



“I paint dance write cook to be less lonely.”



Welcome to The UnLonely Project

In response to the growing public health concern of social isolation and loneliness we've launched The UnLonely Project. The goal of this signature initiative is to broaden public awareness of the negative physical and mental health consequences of loneliness associated with a wide range of life conditions and circumstances while also exploring and promoting creative arts based approaches to reduce the burden.

A growing body of compelling evidence suggests that there is an epidemic of loneliness and social isolation in the United States with significant negative physical and mental health effects.

- Loneliness affects more than one-third of American adults, with particular likelihood among individuals facing challenging life circumstances like loss of a loved one, and chronic or catastrophic illnesses like diabetes, heart disease, mental illness or cancer.
- Health risks associated with loneliness and social isolation are comparable to the dangers of smoking and obesity, increasing mortality risk by up to 30%.
- Loneliness has negative effects on mental health, worsening depression, anxiety, mood disorders and cognitive decline; and on physical health, leading to higher rates of cardiovascular impairment, chronic pain, and fatigue.

- Certain age groups, notably adolescents, young adults and older adults seem to be particularly at risk as marked by growing incidence of depression, substance abuse and suicide.
- External factors may be accelerating the crisis; research indicates that Internet and social media engagement exacerbates feelings of loneliness, depression, and anxiety.

Why is this effort so timely?

First, because the problem of loneliness is worrisome and growing, with an urgent need to move past the silence and stigma that prevents us from fully acknowledging its significance.

Second, provocative research indicates that creative arts expression, with its ability to engage us and connect us, shows great promise in reducing isolation, fostering improvement in health outcomes.

The UnLonely Project seeks to:

- Raise awareness about loneliness as a pressing health problem and promote creative expression as an innovative approach to alleviate it.
- Offer creative arts-based on-line experiences, down-loadable tools, resources, and programs for managing loneliness, adaptable for a range of individuals, communities and conditions.

- Catalyze and conduct further research into how to most effectively and creatively reduce the burden of loneliness for millions of Americans.

Leading artists and public figures are sharing through exclusive video testimonials their personal insights and experiences with creative expression's ability to overcome loneliness. And through our UnLonely Film Festival, we've curated a collection of 40 stories spanning across diverse populations. Our hope is that through these messages we're able to inform, inspire, and initiate a lively dialog on the potential for creative arts to make us *all* less lonely.

We encourage you to join in The UnLonely Project by visiting our website, subscribing to our mailing list, sharing your stories, and help to form authentic connections through creative expression.



The Foundation for
Art & Healing

www.unlonelyproject.org

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