



Naomi Ruth Cohen
Institute for Mental Health Education
at The Chicago School

2026
Community Mental Health Conference



**Alone
Together**

Confronting Loneliness
Across the Lifespan

Saturday, May 16th, 2026

9:00am-5:00pm

Evanston Township High School
1600 Dodge Ave, Evanston



Naomi Ruth Cohen
Institute for Mental Health Education



TheChicagoSchool®

Welcome to the 24th Annual Community Mental Health Conference!



Alone Together

Confronting Loneliness Across the Lifespan

We are honored to welcome this year's panelists: Dr. Nell Compernelle, Ms. Sarah Bier, and Ms. Erin Arnheim, with Dr. Alisha DeWalt serving as our moderator. We also extend our sincere thanks to our exceptional breakout session presenters, joining us from Illinois, Ohio, and Washington, DC.

This conference is made possible through the dedication of many individuals. Special thanks to our host, Evanston Township High School, and to The Chicago School for their continued partnership. We are deeply grateful to our conference planning committee and volunteers, as well as the generous sponsors and in-kind donors who help make this event accessible to our community.

As you plan for your day, a few brief logistics to keep in mind: The panel presentation will take place in the Auditorium from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. If you have a question for the panel, you may write it on the enclosed index card and return it to a volunteer or submit it electronically using the instructions on your Conference Schedule. Following the panel, please join us across the hall in the East Cafeteria (E120) for lunch and an opportunity to explore the Exhibit Hall. Breakout sessions begin at 1:00 p.m. and 2:15 p.m.; if you registered, your selected sessions are listed on the back of your name tag. At 3:30 p.m., we hope you will take part in a Community Connection Circle, followed by a reception.

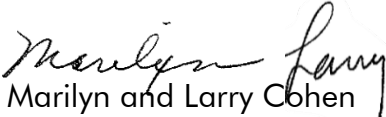
We encourage you to complete breakout session and overall conference evaluations. Your feedback is invaluable and helps to strengthen future programming. Volunteers are available to assist.

If you would like to support the NRCI's work, donations directly fund low-cost mental health education throughout Chicagoland and advance efforts to reduce stigma surrounding mental illness and suicide. A QR code for online giving is included in your folder, and envelopes are available at the NRCI table.

Finally, please save the date for our 25th Annual Community Mental Health Conference, tentatively scheduled for **Saturday, May 15, 2027**. We look forward to gathering again to reflect on how far we've come in reducing stigma associated with mental illness.

To learn more about the Naomi Ruth Cohen Institute, explore current offerings, and review our Strategic Plan, please visit www.naomicoheninstitute.org.

Thank you for being part of this important day.


Marilyn and Larry Cohen
Founders


Tracy M. Levine, LCSW
Executive Director

NRCI extends our thanks to the following for their support:

2026 Conference Committee

Larry Cohen
Marilyn Cohen
Charliese Agnew
Ana Belmonte
Tom Golebiewski
Harvey Kelber
Sue Laue
Tom Laue
Michael Losoff
Mark Reinecke
Renaë Schweers
Hollie Sobel
Nancy Sussman
Addie Van Zwoll
Sharon Weingarten

Evanston Township High School

Ta'Mia Banks
Jason Crawford
Corey Edwards
William Jenkins
Clinton Jones

NRCI Team

Amber Greviskes
Karishma Sunkara
Alyssa Unger
Sophia Vargas
Devanshee Parekh
Tanisha Sharma





Meet the Conference Panel

Marilyn & Larry Cohen - Founders

www.naomicoheninstitute.org



Marilyn and Larry Cohen founded the Naomi Ruth Cohen Charitable Foundation in 2000 in honor of their daughter Naomi who died by suicide at age 33, having lived with bipolar disorder. Their mission is to reduce the stigma often associated with mental illness. In 2002 they hosted the first Community Mental Health Conference, and in 2008, they partnered with The Chicago School to form the Naomi Ruth Cohen Institute for Mental Health Education at The Chicago School.

Tracy Levine, MSW, LCSW - Executive Director

tlevine@thechicagoschool.edu

312-467-2512



A Licensed Clinical Social Worker with decades of experience, Tracy joined NRCI in 2021, bringing a compassionate commitment to behavioral health, direct services, and community empowerment.

She earned her BA and MSW from the University of Michigan and has held senior and executive leadership roles at agencies serving children, families, and individuals navigating a range of challenges. Her work has centered on building resilience, strengthening family relationships, and supporting emerging adults. She has also served as an Assistant Professor in The Chicago School's Counseling Psychology program.

Tracy is a certified instructor in multiple Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) curricula including Youth and teen MHFA, as well as Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) suicide prevention. Known for her empathetic and engaging teaching style, she makes complex topics accessible and actionable.

Alisha DeWalt, Ph.D. - Moderator

www.thechicagoschool.edu 312-329-6600



Dr. DeWalt serves as Dean of the College of Graduate and Professional Studies at The Chicago School, where she leads academic strategy, program development, and operations across a diverse portfolio of graduate programs. She collaborates closely with faculty and institutional leaders to drive innovation, expand access, and enhance the student experience from inquiry through graduation.

She holds both a master's degree in clinical psychology and a doctoral degree in business psychology from The Chicago School, bringing an integrated perspective on human behavior, organizational systems, and applied psychology. Her work focuses on aligning graduate education with evolving societal and workforce needs.

Throughout her career, Dr. DeWalt has advanced interdisciplinary collaboration, program innovation, and student success. She is committed to preparing professionals to address complex challenges across healthcare, organizations, and communities, while contributing to the broader conversation on the future of graduate education and the mental health workforce.

Nell Compernelle, Ph.D. - Panelist

www.norc.org

773-256-6000



Dr. Compernelle is a Senior Research Scientist at The Bridge at NORC at the University of Chicago and a sociologist whose work centers on the structural drivers of loneliness and social connection. She studies how social, cultural, and technological shifts shape the ways people build relationships, experience isolation, and seek support.

Her current research examines the antecedents of loneliness, pathways to prevention, and opportunities for community-level intervention. She also investigates the expanding role of the digital realm; how online environments can both foster belonging and deepen disconnection. Her work includes a collaborative project with Dr. Louise Hawkey tracing the evolution of momentary loneliness over time, culminating in a forthcoming book chapter scheduled for release in 2026.

Sarah Bier, PMHNP-BC, CNM-FPA, APN - Panelist

www.psychiatrystudio.com

312-380-6378



Sarah is a certified nurse midwife and psychiatric nurse practitioner whose clinical work spans the full lifespan, with a focus on how life transitions influence mental health and connection. She supports individuals navigating loneliness and isolation during adolescence, parenthood, perimenopause, and older adulthood, periods marked by profound hormonal, identity, and relational shifts.

In her practice at Psychiatry Studio, Sarah integrates therapy, medication management (including hormonal replacement therapy), lifestyle interventions, and social-support strategies to help clients rebuild connection and strengthen overall well-being.

Erin Arnheim, BBA, M.Ed. - Panelist

www.lenseadvisory.com

224-362-1024



Erin brings a powerful, personal perspective on loneliness shaped by major life transitions that began in childhood, resurfaced during her experience as a foster parent, and reemerged through a period of career upheaval and the search for belonging in mid-adulthood. After more than two decades in financial services, she experienced a season of profound professional and personal change that left her feeling isolated and unmoored. She speaks candidly about how unemployment, identity loss, and disconnection can quietly accumulate, even in lives that appear full and successful.

Now the founder of Lense Advisory, Erin leads with empathy, compassion, and a deep commitment to creating environments where people feel seen, supported, and connected. As a lived-experience speaker, she shares her journey through loneliness, the courage required to reclaim joy, and the power of choosing quality over quantity in relationships. Her story offers hope, authenticity, and a reminder that reconnection is possible, even in the most challenging seasons.



Meet the Conference Presenters



Alexis Del Campo Eyler, MSW, LSW
Unseen and Unsupported: Understanding
Grief and Loss in Adoption



Ana Belmonte, PsyD
Recognizing Concerning Patterns: Isolation
Within the Pathway to Violence



Cristina Castillo, MS
Belonging as Prevention: Addressing
Loneliness in Hispanic/Latino Communities



Halle Schelb, LPCC-S
The Loneliness of Masking: How Late-
Identified ADHD & Autism Shape Connection



Julie Fanning, DSW, LCSW
The Hidden Grief of Professional Helpers:
Isolation, Identity, and Connection



Mahalia Jackson, MPH
Solitude and Substance Use:
Understanding Loneliness in Addiction



Meg Bowman, MS, CNS, LDN, CHES
Loneliness Lives in the Body: How Nutrition
Supports Safety, Belonging, and Connection



Mojgan Makki, MD, DFAACAP
The Hidden Cycle: Loneliness and Mental
Health in Children and Young Adults



Natalie Larson, BA
Solitude and Substance Use:
Understanding Loneliness in Addiction



Samantha Willi, LPCC-S
The Loneliness of Masking: How Late-
Identified ADHD & Autism Shape Connection



Sandra Clavelli, PsyD
Balancing Independence AND Connection
by Tapping the B.R.A.K.E.S.SM



Sharon Dornberg-Lee, LCSW
Social Isolation and Loneliness in Late Life



Urvi Sharma, MA
Alone at Work: Why Organizational Systems
Must Confront Workplace Loneliness





Naomi Ruth Cohen
Institute for Mental Health Education
at The Chicago School



Alone Together

Confronting Loneliness Across the Lifespan

Thank you to our 2026 Conference Sponsors!

Pillar



**American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention**

Illinois

The Illinois Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention focuses on eliminating the loss of life from suicide through education, research, outreach, and advocacy. Their grassroots work focuses on eliminating the loss of life from suicide by delivering innovative prevention programs, educating the public about risk factors and warning signs, raising funds for suicide research and programs, and reaching out to those individuals who have lost someone to suicide.

As a part of AFSP's growing nationwide network of chapters, they bring together people from all backgrounds

who want to prevent suicide in our communities. Families and friends who have lost someone to suicide, vulnerable individuals, mental health professionals, clergy, educators, students, community/business leaders, and many others energize the chapter.

Website: <https://afsp.org/chapter/illinois>

Phone: 312-890-2377

BENEFACTOR

TRILOGY

Mental Wellbeing

Trilogy's mission is to provide comprehensive integrated care that enables people in mental health recovery to build meaningful and independent lives. They envision a society where everyone impacted by mental illness is valued, embraced, and supported holistically, systematically, and culturally; where the stigma of mental illness is eliminated; and where quality of care is not determined by socioeconomic status.

toward stability. They provide our clients with an array of essential services and ongoing support so that they can live independently and thrive in our community.

For 50 years, Trilogy has provided people across Chicago and beyond with support to recover from mental illness and move

Website: <https://www.trilogyinc.org>

Phone: 773-382-4060

BENEFACTOR



Ascension St. Joseph

Ascension Saint Joseph Hospital is a community-based hospital committed to providing compassionate, personalized health-care to individuals and families across Chicago. As part of the Ascension health system, Saint Joseph offers a wide range of medical services with a focus on personalized care for your mind, body, and spirit.

Website: <https://healthcare.ascension.org>

Phone: 224-470-9407

PATRONS



Since 2005, Yellowbrick has specialized in the assessment and treatment of adolescents and emerging adults experiencing emotional, psychological, and developmental challenges. Their treatment model integrates neuroscience, trauma-informed psychotherapy, life skills development, and wellness approaches to support young people in navigating the transition to adulthood.

By combining clinical treatment with active participation in school, work, relationships, and community life, Yellowbrick helps individuals build confidence, strengthen coping skills, and develop meaningful goals for the future. Located in Evanston, Yellowbrick offers a continuum of care including The Residence, Partial Hospitalization (PHP), Intensive Outpatient (IOP), outpatient services, specialty programs, and wraparound supports tailored to each individual's needs.

Website: <https://yellowbrickprogram.com/>

Phone: 866-234-0222



HOME | HEALTH | HOPE

Thresholds is one of Illinois' largest providers of mental health and substance use recovery services, supporting individuals and families across Chicago and surrounding communities. Through a wide range of community-based programs, Thresholds provides outreach, housing support, employment and education services, psychiatry, primary care, substance use treatment, and recovery support for people living with mental illness and substance use disorders.

Thresholds serves diverse populations, including youth and young adults, veterans, young mothers, individuals experiencing homelessness, and members of the Deaf community. Guided by a recovery-oriented approach, Thresholds helps individuals build meaningful, self-directed lives and discover their strengths, skills, and potential.

Website: <https://www.thresholds.org/>

Phone: 773-572-5500

PATRONS



Erie Family Health Centers are committed to providing high-quality medical, dental, and behavioral healthcare to all individuals and families, regardless of ability to pay. Guided by the belief that healthcare is a human right, Erie works to address health inequities and expand access to compassionate, community-based care across the Chicago area. Erie also fosters a culture of dignity, inclusion, and belonging for patients, staff, learners, and community partners alike.

Website: <https://www.eriefamilyhealth.org/>

Phone: 312-666-3494



Endeavor Health is a community-based integrated healthcare system serving patients across the Chicagoland area. Formed through the integration of several regional providers, Endeavor Health offers access to comprehensive medical care across hospitals, outpatient centers, and specialty practices. Their mission emphasizes compassionate, personalized care, community wellbeing, health equity, and improving access to high-quality healthcare close to home.

Website: <https://www.endeavorhealth.org/>

ADVOCATES



Rogers Behavioral Health is a nationally recognized, not-for-profit provider of specialized mental health and addiction treatment. Rogers offers evidence-based care for children, adolescents, and adults experiencing OCD and anxiety, depression and mood disorders, eating disorders, addiction, trauma, and PTSD.

With more than a century of experience, Rogers is a leader in measurement-based care and clinical outcomes research. Rogers provides Partial Hospitalization (PHP) and Intensive Outpatient (IOP) programs in Skokie and communities across the United States, as well as inpatient and residential treatment at hospital locations in southeastern Wisconsin.

Website: <https://rogersbh.org>

Phone: 833-308-5887



Since 1909, Mental Health America of Illinois has been the leading non-profit, non-governmental, statewide organization in Illinois concerned with the entire spectrum of mental and emotional disorders. Dedicated to promoting mental health, working for the prevention of mental illness and improving care and treatment for persons suffering from mental and emotional disorders, MHAII develops and supports policy positions on key mental health issues by working with legislators, state agencies and other not-for-profit groups to advocate for improved services. Sponsor of occasional seminars and educational events on key clinical and policy issues. MHAII is an affiliate of Mental Health America, a national nonprofit.

Website: <https://www.mhai.org/>

Phone: 312-368-9070

FRIENDS

Organization	Website
Center for Thriving Schools	https://www.schoolsweneednow.com/
Impact Behavioral Health Partners	https://impactbehavioral.org/
Institute for Therapy through the Arts	https://itachicago.org/
Simply Bee Counseling	https://www.simplybeecounseling.net/
Skyway Behavioral Health	https://skywaybehavioralhealth.com/
Turning Point Behavioral Health Care Center	https://www.tpoint.org/
Wolcott College Prep	https://wolcottcollegeprep.org/

IN KIND SUPPORTERS



Starbucks
1901 Dempster St. Evanston

corner bakery
CAFE
3232 Lake Ave Wilmette



TheChicagoSchool®

Chicago, Dallas, Southern California, and Washington, D.C., the university's extensive network of community partnerships provides applicable training and networking opportunities.

The Chicago School is a leading nonprofit university dedicated to training professionals for careers that improve the health of individuals, organizations, and communities. By combining education, innovation, community, and impact, The Chicago School Approach provides students with a practical and solutions-oriented education in an array of academic programs across psychology, medicine, business, counseling, and behavioral sciences. With more than 6,000 students and locations in

The Chicago School is accredited by the WASC Senior College and University Commission. The Chicago School is a proud member of The Community Solution Education System, an integrated nonprofit system of colleges and universities working together to advance student success and community impact.

Website: <https://www.thechicagoschool.edu/>

Phone: 866-827-9107





2026 Conference Schedule

9:00am - 9:50am Check-In/Breakfast/Exhibit Hall/Poster Presentations
(East Cafeteria)

10:00am - 12:00pm Panel Presentation (Auditorium)

We will be using electronic forms for audience interaction and our moderated question-and-answer period. You may write questions on the card inside your program folder and hand it to a volunteer or submit electronically and anonymously via your smartphone or other device.

(Wi-Fi access: ETHS_Guest, no password required)

To access the forms please scan the QR codes on the folder card or on the auditorium screen.

12:00pm - 12:50pm Lunch/Exhibit Hall/Poster Presentations (East Cafeteria)

1:00pm - 2:00pm Breakout Sessions Round 1 (Classrooms)

2:00pm - 2:15pm Break

2:15pm - 3:15pm Breakout Sessions Round 2 (Classrooms)

3:15pm - 3:30pm Break

3:30pm - 4:15pm Community Connection Circles (Classrooms)

4:15pm - 5:00pm Connection Reception (Main Office Lobby)

The following poster presentation and exhibit tables will be available for viewing and interaction in the cafeteria during breakfast and lunch:

Poster Presentation:

- *Loneliness: The Silent Struggle in Domestic Violence*
Dulce Torres, LSW; Dalya Canon, MA; Rebecca Cabezas, MS

Exhibitors:

Please take a few minutes to walk through our exhibit “hall” to learn about services and supports available in our community:

- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention – IL (AFSP)
- Center for Thriving Schools
- Community Resources
- Endeavor
- Erie Family Health Centers
- Impact Behavioral Health Partners
- Institute for Therapy Through the Arts
- Mental Health America of Illinois
- Naomi Ruth Cohen Institute/The Chicago School
- Prevention First Illinois
- Rogers Behavioral Health
- Simply Bee Counseling
- Skyway Behavioral Health
- The Schools We Need Now
- Thresholds
- Trilogy Mental Wellbeing
- Turning Point Behavioral Health Care Center
- Wolcott College Prep
- Yellowbrick





Breakout Session Locations

Session Title	Session 1 1:00pm- 2:00pm	Session 2 2:15pm- 3:15pm	Session 3 3:30pm- 4:15pm
Alone at Work: Why Organizational Systems Must Confront Workplace Loneliness	E113		
Loneliness Lives in the Body: How Nutrition Supports Safety, Belonging, and Connection	N111		
Social Isolation and Loneliness in Late Life	N112		
Solitude and Substance Use: Understanding Loneliness in Addiction and Opportunities for Intervention	E115		
The Hidden Cycle: Loneliness and Mental Health in Children and Young Adults	N113		
Unseen and Unsupported: Understanding Grief and Loss in Adoption	E111		
Balancing Independence AND Connection by Tapping the B.R.A.K.E.S.: A Practical Strategy to Combat Loneliness at Any Age		E115	
Belonging and Prevention: Addressing Loneliness in Hispanic/Latino Communities		E111	
Recognizing Concerning Patterns: Isolation Within the Pathway to Violence		N113	
The Hidden Grief of Professional Helpers: Isolation, Identity, and Connection		N111	
The Loneliness of Masking: How Late Identified ADHD & Autism Shape Connection Across the Lifespan		N112	

Community Connection Circles	Session 1 1:00pm- 2:00pm	Session 2 2:15pm- 3:15pm	Session 3 3:30pm- 4:15pm
Caregiving and the Quiet Weight of Responsibility			N111
Connection at Work: Navigating Loneliness in Professional Spaces			E113
Life Transitions and the Search for Belonging			E115
Connection and Belonging in Learning Spaces			E111
Identity, Difference, and the Experience of Belonging			N115
Friendship, Community, and Finding Connection			N113
Make Your Own Circle			N112

Optional:

12pm - 4pm – Sensory Space available in Room E108

4:15pm - Chat with presenters, colleagues and attendees at our Connection Reception hosted by NRCI’s Executive Director Tracy Levine. Please proceed to the lobby area by the Main Office. Light refreshments will be available.



Instructions for Evaluations and Continuing Education

IF YOU ARE NOT SEEKING CEs:

Non-CE attendees are asked to sign in/out of sessions and are encouraged to complete evaluations for the panel, breakout sessions, and overall conference.

IF YOU ARE SEEKING CEs (required):

To receive continuing education credit, you **must**:

1. Be electronically signed in **and** out of the panel and all breakout sessions, and
2. Attend the **full session** (attendance is time-stamped and verified)

We also encourage CE-requesting attendees to complete the corresponding evaluations.

For the PANEL PRESENTATION:

SIGN IN:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check in at a CEU Support table upon arrival <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Participants must attend the full program time to be eligible for CE credit</i> 	
SIGN OUT: <i>(choose one option below)</i>	
OPTION A	OPTION B
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scan QR code #1 2. Select <i>Panel Presentation – Alone Together: Confronting Loneliness Across the Lifespan</i> 3. Select your name → Choose “Signing Out” 4. Complete evaluation now or select “No” to receive an email on Monday 	Check out at a CEU Support table outside the auditorium <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>You will receive an email on Monday with your evaluation link</i>

For BREAKOUT SESSIONS:

SIGN IN:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check in with the classroom volunteer upon arrival <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Participants must attend the full program time to be eligible for CE credit</i> 	
SIGN OUT: <i>(choose one option below)</i>	
OPTION A	OPTION B
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scan QR code #1 2. Select name of the session 3. Select your name → Choose “Signing Out” 4. Complete evaluation now or select “No” to receive an email on Monday 	Ask the classroom volunteer to sign you out <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>You will receive an email on Monday with your evaluation link</i>

EVALUATIONS:

- Optional (but appreciated) for both CE and non-CE attendees
- Paper copies available upon request (see volunteers or CEU Support tables)
- Please complete the **overall conference evaluation** (QR Code #2) when you are finished with your day, including Community Connection Circles and the Connection Reception if you attend
- Evaluations may be completed after the conference

NEED HELP?

Visit a CEU Support Table (located outside the auditorium and in the main lobby between classroom wings) for assistance at any time.

QR CODES:

QR Code #1
Session Sign In/Out



Powered By QuestionPro

QR Code #2
Overall Conference Evaluation



Powered By QuestionPro

If participants have special needs, we will attempt to accommodate them. Please address questions, concerns or any complaints to OfficeofCE@thechicagoschool.edu. There is no commercial support for these programs nor are there any relationships between the CE Sponsor, presenting organization, presenter, program content, research, grants, or other funding that could reasonably be construed as conflicts of interest.

Certificates will not be provided at the conference. They may take up to one month to process in accordance with our accrediting bodies. Certificates will be sent via email.



Community Connection Circles

To close the day, participants are invited to join a facilitated small-group conversation reflecting on themes from the conference. These informal circles offer space for dialogue, shared experience, and connection with others in the community. No pre-registration is required, simply choose the conversation that resonates with you in the moment (3:30pm).

Caregiving and the Quiet Weight of Responsibility

Tom Golebiewski

Caregiving can be deeply meaningful, but it can also bring moments of isolation that are rarely discussed. This circle invites conversation among those who care for children, aging parents, partners, or others in need, exploring the intersection of responsibility, love, and connection.

Connection at Work: Navigating Loneliness in Professional Spaces

Harvey Kelber

Loneliness can exist even in busy workplaces. This conversation explores experiences of connection and isolation across professional environments, including leadership roles, helping professions, remote work, and solo or independent practice.

Life Transitions and the Search for Belonging

Emily Holland

Major life changes, such as starting a new career, becoming a parent, moving, retirement, illness, or loss, can reshape our sense of connection. Participants are invited to reflect on how transitions influence belonging and relationships over time.

Connection and Belonging in Learning Spaces

Kathy Loomos-Ostry

Schools, universities, and training environments shape how people experience connection and isolation. This circle welcomes educators, students, and families to explore how belonging can be fostered within classrooms, campuses, and learning communities.

Identity, Difference, and the Experience of Belonging

Annie Slobig

Identity and lived experience shape how people find connection in communities and institutions. This conversation explores how culture, neurodiversity, social expectations, and personal identity influence belonging and relationships.

Friendship, Community, and Finding Connection

Rena Scheweers

Many people experience loneliness not because they are alone, but because sustaining friendships and community connections in adulthood can be challenging. This circle invites reflection on how friendships evolve and how individuals and communities can create spaces for meaningful connection.



Loneliness Resources

For All

Illinois Warm Line – 866-359-7953, <https://www.illinoismentalhealthcollaborative.com/imhc/en/home>

Belonging Begins With Us: <https://www.belongingbeginswithus.org/join-in>

Commit to Connect: <https://acl.gov/CommitToConnect>

Office of the Surgeon General – Social Connection: <https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/reports-and-publications/connection/index.html>

CDC How Right Now – Loneliness: <https://www.cdc.gov/howrightnow/emotion/loneliness/index.html>

Talking About Loneliness: <https://www.marmaladetrust.org/talking-about-loneliness>

Overcoming Loneliness Together from Humana: https://populationhealth.humana.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Loneliness-Social-Isolation-Resource-Toolkit_2022.pdf

QPR Institute – free “Combatting Loneliness” course <https://qprinstitute.com/professional-training>
(scroll to bottom of page)

Older Adults

Aging Ahead - Friendly Caller Program: <https://www.agingahead.org/blog/friendly-caller-program-3/>

AARP: Tools to Overcome Social Isolation <https://connect2affect.org/>

National Institute on Aging: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/loneliness-and-social-isolation>

Commit to Connect: <https://acl.gov/CommitToConnect>

Friendship Line: (Adults 60+ or Disabled 18+ and Caregivers) 800-971-0016 (24/7/365)

Little Brothers – Friends of the Elderly: 312-455-1000, <https://lbfchicago.org/>

Senior Connections: 847-869-0682, <https://www.cmsschicago.org/services/senior-connections/>

New Parents:

National Maternal Mental Health Hotline: 833-TLC-MAMA (833-852-6262)

Postpartum Support International: Resources for Moms and Dads <https://www.postpartum.net>

Kids and Youth

Safe2HelpIL: Text 72332, Call 844-472-3345, <https://www.safe2helpil.com/>

The resources on this sheet are shared as possible sources of support and information. These hotlines, warmlines, and websites are run by separate organizations, and we are not responsible for their content, services, or availability.

Social Wellness Checklist

Positive social habits can help you build support systems and stay healthier mentally and physically. Here are some tips for connecting with others:



CONNECT WITH OTHERS

Social connections may help protect health and lengthen life. Scientists are finding that our links to others can have powerful effects on our health. Whether with family, friends, neighbors, romantic partners, or others, social connections can influence our biology and well-being. Look for ways to get involved with others.

To find new social connections:

- Join a group focused on a favorite hobby.
- Volunteer at a school, library, or hospital.
- Stay in touch with family, friends, and neighbors. Connect in person or virtually.
- Share your knowledge. Teach a favorite pastime or skill to a new generation.
- Take the stage. Join a choral group, theater troupe, band, or orchestra.
- Help others. Run errands for people with limited mobility or access to transportation.
- Get moving in a class for physical activity.
- Be more active in your local community or senior center or faith-based organization.



TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF WHILE CARING FOR OTHERS

Many of us will end up becoming a caregiver at some point in our lives. The stress and strain of caregiving can take a toll on your health. It's important to find ways to care for your health while caring for others. Depending on your circumstances, some self-care strategies may be more difficult to carry out than others. Choose ones that work for you.

To take care of yourself while caring for others:

- Make to-do lists, and set a daily routine.
- Ask for help. Make a list of ways others can help. For instance, someone might sit with the person while you do errands.
- Try to take breaks each day.
- Keep up with your hobbies and interests when you can.
- Join a caregiver's support group.
- Eat healthy foods, and exercise as often as you can.
- Build your caregiver skills. Some hospitals offer classes on how to care for someone with an injury or illness.



GET ACTIVE TOGETHER

Physical activity has many benefits. It can improve your health, mood, and energy levels. But sometimes, the inspiration to get moving may be lacking. That's when friends, family, and other social connections can help. Research has shown that connecting with others, called social support, can help you get active and make changes to improve your health.

To get moving with others:

- Build your network.
- Make a shared routine. Commit to a schedule with others.
- Be accountable. Share your goals with others. Ask for their support.
- Take a class in person or online.
- Join a team. Look for a local sports team.
- Family activity. Join kids for activities.
- Get dancing. Go to a local dance or class.
- Move more at work. Join a wellness group.



SHAPE YOUR FAMILY'S HEALTH HABITS

Many things can influence a child, including friends, teachers, and the things they see when they sit in front of the TV or computer. If you're a parent, know that your everyday behavior plays a big part in shaping your child's behavior, too. With your help, kids can learn to develop healthy eating and physical activity habits that last throughout their lives.

To help kids form healthy habits:

- Be a role model. Choose healthy food and activities when together.
- Make healthy choices easy. Have nutritious food and sports gear readily available.
- Focus on making healthy habits fun.
- Limit screen time.
- Check with caregivers or schools to be sure they offer healthy food and activities.
- Change a little at a time.



BOND WITH YOUR KIDS

Parents have an important job. Raising kids is both rewarding and challenging. Being sensitive, responsive, consistent, and available to your kids can help you build positive, healthy relationships with them. The strong emotional bonds that result help children learn how to manage their own feelings and behaviors and develop self-confidence. Children with strong connections to their caregivers are more likely to be able to cope with life's challenges.

To build strong relationships with your kids:

- Catch kids showing good behavior and offer specific praise.
- Give children meaningful jobs at home and positive recognition afterward.
- Use kind words, tones, and gestures.
- Spend some time every day in warm, positive, loving interaction with your kids.
- Brainstorm solutions to problems together.
- Set rules for yourself for mobile devices and other distractions.
- Ask about your child's concerns, worries, goals, and ideas.
- Participate in activities your child enjoys.



BUILD HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

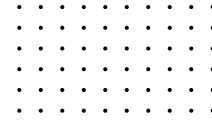
Strong, healthy relationships are important throughout your life. They can impact your mental and physical well-being. As a child you learn the social skills you need to form and maintain relationships with others. But at any age you can learn ways to improve your relationships. It's important to know what a healthy relationship looks like and how to keep your connections supportive.

To build healthy relationships:

- Share your feelings honestly.
- Ask for what you need from others.
- Listen to others without judgement or blame. Be caring and empathetic.
- Disagree with others respectfully. Conflicts should not turn into personal attacks.
- Avoid being overly critical, angry outbursts, and violent behavior.
- Expect others to treat you with respect and honesty in return.
- Compromise. Try to come to agreements that work for everyone.
- Protect yourself from violent and abusive people. Set boundaries with others. Decide what you are and aren't willing to do. It's okay to say no.
- Learn the differences between healthy, unhealthy, and abusive ways of relating to others. Visit www.thehotline.org/healthy-relationships/relationship-spectrum.



NRCI



Our Mission:

The Naomi Ruth Cohen Institute for Mental Health Education at The Chicago School is committed to ending the stigma surrounding mental illness and suicide. We empower individuals, families, and communities by fostering understanding, expanding access to support, and encouraging honest conversations about mental health.

Through community outreach, training programs, and events, we provide education, elevate lived experiences, and inspire hope. Our work amplifies voices too often unheard, creating a more compassionate, informed, and stigma-free world.



Executive Director:

Tracy Levine, MSW, LCSW

NRCInstitute@thechicagoschool.edu

325 N. Wells St.

Chicago, IL 60654

312.467.2552

naomicoheninstitute.org



Naomi Ruth Cohen
Institute for Mental Health Education
at The Chicago School



Marilyn & Larry Cohen, Founders

In 2000, the Naomi Ruth Cohen Charitable Foundation was formed to honor Naomi's memory following her lived experience with bipolar disorder and death by suicide. The first annual community mental health conference was held in 2002.

In 2008, the foundation joined The Chicago School becoming The Naomi Ruth Cohen Institute for Mental Health Education at The Chicago School (NRCI), broadening the organization's reach and supporting its work to eliminate the stigma around mental illness and promote suicide prevention.



Our Work

NRCI is committed to eliminating the stigma associated with mental illness and suicide. We fulfill our mission through educational initiatives including our annual community mental health conference and the facilitation of accredited suicide prevention and mental health education programs. We support mental health advocacy at the state and national levels, and frequently collaborate with community partners.

We offer presentations to community members, agencies, organizations, schools and corporations as well as mental health professionals including but not limited to*:

- Mental Health First Aid (for adults) including curriculums for Older Adults, Higher Education, Fire/EMS, Public Safety, Military/Veterans/Families, and Corrections
- Teen Mental Health First Aid (for teens 14-18)
- QPR Gatekeeper for Suicide Prevention
- Managing Stress in Uncertain Times
- Safety Through De-escalation
- Resilience Building and Mindfulness Practices
- Mental Health in the Workplace

**NRCI will work with you and your team to develop programs that meet your needs, facilitated by our clinically trained and certified instructors. In-person and virtual options available. Many programs are CE eligible.*

