



CCSMH

Canadian Coalition for
Seniors' Mental Health



Talking about Loneliness and Isolation Conversation Starter

It might be hard to talk about feeling lonely or isolated – however starting the conversation is an important first step to improving your social health. **This resource can help you prepare and feel more confident speaking with a health professional which can include any member of a health team or senior-serving organization.**

1.

Take a Moment for Yourself: A Simple Self-Check

Before you talk to a health professional about feeling lonely, it can help to pause and think about how you're feeling. Write down a few notes or ask yourself questions, like:

- How often do I feel isolated or lonely?
- Have life changes (loss of a loved one, health issues, retirement) increased my loneliness?
- Are there times when I enjoy being alone? When does it feel hard?
- How is loneliness affecting my mood or daily activities?

Remember, **feeling lonely is not the same as being alone**. Some people enjoy quiet time by themselves. But if being alone makes you feel sad, disconnected, or like no one notices you, it's okay to say so and to get support.

Most importantly, **it's okay not to feel okay**. We all have times when we feel down or unsure. These feelings don't mean something is wrong with you. Talking openly about them is a strong and positive step toward feeling better.

2.

When to Talk About It

Talk to a health professional if you feel lonely often and you find this distressing. Especially if it's affecting your mood, sleep, appetite, or daily life. Other signs might include:

- Withdrawing from others
- Overlooking personal care (personal grooming, laundry, cleaning, eating healthy)
- Feeling tired, hopeless, or irritable
- Feeling stuck or unmotivated
- Feeling nervous about social events or reaching out.

3.

Starting the Conversation

Opening up can feel vulnerable. Here are some ways to begin:

- I've been feeling more alone lately and want to talk about it.
- It's been hard staying connected. Can we talk about that?
- I don't see people as much anymore, and it's affecting how I feel.
- Is my mental or physical health making it more difficult to stay connected?

4. Finding Support Together

Ask about ways to feel more connected. For example:

- Are there local programs or groups I could join?
- Would talking to a counselor help?
- How do I find support on how to use technology?

Notes:

To learn about available programs in your community, **call 211 or visit www.211.ca. Canada 211 is a free, confidential service available 24/7** that connects people to community and government resources in over 150 languages.

If you need emergency help, please call 911 or visit your local emergency department. To reach a local crisis line call 9-8-8.



Online Resources

Scan QR code with a mobile phone camera to visit link.



5. Planning What's Next

Before you leave, make a plan. Ask:

- Can I follow up if I'm still struggling?
- Should we talk about this again at my next visit?
- What do I do if the things I try don't work?

6. Conversation Tips

- It's ok if not everything gets solved during your first conversation. What matters most is that you start the conversation.
- Health professionals are there to listen and help you feel more connected and supported.



For more information about addressing Social Isolation and Loneliness, or 'starting the conversation,' please visit our website.

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www.ccsmh.ca