

Aging with Resilience: Combating Loneliness and Enhancing Your Mental Health

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**A season of loneliness and
isolation is when the
caterpillar gets its wings.
Remember that next time
you feel alone.**

Mandy Hale

THE
LONELINESS
EPIDEMIC



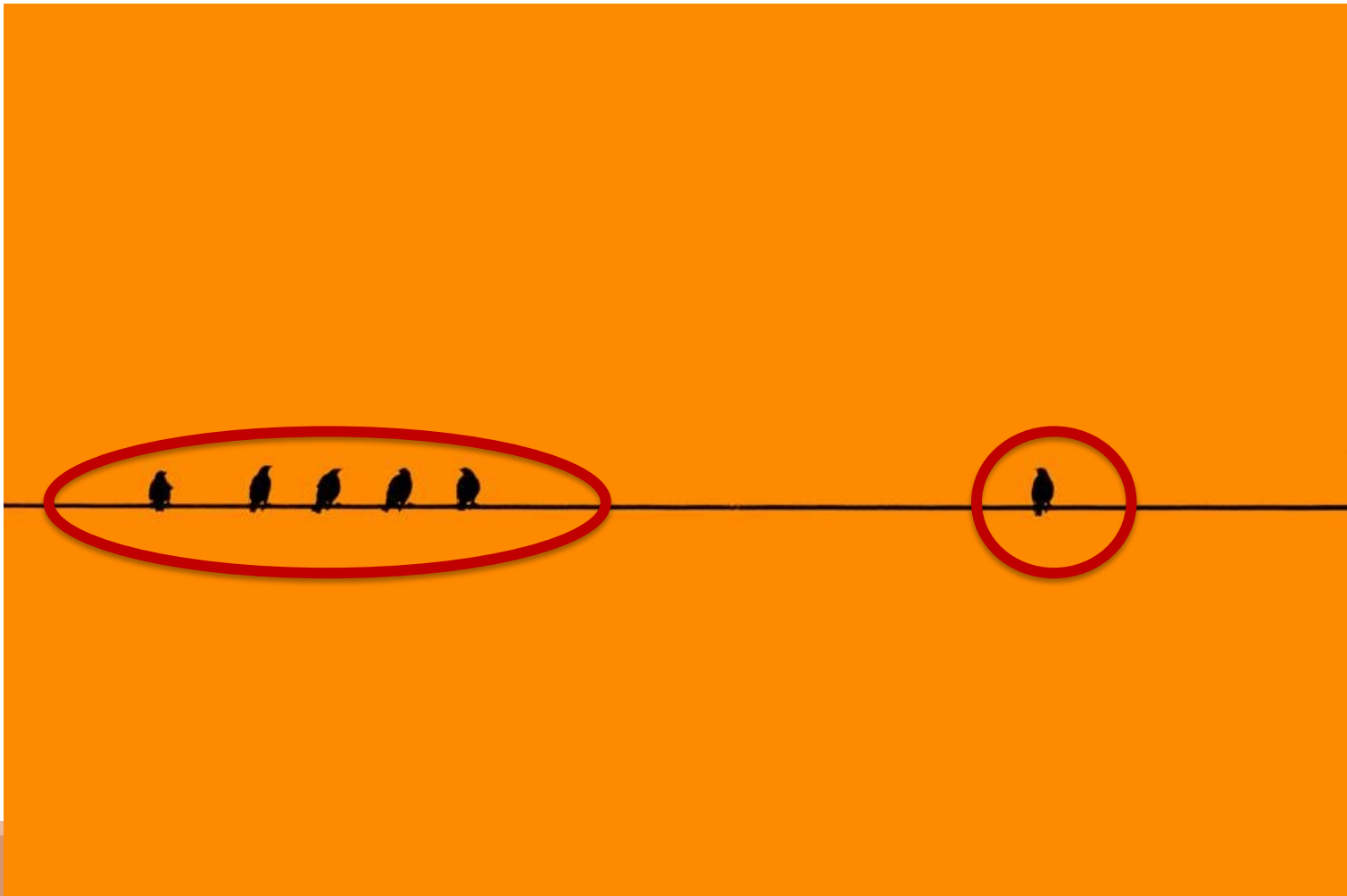












THE STATE OF LONELINESS TODAY

In 2018, Cigna conducted a large national online survey of U.S. adults to explore the impact of loneliness and found that loneliness was at epidemic levels.

N = 20,096

Nearly half report sometimes or always feeling alone

Those who live with others are less likely to be lonely

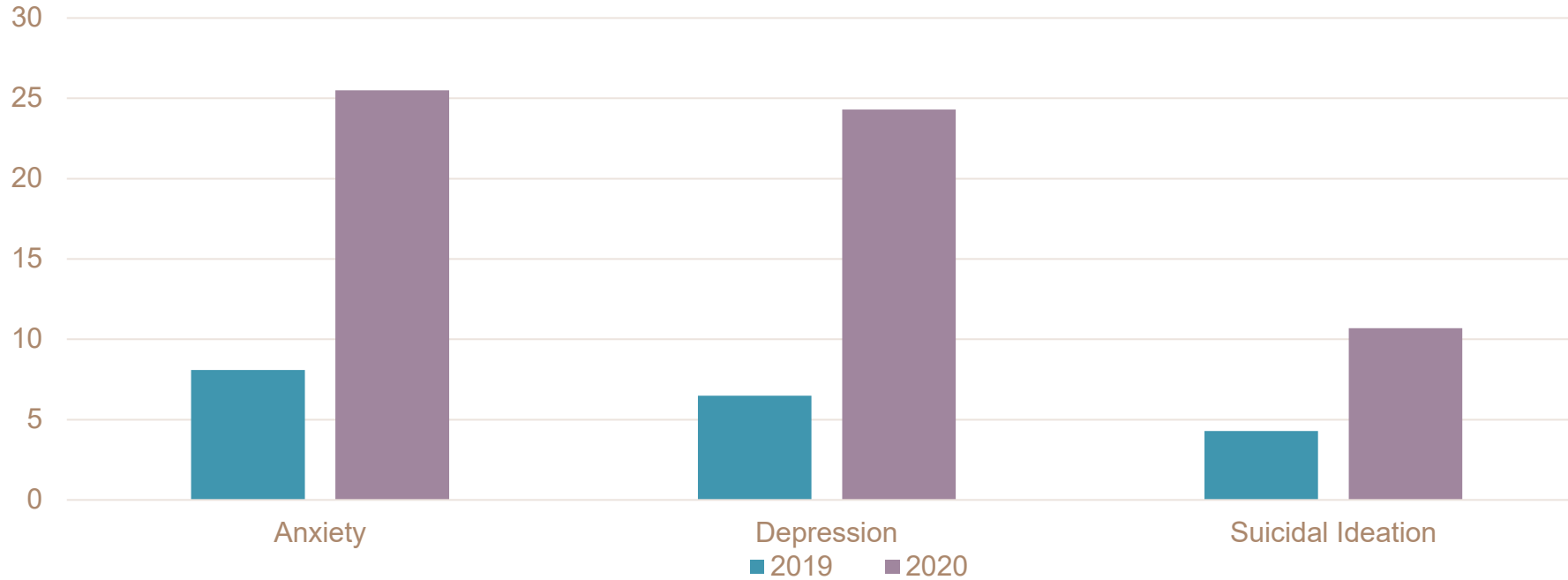
Generation Z (those age 18-22) is currently rated the loneliest generation — they actually claim to be in worse health than older generations

For more information, please visit
[Cigna.com/CombatingLoneliness](https://www.cigna.com/CombatingLoneliness)

The COVID Complication



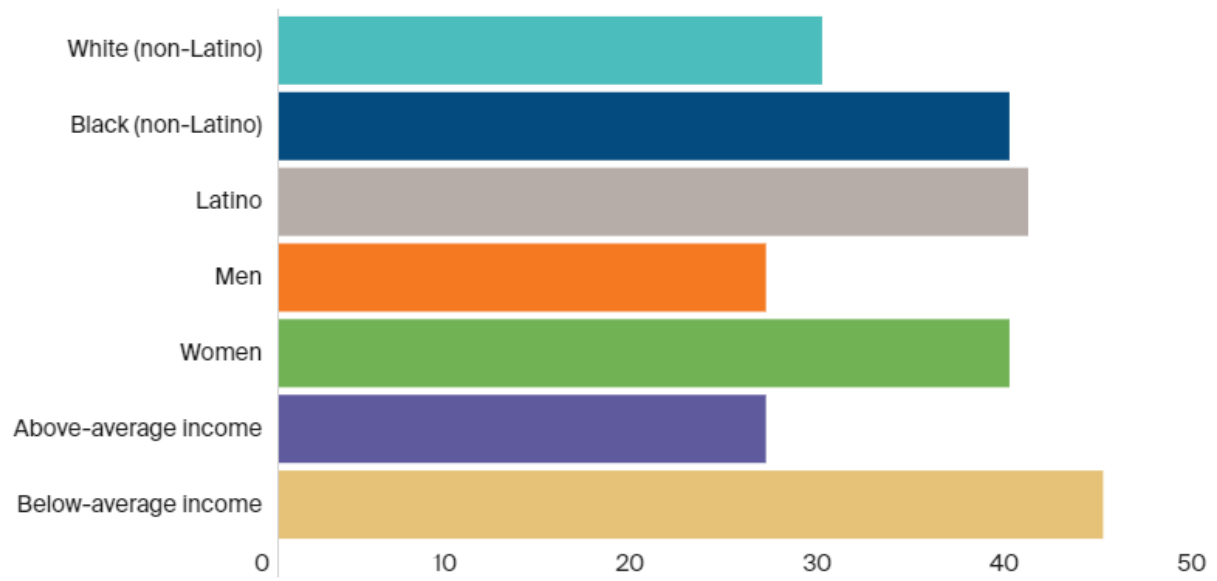
CDC: Mental Health Impact of COVID



The Inequities of COVID

Latino and Black people, women, and people with lower incomes are most at risk of mental health concerns because of the pandemic.

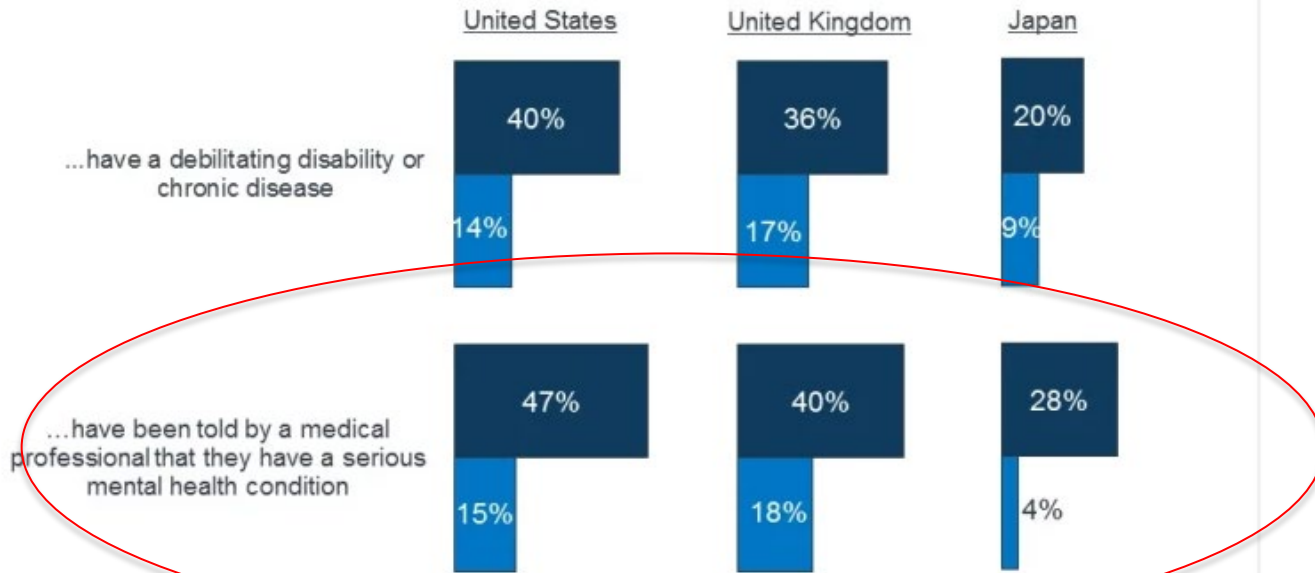
Percent of respondents who reported experiencing stress, anxiety, or great sadness that they found difficult to cope with on their own since the COVID-19 pandemic began



Those Reporting Loneliness Are Much More Likely To Report Poor Mental and Physical Health

Percent who say they...

■ People reporting loneliness or social isolation ■ People not reporting loneliness or social isolation



SOURCE: Kaiser Family Foundation/The Economist Survey on Loneliness and Social Isolation in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Japan (conducted April–June 2018)



Figure 3: Those Reporting Loneliness Are Much More Likely to Report Poor Mental and Physical Health

Why does loneliness do so much damage?



Loneliness and Health Risks

Loneliness can be a precursor to...

- Cardiovascular Disease
- Heart Attack
- Stroke
- Hypertension
- Immune Complications
- Type 2 Diabetes



Loneliness and Substance Use: A Vicious Cycle



Loneliness

& ADDICTION

Sometimes loneliness can lead to addiction. Other times it can result from it. In either case it's a slippery slope and dangerous relationship where one feeds the other if you're not careful.

Loneliness and Older Adult Mental Health

- Increased risk of MCI and dementias
- Correlates with depression and anxiety
- Can correlate to suicidal ideation in older age



Am I Lonely?

Measuring Loneliness:

Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale (R-UCLA)

- Designed to be self administered
- 20 items
- Questions about: companionship, loneliness and isolation
- Rated on scale of: never, rarely, sometimes often

3 Item Loneliness Scale

- Designed to be administered over phone
- 3 items
- Rated on scale of: hardly ever, some of the time, often



So...How Would You Rate?

First, how often do you feel you lack companionship?

- 1 Hardly ever
- 2 Some of the time
- 3 Often

How often do you feel left out?

- 1 Hardly ever
- 2 Some of the time
- 3 Often

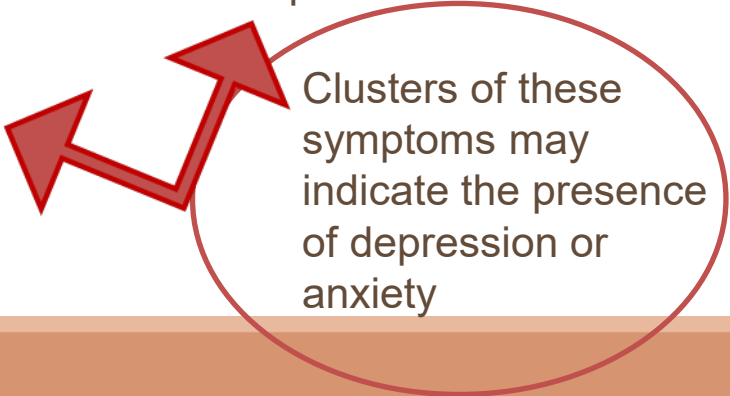
How often do you feel isolated from others?

- 1 Hardly ever
- 2 Some of the time
- 3 Often



Other Signs You Might Be Lonely:

- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Losing interest in activities previously enjoyed
- Becoming emotionally and physically exhausted
- Experiencing changes in appetite, weight or both
- Feeling blue, hopeless and helpless
- Experiencing changes in sleep patterns
- Thoughts of suicide or self-harm behaviors
- Memory and cognitive complaints
- Being irritable
- People may avoid social situations, stay home, go back to bed or go to sleep



Clusters of these symptoms may indicate the presence of depression or anxiety

Strategies for Navigating Loneliness:



It starts with your thoughts...



Take a Balanced Perspective



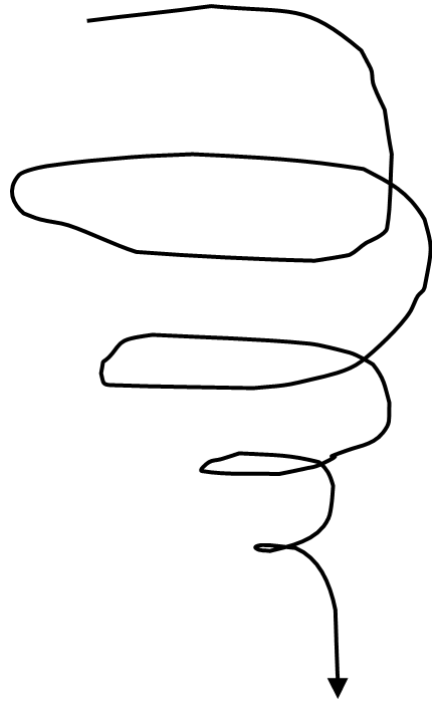
Common Humanity



When it comes to feeling lonely...



Lonely Behaviors: Where Lonely and Alone can join

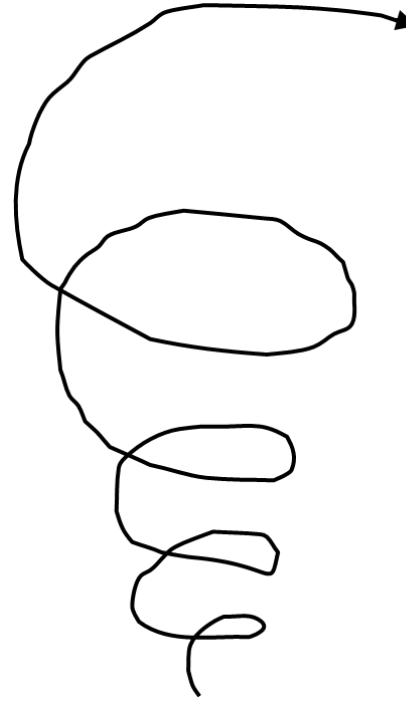


Feel Lonely

Do Less/Isolate
(For Older Adult: Memory Impaired, Concentration Impaired)

Feel Lonelier

Do Even Less



Feel Even more connected

Do More

Feel a Little less lonely

Do Something

Lastly: Do Your GRAPES



G: Gratitude

R: Relaxation

A: Accomplishment

P: Pleasure

E: Exercise

S: Socializing

Have you done your GRAPES today?

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Gratitude							
Relaxation							
Accomplishment							
Pleasure							
Exercise							
Social							

In Summary

- Loneliness is an epidemic within a pandemic
- Loneliness has dire physiological and mental health consequences
- There are things YOU can do to help decrease the feelings of loneliness
- Loneliness is a feeling and everyone feels alone sometimes

Sharp Mesa Vista Hospital offers a variety of services, classes and programs. For more information visit [sharp.com/mesavista](https://www.sharp.com/mesavista) or call 858-836-8434.



Thank You