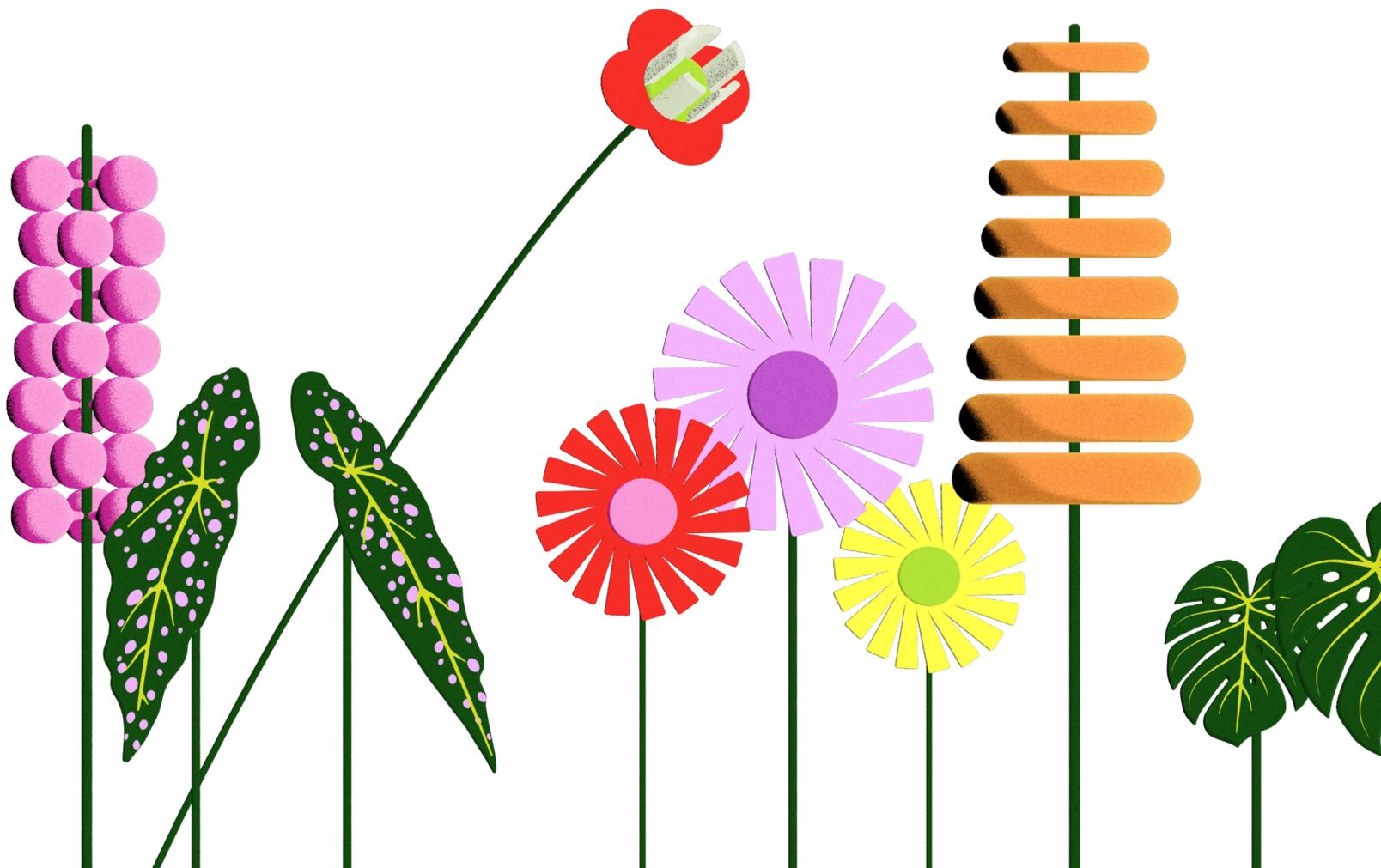


Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation:
The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing
Effects of Social Connection and Community

Social Connection Fact Cards

2023





Living in isolation reduces our chances of survival and social isolation increases the risk for premature mortality by 29%.¹

1. [Holt-Lunstad et al., 2015.](#)



Poor social relationships, social isolation, and loneliness can increase your risk of heart disease by 29% and risk of stroke by 32%.¹

1. [Valtorta et al., 2016.](#)



Smaller social network size is associated with an increased risk of type 2 diabetes and of other diabetic complications including heart attacks and kidney disease.^{1, 2}

1. [Brinkhues et al., 2017.](#)
2. [Brinkhues et al., 2018.](#)



Among older adults, chronic loneliness and social isolation can increase the risk of developing dementia by approximately 50%.¹

1. [Lazzari & Rabottini, 2021.](#)



Being more socially connected can improve stress responses and minimize the negative health effects of stress.^{1,2}

1. [Cohen & Willis, 1985.](#)
2. [Southwick, et al., 2016.](#)



People with strong perceptions of community belongingness are 2.6 times more likely to report good or excellent health than people with a low sense of belongingness.¹

1. [My Health My Community, 2018.](#)



Children and adolescents who enjoy positive relationships with their peers, parents, and teachers experience improved academic outcomes.¹

1. [DuBoid et al., 2011.](#)



Social isolation, or even the perception of isolation, can increase inflammation in the body to the same degree as physical inactivity.¹

1. [Yang et al., 2016.](#)



Adults who report feeling lonely often are more than twice as likely to develop depression as adults who report rarely or never feeling lonely.¹

1. [Mann et al., 2022.](#)



Social support from friends and family is associated with improved hypertension and diabetes management.^{1,2,3,4}

1. [Magrin et al., 2017.](#)
2. [Shahin et al., 2021.](#)
3. [Pan et al., 2021.](#)
4. [Song et al., 2017.](#)



Immersion in local community-based activities such as volunteering significantly increases the likelihood of unemployed individuals becoming employed.^{1,2,3}

1. [Wilson, 2000.](#)
2. [Jastrzab et al., 2004.](#)
3. [Spera et al., 2015.](#)



Loneliness and poor social support have been found to significantly contribute to the development and severity of illnesses after exposure to viruses.^{1,2}

1. [Cohen, 2020.](#)
2. [LeRoy et al., 2017.](#)