



## Combating Loneliness in Seniors

In an age where technology makes it possible for us to connect with friends and family worldwide, it is surprising that research indicates that we, as a society, are lonelier than ever. According to [\*Psychology Today\*](#), the oldest old, defined as being over the age of 80, are the loneliest cohort. It's no real wonder as most older adults live alone and have most likely lived through the loss of a spouse, close life-long friends, and perhaps an adult child. Lonely adults are at greater risk of mental and physical decline than their more social counterparts. Fortunately, with initiative and implementation of some of the following strategies, loneliness can be overcome.



### Form Friendships

The best way to combat loneliness is to surround yourself with friends. Forming new friendships does take effort, but by looking for new opportunities to find new friends can make the process easier. Get involved with your local senior center, join a class at the library, attend a special function at

your church, or look for a special interest group where you can meet other people who share similar hobbies. Meanwhile, don't neglect old friends and neighbors. Reach out to an old friend with whom you may have lost touch with and invite them to lunch, or bake a cake to share with your neighbor. Someone should take initiative when it comes to making plans, it may as well be you.

### Volunteer

No matter your age, you still have something to offer your community. Put your talents and abilities to good use by volunteering. Volunteering provides purpose, and purpose combats loneliness and depression. Reach out to your local senior center, area agency on aging, and hospital for volunteer opportunities. Elementary schools are often looking for volunteers to listen to students read aloud, and middle schools and high schools need volunteers to mentor and tutor the youth. Consider your talents and skills and find an outlet to give back.

### Bridge the Generation Gap

Adult children can help mom or dad overcome loneliness simply by fostering a relationship between their parents and their young children, and children's children. Include mom or dad in your weekly family night at home. Invite grandparents to their grandchildren's sports games or extracurricular activity events. Encourage

your parents to share family stories and family history. Grandparents, teach your grandchildren how to bake your special homemade bread or teach them woodworking skills by building a birdhouse together.

### **For the Homebound**

Homebound seniors are especially vulnerable to loneliness. Even older adults living in a senior living community are susceptible to loneliness. For those homebound, reach out to your local agency on aging to inquire about home-visitation services or community transportation for the elderly. Caregivers of the homebound, dig deeper into what activities your parents or client used to enjoy and research ways to adapt that activity. Reminisce with your parents or client about life events; research shows that older adults who engage in reminiscing have enhanced emotional health and are less likely to be lonely.

### **How Visiting Angels Can Help**

Fortunately, one of the many services that Visiting Angels offers is elderly companion care. For those older adults who are struggling with loneliness, allow Visiting Angels to connect you with the services that would best benefit your situation. Our [Elderly Companion Care services](#) include meal preparation, light housekeeping, errands and shopping, and, most importantly, companionship. [Give us a call](#) to set up a consultation, we look forward to forming a new friendship with you.

Visiting Angels of Denver and Boulder, CO

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