

# CIGNA 2018 U.S. LONELINESS INDEX

In partnership with Ipsos, Cigna fielded a national online survey of 20,000 U.S. adults to explore the impact of loneliness in the U.S. **The survey revealed that most Americans are considered lonely, as measured by a score of 43 or higher on the UCLA Loneliness Scale**, a 20-item questionnaire developed to assess subjective feelings of loneliness as well as social isolation.

## THE STATE OF LONELINESS IN AMERICA

1:2

**NEARLY HALF** of Americans report sometimes or always **feeling alone (46%)** or **left out (47%)**.

1:5

**ONE IN FIVE** people report they rarely or never feel close to people **(20%)** or feel like there are people they can talk to **(18%)**.

1:4

**ONE IN FOUR** Americans **(27%)** rarely or never feel as though there are people who really understand them.

1:2

**ONLY AROUND HALF OF AMERICANS (53%)** have meaningful in-person social interactions, such as having an extended conversation with a friend or spending quality time with family, on a daily basis.

2:5

**TWO IN FIVE** Americans sometimes or always feel that their relationships are not meaningful **(43%)** and that they are isolated from others **(43%)**.



**Americans who live with others are less likely to be lonely** (average loneliness score of **43.5**) compared to those who live alone (**46.4**). However, this does not apply to single parents/guardians (average loneliness score of **48.2**) – **even though they live with children, they are more likely to be lonely.**

Z

**GENERATION Z IS THE LONELIEST GENERATION AND CLAIMS TO BE IN WORSE HEALTH THAN OLDER GENERATIONS.**

- Gen Z (adults ages 18-22) has the highest loneliness score **(48.3)**, and the Greatest Generation (adults ages 72+) are the least lonely **(38.6)**.
- The Greatest Generation is most likely to say their physical health is good, very good or excellent **(77%)**. Gen Zers are least likely to say their physical health is good, very good or excellent **(65%)**.



**SOCIAL MEDIA USE ALONE IS NOT A PREDICTOR OF LONELINESS.**

- Levels of in-person interactions, physical and mental wellness, and life balance are more likely to predict loneliness than social media usage.
- Respondents defined as very heavy users of social media have an average loneliness score **(43.5)** not markedly different from those who never use social media **(41.7)**.
- While social media use alone is not a predictor of loneliness, we found that the older generations (e.g., Greatest Generation) are both less likely to be lonely and less likely to be heavy users of social media while younger generations (e.g., Generation Z) are more likely to be lonely and more likely to be heavy users of social media.

## PEOPLE WHO REPORT BEING LESS LONELY ARE MORE LIKELY TO:



- Have regular, meaningful, in-person interactions;
- Be in good overall physical and mental health;
- Be employed and have good relationships with their coworkers; and
- Have found a balance in their daily activities, including getting the right amount of sleep, socialization and work/life balance.

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## A CLOSER LOOK

People who have frequent in-person daily interactions have lower loneliness scores and are in better overall and mental health than those who do not.

▼ 20

Those who have daily meaningful in-person interactions have an average loneliness score that is **20 points lower** than those who never have in-person interactions (**39.6** versus **59.6**).

9:10

Nearly nine in ten (**88%**) of those who have daily in-person interactions say their overall health and mental health is good, very good or excellent, while around half of those who never have in-person interactions say the same.



People who feel good, very good or excellent about their physical health and mental health have average loneliness scores that are lower (**41.6** for both) than those who rate their physical/mental health as fair or poor (**49.6** and **54.5**, respectively).

Being employed and having good relationships with your coworkers is good for loneliness and your health.



Employed adults have a lower average loneliness score than those who are unemployed (**43.7** versus **49.1**).

9:10

Nearly nine in ten (**89%**) of those who say their relationships with coworkers are good, very good or excellent are in good, very good or excellent overall health, compared to 65% of those with fair or poor relationships with coworkers.

## FINDING BALANCE IS CRITICAL



### SLEEP

- Those who say they sleep the right amount have loneliness scores 4 points lower than those who sleep less than desired and 7.3 points lower than those who sleep more than desired.
- They are significantly less likely to feel they lack companionship (**37%** vs. **62%** of those who oversleep) and are significantly more likely to feel they have someone they can turn to (**85%** vs. **71%**).



### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- People who say they get just the right amount of exercise are considerably less likely to be lonely. The loneliness score of those who exercise more than desired increases by 3.5 points, while a similar uptick is seen for those who exercise less than desired (3.7 points).
- Those who exercise more than desired and those exercising for just the right amount are on par when it comes to feeling as though they are part of a group of friends (**79%**, each), have a lot in common with others (**75%** of those who exercise more vs. **62%** who exercise just right) and can find companionship when they want it (**76%** vs. **80%**).



### TIME WITH FAMILY

- Those who say they spend more time than desired with family and those who spend less time than desired are on par when it comes to feelings of loneliness.
- Those who report spending too much time with family stand out as being more likely than those who don't to say that they feel as though they are part of a group of friends (**73%** vs. **64%**) and they can find companionship when they need it (**74%** vs. **67%**).



### THE WORKPLACE

- Those who say they work just the right amount are least likely to be lonely. The loneliness score of those who work more than desired increases by just over 3 points, while those who work less than desired showed a 6-point increase in loneliness.

## METHODOLOGY

Cigna's survey is based on the UCLA Loneliness Scale, a 20-item questionnaire developed to assess subjective feelings of loneliness or social isolation. The UCLA Loneliness Scale is a frequently referenced and acknowledged academic measure used to gauge loneliness. Respondents were assigned a loneliness score based on their responses, with higher scores indicating increased loneliness.

Approximately 20,096 adults ages 18 and over from the continental U.S., Alaska and Hawaii were surveyed online by Ipsos Polling, in English. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of  $\pm 0.8$  percentage points for all respondents surveyed.

For more information, please visit [Cigna.com](http://Cigna.com).



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