



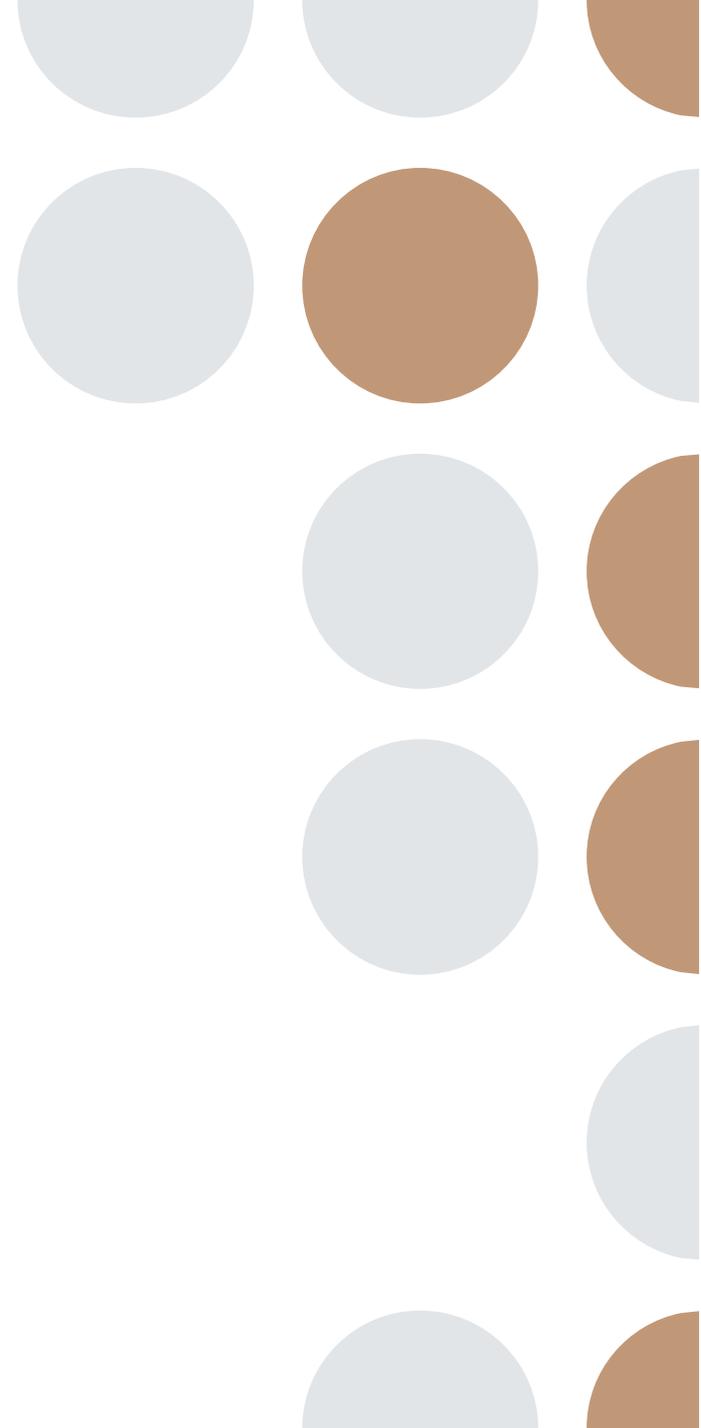
Social Isolation:

Ideas and Connections to Combat Social Isolation

Presented By: Dawn Bartha
PHFA HSD Webinar
August 2022

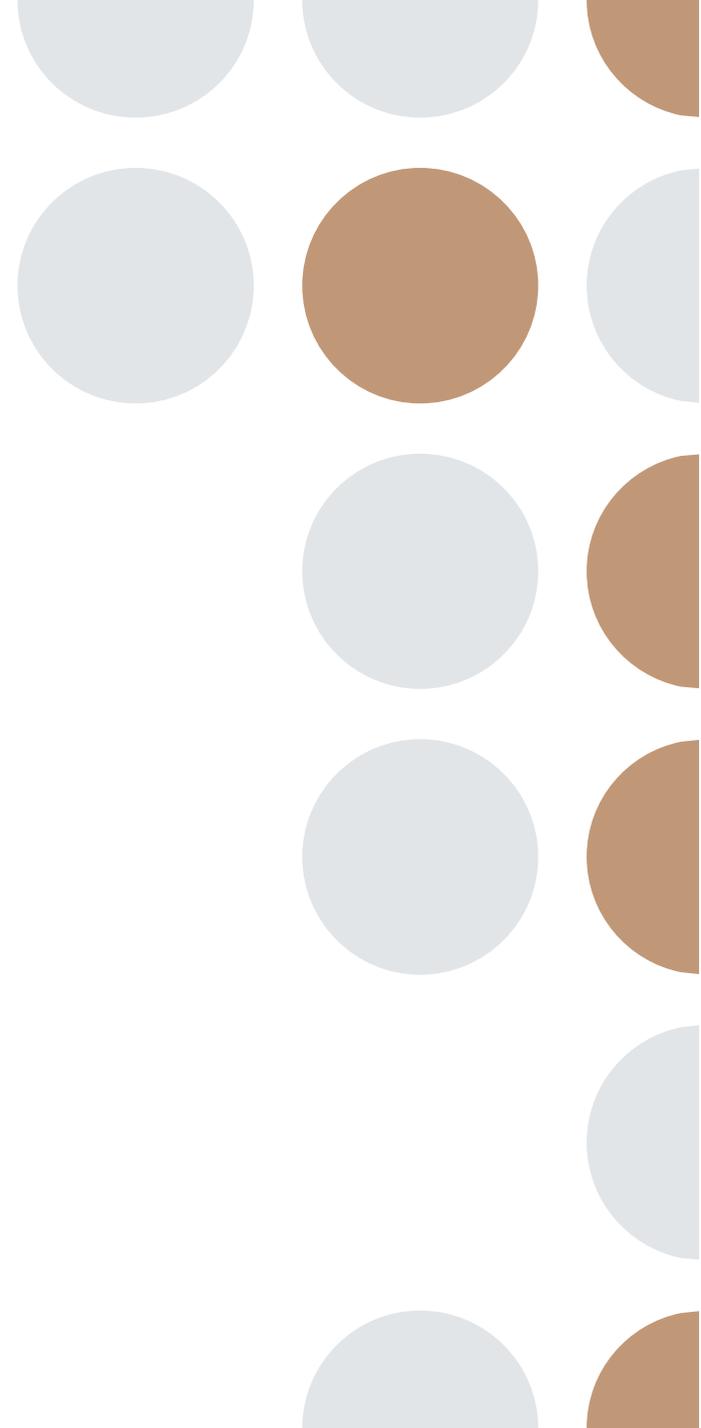
Objectives:

- Define Social Isolation
 - Understand the difference between social isolation vs. loneliness
 - Discuss who it affects
 - Understand the impact it has on individuals
 - Tips & resources to combat the stigma
-



Social Isolation

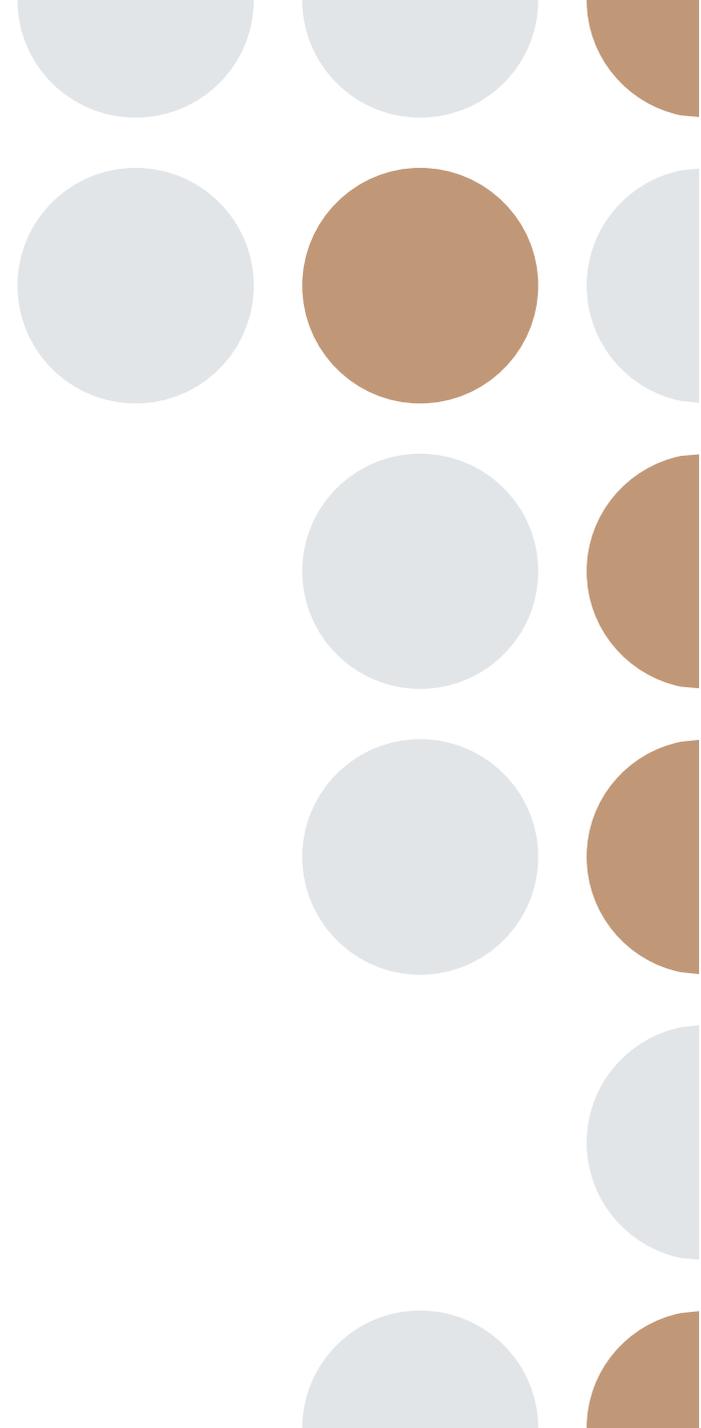
- Characterized by a lack of social interactions, social support structures, and engagement in wider community events and activities
 - Can be voluntary or involuntary
 - Can manifest over a short period of time linked to a trigger event, disease, or behavior or can be prolonged & extended
-



Loneliness

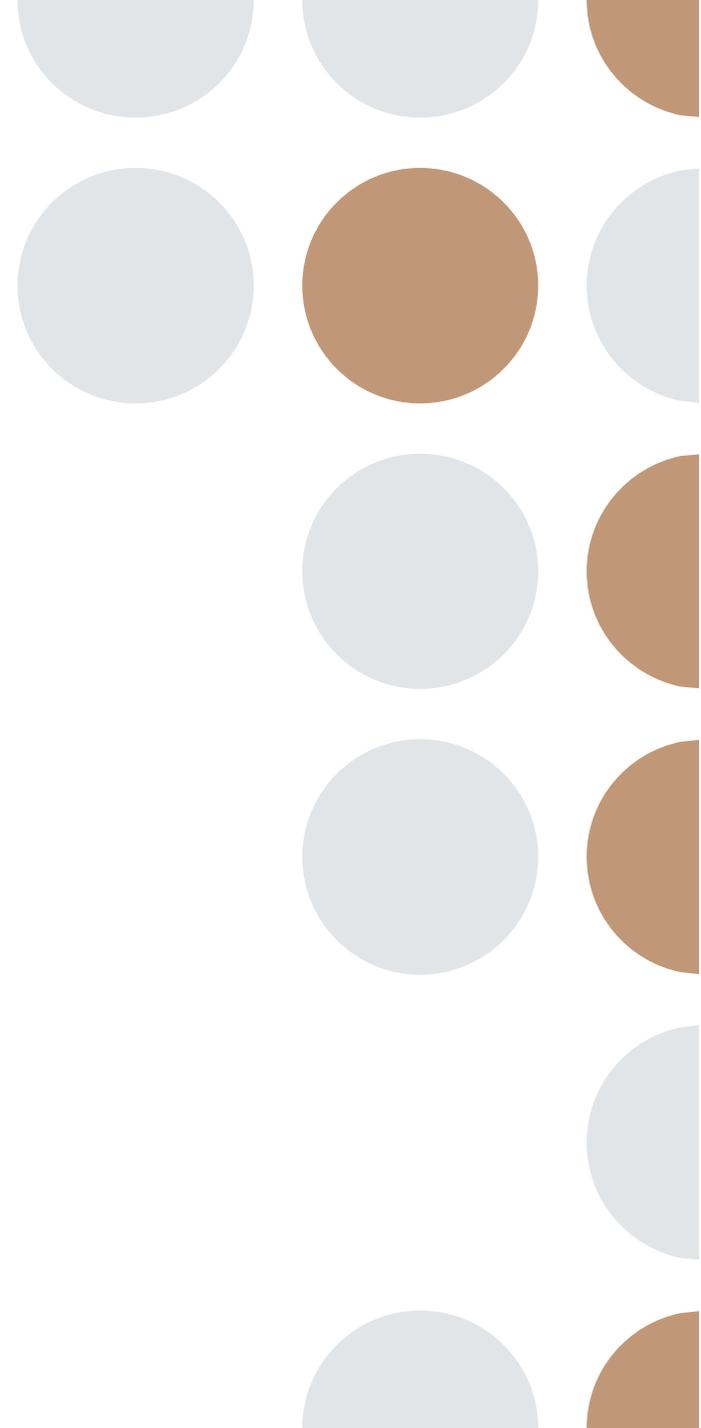
- Oxford Dictionary defines loneliness as,

“sadness because one has no friends or company”



3 Types of Loneliness

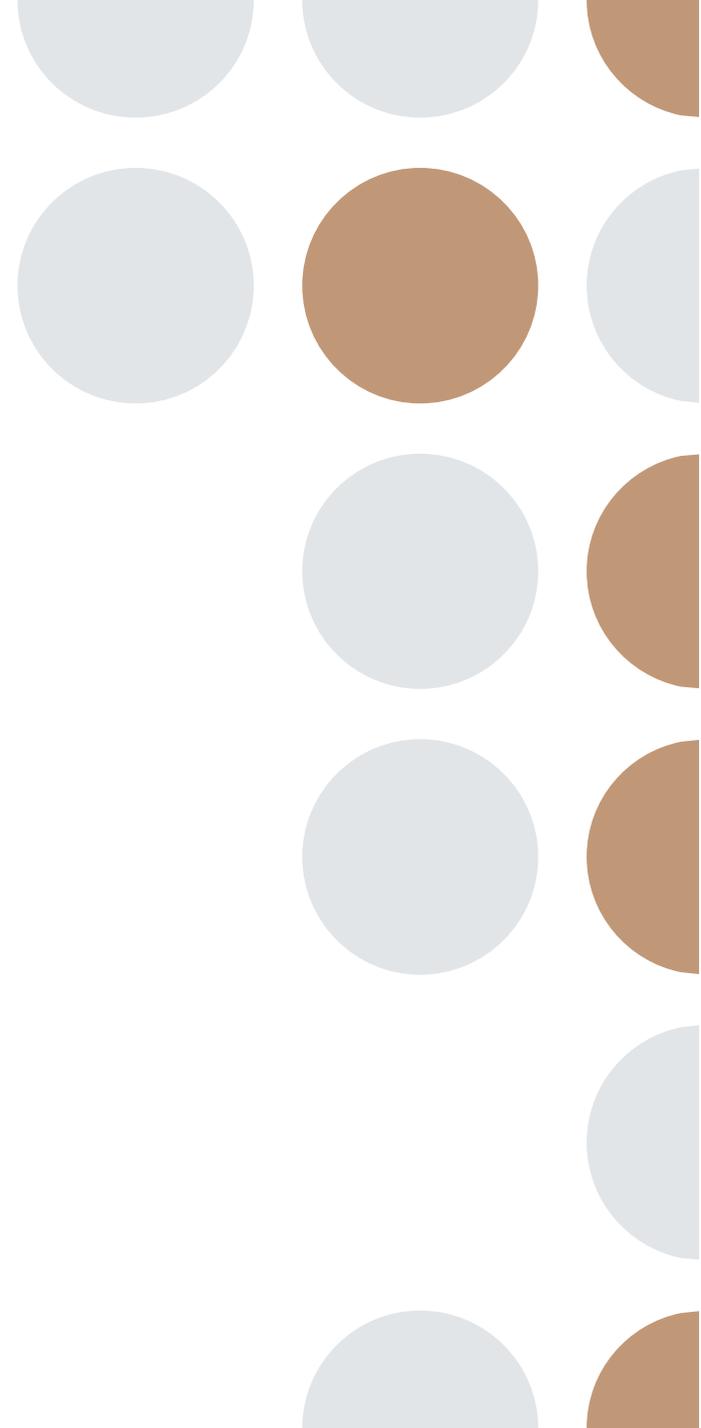
- Former U.S. surgeon general Dr. Vivek Murthy describes 3 different types of loneliness in her book, *“Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World”*
 - Intimate/Emotional
 - Relational/Social
 - Collective
-



Is Loneliness Increasing?

- A study in the early 2000s found that Americans social networks had significantly decreased from 1985-2000.

The proportion of Americans saying that had no one to discuss personal, important matters with almost tripled in that time span.



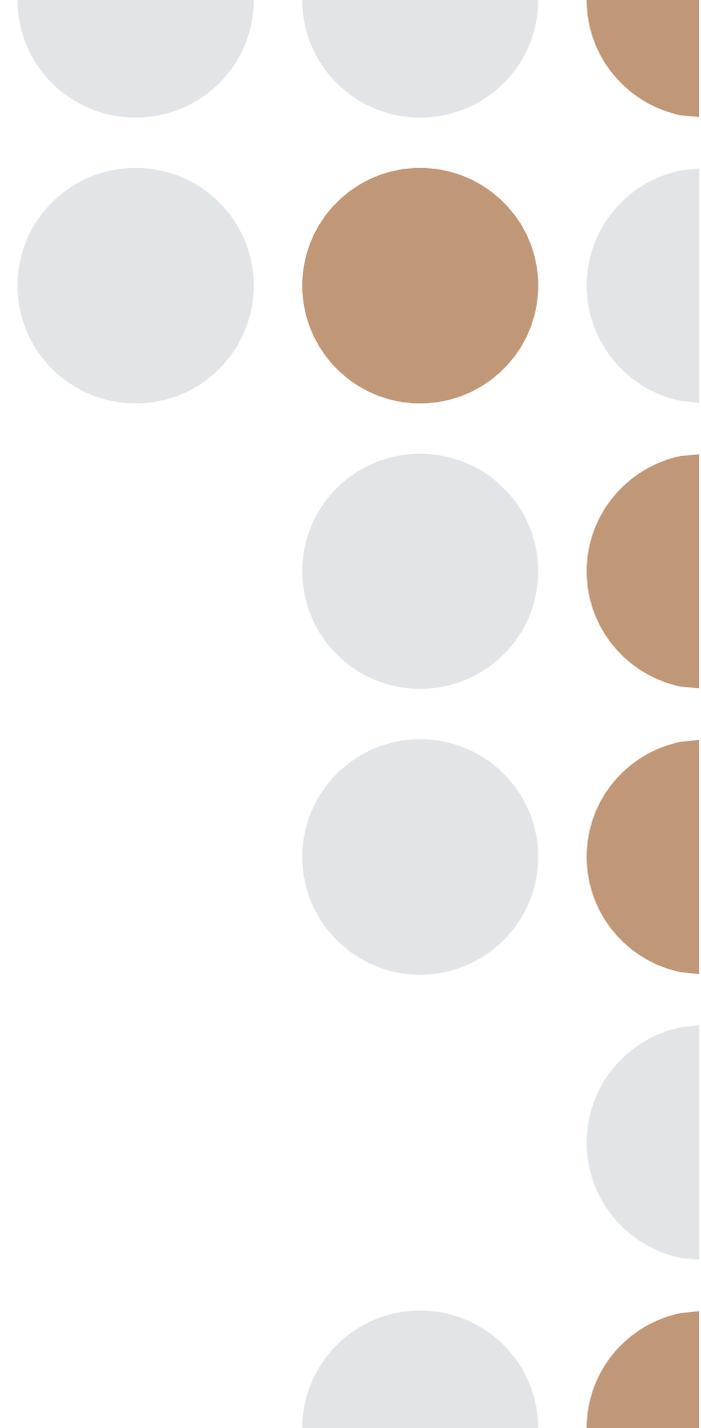
Intertwined Or Not

Social Isolation is characterized by an absence

Social Isolation

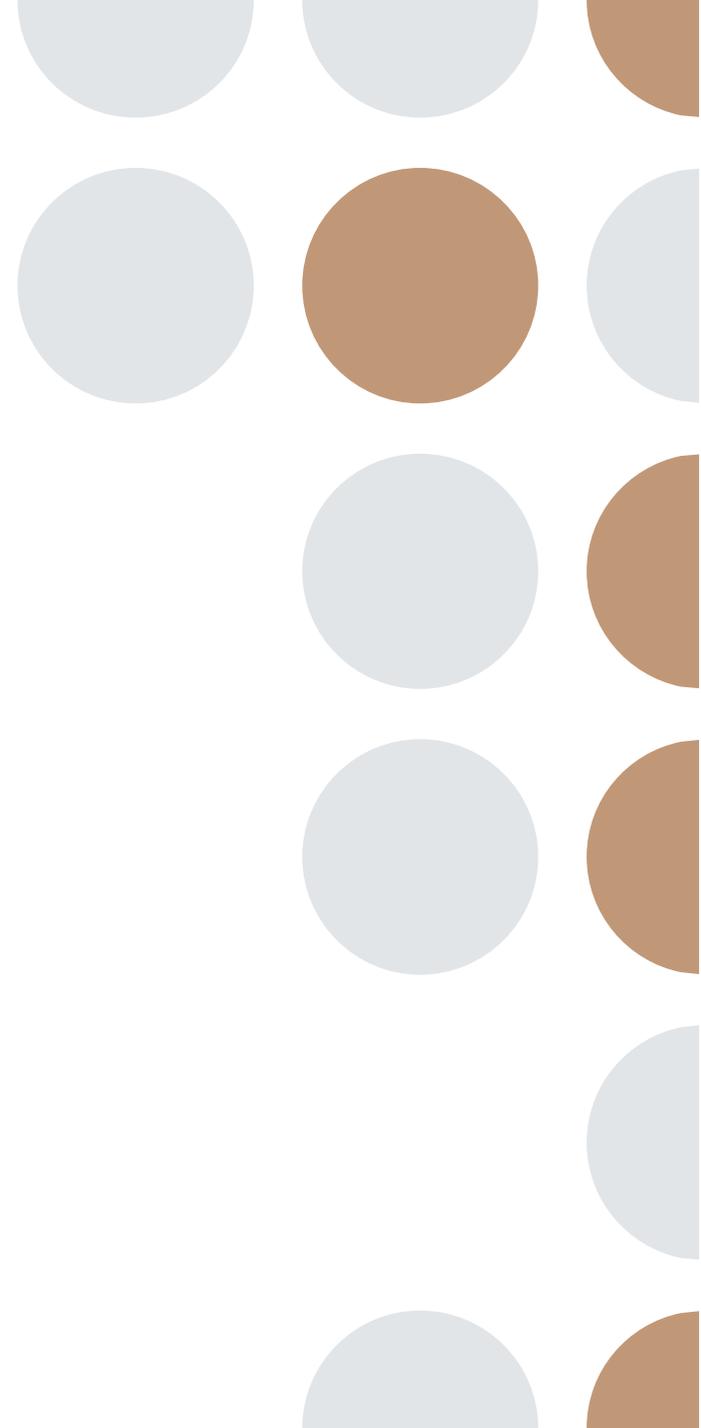
Loneliness

Individual's personal, subjective sense of lacking connection



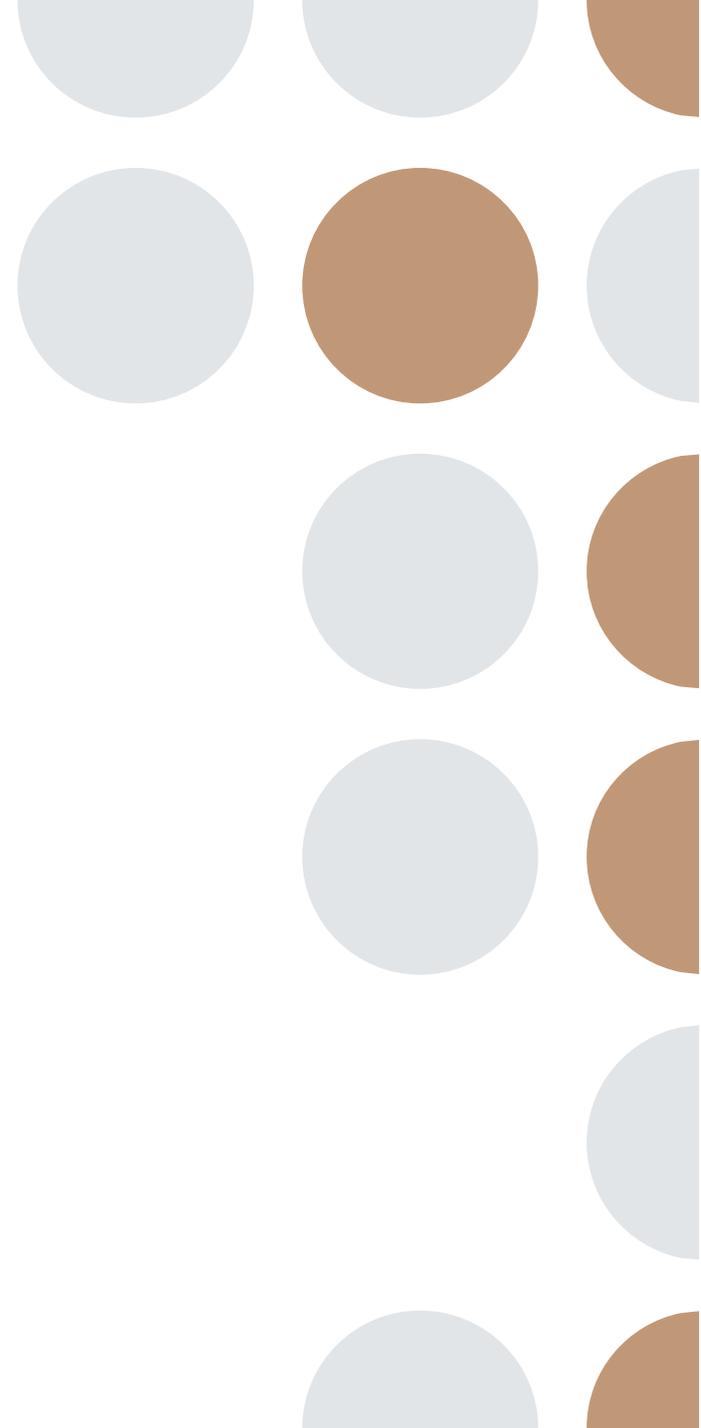
Who?

- A report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) points out that more than one-third of adults aged 45 and older feel lonely, and nearly one-fourth of adults aged 65 and older are considered to be socially isolated
 - highlights loneliness among vulnerable older adults, including immigrants; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) populations; minorities; and victims of elder abuse
-



Does this affect Anyone other than Elderly?

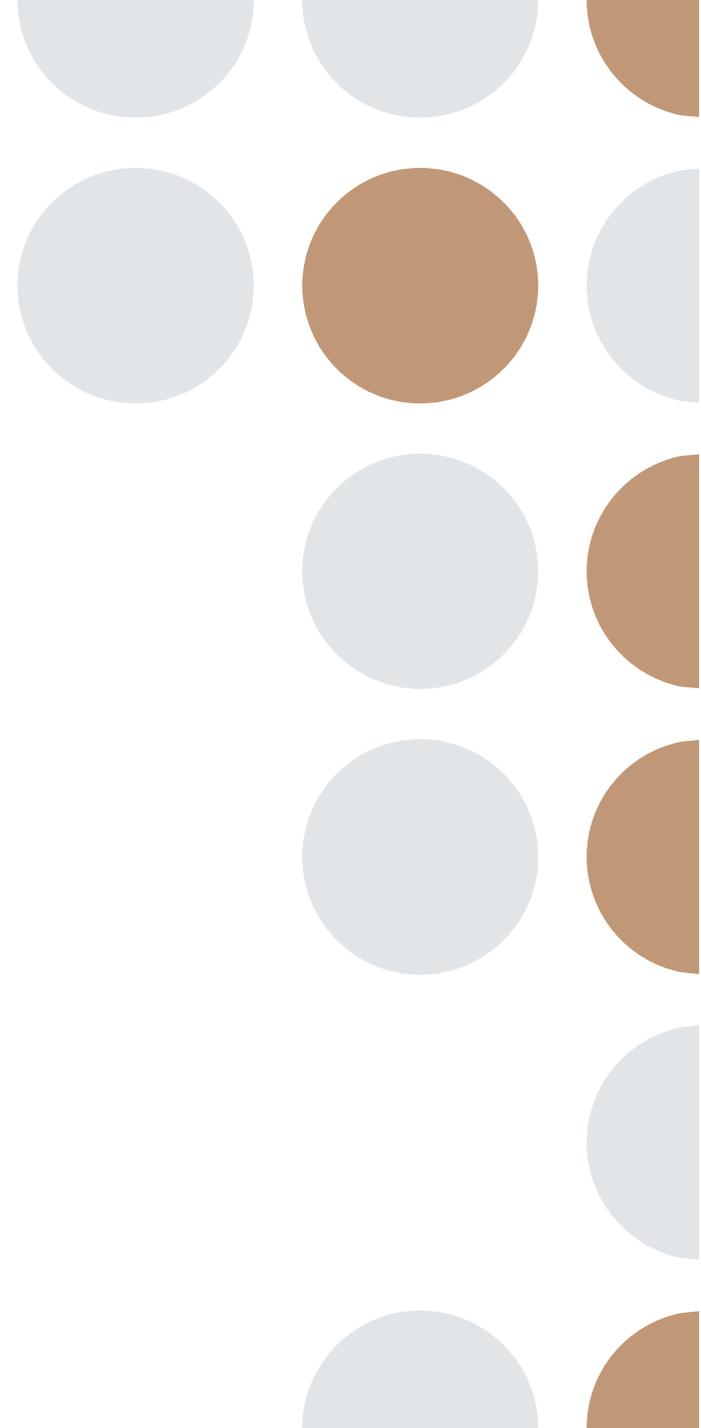
- Harvard News reported that in a recent study done in October 2020, 36 percent of respondents to a national survey of approximately 950 Americans reported feeling lonely “frequently” or “almost all the time or all the time” in the prior four weeks, compared with 25 percent who recalled experiencing serious issues in the two months prior to the pandemic. Perhaps most striking is that 61 percent of those aged 18 to 25 reported high levels.
-



Impacts of Loneliness/Social Isolation

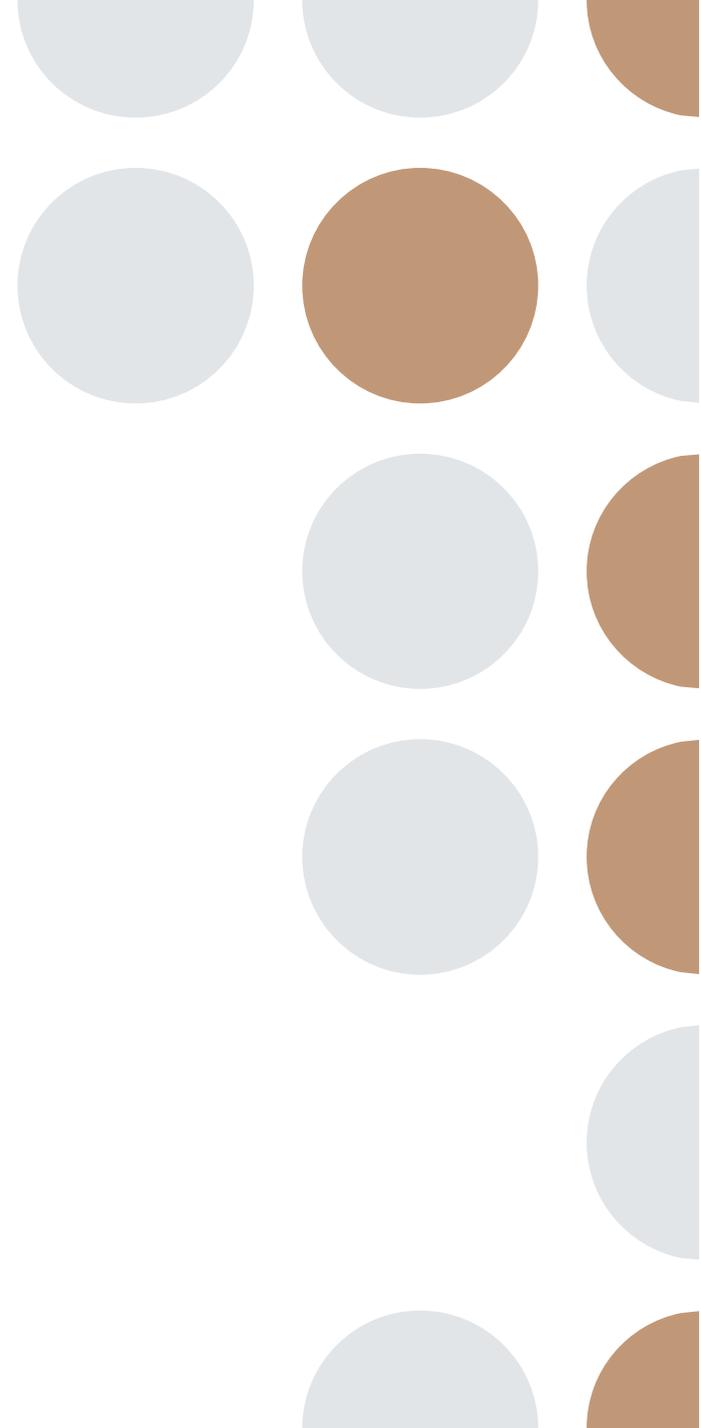
Study from National Academies of Sciences, Engineering & Medicine also found:

- Social isolation significantly increased a person's risk of premature death from all causes, a risk that may rival those of smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity.
 - Social isolation was associated with about a 50% percent increased risk of dementia.
 - Poor social relationships (characterized by social isolation or loneliness) was associated with a 29% increased risk of heart disease and a 32% increased risk of stroke.
 - Loneliness was associated with higher rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide.
-



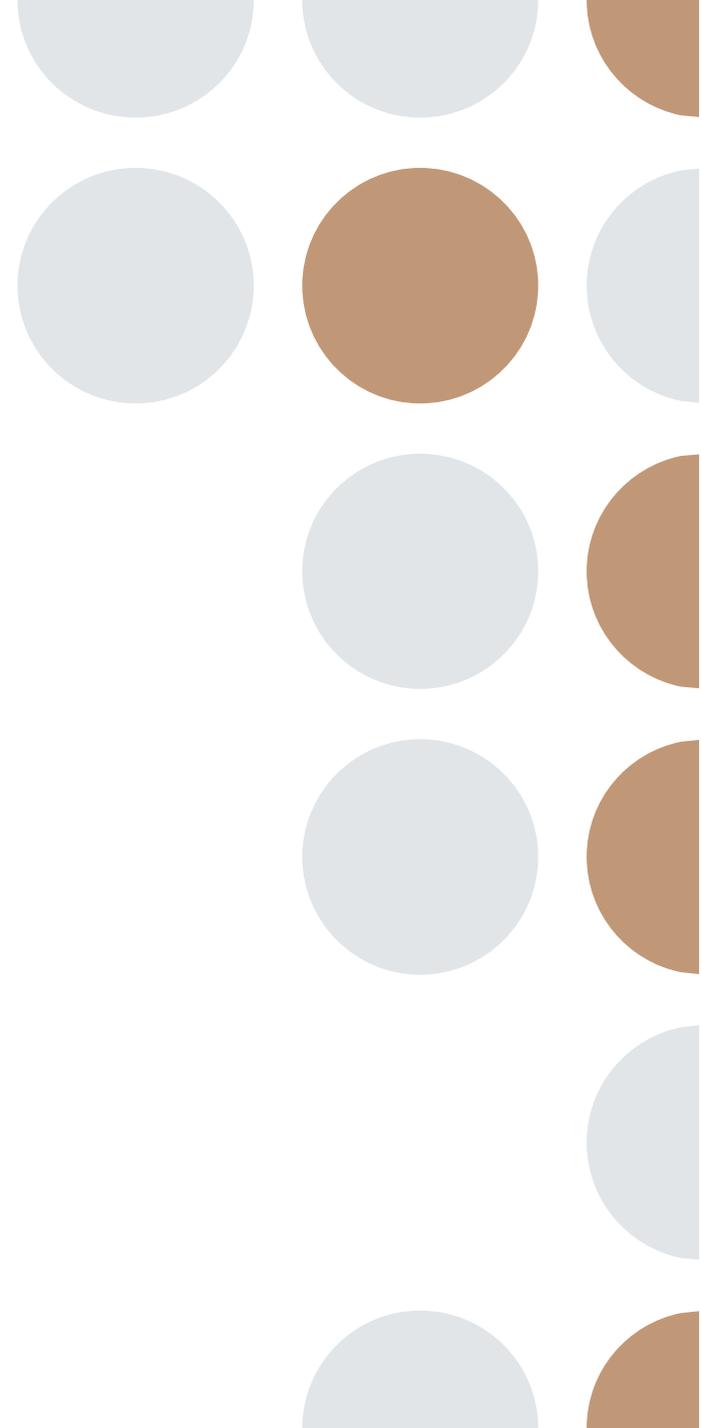
Loneliness & Depression in Older Adults

- Italian Researcher Cacioppo & colleagues state that Studies have shown that loneliness (in older adults) can be a significant predictor of increases in depressive symptomatology (Cacioppo et al., 2010).
 - The same study states that “loneliness is associated with strong negative feelings, and lonely adults have poor emotion regulation and are less likely to use positive feelings to alleviate their negative mood”
 - Chinese Researchers concluded: Loneliness, anxiety, and depressive symptoms may contribute synergistically to a significant decrease in levels of well-being (Liu and Guo, 2007).
-



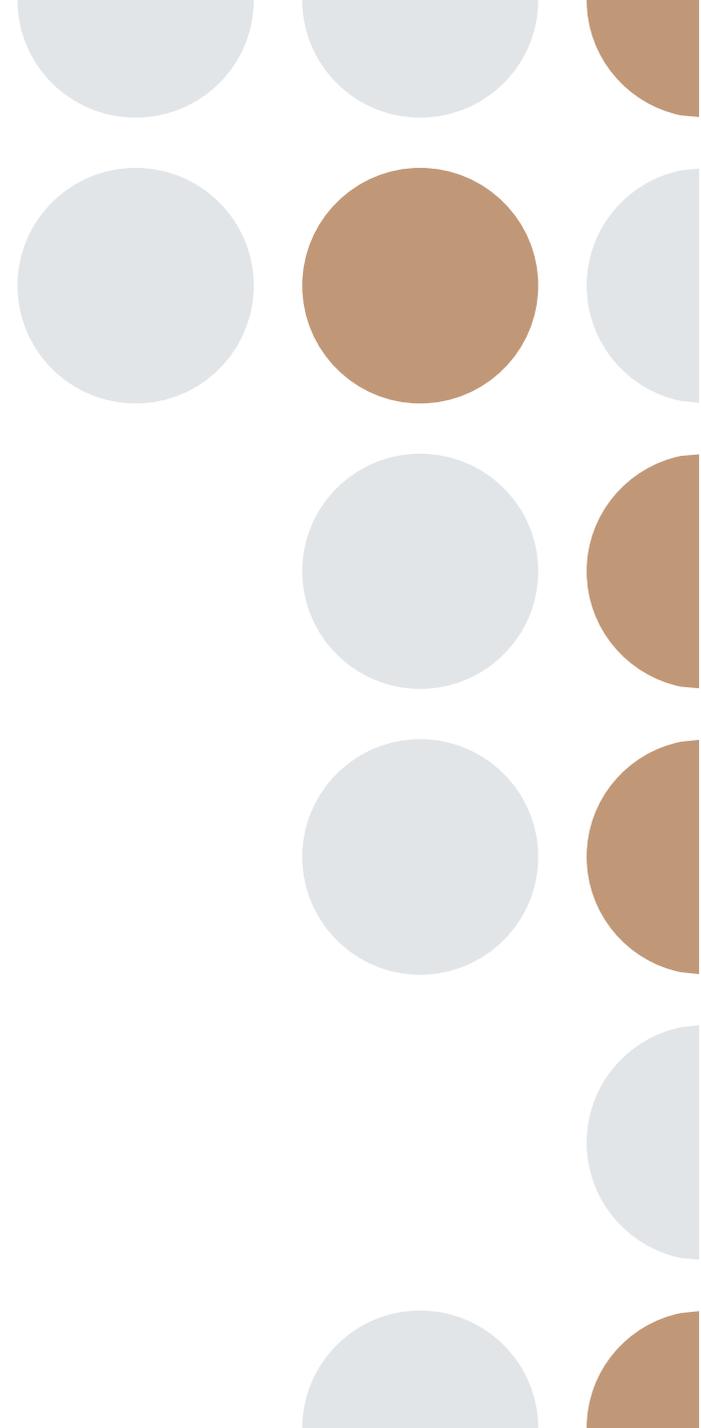
Loneliness & Depression in Young Adults/Adolescents

- Adolescence is a key period when social interaction and peer relationships are of paramount importance to social identity and individuation from the family
 - Loneliness in children and young people is associated with poorer physical health, sleep problems (Eccles et al., [2020](#); Matthews et al., [2017](#)), and increased risk behaviors such as smoking, drug-taking, and alcohol in young people (Stickley, Koyanagi, Koposov, Schwab-Stone, & Ruchkin, [2014](#))
-



What Can We Do to Help?

- Reduce the Stigma of being Lonely!
 - Encourage people to talk to their doctors about feelings of loneliness
 - Make sure teachers are aware of any loneliness concerns
 - Harvard professor, Richard Weissbourd said he and his colleagues consider combating loneliness a moral imperative in an increasingly “hyper-individualistic society,” where many people often choose to focus on the well-being of their small circle of family and friends.
-



Other ways to Help

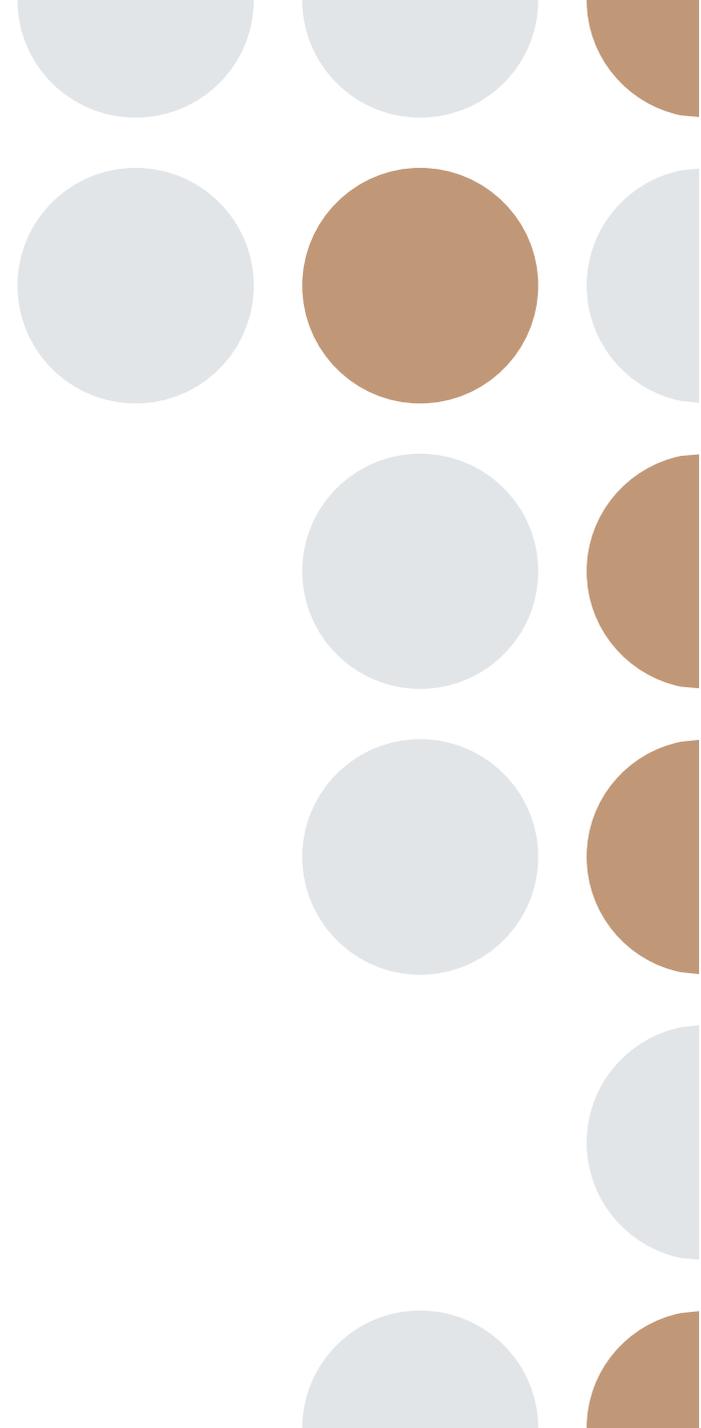
Connect with
people from
your past

Read a Book

Watch
something
you find funny

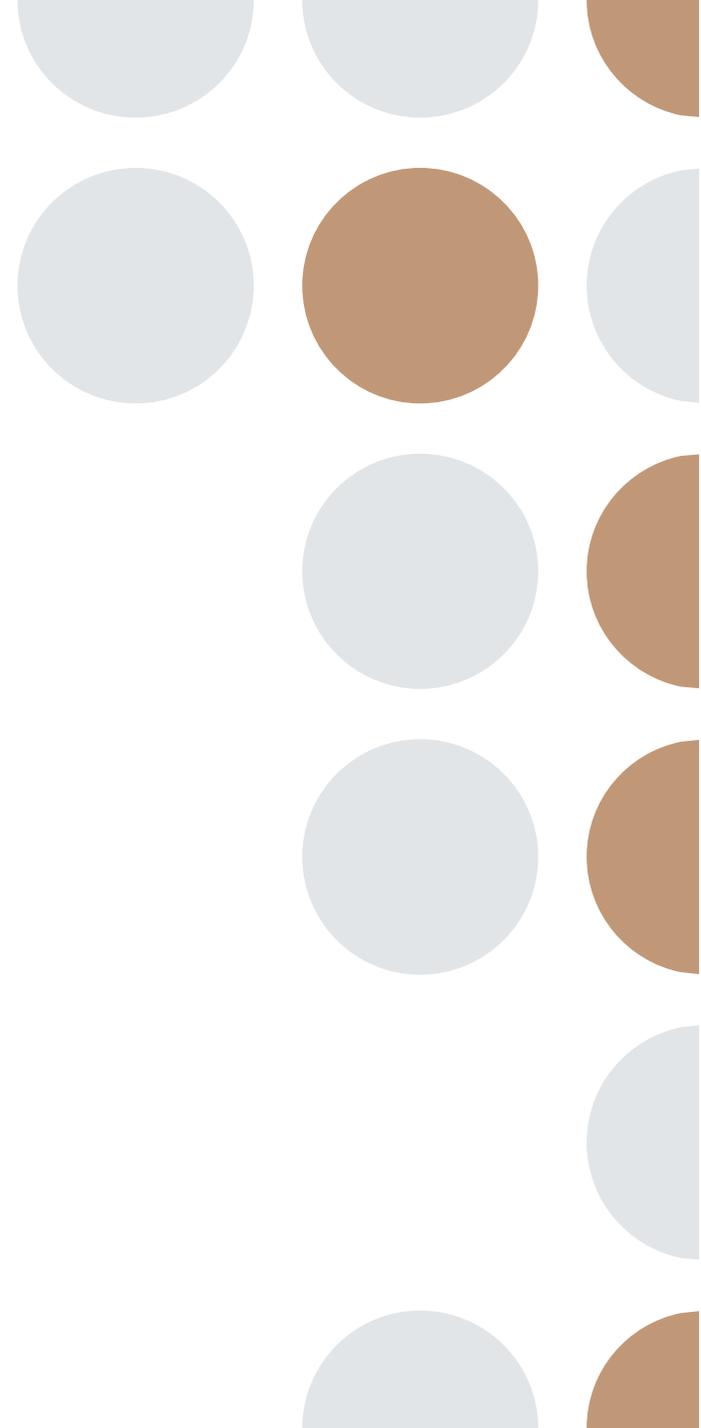
Learn a new
skill/hobby

Perform an
Act of
Kindness

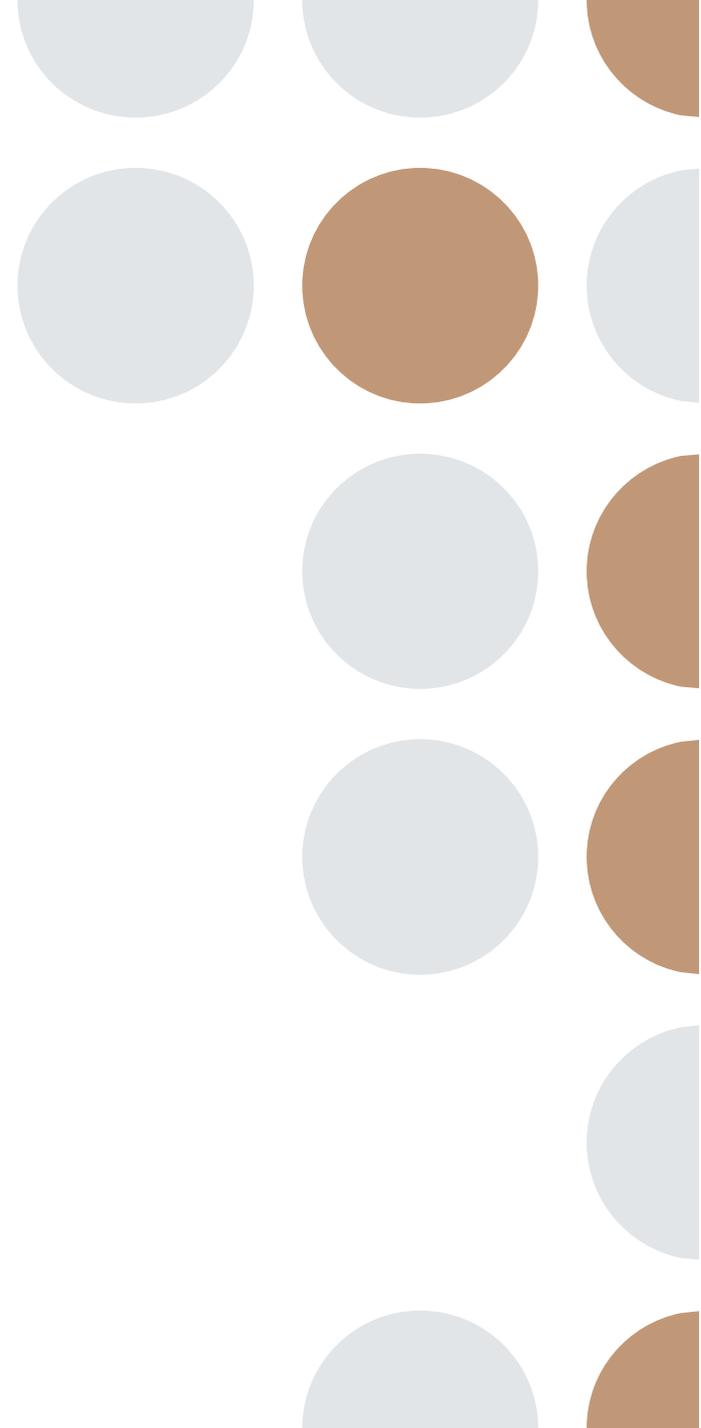


Community Engagement

- the process of inviting community members into the decision-making strategy to assess, plan, implement, and evaluate solutions to issues that affect their daily lives and environments
 - Requires a change in the traditional way we see roles
 - letting go of some of the traditional reins of power and trusting that citizens can and will effectively engage in the issues.
-

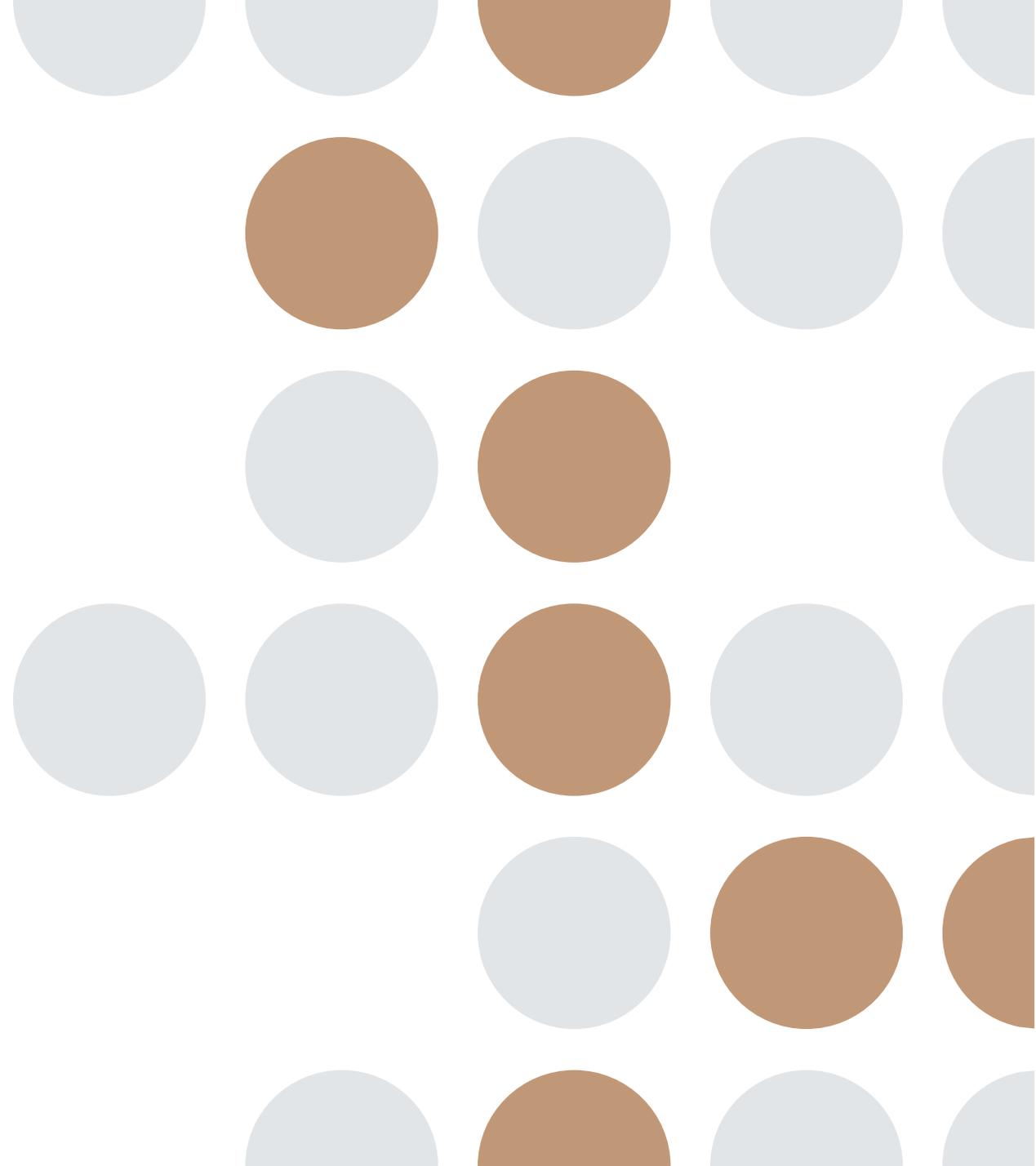


Community Engagement



Importance of Community Engagement

[PHFA's Community Engagement
in the age of Social Distancing
presentation](#)



Some Ideas We've heard

Scavenger
Hunts

Pen Pals/Hand
Written Cards

Accomplishment
Recognition

Telephone
Games or
Call
Chains/Talk
Hours

Create a
Resident
Story
Book

Invent a
Travel
Series,
where each
month travel
to a new
location

Craft and
Art Ideas

More Ideas

Friendship
Bags

Memory Mondays

Cart Visits..have a
different theme every
month (ice cream,
cookies, etc.)

Resident
Cookbook

Cooking
Competitions

Create Surprise
Gift Bags

Door/Hallway/Balcony
decorating contests

Get Creative with
Bingo

Costume
Contests

Outdoor Activities

- Dance Parties
 - Talent Shows
 - Cook-outs
 - Gardening
 - Walking Clubs
 - Outdoor Meditation or Yoga
 - Simply drinking lemonade and listening to music
-



Virtual Engagement

- Virtual Happy Hours
- Virtual Story Times
- Virtual Coffee Chats and Water Cooler Get Togethers
- Birthday Bashes
- Virtual Movie Nights
- Virtual Hide & Seek





WARNING

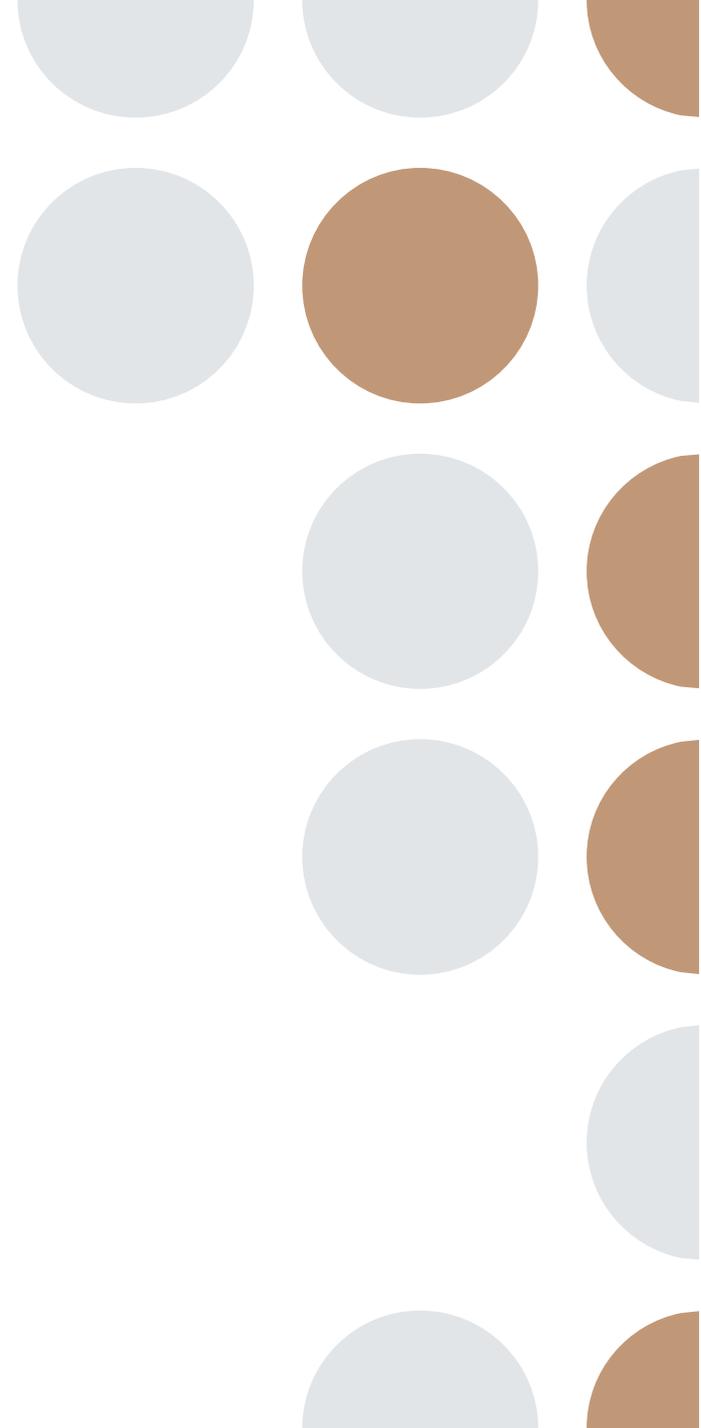
Zoom Fatigue/Anxiety

- **IT IS REAL!!!**

- Zoom Fatigue is the extreme exhaustion felt after video meetings
 - Zoom Anxiety is the anxious feeling you get prior to the meeting and during it
 - **Study done by San Francisco University showed that 80% of the students polled said they experienced more anxiety and trouble focusing in virtual classes.**
-

Causes?

- Research suggests that a bigger cognitive load could help explain why virtual meetings can be more stressful.
 - It is theorized that increased amount of eye contact and the size of your coworkers' faces on-screen mean you're required to process more nonverbal cues than if you were looking at only one speaker in an in-person setting
 - mirror anxiety, or anxiety caused by seeing your own face on the screen
 - feeling trapped, like you can't move too much during the meeting
 - feeling watched by everyone else on the call
-



Tips To Zoom Successfully

If you Experience Zoom Anxiety:

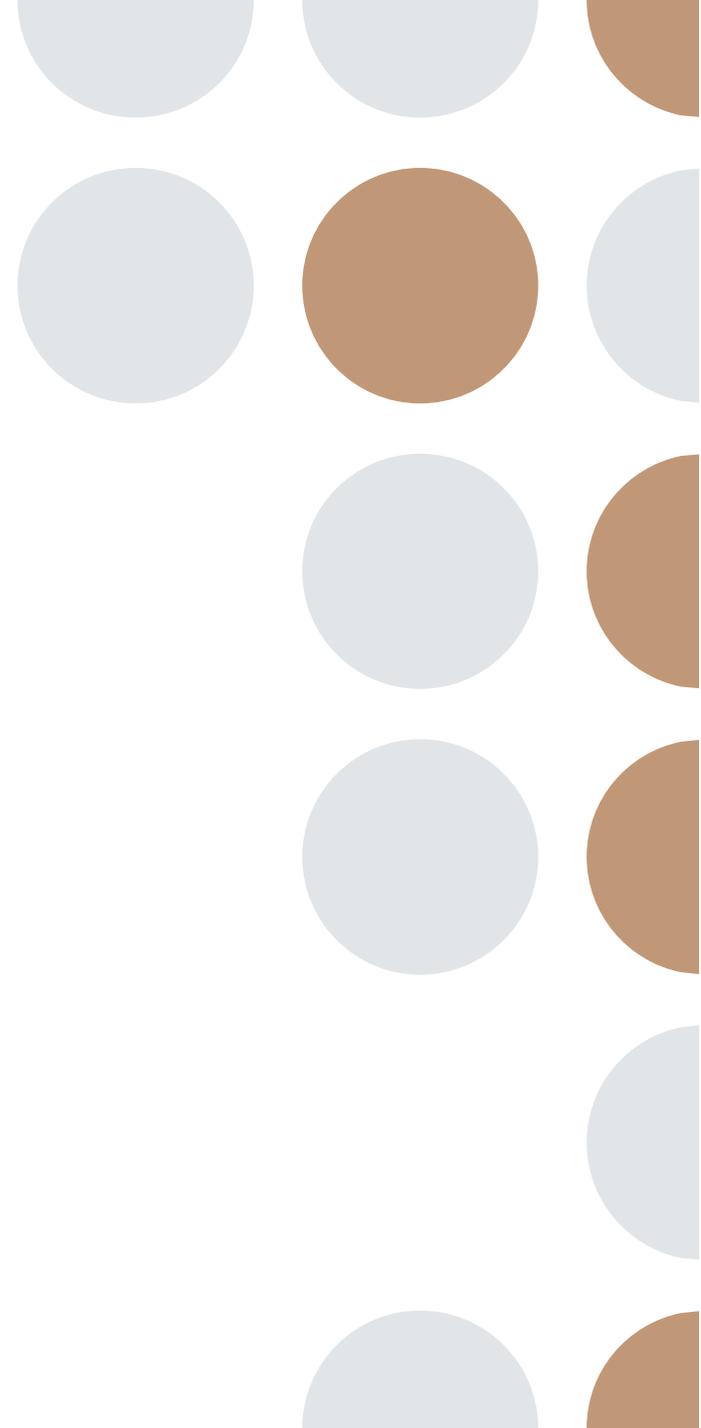
- Minimize Your Mirror
- Go Audio Only when possible
- Move Mindfully
 - Stretch you neck/shoulders if feeling tense
 - Take a sip of water if needed
 - Take a moment to press your feet to the floor

To help Zoom Exhaustion

- Turn on Speaker View
 - Don't Multitask
 - Remember things happen so don't take yourself too seriously
 - Don't go over the allotted time (and try to keep that at under 55 minutes)
-

PHFA Boredom Busters

- https://www.phfa.org/forms/housing_services/management_forms/community-engagement-resident-boredom-busters.pdf
-



Resources for Any Age

Volunteermatch.org

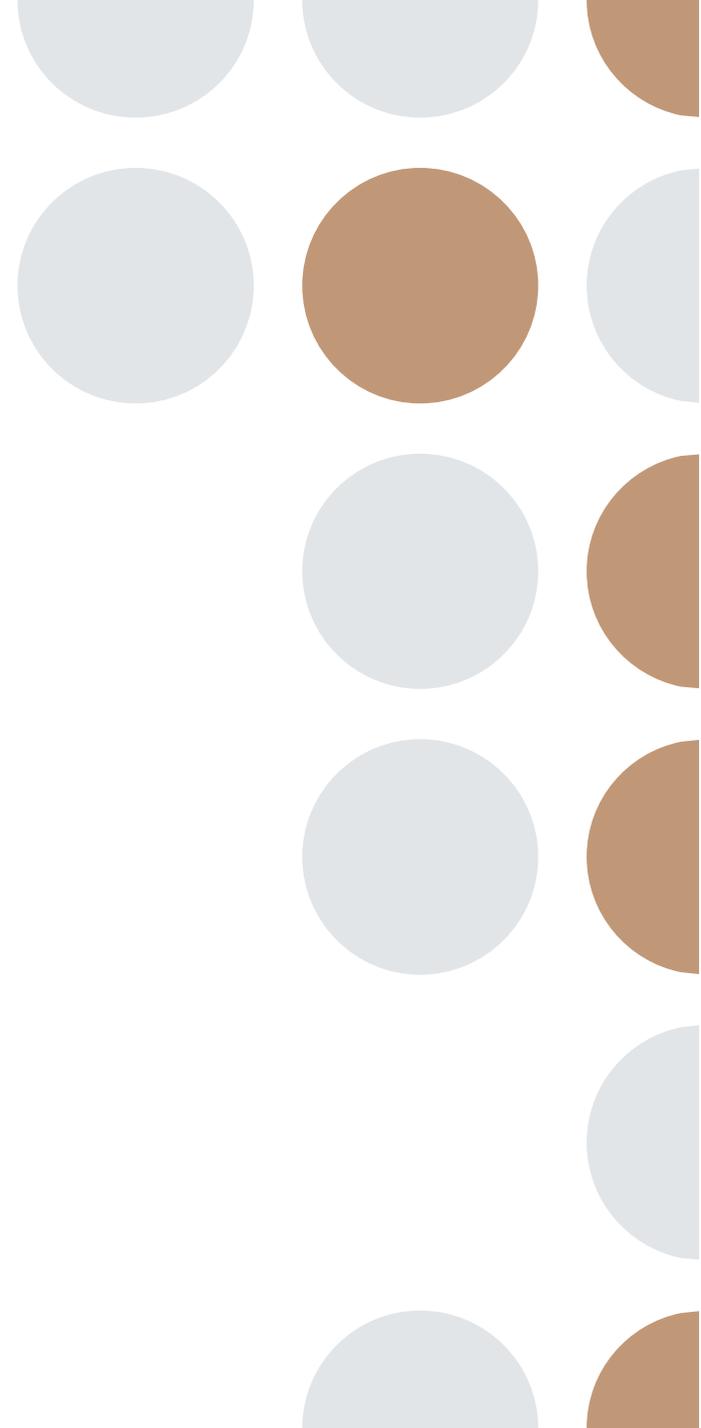
- puts volunteers together with causes they care about in their own neighborhoods. There is some evidence that volunteering can alleviate loneliness. If you're seeking social connection or a sense of purpose, but don't know how to go about it, this searchable database can help get you started

The Lonely Hour Podcast

- is a podcast in which people open up about their struggles with loneliness and isolation. Sometimes, it's helpful to hear that we're not alone in these feelings, and encouraging to learn how others deal with it.

Meetup.com

- an online tool to help you meet new people face-to-face. Search the site to find people near you who share common interests. You can join a group to see where and when they meet and decide if you want to give it a try. There's no obligation to stick with a group once you've joined.



More Resources

OpenSports.net

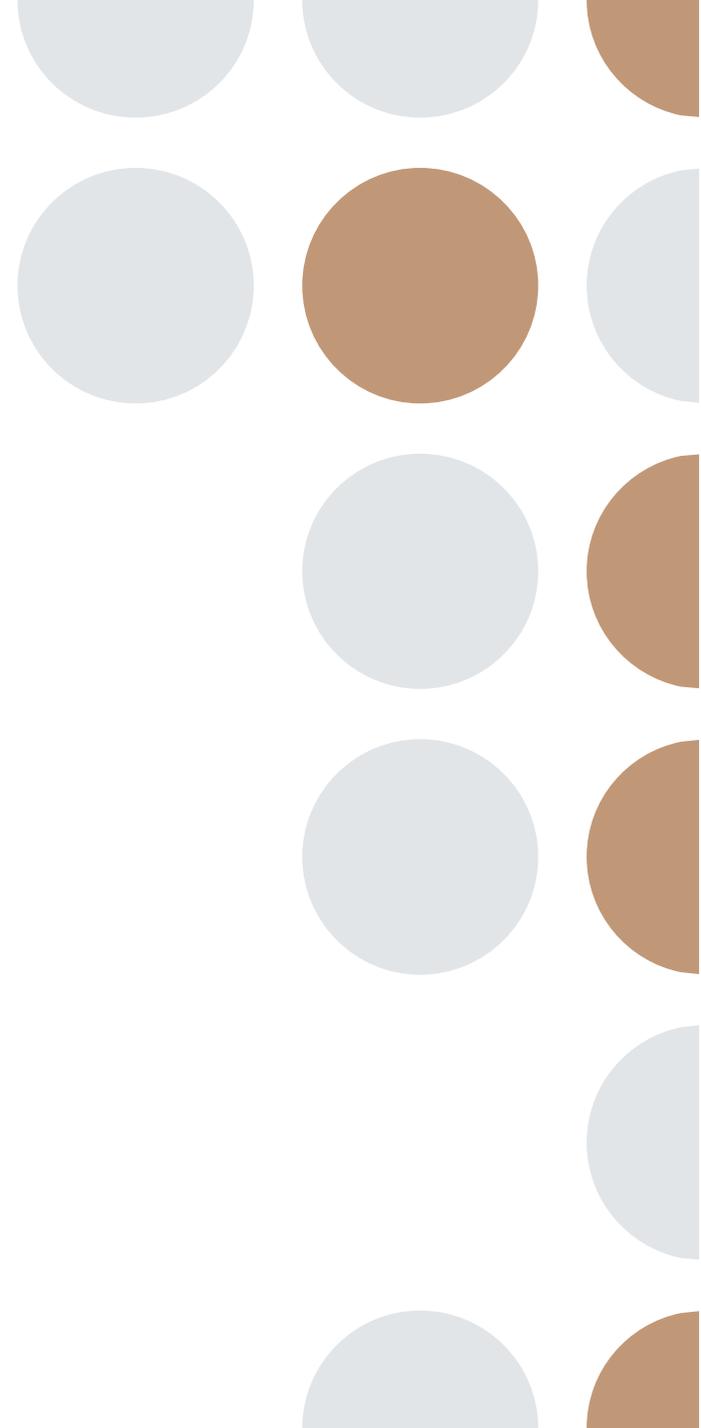
- OpenSports is a sports-specific meetup platform that's available on the web, and as an app on iOS and Android mobile devices. It's used for organizing and registering for pickup and drop-in sports events.

Citysocializer.com

- Citysocializer is a social media app that helps you find cool social gatherings going on around you. It focuses on face-to-face interactions rather than online connections. As you attend more events, your network will grow, and you'll be invited to even more events. It's also a great way to see what's going on in a new city, or find great places in your city that you may not have known existed!

Yubo

- Social meet up app geared for teens. The developers state "the app's goal is to make it easy for people to discover new friends by providing a safe and secure platform." Has over 20 million users and is one of the top rated friendship apps.



Resources

- [AARP](#) – Provides helpful information to seniors to help improve quality of life and provides access to Community Connection Tools.
 - [Area Agencies on Aging \(AAA\)](#) – A network of over 620 organizations across America that provides information and assistance with programs including nutrition and meal programs (counseling and home-delivered or group meals), caregiver support, and more. The website can help you find your local AAA, which may provide classes in Tai Chi and diabetes self-management.
 - [Eldercare Locator](#) – A free national service that helps find local resources for seniors such as financial support, caregiving services, and transportation. It includes a brochure that shows how volunteering can help keep you socially connected.
 - [National Council on Aging](#) – Works with nonprofit organizations, governments, and businesses to provide community programs and services. This is the place to find what senior programs are available to assist with healthy aging and financial security, including the Aging Mastery Program® that is shown to increase social connectedness and healthy eating habits.
 - [National Institute on Aging \(NIA\)](#)– Provides materials on social isolation and loneliness for older adults, caregivers, and health care providers. Materials include health information, a print publication available to view or order no-cost paper copies, a health care provider flyer, and social media graphics and posts.
 - [AmeriCorps- Senior Companion Program](#)- The Senior Companion Program provides grants to organizations with a dual purpose: to engage persons 55 years and older, particularly those with limited incomes, in volunteer service to meet critical community needs; and to provide a high quality experience that will enrich the lives of the volunteers. The AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in this program provide supportive, individualized services to help older adults with special needs maintain their dignity and independence
-

References

- Bailenson, Jeremy N. "NonVerbal overload: A Theoretical Argument for the Causes of Zoom Fatigue." February, 23, 2021. <https://tmb.apaopen.org/pub/nonverbal-overload/release/1->
 - Cacioppo, J. T., Hughes, M. E., Waite, L. J., Hawkley, L. C., and Thisted, R. A. (2006). Loneliness as a specific risk factor for depressive symptoms: cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses. *Psychol. Aging* 21, 140–151. doi: 10.1037/0882-7974.21.1.140
 - Eccles, A. M., & Qualter, P. (2021). Review: Alleviating loneliness in young people – A meta-analysis of interventions. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 26(1), 17– 33. <https://doi.org/10.1111/camh.12389>
 - Johnson, Jacqueline, PsyD. Zoom Exhaustion is More Common than You Think: Here's Why." <https://psychcentral.com/anxiety/zoom-anxiety-is-more-common-than-you-think-heres-why>. June 25, 2021.
 - Liu, L.-J., and Guo, Q. (2007). Loneliness and health-related quality of life for the empty nest elderly in the rural area of a mountainous county in China. *Quality Life Res.* 16, 1275–1280. doi: 10.1007/s11136-007-9250-0
 - National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2020. *Social Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults: Opportunities for the Health Care System*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/25663external icon>.
 - Oxford Dictionary OnlinePeper, Erik & Wilson, Vietta & Martin, Marc & Rosegard, Erik & Harvey, Richard. (2021). Avoid Zoom Fatigue, Be Present and Learn. *NeuroRegulation*. 8. 47-56. 10.15540/nr.8.1.4
-

References

- Stickley, A., Koyanagi, A., Kuposov, R., Schwab-Stone, M., & Ruchkin, V. (2014). Loneliness and health risk behaviours among Russian and U.S. adolescents: A cross-sectional study. *BMC Public Health*, **14**(1), 366. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-14-366>
 - Walsh, Colleen. "Young Adults Hardest Hit By Loneliness During Pandemic." *The Harvard Gazette*. February 17, 2021.
-

