SOCIAL ISOLATION

NOTE: THIS BULLETIN BOARD CONTAINS INFORMATION ABOUT SUICIDE
WHAT IS SOCIAL ISOLATION?

a state in which...
• the individual lacks a sense of belonging socially
• lacks engagement with others
• has a minimal number of strong social contacts
• lack of fulfilling and quality relationships

WHAT DOES SOCIAL ISOLATION FEEL LIKE?

- Aches and pains, headaches, illness or worsening of medical conditions
- Increased symptoms of depression, anxiety, paranoia or panic attacks
- Difficulty getting to sleep, waking frequently during the night or sleeping too much
- Loss of appetite, sudden weight change—either a gain or loss
- Increased consumption of alcohol, tobacco, medications or drugs
- Feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness or thoughts about suicide

RISK FACTORS

- Losing a loved one
- Living alone
- Moving, changing homes
- Chronic mental or physical health conditions
- Mobility Issues
- Language Barriers
- Family Conflict

WAYS TO INCREASE SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORKS

- Exploring an organization/club that you are passionate about
- Hang out with some friends, even if it's just walking down the hall to see a floormate
- Talk to a peer leader on campus such as your RA, GSCA, etc.
- Spend time with the SWA Dogs or other animals- spending time with animals and the people with them is a way to lower social isolation
- Engage with the Northfield the community, whether with kids or older adults, you can volunteer with the CCCE
- See a mental health professional in SHAC
- Join a group fitness class, like the Mindbodyspirit classes at the rec
- Sign up for an intramural sport or club sport
- Attend an OILL talk or other discussion clubs, events, and/or programs

ACADEMICS EFFECTS OF SOCIAL ISOLATION

- Less engaged in class
- Perform worse on exams
- Low attendance rates
- Feel less motivated and put forth least effort
- Feel less satisfied with school

SOCIAL ISOLATION AND SUICIDE

SOCIAL SUPPORT IS PROTECTIVE AGAINST SUICIDAL OUTCOMES

When studying the association between social isolation/loneliness and suicidal outcomes, a number of confounding factors must be considered:
- Temperament/personality
- Low socio-economic status
- Abuse/life events
- Unemployment
- Low self-esteem
- Psychiatric disorders
- Alcohol/drugs abuse/dependence
- Medical conditions

The subjective feeling of loneliness has a major impact, even transculturally. Both the objective condition of being alone (e.g., living alone) and the subjective feeling of being alone (i.e., loneliness) were strongly associated with suicidal outcomes.