

Prioritizing Self-Care & Social Connection

Feeling lonely lately? You are not alone. One in three Americans report feeling lonely at least once a week, with one in 10 reporting feeling lonely every day.¹ This statistic may feel heavy, but it is important to recognize what many of us are feeling. Checking in with yourself and prioritizing self-care is important.

These feelings of loneliness, if left unaddressed, can create bigger issues in our lives and for our health and wellbeing. Loneliness is associated with significantly higher risks of disease and is even likely to harm our overall life expectancy.² Knowing this, we each need to take steps to combat loneliness both for ourselves and for our friends, family, and community members.

If you or someone you know requires crisis support, the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline can be reached by dialing or texting 988.

A Few Ways to Combat Feeling Lonely

Seek Support

Confiding in a trusted friend or family member can be a good place to start. In-person or virtual mental healthcare is also an option for those who need it. Consider accessing an employee assistance program (EAP), mental health resources, or coaching services depending on your needs.

Prioritize Self-Care

Check in with yourself. Without judgement, consider ways you could make changes or improvements to your self-care in a small, sustainable way in the next week.

Reflect on Your Digital Engagement

Connecting online with others is a great way to get social interaction, but it can become a hindrance. Limiting screen time or enforcing boundaries with our digital intake can help improve how we feel.

Volunteer

The opportunity to support others can also help ourselves. Consider volunteering for an organization with similar interests to your own to meet people in your community.

Take a Class or Join a Club

Meeting up with a group of people who have similar interests is a great way to expand your social circle. Look for opportunities to interact with others in-person whether it is a yoga class, sports team, cooking class, hiking group, or other hobby.

In-Person Work

Spending too much time alone in our homes can feel isolating. If you do not have a physical office space to go to, think about work that can be done in work-share spaces, coffee shops, or libraries once and awhile.

It is also important to acknowledge that there are many factors, many beyond our control, which influence loneliness, such as one's genetics, health, socioeconomic status, race, gender, age, living situation, personality, and more.² In a society where community-oriented activities are declining and technology-based interactions are the norm, we must know that this is not just a personal issue for us each to deal with. Even so, by understanding that loneliness is harming our health, we can take action to help ourselves feel less lonely.

¹ American Psychiatric Association. (2024, January 30). New APA poll: One in three Americans feels lonely every week. Retrieved from <https://www.psychiatry.org/news-room/news-releases/new-apa-poll-one-in-three-americans-feels-lonely-e>

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2023). Our epidemic of loneliness and isolation: The U.S. Surgeon General's advisory on the healing effects of social connection and community. J. Holt-Lunstad (Lead Science Editor), S. Golant (Copy Editor). Retrieved from <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf>

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