

Background:

- In the Netherlands one out of four (young) adults structurally takes care of a relative needing help.
- Informal caregivers are at risk of experiencing loneliness and consequently of health problems.
- To promote sustainable caregiving, prevention and reduction of caregiver loneliness is important.

Aim:

This study aimed to provide an overview of available interventions targeting loneliness in three distinct caregiver groups: parents, partners, and young adults (16-24 years old). We focussed on intervention socioecological levels (micro, meso, macro), strategies and components.

Methods:

A scoping review was performed, and the literature search was conducted in January 2025 across six electronic databases, identifying relevant peer-reviewed studies published from 2015 to 2025.

Results:

Nine interventions emerged from the review. The strategies and components are explored on the right side of this panel. -->

Conclusion:

This review shows that loneliness interventions are not available for all caregiver groups, and lack sustainable change in loneliness. There is an urgent need for loneliness interventions that go beyond individual-centered strategies only, and interventions targeting loneliness in young adult caregivers. This review exemplifies knowledge gaps, which need to be addressed to be able to create comprehensive multi-level interventions to prevent or reduce caregiver loneliness and improve public health.

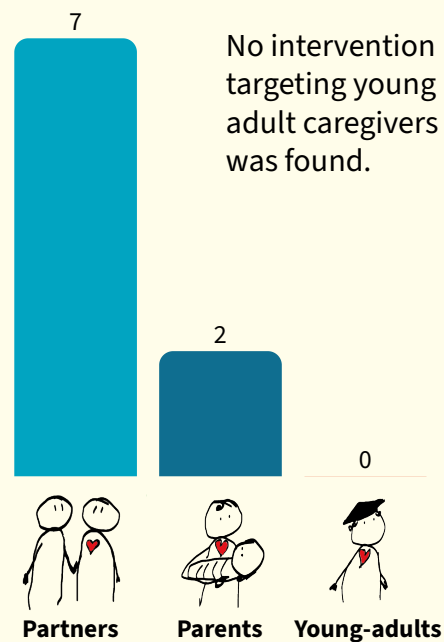
Faces of loneliness:

Results of a scoping review on interventions targeting loneliness in informal caregivers

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Target group



Strategies of the intervention

Eight interventions included information about care, the disease and information resources.



Information and education

All (9) interventions provided social support, i.e. informational, practical, emotional support or social company.



Social support

Three interventions offered psychological element, i.e. mindfulness training or cognitive behavioural therapy to help cope with feelings of loneliness.



CBT and/or mindfulness

One intervention offered a coaching program, targeting goals related to improving social connection.



Coaching towards goals

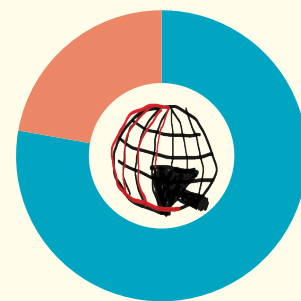
Evidence base

Seven studies evaluated the effectiveness. Only three studies found a significant reduction in loneliness scores at follow-up (at 3 or 6 month). However, effects weren't sustainable in these studies as loneliness mostly returned to original levels and lost significance at second follow-up.

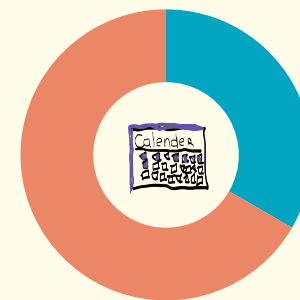


Are we winning in the race against loneliness?

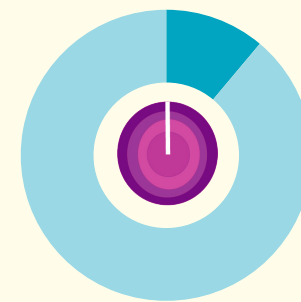
Contextual components



7 Interventions were **based online**; through platforms, websites, or videocalling. The other two interventions were delivered face-to-face.



3 Interventions followed a **scheduled program** (fixed start date). The other six interventions were offered continuously.



All 9 interventions contained **intrapersonal elements** (targeting the informal caregiver directly); only one Intervention also contained community elements, through delivery of community services.



5 Interventions offered **peer group meetings**, whereas four interventions offered one-to-one interaction only.

This project is based in the Netherlands, funded by the Dutch organization for Scientific Research (NWO), and aims to gather knowledge about loneliness in informal caregivers, to spread awareness, and to develop and evaluate interventions targeting loneliness in informal caregivers. The project launched in fall 2024, and will continue until spring 2029. This poster can be downloaded by scanning the left QR.

Any questions about this project or the results? The QR on the right will lead to a Q&A page on slido.com, #3843718.



Download this poster!



Vera: You can find me here during the EPHC. Don't hesitate to ask me any questions or to meet up and talk. You can also contact me by e-mail: vera.knapen@ou.nl



Ask me directly!