

## Signs of Social Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults

Knowing how to recognize the signs of isolation and loneliness in yourself or someone you know is an important step towards limiting the negative impacts.

Recognizing the signs may not always be easy. Sometimes signs can be subtle and mistaken for something else, like being an introvert or wanting to maintain strict social distancing measures. Other times signs can be overlooked, like when an older adult has social contacts but is experiencing loneliness.

Signs and symptoms can look different for each person. Here are some key signs and symptoms to look for.

Prepared by Connection in Action, an initiative of Community Safety & Well-Being in Halton.

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| Category        | Signs of Social Isolation and Loneliness   | Possible Steps   |
|-----------------|--|--|
| Physical Health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☀ Changes in physical appearance like bruising, weight loss, and weakness (results of declining health or signs of elder abuse)</li> <li>☀ Changes in eating and nutritional status</li> <li>☀ Changes in personal hygiene or self-image</li> <li>☀ Increased alcohol consumption or smoking</li> <li>☀ Decrease in physical exercise</li> </ul>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☀ Schedule a medical appointment</li> <li>☀ Call Health Connect Ontario (formerly Telehealth) 811 or TTY 1 (866) 797-0007</li> <li>☀ Contact Home and Community Care Support Services (formerly LHIN and CCAC) 1 (877) 336-9090 or TTY 711</li> </ul> |
| Mental Health   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☀ Restless sleep</li> <li>☀ Fear or confusion</li> <li>☀ General lack of interest and acting withdrawn</li> <li>☀ Behaviour or personality changes</li> <li>☀ Changes to living condition (for example: home in disrepair, clutter, and hoarding)</li> <li>☀ Feels threatened or mistrustful of others</li> <li>☀ Verbalizing feelings of loneliness</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☀ Schedule a medical appointment</li> <li>☀ Meet with a mental health therapist</li> <li>☀ Listen to an older adult if they express feeling lonely</li> <li>☀ Call a crisis or distress hotline</li> <li>☀ Learn about in-home services</li> </ul>    |

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| Personal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☀ Changes in routine</li> <li>☀ Increased amount of time spent at home without company</li> <li>☀ Increased spending</li> <li>☀ Changes in frequency of calls and communication (either increased or decreased)</li> <li>☀ Asking about family and friends they haven't seen in a long time</li> <li>☀ Not meaningfully engaged in activities</li> <li>☀ Feels a lack of purpose</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☀ Volunteer</li> <li>☀ Join local groups, seniors centers</li> <li>☀ Join a local library and participate in events and activities</li> <li>☀ Participate in cultural groups and events</li> <li>☀ Participate in faith-based groups</li> <li>☀ Participate in programs like friendly visiting and telephone check-ins</li> </ul> |

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Connection in Action supports adults aged 55+ who live in Halton by providing information on opportunities to increase social connections.

Connection in Action also supports communities across Halton by raising awareness about issues impacting older adults through our LITE (Loneliness, Isolation to Empowerment) Education.