Dr. Vivek Murthy, the surgeon general of the United States, has said the most prevalent health issue in the U.S. is not cancer or heart disease or obesity. It is isolation. For adults living with chronic mental health concerns, isolation and loneliness are even more harmful. That’s where MHA’s evidence-based Compeer program steps in. Community volunteers like Tyler (above right) are screened, trained, and matched as friends to individuals like Alex (above left). Tyler said, "We always go out to eat and spend a lot of time just talking and hanging out." As a busy UNCC student working toward Public Health and Biology degrees (Pre-Medicine), Tyler said, "Alex is understanding and flexible" about scheduling their 1-2 get togethers each month. When asked how he has benefited from the friendship, Alex said, "Many ways...I tend to be introverted and a loner because of my [diagnoses]. Tyler is easy to relate to, amicable and laid back. I've found that friends are hard to keep." Compeer friendship matches are made with common interests in mind; Tyler and Alex both enjoy travel, conversation and all kinds of ethnic food.

Recent articles about the health risks and prevalence of loneliness, particularly among men, including the assertion that "long term chronic loneliness is equal to smoking as factor for early mortality:"

- Boston Globe
- Good Men Project
- Today

Compeer Results

The Compeer model is recognized as a best practice for recovery by the American Psychological Association. Compeer 1 to 1 matches result in respondents reporting:

- 83% improvement in feeling cared about.
- 78% improvement in feeling understood.
- 76% improvement in decreased loneliness.
- 74% improvement in self-esteem.