



## Coping with Social Isolation Resource

A 2023 report from the US Department of Health and Human Services mentions that approximately half of the US population reported social isolation and loneliness. The physical and mental effects of social isolation can have lasting effects like increased risk for heart disease, stroke, and even cognitive impairment. Use this information for yourself or someone you know experiencing social isolation and loneliness.

### Social Isolation can:

- Be as devastating as smoking 15 cigarettes a day
- Increase risk of heart disease by 29%
- Increase risk of stroke by 32%
- Increase risk of premature death by 26%

### Strategies for Approaching Social Isolation

- For individuals:
  - Understand the power of social connection and the consequences of social disconnection
  - Reflect on the core values of connection
  - Seek help during times of struggle
  - Be open with your healthcare provider
  - Be responsive, supportive, and practice gratitude
  - Invest time in nurturing your relationships with friends and loved ones
  - Minimize distractions during conversations
  - Actively engage with people of different backgrounds and experiences
  - Seek out opportunities to serve and support others
  - Make time for civic engagement
  - Participate in social and community groups
  - Reduce practices that lead to feelings of disconnection from others
- For caregivers:
  - Invest in your relationship with your loved one
  - Encourage and model healthy social connection to peers
  - Reduce behaviors and experiences that may increase the risk of social disconnection
  - Look out for warning signs of loneliness and social isolation
- For community-based organizations:
  - Create opportunities for engagement
  - Embed social connection
  - Actively seek and build partnerships
  - Advance education and awareness efforts
  - Create and provide education, resources, and support programs
  - Foster a culture of connection in a broader community



## How Lonely are You? UCLA Loneliness Scale

**Instructions:** The following statements describe how people sometimes feel. For each statement please indicate how often you feel the way described using the numbers below. **There are no right or wrong answers.**

**Scoring:** 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Always

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. How often do you feel unhappy doing so many things alone?                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. How often do you feel you have no one to talk to?                                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. How often do you feel you cannot tolerate being so alone?                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. How often do you feel as if no one understands you?                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. How often do you find yourself waiting for people to call or write?              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. How often do you feel completely alone?  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. How often do you feel unable to reach out and communicate with those around you? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. How often do you feel starved for company?                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. How often do you feel it is difficult for you to make friends?                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. How often do you feel shut out and excluded by others?                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Final score   | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### Scoring

A total score is computed by adding up the response to each question. The average loneliness score on the measure is 20. A score of 25 or higher reflects a high level of loneliness. A score of 30 or higher reflects a very high level of loneliness.

### Additional Resources

- [Keiro's Social Isolation Fact Sheet](#)
- [Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community \(2023\)](#)
- [UCLA Loneliness Scale](#)