

NO LiMiTS

Helping Young People
Help Themselves

LONELINESS

Information on loneliness and tips
to help you feel connected



What is loneliness?



Loneliness is generally feeling like you have no one there for you, or you don't have meaningful connections with people, but everyone's experience will be different. You can be surrounded by friends and family and still feel lonely or isolated.

We all feel lonely at times, but that doesn't mean that it's a feeling you should just put up with. It may start to have an effect on your mental health if you feel lonely for a long time.

Does being alone mean being lonely?

Not necessarily. Every one of us has a social battery, and they all last for different amounts of time - you don't have to be a social butterfly, always with people and always doing things, to not be lonely.

Someone who likes spending more time by themselves, or doesn't talk as much isn't automatically lonely, they might just be doing what makes them feel happy and comfortable.

What does loneliness feel like?

Loneliness can make you feel very distant from everyone, even when you are right next to someone, like it's harder to reach out and be present with them.

Some people might find it makes them anxious to attend social events and they might start avoiding them and spending more time away from people, because they don't feel there's anyone there for them if they go out.

It can make some people feel really down and while it is not a mental health problem itself, it can lead to issues like depression, and low mood and self-esteem. Or, some people might become lonely as their mental health has made them withdraw from people.



What can cause loneliness?

Many things can cause someone to feel lonely, but common reasons are:

Feeling like you don't fit in

Lots of people feel like they don't quite fit in with everyone else and it can be quite isolating to feel like you aren't like everyone else.



Having no one to talk to

This could range from having no one to talk to about your passions and hobbies, to having no one to vent to, to feeling like there's no one there to tell if you're struggling or to tell how you're feeling.



Changes in your life

If you've recently moved to a new town, are going to a new school or have a new job you might feel like you don't know anyone and aren't quite sure how to make friends. Even just being in an unfamiliar place can make you feel alone.



Lost connections

You can feel lonely if you've lost meaningful connections in your life. This could be because of the death of someone close to you, a relationship break-up, or feeling like you've grown apart from your friends. At the time, these connections can feel difficult, or even impossible to replace.



Not getting out and doing what you want to do

If you have to stay at home more than you'd like to, it can feel like you haven't got purpose in your life. This could be because you have to care for a baby or a family member, have a health condition, or you can't do or have no one to do the things you'd like to do with.



What can I do if I feel lonely?

Talk to someone you trust

It might not be easy to admit you're lonely, especially to someone else, but talking about it can be really helpful. It can take a huge weight off your shoulders and help you feel in control of the situation. Talk to someone you think will support you. This could be a family member, friend, teacher, No Limits or another helpful organisation.



Try and do things you enjoy

Filling your time will help you feel less lonely, and filling it with things that make you happy will have a positive effect on your overall wellbeing, too. Think about what you can enjoy doing on your own. This could be cooking, reading, watching films or going for a walk.



Focus on yourself

Comparing your life to others' won't do you any good. Take social media for example - people only post the good stuff that happens to them on there, so comparing your life to what you see on someone's social media won't be a fair comparison. Try and think about where you are in your life, what you are grateful for and what you would like to do.



Get out and around people

Even if you don't want to talk to anyone, just being in places where there's other people can help you feel more connected. Parks and town centres are good for being around people and when there's things going on like a market or a street event, they can help you to feel involved.



Join a class, group or club or go to a community event

Joining a class or group might be daunting at first, but it's a great way to meet new people and having a common interest could make it easier to chat to them. Do this for something you love, or try taking up something new.



You could also see what's going on in your community and see if there are any events to attend. This could help you meet people who live close to you.



Don't rush yourself

It might be hard at first, but be proud of yourself for every step you take. That could be talking to someone about how you feel, looking into a group or club to join, or just getting out of the house. You don't have to jump in at the deep end and try and make loads of new friends and try loads of different things straight away. There's nothing wrong with taking it slow.

How can I help someone who is lonely?

Let them know you're there

Letting them know that you're there and they can talk to you could help them to feel like they're not quite so alone. They don't have to directly say that they're lonely, but if you think someone might be, telling them you're there for them if they need someone to talk to or someone to listen can make a big difference.



Another way you can let them know you're there is by asking how they're doing. They might not reach out to anyone if they feel they are lonely and have no one to talk to.



Support them to join a group or get further help

If they have a particular passion or hobby they want to do, you could support them to join a group for it. It can be hard going to a new thing on your own so you could offer to go along with them too, so they have someone there that they know.

If you think they need more support, encourage them to talk to No Limits or another similar organisation who will be able to support their wellbeing and help them feel less lonely.

Be patient

If they don't talk to many people, it might be overwhelming speaking regularly to someone at first, especially about the way they feel. Give them time to process, it might take a while to build up a connection. If they go quiet for a bit, just remind them that you are there for them if they need you.



They also might be anxious to go out and socialise at first, so make sure they know they can spend as much or as little time out as they want and let them know they're doing well with every step they take.

I want to find out more



YoungMinds

youngminds.org.uk/young-person/my-feelings/loneliness



NHS

nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/life-challenges/loneliness



Mind

mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/loneliness



CALM

thecalmzone.net/guides/loneliness-and-social-isolation

Other organisations

If you want to talk to No Limits, our information is on the back, but you can also contact these organisations for support.

All support is available 24/7, 365 days a year.

Papyrus

Phone service for people under 35 experiencing suicidal thoughts. Call the Hopeline on 0800 068 4141.

Samaritans

Phone line on **116 123**. This is a listening service and they won't offer you advice or information.

Shout

Anonymous text service for people experiencing a mental health crisis. Text 'HANTS' to 85258.

Want to talk to No Limits?

We offer free, confidential information, advice and support to young people under 26 in Southampton, Hampshire, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight.

Advice Centre

Open six days a week, come down and talk to a trained youth worker about any issue you have, without needing to make an appointment.

Address

13 High Street
Southampton, SO14 2DF

Opening times

Mon 10am-5pm | Tue 10am-5pm
Wed 1:30pm-8pm | Thu 10am-8pm
Fri 10am-5pm | Sat 10am-1:30pm



Advice Centre

nolimitshelp.org.uk/advice-and-wellbeing-hub/advice-centre

Mental Health Support

We offer a broad range of mental health and wellbeing support, covering our whole area.

Support includes:

- Counselling
- One-to-one or group work with a youth wellbeing practitioner
- Three out-of-hours Safe Havens across our area
- Mental health transition support for 16-25 year olds
- Social prescribing



Mental Health Support

nolimitshelp.org.uk/mental-health-and-wellbeing

Find out more

nolimitshelp.org.uk | 02380 224 224 | enquiries@nolimitshelp.org.uk