

A photograph of a white ceramic coffee cup filled with coffee, sitting on a matching saucer on a wooden table. In the background, there is a glass vase containing several wooden spoons. The scene is lit with soft, natural light, suggesting a window nearby. The overall mood is calm and serene.

Disconnected: Isolation, Aging, and the New Reality of Longevity

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Cathy Seeber, CFP®, CeFT®



What does connection feel like?

When was your last meaningful connection?
What made it meaningful?



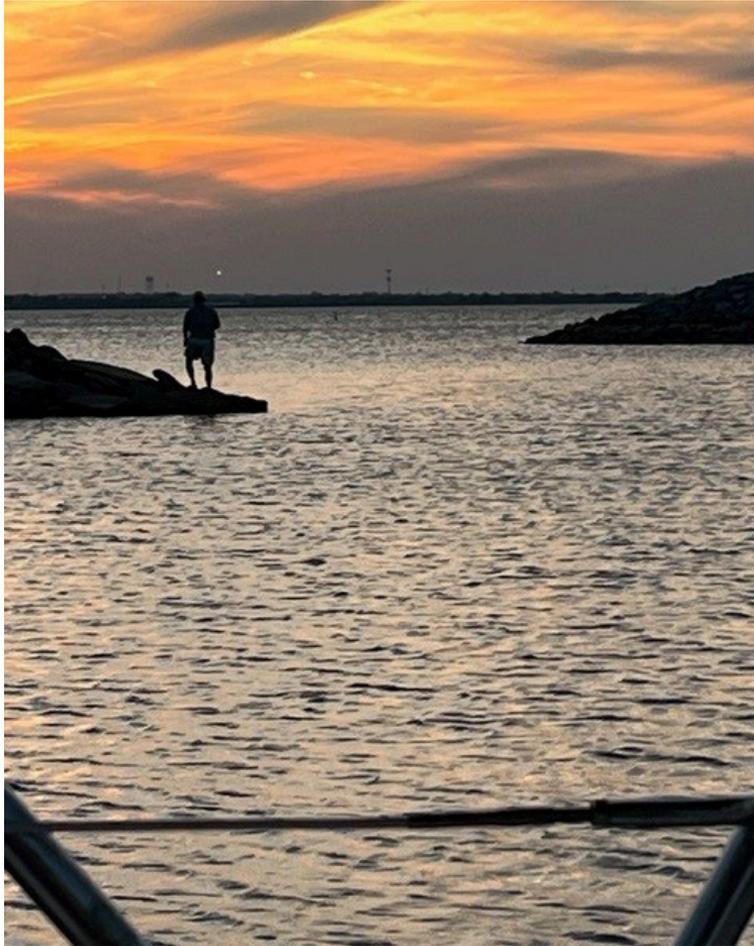
Americans who report having 10 close friends:



1990: 33%

Today: 13%

Americans who have **fewer** than 3 close friends:



1990: 26%

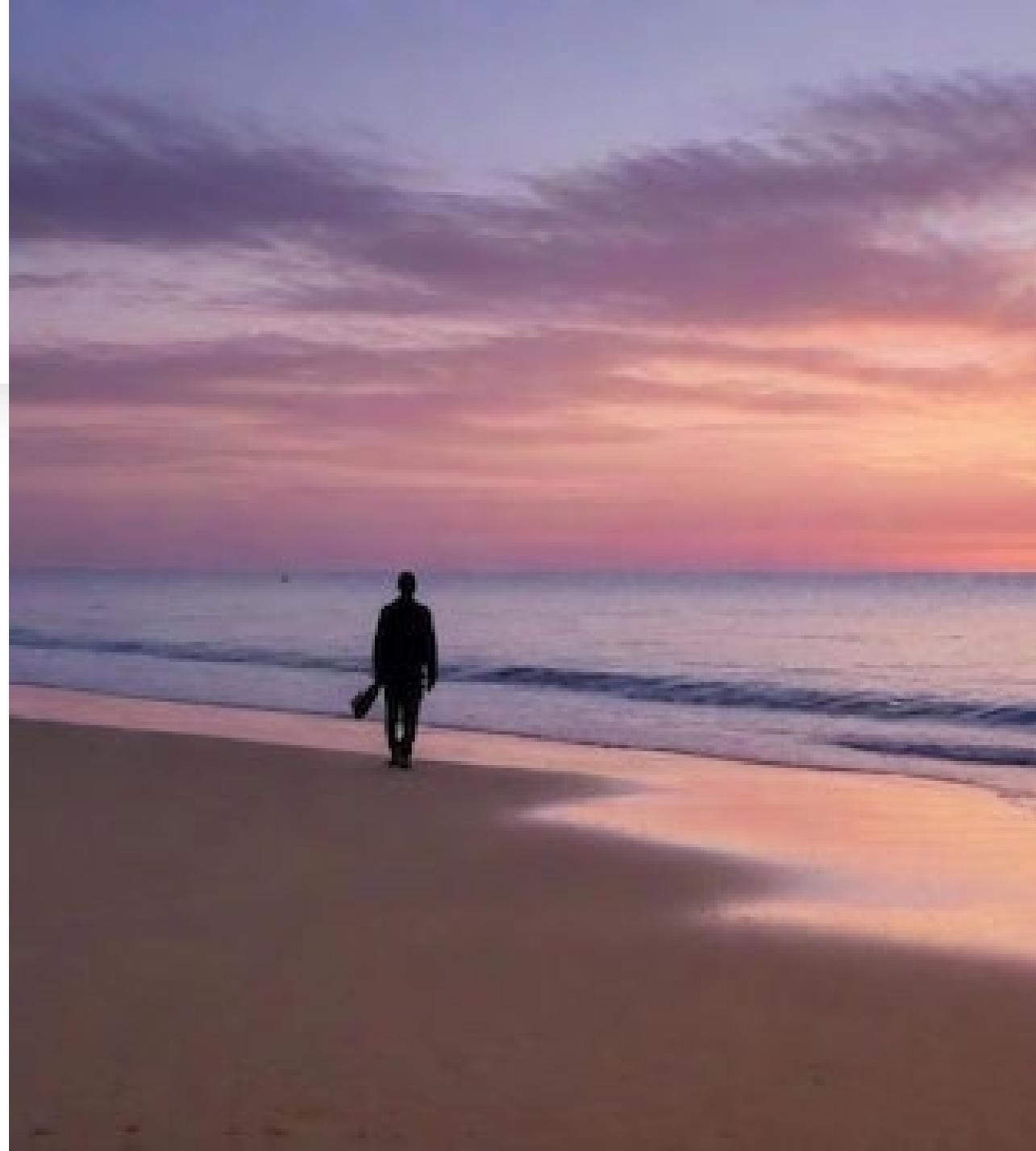
Today: 50%

The number of Americans reporting they have ZERO close confidants TRIPLED from 1990 to 2010.
The decrease started way before Covid.



Social Isolation

- Social isolation is not having relationships, contact with, or support from others.
- Social isolation can pose a health risk to people, even if they don't feel lonely.





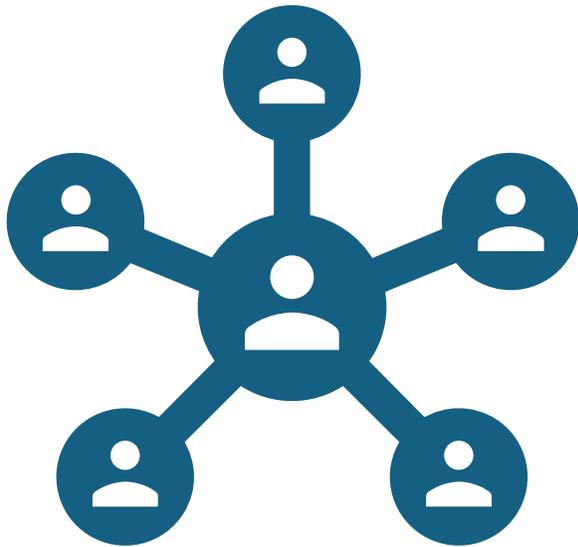
Loneliness

- Loneliness is feeling alone or disconnected from others.
- It is feeling like you do not have meaningful or close relationships or a sense of belonging. The difference between a person's actual and desired level of connection.
- Even a person with a lot of friends can feel lonely.

Both isolation and loneliness put a person at risk of developing serious mental and physical health conditions.

Which, in turn, affects our wealth.





Research strongly indicates that having meaningful social connections can significantly extend a person's lifespan.

In fact, isolation has been linked to a nearly 75% higher risk of death within just four years.

Time to Share

When was your last meaningful connection? What made it meaningful?

Can you think of a time when you felt either socially isolated or lonely? What did you do to address the situation?

Is there a situation now with a client that you are dealing with and you don't know what you can do to help?





How Can We Help?

The life transitions we experience with our clients is one of the individual risk factors (other being chronic diseases, marginalization, limited access to resources).

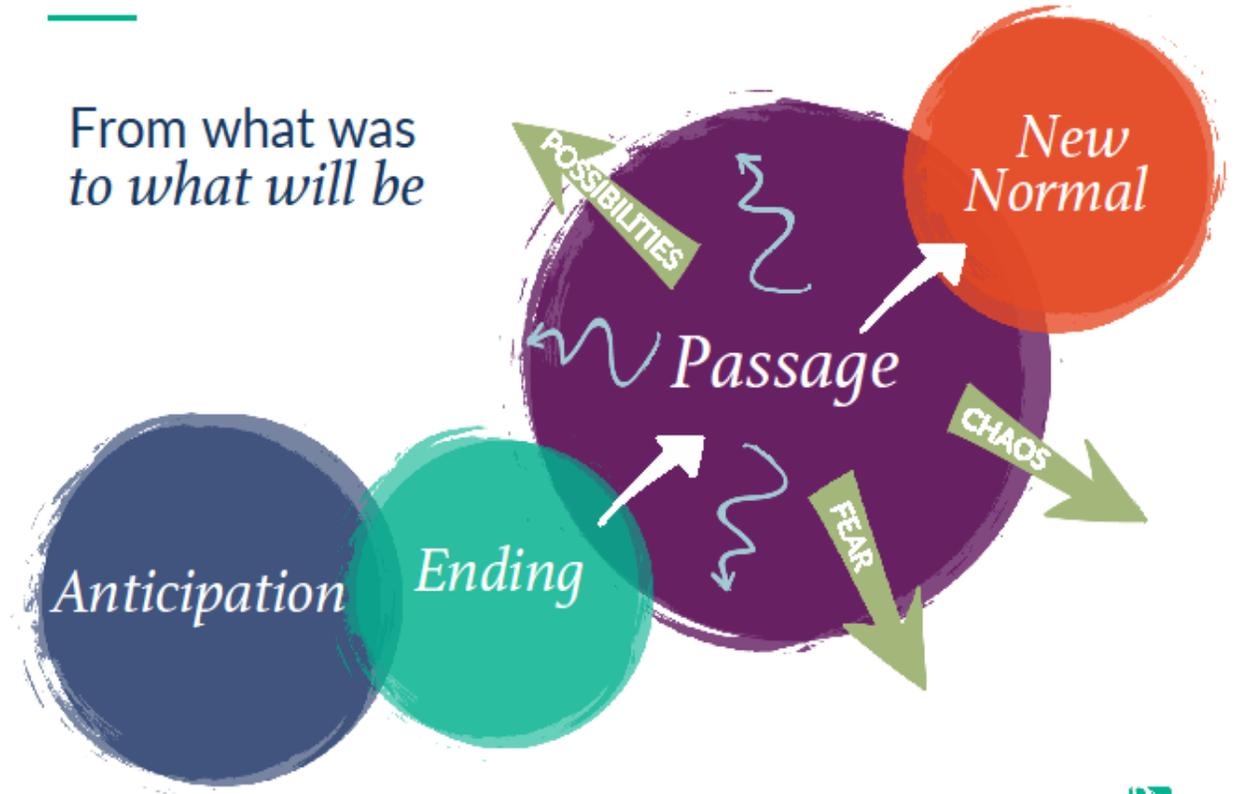
Identifying modifiable risk factors is essential for effectively managing elderly health and developing strategies to extend both lifespan and health span.

Isolation and loneliness are common experiences when life has changed.

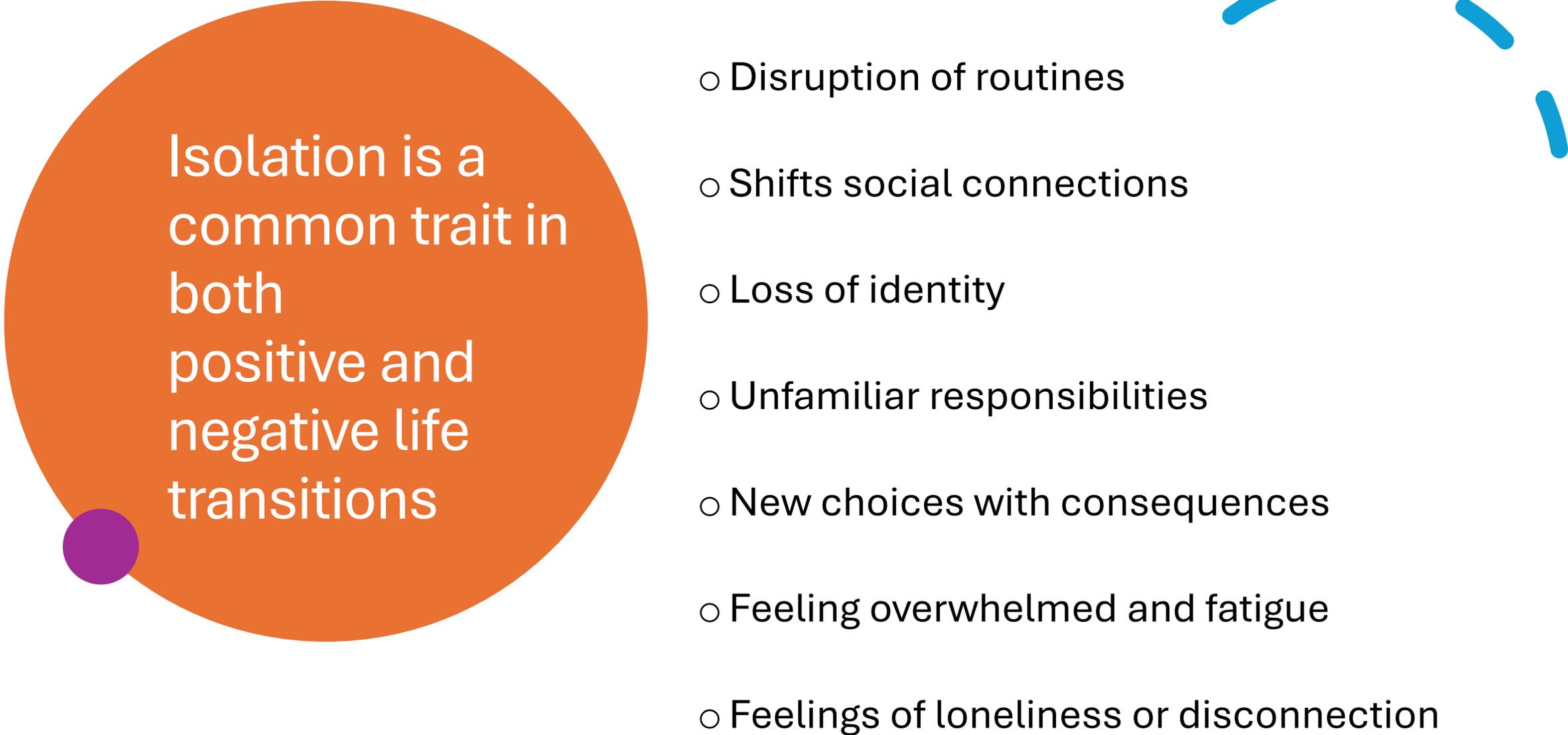
At what stage might isolation and loneliness occur?

Four Stages of Transition

From what was
to what will be



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Isolation is a
common trait in
both
positive and
negative life
transitions

- Disruption of routines
- Shifts social connections
- Loss of identity
- Unfamiliar responsibilities
- New choices with consequences
- Feeling overwhelmed and fatigue
- Feelings of loneliness or disconnection

Behavioral Signs of Isolation

- **Avoidance of social interaction:** They may decline invitations, stop reaching out to friends, or avoid group settings.
- **Changes in communication:** Less frequent contact, shorter conversations, or vague responses can signal emotional withdrawal.
- **Loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities:** Hobbies, routines, or passions may fade without clear reason.
- **Increased screen time or escapism:** Excessive use of TV, social media, or gaming can be a coping mechanism for loneliness.



Pay Attention to Client's Behaviors and Needs

Understand
the signs



Ask
questions



Stay
curious,
check in
on several
occasions.



Remember
transitions
take years



What was
true one
year may
not be true
another year

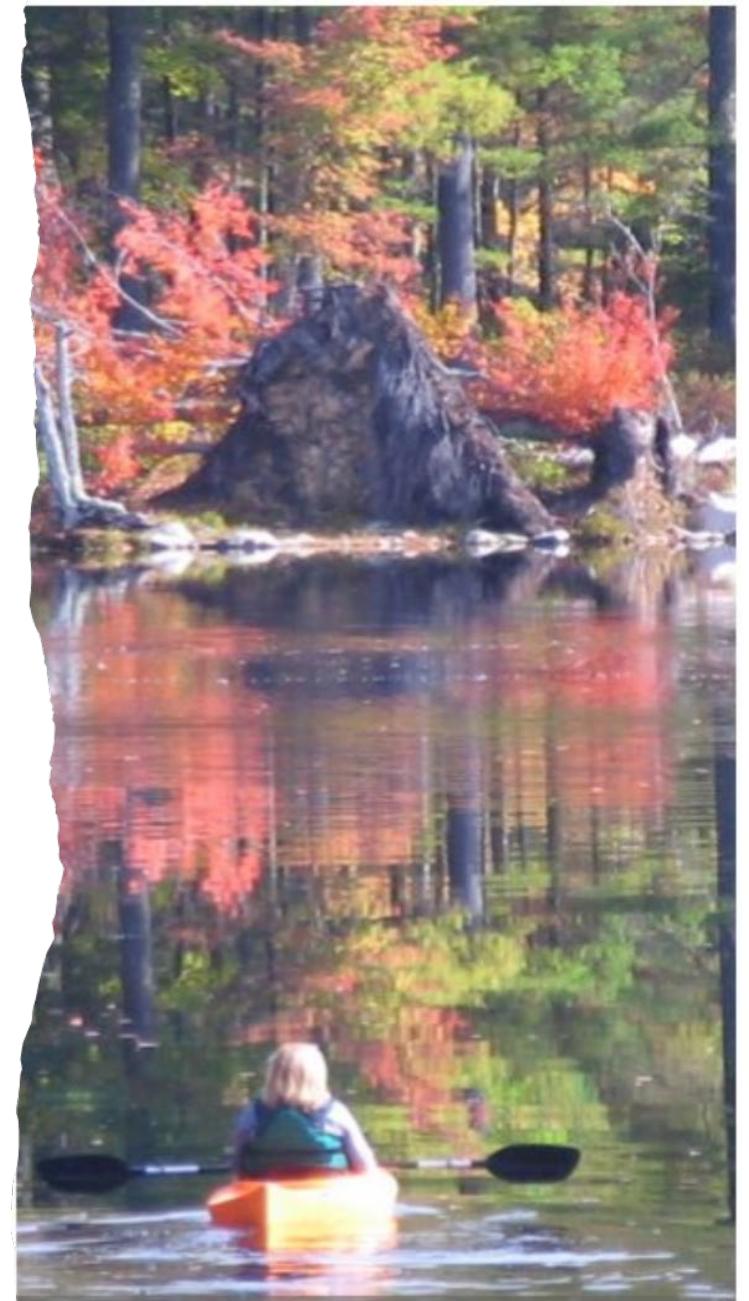
Emotional and Psychological Signs

Feelings of being misunderstood or unseen: Even when surrounded by people, they may express that no one “gets” them.

Sadness or emotional flatness: They might describe feeling “numb,” “empty,” or “adrift” during conversations.

Low self-worth or self-doubt: Transitions often shake identity, leading to insecurity or questioning one’s value.

Hyper-independence or reluctance to ask for help: Isolation can manifest as a belief that they must handle everything alone.





Stay Curious

Questions can be peppered during discussions.

- How many people are living together in your household?
- How often do you visit friends or family or have them visit you?
- What are those leisure/social activities that you do and how often each week do you do them?
- Conditions in the environment make a difference. Talk about where they were born, choices they made on where they live (now and in the past), their job, how they learn, where they worship and play.
- Talk about how screen time can distract from connecting with people.

Create a calendar with activities that meet all four criteria:

Routine

Social

Challenging

Measurable

Routine Reboot Activity Chart

Activity	Routine	Social	Challenging	Measurable

Thank you

