

VETERAN LONELINESS IS REAL

# But your support system is strong



After serving your country and being surrounded by team members, returning to a civilian life can feel like no one understands what you've lived through and experienced.<sup>1</sup> The good news is—you're not alone, and there are resources and support to help.

## Loneliness can happen—even when surrounded by others

Compared to typical civilian loneliness, military-related loneliness has been found to be different—defined by feeling “alien and homeless in a civilian world,” as well as feeling misunderstood and the only one who feels a certain way.<sup>1</sup>

## The impact of veteran loneliness

According to a study from Yale and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the primary enemy most veterans face after service is not war-related trauma, but loneliness.<sup>2</sup>

In fact, loneliness affects more than 33% of adult Americans.<sup>3</sup>



## Social isolation can occur when you're physically alone

Social isolation happens when we're separated from other people and don't have our desired social connections. This can occur from life situations, like transitioning from active duty to civilian status or when friends and loved ones pass away.

Working on ways to help you feel less lonely and get more socially connected can help you decrease your risk of stroke, dementia and Alzheimer's disease.<sup>4,5</sup>

**Humana**®

## ASK FOR HELP

It's important to talk about the feelings of loneliness, anxiety, depression or PTSD that you may face in your everyday life.



Tell someone you trust. Share your challenges with your family members, friends, fellow veterans or counselor. They can listen to your feelings and offer you support.



Choose a doctor with whom you can speak easily and openly. Ask friends, relatives and veterans for recommendations. Bring a list of questions and concerns with you, especially if you've recently felt down or stressed.



Answer your doctor's questions about your physical and mental health honestly to ensure the right diagnosis and treatment.



Bring a friend or relative for support if you know you'll be discussing serious topics, like surgery or a recent diagnosis.



## GOOD NEWS

### There are resources to help you create and build social connections

#### Stay connected and engaged

- **Find veterans in your community.** Reconnect through the VFW ([www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org)), AMVETS ([www.amvets.org](http://www.amvets.org)), American Legion, DAV, Team RWB, Student Veterans of America, Wounded Warrior Project or other veterans organizations.
- **Get out.** Use transportation services to get out and about, even if only for coffee or groceries.
- **Care for a pet.** Enjoy companionship by having a dog, cat or other pet.
- **Join a club.** Share your hobbies and interests—such as woodworking, golf, photography, painting or writing—with a group.
- **Get active.** Join a gym or participate in fitness classes, running/walking groups or other endurance sport activities you enjoyed in the military.
- **Volunteer.** Sign up for a cause that’s meaningful to you. You may be able to volunteer helping your fellow veterans through the VA Voluntary Service program. ([www.volunteer.va.gov](http://www.volunteer.va.gov))
- **Go outdoors.** Enjoy the fresh air and get active by going hiking, climbing, kayaking or just walking in nearby parks and recreation areas.

#### Turn to these resources for help

- **AMVETS HEAL:** Assists veterans with medical needs in accessing the best quality healthcare, including mental health and specialized services. [www.amvets.org/vet-heal](http://www.amvets.org/vet-heal)
- **At Ease:** Offers information and strategies for veterans dealing with loneliness and social isolation. [ateaseusa.org](http://ateaseusa.org)
- **Connect2Affect:** Connects people to transportation services, volunteer programs, senior centers and more. [connect2affect.org](http://connect2affect.org)
- **Give an Hour:** Helps you connect with local mental healthcare providers who are willing to donate their time to speak with veterans like you. [giveanhour.org](http://giveanhour.org)
- **Local VFW:** Provides a communal location for veterans to gather and interact. To find the nearest local VFW, visit [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org)
- **Make the Connection:** Provides information, treatment options, self-help tools and resources to aid veterans in recovery. [www.maketheconnection.net/symptoms/social-withdrawal](http://www.maketheconnection.net/symptoms/social-withdrawal)
- **Veterans Crisis Line:** Connects veterans and service members with qualified VA responders, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. **1-800-273-8255 (TTY: 711), then press 1,** [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net)
- **Vets4Warriors Peer Support:** Connects you with a fellow veteran to talk any time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. **1-855-838-8255 (TTY: 711),** [www.vets4warriors.com](http://www.vets4warriors.com)

<sup>1</sup>The Foundation for Art and Healing, <https://artandhealing.org/military-veterans-loneliness-fact-sheet/>

<sup>2</sup>Yale and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, 2017, <https://news.yale.edu/2017/09/28/suicidal-veterans-loneliness-deadliest-enemy>

<sup>3</sup>The Foundation for Art & Healing, The Unlonely Project, <https://artandhealing.org/unlonely-overview/>

<sup>4</sup><https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/fullarticle/482179>

<sup>5</sup>Valtorta NK, Kanaan M, Gilbody S, et al. Loneliness and social isolation as risk factors for coronary heart disease and stroke: systematic review and meta-analysis of longitudinal observational studies. *Heart* 2016;102:1009-1016.



This material is provided for informational use only and should not be construed as medical advice or used in place of consulting a licensed medical professional.

## Important!

### At Humana, it is important you are treated fairly.

Humana Inc. and its subsidiaries do not discriminate or exclude people because of their race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, ancestry, marital status, or religion. Discrimination is against the law. Humana and its subsidiaries comply with applicable Federal Civil Rights laws. If you believe that you have been discriminated against by Humana or its subsidiaries, there are ways to get help.

- You may file a complaint, also known as a grievance:  
Discrimination Grievances, P.O. Box 14618, Lexington, KY 40512-4618  
If you need help filing a grievance, call **1-877-320-1235** or if you use a **TTY**, call **711**.
- You can also file a civil rights complaint with the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**, Office for Civil Rights electronically through their Complaint Portal, available at <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocrportal/lobby.jsf>, or at **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**, 200 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 509F, HHH Building, Washington, DC 20201, **1-800-368-1019**, **800-537-7697 (TDD)**. Complaint forms are available at <https://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html>.
- **California residents:** You may also call California Department of Insurance toll-free hotline number: **1-800-927-HELP (4357)**, to file a grievance.

### Auxiliary aids and services, free of charge, are available to you. 1-877-320-1235 (TTY: 711)

Humana provides free auxiliary aids and services, such as qualified sign language interpreters, video remote interpretation, and written information in other formats to people with disabilities when such auxiliary aids and services are necessary to ensure an equal opportunity to participate.

### Language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. 1-877-320-1235 (TTY: 711)

**Español (Spanish):** Llame al número arriba indicado para recibir servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística.

**繁體中文 (Chinese):** 撥打上面的電話號碼即可獲得免費語言援助服務。

**Tiếng Việt (Vietnamese):** Xin gọi số điện thoại trên đây để nhận được các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí.

**한국어 (Korean):** 무료 언어 지원 서비스를 받으려면 위의 번호로 전화하십시오.

**Tagalog (Tagalog – Filipino):** Tawagan ang numero sa itaas upang makatanggap ng mga serbisyo ng tulong sa wika nang walang bayad.

**Русский (Russian):** Позвоните по номеру, указанному выше, чтобы получить бесплатные услуги перевода.

**Kreyòl Ayisyen (French Creole):** Rele nimewo ki pi wo la a, pou resevwa sèvis èd pou lang ki gratis.

**Français (French):** Appelez le numéro ci-dessus pour recevoir gratuitement des services d'aide linguistique.

**Polski (Polish):** Aby skorzystać z bezpłatnej pomocy językowej, proszę zadzwonić pod wyżej podany numer.

**Português (Portuguese):** Ligue para o número acima indicado para receber serviços linguísticos, grátis.

**Italiano (Italian):** Chiamare il numero sopra per ricevere servizi di assistenza linguistica gratuiti.

**Deutsch (German):** Wählen Sie die oben angegebene Nummer, um kostenlose sprachliche Hilfsdienstleistungen zu erhalten.

**日本語 (Japanese):** 無料の言語支援サービスをご要望の場合は、上記の番号までお電話ください。

**فارسی (Farsi)**

برای دریافت تسهیلات زبانی بصورت رایگان با شماره فوق تماس بگیرید.

**Diné Bizaad (Navajo):** Wóda'í béésh bee hani'í bee wolta'ígíí bich'í' hódíílnih éí bee t'áá jiik'éh saad bee áká'ánída'áwo'déé nika'adoowól.

**العربية (Arabic)**

الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم المبين أعلاه للحصول على خدمات مجانية للمساعدة بلغتك