

# Wisconsin Coalition for Social Connection

Thriving with purpose and belonging

Loneliness and social isolation are on the rise in the U.S. and are responsible for very real physical, emotional and psychological impacts — especially in older adults and people with disabilities. While the pandemic has exacerbated the issue and heightened awareness, it has long been recognized as a serious public health problem.

**The Wisconsin Coalition for Social Connection wants to do something about that —and you can help.**

Using a collective impact approach that brings together public and private entities, service providers, and individuals, we're organizing to identify and deploy meaningful responses to the negative health impacts of social isolation and loneliness among older adults and people with disabilities in Wisconsin. Join us as we work to tackle the challenges, with a focus on breaking down disparities in communities of color, rural communities and tribal nations, by addressing these areas:



## Public Awareness

We will raise awareness of loneliness as a public health issue and share strategies to improve connections and create a feeling of purpose.



## Research & Share

We will create a research-driven knowledge base to support and inform coalition activities and interventions to be deployed locally.



## Detect & Respond

We will share methods for identifying loneliness and provide access to meaningful and culturally-relevant resources and services.



## Advocate

We will seek public policy solutions that combat the root causes and adverse consequences of isolation and loneliness.



## Social Isolation & Loneliness: What's the Difference?

**Social Isolation:** The objective experience of having few or infrequent social connections.

**Loneliness:** The subjective and distressing feeling of social isolation, often defined as the difference between actual and desired level of social connection.

**Social Connection:** The ways that people can be physically, emotionally and culturally connected to others.

**40%**

Of adults with a disability report feeling lonely.



**43%**

Of older adults feel lonely on a regular basis.

**\$6.7 B**

Estimated annual federal spending attributable to social isolation among older adults.

## What Can You Do?

### Personally . . .

We all know people — friends, neighbors, family members — who may be isolated and without meaningful social connections. Check in with them. Have a conversation. Let them know you care about their well-being and want to help if they need it.

### Your Agency or Organization . . .

Join us. Decreasing loneliness and social isolation will take all of us working together with a unified mission and purpose. When you join, you become part of a broad-based network that includes community, medical, social, crisis and protective service, advocacy, and provider agencies and organizations and will be asked to:

- 1) Participate in coalition network meetings — every other month — and support coalition activities locally as they are launched; and
- 2) Play a role in developing resources and be a source of information, best practices and feedback for the coalition.

### For more information, contact:

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### Founding Organizations:

Wisconsin Department of Health Services -  
Bureau of Aging & Disability Resources

AARP Wisconsin

Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources

UW-La Crosse - Psychology Department

UW-Madison -Division of Extension

Wisconsin Association of Senior Centers

Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging