

**EBB & FLOW**

Connections • Cooperative

# CONNECTION IS PREVENTION

WI Peer Recovery Conference

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# Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation

2023

The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the  
Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community





“OF ALL THE EXPERIENCES WE NEED TO SURVIVE AND THRIVE, IT IS THE EXPERIENCE OF RELATING TO OTHERS THAT IS THE MOST MEANINGFUL AND IMPORTANT. HOW WE BOND AND STAY ATTACHED TO OTHERS IS AT THE CORE OF OUR RESILIENCE, SELF-ESTEEM, AND PHYSICAL HEALTH.”

~ LOUIS COZOLINO, *THE NEUROSCIENCE OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS*

# SOCIAL ISOLATION

Social isolation—the lack of significant social connections interpersonally and within a community—is a public health crisis.

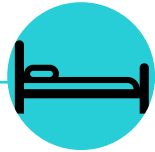


# THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL ISOLATION



## HEALTH EFFECTS

Equivalent to  
smoking 15 cigarettes  
daily



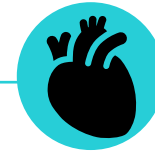
## LINKS

Linked to poor sleep  
quality, depression,  
and impaired  
immunity



## SUICIDE

Linked to increased  
thoughts of suicide  
and self-harm



## HEART

Increases risk of  
stroke and heart  
disease



## DEATH

Increases risk of  
premature mortality



# SOCIAL ISOLATION

“The rise of social isolation is not a personal choice or individual problem, but one that is rooted in community design, social norms, and systemic injustices.”

~Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

## INCREASED RISK FOR SOCIAL ISOLATION

- Long Term Illness or Disability
- Domestic Violence
- Loss of a Loved One
- Becoming a Caregiver
- Living in a Rural Area
- Having a Baby
- Having a Baby
- Moving to a New Place/Migration
- Incarceration
- Homelessness
- Identifying as part of a marginalized group (LGBTQ+, race/ethnicity)



# **SOCIAL ISOLATION & LONELINESS**

**“Loneliness is a subjective, unwelcome feeling of lack or loss of companionship, which happens when there is a mismatch between the quantity and quality of the social relationships that we have, and those that we want” (Perlman and Peplau, 1981)**



# LONELINESS

- 3 in 5 (61%) adults reported feeling lonely (Cigna 2019)
- 8 in 10 Gen Zers feel lonely compared with 5 in 10 Baby Boomers (Cigna 2019)
- Lonely workers report being twice as likely to miss a day of work due to illness, and five times as likely to miss a day of work due to stress. (Cigna 2019)
- October 2020 survey found 36% of respondents felt “seriously lonely” (Harvard 2020)
- 75% of Hispanic adults and 68% of Black/African American adults are classified as lonely – at least 10 points higher than what is seen among the total adult population (58%). (Cigna 2021)
- About 65% of parents and guardians are classified as lonely, a 10-point gap compared to non-parents (Cigna 2021)



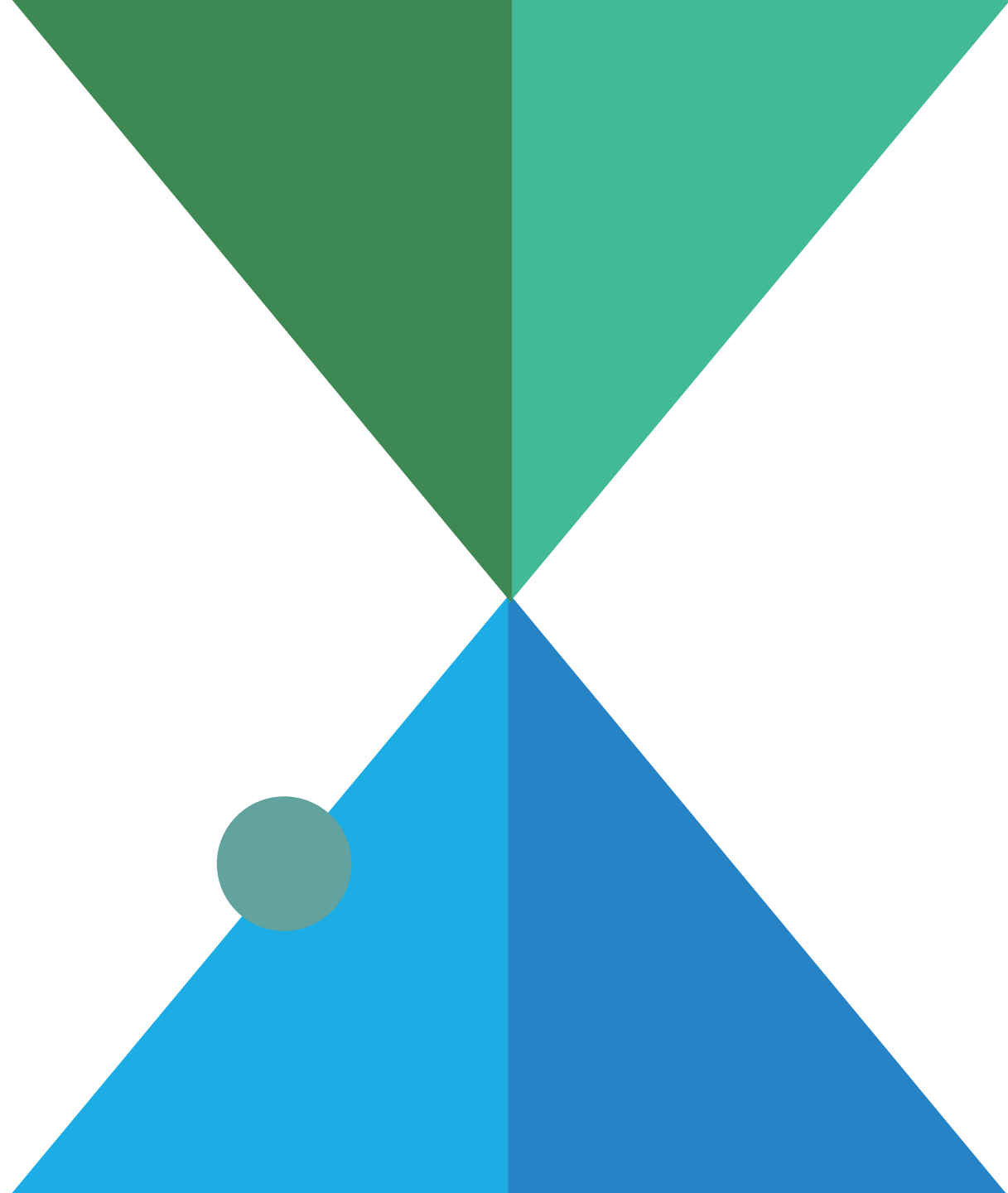


# LET'S TALK LONELINESS

- Acts on the same part of the brain as physical pain
- Feeling alone in a crowded room/with others
- Social Media
- Often Invisible

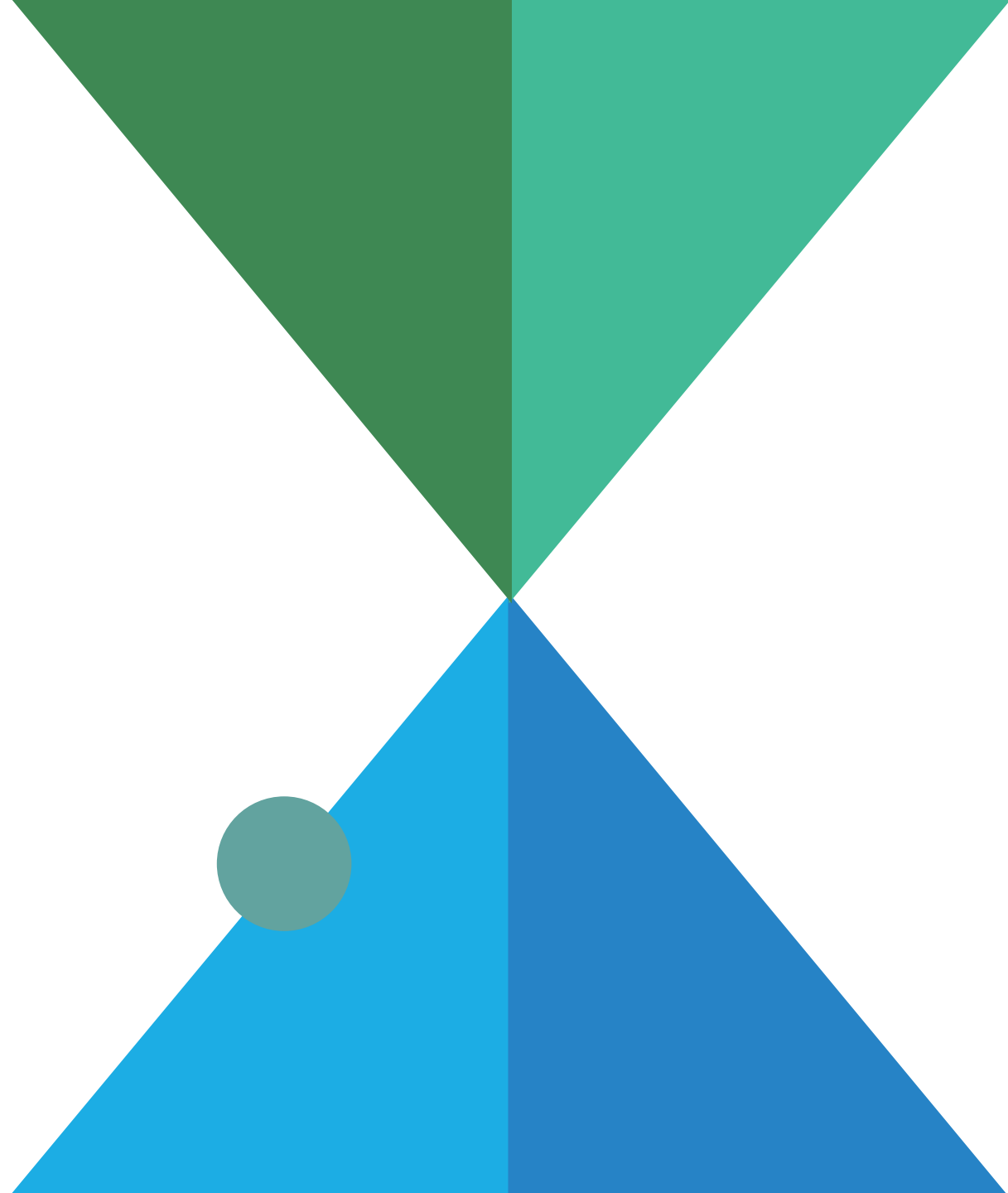
# LONELINESS, SOCIAL ISOLATION AND SUICIDE

- Connectedness is a protective factor  
(individual, relationship, community)
- Loneliness was found as a prominent  
factor contributing to suicide attempts  
(McClelland et al. 2022)



# CONNECTION IS MEDICINE

- “Pain witnessed is pain transformed”
- Healing happens in relationships
- The power of the connection within
- Social connection is a protective factor
- The core of connection is being seen  
and heard





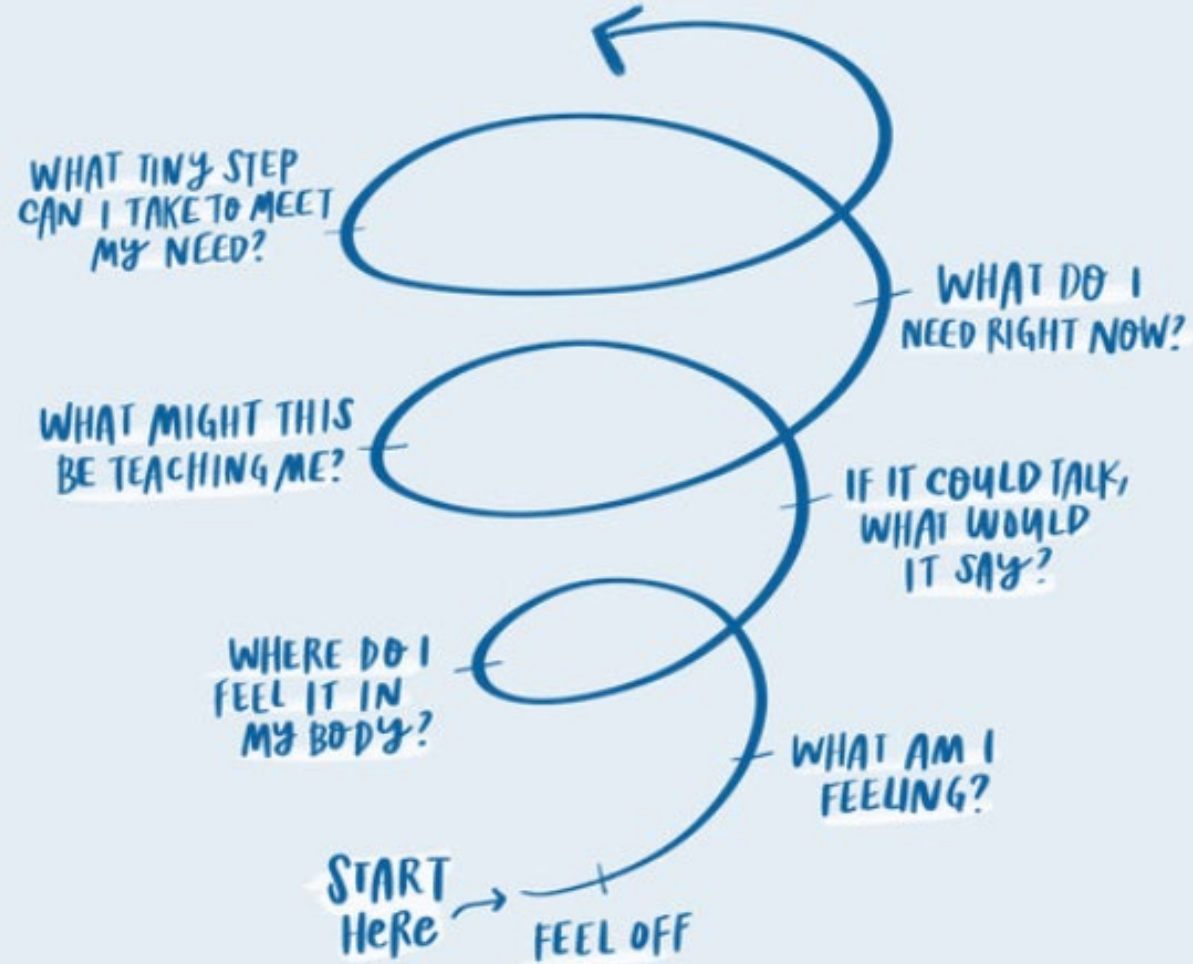
# CONNECT AT THE LEVEL OF EMOTION

- Emotions are normal.
- All human beings experience emotion.
- Emotions can often be understood when words are ineffective.
- When we deepen our relationship with our own emotions, we are better able to be with the emotions of another.
- Empathy requires us to value and connect at the level of emotion ... it is what our world most needs right now.



**LET'S PRACTICE  
CONNECTING!**

# How to Feel Your Feelings



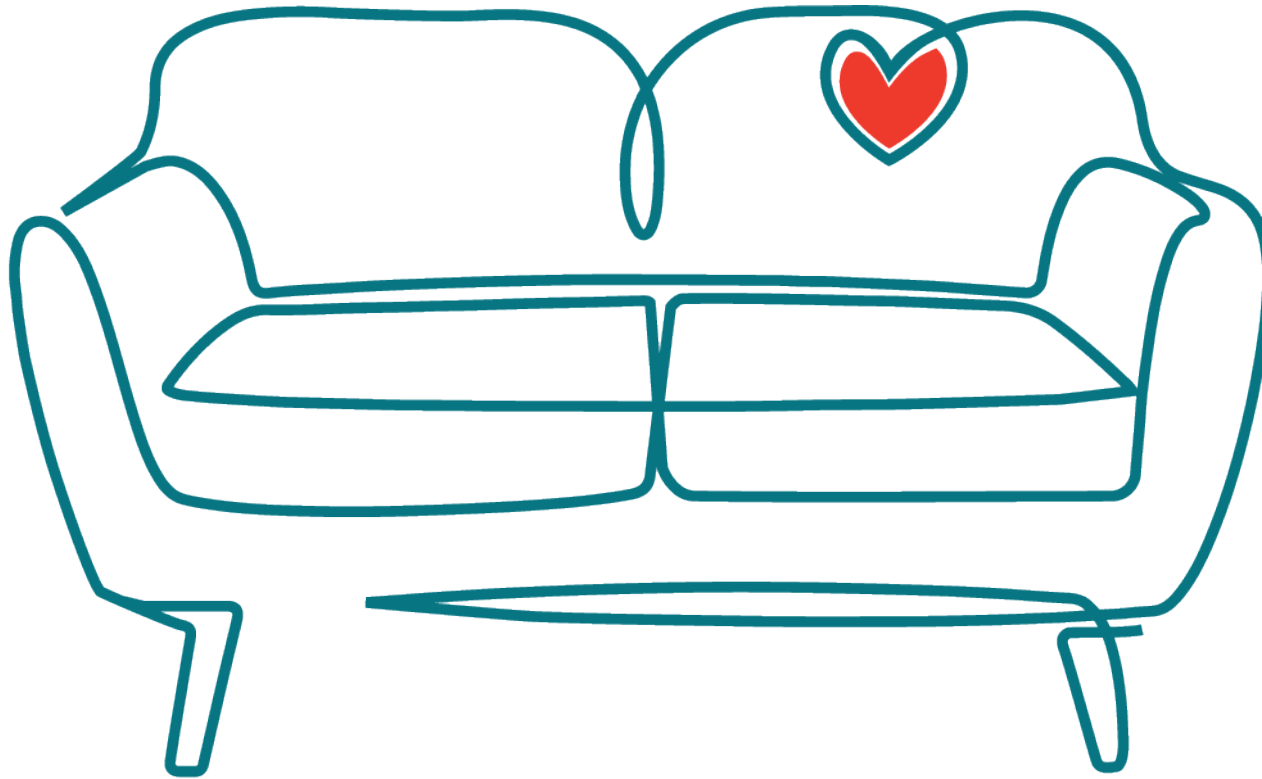
xo @heyamberrae



# THE “CONNECTION PRESCRIPTION”


- Strengthen your connection with yourself and extend self compassion
- Connect with yourself & others at the level of emotion
- Reach out, ask for help. You are not alone.
- Be unapologetically your authentic self
- Strengthen your listening skills by releasing judgment, advice giving or fixing,
- Be present when connecting with others

**[WWW.COMMUNITYLIVINGROOM.ORG](http://WWW.COMMUNITYLIVINGROOM.ORG)**



**Community Living Room**





**“ CONNECTION IS WHY WE’RE  
HERE. IT IS WHAT GIVES  
PURPOSE AND MEANING  
TO OUR LIVES. ”**

Brene Brown

# THANK YOU

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