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## **Self-Assessment: Is Isolation Affecting Me?**

### **What is isolation?**

Isolation is more than being alone. It's the result of feeling detached physically or psychologically, or being disconnected from support groups of family, friends and community. Is Isolation affecting me?

### **Loneliness and isolation are not the same thing.**

Loneliness (also known as subjective isolation) denotes how people perceive their experience and whether or not they feel isolated. Objective isolation involves quantifiable measurements, such as the size of one's social network (and the frequency of engagement with it), availability of transportation, and ability to access resources and information.

### **Isolation is a growing health epidemic.**

More than 8 million adults age 50 and older are affected by isolation. The health risks of prolonged isolation are equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

### **Isolation in older adults is rarely caused by a single event.**

More often, it's the result of multiple causes, including poor physical and mental health, poorly designed communities, and major life events such as loss and retirement. Risk factors include:



Most prevalent  
causes of isolation

Common  
responses that may  
prevent or reduce  
isolation

Transportation  
Challenges

Lack of accessible  
and affordable  
transportation  
options  
Driving retirement

Volunteer-based ride  
programs  
Livable/age-friendly  
community initiatives

Poor Health  
and  
Well-being

Untreated  
hearing loss  
Mobility impairments  
Frailty  
Poor mental health

Falls prevention  
programs  
Chronic disease  
self-management

Life  
Transitions,  
Role Loss or  
Change

Leaving the  
workforce  
Loss of a partner  
or friends  
Becoming  
a caregiver

Support groups  
Lifelong learning  
Senior centers  
Creative/artful aging

Societal  
Barriers

Ageism  
Lack of  
opportunities for  
older adults to  
engage and  
contribute

Intergenerational  
programs  
Lifelong learning  
Policies to support  
an older workforce



## Self-Assessment Tool

Connecting with others is something that improves our quality of life.

**Connect2Affect** has created a [Social Isolation Self-Assessment](#) tool for social isolation that you can take for yourself or someone you know. Completing the self-assessment will help you understand how connected you are and provide you with helpful resources.

**Connect2Affect** is collaborative effort spearheaded by AARP Foundation in cooperation with the Gerontological Society of America, Give an Hour, National Association of Area Agencies on Aging and UnitedHealth Group.

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**AARP** was founded in 1958 and has over 38 million members. It is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization for people over the age of 50. AARP is well-known for its advocacy efforts, providing its members with important information, products and services that enhance quality of life as they age. They also promote community service and keep members and the public informed on issues relating to the over 50 age group.

Article Source

AARP

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