

Loneliness is plaguing Americans in 2024: poll

February 1 2024, by Dennis Thompson



Americans are terribly lonely, a new poll reveals.

Among U.S. adults, about one in three said they feel lonely at least once a week. Worse, one in 10 Americans say they feel lonely every day, results show.

Younger people are more likely to experience [loneliness](#), which is defined as a lack of meaningful or [close relationships](#) or sense of belonging, according to the American Psychiatric Association's latest Healthy Minds Monthly Poll.

About 30% of respondents ages 18 to 34 said they feel lonely every day or several times a week.

The poll "confirms loneliness is widespread, especially in [young people](#)," said APA President Dr. Petros Levounis.

"Doctors and other clinicians can make a major difference in their patients' well-being and [physical health](#) when they ask about loneliness and how to mitigate its effects," Levounis added in an APA news release. "Helping people feel less lonely is straightforward and deeply gratifying."

The poll, which was conducted online from Jan. 10 to Jan. 12 among 2,200 adults, also found that:

- Single adults are nearly twice as likely as married adults to feel lonely on a weekly basis, 39% versus 22%
- About 50% of respondents ease their loneliness with distractions like TV, podcasts or [social media](#)
- Another 41% said they go for a walk to feel less lonely, while 38% said they reach out to family or friends
- Overall, 13% said they use drugs or alcohol to ease their loneliness, with adults 18 to 34 more likely to use substances than those 45 to 64 (21% versus 8%).
- Respondents' highest sense of community and belonging comes from being among family (65%), friends (53%) or neighbors (20%).
- The least helpful places to feel less lonely were [online](#)

[communities](#) and [discussion forums](#) (3%), sports and recreational teams (4%), and gym or fitness classes (5%).

Technology is seen by many as a boon for battling loneliness, however.

About 66% of respondents said tech helps them form new relationships, 75% said it helps them connect with others more frequently, and 69% said it is beneficial for forming and maintaining relationships.

However, people are split on whether technology helps people connect on a deep level.

About 54% said tech fosters meaningful relationships, while 46% said it fosters superficial relationships.

"Clearly, we believe technology can be used to connect with others," said APA CEO and Medical Director Dr. Saul Levin.

"In some cases, it seems to be helping us reach people who become part of our inner circles or to communicate with those who already are," Levin added. "However, distracting yourself when you're feeling lonely with social media might be a double-edged sword: While it can connect, it can also lead to feelings of missing out, and we need to make sure we remain conscious of its effects on our mood. In this tech-heavy world, we should not forget the value of in-person interaction."

Loneliness has been linked to increased risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, depression, anxiety, addiction, dementia and [early death](#), according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The CDC says people can combat loneliness by:

- Spending more time with family and friends

- Joining a group or club related to an interest or hobby
- Spending time with others in nature
- Expressing gratitude to others
- Volunteering with community organizations
- Getting to know the neighbors

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more about the [health risks of loneliness](#).

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Citation: Loneliness is plaguing Americans in 2024: poll (2024, February 1) retrieved 26 June 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-02-loneliness-plaguing-americans-poll.html>

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