

TALLAHASSEE SENIOR CENTER SENIOR RESOURCE INFORMATION

LONELINESS AND ISOLATION

As individuals age, they tend to spend more time alone, for a variety of reasons. There exists a global epidemic of loneliness, and the current COVID-19 crisis further complicates the issue. Social isolation and loneliness among older adults have been linked to the onset or worsening of health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, dementia, depression and pain. There are many ways to address social isolation and loneliness. Sometimes, family members and friends check in regularly in person, virtually or by phone. For others, there are organizations offering social engagement through volunteer programs, interactions with peers, as well as, trained professionals providing counseling and support group services when needed.

Video Communication, Messaging and Technology Resources

There are a variety of video and messaging resources available to help family members stay connected with each other while quarantining or just separated by great distances. Some of the most common video communication programs include [Zoom](#), [Skype](#) and [Face Time](#). Zoom can be downloaded to any computer or device, and a free version is available which allows for calls up to 40 minutes in length, while Skype is available as part of the Microsoft Office Suite. Face Time is available on Apple devices and can be used to communicate from one Apple device to another. If you own an Android device, downloading Google's [Duo](#) app will allow you to accept Face Time calls as well. There are also several messaging applications which support video communication including [Google Meet](#) (formerly Google Hangouts), [Facebook Messenger](#) and [WhatsApp](#). Additionally, the digital game [Words with Friends](#) includes a messaging feature and can be downloaded to any device, providing a fun way to stay in touch with friends and family. A more detailed list of these programs and applications can be found [here](#).

Lastly, the purchase of a [GrandPad](#) can be an effective way to help a senior stay connected with family and loved ones. This tablet provides a safe and streamlined way for seniors to participate in video calls and share photos, as well as limited access to the internet. The GrandPad is designed without complicated features and utilizes large buttons and an intuitive interface to simplify use.

Local Programs and Organizations

The Tallahassee Senior Center is a good place to start when looking for companionship or pursuing social involvement in the community. The Senior Center offers a variety of programming and activities covering a wide range of interests and skills. In addition to the services offered by the Senior Center, staff can also help locate other opportunities and programs within the community that may be more suitable to specific needs or interests. For more information visit talgov.com/seniors or call **850-891-4000**. Also, consider what local places of worship and other faith-based organizations can offer. Often Churches, Synagogues and Mosques can be a good place to find companionship as well as community-based programming and activities.

UPSLIDE (Utilizing and Promoting Social Engagement for Loneliness, Isolation and Depression in the Elderly) serves people age 50 and older. **UPSLIDE** offers individual counseling by phone and video conferencing; virtual Friends Connection meetings allow social connection and support for participants; and a private Facebook page so that UPSLIDE participants can stay in touch with each other.

Email Melanie.Lachman@talgov.com or call **850-891-4066** for more information, assistance, individual counseling. Services are provided at no cost to participants, but donations accepted. **UPSLIDE** is sponsored by the Florida Blue Foundation and the Tallahassee Senior Center Foundation.

Elder Care Services is a local care provider offering a variety of in-home services for older adults including **companionship**. To inquire about these, or other, services, begin by calling **1-800-96-ELDER (35337)**. You will be asked a brief series of questions regarding your eligibility for services, and then connected with your local service provider. Additionally, Elder Care Services has also established the **Elder Call** program which utilizes senior volunteers to make weekly (and in some cases more frequent) calls to home bound and isolated seniors. For more information about Elder Call contact **Ronda Parrish** at **850-245-5918**.

Virtual Support and Companionship

In addition to the local service providers highlighted above, there are further options which focus specifically on virtual companionship. Many of these options are designed to pair up isolated older adults with younger volunteers, while others provide a service for individuals of all ages who are feeling lonely and looking for someone to talk to. As with all interactions with relative strangers online, it is important to exercise caution. An additional resource highlighting tips for interacting safely with people online can be at tallahasseeseniorfoundaton.org/resources.

Student and Seniors Buddy Program	850-891-4047
<p>The Student and Seniors Buddy Program is a partnership between the Tallahassee Senior Center’s UPSLIDE program and the Florida State University College of Nursing. Nursing students are paired with seniors for safe, supervised and confidential conversations via telephone or video chat. Technology assistance is available; call the number above or email Judy.Shipman@talgov.com to enroll.</p>	

COVID Networks	covidnetworks.org
<p>COVID Networks is designed to provide companionship to seniors and other at-risk individuals isolated due to COVID-19. Anyone interested can sign up at the website listed above and get paired with a volunteer with similar interests. Once paired, COVID Networks will facilitate interactions through an online platform.</p>	

Quarantine Buddy	qtinebuddy.com
<p>Quarantine Buddy (operating nationally) pairs up members based on shared interests. To sign up, visit the website listed above and fill out the matching form. Once you have been paired, being video chatting with your buddy and get to know them. Additionally, there are virtual events that you can attend as well.</p>	

Seniors with Skills Online Buddy Program	seniorswithskills.org/online-buddy-program
<p>Seniors with Skills is a non-profit organization that provides programming to help seniors get more involved in their communities. They recently developed the Online Buddy Program to address the current need many isolated seniors have for virtual companionship. Many of the Seniors with Skills volunteers have experience with computer training and can help seniors learn how to use their tablet, computer or other devices.</p>	