

Leeside Manor's

"IS IT TIME? "SELF-ASSESSMENT"

A Guide for Families Navigating Social Isolation and Senior Wellness

Introduction

Social isolation isn't just about being "lonely." For seniors, it is a clinical health risk. This assessment helps you look past the "I'm fine" responses to see the physical and cognitive impact of a shrinking social circle.

Part 1: The "Invisible" Physical Signs

Check all that apply in the last 3-6 months:

- The "Shrinking" Pantry:** Have you noticed more expired food, or does the fridge seem unusually empty (indicating they've stopped cooking for one)?
- Hygiene Shifts:** Are there noticeable changes in grooming, laundry frequency, or general home cleanliness?
- Unexplained Fatigue:** Do they seem "exhausted" despite having no strenuous physical activity? (Social isolation is mentally draining).
- Weight Changes:** Has there been noticeable weight loss or gain without a change in medical diagnosis?

Part 2: The Cognitive & Emotional Pulse

Check all that apply:

- Repetitive Loops:** Do they tell the same stories or ask the same questions more frequently than before?
- The "TV Trap":** Is the television or radio on 24/7 as a substitute for human conversation?
- Loss of Hobbies:** Have they stopped mentioning friends, clubs, or church activities they once enjoyed?
- Mood Shifts:** Have you noticed increased irritability, anxiety, or "flat" emotions during your visits?

Part 3: The Caregiver's Reality

Be honest with yourself here:

- The "Checking In" Anxiety:** Do you feel a sense of dread or heavy "duty" before you call or visit?
- Safety Worries:** Are you constantly worrying about "what if" scenarios (falls, stove left on, missed meds) when you aren't there?
- The Buffer Role:** Are you their *only* source of social interaction and external information?

Interpreting the Results

0-3 Checks: The "Maintenance" Phase

Your loved one is likely doing well, but social circles naturally tighten over time. Now is the perfect time to explore low-pressure social outings or "day-stay" programs to keep their cognitive reserves high.

4-7 Checks: The "Warning" Phase

Social isolation is beginning to impact their physical or mental health. Small "slips" in hygiene or nutrition are often early indicators of a need for more structured daily engagement. Consider a trial run of a day program to "bridge the gap."

8+ Checks: The "Action" Phase

The environment is no longer supporting their best self. It is likely time to transition from "passive" observation to "active" planning. Professional care or a communal living environment isn't a failure—it's a health intervention.