

# Lifeline



## Stay Connected

Helping older adults stay connected  
can lead to better health



## Problem:

The number one emerging issue facing seniors in Canada is keeping older people socially connected and active<sup>1</sup>. Loneliness and social isolation among Canada's seniors has become a significant health and social issue. Almost 20% of Canadian seniors report being lonely, and 30% are at risk of becoming socially isolated<sup>1</sup>.

## Need:

Seniors need a way to stay connected, regardless of their situation. Loneliness and isolation are linked to increased risks of depression, anxiety, and cognitive decline. Socially connected seniors often have better overall physical and mental health, better mood, less stress, and an improved quality of life.

## Solution:

While Lifeline is not a substitute for social connection, Lifeline can provide a connection for seniors. When someone press their button, a friendly, caring, professional Response Associate will respond to their call to see if they need help. It won't replace deep social connection, but it's a point of human contact that could provide some peace of mind.

## Case Study

Albert was a relatively healthy, socially active 85-year-old retired man living in a suburban home. He lives alone after his wife died several years ago. His daughter lives about 30 minutes away and his son lives overseas. They both call regularly and have tried to teach him how email, text and videoconference, but it wasn't for him.

He was active at his church and curling club, golfed regularly, and often drove to visit friends. But his eyesight started failing about a year ago so he was forced to give up his driver's license, which limited his ability to get out. He stopped curling and golfing due to his poor eyesight.

Recently Albert had a fall which affected his mobility. Gradually, Albert has become almost completely housebound, especially in the winter. Albert often feels lonely and anxious. Some days he feels it's hardly worth getting out of bed or even changing from his pyjamas. He's become unmotivated to eat properly, exercise, or make phone calls.

Albert's doctor and children are suggesting he move into a seniors' residence. But in the meantime, his daughter signed him up for the Lifeline service with fall detection. He has felt a little less alone knowing there's always someone there.





# Risk factors for social isolation and loneliness<sup>2</sup>

- living alone
- being age 80 or older
- having compromised health status
- having multiple chronic health problems
- having no children or contact with family
- lacking access to transportation
- living with low income
- changing family structures
- location of residence
- experiencing critical life transitions such as retirement, death of a spouse, or losing a driver's license
- lacking awareness of or access to community services and programs
- being a caregiver.

Social isolation can result from physical changes, life changes, environmental factors etc. In Albert's case, some of his physical changes include his failing eyesight and his fall. A major life change for Albert was the death of his wife and other factors would have to include losing his driver's license. All of these contribute his increasing social isolation.

## Benefits of social connections for seniors

Social connections are important for everyone's physical and mental well-being. Research shows strong links between social isolation and some serious conditions, including heart disease, stroke, diabetes, dementia, depression, anxiety, and premature death<sup>2</sup>.



# Tips to avoid loneliness and isolation

Loneliness and social isolation are challenges that many older adults face, but they are not impossible. Small steps to stay connected can bring connection and enrich lives.

- **Reach out to a loved ones:** Phone calls, video chats, emails and text (even regular mail) can provide a feeling of connection, even if they're far away. In Albert's case, with a little help from his kids, learning how to keep in touch via electronic means could open up a world of social connection with friends and family.
- **Join groups:** Local seniors clubs, religious groups, or volunteer organizations can offer opportunities tailored to older adults to help meet new people. Albert's local community centre offers weekly seniors meetings and they try to provide transportation for those who need it.
- **Try new things:** New activities can provide a sense of purpose and an opportunity to meet others with similar interests. The internet can provide a wealth of resources.
- **Consider technology:** Technology can provide great opportunities to stay connected. Online communities, from exercise groups to book clubs, offer a virtual way to socialize without leaving home. Church services often offer services over videoconference, fitness classes are available on YouTube or Zoom, videoconferencing with family and friends can be a great substitute for face to face visits. Albert's siblings are similarly housebound so the ability to do regular Zoom chats is a way to stay in touch.
- **Ask for support:** Support groups, therapists, clergy, can help if one is struggling with feelings of loneliness or isolation. Many professionals specialize in helping older adults navigate these challenges, and it's okay to seek help when you need it.

Remember, it's never too late to build new connections and rediscover a sense of belonging.



# Signs a loved one could use more support<sup>3</sup>

Socially isolated or lonely seniors who struggle to care for themselves are not willing or able to perform important self-care tasks such as:

- providing basic needs like appropriate food, clothing, and adequate shelter
- obtaining adequate medical care
- obtaining goods and services needed to maintain physical and mental health, well-being, personal hygiene and general safety
- managing financial affairs

When visiting isolated loved ones, look for signs of poor overall self-care like:

## Physical Health

- Poor nutrition which may show as noticeable recent weight loss
- Dehydration may show as dry mouth, headaches, lightheadedness
- Bedsores
- Poor or worsening personal hygiene
- Ongoing physical health problems
- Unexpected or unexplained deterioration of health

## Mental Health

- Decline in cognitive abilities or memory issues (this may be a sign of other issues such as dementia)
- Lack of motivation

## Home Environment

- Excessive dirt or odour, hazardous, unsafe or unclean living conditions
- Piles of unopened mail or increased clutter
- Needing assistance with daily tasks

## Other Signs

- Inadequate or inappropriate clothing
- Absence of needed eyeglasses, hearing aids, dentures or prostheses
- Signs of excessive drugging, refusal to take medication or other drug misuse.

# There's a Lifeline solution for you

## Lifeline can help you stay independent with peace of mind

### At home

Help at the press of a button in and around the home.

**Ideal Candidate:** For people who spend much of their time at home and want to be able to access emergency help at any time, day or night.

**Optional fall detection** can automatically call for help if it detects a fall, even if you can't push your button<sup>4</sup>.



### On the Go

It's the mobile medical alert solution that gives you the freedom to go where you want, when you want<sup>5</sup>.

**Ideal Candidate:** Those who want to remain active and independent with confidence and peace of mind – at home or on the go.



### On the Go with Wandering

Caregivers can track their loved one's general location on their smartphone when they leave their home. Also includes the other benefits of On the Go<sup>5</sup>.

**Ideal Candidate:** Caregivers with a loved one who lives independently but has a tendency to wander, gets lost easily or gets confused in crowds.



### MedReady Medication Dispenser

It's a simple, affordable and automated way to manage multiple medications with 24/7 monitoring.

**Ideal Candidate:** Those with complicated medication regimens, take multiple medications or have a tendency to forget to take their medications.



# The Lifeline difference

Lifeline is the leading provider of medical alert services in Canada today<sup>6</sup>. Lifeline helps empower older adults to feel safer, confident, and independent both at home or on the go.

## Fall detection

Our fall detection technology can automatically place a call for help if it detects a fall – even if subscribers are unable or reluctant to press their help button<sup>4</sup>.

## Easy to use

Subscribers can press their help button at any time to request the assistance they need – anytime, anywhere<sup>5</sup>.

## Responsive

Canadian round-the-clock monitoring with Lifeline's specially trained Response Associates respond in 240+ languages, 24/7, 365 days a year. Each subscriber decides how they would like to be helped – by a neighbour, family member, or emergency services.



**Call today for more information**

**1-800-LIFELINE  
1-800-543-3546**

**[www.lifeline.ca](http://www.lifeline.ca)**

1. Statistics Canada, A look at loneliness among seniors, November 6, 2023.
2. Report on the Social Isolation of Seniors 2013–2014, Government of Canada.
3. Self-Neglect by Older Adults, The National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, Health Canada July 1999.
4. Equipment may not detect all falls. If able, users should always push their button when they need help.
5. On the Go coverage outside the home and wireless service in the home provided with sufficient access to/coverage by the applicable third party wireless network. Certain limitations subject to third party cellular provider availability and coverage. Signal range may vary. Lifeline may not always be able to determine your location.
6. Claim based on the number of subscribers.

# Lifeline

Lifeline Canada  
95 Barber Greene Road, Suite 105  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
M3C 3E9  
Tel: 1-800-387-8120

**[www.lifeline.ca](http://www.lifeline.ca)**