

Loneliness: A Major Health Risk Facing Aging Americans



“Let us never know what old age is. Let us know the happiness time brings, not count the years.” - Ausonius

Isolation is a common element in the lives of aging individuals. In fact, it is directly correlated with one’s physical and mental health. According to the U.S. Census, 34% of people aged 65 and older, lived alone in 2014. Loneliness can lead to depression, poor immune systems, and many more health risks. Therefore, it is crucial to combat loneliness in order to improve your quality of life. Here are some helpful ways to prevent isolation and be the best version of yourself. After all, age is but a number.

Join local charity groups:

There are plenty of community outreach programs, volunteer opportunities, and church groups that will help the public and concurrently aid in avoiding loneliness. Get involved in your community and cater to its individual needs. Participate in local food drives or charities, tutor students at a nearby school, or engage in a community clean-up! The possibilities are truly endless; this is a great way to interact with people while using your energy to positively enhance your community.

If you have a particular philanthropic passion, donate to a charity of your choice and educate yourself about the needs of that specific cost. Attend events related to that charity or even create one yourself! You will feel euphoric after realizing how much you helped a particular cause!



Exercise:

Get your endorphins flowing and head on outside. While joining a gym is a great way to stay healthy, sometimes it is hard to motivate yourself to go. Try to find a gym that has fun workout classes that will engage you. This is a great way to meet people with similar interests and hold yourself accountable for your health. It is way easier following along with an instructor than simply motivating yourself at the gym. However, even taking a stroll outside once and a while will get you out of your house, boost your mood, and allow you to feel connected to your community. Exercising will also help you get in shape, feel more confident about yourself, and encourage you to interact with more people. It's like the old saying goes, if you look good, you feel good.

Have Meals with Friends and Family:

Turn dining into a social experience. Try to go out for a meal with family members or friends at least twice a week. If you are having a hard time making plans, take a book to your favorite café and start up a conversation with someone new. Even if you are eating alone, being surrounded by people at a local hangout can help you feel connected to the general populace.

Adopt a Pet:

There is an abundance of animals who need a kind and loving home. Having the responsibility of caring for a pet can help you fulfill a purpose while receiving unconditional love from your new furry friend. Contact your local animal shelter to find your new cute companion. Unsure if you want the responsibility? Try fostering an animal until they find a proper home. Pets can lower anxiety, boost mood, and most importantly, combat loneliness.

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Stay Connected:

Staying in touch with those closest to you is incredibly important. It is easy for people to get lost in the hustle and bustle of their own lives; however, you should try to establish a steady routine. Also, social media isn't just for the younger folks! Have a family member teach you how to utilize Facebook, a wonderful form of social media that helps you stay connected to the outside world. Human beings are social creatures, so the need for communication and human connection is essential.

Take a Class:

You are never too old to learn something new. Find local classes that interest you and try something you've never done before. This is a great way to increase your brain elasticity and also meet new people! Art, yoga, and cooking classes are sure to be available at a community center, country club, or establishment near you.

It is an ever-changing world out there, and technology is at the forefront of these changes. Taking a class on your smart phone, desktop, or tablet is a great way to keep up with the times and stay connected. For example, if you have an iPhone or other Apple products, the company constantly has classes Apple Store can deeply enhance your knowledge of modern technology and unlock the various features on your devices.

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