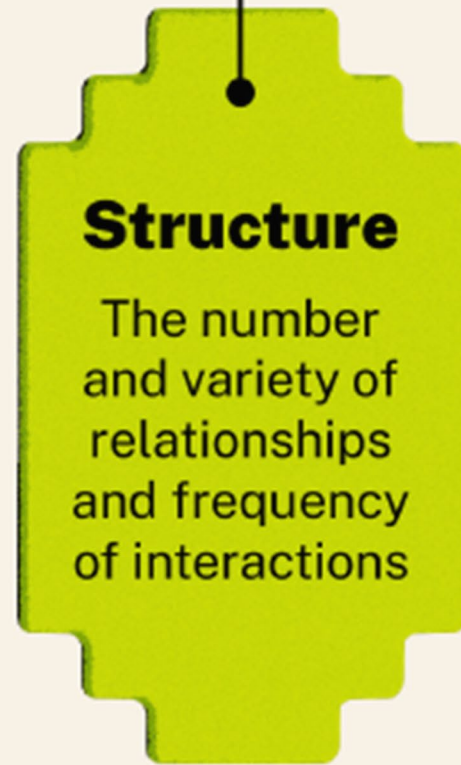
Structure

Function

Quality

Definitions

Three vital components of Social Connection



- EXAMPLES**
- Household size
 - Friend circle size
 - Marital/partnership status



- EXAMPLES**
- Emotional support
 - Mentorship
 - Support in a crisis



- EXAMPLES**
- Relationship satisfaction
 - Relationship strain
 - Social inclusion or exclusion



Scope and Public Health Impact of Social Isolation and Loneliness

The Case for Connections for Caregivers

Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation



2023

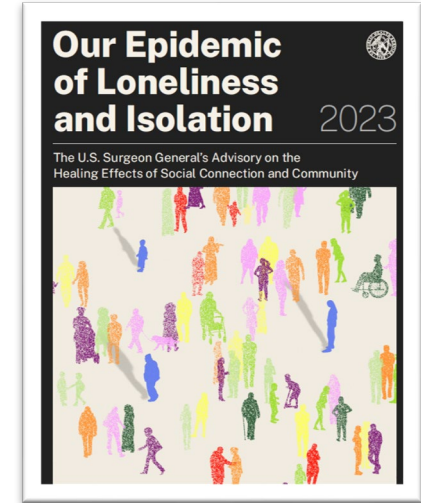
The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the
Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community



The Case for Connections for Caregivers

Some Key Takeaways

Loneliness and isolation represent profound threats to our health and well-being.



The mortality impact of being socially disconnected is similar to that caused by smoking up to

15 cigarettes a day

and even greater than that associated with obesity and physical inactivity.

Health impact

How many older adults experience social isolation?

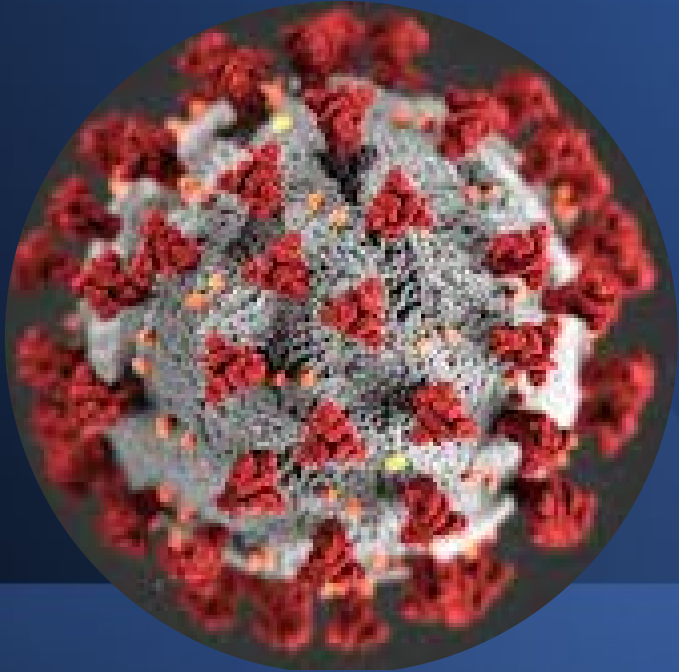


How many older adults live alone?



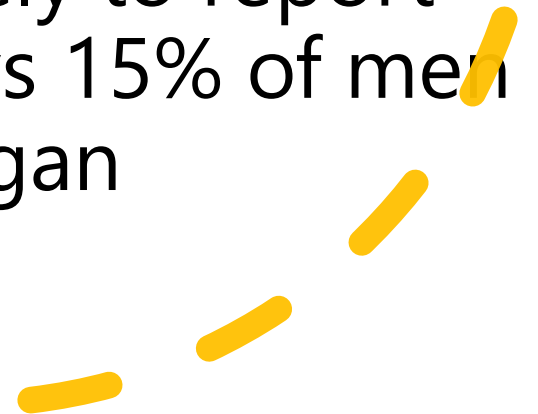
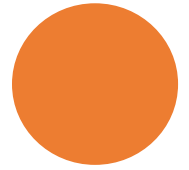
The health impact of social isolation?





The Pandemic Effect

- Two-thirds of U.S. adults report experiencing social isolation
- 66% agree that the COVID-19 pandemic caused their anxiety level to increase
- Women 50+ are twice as likely to report feeling overwhelmed (32% vs 15% of men 50+) since the pandemic began



**7 Factors
may put you
or someone
you know at
risk of social
isolation.**

Age (Youth under 18 and adults over 50)

Household Size – live alone?

Transition in work status (job loss, retirement)

Disability status (physical disabilities, cognitive impairments or limited mobility)

Transportation status – people without affordable, accessible transportation.

Caregiving status – family caregiving responsibilities can reduce ability to connect with others.

The Case for Connections for Caregivers

Caregiver Impact

40% to 70% of family caregivers experience depression caused by isolation and loneliness.

Family Caregiver Alliance

For spousal caregivers, those feelings are exacerbated.

National Institute on Aging



National, State and Local Social Isolation and Loneliness Efforts

Interventions

One size does not fit all



“...loneliness is not just about having random human contact; it’s about the quality of that contact and whom you’re having contact with.”

Dr. Vyjeyanthi Periyakoil, Associate Professor of Medicine,
Stanford University School of Medicine

What Can Individuals and Communities Do to Reduce Social Isolation and Loneliness?

- Face-to-face or digital interventions
- Improving infrastructure (e.g. transportation, digital inclusion, built environment) and promoting age-friendly health systems and communities.
- Implement and scale up effective interventions.
- Improve research and strengthen the evidence for what works.
- Laws and policies to address, for instance, ageism, inequality and the digital divide.



Some Examples

Volunteering

Social Activities: Clubs, book clubs, card groups, pen pal programs, meals, support groups

Physical Activities: Home or fitness center exercise programs, walks, gardening, yoga

Learning Activities & Brain Health: Trivia, brain teasers, health promotion programs

Entertainment Resources: Coloring books, music/theater performances, online museums, writing groups



Some Examples

Nurturing Positivity: Gratitude journaling, mindfulness, spirituality

Wellness Calls: Coffee chats

Pets: (real or robotic)

Support groups: Caregiver support and/or other groups

Respite:



**Local, State,
and National
Social
Isolation and
Loneliness
Efforts**

Family Caregiver Remedies for Loneliness & Social Isolation

1. Join a caregiver support group. Meeting regularly with people who face similar challenges reminds us we're not the only ones going through this.
2. Get some help.
3. Talk to a therapist.
4. Build and maintain social connections.
5. Take time to exercise, eat well and get ample sleep.



Local, State, and National Social Isolation and Loneliness Efforts

ACL | Commit to Connect



The [Administration for Community Living](#) (ACL) initiated as a public-private partnership working on a nationwide effort to address social isolation and loneliness.

Build a nationwide network of champions to collaborate on solutions and help us reach more people.

Develop an online, consumer-focused tool, or clearinghouse, that matches people who are socially isolated to customized suggestions for resources that can help them connect and engage.



**Local, State,
and National
Social Isolation
and Loneliness
Efforts**

Administration for Community Living Commit to Connect

Establish critical partnerships in communities and across all levels of government.

Share successful initiatives that can be implemented in communities across the country.

Find it at:

acl.gov/CommitToConnect



Local, State, and National Social Isolation and Loneliness Efforts

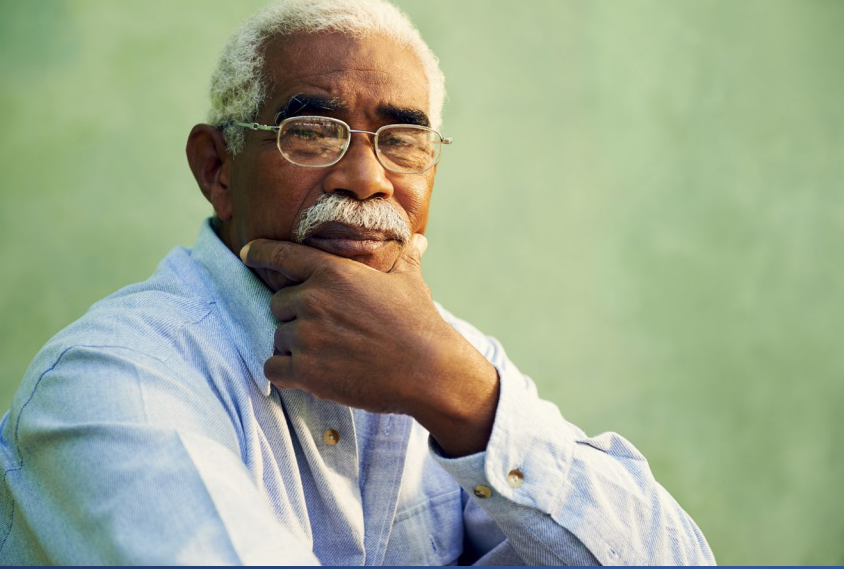
AARP Foundation
connect **2** affect

AARP Foundation | Connect2Affect.org

Features tools and resources to help evaluate isolation risk, reach out, and reconnect people to the community.

Goals:

- Increase social connectedness by addressing the root causes of isolation through a consumer portal of curated evidence-based content and activities
- Develop an easy-to-use online system that offers recommendations for programs, activities and resources that can help users connect to others and engage in the community, based on their individual needs, interests, and abilities
- Create a center of excellence and clearinghouse of best practices and evidence-based solutions to address social isolation



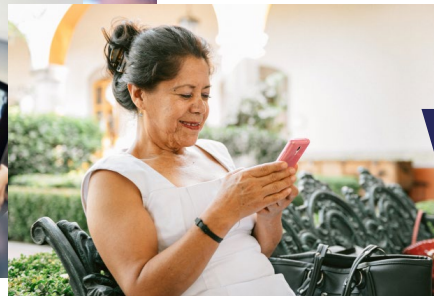
**Local, State,
and National
Social
Isolation and
Loneliness
Efforts**

AARP Foundation | Connect2Affect.org



Connect2Affect

**Community
Workshop**



Welcome!

AARP Foundation
connect **2** affect

with the generous support of
 UnitedHealthcare®

Learn more about staying connected ▶

engAGED

The National Resource Center
for Engaging Older Adults

engAGED: The National Resource Center for Engaging Older Adults

A national effort to increase the social engagement of older adults, people with disabilities and caregivers by expanding and enhancing the Aging Network's capacity to offer social engagement.

Administered by USAging

www.engagingolderadults.org/

engAGED: The National Resource Center for Engaging Older Adults

engAGED identifies and disseminates information about emerging trends and best practices and develops social engagement resources and replication strategies that the Aging Network can customize for use in their communities.

[About](#)[Events and News](#)[COVID-19](#)[Blog](#)[Innovations Hub](#)[engAGED Publications](#)[Resources](#)[Publications](#)[Template Materials](#)A photograph of a person from the chest up, wearing a grey face mask and a blue long-sleeved shirt. They are holding a brown paper grocery bag filled with fresh vegetables, including a head of broccoli and some leafy greens. The background is a blurred indoor setting, possibly a grocery store or a community center.

Learn How Organizations Are Helping Older Adults Stay Connected



Wisconsin Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness



End Isolation & Loneliness

Wisconsin Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness

Social Isolation & Loneliness: What's the Difference?

- **Social Isolation:** The **objective** experience of having few or infrequent social connections.
- **Loneliness:** The **subjective** and distressing feeling of being alone or isolated, often defined as the difference between actual and desired level of social connection.
- **Social Connection:** The ways that people can be physically, emotionally, and culturally connected to others.

- The Impact of Loneliness & Social Isolation
- Resources

Wisconsin Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness (WCESIL)

About	The Wisconsin Coalition to End Social Isolation and Loneliness (WCESIL) brings community organizations and individuals together to make that happen. WIHA participates in WCESIL. Learn More about the Coalition:
Join Us	



Wisconsin Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness

Founding Organizations

- Wisconsin Department of Health Services - Bureau of Aging & Disability Resources
- AARP Wisconsin
- Board for People with Developmental Disabilities
- Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources
- UW-La Crosse - Psychology Department
- UW-Madison - Division of Extension
- Wisconsin Association of Senior Centers
- Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging



Wisconsin Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness

Collective Impact Approach

- A Common Agenda
- Shared Measurement System
- Mutually Reinforcing Activities
- Continuous Communication
- Backbone Support Organization



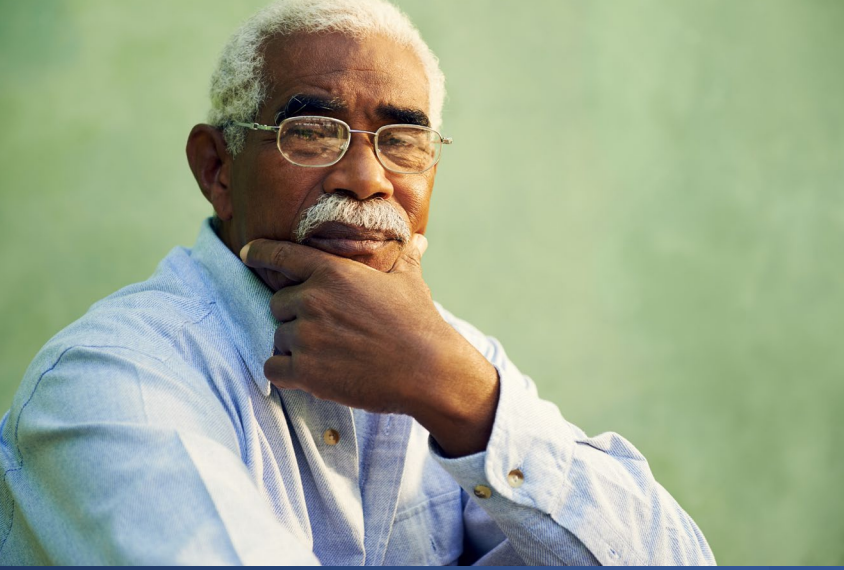
Wisconsin Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness

Public Awareness

Raise awareness of loneliness as a public health issue and share strategies to improve connections and create a feeling of purpose.

Research and Share

Create a research-driven knowledge base to support activities and interventions to be deployed locally.



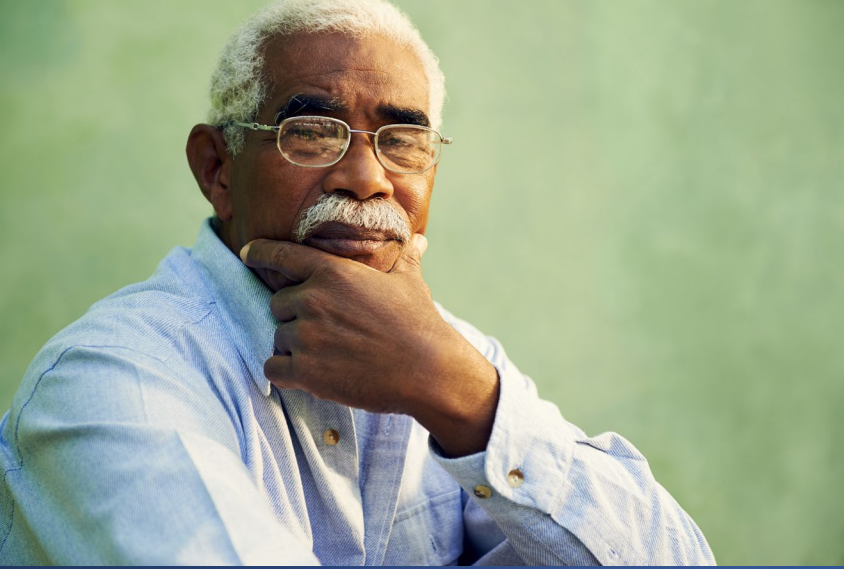
Wisconsin Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness

Detect and Respond

Share methods for identifying loneliness and provide access to meaningful and culturally-relevant resources and services.

Advocate

Seek public policy solutions that combat the root causes and adverse consequences of isolation and loneliness.



Wisconsin Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness

Wisconsin Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness

What if we could build communities where everyone feels a sense of belonging? Where real connections between people create impactful relationships? Where we all live with meaning and purpose?

The Wisconsin Coalition to End Social Isolation and Loneliness is bringing community organizations and individuals together to make that happen.

Upcoming Events & Learning Opportunities

Find resources, tools and learn about coalition initiatives to support older adults and people with disabilities in communities throughout Wisconsin.



Research, Data & Advocacy

Information, tools and initiatives to support local action and improved policy.



Raising Awareness

Alerting people to the scope and health impacts and creating opportunities for connection.

About Us

Learn more about our focus areas, goals (click image) and organizations leading the effort (click below).

Steering Committee



Join Us!

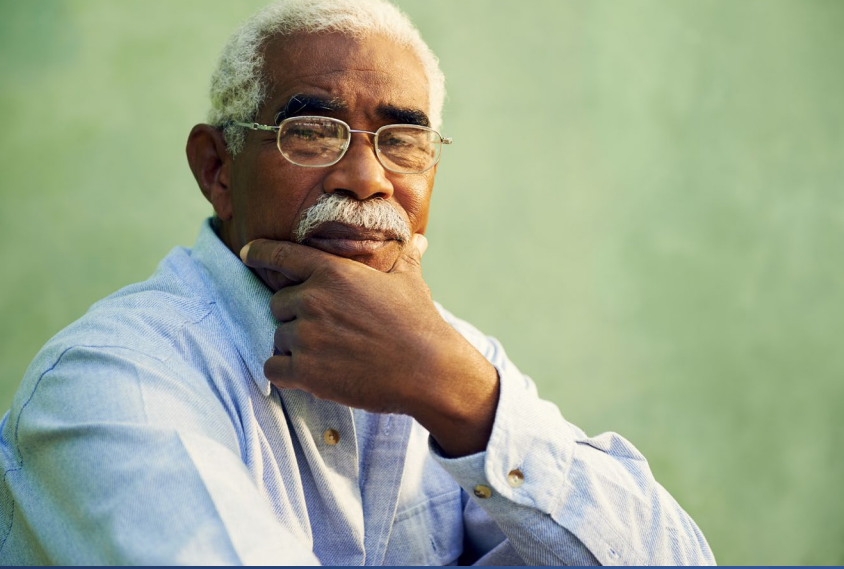
Everyone is welcome to be part of the movement. If you're interested in joining the coalition, learn more and fill out our survey at the link below. Or, if you've already joined, log in to our members page to access work group information.

Join the Coalition

For WCESIL Members

Social Isolation & Loneliness: What's the Difference?

Social Isolation: The objective experience



Wisconsin Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness

Wisconsin Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness

Creating Meaningful Connections:

Reducing Social Isolation and Loneliness in Wisconsin Communities

Looking for ways to support older adults and people with disabilities who are lonely and/or isolated in your community? Join us for two webinars where you'll hear about state and local efforts to provide meaningful connections.

**Webinar #1:
Engaging the Community in Volunteerism to Promote Purpose and Connection**

Volunteer opportunities provide bi-directional support to the community. Hear from volunteer organizations on the impact of volunteerism on both volunteers and recipients.

When: Tuesday, November 15 | Noon - 1:30 pm CST

Register Here for Webinar #1

**Webinar #2:
Initiatives & Innovations to Impact Loneliness and Social Isolation**

Learn about national, state and local efforts to support community members and engage in a discussion of how efforts can work in your area or community.

When: Thursday, November 17 | Noon - 1:30 pm CST

Register Here for Webinar #2

Visit wihealthyaging.org/initiatives/isolation-and-loneliness/



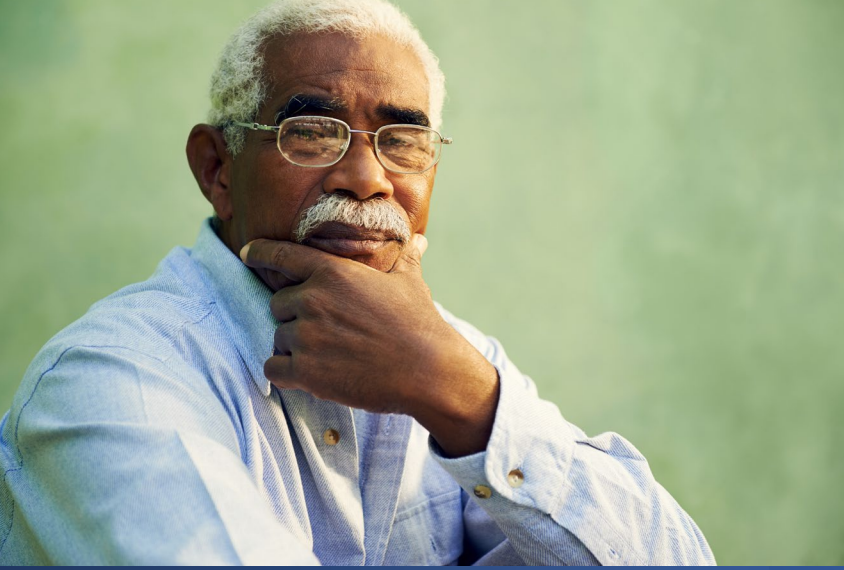
Who should attend?

Community members and professionals with an interest in developing community responses to loneliness and social isolation including those in community-based organizations, health and managed care, public health, aging offices and ADRCs, independent living centers, senior living facilities, caregiver support and more!

**Contact
Carleigh Olson
for more
information.**

Brought to you by:

Wisconsin Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness



Wisconsin Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness

Tip for Building Connections:

How's Your Neighbor?

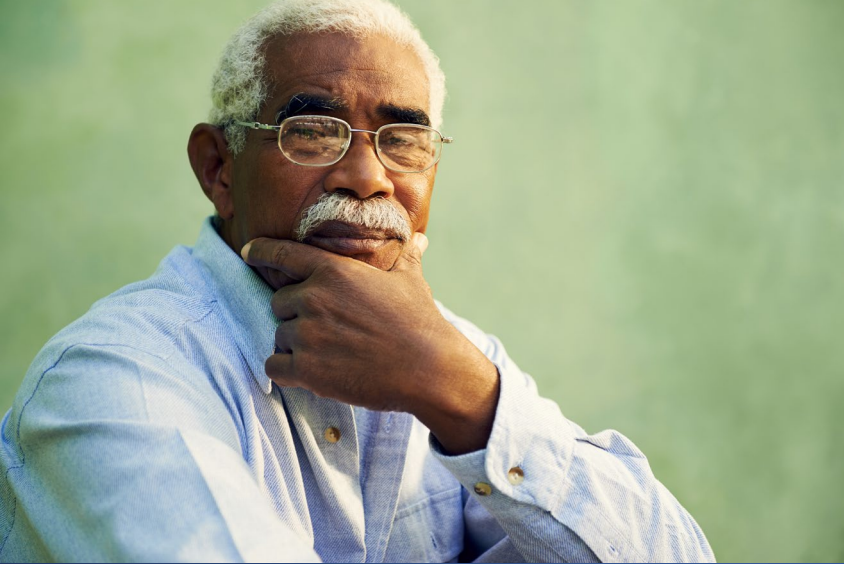
Is there someone in your family or community who may be lonely and isolated? There are simple ways to help. It starts with reaching out.

Stop by, call, schedule a video chat.

Invite them to an event or over for coffee.

Reach out. Stay in touch!





WCESIL Opportunities

What Can You Do?

Join the Movement

- Become active in the coalition
- Personally reach out to family and/or friends to provide a meaningful connection
- Share opinions/provide feedback
- Stay informed

wihealthyaging.org/wisconsin-coalition-to-end-social-isolation-loneliness



Thank you!

Kris Krasnowski –

Executive Director

Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging

kris.krasnowski@wihealthyaging.org

wiha

Wisconsin Institute
for Healthy Aging

What Can Individuals and Communities Do to Reduce Social Isolation and Loneliness?

The Six Pillars to Advance Social Connection

- Pillar 1: Strengthen Social Infrastructure in Local Communities
- Pillar 2: Enact Pro-Connection Public Policies
- Pillar 3: Mobilize the Health Sector
- Pillar 4: Reform Digital Environments
- Pillar 5: Deepen our Knowledge
- Pillar 6: Cultivate a Culture of Connection