



Mental Health & The Gift of Social Connection

A recent study by the World Health Organization revealed that the conditions of loneliness and social isolation are widespread and have a serious impact on physical and mental health, quality of life, and longevity for people of all ages – especially seniors and teens. Loneliness is the feeling of being alone, regardless of the amount of social contact. Social isolation is a lack of social connections. Even though we are in an era of constant contact via social media many of our meaningful social interactions have been lost. As you read this you may recognize your child, a family member, neighbor, or yourself.

It is imperative that we begin building awareness within our community that the need for high-quality social connection is essential to our mental and physical health. The holiday season can be a particularly challenging period for many. Feelings of loneliness, and even depression or anxiety, are often magnified this time of year. It's important to remember that seeking support is the best gift you can give yourself or someone else. In addition, making small changes in your routine can have an impact – join a group, take up the hobby or sport you've been thinking about for years, volunteer with a local charity, invite a friend for coffee, and make time to share quick conversations. If you are feeling overwhelmed and need additional support, reach out to Family Service League or your doctor. It's never too late to make a change for the better.

Be well and Happy Holidays!