

## What is loneliness and social isolation?

**Loneliness:** the feeling of being alone, regardless of the amount of social contact

**Social Isolation:** having few social relationships or infrequent social contact with others

## More people are feeling lonely & isolated as the pandemic goes on

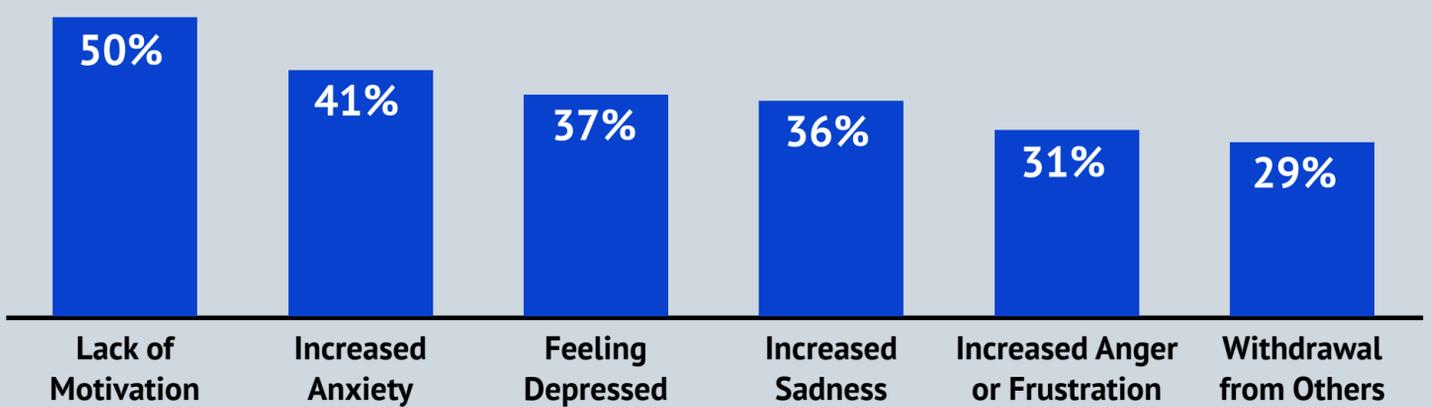
Before the pandemic approximately 20% of adults in the US said they often or always felt lonely or socially isolated. Reports from August 2020 showed:

28% of adults reported feeling lonely

41% of adults have reported feeling socially isolated

Younger generations are more likely to report loneliness and social isolation during the pandemic

## A majority of those experiencing social isolation also reported:



## Risk factors of being lonely

### Factors that decrease loneliness

- Increased age
- Marriage
- Hobbies
- Good night's sleep
- Social network size

### Factors that increase loneliness

- Social isolation
- LGBTQ status
- Mental illness diagnosis
- Lower income
- Urban environments

### Factors that have little to no effect

- Education
- Race/Ethnicity
- Gender

## Loneliness & social isolation can be damaging to physical health

41% of people have not visited or seen a health care professional since March

Social isolation can be as damaging to health as smoking **15** cigarettes a day



Social isolation has been associated with a **50%** increased risk of dementia



Poor social relationships have been associated with a **29%** increased risk of heart disease



Social isolation and loneliness significantly increase a person's risk of premature death from all causes

## Solutions and strategies to combating loneliness & isolation

### During COVID-19 social restrictions & beyond



**Talk with Family and Friends Regularly**  
Phone, virtual platform, email and social media



**Keep a Healthy Lifestyle**  
Eat a balanced diet, exercise and get quality sleep



**Get Outdoors as Much as Possible**  
Get as much sunlight, fresh air and nature as you can



**Get Help and Reach Out When Needed**  
Take part in support groups or therapy, virtual or in person