Share a time you felt loneliness because of being a senior.



- High school kids walk by my house and don't even notice me. A feeling of invisibility.
- Moving from a familiar community in southern CA to a new one. I feel loss of connection and also isolation.
- I feel disconnected from younger people due to my lack of understanding how to operate technology. It feels as if we are expected to know and it's frustrating when we don't.
- Forced connections due to being placed in a senior community. Reluctant acceptance of a new living situation.
- I am drawn more to random acts of kindness.

- When nobody is home but my TV talks to me.
- Sense that the family is “too busy”
- Daughter gave away my dog without telling me.
- Decisions are being taken away from me.
- Dogs and animals keep me company.
- I decide to accept and let go.
- My daughter can’t ruin my life by ignoring me.
- Feeling voiceless, powerless even in familiar context = depression
- After divorce, break ups, death
- Disconnected from younger culture
- Younger reference points are not shared
- Loss of past close connections
- Estrangement through loss of faculties on both sides
- Group situations are difficult
- Decreased ability to engage physically (energy, stamina, etc)
- Men especially lacking social skills
- Hospital stroke recovery felt isolated
- Loss of mobility, lifestyle change
- Change and loss of social circles
- Self-isolation due to fear of falling
- Noise- hearing sensitivity
- Death of friends and family
- Loss of independence: driving, financial
- Losing my ability to drive
- I remember my mother’s fear of losing her memories during the early stages of her alzheimer's.
- Knowing that people can’t understand my experience, until they’ve lived it.
- I feel isolated due to my memory slipping.
- Regarding technology: “We’re being put out to pasture and it’s unfamiliar.”
- I feel that culture has shifted from more respect for seniors to less.
- Lack of friends due to jobs and between groups in a hospital setting
- After divorce = fewer friends
- Hanging up keys- no longer able to get yourself to places you want or people to spend time with
- retirement/work which defined much of your life and social network
- Alzheimer's and health issues that prevent people from interacting

- Lack of health services = people look over them
- Lack of information on how things are communicated
- Loss of friends and family
- Language barriers
- Lack of family to help
- Unable or unwilling to communicate needs
- Depression and mental health challenges
- Holidays: friends go out of town, everyone else is in pairs
- Illness: isolation, lack of mobility.
- Grandkids: grow up and leave
- Children: leaving creates a void
- Unconnected: digital modes of connection are challenging, there is abrupt change.
- Separation: separated families, loss of self-determination
- Birthdays
- Anniversaries
- Caregivers feel this isolation too
- Living at home
- Bed-ridden
- Sick
- No family and friends
- Senior housing can be isolating or a good community
- Busy family
- Not included in nuclear family
- Empty nest
- Mother’s day
- Can’t drive
- Losing my spouse
- 2005 isolation after the death of a loved one. Found resource that truly helped
- Living facility that felt limited and getting out of that setting allowed me to be more mobile, connected.
- No partner, poor health, needed a change. A 1 to 1 connection to undergo personal lifestyle changes.
- Being labeled: outsider/ devalued/ less than
- Mobility restrictions, losing driving
- Felt like my body betrayed me

- Losing peers during hiv/aids now feeling lonely and missing my friends
- Reading the obits
- Witnessing generational friends
- Feeling invisible
- Loss of: pets, work community, friends, physical touch, contributing community member, family
- You don’t have to be alone to feel loneliness. You can be with other people and feel alone and hurt.
- Facing the situation of being home alone
- What happens if i fall?
- Know your neighbors, share phone numbers, community is key!
- My son left to the army. My son was homeless when he returned with PTSD. I received assistance from the senior center to find my son a home.
- Nobody understood me
- Nobody supported me
- I’m not able to talk about family problems.
- The implications of being single with no children and no spouse.
- In capitola, not a lot of people speak spanish.
- Creativity extends connections within the community.
- Support group for people with parkinson's
- I plan a weekly dinner but there are no spanish speaking people.
- I need someone that can help me do art for SCCCOR
- No visitors
- Moving from house to apartment and feeling alone
- Animal pets as my closest companions, as family
- When a couple has to separate due to health issues
- Isolation due to health issues i.e. hearing loss
- Alienated grandparent due to CPS taking grandchildren away
- Loss of peers (and loss of identity through that, being known)
- Loss of a sense of purpose
- I feel alone any evening
- When I have children, I don’t feel lonely
- Parkinson's disease
- When I’m not involved in my community
- When I lost my dog
- I’m often alone but seldom lonely.

- Going to a bar, concert, square, stores etc and realizing you're the oldest person there
- Unable to find age appropriate clothing
- Being single
- Self isolation because of trauma
- Children are out of touch
- Physical limitations (this is not a walking community)
- Losing friends, partners and spouses
- Losing the ability to drive
- English is a second language for me, language differences
- I feel culturally isolated, there's a lack of diversity here
- Experiencing a disability, pain and discomfort.
- Unable to get out of the house.
- Anxiety about going to new places
- Not feeling welcome among new groups
- Becoming invisible
- Cost of living leads to isolation
- Needing to navigate an activity by yourself
- Feeling lonely not being able to have a soundboard around to make decisions with.
- Fear of appearing to be less independent, therefore reluctant to ask for help.
- Dealing with the aftermath of a natural disaster
- Life changing events are harder to handle as you age.
- Not having children or close family nearby.
- Depends on your health
- Most of life alone as a choice- workaholic
- Sometimes isolation is good
- Loss of a spouse
- Lonely at home
- A change in routine
- Losing connections
- Stopped being a teacher, new identity as an education consultant-- lost your identity as you lose your routine.
- Geographic isolation
- Children feel burdened by parents loneliness
- Loss of siblings

- Alzheimer's and other dementias as isolating conditions
- Loss of spouse/partner
- Isolated by physical deterioration to the point of committing suicide
- Loss of intergenerational community after retirement

What does isolation or loneliness feel like?


Isolation
Stuck
potential
Anxiety
can't
don't
know
Disconnected
loneliness
Depression
Sadness
Feeling
sense
making
lack
Loss
Pain
way
I'm
Wishing
using
others
Sad
like
Invisible
Dark
Fear
reach
friend
Living
cares
Heavy
hurts
Empty
Tired
physical
hopeless
Helpless
Useless
purpose
someone
feeling
rejection
touch
Lack
Shame
Thinking
caring
Extreme
sick
talk
dark
Creativity
Unending
conflict
care
death
earth
deserted
connecting
needed
can
money
house
Quiet
Attempt
health
Lights
unhealthy
Dependence
Personal
Fetal
value
Heartache
Vulnerable
Worthless
Regret
hole
men
poor
dragging
Gift
find
behavior
Feel
Inadequate
anymore
fetal
Excluded
move
you're
Envy
Grief
lost
heard
wrong
Time
vacuum
motivated
ask
able
box
Vast
media
running
Sorry
help
far
bar
lists
toll
day
staying
exists
crafts
long
forget
fear
area
Silence
family
place
Sickness
less
people
weekends
self-pity
Lock
time
Thinking
Shame
Extreme
Lack
Time
art
fix
ring
will
see
active
get
cares
past
Living
Vulnerable
Heartache
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Personal
Attempt
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Gift
find

- In a vacuum
- Mentally debilitating
- Self-doubt
- Physical and mental toll
- Boring
- Disconnected
- Dark tunnel, can’t see light
- Heavy
- Empty
- Thick
- Dense
- Dark
- Fragile
- Alone
- Permanent
- Ignored
- Not worthy
- Never changing or fluctuating
- Feeling useless
- Disengaged
- Confined
- Yearning for intimacy
- Lacking physical touch
- Lessened ability to engage and react to stimuli
- Difficulty in assessing making connections (especially for men)
- Inhibition to reach out (because of judgement)
- Cornered
- Forgotten
- Dark
- Depressed
- Lights off
- Having to move or depend on others
- Attempt to fix the loneliness by going to a bar, using alcohol or other things to escape
- No more physical touch
- Jealousy

- hopeless / helpless
- Frustration / anger
- Drowning
- Death
- Invisible
- Disconnected - no social media, no longer places you are familiar with or comfortable with
- Overwhelming
- Humiliating
- Defensive
- Pain
- In a dark hole with no way out.
- Every day seems the same
- Frightened, confused
- Sad
- Friendless
- Frustrated
- Helpless
- Powerless
- Desolate
- Dark
- Bleak
- Emptiness
- Sadness
- Useless
- Wanting to discuss something that others may not. They don’t know how to confront it.
- Invisibility
- I keep a sense of determination through my sense of isolation
- Sadness due to death of community members
- Suddenly your lunchmate isn’t there and you can’t find out what happened
- Being placed in an environment and lack of connection to peers
- “A lonely crowd”
- Fear: who will care for me? Circle of friends is leaving
- Sad: easy to get depressed
- “Living death” I’m waiting

- Hopeless: lack of options
- Anxiety: reaching out, fear of rejection
- Vast and unknown: surreal because of lack of connection
- Pain in my chest
- Empty
- Scary
- Hopeless
- Heavy weight
- Darkness
- Feeling broken
- Irreversible
- Not having a purpose
- No one cares about me
- The need to suppress it
- Need to self-medicate, numb it
- Tired, fatigue, sleeping more
- Agitated and angry
- Feeling muted, bottled up
- Desire to want to “get over it”
- Feeling less than
- Feeling ugly and unwanted
- Invisible
- Invalidated
- Empty
- Sad
- Futile
- Hopeless
- Curled up on the floor in a fetal position
- On an island
- Financial insecurity
- Feel as if i am in a desert “like a horse with no name”
- Gift box that is empty
- Last person on earth
- Desolate
- Useless
- Extreme frustration

- Not needed
- Something wrong with me
- Unending
- Excluded
- Hopeless
- Sadness
- Invisible
- Depression
- Forgotten
- Unmotivated
- Grief
- No mobility
- Inadequate
- Powerless
- Shame
- Worthless
- Quiet
- Silence
- Unhealthy sick
- Addiction
- Compulsive behavior
- No money
- Lock of mobility vs staying active
- Being disconnected
- Not belonging
- Vulnerable
- Sickness
- Poor health
- Tired
- Thinking about the past in an unhealthy way. Regret
- Not using potential, time running out
- How to use that potential?
- Dependence on others
- Creativity connects us, lost sense of value as art and crafts change
- Heavy
- Emptiness

- Envy of others connecting
- Heartache
- Stuck on a deserted island
- Sorry for myself, self-pity
- Time dragging on
- Unmotivated
- Feeling like I’m the only one
- Living in a house by yourself
- Having a computer for a friend
- Talking to yourself making lists
- Helpless hopeless
- Sad
- Feeling ignored
- Invisible
- Sense of pointlessness, irrelevant
- Stuck, trapped, ex: long weekends
- Wishing you could be somewhere with people
- Waiting for the phone to ring
- Wishing someone could be with me (children not in the area)
- Depressing
- Useless
- Hopeless
- Hollowness
- Invisible
- Affects self-esteem
- No one cares
- It hurts
- I don’t matter
- Sadness
- Loss of energy
- Loss of interest
- Diminishes health (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual)
- Disconnected
- Depression
- Inclination towards substance abuse
- Cranky

- Frustrated
- Slumped
- Fetal position
- Physical limitations
- Suicidal thoughts
- Sadness
- Feeling like you’re no good
- Depression
- Isolation feeding and building on itself
- Sense of meaninglessness
- Longing for a place that you don’t know exists (far loneliness)
- Hopelessness - feeling unable to reach out
- Afraid to ask for help
- Afraid of rejection
- Not making a friend of loneliness
- Failure
- Not feeling heard
- Exhausting
- Sad
- Defeated
- Not motivated
- Feeling discouraged
- Disconnected
- Not caring anymore
- Lack of purpose
- Misunderstood
- Unimportant
- No one to talk to
- Isolation and loneliness can be different
- Fear
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Sadness
- With no desire of living
- Not feeling important
- Desperation

- Negative
- You forget the most important things (like children)
- Depression
- Antidepressant medications
- Not being able to connect with family because your medicated problems with addiction
- How can you care for someone that hurts you?
- Fear
- Personal conflict with the power to do and change things.

What would a world without loneliness look like or feel like to you?



- Comfort of my close friends
- Peaceful, friendly, active
- Friends to share activities and conversations with
- Coming together
- Friends to talk to
- A world where everyone cared about each other and helped each other
- Warm, happy
- Secure
- Connected
- Driverless cars?
- Multi-generational living
- Free from debt
- Basic needs met
- Considerate
- Safe
- Freedom
- Supported
- Intergenerational community infrastructure
- Care and compassion
- Social responsibility
- Government programs and subsidies
- Shared awareness
- Loving joyful
- Optimistic, hopeful
- Healthy
- Engaging and stimulating
- Spacious
- Full
- Fun filled
- Anchored
- Relief at things unfolding on their own
- Comfortable
- Feeling included
- Not necessarily a big party
- Harmonious
- Utopian paradise

- All feel needed
- Safe
- Able to be spontaneous
- Comfortably physical with one another
- Every day companionship
- Intergenerationality
- Connection
- Love
- Respect among differences
- Tolerance
- Warm
- Light-hearted
- Smooth and heavy: like a good wine
- Happy
- Easy
- Complex
- Multifaceted
- Elder experiences, physical triangles, wisdom all respected
- 24/7 hugs
- Intergenerational connections with family, friends, neighbors, community.
- Needs are met
- A party with food and dancing
- New things like app that can connect
- Safe: no conflicts, no war/no weapons
- Easy to service the world, social networks, possibilities.
- Everything is bountiful
- A musical with people singing, happiness and music
- Joy
- Choices: having options, control, a voice, being engaged and included, being heard
- Exciting communal living
- Alive
- Sense of community
- Loved
- Busy
- Appreciated

- United
- Involved
- Knowledgeable
- We need each other
- Supported
- Birds singing wizard of oz
- Talking to each other
- Greeting each other
- Waving hello
- Smiling
- Understanding each other
- Physical presence with people (no texting)
- Humor laughter
- Colorful
- Fun
- Interesting
- Connected
- Purposeful
- Needed
- Appreciated and valued
- Inter-generational groups and activities
- Stimulating
- Useful
- Social
- Understood
- Welcomed
- Exciting
- Something to look forward to
- Juicy
- Warm
- Accepted
- More intelligent caring
- Past experiences and history are honored
- Non-conforming seniors feeling included, appreciated, connected and seen
- Listened to
- Elders are respected

- Affordability for senior activities
- Making sure seniors don’t feel like a burden
- Informed community about the experience of senior loneliness
- Phone tree
- LGBTQ seniors feeling connected and supported
- Intergenerational activities
- Effective outreach to seniors
- Funding priority for senior programs
- Perfect harmony
- Engaged
- Vibrant
- All the porch lights are on
- Compassionate
- Supported
- Welcoming
- Village
- Less scary
- Pet friendly
- Safety
- Connected
- Block parties
- Always having someone to talk to
- Knowing someone has your back ‘posse’
- Free to be yourself
- Love your neighbor
- Diversity
- Around lots of energy
- Plenty of unds for all the services
- Accessible services
- Communities that are aging-friendly
- Co-housing
- Meal sharing
- No need for skilled nursing
- Facilities
- Playful world
- Less judgemental

- Activity
- Affordable housing
- Feeling connected in the community
- Positive social interaction
- People care about you.
- People talk to you.
- People ask questions
- People help you
- Meaningful interactions
- Constant family attention and interaction
- Being a priority to your family
- Best friend buddy
- Sense of purpose (volunteer opportunities)
- Peace, joy, glory
- Connection to the land and earth
- Educated world about health and creativity
- Value assigned to self worth
- Teamwork
- Awareness of how to stay healthy
- Social interaction
- Intentional interaction
- Helping others and being of service
- Less fear and more confidence in society
- Connected
- In sync
- Creative
- Seniors embracing change, technology, music
- Respect for intergenerational experiences and exchanges
- Relationships are more important than resources
- Listening
- Willing to work on difficult things and weaknesses
- Respect of elders
- Community
- Being seen and valued for life experiences
- Bridge with multiple connections (intergenerational)
- An archive storehouse

- Joyous
- Mobility
- Singing
- Content
- Connected
- Loved
- Bustle
- Engaged
- New york subway train
- No bitterness
- Diverse
- Beautiful rainbow
- Abundance
- Financial security
- Me, myself, i
- Increased value for listening to others stories
- Senior communities as “living libraries”
- People prioritizing the stories of others and telling them
- Relating our current lives to history
- More phone calls and visits than texts and emails
- Family members living closer to me, and seeing them more often
- Neighborhoods where everyone knows each other
- “Hope Village” as an example
- More intergenerational communities
- Diversity
- Being alone does not equate to loneliness
- A cultural shift towards having a tolerance for silence
- People don’t always need to be talking when in another's presence.
- Liveable community mobility
- Cities designed with more ease of transportation
- More opportunities to share your story and listeners
- Spontaneous
- Connected and engaged
- Hopeful
- Smiles happy
- Stronger sense of community

- Inclusive
- Healthier: mentally, physically, spiritually
- Respectful
- Lots of eye contact
- Colorful
- A place to be sad, acceptance
- Safe space
- Involved
- Service to others, opt to serve
- Brighter
- Compassionate
- Caring
- Good communication
- Accepting and open minded
- Free of assumption
- Mindful
- Intergenerational
- More love
- Less violent
- Full of joy
- Possibility
- Heaven
- A full house
- Grandkids
- Happiness and smiling
- One on one contact
- Feeling enthusiastic
- Lower stress
- Less judgement of others and ourselves
- More helping hands
- More sharing
- Random acts of kindness
- Talking to strangers
- A piece of the meaning of life would be lost
- More inclusion and acceptance
- Strong sense of community

- No age discrimination
- Feel more visible
- More sharing of experiences and identities
- More communication
- Feeling loved and valued
- Creativity
- Giant family
- Sharing meals
- Communal living
- Multiculturalism and diversity
- Nurturing potential
- Liberating
- Passion and drive for activity or hobby
- Acceptance that loneliness is a part of life
- Free support or affordability
- Open acceptance and ease
- Being included despite age or wrinkles
- Playfulness
- A buddy system
- Transportation
- A party
- One would wake up with good thoughts
- Have breakfast, be productive, work, have dinner with our children and after do something fun
- Play instruments
- A world without conflicts, prejudice, with fun and stable affordable housing
- Without violence
- productive , nice and beautiful
- Unimaginable
- With lots of love and energy
- Genuine
- Without anger
- Stable affordable housing
- A world where you can give without receiving.
- When each person can accept and love oneself as is
- We already live in a beautiful world, we just need to accept oneself

- Leave behind the low self-esteem
- A world where we can all have a purpose and be grateful for everything we have
- Feel accepted