

Social isolation



Social isolation is growing across all age groups worldwide.

Do you feel that someone in your close environment might be experiencing social isolation?

Keep in mind that a person experiencing social isolation is unlikely to reach out about their situation. This is why it's important to stay observant, trust your instincts, and reach out to them.

By simply asking and listening, you can make a positive impact on someone's life. You can follow some simple steps to connect with people you're concerned about.



Staying in touch

Ask for permission to check in again and see how things are going. If they are struggling, offer to help connect them with service providers or healthcare professionals.

If things are going well, celebrate their progress!



Useful information

island.is
/felagsleg-
einangrun

1717
The Red Cross
Helpline

112
The national
emergency number

Let's talk

Prevent
social isolation



Government of Iceland
Ministry of Social Affairs
and Housing

Noticing the Signs

It can be hard to understand how the people around us are feeling, so it's important to be mindful of certain signs.

Has the person stopped reaching out or responding to calls and messages?

Have they changed their routines, like stopping regular activities, missing meetings, or withdrawing from social engagements?

Are they not quite themselves?

Sometimes we get a feeling that something isn't right. Trust this feeling and talk to the person rather than ignore it.

In the worst case, they'll simply know that you care.

Start the conversation

Initiating a conversation with someone you suspect may be struggling can feel awkward, especially if you don't know them well. In such cases, it can help to create a reason for contact.

For example, if it's a neighbor, you could ask to borrow something or bring up a neighborhood topic.

If the timing isn't right for them, offer to visit another time. Remember to stay calm and balanced in your interactions.

Let them know you've noticed a change: "It's been a while since I've seen you. How have you been?"



Listen

When interacting with someone you want to support, listening is key. You don't need to solve their problem—just being present and listening is often enough. Everyone's concerns and problems differ from our own.

Stay calm, don't rush, and avoid interrupting.

Let them know you're concerned and there to listen: "Would you like some coffee while we chat?"



If they don't want to talk

Sometimes people have a hard time admitting they're struggling, even if you suspect otherwise. You could mention that you've noticed a change: "You seem a bit different. Are you sure everything's okay?" Just be careful not to push too hard.

Perhaps the issues are too sensitive, they feel ashamed, or maybe you've simply misunderstood and they're fine. That's okay! Taking the first step can be enough to break the ice.

Encourage them

You don't need to have all the answers. Encourage them to seek help if needed or find new ways to approach their challenges. Offer encouragement, and if you feel up to it, offer your help.

