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A Resource Center for Today's Case Manager

How Can Social Connection and Community Impact the Health of Our Clients?

A close look at how loneliness and isolation effects overall health

Julianne Holt-Lunstad, PhD
Professor of psychology and neuroscience and director of the Social Connection & Health Lab at Brigham Young University

MaryBeth Kurland, MPA, CAE, ICE-CCP
CEO, Commission for Case Manager Certification

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Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions:
  - Commission for Case Manager Certification
- Presentation:
  - Julianne Holt-Lunstad, Ph.D.,
    Professor of psychology and neuroscience and director of the Social Connection & Health Lab at Brigham Young University

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Exam Prep Resources

Quiz App

Practice Exam

Glossary App

Certification 360
Virtual Workshops

Printable
Glossary

Exam Prep
References

8-Week
Prep Circuit

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https://bit.ly/CCMCWebinarLoneliness

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Learning Outcomes

After this presentation, the successful participant will be able to:

- **Define social connection and community and explain their significance in relation to clients' health.**
- **Identify the physical, mental, and emotional impacts of loneliness and isolation on overall health.**
- **Analyze the factors contributing to loneliness and isolation in different populations.**
- **Explore strategies to foster social connections and build supportive communities for improving client health outcomes.**

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How Can Social Connection and Community Impact the Health of Our Clients?

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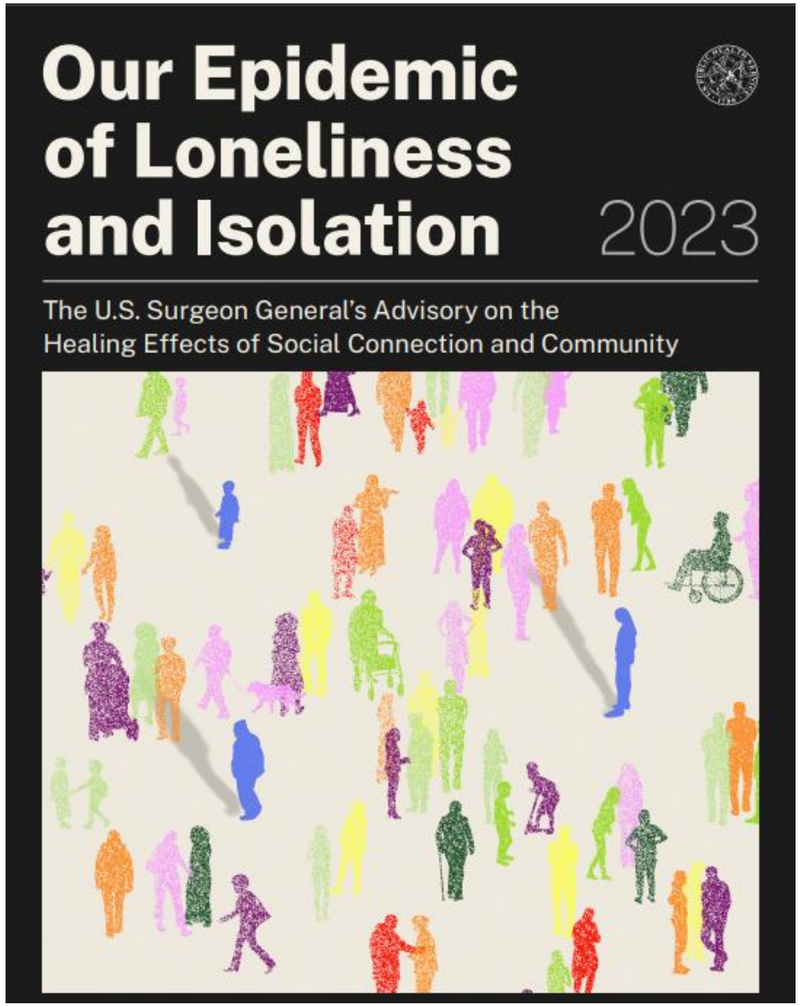
How Loneliness and Isolation Effects Overall Health



- Being socially connected not only enhances our emotional well-being but also has profound impacts on our physical health.
- Weak social ties face increase the risk of heart disease by 29%, and the risk of experiencing a stroke by 32%[1].

1.General USPHSO of the S. Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community. archive.hshsl.umaryland.edu. Published May 3, 2023. Accessed September 15, 2023. https://archive.hshsl.umaryland.edu/handle/10713/20582

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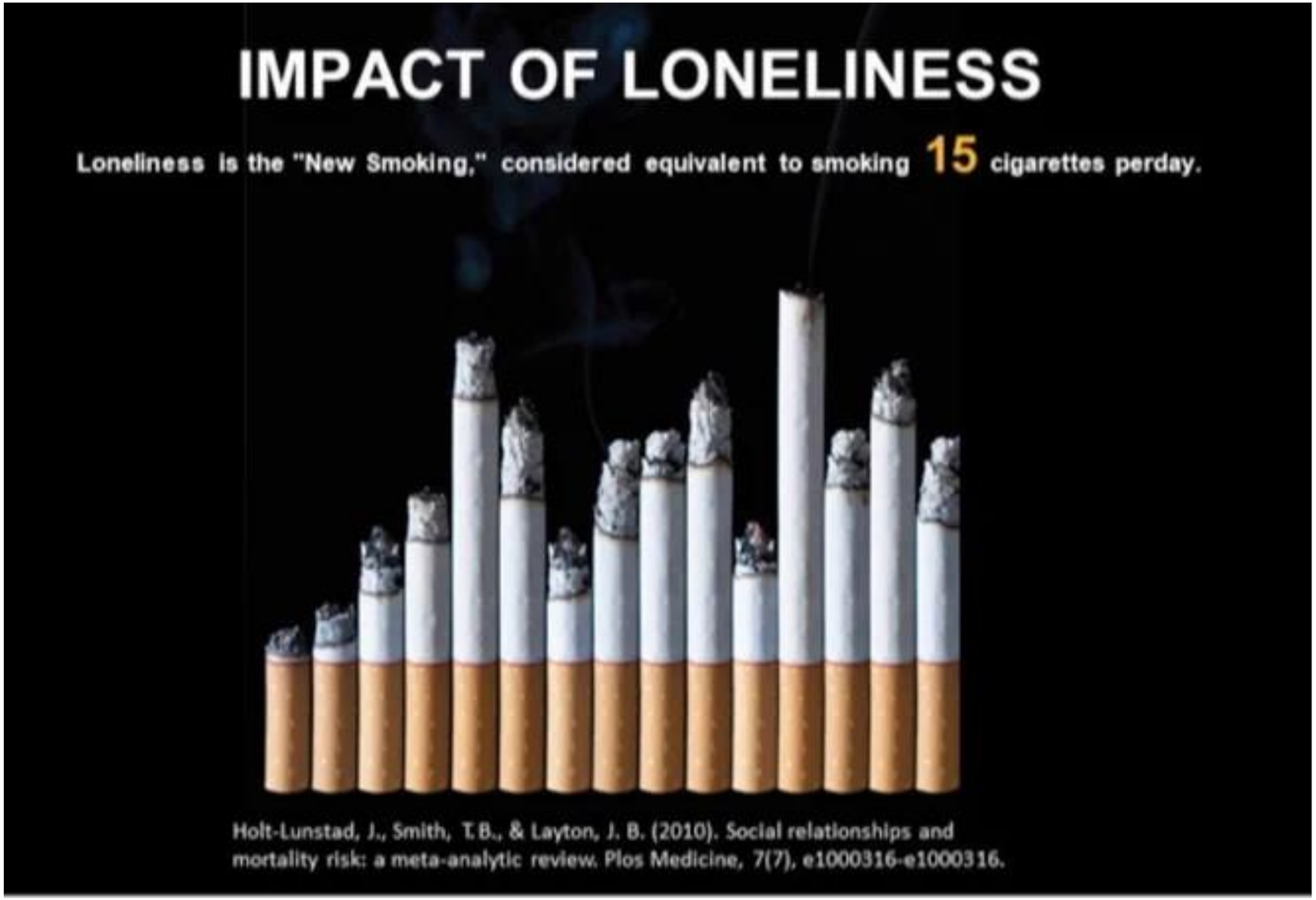
How Loneliness and Isolation Effects Overall Health



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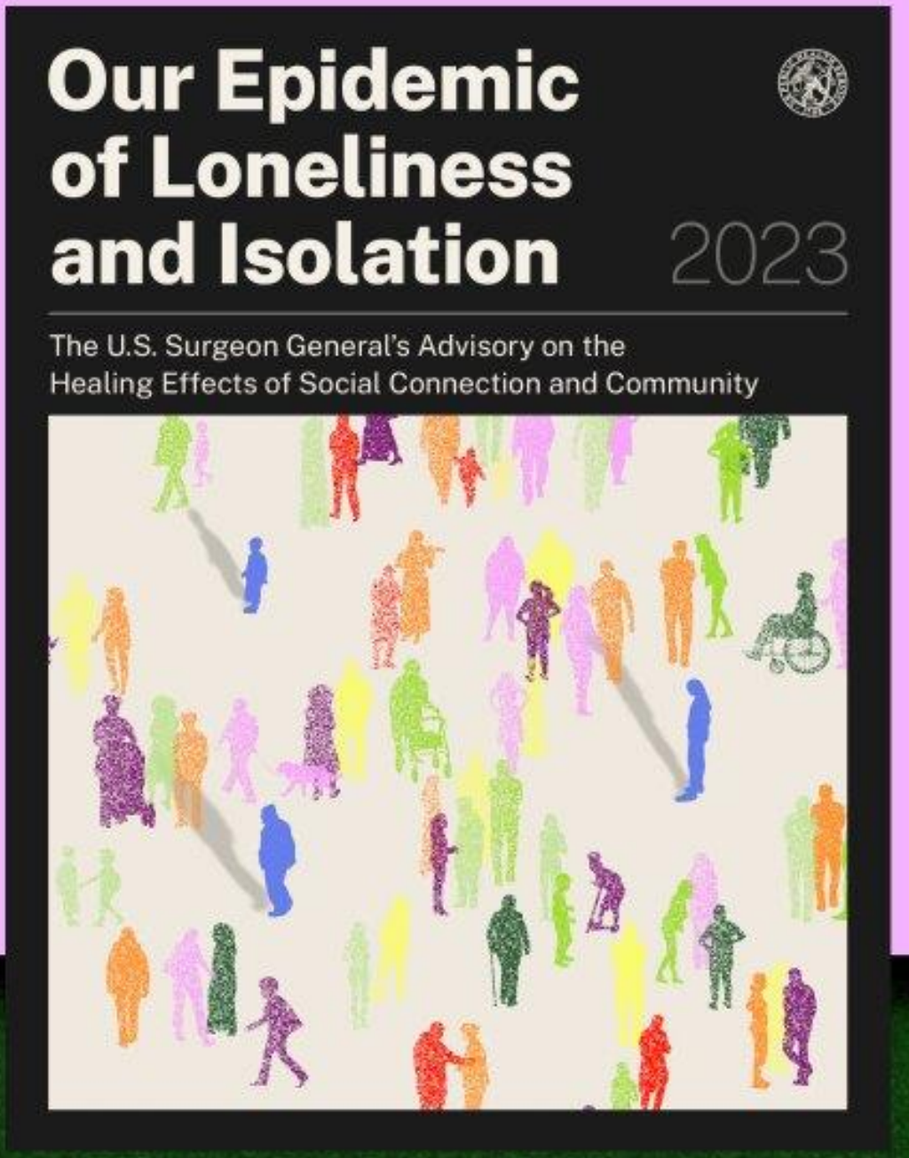
CCMC

Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation 2023

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

Our relationships are essential to our health and well-being.

Learn more at:
surgeongeneral.gov/loneliness



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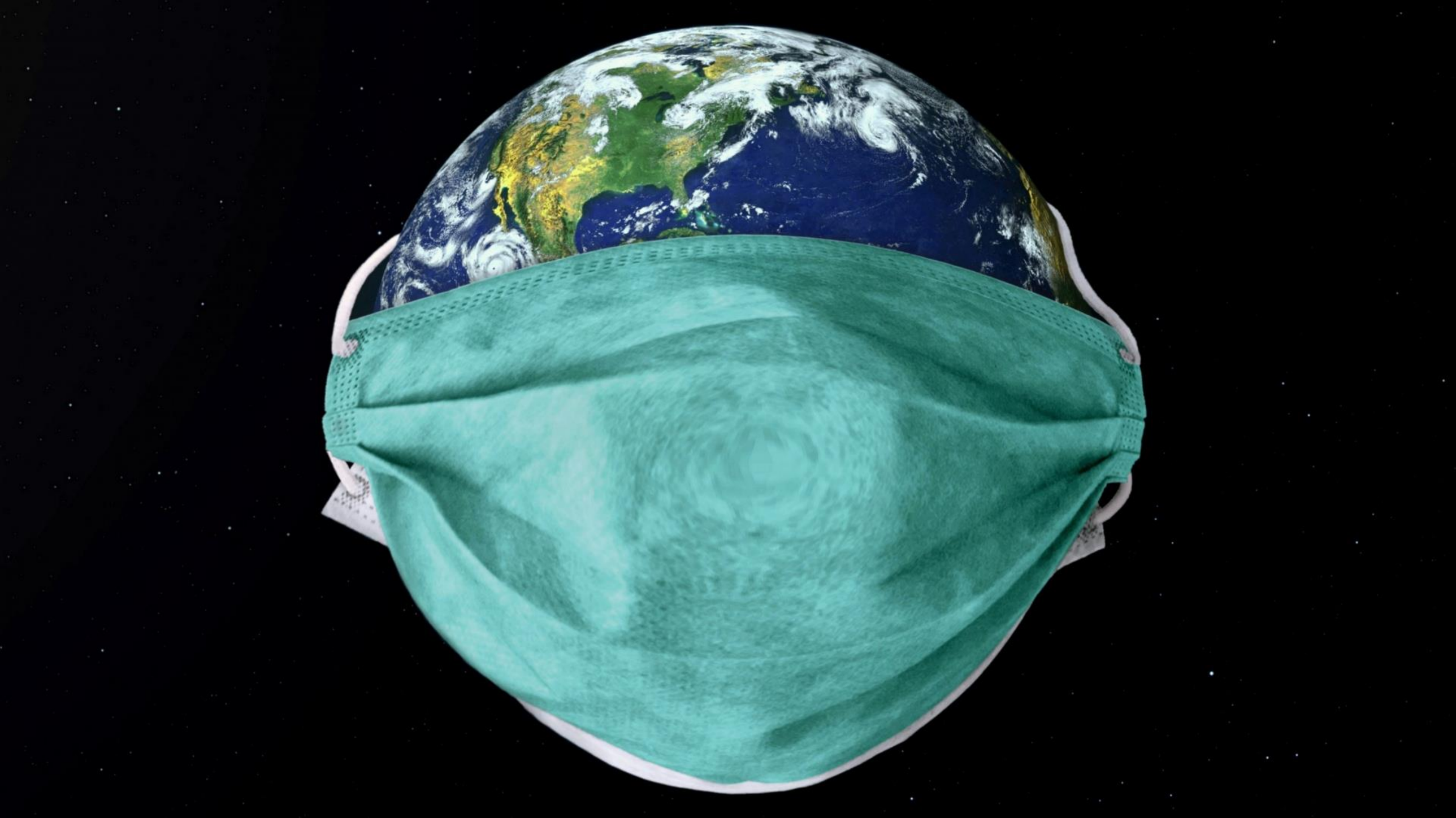


The Importance of Social Connection

Social Connection is a critical and underappreciated contributor to individual and population health, well-being, community safety, resilience, and prosperity.

Health

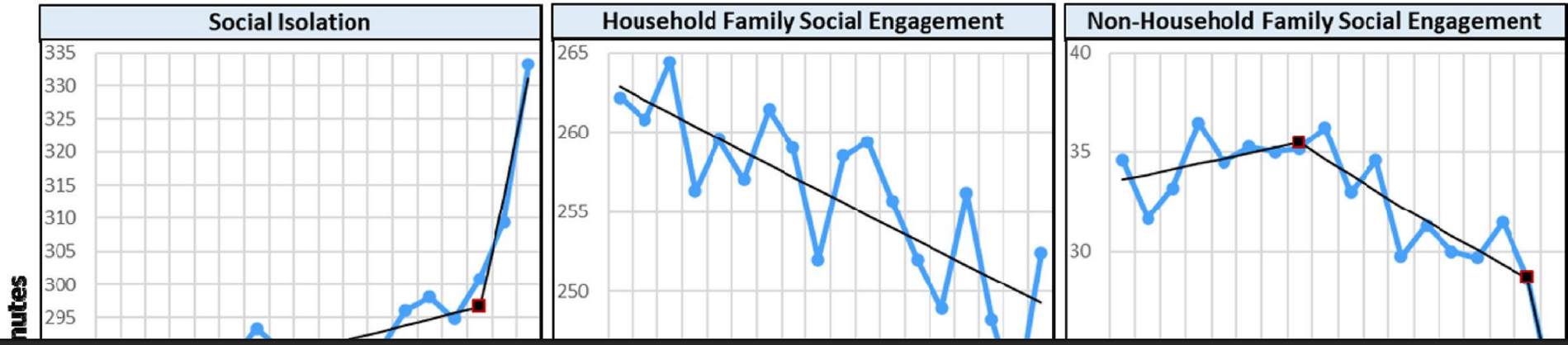
Happiness

Longevity

Economic Prosperity

People who have strong social connections are happier, healthier, and live longer than those who don't.

Current Trends

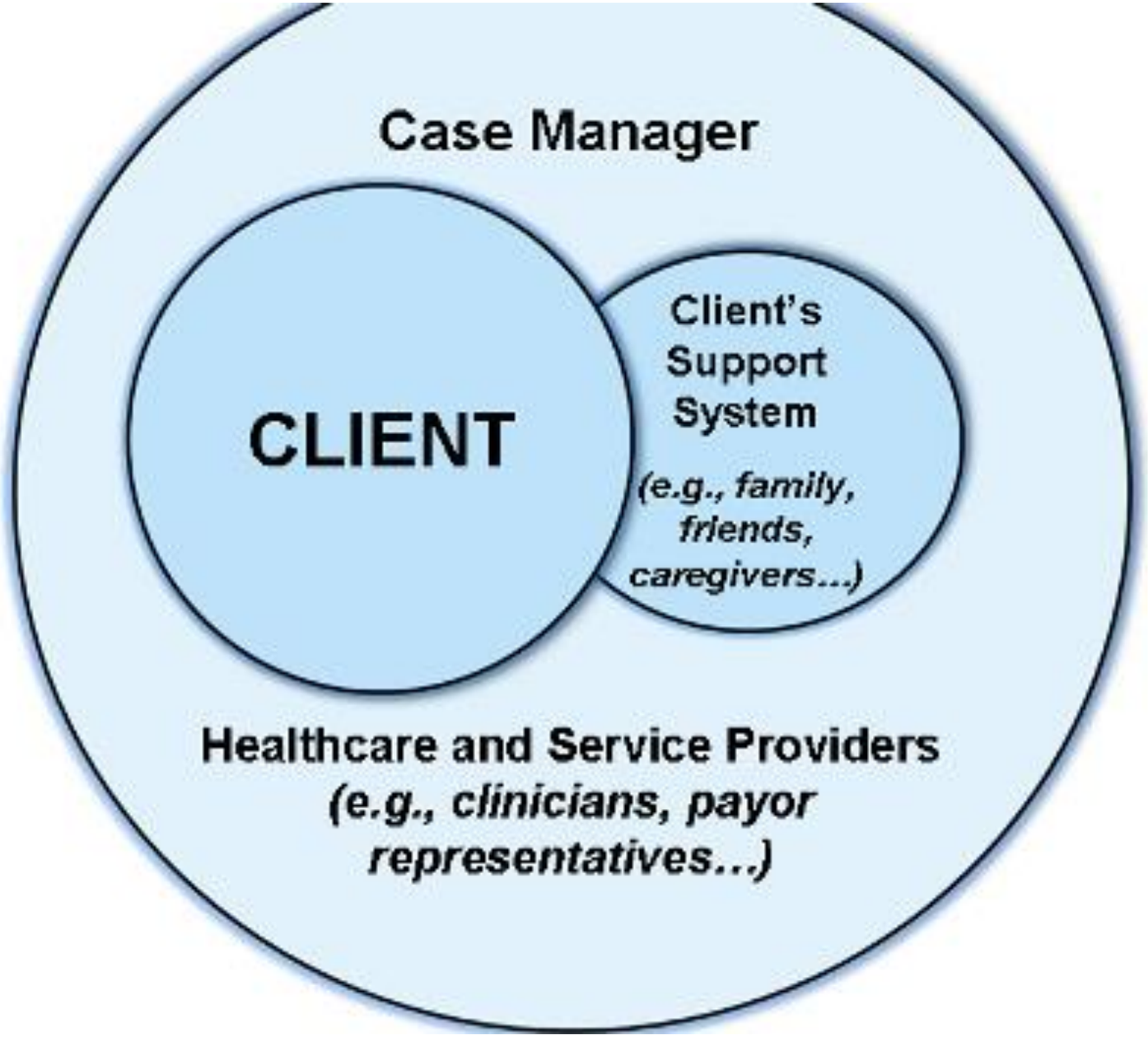


Relevance to Case Managers:

The Connection to Quality and Patient Empowerment

Connection to Key Aspects of Case Management

(e.g., Advocacy, Coordination, Empowerment)



DEFINING THE ISSUE

TERMINOLOGY IN THE CONTEXT OF HEALTH CARE AND CASE MANAGEMENT

- **Social Isolation**: Is objectively being alone, having few relationships, or infrequent social contact.

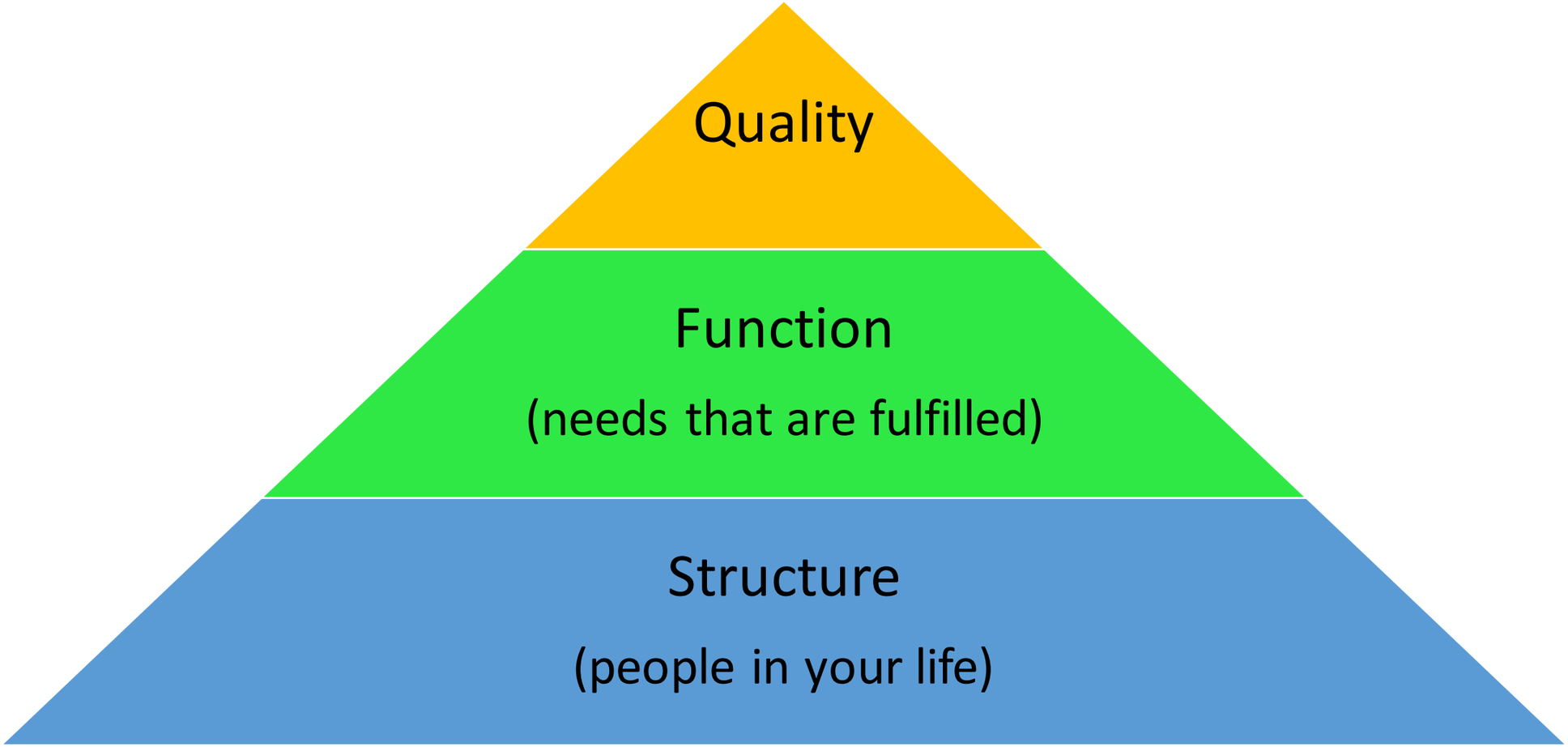
- **Loneliness**: Is subjectively feeling alone. The discrepancy between one's desired level of connection and one's actual level.

- **Social Connection**: An umbrella term that encompasses the structural, functional, and quality aspects of social relationships

All important

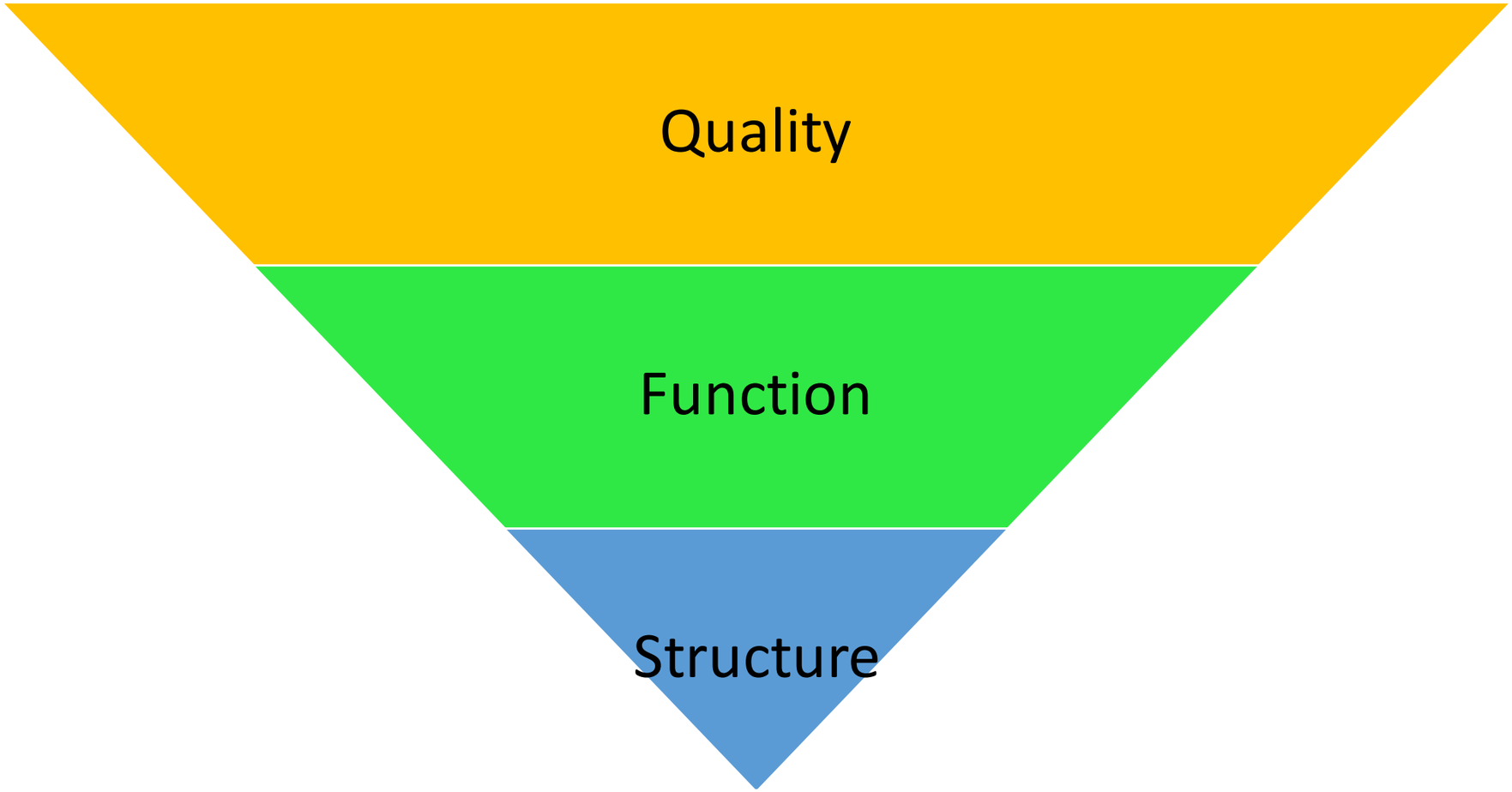
- Each component on a continuum
- Loneliness and isolation are examples of low social connection

Social Connection



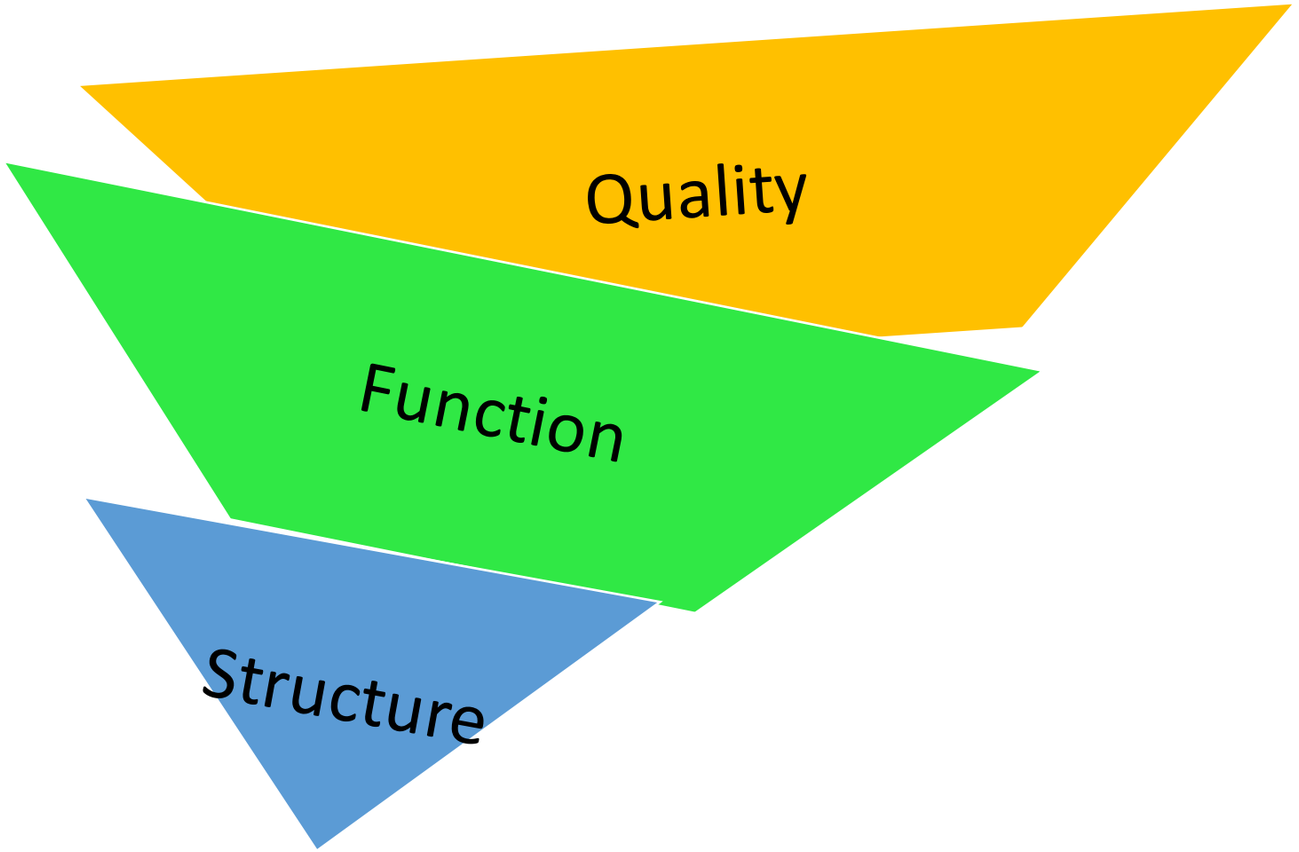
Example: Wide social foundation to draw upon for needs

Social Connection



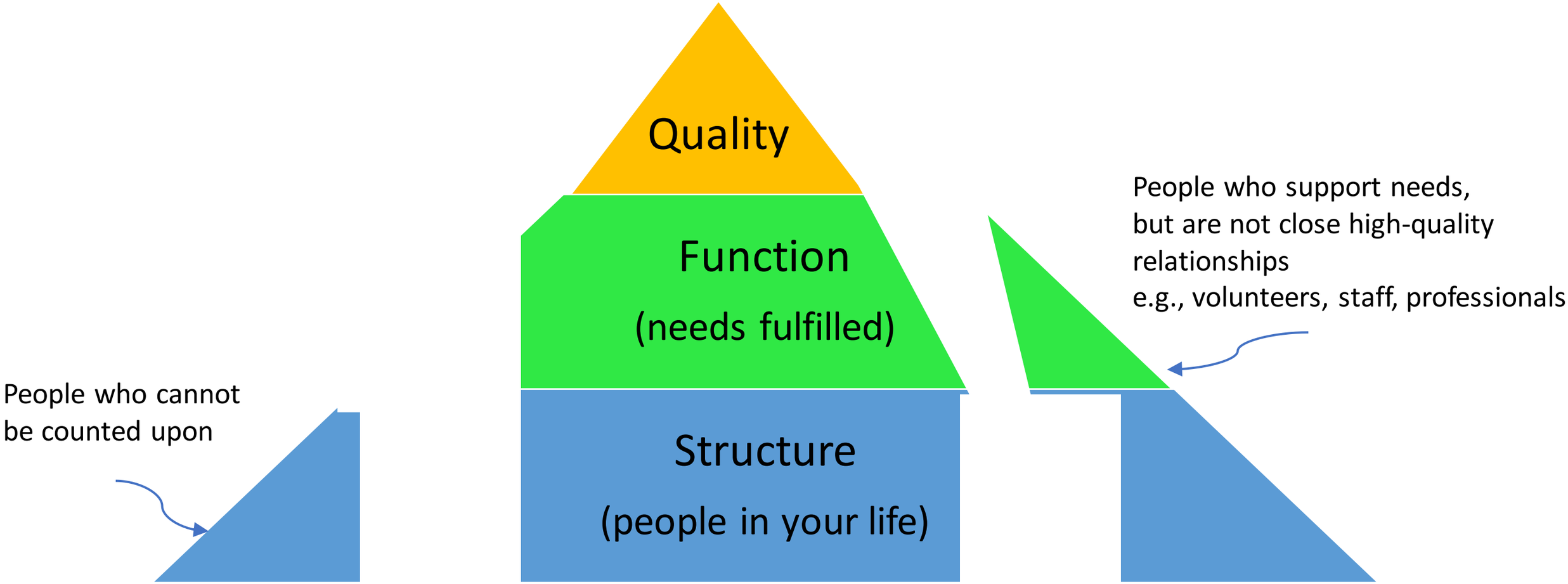
Example: Someone who may be thriving but foundation may be vulnerable

Social Connection



Example: A vulnerable social foundation can threaten access to other components

Social Connection



Example: Someone who has some gaps in their social foundation

Take-Aways

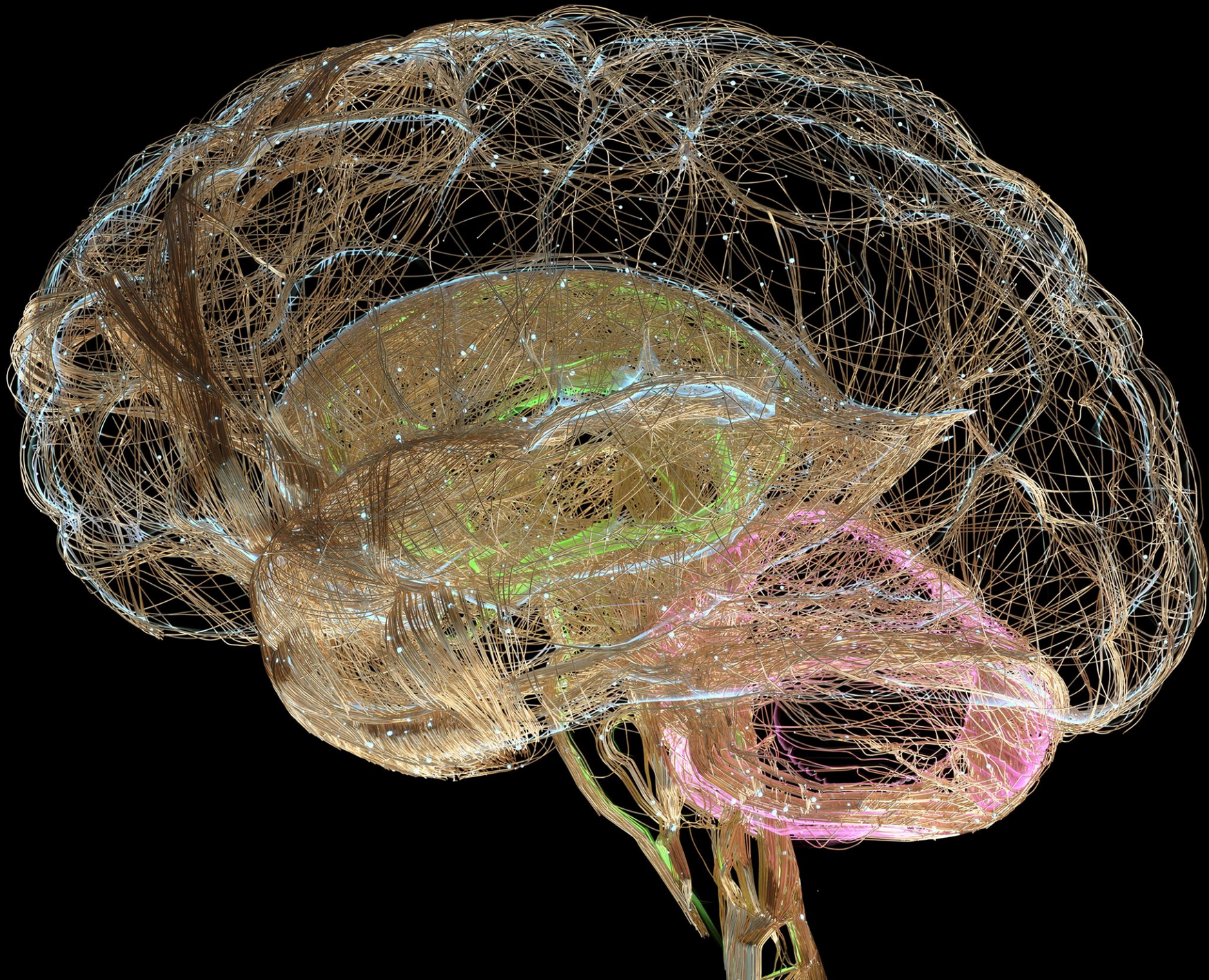
Social connection is an umbrella term

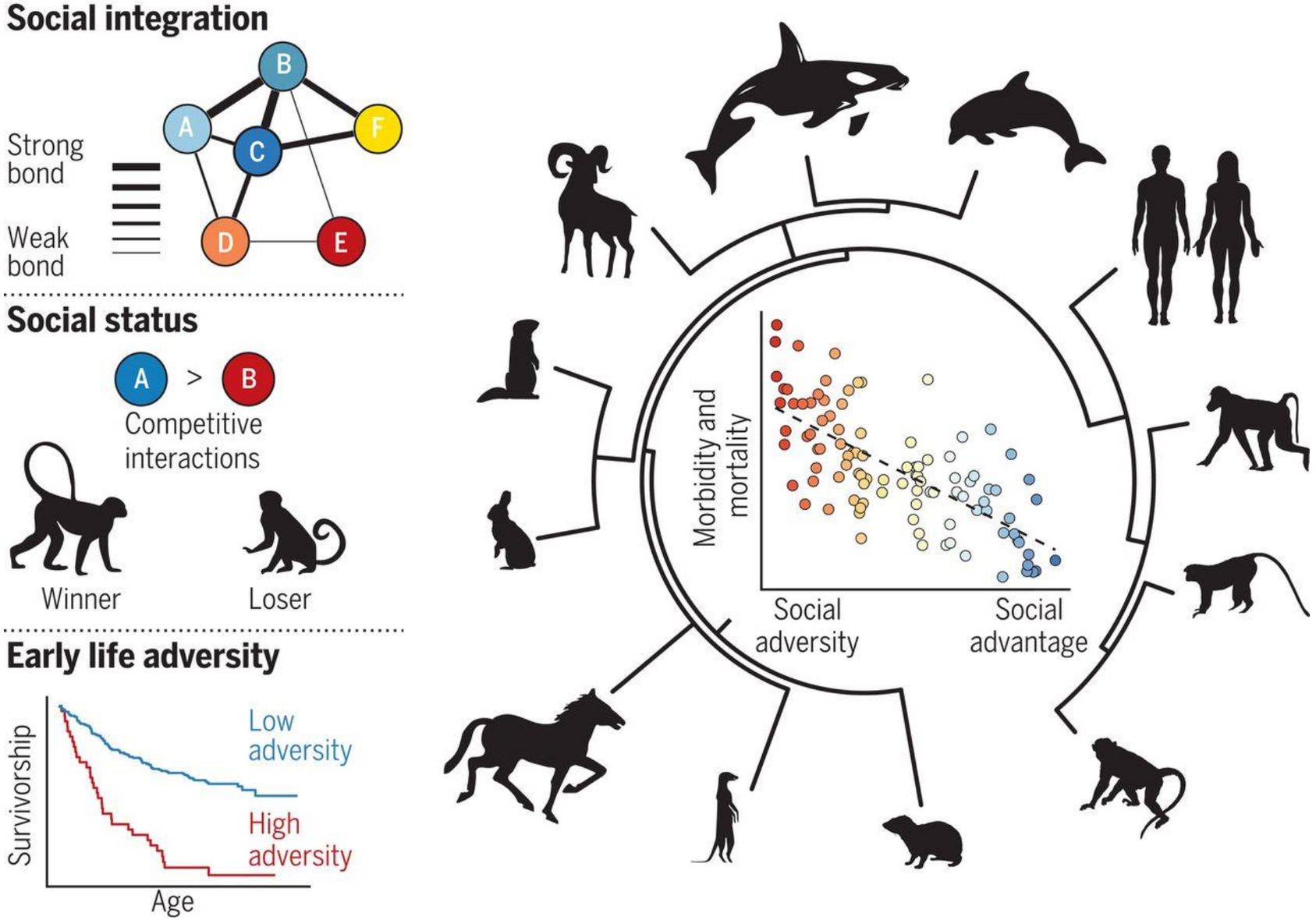
Patients level of social connection is important for health

Patients may lack connection in a variety of ways—including isolation, loneliness, lacking social support, or having poor-quality relationships, or a combination.

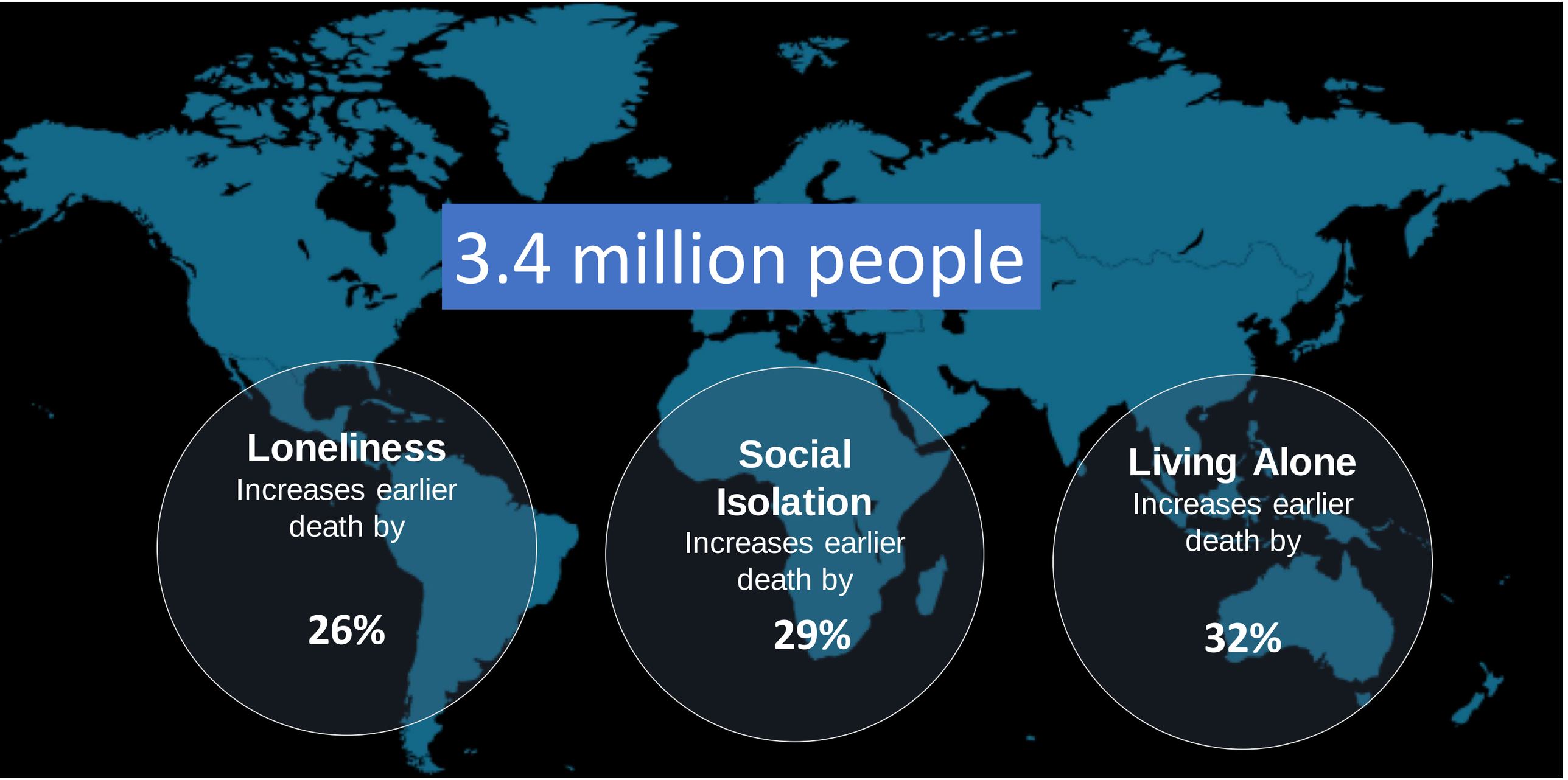
These may present in different ways, have different underlying causes, but all impact health.

The Impact of Social Disconnection on Health





Source: Snyder-Mackler et al, *Science*, 2020



Source: Holt-Lunstad et al, 2015

The influence of Social Disconnection on Health and Economy

Physical Health

- Cardiovascular Disease
- Stroke
- Type2 Diabetes

Mental & Behavioral Health

- Depression & Anxiety
- Suicidality
- Addiction

Cognitive Health

- Cognitive decline
- Dementia
- Alzheimer's Disease

Economic Health

- $6.7B in Medicare Spending
- Lower productivity
- More Absenteeism
- Lower quality of work

Sources: Cené et al, 2023; Holt-Lunstad et al, 2015; NASEM, 2020; AARP, 2017; Holt-Lunstad, 2022; Hong et al, 2023;

Population Health

Ex: Spread of Illness
Covid Response

Violence/Safety

21% reduction in murders
20% reduction in car thefts
(Stuart & Taylor, 2021)

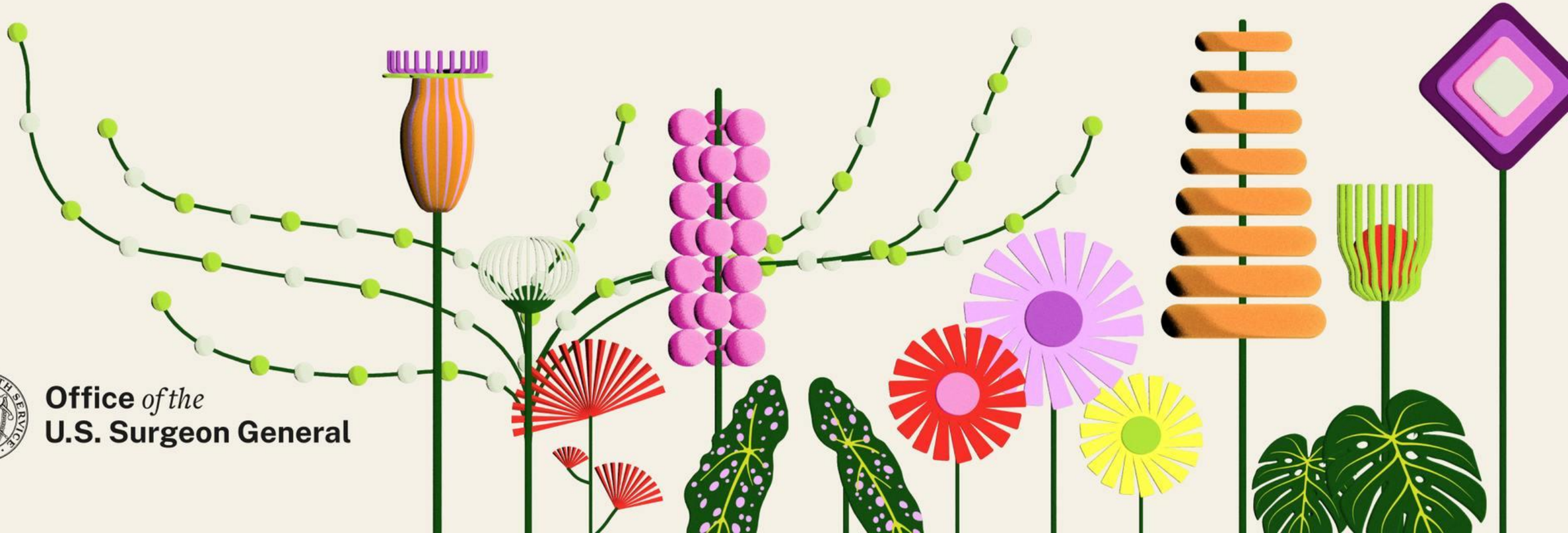
Preparedness/Resilience

natural hazards,
pandemics,
safety threats.

Social Connected Communities

Combating loneliness and rebuilding connection is essential to our health and well-being.

surgeongeneral.gov/loneliness



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Implications for Case Managers: Ensuring Appropriate Care

At-Risk Populations and Risk Factors

How do we identify those who may lack social connection?

Signs to look for:

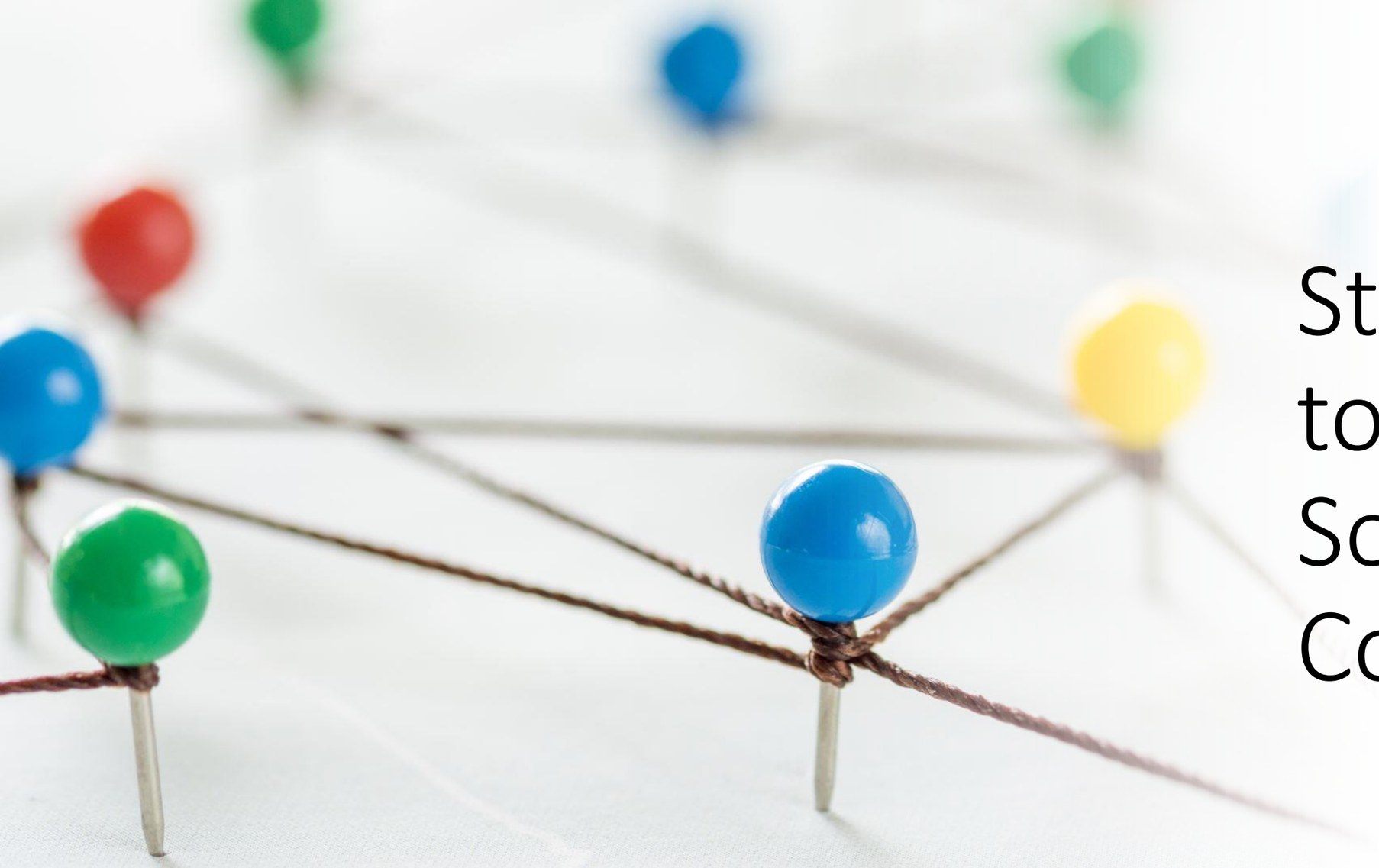
- Not always obvious
- Spending significant time alone
- Recent changes in living situation, health, or relationship status

What leads us to be more or less connected?

This is more than a personal issue

You may be at greater risk if you:

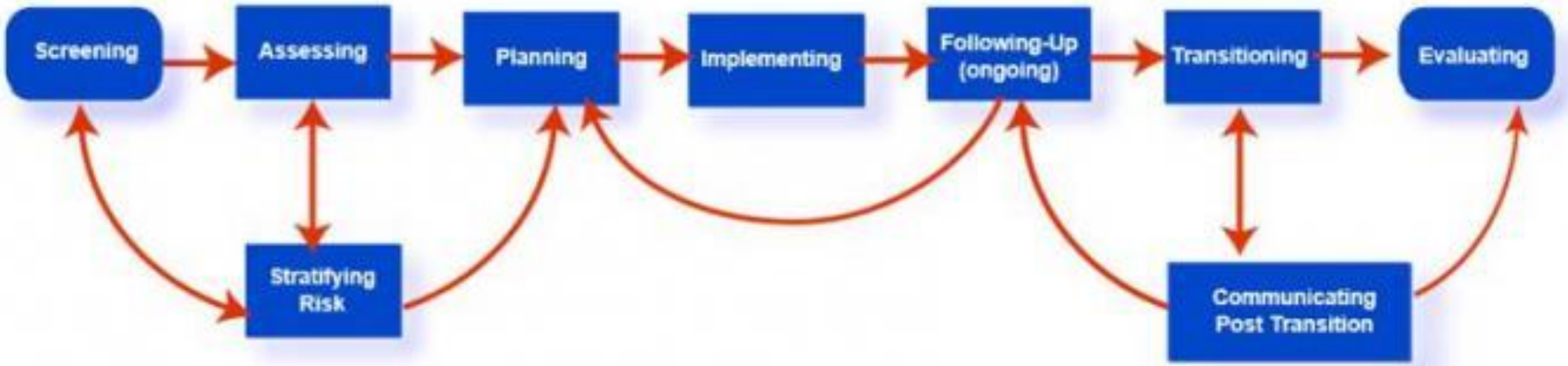
- Live alone
- Can’t leave your home
- Had a major loss or life change, such as the death of a spouse or partner, or retirement
- Struggle with money
- Are a caregiver
- Have psychological or cognitive challenges, or depression
- Have limited social support
- Have trouble hearing
- Live in a rural, unsafe, and/or hard-to-reach neighborhood
- Have language barriers where you live
- Experience age, racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity discrimination where you live
- Are not meaningfully engaged in activities or are feeling a lack of purpose



Strategies to Foster Social Connection

CASE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

High-Level



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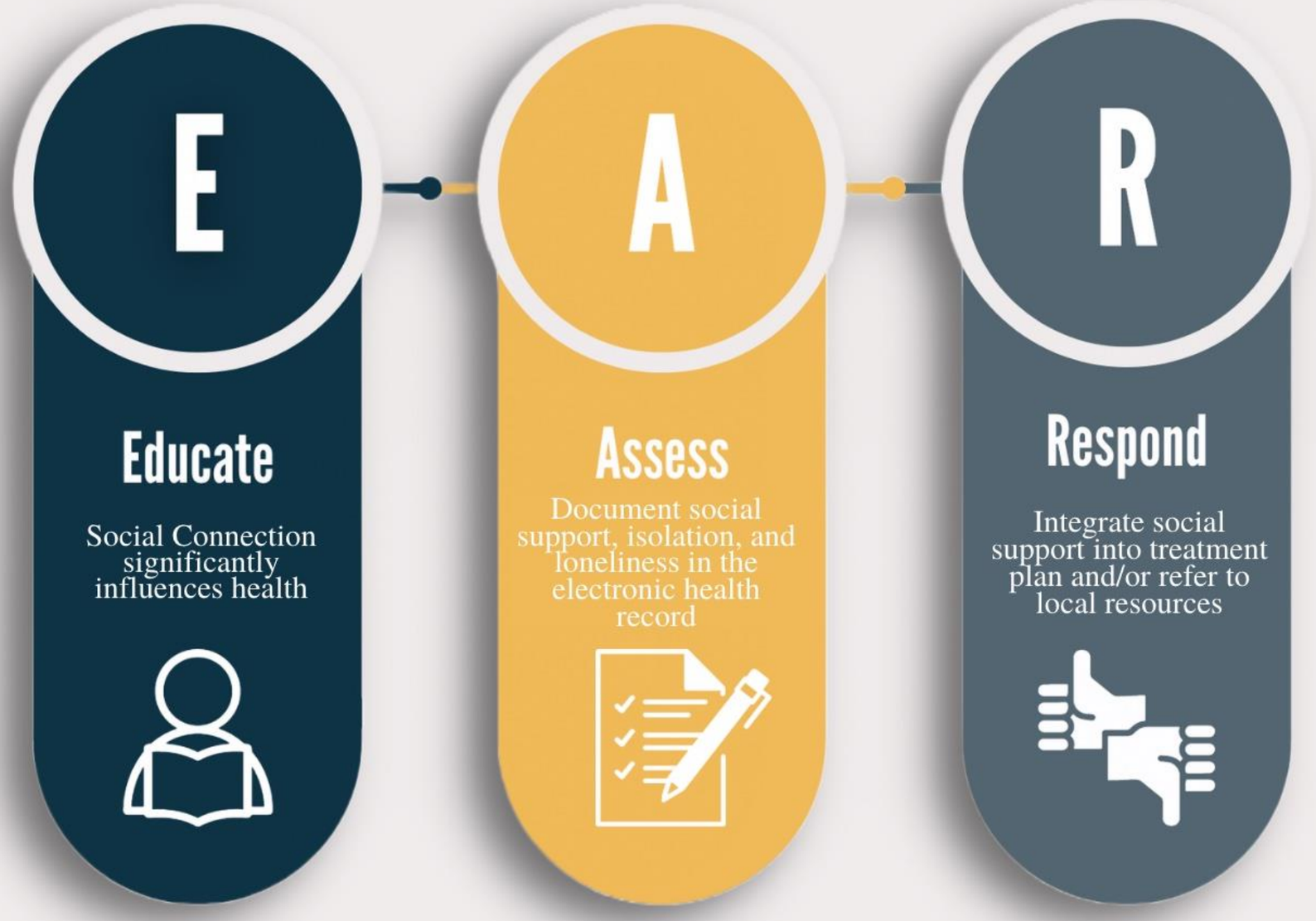
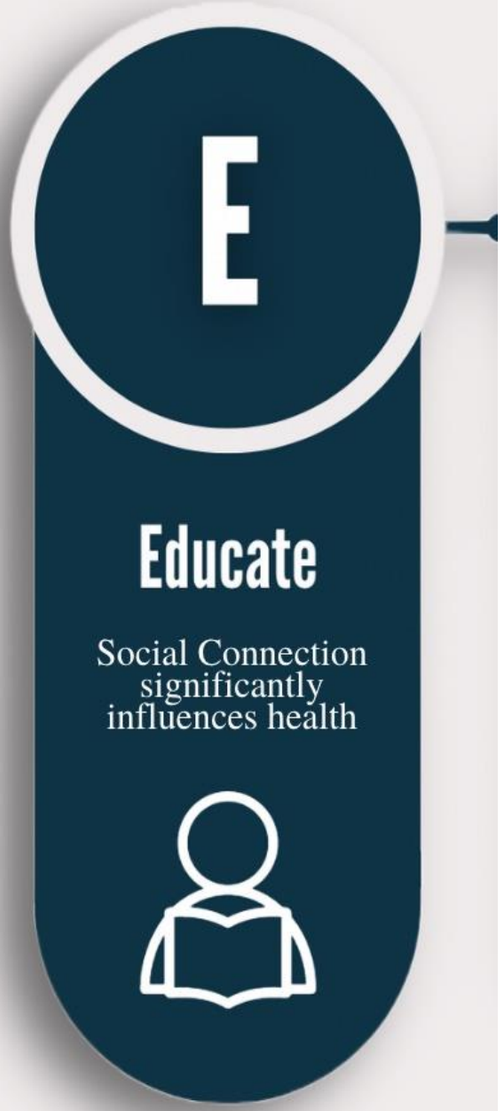


Source: Holt-Lunstad & Perissinotto, Social Isolation and Loneliness as Medical Issues. *New England Journal of Medicine* (2023)



Social Connection is part of a healthy lifestyle

When lacking--can carry significant risk to health, functioning, and earlier death

Social connection helps clients maintain their health, manage existing medical conditions, and adhere to treatment regimens

Source: Holt-Lunstad & Perissinotto, Social Isolation and Loneliness as Medical Issues. *New England Journal of Medicine* (2023)

1

Document social support, isolation, and loneliness in the electronic heath record

2

Identify patients at risk using validated measures of social isolation and loneliness

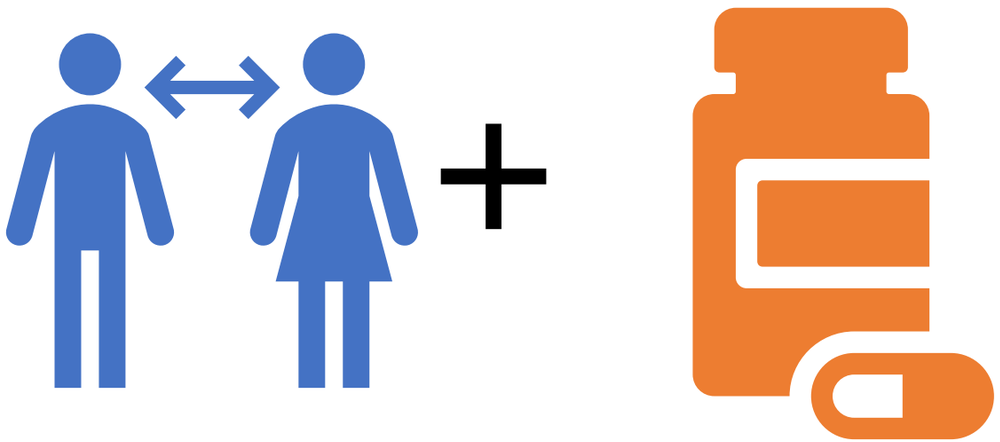
3

Track risk and progress over time

RESPOND

- Integrate psychosocial support from all members of the care team
- Offer referrals tailored to clients needs and partner with local community resources
- Reassess clients regularly for change circumstances and needs and respond accordingly

Integrating Psychosocial Support within Tx



20% increased likelihood of survival for intervention participants compared to controls

29% increased likelihood of longer survival compared to controls

Meta-Analysis of 106 RCTs within Clinical Settings

Source: Smith et al; Plos Medicine, 2022

Referrals: Interventions in the Community

Social prescribing connects patients to activities, groups, and services in their community to meet the practical, social and emotional needs that affect their health and wellbeing

Recommendations

- There is no one-size-fits-all approach to addressing loneliness or social isolation
- Tailor interventions to suit the needs of individuals, specific groups, or the degree/type of disconnection experienced.
- Co-design interventions with the group you are working with
- Identify and overcome barriers
- Evaluate the intervention to identify what works for whom, and in what context.

First Ever OSG Framework for a National Strategy

Office of the U.S. Surgeon General

The Six Pillars to Advance Social Connection

1
Strengthen Social Infrastructure in Local Communities

Design the built environment to promote social connection

Establish and scale community connection programs

Invest in local institutions that bring people together

2
Enact Pro-Connection Public Policies

Adopt a "Connection-in-All-Policies" approach

Advance policies that minimize harm from disconnection

Establish cross-departmental leadership at all levels of government

3
Mobilize the Health Sector

Train health care providers

Assess and support patients

Expand public health surveillance and interventions

4
Reform Digital Environments

Require data transparency

Establish and implement safety standards

Support development of pro-connection technologies

5
Deepen Our Knowledge

Develop and coordinate a national research agenda

Accelerate research funding

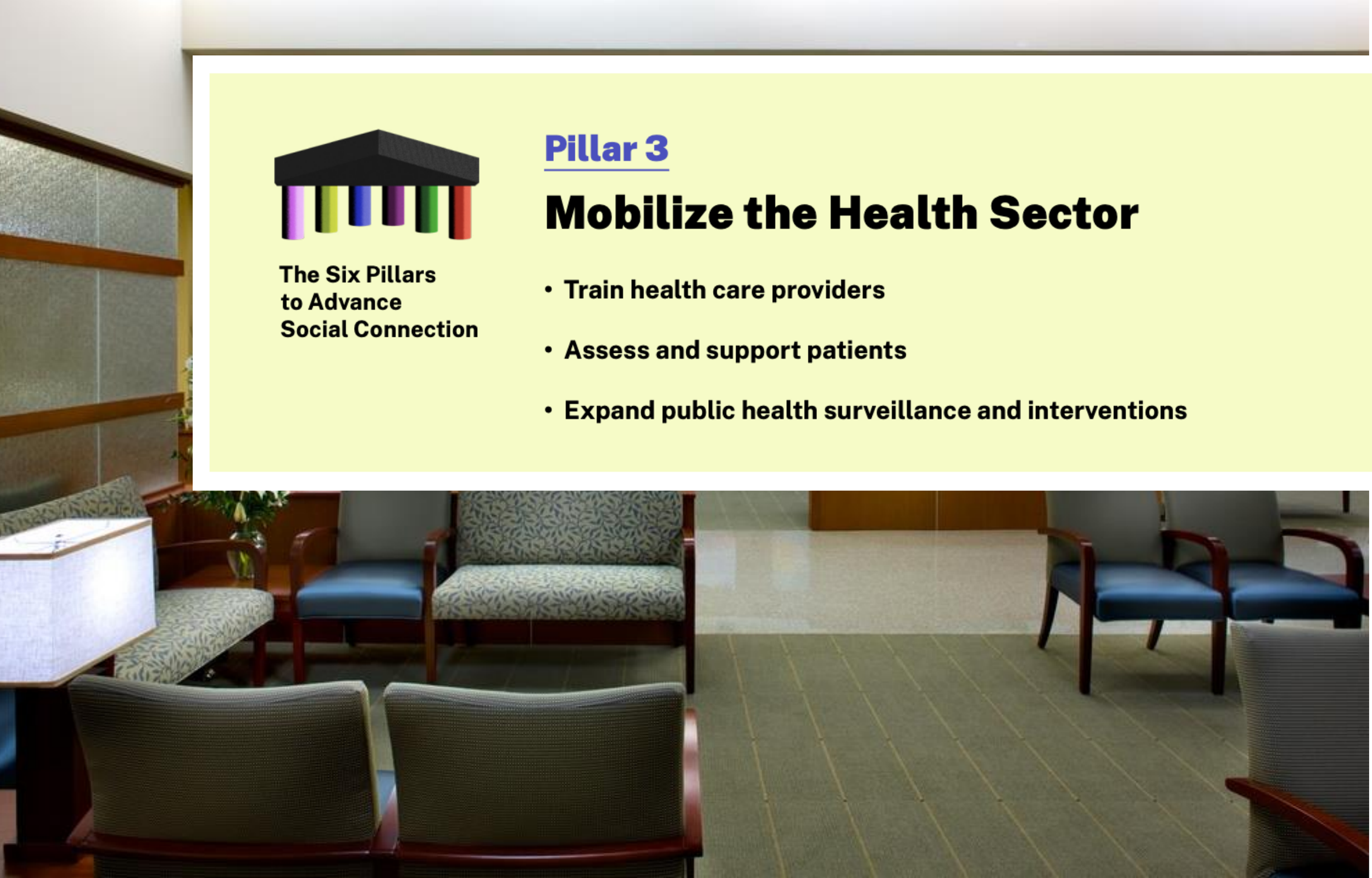
Increase public awareness

6
Build a Culture of Connection

Cultivate values of kindness, respect, service, and commitment to one another

Model connection values in positions of leadership and influence

Expand conversation on social connection in schools, workplaces, and communities



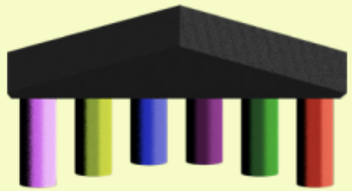
The Six Pillars to Advance Social Connection

Pillar 3

Mobilize the Health Sector

- Train health care providers
- Assess and support patients
- Expand public health surveillance and interventions

How can your organization benefit from, and contribute to, a greater knowledge of this issue?



The Six Pillars to Advance Social Connection

Pillar 5

Deepen our Knowledge

- Develop and coordinate a national research agenda
- Accelerate research funding
- Increase public awareness

The Six Pillars to Advance Social Connection

Pillar 6

Cultivate a Culture of Connection

- Cultivate values of kindness, respect, service, and commitment to one another
- Model connection values in positions of leadership and influence
- Expand conversations on social connection in schools, workplaces, and communities

Summary of Recommendations

What Community Based-Organizations Can do

01

Create opportunities and spaces for inclusive social connection

02

Embed social connection in internal policies, practices, programs, and evaluations

03

Actively seek and build partnerships with other community institutions (schools, health organizations, workplaces)

04

Advance public education and awareness efforts

05

Create and provide education, resources, and support programs

06

Foster a culture of connection in the broader community

What individuals can do:

- Invest time
- Minimize distraction
- Support others, and seek support when needed
- Engage with a variety of others
- Participate in groups
- Be open with provider
- Civic engagement
- Model core values of connection

Final Take-Aways

Social connection is a key client need that has health consequences

Case Managers cannot solve this alone, but are a key point of identifying needs and access to care

Caring for clients' social needs does not detract from other needs—it is part of wholistic client care.

Value of Case Management Services
CASE MANAGEMENT PROCESS: SCREENING
ASSESSING
STRATIFYING RISK
PLANNING
IMPLEMENTING (CARE COORDINATION)
FOLLOWING-UP
TRANSITIONING (TRANSITIONAL CARE)
COMMUNICATING POST TRANSITION
EVALUATING
Care Delivery and Reimbursement Methods
Psychosocial Concepts and Support Systems
Quality and Outcomes Evaluation and Measurement
Rehabilitation Concepts and Strategies
Ethical, Legal, and Practice Standards
Professional Development & Advancement

Thank you

Additional Resources

- NASEM 2020 report
- Meta-Analyses of Mortality Risk
  - Social Isolation, Loneliness & Living Alone
  - Social Relationships
- Evidence for Social Connection as a Public Health Priority
- Social Connection as a Social Determinant of Health
- Why Social Connection is relevant to health

More about my work on Social Connection/Isolation:

- http://julianneholtlunstad.com

Twitter @jholtlunstad

For Questions:

Email: Julianne_holt-lunstad@byu.edu

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Follow Up Questions

In our CEO's introduction, MaryBeth mentioned that lacking social connection is comparable to smoking up to 15 cigarettes per day. This came from your research. Would you mind expanding on this?

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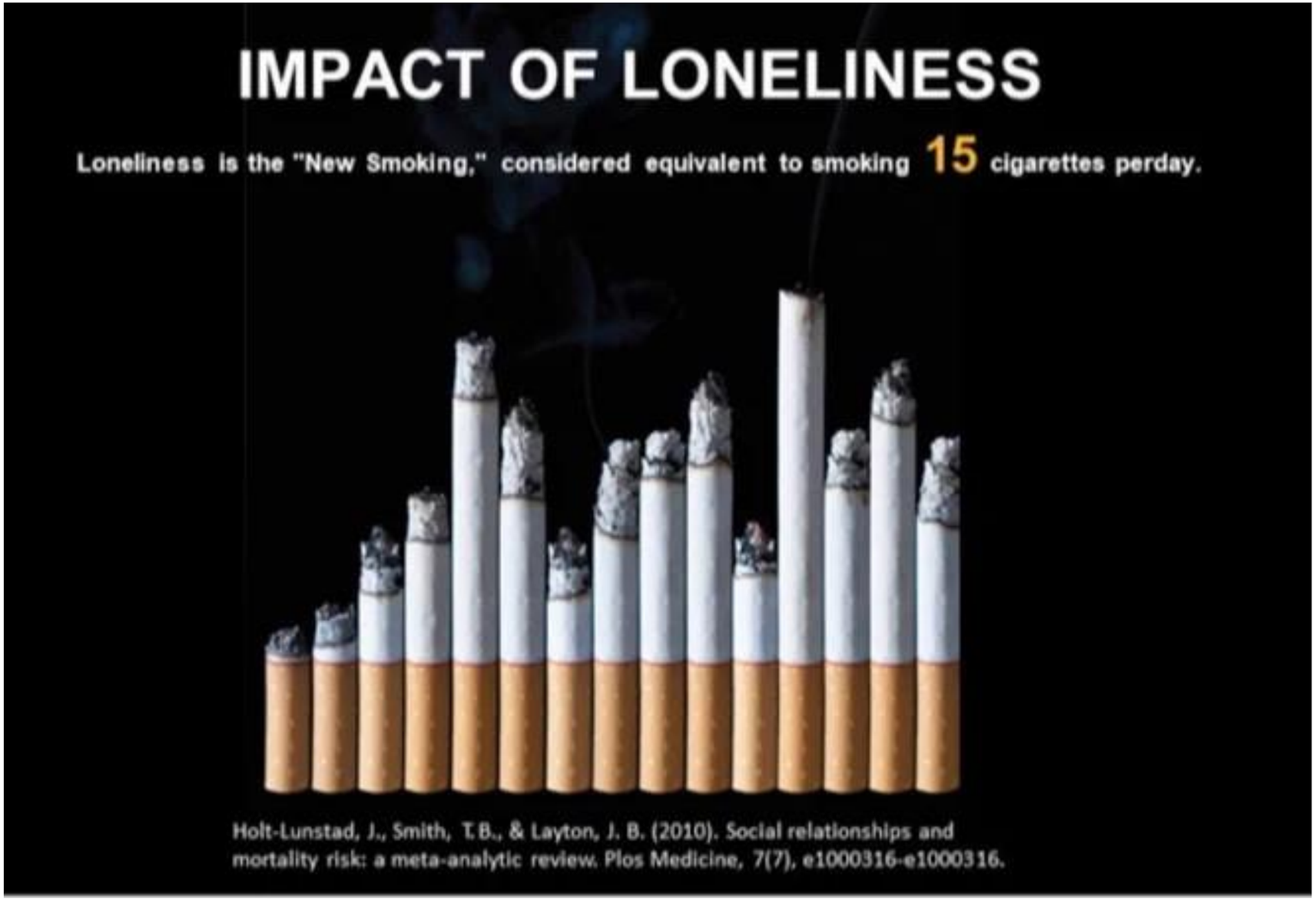
How Loneliness and Isolation Effects Overall Health



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Follow-up Questions

You mentioned several signs that would indicate someone being at a greater risk for social isolation and loneliness. Do you have any recommendations for our case managers as to how they might identify these things and the best way to begin a conversation to help their clients?

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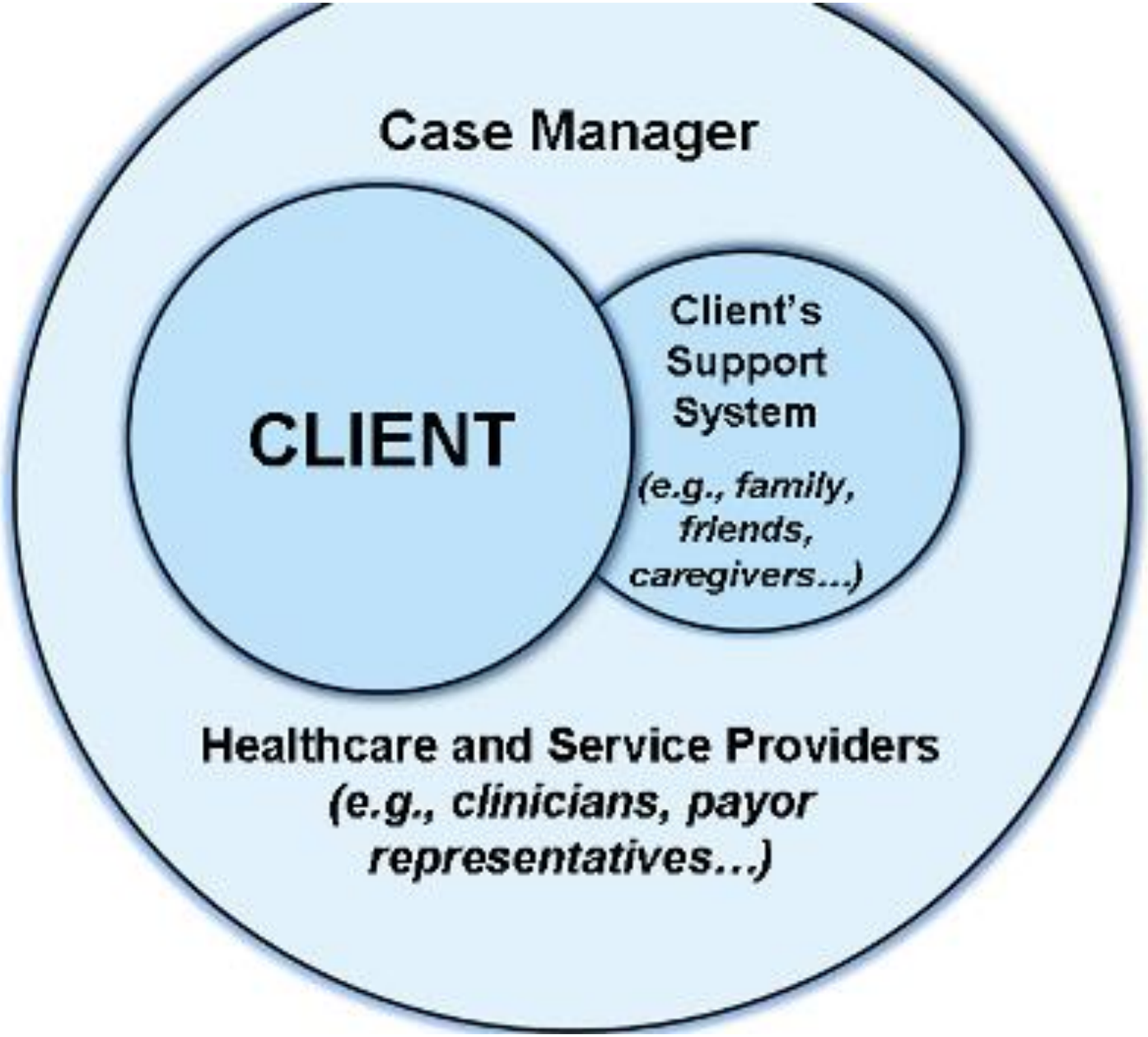
Connection to Key Aspects of Case Management

(e.g., Advocacy, Coordination, Empowerment)



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Follow-up Questions

We normally think of loneliness and isolation as impacting the elderly, but your research points to a variety of ages. What demographic was most surprising to you?

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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

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Follow-up Questions

What are some key recommendations that you would give healthcare professionals to apply these principles of social connection to their own lives to foster resilience and prevent professional burnout?

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Closing Remarks

MaryBeth Kurland, MPA, CAE, ICE-CCP
CEO
Commission for Case Manager Certification

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Thank you!

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