



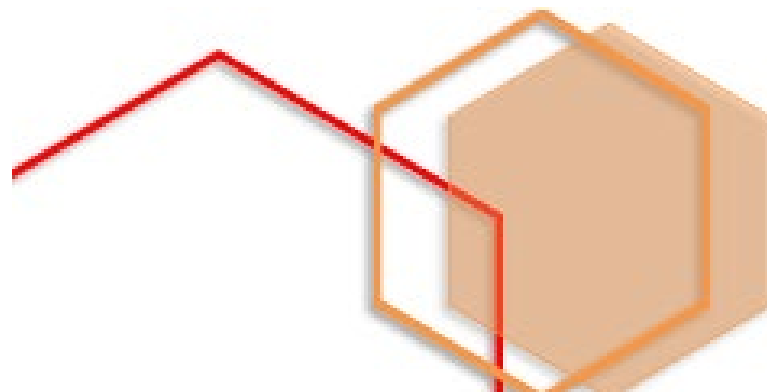
IO2 – TRAINING MATERIALS FOR SENIORS

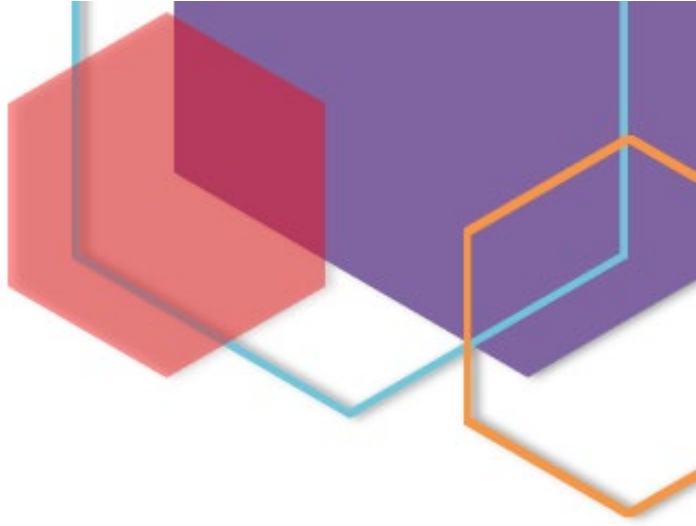
HEALTHY LONELINESS PROJECT



Co-funded by the
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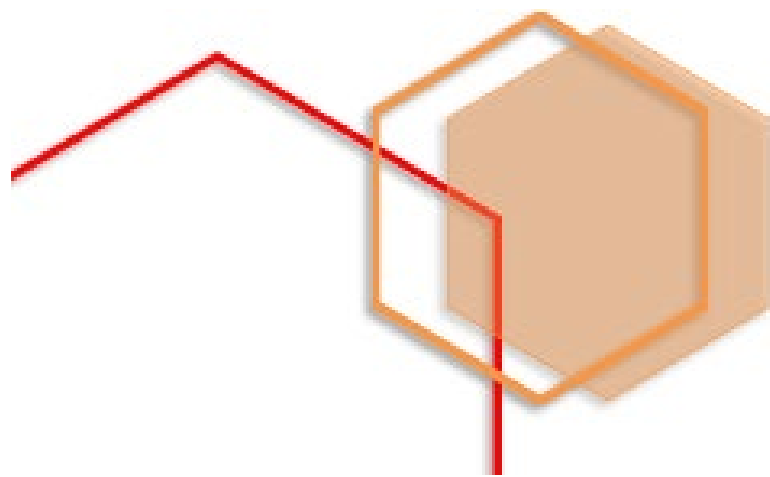
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Introduction

Current document was developed in the framework of the Erasmus+ project Healthy Loneliness. It is aimed at presenting the training materials dedicated to seniors in order to fight the feeling of loneliness and give some tips on how to be socially active.

It will first describe the phenomenon of loneliness encountered in our current societies and especially in the cities of the partners involved in the project (Valencia, Paris, Lodz and Coimbra), followed by a part dedicated to the direct feedback of seniors facing this situation. Then, concrete tips and solutions will be proposed for maintaining a social and active life. Finally, useful contacts will be listed in each city in order to guide and support senior citizens in their everyday life.

General situation of loneliness

According to the World Health Organization, unwanted loneliness is one of the greatest risks for the deterioration of health, and a determining factor that favours the entry of seniors into situations of dependency.

Let's reflect now what is the feeling of loneliness to you? How can you describe this feeling?

The fact of living alone in old age has been considered by many researchers as one of the main factors of risk of loneliness. However, being alone, living by yourself or socially isolated is not the same as the feeling of loneliness. This is something very subjective and can only be applied/felt by a person him/herself. The significance of loneliness for individual wellbeing and social cohesion should not be underestimated. The mortality risk of loneliness is comparable to that of obesity and smoking. Persistent loneliness is further associated with unhealthy behaviours, mental problems and poor cognitive performance. Lonely individuals also report more pessimistic judgements and feel sadder.

Loneliness can be measured directly, by asking people about their subjective feelings of loneliness. Indirect measures probe into specific determinants of loneliness such as the frequency of meetings with friends or having someone to talk to about intimate matters.

Did you know that in Europe 30 million European adults frequently feel lonely?

Headlines

- More than **75 million European adults** meet with family or friends at most once a month and around **30 million European adults** frequently feel lonely.
- Loneliness is more prevalent in **Eastern** and **Southern** Europe than in **Western** and **Northern** Europe.
- **Poor health, unfavourable economic circumstances** and **living alone** are all associated with higher rates of loneliness.
- **Loneliness** affects **all age groups**. Even though the elderly may be more socially isolated than other age groups, they do not report more frequent feelings of loneliness.

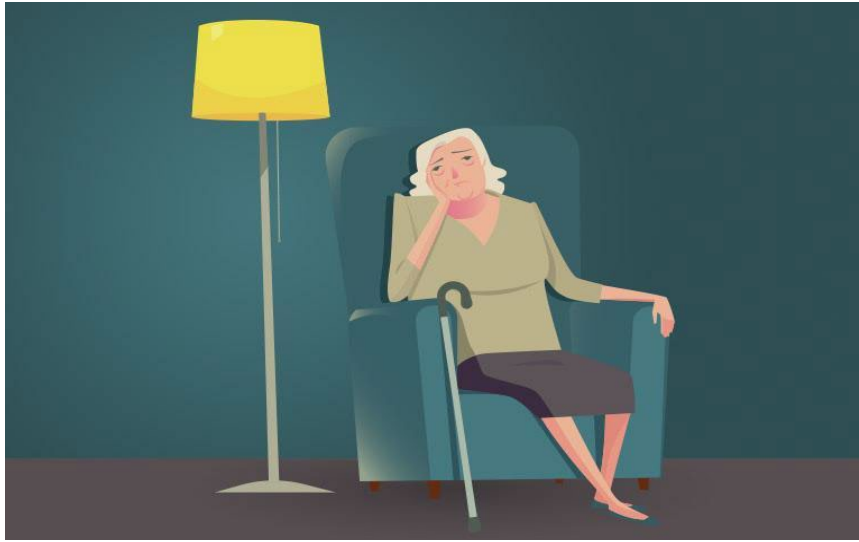
Source :

https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/sites/default/files/fairness_pb2018_loneliness_jrc_i1.pdf

The effects of the spread of the recent pandemics COVID-19 and the lack of knowledge on how to manage the disease has forced governments to impose mobility restrictions to the general population, including strong lock-downs and confinements. These measures are generating a big international debate and each country is adopting them differently

(conducting to different results and situations). Several studies based on surveys and demographic analysis conclude that there will be an increase in mental health problems as a repercussion of the current pandemic, which may be particularly important for older adults with multimorbidity.

In the current document below, you will find some useful tips and sources to deal with the feeling of loneliness.



Source: <https://thefiftypluslife.com/>

Feelings, expectations and fears when living alone

Recently, co-creation sessions were conducted in partners' countries in order to understand and define the feeling of loneliness evaluated by older persons. Also, a survey was distributed in Spain, Poland, Portugal and France to measure the impact of Covid-19 on seniors' general health and loneliness.

The groups agreed on the fact that isolation and loneliness correspond to the loss of autonomy due to physical problems (mobility, cognitive impairments and other age-related problems), social environment and community (change of home, family living far away, living outside the city centre) and a personal feeling of emptiness, absence of social networks (family, friends, neighbours, other generations). In all countries, it can be noticed that the main causes of loneliness are due to life events (death, illness, children's departures), health issues encountered by older persons and the end of their professional life. Personal emotions and negative feelings such as bad mood, frustration, depression, anxiety can be both causes and consequences for the situation of isolation. Moreover, physical issues may appear with loneliness (increased blood pressure, sleeping troubles).

Testimony n°1: *“Even in big cities, some people feel very lonely, do not talk to their neighbours and do not have much contact with family or friends”*

In order to prevent loneliness, it is crucial to maintain social relationships and interactions with others for having an active and shared life.

It is important to express oneself and interact with people in everyday life, for example with neighbours. This can show them that you are doing well or allow them to feel a need for social interaction, even if you are not aware of it.

There are a lot of initiatives that are already existing in this field, but the real problem is to have access and to know about them (due to ICT, human or geographical access or lack of mobility).

Leading an active and healthy lifestyle is vital for avoiding loneliness and isolation.

Testimony n°2: *“A solution would be to promote the exchanges of services between generations”*

Setting up a routine and maintaining a social participation in the community

Loneliness is a major concern of citizens in our societies. This phenomenon was emphasized during the last years by the financial crisis affecting a lot of countries but also, the sanitary crisis due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, several actions could be useful to fight against this situation¹:

- **Engaging in group activities that are useful for all:** physical activities, social events gathering people. It could also be to set up a group of people and have them accompanied by an "expert" to carry out a project that will be useful to them.
- **Regaining mobility** by going out every day at least for a short walk or for shopping. For older people or people with reduced mobility, being able to move around is also essential for maintaining links with others: meeting friends, going to an activity, etc.
- **Relearning the benefits of community living:** living in a community is an increasingly popular alternative for single people, especially the older people
- **Re-establishing dialogue between people** by contacting his/her neighbours, discussing with shopkeepers etc., having a coffee. An idea is also to re-invent places for opportunities for exchange and sharing (social coffees, cultural or digital workshops etc.)

¹ Enquête "Agir contre la solitude" réalisée par la Fondation de France:

https://www.fondationdefrance.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/dp_solitudes_2015_avec_fiches_exemple_def.pdf, 2015

Use of ICT tools

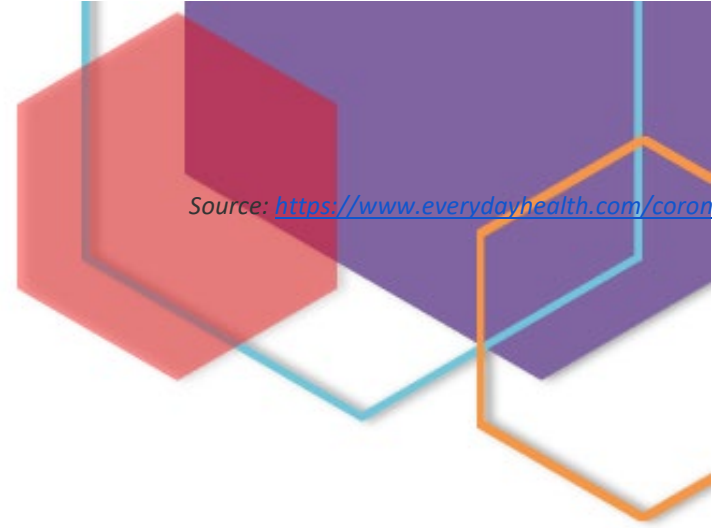


Seniors are often missing some ICT knowledge and this excludes them from being an active part of the society. ICT tools can be the bridge to social inclusion and maintaining contacts with family and friends for seniors regardless of the sanitary, economic or political situation. This is why it is crucial for older adults to acquire at least basic IT skills and be able to communicate on-line. Moreover, it can be a help in terms of entertaining, in-line banking and health services. This will allow them to communicate with other persons regardless of the distance and time and also, to be aware of news and activities in their communities and to feel less lonely.

Here below is the list of the possible on-line links/apps that can be useful for a senior person living alone:

- **Communication:** email, Skype, WhatsApp, Zoom, Google Meet
- **Social networks:** Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube
- **Health services:** applications allowing to book doctor appointments on-line (like Doctolib in France; ZnanyLekarz in Poland; app GVA+ SALut in Spain and SNS 24 in Portugal) or a website for Health Data management (social security or other platforms)
- **Administrative services:** tax declaration help, e-finance and on-line banking, on-line shopping, e-Administration, bizum, etc.
- **Nutrition:** applications for scanning products and measuring their nutritional values (like Yuka etc.) or applications proposing recipes (like Marmiton in France, App Nutrición 55+)
- **Physical activity and mobility:** applications like maps (Google Maps etc.), pedometers, or gentle exercises to realize at home etc. (Stay Fit with Samantha, Rosita Longevity app, VIVIFRIL, Activate 55+ etc.)
- **Cognitive stimulation:** cognitive games and games dedicated to memory, reasoning etc. (like NeuroNation, Luminosity, Duel Quiz, Kahoot, App enbuenaedad.es in Spain), virtual visits to museums and cultural exhibitions, platforms to download music and e-books.





Source: <https://www.everydayhealth.com/coronavirus/isolation-the-hidden-risk-of-social-distancing/>



Having a healthy lifestyle



Leading a healthy lifestyle is one of the keys to healthy and active aging. Staying active and participating in social activities and maintaining healthy routines allow everyone and especially older persons to have full and plenty of life.

For instance, here are some tips for leading healthy lifestyle:

1. **Regular physical exercises in group** (strength, balance or cardiovascular)
2. **Watch over your nutritional habits**
3. **Take advantage of tests and checks available** - most of the GPs can do you a free prescription for check-ups and examinations
4. **Have a stable sleeping pattern in a dark and comfortable bedroom**
5. **Keep your mind active** - privilege mind stimulating activities or games (learn another foreign language, play sudoku or just draw)
6. **Stay connected with people around you** - through modern communication technologies and face-to-face

In the guide below, you will find some tips that can help you to have healthy lifestyle and habits:

[Tips for healthy eating lifestyle and physical activity - Foodgaming.eu](https://www.foodgaming.eu)

In Spain:

- [Consejos para una alimentación, estilo de vida y actividad física saludable - Foodgaming.eu](https://www.foodgaming.eu)
- [Guia para el envejecimiento activo y saludable - Euskadi](https://www.euskadi.eus/guia-envejecimiento)



Source : <https://www.freepik.com/>

Useful contacts

There are quite a lot of contacts, organizations and networks that have been created to tackle loneliness of older adults.

For instance, in France there is an on-line portal assembling all good practices tools and websites that are available for seniors in France called **Les Lutins bleus** ("Blue Elfs"). Thanks to *Les Lutins Bleus*, people can discover and compare all the senior offers on all possible themes: health, home help, housing, technology, mobility, clothing, food, media, leisure, travel, employment, meetings, etc.

The "Silver Economy" is full of offers for seniors and their careers. Finding your way around is sometimes difficult. Indeed, the major players in the market very often rise to the top of the search engine results. At the same time, the smaller players, who do not have the same resources, appear much further down the results. However, they often offer products of just as high quality, and therefore deserve to gain visibility.

The Lutins Bleus are therefore working to identify all the offers on the market and to present them objectively. It is then up to the senior or carer, to make the choice according to your own criteria.



Source: <https://www.leslutinsbleus.fr/>

In France, several organisations like La Croix Rouge or Les Petits Frères des Pauvres are also used to help people in situation of loneliness and to guide them by proposing some tips to have an active and social life. They propose helplines and support lines free of charge for people suffering isolation and loneliness:

- Les Petits Frères des Pauvres : 0800 47 47 88

- La Croix Rouge: 0800 858 858

Finally, the seniors can also address their local social centres, district's initiatives or town hall to receive support or news about new activities.

In Spain, in the city of Valencia, the main references to find resources for active and healthy ageing of older adults are:

- Primary Health Centers, where GPs do social prescription of physical activity and other community resources.
- City Council social services web, where the following information and resources can be found:
 - Summary of resources, equipments and social services available for older adults;
 - SAD, municipal Home Care Service;
 - TAD, municipal teleassistance service;
 - Menjar a casa, municipal food home delivery service;
 - 12 Municipal Social Services Centers.
- City Council Active Ageing Department web
 - Municipal services for older adults;
 - OMAM, Oficina Municipal de Atención al Mayor: OMAM is the service that centralises the municipal attention of the City Council of Valencia to older adults; offering face-to-face, telephone and telematic attention to all citizens.
 - Defensor/a de la Persona Mayor: The Ombudsman for the Older Adults has the mission to provide a service of advice, information, care and assistance to citizens over 60 years of age of the citizens over 60 years of age in the City of Valencia, in their relations with the Municipal Administration and the rest of the bodies and entities that depend on it, in the administrative actions.

In Poland seniors can contact wide range of phone lines:

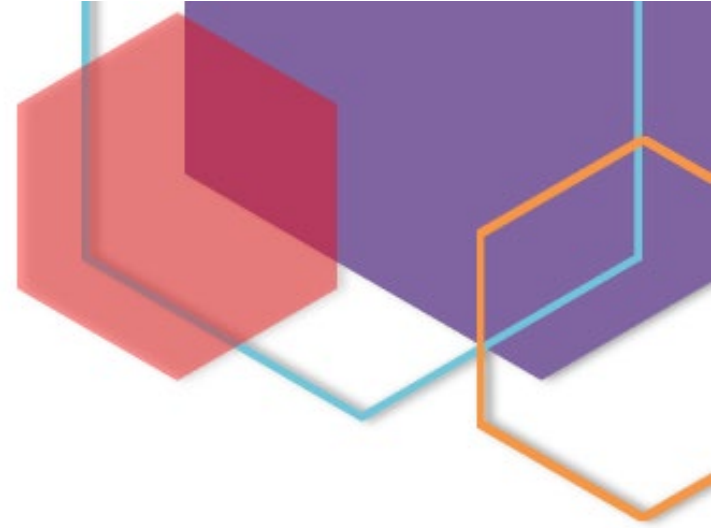
1. **Governmental** hotline for seniors (information about pandemic, health and help for people over 70 years old - +48 22 505 11 11).
2. **Citizen actions** as HaloFon - a hotline made by seniors for seniors (telephone for kindness - +48 739-903-452).
3. **Non governmental organisations** hotlines (e.g. psychological help for seniors by the phone Vis Salutis Foundation +48 888-990-980; Project "Telephone of Kindness for Seniors" for joint studies and the organization of the Subvenu fund, the Department



of Health and Social in Lodz of volunteers, lawyers and psychologists - +48 514 025 546; Caritas hotline +48 42 639 95 81)

In Portugal, people suffering from loneliness can find support by telephone by contacting organizations like Fundação Bissaya Barreto “SOSSolidão” or SOS Voz Amiga.

A pilot project to tackle Loneliness in Lisbon has been launched by "La Caixa Foundation" and will be launched in the first semester in Porto. Social care providers will implement La Caixa Foundation toolkit on "Sempre Acompanhados" program to support elderly people suffering from loneliness. For more information: Fundacaolacaiva.pt



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