

The Health Impacts and Prevalence of Loneliness

The Australian Loneliness Dialogue



We want to free people
from loneliness.

**Loneliness is a big problem and it's
a big problem for a lot of people.**

Overseas research shows how dangerous
loneliness is for our health, including the
increased risk of heart disease, depression
and anxiety and how it is a growing problem.

We aim to free people from loneliness.
This task is enormous.

Loneliness & Social Isolation

Why is it important to distinguish between the two?

Loneliness

A subjective feeling about the gap between a person's desired levels of social contact and their actual level of social contact.

Social isolation

An objective measure of the number of contacts that people have. It is about the quantity and not quality of relationships. People may choose to have a small number of contacts.

Different types of loneliness

- **Emotional/intimate**
- **Social/relational**
- **Collective**

Key Facts about Loneliness

- **Loneliness does not discriminate and can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, location, race, wealth**
- **Loneliness has been associated with increased internet use, especially Facebook**

- It is estimated that loneliness and the physical problems associated with it *kill more people than obesity*; there is a lot of talk about an obesity epidemic, maybe it's time talk about a loneliness epidemic too.
- Chronic loneliness poses as significant a risk for your long-term health and longevity as cigarette smoking.



185,000

Older people in Victoria are likely to be
experiencing loneliness by 2031

Source: A recent report by the Commissioner for Senior Victorians



- **As many as one in four Australians report to feeling lonely**

Research from the UK “Campaign to End Loneliness” found that:

- **50% of the older people felt lonely**
- **43% of the children felt lonely**
- **50% of people with disabilities felt lonely**
- **Potentially lead to an extra cost of £6,000 per person, per year on the health system**
- **Consider the implications for a population of over 66 million people**



TimeWeTalked

An initiative from



friends
for good

SOLD HERE

FELT LONELY AT SOME
POINT IN YOUR LIFE

91%

IDENTIFY AS LONELY
RIGHT NOW

37%

 TimeWeTalked

79%

THINK IT'S DIFFICULT TO
ADMIT BEING LONELY

95%

CURRENTLY LIVE IN
AUSTRALIA

51%

EXPERIENCE
LONELINESS OFTEN

 TimeWeTalked

“ Feeling like I have no body around me and no support from others.

“ TimeWeTalked

“ Not finding a connection with people, places or things.

“ TimeWeTalked

“ It means I miss my friends and having a partner.

“ TimeWeTalked

“ Not being connected to people.

“ TimeWeTalked

“ Isolated, stressful,
overwhelming.

“ TimeWeTalked

Responses and Rethinking

- **What does all of this mean for people accessing our services?**
- **What might we need to do differently?**

What are Friends for Good doing?

- **Community lunches**
- **FriendLine**
- **Letter writing**
- **Events**