

Social Isolation

Issue in brief

- Every community has people who are left out. Race, age, ability, gender, geography and income are all factors that can marginalize people and limit their ability to participate in society. United Way believes everyone deserves to belong, to be accepted for who they are and to be valued for what they can offer.

Why does solving this issue matter?

- Human relationships are the key to living a healthy and happy life. Without the support of social environments, people can experience a lack of participation and representation in their community, and feel powerless and lonely as a result. Socially isolated individuals are also more likely to experience illness and hopelessness, which can impact both their physical and mental wellbeing.
- A sense of belonging is at the heart of every healthy, inclusive and productive community. In a municipality that values community as much as we do, we must do a better job of ensuring that everyone is respected, accepted and supported.

Facts & Stats

- Female led lone-parent families, children and youth, and people with disabilities are the populations most impacted by poverty. Within these populations, several groups are overrepresented in the experience of poverty, including Indigenous people, African Nova Scotians, immigrants and the LGBTQ2SIA+ community.
- An estimated 60% of income assistance clients in HRM have a disability or short-term illness.
- People with disabilities are significantly less likely to have a certificate, diploma, or degree compared to people without disabilities.
- Trans and non-conforming people have double the unemployment rate as the general population, and 1 in 5 have been refused houses or apartments because of their gender identity or expression.
- The experience of isolation and the health risks facing senior populations can be more difficult to address in rural areas. 26.6% of people living in HRM Rural East are aged 65 years and over, and 39.7% of households in this area report having no children at home.
- Many recent immigrants experience language barriers, social isolation and discrimination.
- Nova Scotia has one of the highest disability rates in the country, with 18.8% of the population having a reported disability. Additionally, 46.4% of people with a disability in Nova Scotia make less than \$20,000 a year.
- A lack of affordable transportation contributes to the challenge of social isolation in HRM. Recently, HRM, Halifax Transit and the Province partnered to provide transit passes to all income assistance recipients, their spouses, and dependents. This new transit pass program will impact more than 16,000 residents.