

# LONELINESS AND THE Workplace

**2020 U.S. REPORT: To further explore the impact of loneliness, in our culture and in our workplaces, Cigna fielded a national survey of 10,000 U.S. adults.<sup>1</sup>**

## UCLA LONELINESS SCALE



The evaluation of loneliness below was measured by a score of 43 or higher on the UCLA Loneliness Scale, a 20-item questionnaire developed to assess subjective feelings of loneliness, as well as social isolation. The UCLA Loneliness Scale is a frequently referenced and acknowledged academic measure used to gauge loneliness.

The study's questions assess respondents' subjective feelings of loneliness, social isolation, health, work performance and other factors, and all data reflects these self-reported feelings.

## THE STATE OF LONELINESS TODAY

In 2018, Cigna conducted a large national online survey of U.S. adults to explore the impact of loneliness and found that loneliness was at epidemic levels.

In 2019, our results showed that the mental health crisis is growing – three in five Americans (61%) report feeling lonely, compared to more than half (54%) in 2018.



24% of Americans say their mental health is fair or poor.



Americans reporting good mental health is down 5-percentage points from 2018 (76% vs. 81%).



The CDC validates our findings in that 20% of Americans will experience a mental illness in a given year.<sup>2</sup>

## WHY? KEY DETERMINANTS OF LONELINESS IN AMERICA

A lack of social support and infrequent meaningful social interactions.

Poor physical and mental health.

Negative feelings about one's personal relationships.

A lack of "balance" in one's daily activities – doing too much or too little of any given thing (e.g., sleep, work).

## LONELINESS ACROSS KEY DEMOGRAPHICS



### GENERATION

Younger generations are lonelier than older generations. Nearly eight in 10 Gen Zers (79%) and seven in 10 millennials (71%) are lonely, vs. half of boomers (50%).



### ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Higher-income individuals are less lonely than those with lower incomes. People with incomes of \$25K or less had a 7.2-point higher loneliness score than those with incomes of \$125K or greater (50.6 vs. 43.3).



### GENDER

Men (46.1) are lonelier than women (45.3).



### COMMUNITY

Those living in urban (46.7) and suburban (44.7) communities are less lonely than those in rural areas (47.0).



### RACE/ETHNICITY

Hispanic respondents (47.7) and those who identify their race as "other" (47.2) are loneliest, followed by Black/African-American respondents (46.3).

See page 2 for more details on loneliness in the workplace.

<sup>1</sup> In partnership with Ipsos, Cigna fielded a national online survey of approximately 10,000 U.S. adults to further explore the impact of loneliness in the U.S., and specifically loneliness in the workplace.

<sup>2</sup> Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Rockville, MD: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. 2016.

For more information, please visit [Cigna.com/CombatingLoneliness](https://Cigna.com/CombatingLoneliness)



## LONELINESS AND THE WORKPLACE: WORK AND LONELINESS ARE INEXTRICABLY LINKED



### WORK SATISFACTION

Americans who feel as though they work less than they want (49.6) are almost three points lonelier on the UCLA Loneliness Scale than those who work more than they want (46.9), and more than six points lonelier than those who feel they work as much as they want (43.5).



### COWORKER RELATIONSHIPS

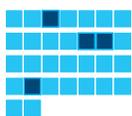
People who report that they don't have good relationships with their coworkers (53.7) are 10 points lonelier than those who do (43.7).



### WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Americans who feel they don't have a good work-life balance (50.8) are seven points lonelier than those who say they do (44.0).

## THE COSTS OF LONELINESS



### MISSED DAYS AT WORK

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.



### LOWER QUALITY OF WORK

While only 4% of non-lonely workers report that the quality of their work is lower than it should be, 12% of lonely workers believe their work is lower quality than it should be.



### LOWER PRODUCTIVITY

While the majority of non-lonely workers (54%) claim higher productivity than their peers most or all of the time, only 45% of lonely workers make the same claim.



### HIGHER RISK OF TURNOVER

In an average month, lonely workers report that they think about quitting their job more than twice as often as non-lonely workers.

## IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY AT WORK



### EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE FRIENDS AT WORK ARE LESS LONELY

Employees say that having a "best friend" or good friend at work reduces loneliness by almost six points (43.2 vs. 48.8).



### WORKPLACE CULTURE MATTERS

Employees who feel they share goals with their colleagues are almost eight points less lonely than those who don't feel that way (43.7 vs. 51.6).



### TECHNOLOGY PLAYS A ROLE IN REDUCING LONELINESS

When employees feel that technology helps them make meaningful connections to coworkers, they are more than four points less lonely (43.9 vs. 48.0).



### COMMUNICATION FREQUENCY IMPACTS LONELINESS

Increasing the frequency of phone calls and in-person conversations at work reduces loneliness. But this needs to match employees' expectations - using the phone more than the preferred amount increases loneliness by four points and having more in-person conversations than preferred increases loneliness by five points.

## METHODOLOGY

Approximately 10,441 adults ages 18 and over from the continental U.S., Alaska and Hawaii were surveyed online by Ipsos Polling, in English. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of  $\pm 1.1$  percentage points for all respondents surveyed.