



# Social Isolation (SI) and Loneliness (L)

Understanding the difference between SI and L

Types of Loneliness

Lessons from The Blue Zones

Managing Loneliness and Social Isolation



# INTRODUCTION

## 3 STORIES

Jose, 35-year-old Colombian male.

Dorothy, 84-year-old widowed female.

Patricia, 72-year-old divorced retired female.



# Definitions

(According to the US Surgeon General's Advisory)

- Social Isolation and loneliness are related but not the same.
- Social Isolation
- Loneliness
- Solitude

# Potential Risks


(According to the US Surgeon General's Advisory)

- SI & L increase the risk of premature death by 26% and 29% respectively (as much as smoking 15 cigarettes a day)
- Insufficient Social Connections (SC) increase the risk of disease, including 29% increase in heart attack and 32 % in risk of stroke.
- Also, it is associated with increased risk for anxiety, depression and dementia.



# Findings

- 2022 study found 39% of adults felt VERY CONNECTED” to others.
- 50% of young adults, report feeling “LONELY”.
- Less than 20% of the people who often or always feel lonely recognize it as a major problem.
- SI among older adults alone, accounts for an estimated 6.7 Billion in excess Medicare spending annually, largely due to increased hospital and nursing facility spending.
- Stress related absenteeism attributed to loneliness costs employers an estimated \$154 billion annually.



# Findings (continue)

- Trusting Others
- Social Network is getting smaller, and levels of social participation are declining.
- SINGLE PERSON HOUSEHOLD 1960 → 13% 2022 → 20%
- Church 1999 → 70% said they belong to a church
- VS 2007 → 47%



# Types of Loneliness

**Gretchen Rubin**  
**The Happiness Project**

- 1-New-situation loneliness (Moving to a new city, changing job, new school)
- 2-I'm-different loneliness (feeling different than others)
- 3-No-sweetheart loneliness
- 4-No-animal loneliness
- 5-No-time-for-me loneliness
- 6-Untrustworthy-friends loneliness
- 7-Quiet-presence loneliness



# Types of Loneliness

(Psych2Go)

- Interpersonal Loneliness
- Social Loneliness
- Cultural Loneliness
- Intellectual Loneliness
- Psychological Loneliness
- Existential or cosmic Loneliness



# In Summary

- As humans, we need to be socially connected as much as humans we need food, water and shelter. Our distant ancestors relied on others to help them meet their basic needs. Living in isolation, or outside the group, means having to fulfill the many difficult demands of survival on one's own.



# LESSONS FROM ALL BLUE ZONES

**MOVE NATURALLY**

**HARA HACHI BU**

**PLANT SLANT**

**GRAPES OF LIFE:**

**PURPOSE NOW:** Take time to socialize, slow down and be present with others and with nature. (Reduce the noise; be early; meditate)

**DOWNSHIFT: BELONG:** Most centenarians belong to strong religious communities

**LOVED ONES FIRST:** family first, their lifelong devotion to their families produces returns: their children reciprocate their love and care. (Get closer; establish rituals; create a family shrine; put family first.)

**RIGHT TRIBE:** Social connectedness is ingrained into the world's Blue Zones. (Identify your inner circle; be likable; create time together.)

# WAYS OF STAYING CONNECTED & REDUCING LONELINESS

- Practice Self-kindness (sleep, eat, get out, exercise)
- Capitalize on the present moment (share good feelings with someone right away)
- Connect with real life (In person connections)
- Re-think how you spend your shared time (don't opt to stay alone every night)
- Do more with more people (become active in your faith, sports, outdoor clubs, senior centers)
- Talk to strangers
- Stop focusing on you (shift focus from what I can get to what I can give and do)
- Stop negative thoughts (first step, change your behavior)



# WAYS OF STAYING CONNECTED & REDUCING LONELINESS

- Self-care: manage stress by staying physically and mentally healthy.
- Find new activity you can enjoy
- Restart an old hobby
- Take an online or in person class (ACT 2)
- Check your library for new classes (Central Library, The Hive, Indian Trail, Liberty Park, Shadle Park, South Hill Library)
- Become a member of your local senior center (Corbin Senior Center, Hillyard Senior Center, Sinto Senior Activity Center, Southside Community Center, Northeast Community Center, etc)
- Volunteer:



# WAYS OF STAYING CONNECTED & REDUCING LONELINESS


- Ask better questions.
- Kind Act
- Take an online or in person class (ACT 2)
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# Blue Zones

- OKINAWA (JAPAN)
- SARDINIAN (ITALY)
- LOMA LINDA (USA)
- COSTA RICA
- IKARIA (GREECE)



# The Blue Zones

(Wikipedia)

- A **blue zone** is a region in the world where people are claimed to have exceptionally long lives beyond the age of 80 due to a lifestyle combining physical activity, low stress, **rich social interactions**, a local whole foods diet, and low disease incidence.<sup>[1][2]</sup>



# Lessons from THE BLUE ZONES

- **OKINAWA'S LONGEVITY LESSONS**

- Embrace an ikigai (Elders have a purpose when they get up in the morning)
- Rely on a plant-based diet
- Get Gardening
- Have more soy
- Maintain a moai (meeting for a common purpose)
- Enjoy the sunshine
- Stay active
- Plant a medicine garden
- Have an Attitude

- **SARDINIAN BLUE ZONE LESSONS**

- Eat a plant-based diet accented with meat
- Put family first
- Drink goat's milk
- Celebrate Elders
- Take a walk Drink one or two glasses of wine daily
- Laugh with friends

# THE BLUE ZONES

- **LOMA LINDA'S BLUE ZONE SECRETS**

- Find a sanctuary
- Maintain a healthy body mass index (BMI)
- Get regular moderate exercise
- Spend time with like-minded friends
- Snack on nuts
- Give something back
- Eat meals in moderation
- Eat an early, light dinner
- Put more plants in your diet
- Drink plenty of water

- **COSTA RICA'S LONGEVITY SECRETS**

- Have a Plan de Vida (Strong sense of purpose)
- Drink hard water
- Keep a focus on family
- Eat a light dinner
- Maintain social network
- Get some sensible sun
- Embrace a common history

# THE BLUE ZONES

- **IKARIA'S BLUE ZONES SECRETS**
  - Drink some goat's milk
  - Mimic mountain living
- Eat a Mediterranean-style diet
  - Stock up on herbal
    - Nap
  - Fast occasionally
- **Make family and friends a priority**



