

The Power of Connection

How connecting with others impacts health and quality of life

Welcome!

- Name
- Organization
- Favorite way to stay connected

Drop it in the chat!



Agenda

1. Addressing the Epidemic of Social Isolation & Loneliness
 - a. Angie Sullivan, Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources
2. Panel Discussion
 - a. Christie Carter, Milwaukee LGBT Community Center
 - b. Dimeji Tomori, Pointters Community Initiatives
 - c. Ka Lee, Prism Health and Wellness & JoinUs Hmong Cafe
 - d. Shae Rising, R&R House
3. Q&A
4. 5-for-5 Connection Challenge
5. Wrap Up

Addressing the Epidemic of SIL



Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation

2023

The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the
Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community



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Definitions

Social Isolation is commonly defined as an *objective* measure of the # of relationships and contacts a person has.

- **Being** isolated – physically separate from other people
- May not be unpleasant for the person; they may choose to isolate

Loneliness is a *subjective* feeling about the gap between a person's desired levels of social contact and their actual level of social contact.

- **Feeling** isolated
- Distressing for the person
- Can be felt regardless of social contact

Definitions

Social Connectedness refers to the degree to which people have and perceive a desired number, quality, and diversity of relationships that create a sense of belonging, being cared for, valued, and supported.

Belonging is a fundamental human need – the feeling of deep connection with social groups, physical places, and individual and collective experiences

Factors that Impact Connection

In the Individual

- Physical health problems/chronic conditions
- Sensory & functional impairment
- Mental health challenges
- Tech use
- Personality
- Race
- Gender
- Socioeconomic status
- Life stage

Based on Relationships

- Structure, function and quality
- Household size
- Characteristics and behaviors of others

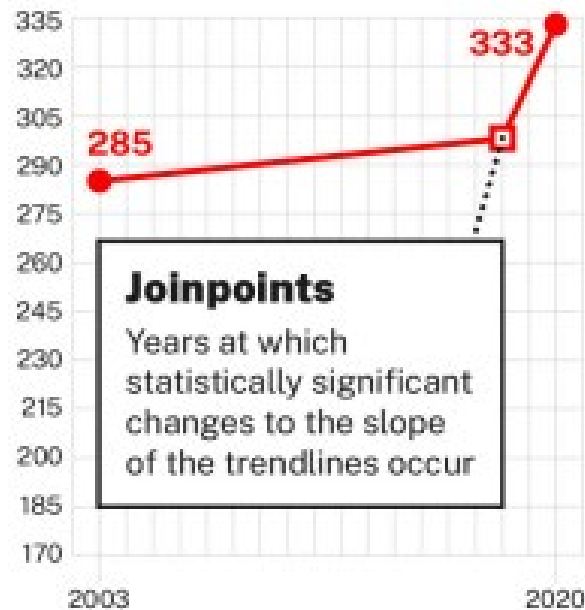
Based on Society

- Norms and values
- Public policies & civic engagement
- Historical inequities

Based on Community

- Outdoor space
- Housing
- Schools
- Local business & workplace
- Local government
- Community organizations
- Health care
- Transportation

Trends in Connection



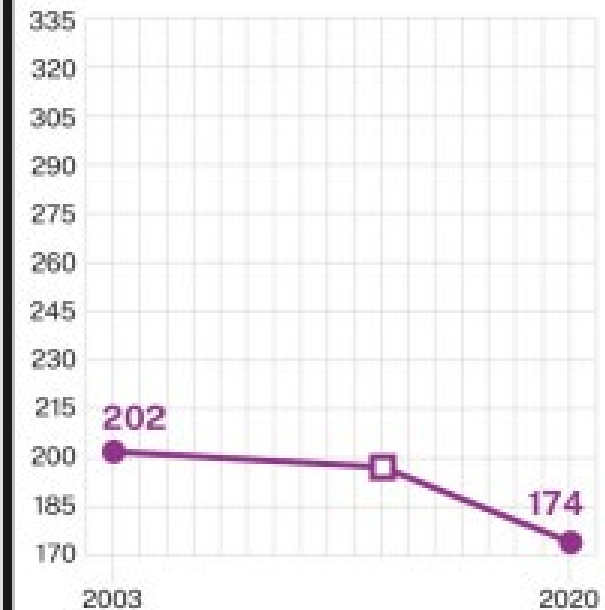
Social Isolation

an increase of
24 hours per month



Household Family Social Engagement

a decrease of
5 hours per month

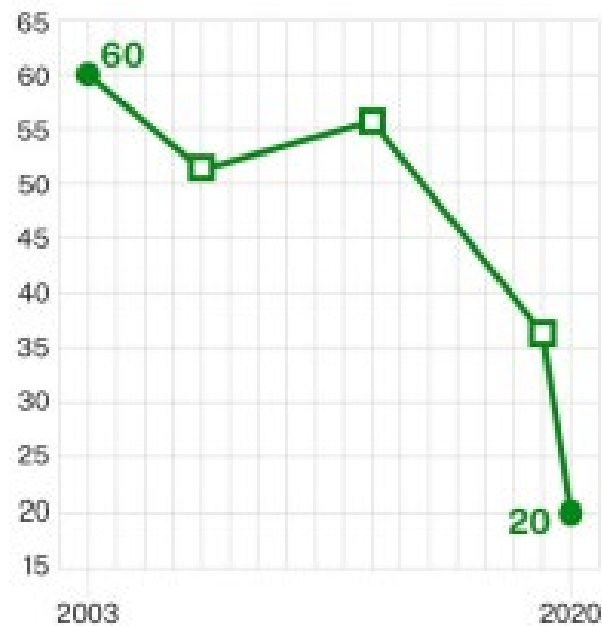


Companionship

a decrease of
14 hours per month

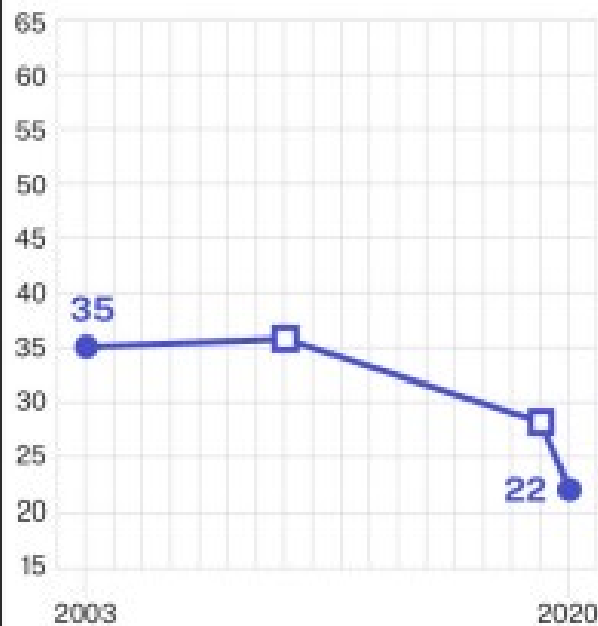
Companionship refers to shared leisure for the sake of enjoyment and intrinsic satisfaction

Trends in Connection



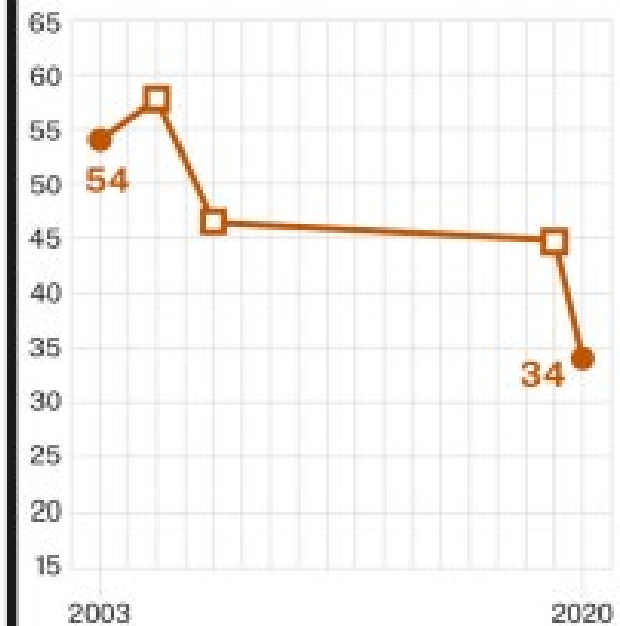
Social Engagement with Friends

a decrease of
20 hours per month



Non-Household Family Social Engagement

a decrease of
6.5 hours per month

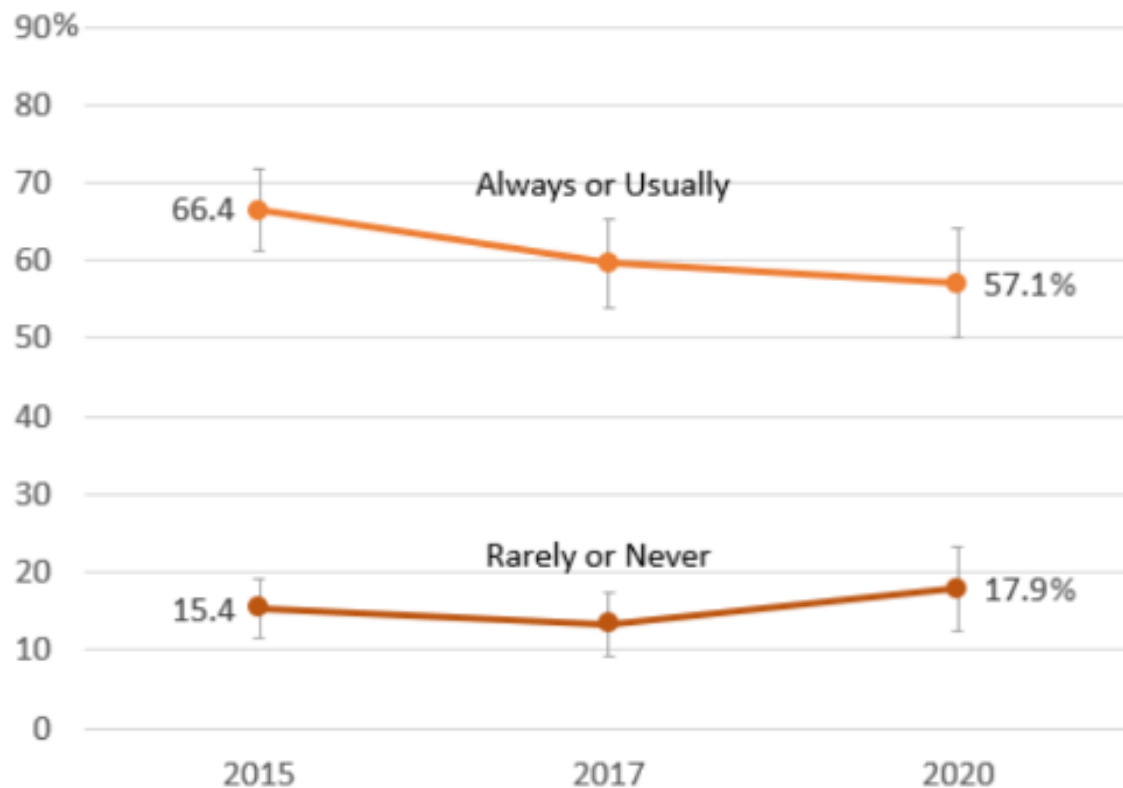


Social Engagement with Others

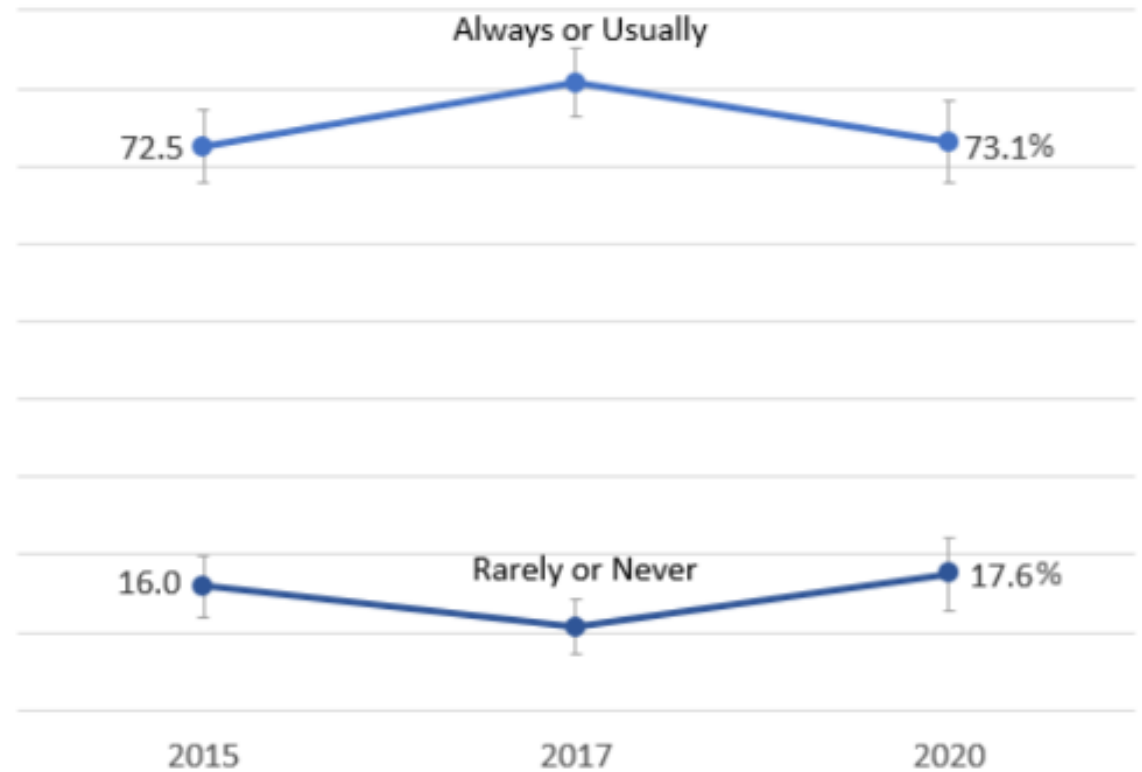
a decrease of
10 hours per month

In recent years levels of social support have been trending worse for adults with disabilities and remaining steady for older adults.

Percentage of adults with disabilities (ages 18–64) by frequency of **social and emotional support** and by year, WI

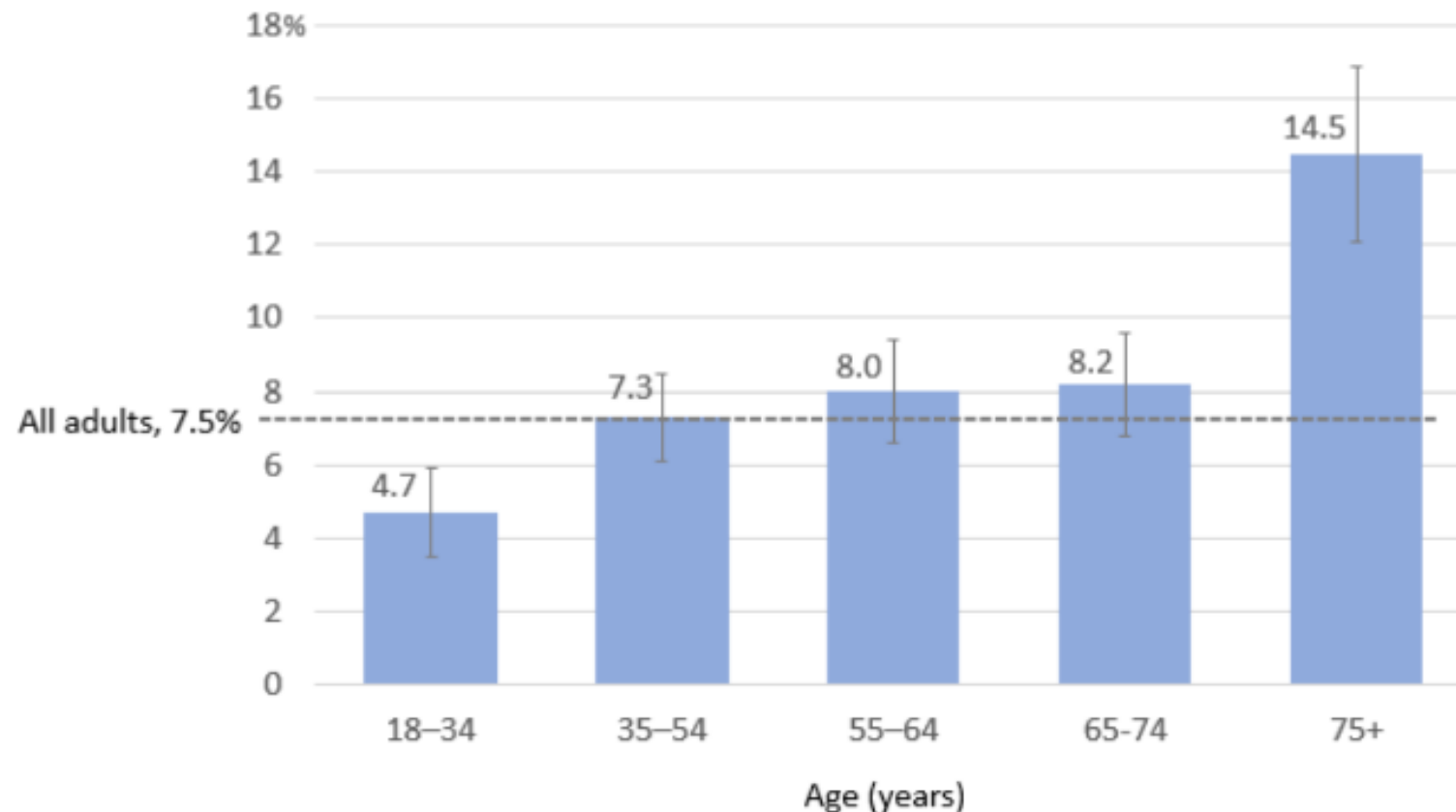


Percentage of adults ages 75 and older by frequency of **social and emotional support** and by year, WI



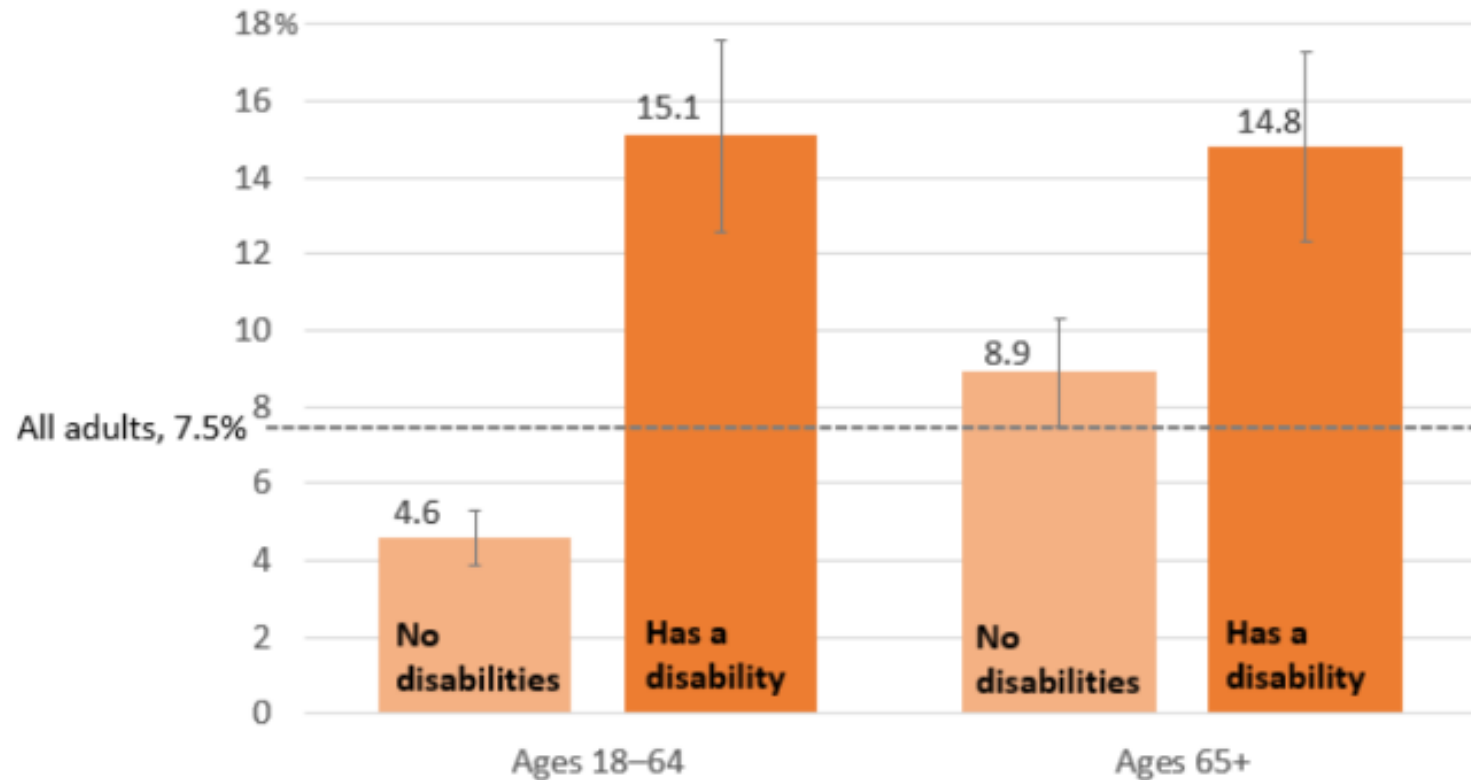
Adults ages 75 and older were the most likely to lack the social support they needed.

Percent of adults who **rarely or never get the social and emotional support they need** by age group, WI, 2015, 2017, and 2020 combined



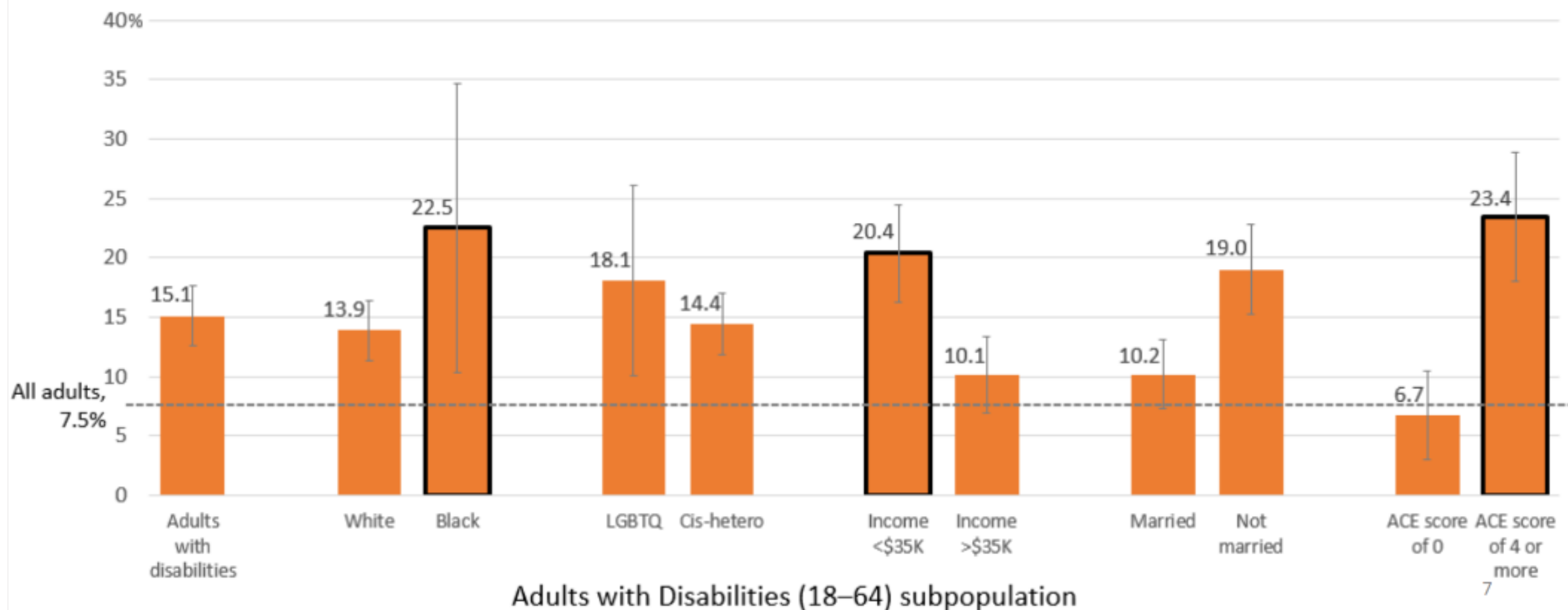
Adults with disabilities were more likely to lack the social support they needed regardless of age.

Percent of adults who **rarely or never get the social and emotional support they need** by age group and disability status, WI, 2015, 2017, and 2020 combined



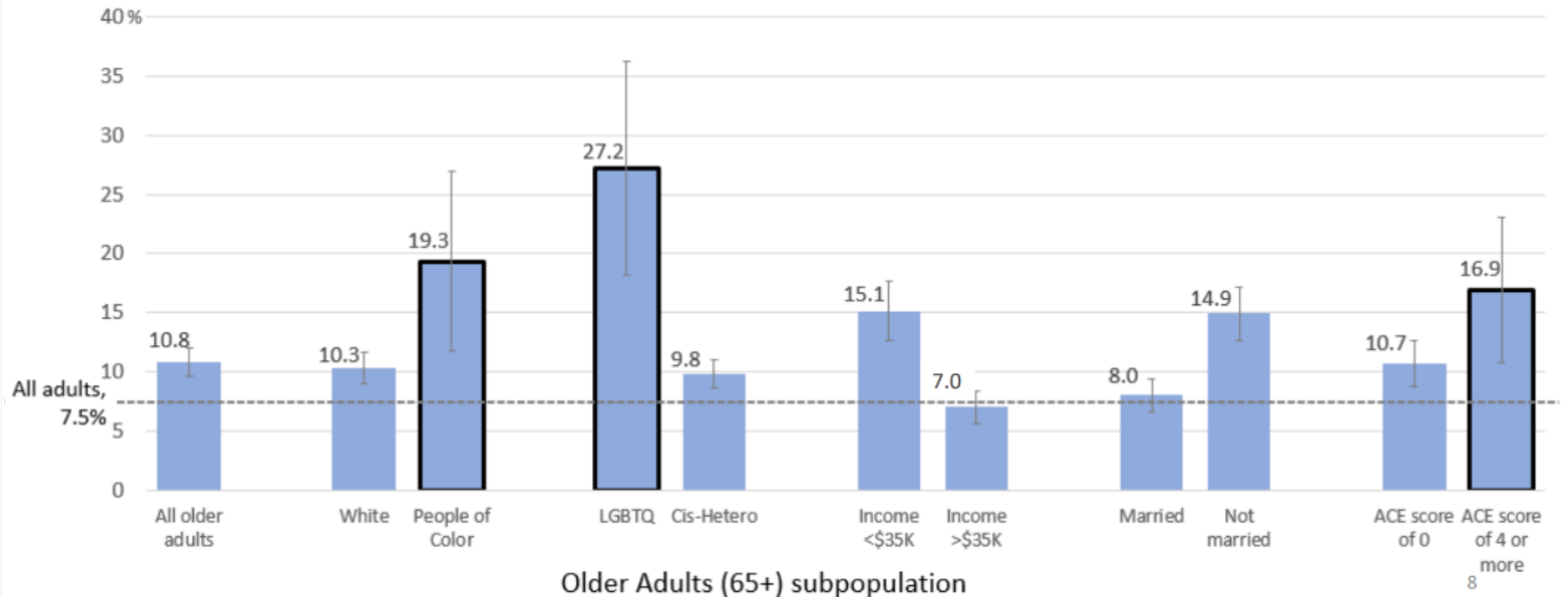
Among adults ages 18–64 with disabilities, those who were Black, had low income, and an ACE score of 4 or more were the most likely to lack the social support they needed.

Percent of adults with disabilities ages 18–64 who **rarely or never get the social and emotional support they need** by select characteristics, WI, 2015, 2017, and 2020 combined



Among adults ages 65 and older, those who were LGBTQ, people of color, or had an ACE score of 4 or more were the most likely to lack the social support they needed.

Percent of adults ages 65 and older who **rarely or never** get the social and emotional support they need by select characteristics, WI, 2015, 2017, and 2020 combined



Health Impacts

People who lack connections experience serious health impacts including:

- 29% increased risk of heart disease
- 32% increased risk of stroke
- 50% increased risk of dementia
- Significantly increased risk for depression and anxiety
- Increased susceptibility to infectious disease

Increases the risk for early death as much as smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day – more than obesity.

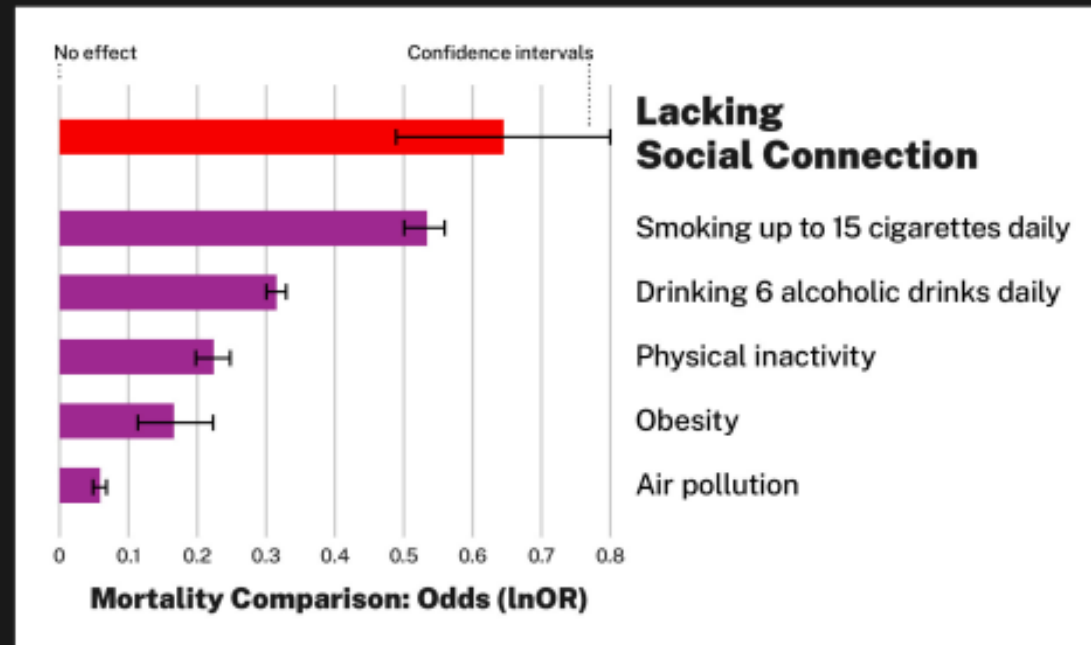
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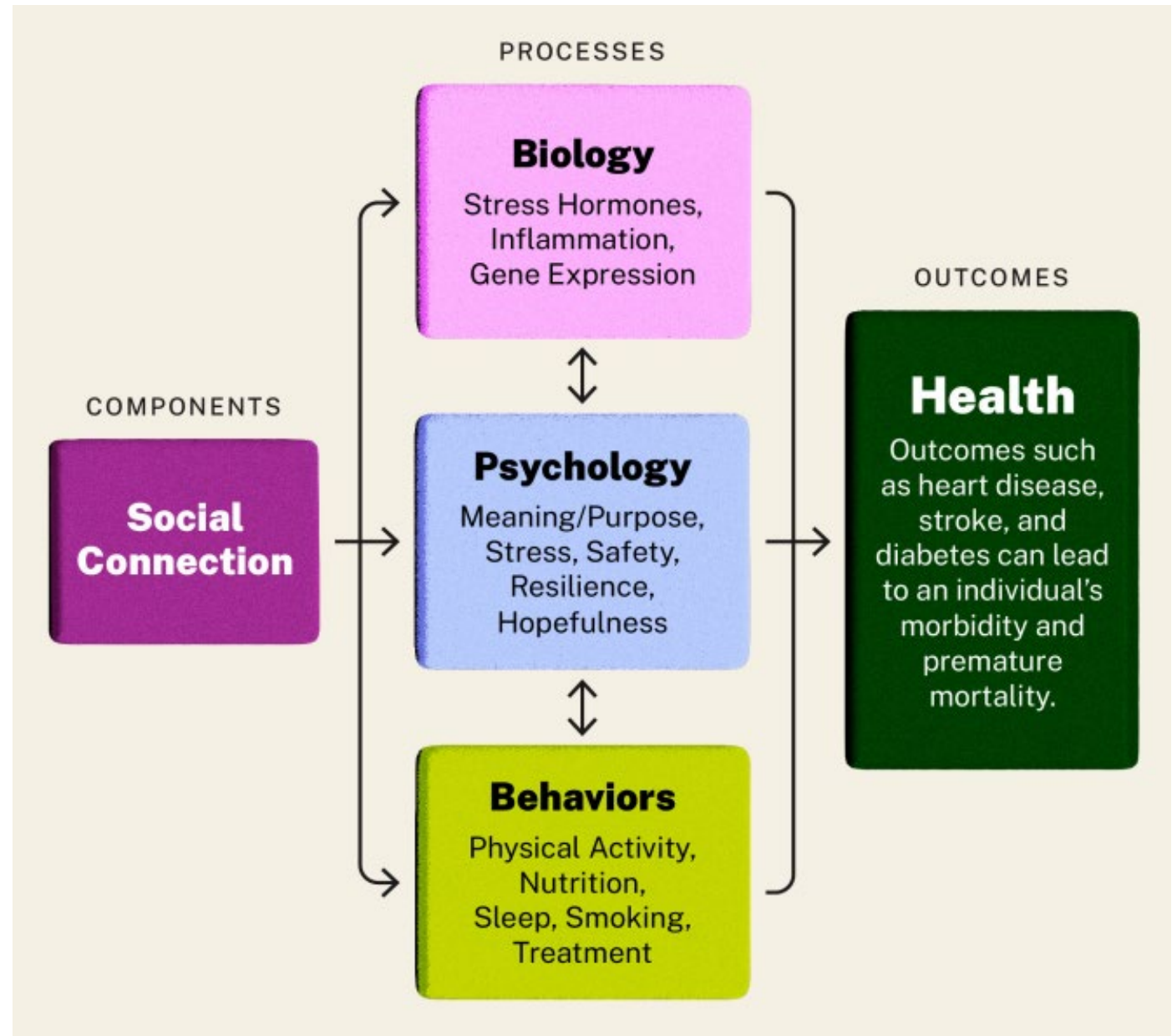
Lacking social connection is as dangerous as smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day.



Comparison groups: Complex measures of social integration: high v. low; not smoking v. smoking < 15 cigarettes daily; alcohol abstinence v. drinking > 6 alcoholic drinks daily; physical activity v. inactivity; low BMI v. high BMI; low air pollution v. high air pollution.

Source: Holt-Lunstad J, Robles TF, Sbarra DA. Advancing Social Connection as a Public Health Priority in the United States. *American Psychology*. 2017;72(6):517-530. doi:10.1037/amp0000103. This graph is a visual approximation.

How Social Connection Influences Health

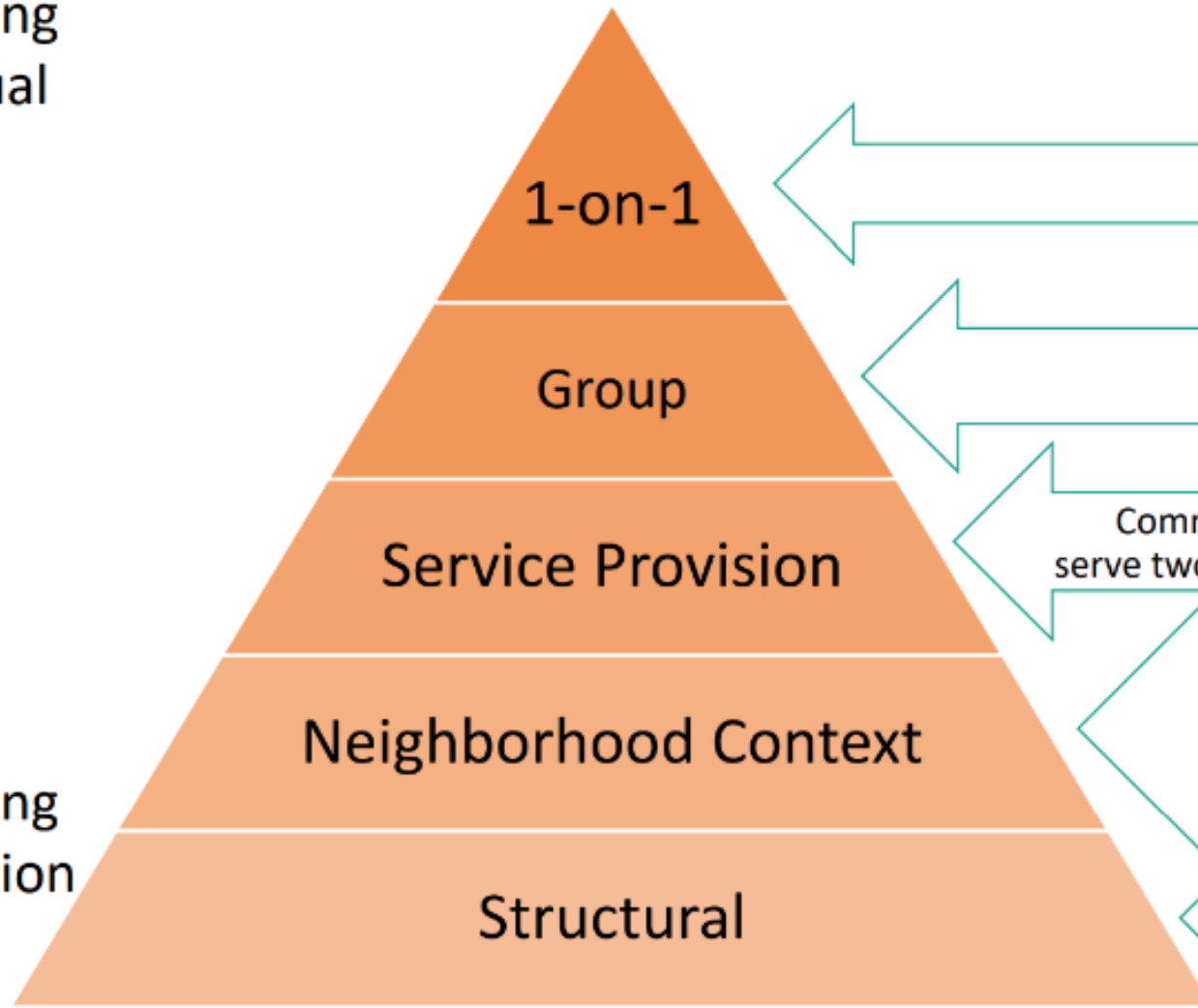


Loneliness Impact Pyramid

Increasing individual effort



Increasing population impact



Examples of interventions at each level^{1,20}

Befriending, mentoring, therapy

Identity-specific support groups, health education groups

Community health workers/navigators, co-locate programs that serve two or more generations, computer and mobile app trainings

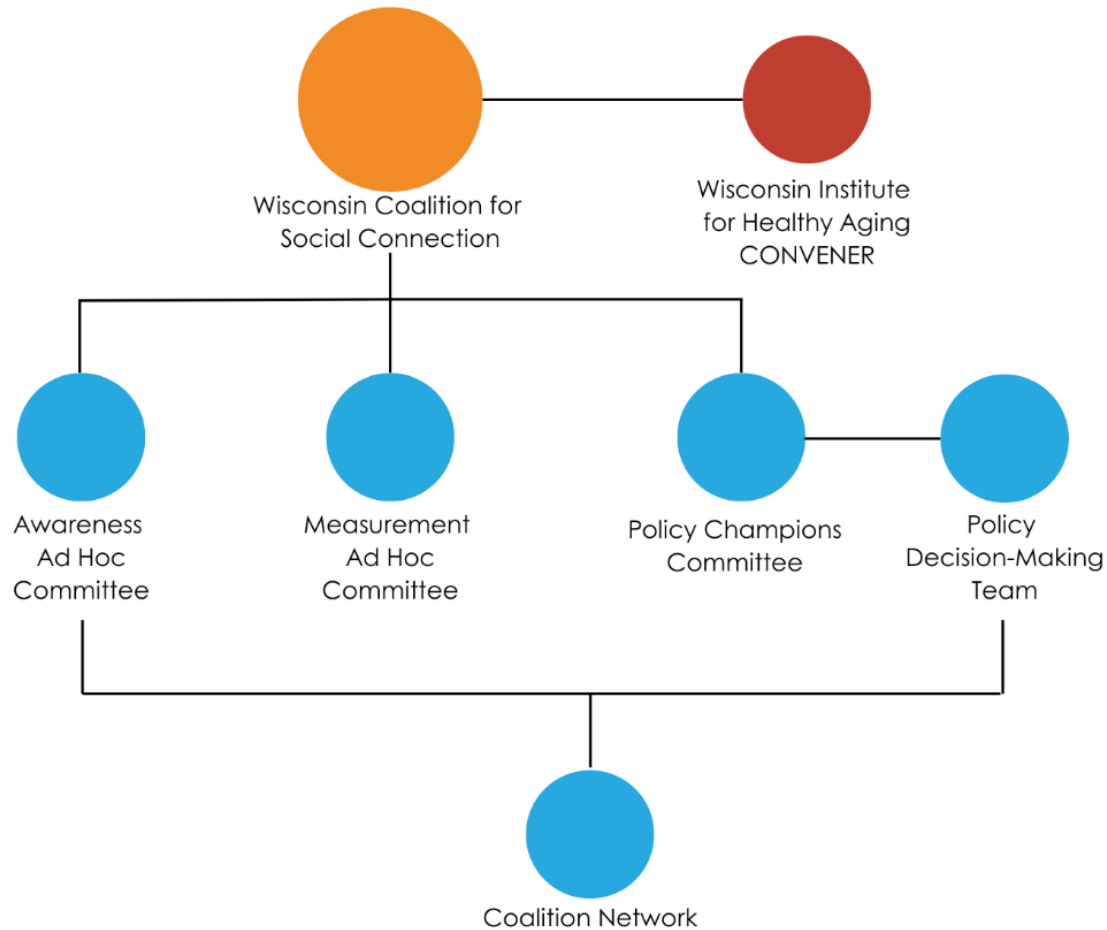
Age-friendly communities, accessible and inclusive public spaces, maintain quality public spaces, community events, accessible transportation

Promote positive aging and disability justice, caregiver friendly workplace policies, broadband internet access

How to Help

- **Volunteerism**
- **Social activities:** Clubs, book clubs, card groups, pen pal programs, meals, support groups, intergenerational
- **Physical activities:** Home or fitness center exercise programs, walks, gardening, yoga
- **Nurturing positivity:** Gratitude journaling, mindfulness, spirituality
- **1:1:** Mentoring, befriending, therapy, phone check-ins or wellness calls
- **Community health workers**
- **Learning activities & brain health:** Trivia, brain teasers, health promotion programs, computer & phone trainings
- **Entertainment resources:** Coloring books, music/theater performances, online museums, writing, music
- **Age-friendly communities**
- **Screen** (UCLA 3-Item Loneliness Scale)
- **Accessible and inclusive public spaces, community events, accessible transportation**
- **Affordable housing**
- **Pets** (real or robotic)
- **Access to internet**
- **Generate awareness**

Coalition Overview



Mission: Engage diverse partners in reimagining how we can combat the root causes and adverse consequences of social isolation and loneliness among older adults and people with disabilities in WI.

Panel Discussion

Welcome...

- Christie Carter, Milwaukee LGBT Community Center
- Dimeji Tomori, Pointters Community Initiatives
- Ka Lee, Prism Health and Wellness & JoinUs Hmong Cafe
- Shae Rising, R&R House

Q&A

- Turn on your camera!
- Raise your hand
- Use the chat



5-for-5 Connection Challenge

- Step 1: Commit to connect
 - Pick 5 actions and 5 days in a row to connect with people in your life.
- Step 2: Connect each day for 5 days
 - Each day, take 1 simple action of your choice to **express gratitude, offer support, or ask for help.**
- Step 3: Reflect and share
 - Take a moment. How did connecting make you feel? Let your loved ones know about your experience and invite them to join in!

Sample 5-for-5 Connection Challenge Actions:

Visit [SurgeonGeneral.gov/Challenge](https://www.surgeongeneral.gov/challenge) to find inspiration for your 5 actions. Here are a few examples:

Express Gratitude	Offer Support	Ask for or Accept Help
Call, text, or send a note — tell someone you're grateful they're in your life!	Check in with someone and let them know you're there	Let someone know you're having a hard time
Compliment someone who deserves recognition	Offer to help someone with daily tasks	Tell a loved one how they can better support you
Thank someone for a specific time they helped you	Volunteer with a local organization that's important to you	Reach out for professional mental health support, like calling 988

5-for-5 C

- Step 1: Comm
 - Pick 5 action
- Step 2: Conn
 - Each day, to **support**, or c
- Step 3: Reflec
 - Take a mom know about

your life.

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or loved ones



More Information on the Surgeon General's Social Connection Priority:

[SurgeonGeneral.gov/Connection](https://www.surgeongeneral.gov/connection)

Use this space to reflect on your **5 for 5 Challenge** experience!

How I connected today

How the connection made me feel

Day 1


Day 2


Day 3


Day 4

Day 5

Share your connection story! #MadeToConnect

 @U.S.SurgeonGeneral


 @Surgeon_General


 madetoconnect@hhs.gov


Use this space to reflect on your **5 for 5 Challenge** experience!

	How I connected today	How the connection made me feel
Day 1	Check-in with a friend I haven't talked to in awhile	
Day 2	Celebrate my husband's half birthday	
Day 3	Compliment a stranger	
Day 4	Call my husband's grandma	
Day 5	Attend local candlelight hike event	

Share your connection story! #MadeToConnect

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Thank You!

Follow us on Facebook:
Facebook.com/connectwi



[Connectwi.org](https://connectwi.org)



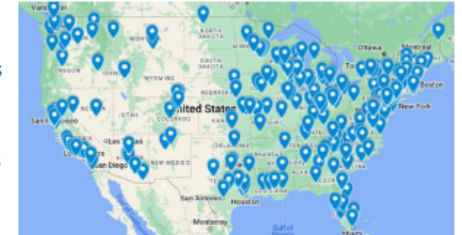
Network of Champions
bit.ly/4bvRx9e



Commit to Connect

The Nationwide Network of Champions

The [Nationwide Network of Champions](#) is an online and free platform hosted by the [Commit to Connect](#) initiative for individuals and organizations interested in advancing social connections as a public health priority. Member "Champions" have access to a nationwide network of professionals, volunteers, and innovators from a variety of sectors and perspectives.



Register or log-in to:

- Search the **directory** by staff, state, or/and organization
- Ask a question or share strategies on **discussion boards**
- Browse or submit items to the **resource library**
- Promote your virtual and in-person events on the **event calendar**
- Read **blogs** featuring Champions and their efforts to address social isolation and loneliness
- Share your opinion by voting in **polls** on relevant social connection topics
- Join topical **communities**, such as the Intergenerational Engagement Community

Already Working with Others to Advance Social Connection?

The Nationwide Network of Champions platform also hosts coalitions, organizations, communities of practice, and other groups as "communities." By creating a community for your group, organizations will gain a home for their resources and activities.

Interested in using the platform to host your cohort, community of practice, or organization in a private or open community? Email us at: info@committtoconnect.org

Visit www.committtoconnect.org for more on how to stay connected.



Thank You!

Follow us on Facebook:
[Facebook.com/connectwi](https://www.facebook.com/connectwi)



[Connectwi.org](https://www.Connectwi.org)



Network of Champions
bit.ly/4bvRx9e



Social Connection Awareness Week Summit 2024

Back to the Basics: The Building Blocks of Connection

Looking for ways to support those who are lonely and/or isolated in your community?

Join us for **FREE** lunch & learn webinars

- November 11 - 15th
- 12:00 - 1:30pm each day

Learn about state and local efforts to provide meaningful connections for older adults and people with disabilities.

MONDAY,
NOVEMBER 11
The Power of Connection

TUESDAY,
NOVEMBER 12
Accessible Recreation

WEDNESDAY,
NOVEMBER 13
Coalition & Community Building

THURSDAY,
NOVEMBER 14
Intergenerational Programs

FRIDAY,
NOVEMBER 15
Technology for Connection

Wisconsin Social Connection Awareness Week
November 10 - 16, 2024

 [Learn More](#)

 [Register Here](#)