

Connect2Affect



Community Workshop

Welcome!

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with the generous support of



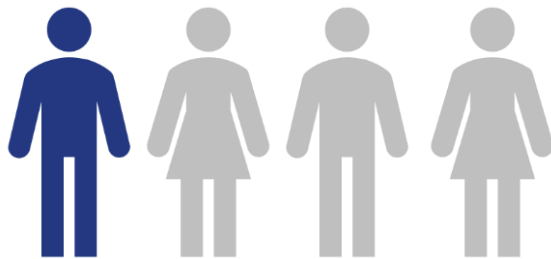
[Learn more about staying connected ▶](#)

Let's Get Acquainted!

- [Facilitator, list your name here]
- [List the “icebreaker” question you select from the Facilitator Guide here]

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Social isolation affects
nearly **1 in 4** older adults.



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About AARP Foundation

AARP Foundation works to end senior poverty by helping vulnerable older adults build economic opportunity and social connectedness.

As AARP's charitable affiliate, we serve AARP members and nonmembers alike. Bolstered by vigorous legal advocacy, we spark bold, innovative solutions that foster resilience, strengthen communities and restore hope.

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About Connect2Affect

When people connect, they affect each other's lives.

That's the premise behind Connect2Affect, a platform powered by AARP Foundation to help older adults build the social connections they need to thrive.



Social Isolation was a health issue *before* the current pandemic.

Research shows that the negative health effects of chronic isolation and loneliness, while harmful at any age, are especially dangerous for people over 50.

Social isolation and loneliness are associated with:

- Higher blood pressure
- Increased susceptibility to the flu
- Greater risk of heart disease
- Earlier onset of dementia

Social isolation is as bad for health as smoking **15 cigarettes** a day.



Social Isolation & Loneliness

Objective

Social isolation typically refers to the objective lack of (or limited) social contact with others and is marked by a person having few social network ties, having infrequent social contact, or, potentially, living alone.

Subjective

Loneliness refers to the perception of social isolation or the subjective feeling of being lonely.

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What can we do about it?

So, what is social isolation?

It's the result of being disconnected from support groups of family, friends and community. **Risk factors and causes of isolation include:**

Societal / Community



Limited/unaffordable transportation



Rural, unsafe or inaccessible neighborhood



Societal barriers (ageism or other forms of discrimination)

Individual



A low income



Being a caregiver



Chronic health conditions



Hearing/vision loss



Retirement



Limited mobility



Living alone



Loss of memory



Loss of a spouse

Fixing broken connections can help people thrive.

Ways organizations can help people fix broken connections:



Treat health issues that create barriers to connection. Like fall prevention programs that increase balance, strength, and the confidence to go out more often.



Provide support through major life transitions. Support groups can help someone feel connected while coping with a significant change.



Address societal barriers that exclude older adults. For instance, policy changes that support an older workforce.



Ensure availability of services and support tailored to the needs of diverse communities. Home-sharing models can make aging in place more affordable.



Create opportunity for affordable and accessible transportation. Volunteer transportation services make it easier for older adults to get around their community.

Recommendations

Consensus Study: Social Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults: Opportunities for the Health Care System

- Develop a more robust evidence base for effective assessment, prevention, and intervention strategies for social isolation and loneliness
- Translate current research into health care practices in order to reduce the negative health impacts of social isolation and loneliness
- Improve awareness of the health and medical impacts of social isolation and loneliness across the health care workforce and among members of the public
- Strengthen ongoing education and training related to social isolation and loneliness in older adults for the health care workforce
- Strengthen ties between the health care system and community-based networks and resources that address social isolation and loneliness in older adults



Recommendations

Consensus Study: Social Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults: Opportunities for the Health Care System

- **GOAL 3: IMPROVE AWARENESS**
 - Recommendation 8-2: Health and aging organizations, relevant government agencies, and consumer-facing organizations should create public awareness and education campaigns that highlight the health impacts of social isolation and loneliness in adults.
- **GOAL 5: STRENGTHEN TIES BETWEEN THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM AND COMMUNITY-BASED NETWORKS AND RESOURCES**
 - Recommendation 9-1: Health care providers, organizations, and systems should partner with social service providers, including those serving vulnerable communities, in order to create effective team-based care (which includes services such as transportation and housing support) and to promote the use of tailored community-based services to address social isolation and loneliness in older adults.



The COVID-19 Social Connectivity Paradox

- Social [physical] distancing is both harmful and protective to older adults
- Pandemic underscores the need for clinical and community-based organizational collaboration to maintain the provision of services and programs to older adults
- Elements of solutions are already present:
 - Older adults can be mobilized and capitalized upon as volunteers so they can remain engaged and combat social isolation risk among peers, family, etc
 - The aging social services network is critical infrastructure for reaching older underserved and/or marginalized persons
 - Pre-COVID-19, awareness about the pervasiveness and seriousness of social isolation had begun to spur partnership and action to address its enormous human and financial tolls.
- Coordinated community action is now more critical than ever
 - Older adults know they must physically isolate but often do not know the importance of maintaining strong social connections
 - They may also lack the tactics or ability to maintain connections virtually
- Immediate Action Items:
 - Raise awareness on the issue among professional and lay communities
 - Universal access to reliable, broadband internet
 - Improved accessibility, feasibility, and appropriateness of technology for older persons
 - Longer term (but start now!): community resource mapping and navigation, clinical/provider partnership with community based organizations on screening/referral systems with funding

Tips for getting and staying connected.

We can all take steps to maintain and strengthen our ties to family and friends, expand our social circles, and involved in our communities — even during a pandemic that requires physical distancing to lessen disease spread.

- 1 Commit to contacting a friend or family member you haven't been in touch with regularly.
- 2 Schedule a time every day to call a friend.
- 3 Get outside and walk to stay physically active and enjoy fresh air.
- 4 Get involved in online group activities and trusted virtual communities — for example, groups that are organized around faith, fitness, movies, music, sports or books.
- 5 Check to see if your local senior center is offering virtual games or other activities online.
- 6 Volunteer to deepen your sense of purpose. There ways you can help from the safety of your home, like making calls, working on mailings or fundraising.
- 7 Say hello to your neighbors — just remember to keep a healthy distance of at least 6 feet! Meeting new people in your community is a great way to connect with people of all ages.
- 8 Do something pleasant or soothing for yourself every day. Keeping a positive frame of mind helps us connect.

What have you been doing to stay connected?

Local Organizations and Resources

- [Fill in example A]
- [Fill in example B]
- [Fill in example C]

National Organizations and Resources

- **AARP Foundation Connect2Affect:**

[Connect2Affect.org](https://connect2affect.org)

Learn more about social isolation and find resources and tools to help you stay connected.

- **AARP Community Connections:**

aarpcommunityconnections.org

Find or start a mutual aid group, get assistance, or connect with people in your community.

- **AARP Coronavirus Updates:**

aarp.org/coronavirus

All the latest updates on the coronavirus, including tips for older adults on avoiding social isolation.

- **AARP Create the Good:**

createthegood.aarp.org

Links to local home/remote volunteer opportunities.



Friendventory Activity

Preparation for Friendventory Activity

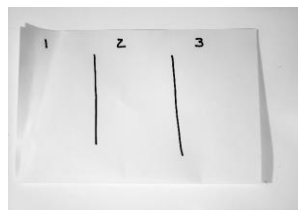
1. Gather the following materials:

- Sheet of paper
- Pen or pencil

2. Fold your sheet of paper in half



3. Draw three columns on one half of the paper and number them



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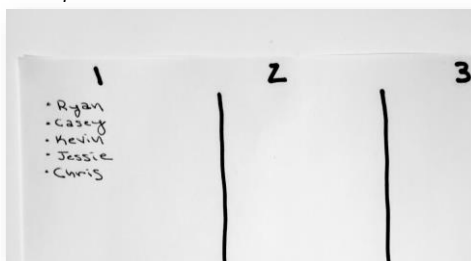
Friendventory Activity

Make Your Connection Plan

In column 1, list your network of contacts:

- Friends
- Family
- Neighbors
- Others?

Example:

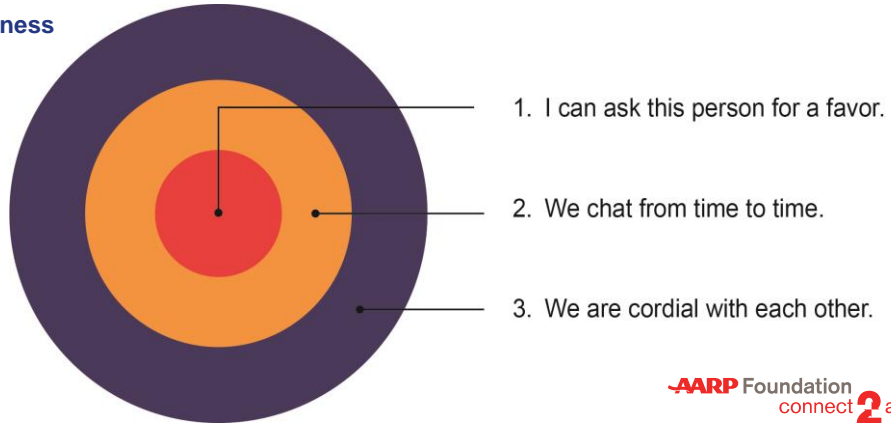


Be sure to list everyone in your network — not just those closest to you.

Friendventory Activity

Make Your Connection Plan

Circle of Closeness



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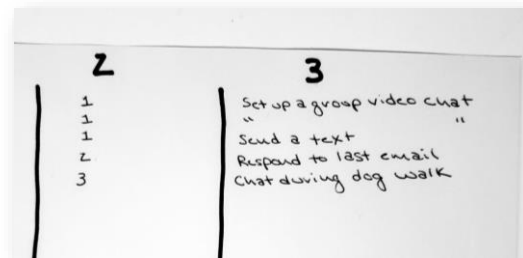
Friendventory Activity

Make Your Connection Plan

In column 3, list ways you can improve or maintain your connections:

- Make a phone call.
- Send an email.
- Set up a video chat.
- Text.
- Chat with neighbor from front porch.

Example:



Be creative — think of all the ways you can connect!

Be specific — **when** and **how** will you connect?

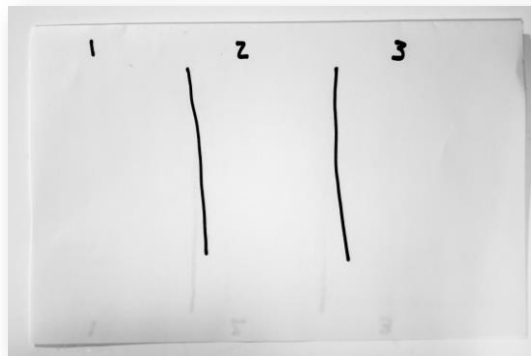
Examples:

- Call a close friend every other Tuesday.
- Organize a family video chat every Sunday.

Friendventory Activity

Make Your Connection Plan

Flip the paper over and create three fresh columns:



Friendventory Activity

Make Your Connection Plan

Column 1: Social Activities

Examples:

- Talk to others on the phone.
- Have video chats using FaceTime or similar apps on your phone.
- Email or text your friends and family for a quick check-in.
- Organize a group to watch the same movie or TV show, then review and discuss via an electronic method (email or video conference).
- Take a walk with a friend — 6 feet apart! — to get exercise as well as social contact.
- Join an online chat forum on a topic that interests you.
- Use a free video conferencing application (e.g., Skype, Zoom, GoToMeeting, etc.) to have online get-togethers.
- Sit on your porch and talk to neighbors on their porch.
- If you have meals or groceries delivered, take a moment to chat with the delivery person — while maintaining appropriate distance.

Friendventory Activity

Make Your Connection Plan

Column 2: Pleasant & Stimulating Activities

Examples:

- Soak in a tub.
- Participate in hobbies (e.g., stamp collecting, model building, etc.).
- Listen to music, watch TV or movies, or read a book, magazine or paper.
- Eat your favorite food.
- Engage in crafts (e.g., sewing, knitting, weaving, pottery, etc.).
- Reminisce about people or events that made you happy.
- Sing or play a musical instrument — or both.
- Arrange flowers.
- Write an article or letter.
- Play with pets.
- Solve puzzles.
- Take a nap.
- Pray.

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Friendventory Activity

Make Your Connection Plan

Column 3: Physical Activities

Examples:

- Garden.
- Take a walk.
- Practice yoga.
- Dance.
- Do leg lifts/arm curls.
- Clean your home.

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Next Steps

1. Review your Circle of Closeness.

- Are there others in your network that you're forgetting, or that you didn't have time to list?
- Consider your next steps to improve your connections. For instance, how can you bring your outer circles closer?

2. Put your plan into action!

- Do at least one activity from each column every day.
- **Post your Friendventory somewhere that you'll see it every day.**

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[Home](#) [About](#) [Resources](#) [Spread the Word](#)

SIGN UP FOR UPDATES ON THE COMMIT TO CONNECT CAMPAIGN AND GET MORE INVOLVED!

[Home](#) / [Commit to Connect](#)



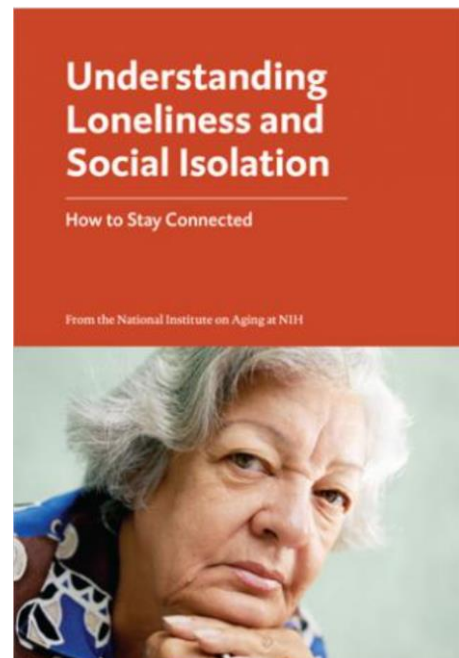
<https://acl.gov/CommitToConnect>

NIH National Institute on Aging

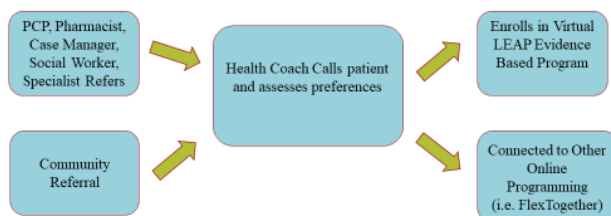
Social isolation and loneliness outreach toolkit:

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/ctctoolkit>

- Infographics
- Educational flyers
- Social media content



Referrals to Health Coach/Virtual LEAP



Study findings:
Community-based group health class participants reported decreased loneliness and social isolation at 6-month follow-up.

The Leveraging Exercise to Age in Place (LEAP) Study: Engaging Older Adults in Community-Based Exercise Classes to Impact Loneliness and Social Isolation

Allison Moser Mays ¹, Sungjin Kim ², Katrina Rosales ³, Tam Au ⁴, Sonja Rosen ⁵

Affiliations + expand

PMID: 33268235 PMCID: PMC7563028 DOI: 10.1016/j.jagp.2020.10.006

[Free PMC article](#)

TogetherNESS is building connections, increasing socialization and re-engaging members with their healthcare to reduce loneliness and social isolation



AARP Virtual Community Center

Offering a wide variety of **FREE** interactive online events and classes designed for learning, self-improvement, and fun.

<https://local.aarp.org/virtual-community-center/>

<https://agingconnected.org/>

<https://seniorplanet.org/>

★ <https://www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit> ★

Getting Older Adults Online

We're partnering with telecommunications companies, nonprofits, and public entities to bring low-cost internet options to older adults nationwide.

Have a technology question? Call the National Senior Planet Hotline: 920-666-1959

Open from 9am – 5pm EDT, Monday – Friday