



SAMUEL CENTRE
FOR SOCIAL
CONNECTEDNESS



Foundation for
Social Connection

Social Connection Measurement Tools Inventory: User Guide Content

About this Guide

This user guide was created to support the use of the [Social Connection Measurement Tools Inventory](#), developed by Prachir Pasricha with the Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness and the Foundation for Social Connection. Given the wide range of tools that exist to measure social connection and associated concepts like social isolation and loneliness, as well as the array of characteristics that define these tools, this inventory was developed as a centralized source of information that supports measurement efforts. While it is intended primarily for practitioners in community-based organizations looking to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions related to building social connection, clinicians, researchers, and policymakers may also find it useful – for example, in screening for social isolation and/or loneliness among patients, or understanding their prevalence in a community.

This user guide provides a brief overview of relevant Airtable functionalities (sorting, grouping, etc.), and defines the categories of information on the non-exhaustive list of 50+ measurement tools that have been identified. It also serves as a starting point for identifying which measurement tool(s) to use in your work. However, given their experience with conceptualizing, developing, and testing these tools, it is recommended that you consult a researcher to identify which tool(s) would be the most appropriate for your particular context. Please see the final report on this research project for more recommendations, key challenges identified, and measurement guides.

If you would like to suggest adding a new measure to the inventory or updating an existing measure, please fill out this [form](#).

Using the Inventory

There are three main functionalities you can use to narrow down your search for tools in the inventory: **filter**, **group**, and **sort**.

Filter

You can click on "Filtered by Status" to add filters that will only show tools specific to your needs. (By default, the inventory is filtered by status to only show tools that have been reviewed and approved.) For example, if you are interested in tools that measure an individual's sense of connection with their community:

1. Click "Add condition."
2. Select "Name" and "contains...," and type "community."

If you want to know which tools measure all three identified components of social connection (structure, function, and quality):

1. Click "Add condition."
2. Select "Component(s) of Social Connection" and "has all of," and toggle on "Structure," "Function," and "Quality."

You can add multiple filters at the same time to further refine your search.

Group

With groups, you are still shown all of the tools in the inventory, but separated into different categories. For example, if you want to know which countries tools were developed in:

1. Click "Group."
2. Select "Country of Origin."

Sort

Sorting tools can be particularly useful for numerical categories. (By default, the inventory is sorted alphabetically.) For example, if you want to easily see which tools have 10 or less questions:

1. Click on "Sorted by 1 field."
2. Select "Number of Questions" and "A → Z."
3. Drag the sort above "Name A → Z."

Definitions

Area(s) of Measurement

Given that different tools measure different concepts, it is important for practitioners to understand which one(s) their intervention addresses and identify appropriate measurement tools accordingly. Definitions for these concepts vary. The ones provided here are from [Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: The U.S. Surgeon-General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community](#).

Social connection: A continuum of the size and diversity of one's social network and roles, the functions these relationships serve, and their positive or negative qualities.

Social isolation: Objectively having few social relationships, social roles, group memberships, and infrequent social interaction.

Loneliness: A subjective distressing experience that results from perceived isolation or inadequate meaningful connection, where inadequate refers to the discrepancy or unmet need between an individual's preferred and actual experience.

More information on these concepts and how they vary can be found [here](#).

Component(s) of Social Connection

The inventory includes tools that measure all aspects of social relationships, as identified by Julianne Holt-Lunstad: structure, function, and quality.¹ These components are defined in the US Surgeon General's [Advisory](#) as follows:

- **Structure:** The number and variety of relationships and frequency of interactions (e.g., household size, friend circle size, partnership status)
- **Function:** The degree to which relationships serve various needs (e.g., emotional support, mentorship, support in a crisis)
- **Quality:** The positive and negative aspects of relationships and interactions (e.g., relationship satisfaction, relationship strain, social inclusion or exclusion)

¹ Julianne Holt-Lunstad et al. "Advancing Social Connection as a Public Health Priority in the United States," *The American Psychologist* 72, no. 6 (2017): 517-530, doi: 10.1037/amp0000103.

Method of Measurement

Note: The information provided in this category indicates the *original* method of measurement used in the development of the tool. This does not mean an alternative method cannot be used, although given that it may not have been tested, it may affect the tool's quality.

- Diary recording: The subject fills out diary entries based on the information requested by the tool's administrator.
- Interview: The tool uses or requires an interviewer to administer it.
- Self-administered questionnaire: The subject responds to the questions in the tool on their own (for example, through filling out a form).

Intended Administrator(s)

Note: The information provided in this category indicates the *original* administrator of a tool (for example, a researcher). This does not mean that it cannot be administered by an alternative individual, although given that it may not have been tested, it may affect the tool's quality.

Intended Subject(s)

Note: The information provided in this category indicates the *original* subject of a tool (for example, a research participant). This does not mean that it cannot be used in an alternative context, although given that it may not have been tested, it may affect the tool's quality.

Target Demographic(s)

While some tools were designed to be used among specific populations (e.g., older adults), others were not – in these cases, information on the demographics of the original subjects has been provided, where available.

Modality of Tool

This refers to the medium through which a tool is administered (for example, through an online form, or a phone call). Note: The information provided in this category indicates the *original* modality of a tool (for example, a research participant). This does not mean that an alternative modality cannot be used, although given that it may not have been tested, it may affect the tool's quality. "Unspecified" indicates that information on the original modality could not be found.

Research on Psychometric Properties

Psychometric properties are used to determine the quality of a tool. In this context, the main ones are **validity** and **reliability**. Validity refers to whether a tool actually measures what it intends to measure, while reliability captures whether a tool consistently measures the same thing. For more information on the different types of validity and reliability, visit this [website](#).

Endorsement(s)/Recommendation(s)

Several organizations and government bodies have provided recommendations for measurement tools. These take into account various factors, including the extent to which these tools have been studied, how feasible they are to implement, and the framing of the questions (whether they are positively or negatively worded).

Tool Guide(s)

Some organizations have developed guides for how to administer measurement tools, which include information on how to maintain privacy, interpret the data collected, and support staff in the implementation process.

Notes

You may need to request permission to use a tool from its author or properly cite its usage. These details can be found in the “Notes” section.