

Referrers Toolkit



Information and Referral Support for Healthcare and Community Professionals

This toolkit will equip you with practical guidance to recognise social isolation and loneliness, understand their impact, and connect seniors and carers with meaningful support through Inclusee.

Inside, you'll find clear information on our programs and simple steps to help you make effective, supportive referrals.



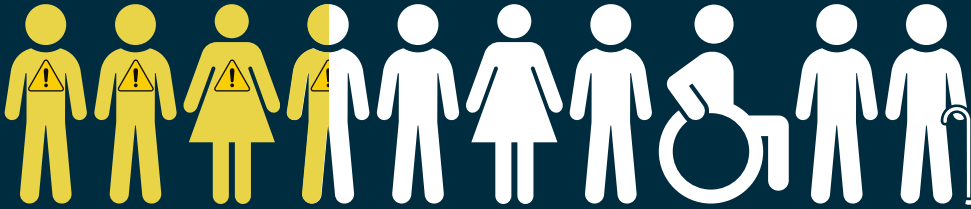
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Social Isolation & Loneliness: A Critical Risk Factor for Health

When people experience social isolation or loneliness, the effects extend beyond emotional wellbeing and significantly impact physical health and premature mortality.

Social health is a core pillar of overall wellbeing, alongside physical and mental health, yet social disconnection is widespread, affecting nearly one in six people globally.

2025 meta-analysis found that social isolation increases all-cause mortality by 35% in older adults.¹



Strong evidence links social isolation to increased risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke, diabetes, depression, cognitive decline, and early death. Despite its significant impact, it remains underrecognised in health systems worldwide.¹

¹ Loneliness, social isolation, and living alone: systematic review & meta-analysis of mortality risks in older adults.

² Associations of social isolation and loneliness with healthcare utilization among older adults: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Innovation in Aging*, 2026.



Social Connection & Healthcare

How social connection improves patient outcomes

Social connection is a protective determinant of health, supporting physical and mental wellbeing. Despite this, social wellbeing is not routinely addressed in clinical care.

Addressing social wellbeing alongside physical health presents a clear opportunity, with evidence showing that social prescribing can improve mental health, physical health, and lifestyle behaviours.¹

Loneliness is associated with higher healthcare utilisation, with affected patients presenting 40% more often to their GP and experiencing a 50% increase in emergency care use among older adults.²



CONNECTION CHANGES EVERYTHING



Identifying Social Isolation and Loneliness

Recognising loneliness and social isolation in older Australians can be difficult, as many people may not openly discuss that they are feeling disconnected.

Clinical cues in the consult:

- **Frequent or repeated appointments** with no clear clinical cause.
- **Life transitions or losses**, such as bereavement, retirement, or reduced independence (including loss of a driver licence).
- **Changes in mood or behaviour**, including low mood, anxiety, withdrawal from social or recreational activities, or reduced motivation.
- **Forgetfulness or disengagement** that may reflect reduced social stimulation rather than cognitive decline alone.
- **Physical or practical barriers**, such as mobility limitations, fear of falling, or lack of access to transport, which restrict participation in the community.
- **Primary caring responsibilities**, where the patient is a primary carer and has limited opportunity for their own social connection.
- **Geographic isolation**, including living in rural or remote areas or being physically distant from family and established support networks.



Simple, open-ended questions can help uncover unmet social needs.

- What do you enjoy doing in your day to day?
- Are there activities you used to enjoy that you're doing less of now?
- How connected do you feel in your everyday life?
- How do you feel about your level of contact with friends or family?
- What do you enjoy outside of your caring role?
- What makes it difficult to spend time with other people?

About Inclusee

Who are we?

Inclusee is a not-for-profit supporting older Australians and carers who feel lonely, socially isolated, or find it hard to leave home.

Through our Virtual Community Centre, participants build confidence, routine, friendships, and skills in a safe, welcoming online environment.

Who is Inclusee ideal for?

The Inclusee Community supports people aged 50+ and unpaid carers, particularly those with limited mobility, living rurally, or experiencing loneliness, bereavement, or carer fatigue.

What will they experience?

- A warm welcome with guided digital support.
- 200+ online clubs each month, including art, wellness, history, music, meditation, travel, craft, trivia, and more.
- Peer support groups, such as Carers Haven and Men's Hour.
- Regular opportunities to chat, learn, laugh, and reconnect with people across Australia.



Who We Support

Older Australians experiencing loneliness or isolation

Loneliness affects everyone differently, and many older Australians face barriers to staying socially connected. Inclusee provides a welcoming online community where participants can meet friends, explore interests and engage in meaningful activities tailored to their needs and goals.

Unpaid carers supporting an ageing partner, parent or sibling

Inclusee supports carers experiencing emotional or physical strain, offering connection, peer support, and opportunities to engage in activities with their loved one or independently.

People worried about their parent's social connection

Inclusee helps adult children who are worried about an ageing parent's social connection, providing safe and welcoming programs that encourage confidence, routine, and meaningful connection.

Health and community professionals

Inclusee supports professionals working with socially isolated, disengaged, or frequently returning patients, offering simple referral pathways and evidence informed programs that address social wellbeing.



Community Connection for Healthier Ageing

Our Programs & Clubs

Inclusee delivers structured, interest-based programs that support routine, purpose, and meaningful social connection, key factors in maintaining health and wellbeing as people age.

Our clubs cover a range of interests including art, history, hobbies, technology, health, and wellness, enabling participants to build ongoing peer connections in a safe and supportive environment.

We also offer targeted programs for groups at higher risk of isolation, including Carers Haven and Men's Hour, which provide dedicated spaces for support, shared experience, and connection.

Health & Wellbeing Sessions

Our community offers regular wellbeing sessions with trusted organisations across the health and ageing sectors, covering topics such as mental health, dementia, chronic conditions, nutrition, digital safety, grief, and caring. These sessions support and empower participants to stay informed while remaining socially engaged.

Why Socially Prescribe to Inclusee?

Inclusee offers a safe, accessible, and evidence-informed social prescribing option for patients experiencing loneliness, social withdrawal, or reduced community engagement.

Referral supports improved social connection, emotional wellbeing, confidence, and participation - protective factors linked to better health outcomes and healthier ageing. Social prescribing to Inclusee complements clinical care and provides a practical pathway to address the health impacts of social isolation.



OUR COMMUNITY IMPACT

Achieving Meaningful Outcomes for Socially Isolated Older Australians

Inclusee provides measurable social-connection outcomes that complement clinical care and support social prescribing.

Our programs offer safe, structured ways for older Australians to build confidence, reduce loneliness and stay engaged, helping address key social determinants that contribute to poor health and frequent presentations.

Access the resources below to learn more about Inclusee, see what's coming up in our community, and learn how to submit a referral through our social prescribing program.



Visit Our Website

Visit our website to learn more about Inclusee and how we support older Australians through connection, learning and fun.



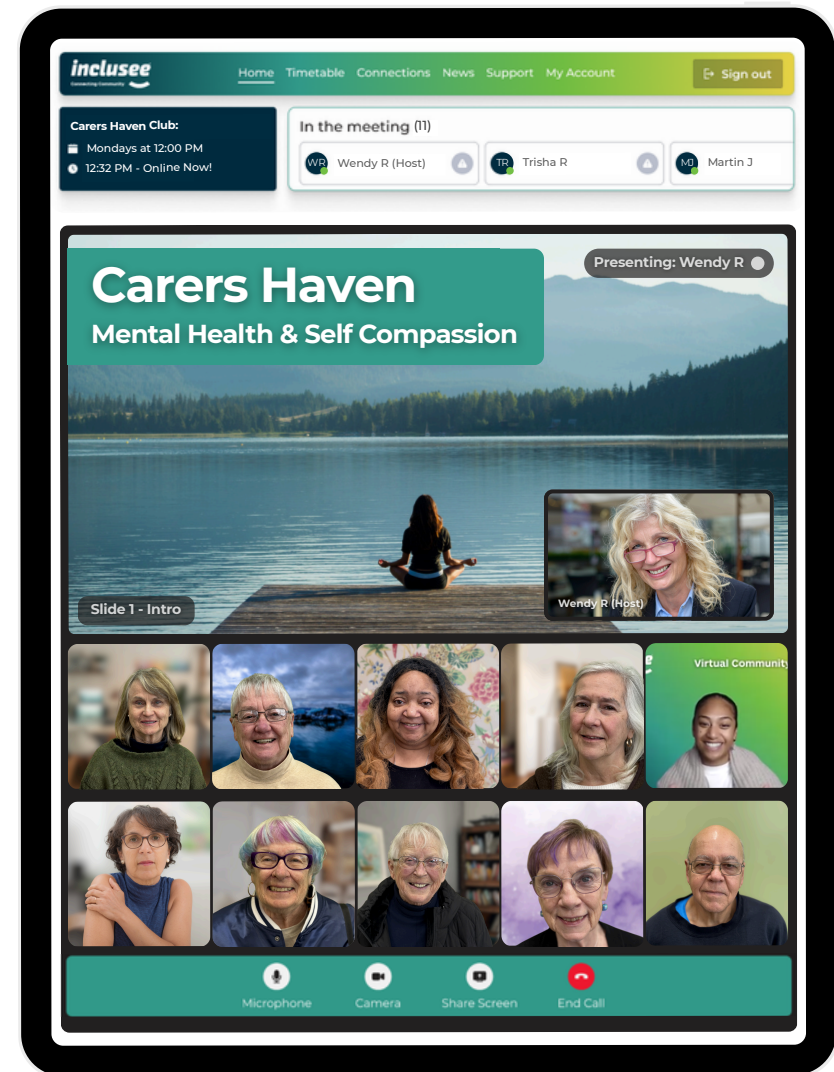
Explore Our Community Newsletter

Read our newsletter for the latest community stories, wellness tips, event updates, and insights for older Australians.



Submit a Social Prescribing Referral

Help someone discover connection, community and support by referring them through Inclusee's social prescribing program.





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SUPPORT YOUR PATIENTS BEYOND THE CONSULT.

If social isolation or loneliness is impacting your patient's wellbeing, click the button below to submit a referral or contact our team to learn more.

[Submit a Referral](#)

 1800 287 687

 Connect@inclusee.org.au

 inclusee.org.au

