



# The Caregiver Toolkit

*Social Isolation and Loneliness in  
Caregivers*

# Meeting Objectives

- 1 Understand the difference between social isolation and loneliness
- 2 Discuss risk factors of social isolation and loneliness
- 3 Review effects of social isolation and loneliness
- 4 Reflect on caregiver experiences with social isolation and loneliness
- 5 Discuss helpful tips to reduce social isolation and loneliness

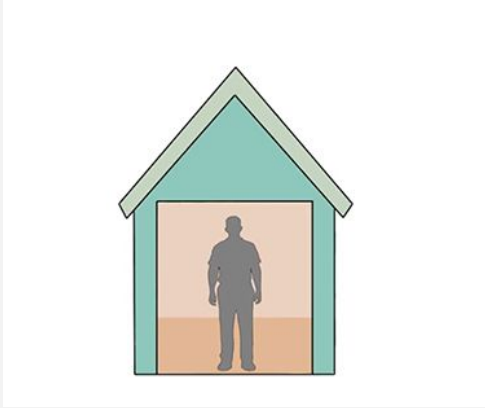
# Social Connectedness

“the degree to which people have and perceive a desired number, quality, and diversity of relationships that create a sense of belonging, and being cared for, valued, and supported.” - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023

- ❖ People are by nature social creatures
- ❖ Social connectedness is important for our survival
- ❖ Improves mental and physical health outcomes



# Social Isolation Vs. Loneliness



## Social Isolation

- a lack of social connections
- can lead to loneliness in some people, while others can feel lonely without being socially isolated



## Loneliness

- the feeling of being alone, regardless of the amount of social contact



# A Population at Risk

You may be at a greater risk of social isolation and loneliness if you:

- Live alone
- Can't leave your home
- Had a major loss or life change
- Struggle with money
- Are a caregiver
- Have psychological or cognitive challenges, or depression
- Have limited social support
- Have trouble hearing
- Live in a rural, unsafe, and/or hard-to-reach neighborhood
- Have language barriers where you live
- Experience age, racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity discrimination
- Are not meaningfully engaged in activities or are feeling a lack of purpose



More than  $\frac{1}{3}$

Of adults aged 45 and older feel lonely

Nearly  $\frac{1}{4}$

Of adults aged 65 and older are socially isolated

Nearly 10%

Of caregivers felt often or always lonely

**HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE**

**HEART DISEASE**

**OBESITY**

**WEAK IMMUNITY**

# Effects

**COGNITIVE DECLINE**

**ANXIETY**

**DEPRESSION**

**DEMENTIA**



# Caregiver Report

- ❖ *“I can't do so much as I used to do. I can't leave him in the house, I can't go off and leave him, he's always got to be with me. My life has narrowed down a bit.”*



# Caregiver Report

- ❖ *“When you're looking after someone all the time, you're thinking about them a lot more than you're thinking about your own health, and so that can be really isolating because you stop putting yourself first and you stop looking at what your hobbies are and what makes you happy.”*



# Caregiver Report

- ❖ *“It's not loneliness in feeling you've got nobody to turn to, it's loneliness in that nobody can really help in a way.”*



# Caregiver Report

- ❖ *“You are really alone with those feelings because I think as a carer, what you really need, to be honest, is reassurance that you're doing the right thing and you don't get it.”*



# Reflect

*Describe a time when you felt lonely or socially isolated as a caregiver.*

# Self-Assessment Checklist

Yes/No

I live alone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I see or talk to my family members one or more times per week.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I see or talk to my friends one or more times per week.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I provide daily care or support to a family member or friend who needs assistance with everyday tasks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I generally have a ride or the transportation that I need to get where I want to go.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is difficult or impossible to leave my home without assistance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel that I make a meaningful contribution to the world or the people around me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On a weekly basis I participate in social activities with family/friends or attend group activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I often feel that I lack companionship.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I often feel left out.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I had a problem and needed help or advice, I know someone I could rely on.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I had good news or an interesting story to tell, I know someone I could tell.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Within the past year I have suffered a major loss or change, like death of a loved one or retirement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Scoring:

2 “yes”: You are at risk for isolation but by becoming aware of the risk factors, you can take steps to avoid becoming isolated.

3 or more “yes”: You may already be experiencing the negative consequences of isolation and would benefit from taking steps to reconnect and address the barriers that may be causing you isolation.

# Tips



- ❖ Join a support group, virtually or in person
- ❖ Stay in touch with family, friends, and neighbors in person, by phone, or online
- ❖ Find a valued social role
- ❖ Participate in online events or forums
- ❖ Consider adopting a pet
- ❖ Join a group, club, or class related to an interest or hobby (books, art, sports)



*Activity Time!*





# 2-MINUTE MEDITATION



Questions?

# Satisfaction Survey

Please scan the QR code to fill out



# References

Scan the QR below

