

Frameworks for Social Isolation and Loneliness in Wisconsin

These frameworks were developed by the Wisconsin Coalition for Social Connection and serve as a guide to better understand both the causes of and solutions to social isolation and loneliness.

For additional information, please contact connectwi@wihealthyaging.org

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Social-Ecological Model: Risk Factors of Social Isolation and Loneliness

with examples of relevant factors at each level

Life-Course

Individual

- Having disabilities or becoming disabled^{1, 20}
- Being aged 75 years and over¹
- Living alone/spending a lot of time alone¹
- Self-esteem and social skills^{22, 23, 26}
- Being widowed or divorced¹
- Limited financial resources¹
- Depression or anxiety²
- Belonging to certain minority groups, including LGBTQ^{3, 4, 25}
- Language barriers¹
- Dementia¹
- Decline in general health¹
- Loss of employment or retirement⁵
- Losing ability to drive⁶
- Moving to a care facility¹
- Losing a partner/death of loved ones¹
- Caregiving for a loved one¹

Relationship

- Family support^{8, 9}
- Strained relationships: friends and/or family⁸
- Proximity to neighbors^{7, 10}
- Frequency of contact with friends, family, and neighbors¹
- Size and quality of social network¹¹
- Religious community involvement¹⁰
- Quality and reliable paid supports²⁴

Community

- Living in an area with:
- Low income or social disadvantage¹²
 - High crime or violence¹³
 - Limited opportunities for social participation or recreation^{14, 26}
 - High residential mobility¹
 - Limited access to services, amenities, and public transport^{1, 26}
 - Low access public spaces²⁰

Societal

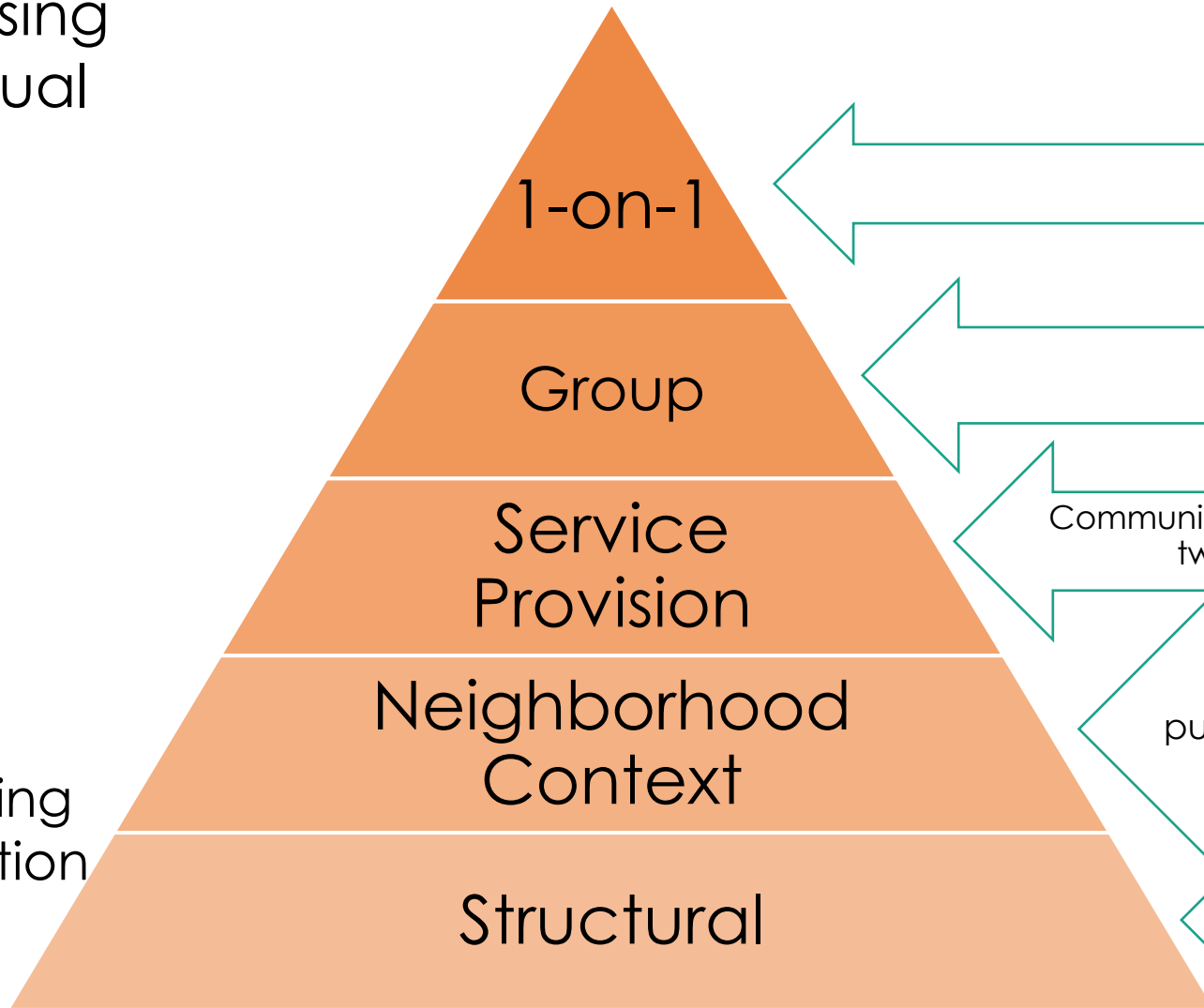
- Stigma of loneliness¹⁰
- Stigma of disability^{25, 26}
- Social and cultural norms¹⁵
 - Cultural values of independence and productivity¹⁶
- Social, health, economic, and housing policies¹⁷
- Discrimination such as ageism, ableism, racism, heterosexism^{18, 25}
- Lack of social cohesion¹⁹

Loneliness Impact Pyramid

Increasing individual effort



Increasing population impact



Examples of interventions at each level^{1,20}

Befriending, mentoring, therapy

Identity-specific support groups, health education groups

Community health workers/navigators, co-locate programs that serve two or more generations, computer and mobile app trainings

Age-friendly communities, accessible and inclusive public spaces, maintain quality public spaces, community events, accessible transportation

Promote positive aging and disability justice, caregiver friendly workplace policies, broadband internet access

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