

# SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS DEFINED

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**Social isolation-** the absence or scarcity of contact or interaction between a person and a social network

**Loneliness-** a feeling of being alone, separated or apart from other people

While the two are related, loneliness is a subjective, perceived feeling of isolation while social isolation is an objective, observable condition.

Not everyone who feels lonely is socially isolated, and not everyone who is socially isolated is lonely.

Social isolation and loneliness are serious and underappreciated public health risks.



## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

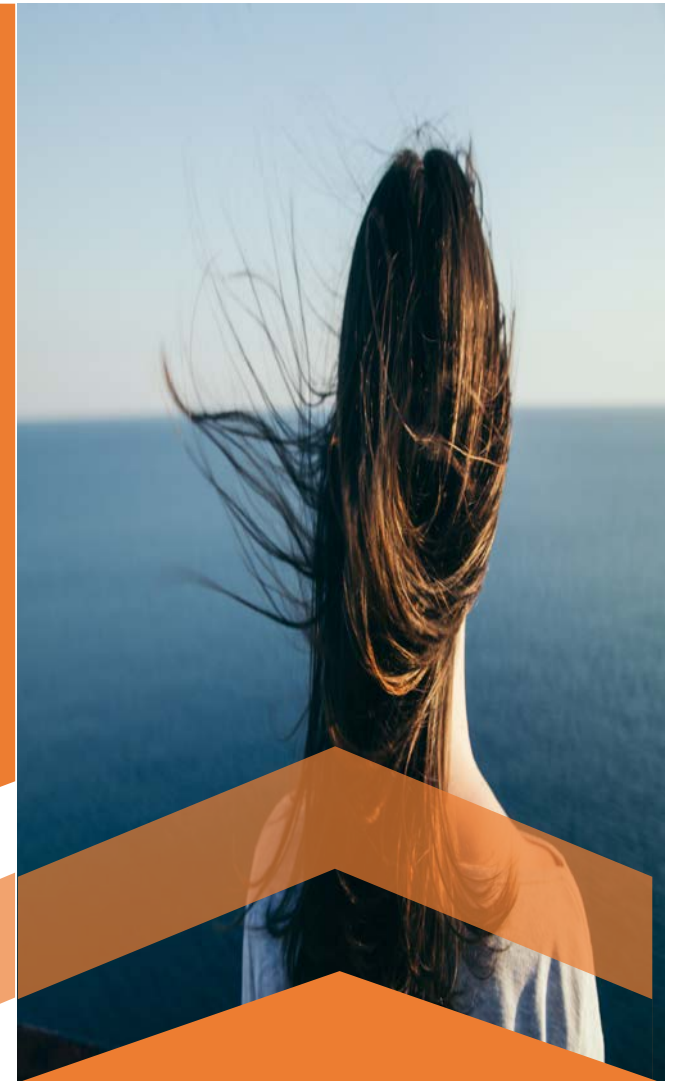
### Local Resources

- Senior Companion Program  
1-800 856-5525
- Nashua Senior Activity Center  
(603) 889-6155
- DH Aging Resource Center  
603-653-3460

### State Resources

- ServiceLink  
(ServiceLink.NH.Gov)
- NHCarePath (nhcarepath.org)
- 211 New Hampshire (Dial 211)

BROCHURE DEVELOPED BY  
TERESA DIDEHBANI, RN, BS, NP  
STUDENT  
RIVIER UNIVERSITY, NASHUA, NH



**Social  
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# WHO'S AT RISK FOR SOCIAL ISOLATION?

People who do not have consistent interactions with others

Those with unstable housing

Those who do not belong to any social or religious groups

Those who do not have significant personal relationships

Those who live alone

People who have suffered the loss of family or friends

People with chronic illness

People with sensory impairments

People who are not satisfied with their social connectedness



# WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL ISOLATION?

Social isolation is associated with adverse health consequences including depression, poor sleep quality, impaired executive function, accelerated cognitive decline, poor cardiovascular function, and impaired immunity at every stage of life.

Social isolation carries the same negative health consequences associated with obesity, smoking, lack of access to care and physical inactivity.

Social isolation and loneliness in the older adult population is associated with health decline and higher rates of mortality.



# WHAT CAN YOU DO TO COMBAT LONELINESS AND SOCIAL ISOLATION?

**\*Enhance mobility or exercise-** physical activity has shown promise in improving the health of those who are socially isolated

**\*Utilize available technology-** technology can help connect socially isolated and lonely people

Ensure access to Information Technology

Utilize social media, video calls, app-based services

**\*Engage in social and community groups**

Book clubs, church groups, choir  
Volunteer

**\*Join a Support Groups**

**\*Consider getting a pet-** evidence suggests pet ownership is related to increased health benefits and reduced mortality

