LONELINESS: THE MODERN SOCIAL HEALTH CRISIS

A WEBINAR FOR EMPLOYEES FROM YOUR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

May 8, 2024

PSE | Federal Occupational Health

INTRODUCTION

OBJECTIVES

– Define loneliness

– Review loneliness risk factors

– Explore how loneliness affects an organization and its employees' physical and mental health

– Discuss ways to decrease loneliness

True or False:

Loneliness worsens when you spend too much time alone.

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SECTION 1

LONELINESS DEFINED, RISK FACTORS, EFFECTS

WHAT IS LONELINESS?

"The state of distress or discomfort that results when one perceives a gap between one's desires for social connection and actual experiences of it."

Emotional distress due to a need for social connection

Negative feelings due to a lack of desired social relationships

Loneliness is different than depression

RISK FACTORS

Age:	79% of adults aged 18-24 feel lonely, compared to 41% aged 66+
Being a parent:	Parents reported feeling lonely 65% of the time and single parents 77% of the time while nonparents feel lonely 55% of the time
Openness about feelings:	Loneliness for those who talk to their partners about their feelings was 34%, compared to 68% for those who do not
Physical health:	Adults with physical health issues were 50% more likely to feel lonely
Major life change:	A major life change, such as a death, moving, or retirement, may also increase feelings of loneliness

LONELINESS IN THE WORKPLACE

Effects:

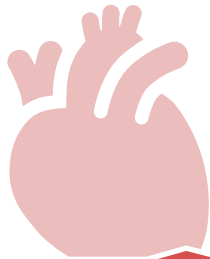- Productivity and performance suffer

- Absenteeism rises

Loneliness at work depends on:

- Organizational culture

- Job satisfaction/ fulfillment

- Stress levels and burnout

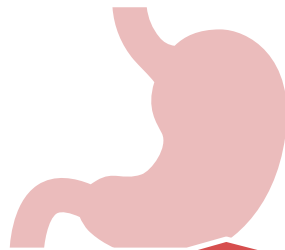- Shared meaning

- Feeling valued as an employee

EFFECTS OF LONELINESS ON HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Potential impacts include increased risk of:

Heart disease and stroke

Metabolic disorders

Sleep disorders, such as insomnia

Dementia

Weakened immunity

Anxiety and depression

Lower quality of life

SECTION 2

DECREASING LONELINESS THROUGH COMMUNITY

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY

Form connections

Maintain supportive relationships

THE MEANING OF COMMUNITY

"Human communities are often characterized by **commonality of interests, attitudes, and values and a general sense of belonging** *to a unified, socially integrated group."*

What are some words that you would use to describe a strong sense of community?

HOW COMMUNITY LESSENS LONELINESS

Communities are comprised of the people in your life who:

Show up to help	You exchange information with	Recognize your accomplishments	Know the real you

TIPS TO DECREASE LONELINESS

Start small

Reach out to others

Be present

Take a social media break

Give and receive help

Practice gratitude

Share your creativity and interests

Engage with people in many areas

Spend time alone

Seek professional help

SUMMARY

RESOURCES

Books

- *A Practical Guide to Overcoming Loneliness*
  - S. Alter, 2019

- *Connecting With Loneliness: A Guided Journal: Prompts to Discover Self-Love, Build Connection, and Embrace Joy*
  - J. Everts, 2021

- *The Anatomy of Loneliness: How to Find Your Way Back to Connection*
  - T. Swan, 2018

Website

- Meetup.com

Online Articles

- 3 Ways to Create Community and Counter Loneliness

- 4 Steps to Walk Away From Loneliness

- The Misconception About Introversion and Extroversion: Enjoying Alone Time

Apps

- Gratitude: Self-Care Journal
  - Android | iOS

- ThinkUp – Daily Affirmations
  - Android | iOS

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Date:

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