



Coalition to End  
Social Isolation  
& Loneliness

## Global Loneliness Awareness Week **Media Training 101**

Over this past year, we have seen incredible momentum on the Hill and in the news surrounding social connection, isolation, and loneliness. As a part of the Coalition's commitment to strengthening our relationships with national news outlets and raising public awareness, we invite you to join us in advocating for our policy priorities and inspiring action to address social isolation, loneliness, and connection. By following the tips below, we can amplify our collective voice.

### **Craft Your Message**

- **Create a Boilerplate Introduction:** Highlight key projects you are working on to address social isolation and loneliness. Show you are part of a national movement by referencing your Coalition membership and our collective dedication to advancing connection. (See the Coalition's boilerplate at the end of this document.)
- **Understand Your Audience:** Tailor your message to the audience you are addressing. Feel free to ask the media contact more about their audience demographics or key takeaways they are hoping to provide their audience. They will likely not share questions ahead of time, but you can still inquire about high-level topics they will ask you about.
- **Practice Clarity and Brevity:** Keep your statements concise and to the point. Avoid jargon, acronyms, and technical terms that might confuse your audience.
- **Use Stories and Examples:** Personal anecdotes and concrete examples can make your message more relatable and memorable. Additionally, it helps the media provide case examples for their audience and build a narrative.
- **Call Others to Action:** Draw attention to the Coalition's policy priorities and endorsed legislation. Feel free to highlight our five overall policy priorities or dive deeper into specific recommendations. Additionally, emphasize the need to secure bipartisan support for proposed legislation.

### **Draw Upon the Evidence**

Below are the Coalition's most commonly cited statistics related to social isolation, loneliness, and connection. **We recommend choosing 2-4 of the most powerful or salient statistics related to your work**, as referencing too many statistics can overwhelm your audience. If you would like help finding more statistics related to your industry or the population(s) you serve, please reach out to [shannon@social-connection.org](mailto:shannon@social-connection.org).

- **General**
  - Post-pandemic, 58% of Americans experience loneliness - consistent with pre-pandemic rates. [1]
- **Age**
  - In 2023, 1 in 3 adults age 50-80 reported feeling isolated from others. [2]
  - 79% of Gen Z and 71% of Millennials report experiencing loneliness, making them the two loneliest generations. [1,3]
  - Loneliness among school-aged youth has increased from 18.6% in 2000 to 36.6% in 2018, with most of the increase occurring after 2012. [4]
- **Health**
  - Social isolation and loneliness increase our risk for heart disease, dementia and Alzheimer's, anxiety, depression, diabetes, and other health conditions. [5-9]
  - Social isolation has been associated with an approximately 50% increased risk of developing dementia. [10]
  - 63% of young adults who experience loneliness also experience significant anxiety or depression symptoms. [11]
  - Lacking social connection carries a premature mortality risk that is comparable to smoking up to 15 cigarettes per day. [12]
  - Loneliness and social isolation increase the risk for premature death by 26% and 29%, respectively.
  - Social connection reduces our risk of early death by 50%. [12,13]
- **Economy**
  - The effects of social isolation, loneliness, and disconnection are estimated to cost our national economy \$406 billion annually. [14]
  - Medicare spends \$6.7 billion annually as a result of individuals being socially isolated. [15]
  - People who volunteer in their communities are 27% more likely to be employed within one year of losing their job. [16]
- **Community**
  - Only 31% of Americans know most or all of their neighbors, and only 16% of Americans say they feel very attached to their communities. [17]
  - Communities with strong social networks and higher levels of social capital are more equipped to handle natural disasters and coordinate emergency response plans. [18]
  - Isolation and loneliness can be associated with reduced community trust in government institutions, mistrust among neighbors, and low levels of perceived social support. [19]

## Stay On-Message

If the conversation veers away from your key points or toward an unfamiliar subject area, use "bridging" techniques to steer the conversation back to your message. Some phrases include:

- "That's a good question, but what's important to remember is..."
- "To take a step back..."
- "There's a lot of nuance surrounding \_\_\_\_\_. What I do know is..."
- "I can't speak to that specifically, but I can say is..."

With the increased media attention to social isolation, loneliness, and connection, reporters may ask questions related to current events or popular topics (i.e., AI, mental health, youth and young adults). It helps to brainstorm 1-3 questions that may arise and prepare short, "rapid-fire" responses to address the question and move back to your key points.

## Follow Up

To encourage others to follow your calls to action, it is important to send the links of any materials you mentioned in a follow-up email to the media contact. This can include the Coalition's [2023-2024 Policy Priorities](#) document, fact sheets and one-pagers, statistic citations, or other informational collateral. Offer to be a resource for any of their future stories. Additionally, ask to be notified of the article or interview's release so you can share with your network. We invite you to forward all articles and interviews to [shannon@social-connection.org](mailto:shannon@social-connection.org) to be featured on our website and social media.

## About the Coalition

Since its founding in 2018, the [Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness](#) has been advocating for policy change that addresses the detrimental effects of social isolation and loneliness. The Coalition represents over 50 of the most influential consumer groups, patient advocates, health plans, community-based organizations, behavioral health groups, and private sector innovators in the United States, all who share a mission to create a more socially connected nation. Through disseminating research findings, leading public awareness, and advocating for legislative and regulatory interventions, the Coalition envisions a society where every individual will one day have the opportunities and support necessary to be socially engaged.

## Citations

- [1] <https://newsroom.thecignagroup.com/loneliness-epidemic-persists-post-pandemic-look>
- [2] <https://www.healthyagingpoll.org/reports-more/report/trends-loneliness-among-older-adults-2018-2023>
- [3] <https://legacy.cigna.com/static/www-cigna-com/docs/about-us/newsroom/studies-and-reports/combating-loneliness/cigna-2020-loneliness-factsheet.pdf>
- [4] <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140197121000853>
- [5] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27091846/>
- [6] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30452410/>
- [7] <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-022-13049-9>
- [8] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35583561/>
- [9] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36168066/>
- [10] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34369248/>
- [11] <https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/reports/loneliness-in-america>
- [12] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20668659/>
- [13] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25910392/>
- [14] <https://legacy.cigna.com/static/www-cigna-com/docs/about-us/newsroom/studies-and-reports/combating-loneliness/loneliness-and-its-impact-on-the-american-workplace.pdf>
- [15] <https://www.aarp.org/pri/topics/health/coverage-access/medicare-spends-more-on-socially-isolated-older-adults/>
- [16] <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0899764015605928>
- [17] <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2018/05/22/americans-satisfaction-with-and-attachment-to-their-communities/>
- [18] [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/245024251\\_Building\\_Resilience\\_Social\\_Capital\\_in\\_Post-Disaster\\_Recovery](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/245024251_Building_Resilience_Social_Capital_in_Post-Disaster_Recovery)
- [19] <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2019/07/22/trust-and-distrust-in-america/>