

# Social Connection, Isolation & Loneliness



Factsheet for People Living with Dementia and Care Partners

In this factsheet, you will learn about:



Social Isolation



Loneliness



Affects on Health

## Key ideas:

- Loneliness and social isolation can contribute to poorer health and reduced quality of life. However, social isolation and loneliness are not the same thing.

Social connection, social isolation and loneliness are related, but different terms.

- **Social connection** is used to describe our relationships with others and the support we feel from others.
- **Social isolation** refers to having few social contacts, or having infrequent contacts.
- **Loneliness** is the feeling of being isolated or alone, regardless of how many contacts we have. People can feel lonely even when others are around. People can also be alone and not feel lonely.

Both people living with dementia and their family care partners can feel isolated as well as lonely. It is important to find ways to stay connected.

Being connected with others is a basic human need.

# Impacts of social isolation and loneliness on health

Social isolation and loneliness can increase a person's risk for certain conditions and negatively affect our health behaviours.

## For example:

### Physical health:

- Cardiac disease
- High blood pressure
- Stroke
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Weakened immune system



### Cognitive health:

- Alzheimer's disease
- Cognitive decline

## Notes, reflections, and goals:

### Mental health:

- Social stigma
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Stress

### Health Behaviours:

- Diet & food choices
- Sleep



## How can I get started?

- Make a list of people you enjoy being with and things you enjoy doing.
- Use this information to make a plan for doing something with others.