

HEALTHY
aging
education series

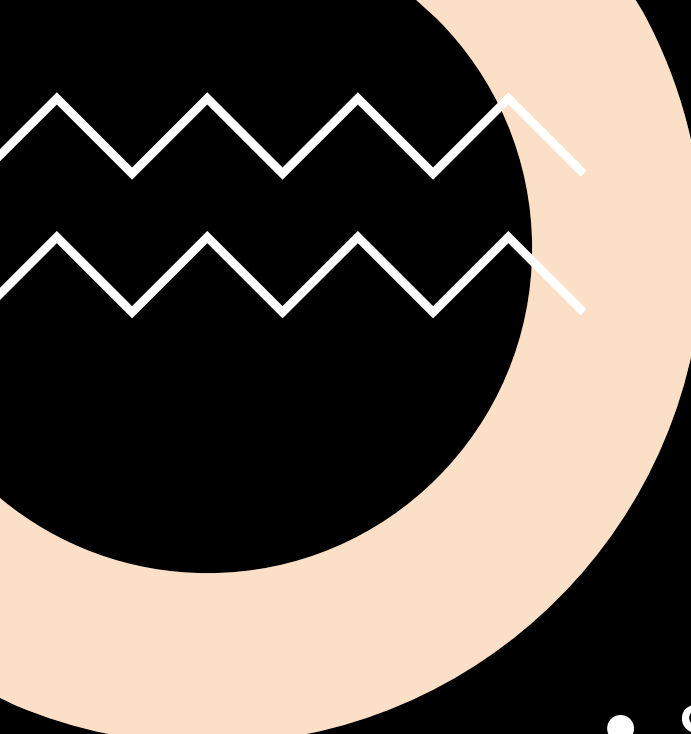
the **TRUTH** about
social isolation
(presented by one who cannot be trusted)



Who is this guy?!

- Lens has less than 5X magnifying power
- I thought it was a mirror and wanted to see my handsome self
- Hieroglyphs on t-shirt spell EGYPT but I have never been there
- Does not own a beard trimmer or electric razor – eyeballs it every time
- That's not even my hat





No, really, who is this guy?!

- Shan Abbasi
- I work for the volunteer centre, Volunteer MBC – we care a lot
- Scrabble clubs and tournament director since 2007
- I went through a period of extended loneliness ~2003-2009
- Now I spend my days talking to others at not-for-profit organizations and trying to tackle the isolation problem



VOLUNTEER MBC
MISSISSAUGA • BRAMPTON • CALEDON
care • community • connection



Welcome Activity

In the Chat or Unmute Yourself and Share:

- Your Name
- Answer one or both:
 - Share one ray-of-hope moment you experienced during the pandemic
 - What's something you appreciate more now that you took for granted before?

The Difference Between Isolation and Loneliness

Isolation

- Physical State
- Occurs when a person has little or no contact with other people (can be over long or short periods of time)
- Negative emotional effects (e.g., increased sadness, restlessness, and loneliness)
- May be characterized by staying home most or all of the time, refusing interpersonal interaction, and/or avoiding social situations

Loneliness

- Emotional State
- Defined as feeling alone or separate from others and/or feelings of emptiness
- Loneliness can be caused by isolation or from other events (e.g., divorce, death of a loved one, and moving to a new location)
- Loneliness can accompany depression, anxiety, and many addictions and phobias

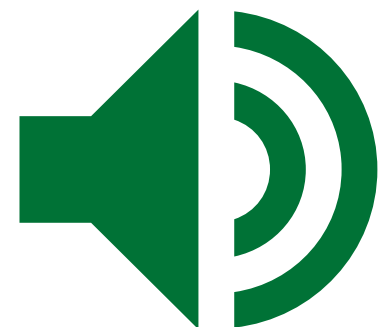
The Human Dictionary

- The condition of being alone, especially when this makes you feel unhappy
- The fact that something is separate and not connected to other things

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/isolation>

What is another word you might use or have heard to describe it?

Share in the chat or unmute!





LONELINESS

IF YOU FIND YOURSELF STRUGGLING WITH LONELINESS, YOU'RE NOT ALONE.
AND YET YOU ARE ALONE. SO VERY ALONE.

Isolation Risk Factors

What do you think are some risk factors that contribute to isolation and feelings of loneliness?

Share in the chat
or unmute!



Isolation Risk Factors

Some risk factors of isolation are:

- Age
- Gender
- Language barriers
- Marginalized and racialized populations at a higher risk
- Geographical location
- Mobility and/or sensory impairment
- Life changes/losses
- Family and/or social network size
- Source of Income/ Low income
- Lack of technology/ digital literacy
- Caregiver role

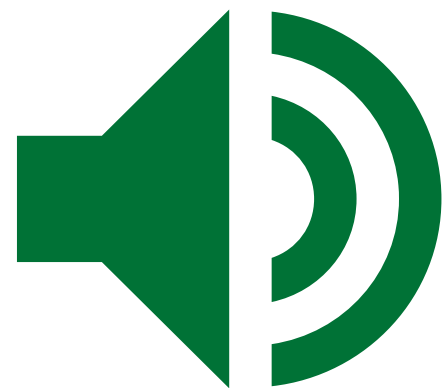


Impacts of



How do you think
isolation and feelings of
loneliness can impact
you and others?

Share in the chat
or unmute!



Health Impacts of Isolation

There is a substantial amount of evidence that describes the relationship between health and social isolation. This can negatively affect both physical and mental health. Such as:

- Cognitive decline and risk of dementia
- Chronic illnesses
- Major risk factor for depression
- Higher blood pressure
- Risk of stroke and/or heart disease
- Increased risk of mortality
- Affects the psychological and cognitive health
- Associated with higher levels of depression and suicide

Other Impacts of Isolation

Isolation and loneliness can increase and/or cause the following:

- More pessimistic outlook about the future
- Higher risk to engage in unhealthy behavior (e.g., poor diet, substance abuse, lack of physical activity)
- Impacts to self-esteem and confidence
- Have a higher likelihood of falls
- More likely to need long-term care
- 4 - 5 times greater risk of hospitalization
- Vulnerable to a greater risk of senior abuse/ financial abuse
- Decrease in community engagement and contributions

Facts to Consider

- 1 in 4 seniors lives with a mental health problem (e.g. depression, anxiety) or illness
- 10-15% of adults 65 years or older suffer from depression.
- Seniors in residential care who have symptoms of depression is higher at 44% (with or without diagnosis).
- About 50% of people over the age of 80 report feeling lonely
- Peel had the second-highest growth in the population aged 65+ in the GTA. In 2019, the senior Population aged 65 and over accounted for 15.1% of GTA's population and 13.3% of Peel's Population.
- Men over the age of 80 have the highest suicide rate of all age groups

THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS...

LONELINESS is KILLING US

TRUTH



Captain, I've managed to isolate the antibody that fights the virus.

Nice work Bones, but my wife left me--
what can I do about that?

Damn it, Jim, I'm a doctor—
not a miracle worker!

Basic ways to stay energized



Existing Supports and Programs

- **Caring and Connecting Pen Pal Initiative** [Mostly one-way letters of kindness to reduce feeling of isolation and loneliness. The letters are formatted to be accessible and senior friendly.]
- **Go the Distance (Alberta Health Services)** [Therapeutic Recreation Program which uses interactive cognitive and social interventions, and utilizing Zoom and phone methods to build connections. Region of Peel joined this program for their Adult Day Services]
- **Caregivers ' and Seniors' Support Program** (Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre) [To keep individuals involved in their community and connected to resources that help them to maintain optimum health, quality of life and independence. All are welcomed. Drop-ins are offered weekly in English, and language-specific facilitated drop-ins are held monthly in Mandarin, Urdu/Hindi/Punjabi and Polish.]
- **Bereaved Families of Ontario Halton -Peel** – Peer support groups to deal with grief

Existing Supports and Programs

- **Certified Listeners Society** [A voice/video/text emotional support chat service for older adults to foster social connections and to help their mental health and general well-being. Certified Listener volunteers are trained to best support older adults with specific issues.]
- **Seniors Virtual Clubs** (Family Services of Peel) [To bring seniors together to socialize and connect with others in a meaningful way to reduce the feelings of loneliness and isolation)
- **Seniors Social & Wellness Groups** (Caledon Meals on Wheels) [To promote and support senior health, wellness and independent living through creative activities, discussions, and presentations.]
- **Caledon Meals on Wheels** – Connection Newsletter [Print Media with current news, available supports, services, resources, and activities to reach and connect with the community]

The value of volunteering!

BUILDING: CONFIDENCE COMPETENCE CONNECTIONS COMMUNITY

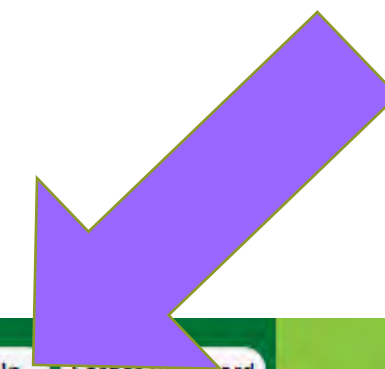
- Caring for others is a powerful way to combat isolation
- Visit www.volunteermbc.org and create your own Volunteer Profile



www.volunteermbc.org

Start a Profile

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Volunteer MBC website. At the top, there is a green navigation bar with links for 'Contact Us', 'Invite Us', and social media icons (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube). On the right side of this bar are input fields for 'username' and 'password', buttons for 'Log In', 'Sign Up', and 'Forgot Password', and a 'DONATE' button. Below the navigation bar is the organization's logo, 'VOLUNTEER MBC', with the tagline 'MISSISSAUGA • BRAMPTON • CALEDON' and 'care • community • connection'. A main menu includes 'VOLUNTEERS', 'ORGANIZATIONS', 'LEARN', 'EVENTS', and 'ABOUT'. The central banner features a photograph of hands holding a piece of paper with the word 'care' written on it. Below the banner are two call-to-action buttons: 'CREATE YOUR PROFILE' and 'SEARCH OPPORTUNITIES'. At the bottom, there is a grid of eight green buttons with icons and text: 'NEWS & VIEWS' (lightning bolt icon), 'COMMUNITY PROGRAMS' (star icon), 'VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES' (magnifying glass icon), 'SHOW YOUR SUPPORT' (heart icon), 'EVENT CALENDAR' (calendar icon), 'LEARNING CENTRE' (leaf icon), 'RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS' (organizational chart icon), and 'AWARDS & RECOGNITION' (trophy icon).



Browse

Discuss and Reflect

What will you do to combat isolation and loneliness?

How will you identify someone at risk of becoming socially isolated?

How can we reach out to each other, so that as a community, we are not isolated?



Thank you! Connect us with at
info@volunteermbc.org
www.volunteermbc.org

