



5 tips to fight loneliness

Sometimes life can start to feel a little lonely. Maybe your adult children have flown the nest, you're missing family who live across the country or you've retired and find yourself at home more.

FACTS: **43 percent of seniors feel lonely on a regular basis.***

Loneliness and isolation are linked to serious health conditions.**

Loneliness isn't just a mental health concern — it can also affect your **physical health**; making it tough for you to handle normal daily tasks such as bathing and getting dressed. Loneliness can also raise your risk for certain medical conditions and depress your immune system.

While loneliness is common, there are steps you can take to make you feel more connected:

- 1. Be open to change.** Start doing things a little differently. Play cards with your spouse or a friend instead of watching TV at night, try out a new coffee shop or walk your dog to a different park.
- 2. Stay connected to loved ones.** This can be done by giving family members or friends a weekly phone call or a virtual meet-up. You can even send them a handwritten note just to let them know you're thinking of them.
- 3. Add to your social circle.** Many local community centers and places of worship offer virtual options for social gatherings and activities for you to participate in.
- 4. Give back to your community.** Volunteering at locations like your local soup kitchen not only allows you to make a positive difference in the world around you, but it connects you with a like-minded group of people.
- 5. Join a social club.** Do you enjoy going out for a nice dinner? Trying new recipes or new wines? Join a group to socialize and learn something new.

For your safety, if you're physically present for any of the above activities, ensure that you follow recommendations to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, including social distancing and wearing masks.

Get more tips and learn more at bcbsm.com/mentalhealth.



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**A study by researchers at the University of California, San Francisco*

***Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*