



**Display Settings:** Abstract

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## **Toward a better understanding of loneliness in community-dwelling older adults.**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this interpretive phenomenological study was to explore the meaning of loneliness in community-dwelling older adults and to understand their daily practices in coping with loneliness. The sample consisted of 8 women and 4 men. Interviews were conducted with the 12 participants utilizing several tools, including 3 separate interview guides and the UCLA Loneliness Scale, Version 3 (Russell, 1996). A critical finding was that many participants experienced loneliness as a result of disrupted meaningful engagement, due to age-related changes, as well as other losses, including death of spouse, retirement, and giving up the car. Two paradigm cases and themes representing the loneliness and coping experience emerged. Participant coping practices with loneliness included reaching out to others, helping those in need, and seeking companionship with pets. Many older adults are at risk for loneliness because of declining health and other age-related losses that prevent them from remaining engaged in meaningful relationships. Health care professionals can screen for loneliness to identify those at risk and can intervene to help older adults maintain connections. Recommendations for those caring for lonely older adults include active listening, vision and hearing screenings, transportation needs, **pet therapy**, volunteering, and engagement in social activities.

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**MeSH Terms**

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**LinkOut - more resources**