



# Reducing Social Isolation

Coles County Steering Committee



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# Steering Committee


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- Margaret Messer, ECIAAA Corporate Board Member, Coles County
- Patti Hicks, Executive Director, Coles County LifeSpan Center
- Kathleen O'Rourke, Ph.D., Graduate Coordinator, M.A. in Aging Studies, Professor, Human Services & Community Leadership, Eastern Illinois University

**Mission: to Enhance Illinois' existing community-based service delivery system to address social isolation among older adults.**

**Goal 1:  
Collaborate with  
community-based  
providers**

**Goal 2:  
Establish a vision  
for our service  
area**

**Goal 3:  
Implement pilot  
interventions**

A person with white hair, seen from the back and side, is sitting on a bench in a park. The background is a blurred city street with buildings and trees. The overall tone is somber and reflective.

**Social Isolation:**  
As bad as smoking 15  
cigarettes per day

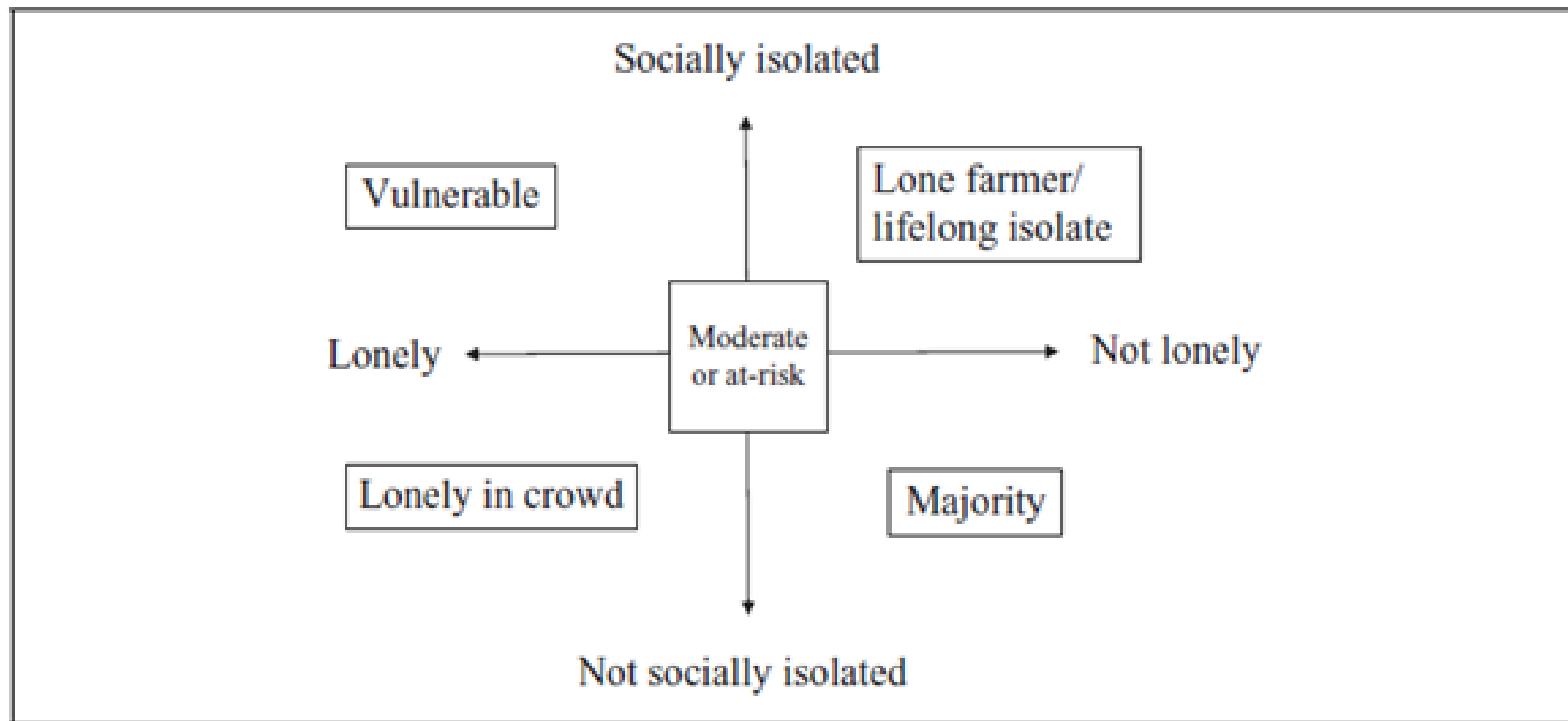
# Social Isolation vs. Loneliness

## Social Isolation is objective

- Size of social network
- Frequency of contact
- Availability of transportation
- Supportive resources

## Loneliness is subjective

- Perception of experience
- Feeling lack of
  - Connection
  - Companionship
  - Sense of belonging



**Figure 1.** Four groups based on dimensions of loneliness and social isolation among older adults.

**“The size of one’s social network and being physically isolated are the top predictors of loneliness.”**



- Living alone
- Size of social network
- Location
- Access to transportation
- Low income <\$25,000 per year
- Marital status
- Major life transitions
- Education
- Membership in a vulnerable group
- Physical health
- Mental health
- Mobility or sensory impairment
- Unpaid caregiving
- Language barriers
- LGBTQ
- Coping mechanisms
- Immigrant status

# Risk Factors

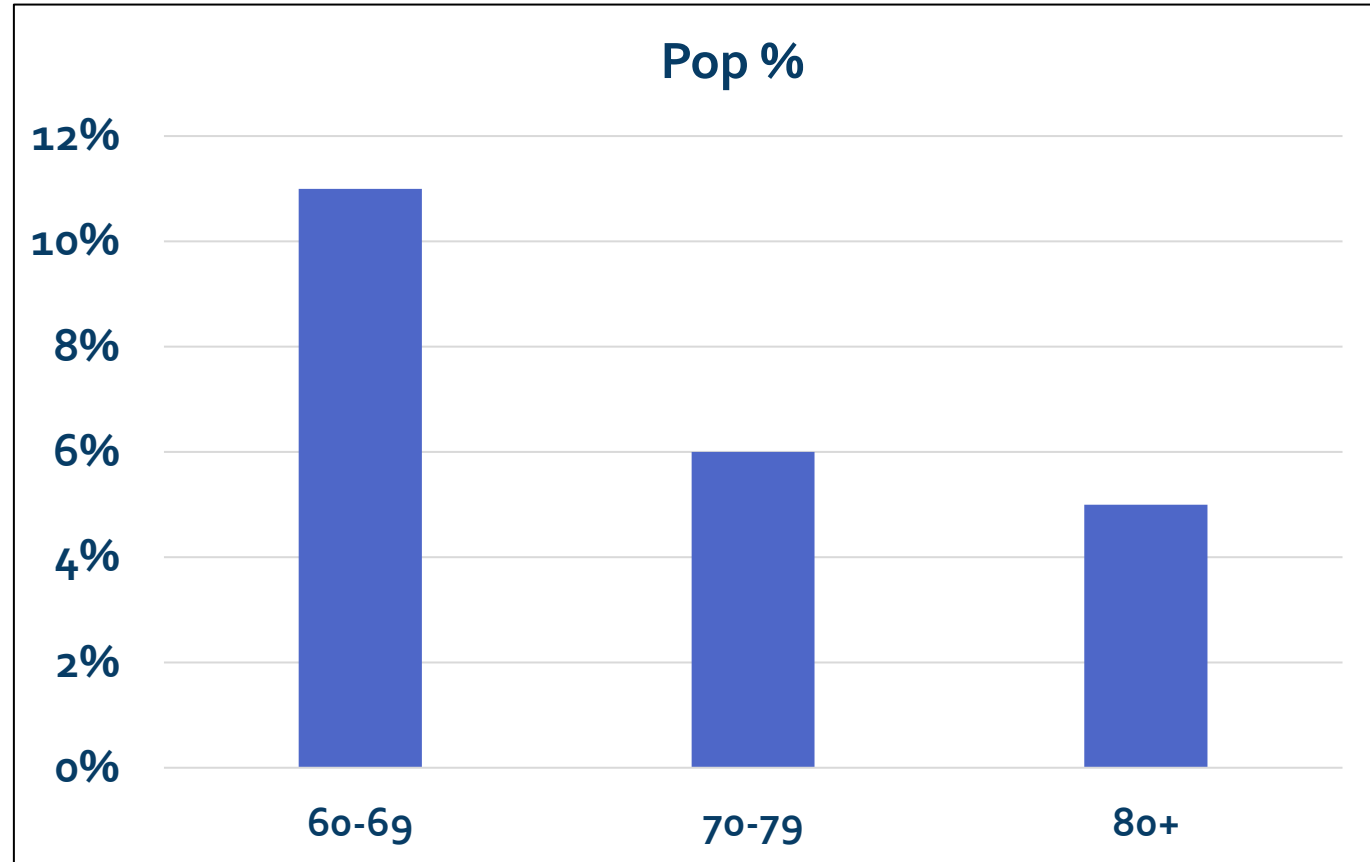


## Consequences of Social Isolation

- Health risks
  - Depression
  - Cardiovascular disease
  - Mortality
- Quality of Life
- Cognitive function
- Financial implications
  - Medicare- \$134/month more per isolated older adult
  - 4 million isolated older adults enrolled in Medicare = \$6.7 billion additional Medicare spending annually

(Insight on the issues AARP Public Policy Institute, 2017)

# Coles County Age Demographics



Total Population  
51,065



Total Population 60+  
11,234

Source: US 2020 Census

**Coles County  
Community  
Health Needs  
Assessment  
Priorities  
2020-2025**

**Top health concerns:**

- Increase Covid-19 Immunization Rate
- Decrease Preventable Deaths namely Suicide and Drug Abuse
- Reduce Heart Disease and Stroke



## Overcoming Social Isolation

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- Physical activity
  - Nutrition
  - Healthy lifestyle education
  - Mental health support
  - Integrate health networks
  - Get to know neighbors
  - Technology
  - Community engagement
    - Volunteering
    - Attending religious services
  - Make time for hobbies
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# Targeting Priorities

60+  
Statistical  
Minorities

60+ Living  
Alone

60+ Living  
in Poverty

75+  
Population

# Coles County Statistical Minority Demographics

Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin	% of 60+ Population
White or non-hispanic	97.6
Black or African American	4
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.3
Asian	1.1
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.1
Two or more races	1.7
Hispanic or Latino	2.7

Source: Census.gov 2020 Quick Facts

# Current Initiatives in other areas



**LIBRARY  
SERVICES IN  
LONG TERM  
CARE**



**TECHNOLOGY  
IN SENIOR  
HOUSING**



**SOCIAL & COGNITIVE  
ACTIVITIES IN  
SENIOR HOUSING**



**OUTREACH TO  
LATINX  
COMMUNITY**



**FRIENDLY  
CALLS**



**FRIENDLY  
VISITING**

*Three-Item Loneliness Scale*

*Lead-in and questions are read to respondent.*

The next questions are about how you feel about different aspects of your life. For each one, tell me how often you feel that way.

<i>Question</i>	<i>Hardly Ever</i>	<i>Some of the Time</i>	<i>Often</i>
First, how often do you feel that you lack companionship: Hardly ever, some of the time, or often?	1	2	3
How often do you feel left out: Hardly ever, some of the time, or often?	1	2	3
How often do you feel isolated from others? (Is it hardly ever, some of the time, or often?)	1	2	3

## Measuring our work: UCLA Loneliness Scale



# Coles County RSI Partners



Coles County  
Council on Aging, Inc.

## References

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- Flowers, L. Houser, A., Noel-Miller., C. Shaw, J., Bhattacharya, J. , Schoemaker, L., Farid, Monica (2017). Medicare spends more on socially isolated older adults. *Insight on the Issues: AARP Public Policy Institute*, November, 2017, 1-15.
- McQuaid, R. J., Cox, S.M.L, Ogunlana, A., Jaworska, N. (2021). The burden of loneliness: Implications of the social determinants of health during COVID-19. *Journal of Psychiatry Research*, 296, 1136-1148. Retrieved from: [http// elsevier.com/locate/psychres](http://elsevier.com/locate/psychres)
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# Discussion

Thank You!

