

Wellbeing in the workplace,
thriving business.

Loneliness -
overcoming the
silent pandemic

What is loneliness?



Loneliness is an emotional response to the isolating environment we find ourselves in and has even been associated with poor state of mind that causes people to feel empty, alone, and unwanted.

The feelings of loneliness have been associated with introversion, poor social skills, depression and isolation. Loneliness is different to solitude. Loneliness is involuntary isolation whilst solitude is voluntary isolation, where an individual chooses to be alone.

Encouraging social interactions and connections with other people is the key to solving the mass loneliness that is present within society.

What are the causes of Loneliness?



Divorce/ relationship breakup



An unhealthy use of the internet



Depression



An unhealthy lifestyle



Isolated working environments



Death of a loved one



Physical isolation



Being in a new location



Low self-esteem / confidence



Social anxiety



Anti social work hours



Work stress

Health risks

- Alcohol/ drug misuse – some people experiencing loneliness may turn to alcohol or drugs to cope when in social situations or when meeting new people
- Depression / suicidal thoughts – loneliness can cause depression, feelings that no one cares or values them. Sadly this can lead to self-harm or thoughts of suicide
- Impaired brain functions - loneliness has been linked to altered brain functions and associated with the progression of Alzheimer's, decreased memory and learning, sleep reduction, daytime fatigue, poor decision-making as well as disruption to the regulation of cellular processes which cause cells to grow in an uncontrolled manner. This may result in medical problems like cancer, where cells start to divide uncontrollably and form a tumor because they are no longer being regulated
- Lack of exercise and unhealthy eating – some people when they experience loneliness exercise less and their diet may deteriorate. They may feel that their health or quality of life is unimportant. A lack of exercise and an unhealthy diet can lead to a multitude of health risks such as obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes



If you're feeling like you may harm yourself or you are having suicidal thoughts, please contact

The Samaritans: 116-123

Clubs and volunteering

Connecting with one another is the best way to overcome your loneliness. Meeting new people through volunteering, joining clubs or creating your own club is a great way of finding new friendships with people who share the same interests as you.

Alternatively, joining a club that is completely different to anything you've tried before can expand your interests and hobbies. It can also build confidence by trying new things.



- Be confident and optimistic when creating a group or club. Being persistent and patient is a great way to build mental resilience
- Be content with a small amount of connections. Don't expect your group to be massive. One person could help fulfil loneliness singlehandedly. It's not about the quantity of connections, but instead the quality of connections.
- Volunteer and expand connections through helping others. It's a rewarding act that may help you to feel more connected.



The power of pets

Adopting a pet is a good way of relieving loneliness.

First consider if you have sufficient time to look after a pet. Whilst they can be very rewarding they can also be very time consuming and expensive!



Pets can be really comforting during tough times. Depending on the type of pet you choose they can offer unconditional love or playfulness.



Pets can create purpose. Your pets need you to survive, and they can bring great joy, love and loyalty if looked after properly. It's a really rewarding bond and offers company.



Joining a pet social group or club can offer an opportunity to mix with other owners who share similar interests and hobbies. Or if you have a dog, you can simply walk in the park and meet fellow dog walkers.



Relationships & appreciation

Reconnect with old friends or focus on strengthening current relationships. Reaching out to family and friends, interacting with people who know you and can trust may be very comforting.



Interact as much as possible with these people. It creates a deeper sense of reciprocity and greater level of understanding, which in turn builds trust. It's all about quality relationships.



Taking time to think about the good things in your life can help tackle loneliness. It encourages appreciation, confidence and positivity. Focusing on your mindset and realising the impact of your thoughts is an important way of combatting loneliness. Teach the mind to think more positively. A positive outlook brings appreciation and is a reminder of the people that care about you.

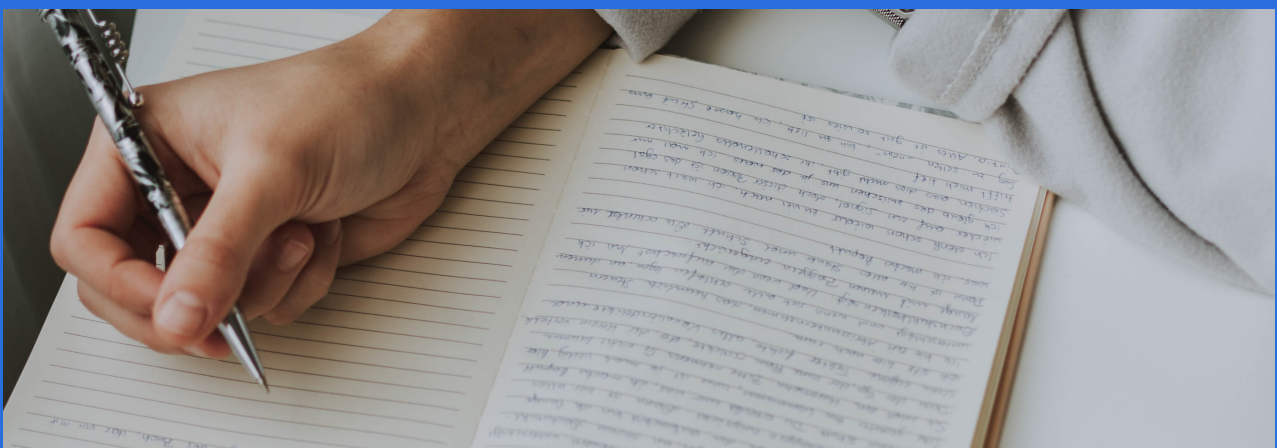


Take part in activities with friends or perhaps those you haven't seen in a while. If it's difficult to meet an old friend in person because of busy day to day lives, organise something for the future so there is something to look forward to.



Problem solving to understand

- Following a social interaction with someone, write down the positives rather than focusing on the negatives. Only then consider what may have gone wrong in order to improve next time.
- Don't be spiteful or angry about bad interactions. This may cause you to avoid engaging with people or lead to becoming antisocial. It's important to be kind to yourself as well as others, and remember, you can't always get it right.
- Be willing to solve the problem of loneliness. Have a determined mindset and when things don't go the way you envisioned, don't give up.
- Consider improving your social skills. There's plenty of great advice online, both about loneliness and improving social interactions.
- Write down the fears and irrational fear you have about socialising. Overtime you may become less anxious about socialising. Focusing on the outcomes can really help when putting yourself in social scenarios.
- Think about what you can do publicly to relieve your feelings of loneliness. Talk to people, be polite to strangers, wish someone a good day or compliment them. Small things can have a big impact.
- Ask close friends or family for advice on how to end your loneliness. A different perspective might be valuable help.



Proactive and patient

- Patience and persistence are vital to ending loneliness. Don't become disheartened and waste time overthinking a situation if you didn't achieve the desired social interaction.
- Continue to put yourself out there for social interactions.
- Once you've made the effort to socialise, maybe join a club or pursue a hobby. It's important to keep going. Maybe some of the new connections will be interested in meeting up outside the club. Continue to interact in person and strengthen your relationships.
- Keep a positive mindset when trying to improve relationships. Approach your loneliness enthusiastically and make positive changes to overcome it.
- Learn mindfulness and hardiness. It can really help in becoming more patient and calm. Apps such as Headspace, Calm and HappyNotPerfect are great tools to train the mind to think more positively and rationally.



Keep occupied and distracted from loneliness whilst waiting for social connections to form. Reading books, doing house chores and exercising can be great activities to keep your mind active. And remember to not force it. Quality relationships that help remove loneliness from your life take time.