



Basic Fact Sheet: Arts, Loneliness, and Community wellbeing

The data included in this fact sheet is from the Arts & Loneliness Study conducted by Arts Alive! and Antioch University in 2021. There was a community-wide survey with 365 participants and five focus groups totalling 36 participants.

Our community believes in the importance of connecting people in our region

- 97% agreed with the idea that a connected community fosters the wellbeing of its members
- 90% agreed that community events were an effective means to connect people in the region.

Loneliness impacts health

- Loneliness has been associated with depression, anxiety, dysphoria, and social withdrawal¹
- **Social isolation triggers cellular changes that result in chronic inflammation**, predisposing the lonely to serious physical conditions like heart disease, stroke, metastatic cancer, and Alzheimer's disease.²
- Loneliness and social isolation are correlated with increased risks of Coronary Heart Disease and stroke. This means loneliness's impact on health is similar to anxiety and job stress.³

Engaging in the arts, alone or with others, decreases an individual's feelings of loneliness

- 65.4% of 361 survey respondents engage in artistic expression to manage loneliness
- 61% of the 109 people who reported that they **did not** engage in artistic expression to manage loneliness disclosed that they felt less lonely after engaging in their last artistic activity.
- 87.3% of participants who reported engaging in their last artistic activity alone, reported feeling less lonely after that artistic activity
- Those who reported a **SIGNIFICANTLY POSITIVE** change in their feelings of loneliness participated in that artistic activity with five or more other people

Specific activities were identified by survey participants to help stave off loneliness

- Creating Music*
- Drawing, Painting, and Photography*
- Community dancing and spiritually centered physical activity like Yoga and Tai Chi
- Crafting (sewing, knitting, woodworking, etc)*
- Writing and Journaling*
- Listening to Music*
- Participating in creating or attending performances of live Dance and Theatre

**These activities were ALSO named as ways to stave off loneliness during the pandemic lockdown.*

The biggest barriers that inhibit access to the arts are Timing and Cost

- 68% of 307 survey participants selected timing of events related to essential life functions as a barrier to participating in the arts
- 50% selected Cost

Social Anxiety and Fear of Exclusion: 29.8%. However:

- 63% of survey participants under 30 reported social anxiety as a barrier
- 43.5% of those who did not attend higher education and 38.5% of those who make less than the median per capita income noted Social Anxiety as a barrier
- 33.3% of participants who don't identify as white mentioned fear of exclusion as a barrier

Weather: 30%. For non-white or mixed race participants Weather was also selected frequently as a barrier.

Weather was also a significant barrier for older survey participants.

Disinterest: 34%. Those with lower incomes, those who were between ages 30-60, and those who did not identify as white were less likely to select disinterest as a barrier

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5831910/#>

² <https://www.pnas.org/content/early/2015/11/18/1514249112.abstract>

³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5831910/>