



Eradicate Social Isolation

The Issue

Americans are more socially isolated now than ever before. Research finds that it can be a silent yet potent killer that affects diverse groups of Americans across the age spectrum. The high correlation between social isolation and health issues such as morbidity and mortality has led this hazard to become one of the priorities for social work research and intervention.

Societal Goal

Through interdisciplinary collaboration and innovative interventions, we can reduce the risk of social isolation across all populations and strengthen social ties that are a vital source of emotional strength and health improvement. The “social” element of social work is the key for reducing the risk of social isolation and strengthening social ties among all populations.

A Decade of Work

Over the next ten years, researchers, practitioners and policymakers can engage in a variety of activities that will advance this Grand Challenge and ignite social work achievements, including efforts to:

- Increase access to high quality childcare that strengthens social connectedness for both children and caregivers
- Build more age-friendly communities that strengthen frayed social ties and prevent elderly mistreatment.
- Advocate for reform of solitary confinement.
- Implement assessment protocols in healthcare settings that encompass social health status as an attribute presented when seeking care and treatment.
- Increase research on social isolation among marginalized communities using a multi-systems approach at individual, familial, community, and societal levels.
- Address the isolating consequences of hearing loss and other sensory impairments.
- Create opportunities for social ties in large portions of the population through expanding evidence-based interventions that harness the power and access of technology.
- Websites:
 - <http://www.GrandChallengesforSocialWork.org/12-challenges/eradicate-social-isolation/>
 - <http://www.bc.edu/centers/ioa/videos/social-isolation.html>
 - <https://connect2affect.org>

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Resources

- Lubben, J; Tracy, E; Crewe, SE; Sabbath, E; Gironda, M; Johnson, C; Kong, J; Munson, M & Brown, S. (Forthcoming) Eradicate Social Isolation in *Grand Challenges for Social Work and Society*. R. Fong, J. Lubben, and R. P. Barth (Eds.). New York and Washington, DC: Oxford University Press/NASW Press.
- Brown, S., Casey, E. A., Crewe, S. E., Gironda, M., Johnson, C., Lubben, J., ... Tracy, E. (2016, September). [Policy recommendations for meeting the Grand Challenge to Eradicate Social Isolation](#) (Grand Challenges for Social Work Initiative Policy Brief No. 5). Cleveland, OH: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare.
- Lubben, J., Gironda, M., Sabbath, E. Kong, J., & Johnson, C. (2015). Social isolation presents a grand challenge for social work (Grand Challenges for Social Work Initiative Working Paper No. 7). Cleveland, OH: American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare.

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See the Eradicate Social Isolation website for a full list of current participants in this Grand Challenge:

<http://www.GrandChallengesforSocialWork.org/12-challenges/eradicate-social-isolation/>

If you are not yet involved, get involved!

Sign up for the Grand Challenges newsletter & updates: www.GrandChallengesforSocialWork.org

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