

Introduction:

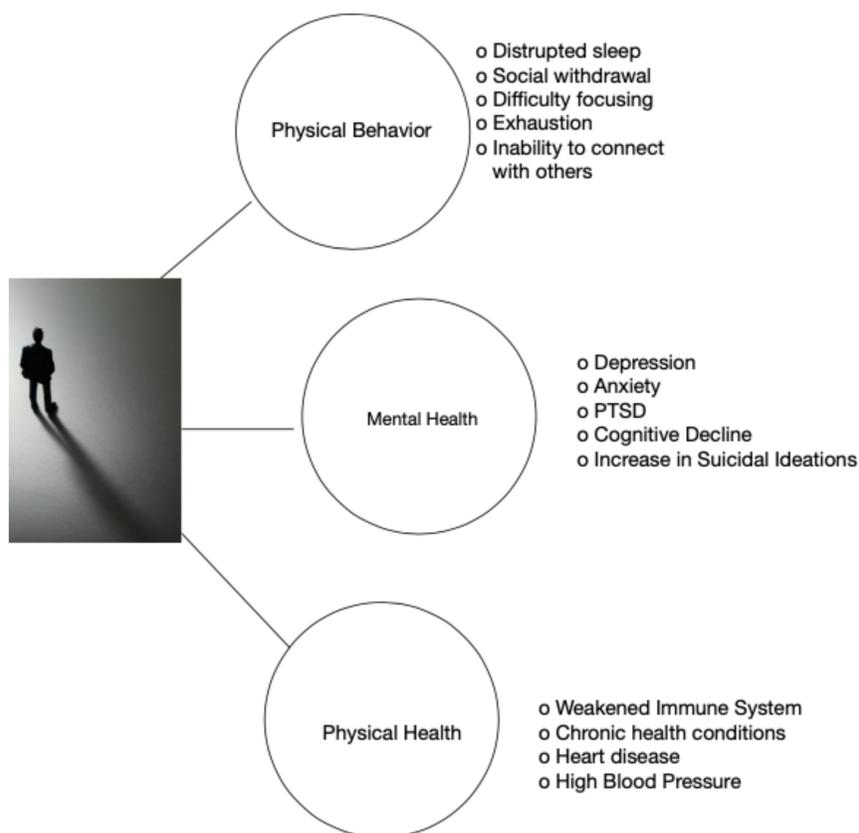
- COVID-19 is extremely contagious¹¹
- Social isolation has been encouraged and enforced⁴
- COVID-19 resulted in numerous restrictions¹¹
- A significant decline in mental-health has been seen due to isolation⁸
- It is important to understand the isolating effect of social distancing and to find out what efforts should be made to mitigate the negative psychological impact⁸

Loneliness:

Loneliness is often described as the state of being without any company or in isolation from the community or society. This feeling is a risk factor for many mental health disorders¹

- Preliminary surveys suggest that within the first month of COVID-19, loneliness increased by 20 to 30 percent, and emotional distress tripled²

Effects of Social Isolation and/or Loneliness on Health:

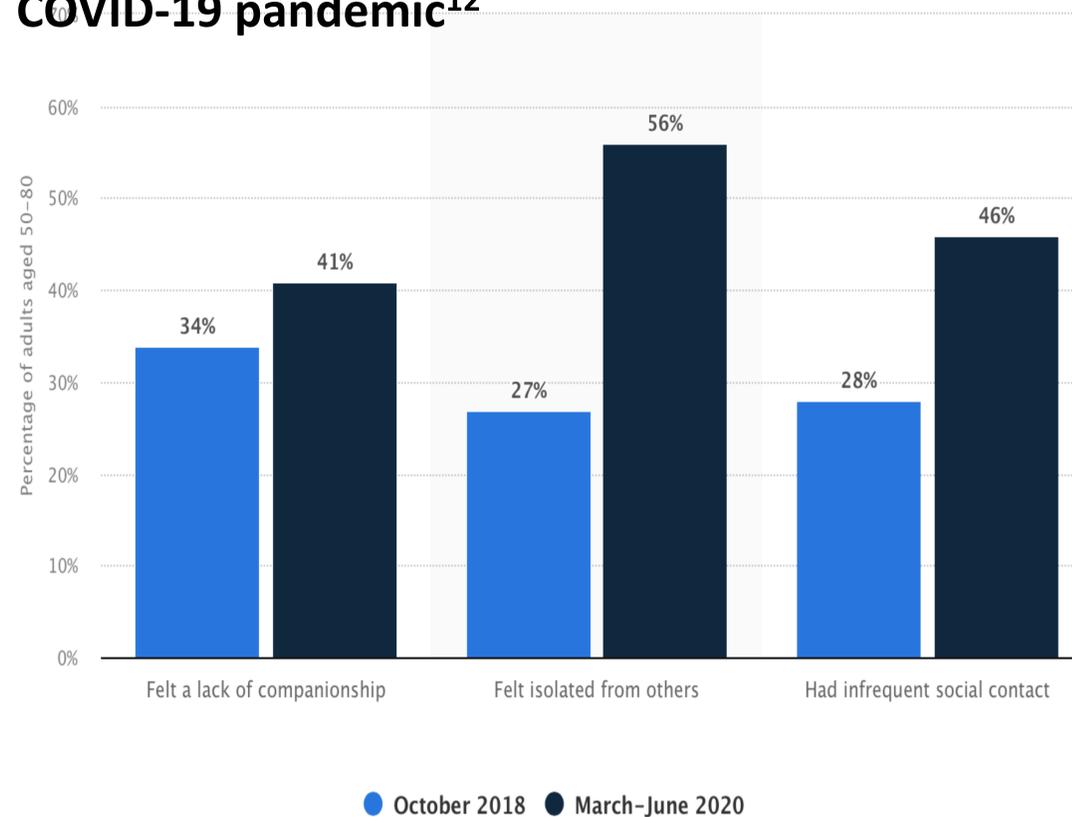


The Effect of Social Isolation on Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Percentage of older adults in the U.S. who reported feeling lonely or isolated before and during the COVID-19 pandemic¹²



Resources:

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4. McKnight-Eily, L. R., Okoro, C. A., Strine, T. W., Verlenden, J., et. al (2021). Racial and ethnic disparities in the prevalence of stress and worry, mental health conditions, and increased substance use among adults during the COVID-19 pandemic — United States, April and May 2020. *MMWR Morbidity Mortality Weekly Report*, 70, 162166. <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7005a3external.icon>
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9. Pietrabissa, G., & Simpson, S. G. (2020). Psychological consequences of social isolation during COVID-19 outbreak. *Frontiers in Psychology*, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.02201>
10. Torales J, O'Higgins M, Castaldelli-Maia JM, Ventriglio A. (2020) The outbreak of COVID-19 coronavirus and its impact on global mental health. *Int J Soc Psychiatry* 66(4):317-20. doi: 1177/0020764020915212
11. Walsh, C. (2021). Young adults hardest hit by loneliness during pandemic. *The Harvard Gazette*. <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2021/02/young-adults-teens-loneliness-mental-health-coronavirus-covid-pandemic/>
12. Yu B, Steptoe A, Chen Y, Jia X. (2020) Social isolation, rather than loneliness, is associated with cognitive decline in older adults: the China Health and Retirement Longitudinal Study. *Psychol Med* 1-8. doi: 10.1017/S0033291720001014

Statistics:

COVID-19 induced-isolation has impacted mental health and substance use disorders

- National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) indicate that approximately 81,230 drug overdose deaths occurred in the U.S. in the 12-months ending in May 2020¹⁰
- From March 2020 to the slow decline of the pandemic, prevalence of anxiety and depression increased, and in some countries, even doubled.⁷

Demand for Intervention:

- COVID-19 leading to intense psychosocial issues and compromising mental health has marked a secondary health concern all around the world⁶
- The on-going stress and uncertainty of COVID-19 has led to increased demands for mental health services⁹
- Mental health services, facilities, and specialized psychiatric treatment teams should be established to address psychological concerns in the general public⁴

Tips to Manage Your Mental Health During Isolation of COVID-19:

- Focus on what you can control: mind, body, immediate environment, what you consume, how you prepare and how to protect yourself and others
- Speak to a professional
- Communicate with others



When Anxiety Won't Let Up:

If you are taking the steps to manage worry and anxiety during the COVID-19 crisis but it doesn't seem to be helping, there are additional resources

- Crisis Hotlines and Text lines: **1-800-985-5990**
- Get connected to a local crisis center to get in touch with someone immediately, **1-800-273-8255** or text **"MHA" to 741741**