

Is Loneliness a Health Problem?



Chronic loneliness can have negative health effects, so CIGNA surveyed 20,000 Americans to gauge the prevalence of this emotion. One in five respondents reported no close relationships at all, and one in four reported having no one with whom they can have a

meaningful conversation. Those aged 18-22—despite their proficiency with social media—report being most lonely. Loneliness is a symptom of a larger problem, because those less lonely reported getting more sleep, spending more time with family, not overworking, and getting proper exercise. If loneliness affects you, take action, engage, or get counseling to overcome it.

<https://www.forbes.com/>

Doing Your Own Team Building

Team building improves communication, increases morale, and boosts productivity. But what if your employer doesn't offer those big off-site team-building retreats? How can small two-person teams benefit? Try do-it-yourself team building! Simple exercises can rejuvenate you. Find exercises (hundreds are at online bookstores) that 1) focus on building trust; 2) offer the experience of being open with feelings; 3) allow team members to practice nonjudgmental thinking about each other; and 4) give each team member the opportunity to feel vulnerable but have the vulnerability rewarded with safety and acceptance. Team desire to maintain emotional closeness following team building is its own motivation to reduce conflict and practice healthier communication. Refreshing the commitment team members have for one another, even with one team-building exercise, helps walls from forming between members. This dynamic arises from workplace stress—it's all normal. Understanding the gains from team building will have you doing it more often. Try an exercise: One team member shares a negative experience of their workday with another team member—the more personal the better. One coworker repeats what was shared, but focuses only on the positive aspects of the negative experience. The goal is to identify the positive benefits of negative experiences. Then, switch roles. With this experience, team members learn to reframe negative experiences into positive ones that build resilience, while feeling accepted and supported.

Overhaul Your Morning Routine

Don't slug through a morning routine that barely gets you out the door. Maximize your routine for improved work-life productivity. The payoff will be a happier you. More excitement about goals, a better mood, improved health, and finding more meaning in your job can all flow from an optimized morning routine. Experiment with a few tweaks, and keep notes about any positive impacts on yourself. Everyone is different, so don't simply copy an online "do this" formula. Whether it is drinking a glass of water first thing after awakening, avoiding the snooze button, doing 20 pushups, making your bed without fail, or meditation—hundreds of ideas exist. Some will be perfect for you.

Start at www.inc.com (search "morning routine ideas").

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Safety Travel Tips for Pets

Whether it's summer or any other time of year, the national Center for Pet Safety, which conducts safety testing research for pet restraint devices, wants to remind you that distracted driving can be caused by not only your cell phone but also the family pet. It's important to be safe together on the road, so the center recommends a pet safety harness in the backseat of your vehicle. Pet travel harnesses come in two forms: those that prevent distraction and those that provide actual crash protection.

Find advice and tips about these devices at <http://www.centerforpetsafety.org>.