



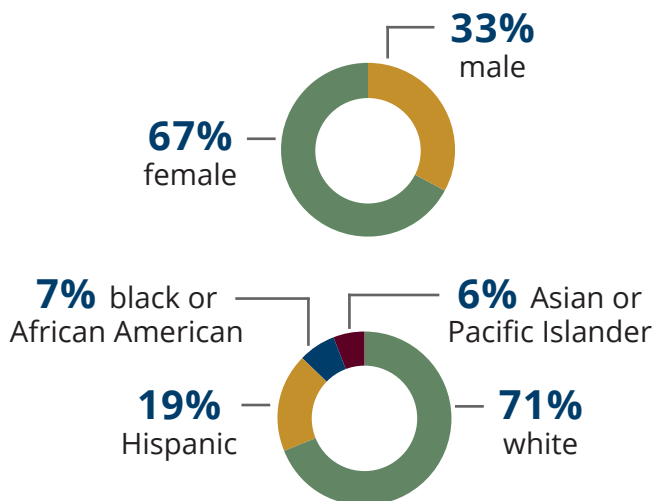
Reducing Social Isolation and Loneliness among Older Adults

The purpose of this research brief is to share results about a pre-COVID-19 study about social isolation and loneliness in Washington state. We sought information on social isolation and loneliness from older adults. The participants were recruited from seven clinical and community sites in Washington state.

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS



A total of **116 OLDER ADULTS**, with ages ranging from **60 TO 101 YEARS**.



40%

lived with a spouse or partner



75%

reported using a computer or smartphone in the previous two weeks



25%

did not drive

RISKS FOR ISOLATION & LONELINESS



40-50% OF PARTICIPANTS

- Felt isolated from others (*often or some of the time*)
- Felt no one really knew them well (*often or some of the time*)
- Did not often feel part of a friend group
- Worried about being by themselves (*often or some of the time*)
- Could not often find companionship when they want it
- Missed having people around them



1 IN 5 PARTICIPANTS

- Avoided socializing because of difficulties understanding conversations
- Did not have the desired amount of contact with people they feel close to and can trust
- Were not content with their friendships and relationships

IN THE PREVIOUS MONTH BEFORE TAKING THE SURVEY



25%

had a negative change in their health



32%

had an emotional loss (e.g., death of a family member or friend)

IN THE PREVIOUS TWO WEEKS BEFORE TAKING THE SURVEY

14%

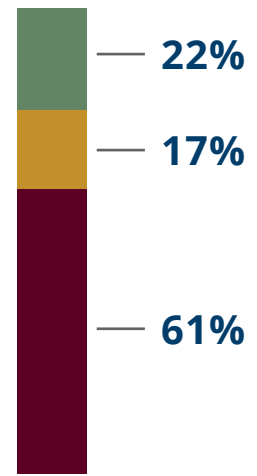
reported no face-to-face, telephone, or written/email/text contact with family members or friends

34%

did not participate in organizations such as social clubs, residents groups, or committees

55%

did not participate in religious groups



— **22%**

— **17%**

— **61%**

61%

of participants scored as high risk on the 13-item Upstream Social Isolation Risk Screener (U-SIRS)

IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY AMONG OLDER ADULTS

Take time to listen to older adults. Even if an older adult doesn't have a large group of family or friends, it only takes one person to make them feel valued, connected, and supported.

Encourage older adults to be open to new activities and new people. Identifying common interests can form bonds, create purpose, and develop positive relationships.

Identify ways to introduce meaningful interactions in different settings. Consider telephonic and internet-based services and programs that bring people together.

Consider these resources for getting connected at safe distances during COVID-19:

- Administration for Community Living: <https://acl.gov/COVID-19>
- National Council on Aging: <https://www.ncoa.org/covid-19-resources-for-professionals>
- AARP Foundation: <https://connect2affect.org/>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Iora Primary Care

Jefferson Healthcare

Northshore YMCA

Ida Culver House Broadview

Lake City Seniors (Sound Generations)

Sea Mar Community Health Centers

Renton Senior Center