



# Social Isolation Resource Guide

This guide is meant to be used by Dane County Senior Focal Points as a tool to help combat social isolation and loneliness in older adults.

## Wellness Calls

While “Safer at Home” continues, many older adults long for social connection. Words are powerful, they can inspire hope, offer encouragement and strength. Consider asking older adults and caregivers to share words of encouragement with their peers. This allows them to give back and have a purpose. It’s a great way to instill a sense of community and connectedness even when we are apart. Many people want to volunteer and utilizing them to make calls, emails, or texts is a win-win-win for them, the older adult, and our agencies.

### Scripts/Conversation Starters

- [Nutrition Education & Activities](#)—Click on Activities-Conversation Starters > Conversation Starter SparkCards
- [Sample Telephone Reassurance Instructions & Checklist](#)—Click on links listed on the right

## Physical Activity

1. [Strong Women](#)
2. **Go4Life**—Go4Life, an exercise and physical activity campaign from the National Institute on Aging (NIH), is designed to help you fit exercise and physical activity into your daily life. This comprehensive website offers free videos and tips on endurance, strength, balance and flexibility activities. Participants can also sign up to receive motivation and fitness tips directly to their inbox. The Go4Life website (<https://go4life.nia.nih.gov/>) offers free tracking tools such as weekly exercise and physical activity plan, and goal setting worksheets.
  - [Go4Life 15 Minute Sample Workouts](#)
  - [Go4Life 20 Minute Sample Workouts](#)
3. **Daily Wellness Challenge**
  - [Wellness Challengers & Trackers](#)
  - [Workplace Wellness Challenges](#)
  - [Aging Mastery](#)
4. [Printable Exercises](#)
5. [Sliver Sneakers Yoga](#) (7 minutes)
6. **Utilize Zoom, GoToMeeting, etc.**—Set up “Zoomba” classes, chair yoga, tai chi, or any kind of fitness class via video chat.



## Brain Health

### 1. Trivia or Question of the Day

- [Trivia Games for Seniors](#)
- [Sing-along for Seniors](#)



### 2. [30 Virtual Field Trips](#)

3. [The Libby App](#)—allows library patrons to access free eBooks, audiobooks, music and videos from your local public library onto your phone or tablet for free.

### 4. Brain Teasers

- [Download](#)
- [Print](#)
- [Thinkable Puzzles](#)
- [Fun Brain Teasers](#)
- [Free Unblocked Games](#)



5. **Weekly Guided Meditations: Healthy Minds Innovations, Inc. (HMI)**—Founded by world-renowned neuroscientist Dr. Richard Davidson from the Center for Healthy Minds at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, HMI is dedicated to cultivating well-being and relieving suffering through a scientific understanding of the mind. These virtual events are free and open to the public. All are welcome! Please "like" and visit Healthy Minds Innovations on Facebook to see a schedule of all guided meditations offered: <http://facebook.com/pg/HealthyMindsInnovations/events/>

6. [Badger Talks](#)—UW Connects brings the resources of the University of Wisconsin-Madison to citizens of Wisconsin. The program brings the Wisconsin Idea to life.

## Music and Art

1. [Music Therapy Program for Older Adults and Caregivers](#)—A Board Certified Music Therapist provides one-on-one therapeutic care to address physical, emotional, cognitive, and social needs of individuals. This program is funded through the Caring for Caregivers grant. Recipients must have a smart phone (android or iPhone), tablet, laptop, or desktop computer with a working camera. Applications are made by contacting Jane De Broux (261-5679 or [Debroux.Jane@countyofdane.com](mailto:Debroux.Jane@countyofdane.com)).

### 2. Coloring Books/Pages

- [Download Free Coloring Books from 113 Museums](#)
- [Download Free Coloring Pages from Mary Engelbreit](#)

### 3. Opera

- [Metropolitan Opera's Nightly Met Opera Streams](#)

### 4. Free Concert Hall

- [Berliner Philharmoniker](#)

### 5. Museum Tours

- [Virtual Museum Tours](#)



6. **Writing Program**—In Madison, an intergenerational writing program is underway. Older adults have been paired with local high school students. They are discussing short articles on Ageism. Because discussions are in written form, social distancing requirements are met. For more information, contact [Madison Senior Center](#).
7. **Poetry**—Have people call in with written poems and add them to your newsletters. Or have them submit poems to local TV or newspaper.
8. **Dane County Parks: Conservation Corner Video Series**—Each Friday at 1 pm, videos are [posted](#) on Facebook helping you engage with parks right from home! Weekly topics include: Habitat Restoration, Birding, Prescribed Burns, Volunteerism, and What’s Blooming? History of Dane County Parks, Tree Care, and more.

## Positivity

1. [Place positive affirmations in meal bags](#)—Click on Activities-Conversation Starters > Words of Encouragement Full Page Quotes
2. **Have meal participants write positive notes to each other**—You can utilize your nutrition program for this. Have the meal delivery volunteers collect notes from participants and distribute them the next day.
3. [Mindfulness Resource](#)
4. [“Be the reason someone smiles today” postcards](#)
- 5.
6. **Gratitude Wall**—Share something you are grateful for, have a “gratitude wall” where people can submit to be posted.
7. [Joy4All Hotline](#)—“Students launch a hotline with jokes, stories and support for isolated seniors,” Christopher Dawson, *CNN* (4/18/20)



## Social Connections

1. [Well Connected](#)—free site that offers several opportunities for engagement using just a phone.
2. **Story Time**—Connect with local radio stations and librarians to read a book (30 min segment).
3. **Newspapers**—Connect with local newspapers and see if they would donate newspapers to meal participants.
4. **Book club**—Create a book club with seniors via zoom, conference call, etc. You can also utilize volunteers for this and create a “one-on-one” book club between the volunteer and older adult. Have the volunteer call and read a chapter of a book and then discuss.
5. [Play Cards Together](#)



## 6. Pen Pal Programs

- [Pen Pal Program](#)—Madison Senior Center created a pen pal program matching volunteers to older adults in the Madison area to correspond and make new friends. Currently 30+ people are participating and there's room for more! Can be done using old-fashioned pen and paper, email, texting, social media, or however you and your pen pal decide.
- [To Battle Isolation, Elders and Children Connect as Pen Pals](#)—"Pen pal programs have sprouted up around the world as schools and senior centers try to keep older adults connected and children occupied," Mihir Zaveri, *New York Times* (4/10/20)

7. **Car Parade**—Coordinate a local drive-by car parade. Have staff wear silly costumes, play music, smile and wave while participants drive by.

8. [Spreadjoy24/7 Movement](#)—through writing letters

9. [Goosechase](#)—A virtual scavenger hunt you can play with friends and family, while maintaining safe social distancing. Recreational tier is free for up to three teams, unlimited missions.

## Other Articles/Webinars

["What submarine crews and astronauts can teach us about isolation"](#) Anna Russell, *New Yorker* (4/9/20)

["Social distancing comes with psychological fallout-Experts warn prolonged isolation during the pandemic may worsen or trigger mental health problems,"](#) Sujata Gupta, *Science News* (3/29/20)

["Protecting older adults during social distancing,"](#) Ali Jawaid, *Science Magazine* (4/10/20)

["Just What Older People Didn't Need: More Isolation,"](#) Paula Span, *New York Times* (4/13/20)

[The Health and Medical Dimensions of Social Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults](#), publication by *National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine* (2020)

["COVID-19 and the consequences of isolating the elderly,"](#) Richard Armitage & Laura B. Nellums, *Lancet Public Health* (March 2020)

["Caring from a distance,"](#) Gazette staff, *GazetteXtra* (3/25/20)

["Loneliness among seniors"](#) Jeffery Borenstein, *Psychology Today* (4/13/20)

Mental Health in Older Adults During COVID-19 Webinar: ["You Can Make a Difference: Having difficult conversations during times of crisis with older adults"](#)



Please contact Alyce Miller with questions or additional resources  
(261-5678 or [miller.alyce@countyofdane.com](mailto:miller.alyce@countyofdane.com)).