

INTERVENTION MODEL

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Isolation is a complex and multi-factorial phenomenon. It can not be tackled with a simple unique solution but needs integrated complementary policy interventions. The Breaking Isolation Intervention Model is a tool to be used by policymakers who wish to tackle social isolation at local level.

The intervention model presented here is built around 4 main policy interventions:

1. **Identifying** people who are isolated or might be at risk of falling into isolation
2. **Helping** those who are isolated by offering them a way out
3. **Awareness-raising** to inform about the issue and equip people (inc. professionals) with tools, methods and knowledge about isolation
4. **Preventing** isolation by intensifying social interactions and tightening community life and care

The model is articulated around 4 types of beneficiaries:

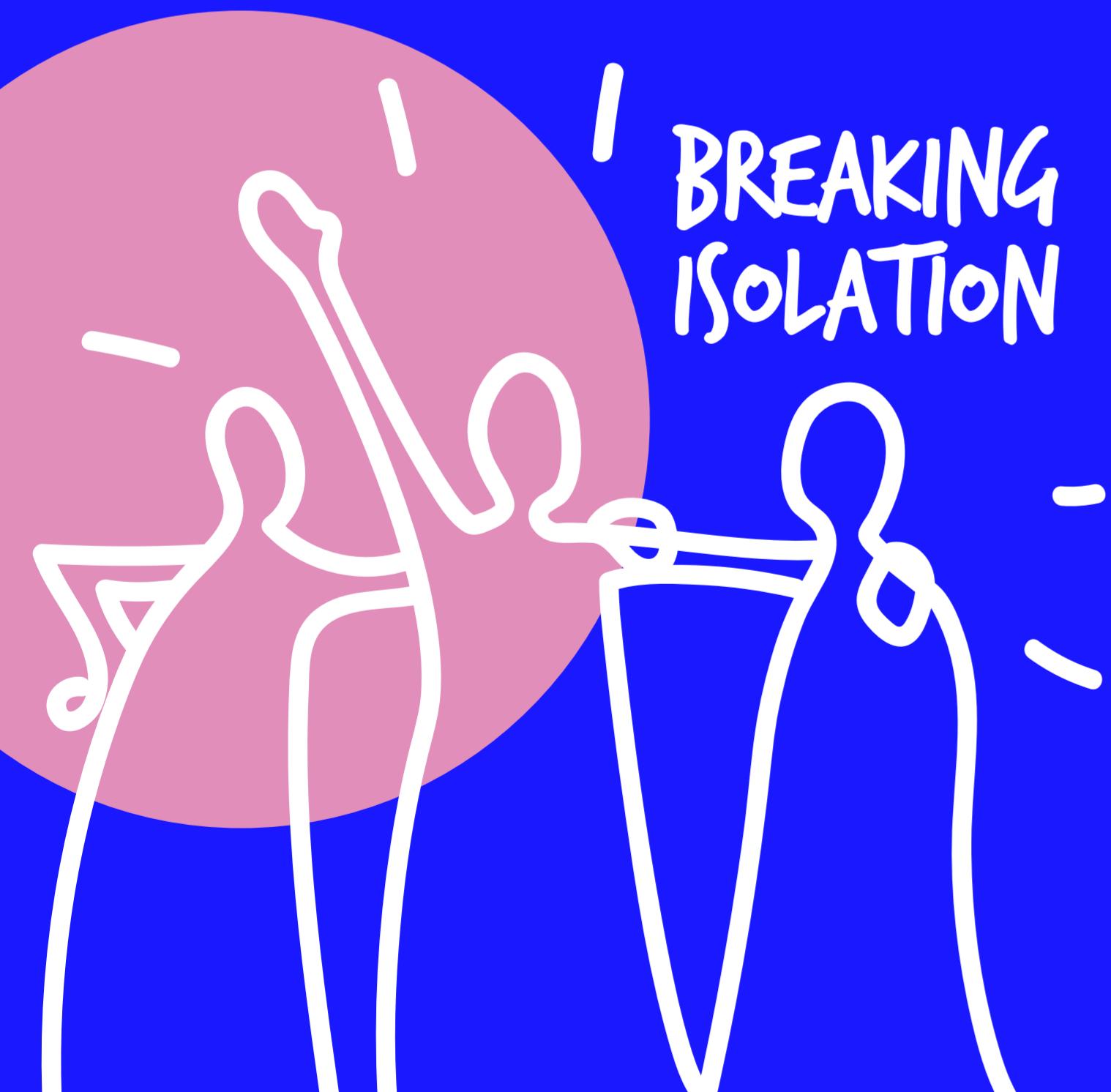
- Those who are isolated
- Those at risk of getting isolated
- Those who can provide help (professionals, care providers, informal helpers)
- All citizens

Interventions may be of 3 levels:

- Intensive support
- Targeted support
- Universal support

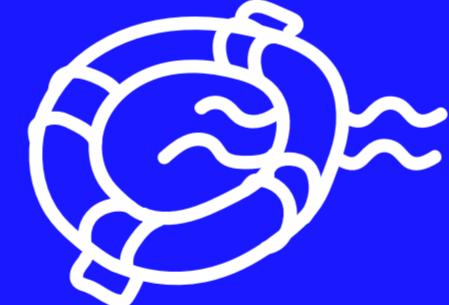
Finally, at the center of the model, examples of policy interventions provide concrete actions that may be put in place.

BREAKING ISOLATION



HELPING

We need to propose tailored solutions to those suffering from isolation



IDENTIFYING

We need to identify those at risk of isolation and those already suffering from isolation



Those who are at risk of isolation (people who accumulates multiple risk factors*)

TARGETED SUPPORT

Active (pre-)retirement
Youth or Elderly socialization spaces/ dedicated community centers
Intergenerational workshops/ events/activities

Isolation & early signs diagnosis tool
Shared database/ alert/report system

Telecare & hotline services

Social prescribing

Policy examples

Local multistakeholder Observatory on social isolation

Training of professionals on isolation

TARGETED SUPPORT

Those who can provide help (social workers, health professionals, caregivers, etc.)



PREVENTING

We need to prevent isolation by investing in greater community life and tighter social relations

UNIVERSAL SUPPORT

Community-based solidarity initiatives
Cultural/art/music/ sport/gardening activities & events



AWARENESS RAISING

We need to raise awareness, inform and train people about social isolation as it is a complex phenomenon and still a largely unknown one

* SEE RISK FACTORS ON THE OTHER SIDE

RISK FACTORS OF SOCIAL ISOLATION

Anyone can experience social isolation, but certain factors increase the risk. Research and interviews with practitioners from the 10 Breaking Isolation network cities allowed us to identify 10 key factors.

Warning: These causes don't automatically lead to isolation, but when combined, they increase risks.

It is also worth noting that the EU Loneliness Survey (which covers 27 EU countries) identifies 4 types of demographic and socio-economic characteristics that are significantly associated with a higher risk of feeling lonely:

1. Poorer people and the unemployed
2. Minority groups (migration background, LBGT, disabled)
3. People who moved places recently
4. Young adults (16-24)



POVERTY

Beyond the stigma of being poor, people in poverty focus on securing basic needs (food, housing, water) with little resources for social activities (going out, restaurants, cinema, etc.).



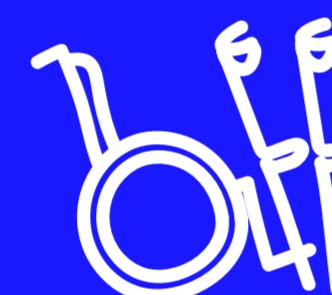
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OR HARASSMENT

People experiencing domestic violence, harassment, or school bullying often become isolated, either withdrawing themselves out of fear and shame, or being deliberately cut off from family and friends by their abusers to prevent them from seeking help.



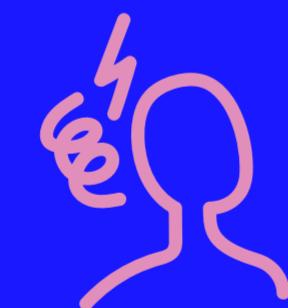
LIVING REMOTELY

Living far from family and friends (abroad or hundreds of kilometers away) or in low-density rural areas with no neighbors increases isolation risk.



PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENTS OR LONG ILLNESS

Physical handicaps (permanent or temporary) may reduce mobility and ability to leave home, causing seclusion.



MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

This includes all forms of mental illnesses and neurodivergence (autism, Asperger, bipolarity, schizophrenia, etc.). People with these conditions often suffer stigma, discrimination, and social exclusion.



DEATH OF A LOVED ONE OR BREAK UP

Though commonly experienced, this can provoke severe distress, depression, and isolation for some people.



Find more info about the Breaking Isolation network by visiting urbact.eu and downloading the baseline study: *Social Isolation - A discreet epidemic*



ADDICTIVE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

While social media can connect people, addictive use reduces face-to-face interaction time. Heavy users may prefer digital interactions over real-world ones and feel more socially isolated than those with lower usage.



ADDICTIONS TO DRUGS, ALCOHOL, GAMBLING

These addictions modify reactions and mood, cause financial and health complications, and may lead to anti-social behaviors.



LACK OF SOCIAL SKILLS

Not everyone has equal empathy, self-regulation, communication ability, or emotional stability. Those lacking these skills struggle to make friends, maintain relationships, and communicate with unfamiliar people.