

ADDRESSING SOCIAL ISOLATION FOR HUD-ASSISTED RESIDENTS

Social isolation and loneliness are steadily becoming a public health concern for all Americans. The lack of social connection may have an individual impact but can be addressed within our communities.

WHAT IS SOCIAL ISOLATION?

An objective observation of having few or limited social relationships, infrequent interactions, roles, or membership with groups.

WHO IS IMPACTED BY SOCIAL ISOLATION?

Social isolation and loneliness have impacted residents across the country; but specific high-risk groups disproportionately experience social isolation, such as:

- Youth
- Elderly
- Disabled individuals
- Ethnic/racial groups
- Low-income individuals
- LGBTQIA+ individuals



SOCIAL ISOLATION HAS AN IMPACT ON:



PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Potential increased risk to disease
- Weakened immune response, increased susceptibility to illness
- Lacking social connection can increase the risk for premature death as much as smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day.



MENTAL HEALTH

- Increase likelihood of depression & anxiety
- Increased risk of self harm, including substance abuse and disorder
- Loneliness and social isolation increase the risk for premature death by 26% and 29% respectively.

HOW CAN WE ADDRESS SOCIAL ISOLATION?

Social Connection can help Americans power through hardships and obstacles. A resident's social network can improve the lives of many Americans with quality and healthy relationships.



WHAT CAN YOU DO TO REDUCE SOCIAL ISOLATION IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

LISTEN TO YOUR RESIDENTS



- Gather information through surveys, assessments, and community conversations:
 - Check out this resource for some inspiration:
 - [Social Isolation and Loneliness Definitions and Measures - Addressing Social Isolation to Improve the Health of Older Adults: A Rapid Review - NCBI Bookshelf \(nih.gov\)](#)
- Check in with residents on a consistent basis:
 - [Virtual meetings](#) for elderly and disabled residents who may have mobility issues that make in-person attendance difficult.
 - [Monthly newsletters](#), detailing social events or awareness workshops for residents and staff members to attend.
 - [Focus groups](#), to encourage conversations between residents and staff centered on social isolation and loneliness.

INTERACT WITH YOUR RESIDENTS

- Make residents aware of Social Isolation:
 - Encourage vulnerable residents to check in with Resident Services staff when experiencing social isolation or loneliness. [Check out this resource!](#)
 - Plan informational events and workshops for Resident Services staff to learn how to address social isolation.
 - Provide the results of the community survey so residents and staff are aware of social isolation and loneliness and the impact it has on their community.
- Create a social environment for residents:
 - Community gardens, residential lounges, fitness rooms/exercise classes, or monthly social gatherings.
 - Establish community connection programs for HUD-assisted residents to foster relationships such as youth groups, savings club, book club, and/or exercise groups.



WHERE CAN I GO TO LEARN MORE?

- Did you know there are Community Mental Health Centers throughout the country? You can find the closest one to you [here](#).
- CDC and the Department of Health and Human Services has many resources available here:
 - [Social Connection Fact Cards](#): Learn more about social connection and how it may impact your residents.
 - [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#): This Lifeline is a resource for individuals experiencing distress and addressing crises.
 - [Connect to End Social Isolation and Loneliness](#): This resource is great for vulnerable residents, specifically older adults, who experience social isolation and loneliness.
 - [Social Connectedness Resource](#): This CDC resource page addresses emotional well-being and may be of use for residents