

Reducing Social Isolation and Loneliness



There are many activities available to older adults in Broome County to help them stay connected and prevent negative impacts associated with social isolation and loneliness. Office for Aging publishes a monthly newsletter that provides an easy access to information about programs and events held at local senior centers and in the community. To subscribe to the Senior News call **(607) 778-2411** or visit: **www.gobroomecounty.com/senior** where you can access Senior News online.

Below are activities you can engage in at home or in your community to help you stay socially connected and healthy.

1. Activities in the Community

- **Senior Centers:** There are 9 senior centers throughout Broome County that are open and available for you to join! These centers encourage social engagement through a variety of classes and activities that happen daily. They also serve nutritious lunches to those who reserve a meal ahead of time. Find out about your local senior center by reading the Senior News or by calling the Office for Aging at **(607) 778-2411**.
- **Friendly Visiting Program:** If you are living alone and cannot get out much you could enjoy the company of a student intern. This will help you connect with another person through meaningful conversations as well as partake in fun activities of your interest. Find out if you are eligible for a student visitor by contacting the Office for Aging at **(607) 778-2411**.

2. Activities at Home

If you prefer to try new activities at home, consider joining online programs offered by the Office for Aging or the Virtual Senior Center Programs. Other online platforms are also available to help you get creative, try a new hobby, and stay active. There are new technologies such as robotic pets and personal robots that are available to help older adults battle social isolation.

Robotic Pets (Cats, Dogs, Birds)

- Plush and “lifelike” robotic pets are designed to make realistic sounds and motions providing comfort and companionship.
- Free pets available through the Office for Aging to qualifying older adults: those with a diagnosis of dementia/Alzheimer’s, depression and social isolation
- Please contact **(607) 778-2411** to inquire about getting a pet and completing a quick assessment.
- Pets can also be purchased using a NYS discount code NYS20: <https://aging.ny.gov/tools-and-innovations>

Personal Robots ElliQ

- ElliQ is designed to foster independence and provide support for older adults through daily check-ins, assistance with wellness goals and physical activities, and more using voice commands and/or on-screen instructions.
- Delivered by the NYS Office for Aging for free to qualifying older adults.
- Contact Broome County Office for Aging if interested in an ElliQ: **(607) 778-2411**

Office for Aging Virtual Programs:

- Free weekly classes such as Chair Dance, Chair Drum Exercise and Chair Exercise are offered through Zoom.
- Review the Senior News or call (607) 778-2411 to sign up

Enlivo: Virtual Senior Center Program VSC

- Online platform that allows older adults to connect and engage with each other through online classes. Daily classes can include chat groups, exercise, art, history, science, and music classes.
- Enroll for free by calling the Office for Aging at (607) 778-2411.

Get Set Up

- Online platform for older adults to learn, connect, and share with peers in small, virtual groups. Classes include fitness, history, cooking, music, computer/ technology, and discussions on various topics
- To access free online classes visit: <https://www.getsetup.io/partner/nystate>

Senior Planet: AARP

- Free online classes that help seniors learn new skills, save money, get in shape, and make new friends.
- Access online classes by visiting: <https://seniorplanet.org/>

Pets Together

- Brings the joy of animals to you virtually. Set up free appointments to meet 5 volunteers over a zoom call. The volunteers may have dogs, cats, goats, alpacas, horses, lizards, and other animals. It's a surprise what you will get!
- Make an appointment to see some amazing pets by visiting: <https://petstogether.org/>

Other ways to stay entertained and engaged

- o Ways to “creatively connect” <https://artandhealing.org/>
- o Well Connected has courses, and games that are available virtually – registration on their website: <https://covia.org/services/well-connected/>
- o SAGE Connect links LGBT elders with their broader community, reducing isolation and promoting well-being. Interested individuals can register here <https://www.sageusa.org/sageconnect/> or call the registration line at 929-484-4160.
- o Virtually visit museums all over the world here: <https://artsandculture.google.com/?hl=en>
- o Stream an Opera nightly here: <https://www.metopera.org/>
- o Watch the animals at the National Zoo here: <https://nationalzoo.si.edu/webcams>
- o Practice mindfulness – or find out what that even means for free here: <https://www.headspace.com/ny>
- o Check out <https://www.youtube.com> for a variety of videos on different topics including work out videos, cartoons from your childhood, how-to videos, concerts, and many more videos are available.