

Loneliness is more than just being alone

What is loneliness?

Loneliness is the feeling of lacking meaningful or close relationships and a sense of belonging.

(Center for Disease Control and Prevention)

According to a 2023 advisory by the U.S. Surgeon General, loneliness has a significant impact on both individual and societal health, increasing the risk of:

- Heart Disease
- Stroke
- Depression
- Dementia
- Premature Death
- Violence or abuse

Certain groups also face a higher risk of loneliness due to social, economic or cultural factors:

- Young adults
- Older adults, particularly those living alone or with health issues
- Immigrants adjusting to a new culture
- People who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual who may face a lack of acceptance

Different types of loneliness

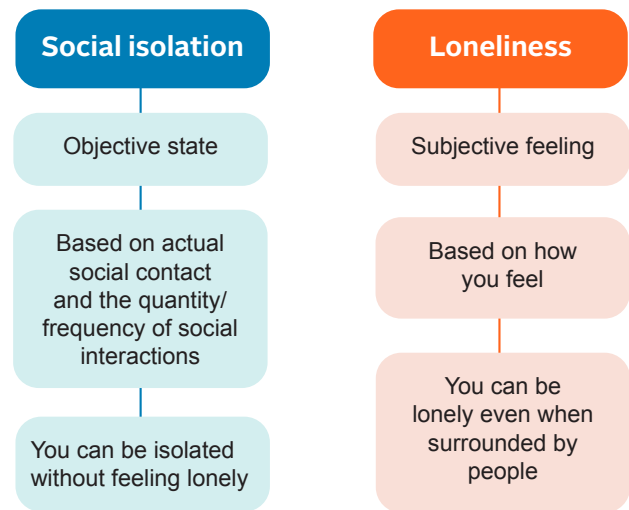
Loneliness affects people in a variety of ways. There are three commonly identified types of loneliness:

Social loneliness – a ‘perceived deficit in the quality of social connections’. Social loneliness could be associated with moving to a new city, starting a new job or social exclusion/discrimination.

Emotional loneliness – ‘the absence of meaningful relationships’. Emotional loneliness could be associated with the loss of a loved one and therefore, the loss of a good, quality social relationship.

Existential loneliness – ‘a feeling of fundamental separateness from others and the wider world’. Existential loneliness could be associated with the diagnosis of a serious illness, aging or retirement. Recognizing these signs is the first step in addressing loneliness. Whether it’s reaching out to someone in your community or offering support to a loved one, small actions can make a big difference in fostering connection and improving well-being for everyone.

Social isolation and loneliness



It’s important to recognize loneliness, as it can affect both mental and physical health.

Join us in the Better Together campaign to fight loneliness and create stronger, more connected communities.

Learn more at:
ibx.com/bettertogether

Resources:

Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation, U.S. Surgeon General (<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf>)
Campaign to End Loneliness UK (<https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/facts-and-statistics/>)
What Works Wellbeing (<https://whatworkswellbeing.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/V3-FINAL-Loneliness-conceptual-review.pdf>)
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<https://www.cdc.gov/social-connectedness/risk-factors/index.html#:~:text=Loneliness%20is%20feeling%20alone%20or%20a%20sense%20of%20belonging.>)

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