

Social Connections and Belonging Promote Better Health








Connecting with others —whether in person or virtually—can help reduce isolation and feelings of loneliness. We call this being “socially engaged!”

Our lives can change, which means you connect with people less often, whether you’ve chosen to change jobs, retire, moved to a new area, lost a loved one, or it is difficult to get involved due to a transportation or mobility limitation.

It’s important to remember that there are ways to stay socially engaged.

Benefits of Being Socially Engaged

Long times of isolation can be bad for your health... being engaged and connected to others and your community can lead to:

-  Improved emotional well-being and mental health
-  Better physical health
-  A sense of purpose or a reason for your life
-  Longer years of life
-  Strengthening your community. Sharing your knowledge, talents, skills, and wisdom benefits both you and your community!

Step 1

Self-Assessment

Are you wondering whether you or a loved one might be experiencing social isolation or loneliness? Take this short quiz called the UCLA Three Item Loneliness Scale! Select one of these three answers for each question:

1. **How often do you feel that you lack companionship?**

Hardly Ever Sometimes Often

2. **How often do you feel left out?**

Hardly Ever Sometimes Often

3. **How often do you feel isolated from others?**

Hardly Ever Sometimes Often



Give yourself 1 point for **Hardly Ever**, 2 points for **Sometimes**, and 3 points for **Often**. Then, total your points. If your score is higher than 5, consider using some of the ideas included in this brochure. There are many ways you can continue to engage in your community!

Step 2

Become More Socially Engaged By:



Volunteering for an organization or institution, whether it's a local club, nonprofit organization, faith community, or another type of organization.



Rekindling creative talents or learning new ones by taking art classes, learning how to play a musical instrument or singing in a choir.



Getting involved in opportunities to support youth, such as mentoring or tutoring programs.



Taking lifelong learning courses, educational classes, or technology training at a senior center, local college, or university.



Participating in health and wellness classes.



Using technology to connect to friends and family.



Employment opportunities or developing entrepreneurial skills.

Wisconsin Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness

<https://wihealthyaging.org/initiatives/isolation-and-loneliness>