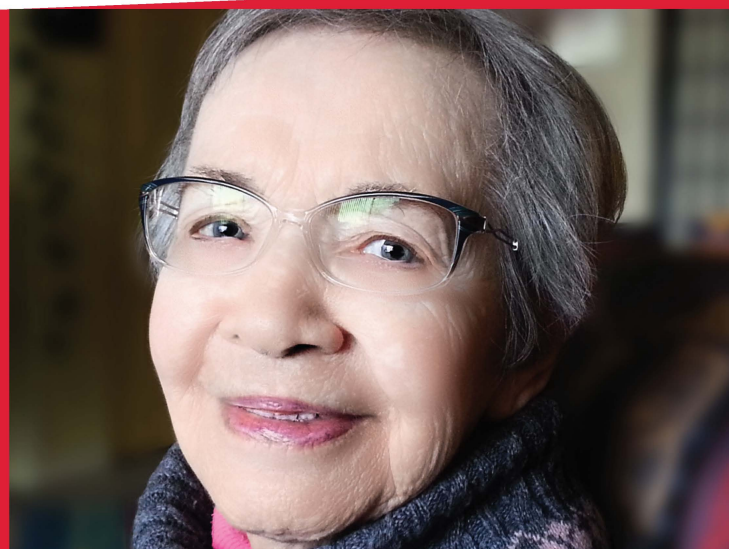


# Do not let a senior become “invisible”

The goal of the RISE Initiative is to help Canadians become aware of the possible impact of loneliness and social isolation on their older family members, friends and neighbours – and to take action.



**HelpAge  
Canada**

*age helps*

[www.helpagecanada.ca](http://www.helpagecanada.ca)

**HelpAge  
Canada**

*age helps*

Is someone  
you know becoming  
invisible?



[www.helpagecanada.ca](http://www.helpagecanada.ca)

# REACH OUT AND CONNECT WITH AN OLDER PERSON

Social isolation and loneliness are major social, health and quality of life issues for older people. Many seniors are isolated and rely only on a pet or TV for companionship. Over time, their mental and physical health deteriorate, sometimes to the point where they become “invisible” – we only learn about their existence when they reach the hospital. But it doesn’t have to be that way... The goal of this tool is to help you identify the risks... and the possible actions to take. DEPENDING ON THE RISK FACTORS, MAYBE ONLY A FEW, THE SENIOR COULD BE AT THE SERIOUS OR IMMEDIATE INTERVENTION STAGE.

## Risk factors/indicators of Social Isolation

### Personal

- age = 80+
- childless
- retired
- member of a specific group (e.g. Aboriginal, LGBT)
- older newcomer
- lower levels of education
- low self esteem
- death of a partner
- weak social/communication skills
- poor English language skills
- low emotional support

### Health

- chronic illness/disability
- depression or other mental health issues
- loss of vision, hearing
- dementia
- age-related disabilities (incontinence, fear of falling)
- mobility problems
- alcoholism

### Living situation

- low/unstable income
- living alone
- location (urban, rural, remote)
- no friends or family nearby
- change of residence
- living in unsafe neighbourhoods
- being anonymous to neighbours
- minimal participation in social activities, volunteering, outside groups (church, club)
- being a caregiver

### Changes in...

- physical health (bruising, weight loss, weakness)
- mental/emotional health (fear, confusion)
- personal hygiene/appearance
- personality/routine (withdrawal, poor diet)
- appearance of home (neglect, cleanliness)

### Barriers

- lack of affordable, accessible transportation
- loss of driver’s licence
- lack of awareness/access to community services
- challenges re. technology
- limited assistance with routine activities (shopping, meal prep)

## Level of risk

PERSON HAS **3** OR MORE RISK FACTORS

**1**

POTENTIAL RISK

PERSON MEETS **5** OR MORE RISK FACTORS

**2**

MODERATE RISK

PERSON HAS **7** OR MORE RISK FACTORS

**3**

SERIOUS RISK

PERSON HAS **10** OR MORE RISK FACTORS

**4**

**IMMEDIATE  
ACTION REQUIRED**

## Potential Actions:

- Regular phone calls to check-in
- Contact individual’s family
- Set up visitation schedule with friends/family
- Offer to take person shopping
- Offer lift to medical/other appointments
- Invite to meet for coffee or other outing (e.g. library, church)
- Offer assistance with computer
- Offer to research community, volunteer programs
- Drop off prepared meals/offer to prepare meals with person
- Provide contact numbers for assistance (211 is available in all provinces except MB, PEI, NFL)
- Contact local Social Services dept for evaluation and/or immediate assistance.
- Contact local Health dept for evaluation and/or immediate assistance.

## For information:

- Call 211, a source of information on government and community based health and social services.
- Contact your participating RISE organization:



Disclaimer: These are guidelines only, if you feel that the senior is at the point of serious risk or needs immediate intervention, even though they are experiencing only one or two of the risk factors, please take action.

[www.helppagecanada.ca](http://www.helppagecanada.ca)