

Combating an Epidemic of Loneliness

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Humans can survive three minutes without air, three days without water, three weeks without food and — according to survival lore — three months without companionship. Whether true or not, what's clear is that people need people. And pandemics, many of us are learning, can be lonely times.

After months of lockdowns and shelter-in-place orders, some experts worry about a rise in the number of people feeling alone, especially young people and older adults. But [resilience is also widespread](#), and studying loneliness can reveal a variety of ways to combat it.

“In light of the pandemic, there are ways that we can increase that sense of connection or reduce feelings of loneliness in ways that we may be able to do safely at a distance,” said Julianne Holt-Lunstad, a professor of psychology and neuroscience at Brigham Young University. “One of the things that research has shown is that social support is incredibly helpful in times of stress.”

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