

# Social Connections Among Older Adults and People With Disabilities

## NCI- AD DATA SPOTLIGHT



**14%**

of respondents said they are  
**often sad or depressed**



People who lived on their own or in the family home were **most likely** to often feel sad or depressed

Social isolation can have negative impacts to older adult physical health, including high blood pressure, heart disease, and early mortality<sup>1</sup>. Loneliness also has an impact on mental and emotional health, as older adults experiencing loneliness are at increased risk of depression and cognitive decline.<sup>2</sup>

Older adults and people with physical disabilities are at particular risk of social isolation due to potential health limitations, lack of accessibility, and loss of support networks. Consider the impact social connections can have on long-term services and supports outcomes, keeping in mind social distancing protocols are largely still in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Information in this document comes from the more than 14,000 older adults and people with disabilities across 16 states who took part in the 2018–19 NCI-AD™ Adult Consumer Survey.

Learn more about NCI-AD [here](#).

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pnas.org/content/110/15/5797.full>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nia.nih.gov/news/social-isolation-loneliness-older-people-pose-health-risks>

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## NCI-AD DATA SPOTLIGHT



**45%**

of respondents live alone



**61%**

Usually like how they spend their day



**85%**

have family or friends\* that are involved in their lives



**87%**

Are always able to see or talk to family or friends\* when they want to



**50%**

Are as active in their community as they want to be

Most common reasons people were not as active as they wanted to be:

**Health limitations, transportation, and cost**

*\*who they do not live with*

### Here is how some states have responded to social isolation since COVID-19:

- [http://www.advancingstates.org/sites/nasvad/files/Social%20Isolation%20Resource\\_10142020.pdf](http://www.advancingstates.org/sites/nasvad/files/Social%20Isolation%20Resource_10142020.pdf)

### For more information on NCI-AD and to see all NCI-AD public reports, visit:

- <https://nci-ad.org/>

### More information on social isolation and loneliness:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/publications/features/lonely-older-adults.html>
- <https://www.nia.nih.gov/news/social-isolation-loneliness-older-people-pose-health-risks>
- <https://www.agingcare.com/articles/loneliness-in-the-elderly-151549.htm>
- <https://www.sbp-journal.com/index.php/sbp/article/view/1507>