

June 2024



We all feel lonely at times, it is a natural emotion. By building a greater awareness and acceptance of loneliness, we can help ourselves to manage the feeling.

Most people will feel lonely at some point in their lives, regardless of age or background. It's a deeply personal experience that in most cases will thankfully pass. But for a growing number of people, loneliness can define their lives and have a significant impact on their overall wellbeing.

Loneliness will be felt differently for everyone, it may still occur when you have loving support around you. It's not always the number of social contacts but the perception of those relationships that count. Feeling lonely is different from being alone.

Loneliness is affecting more and more people in the UK and has had a huge impact on our physical and mental health especially during and since the pandemic. The connection to other people and community is fundamental to protecting our mental health.

Certain life events, such as a bereavement can trigger such feelings, even if other family members rally around in support. Loneliness can be caused by many other things including leaving the workplace, children or friends moving away, debilitating health condition or illness, no longer being able to participate in normal hobbies or activities and lack of access to transport.



Things you should know about loneliness

Loneliness is a natural feeling

Most of us will experience loneliness at some point in our lives. Loneliness doesn't mean there is anything wrong with you, it's just your body's way of letting you know that you're not getting your social needs met. Like hunger telling you to eat.

You shouldn't feel embarrassed or shameful about being lonely.

Loneliness can affect you at any age.

It is generally thought that the older community are more likely to feel lonely, but this isn't the case, people aged 16-24 are now the most likely group to be affected by loneliness.

There are various reasons for feeling lonely

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Loneliness can be caused by many other things including leaving the workplace, children or friends moving away, debilitating health condition or illness, no longer being able to participate in normal hobbies or activities and lack of access to transport. Emotional loneliness can happen in relationships and families, where you have people in your life, but you don't feel close to or understood by them.

We are all different and you may not know someone is feeling lonely unless they tell you.

Loneliness is temporary

You may not realise it if you are feeling overwhelmed by loneliness, but it won't last forever and you can take steps to feel better.

Loneliness should improve with time. However, often it's advisable to address the situation in the early stages to prevent it becoming a chronic issue. Loneliness is now being recognised for its damaging effects, such as mental health conditions, cardiovascular issues, and sleep problems, it is therefore important to try and overcome the feeling of isolation.

What can you do if you're feeling Lonely?



Catch up with friends – Connecting with the people around you, your family, friends, colleagues, and neighbours are key to your overall wellbeing. These relationships will support and enrich you.

Make new friends – Join local groups or classes based on your interests, not only will you be doing something you enjoy, you'll meet new people with similar interests.

Help others by volunteering – Giving to others is a great way to boost your wellbeing. It can give a sense of purpose and create feelings of positivity. It is also a great way to meet new people whilst helping the local community.

Do things you enjoy – Plan your week to include activities that you enjoy and make you feel good.

Learn a new skill – Continued learning throughout your life helps to enhance your self-esteem and encourages social interactions.

Spend time outdoors – Fresh air, natural light and exercise combined are great for our mental health. Whatever the weather it's great to get outside.

Focus on the positives – When you are feeling lonely, you can sometimes be in a negative frame of mind. Thinking about the good things in your life, remembering happy times or identifying at least one thing each day to be thankful for can help you to think more positively.

Look after yourself – Self-care is essential. Make sure you are sleeping well, eating healthily and being as active as possible. Prioritise looking after yourself.

It's good to talk – If at times, life gets too much for you, it's important that you speak to someone about how you are feeling, this may be a family member or trusted friend, your GP, or a professional organisation.

GETTING HELP:

NHS

www.nhs.uk
www.wales.nhs.uk
www.nhsinform.scot

AGE UK

www.ageuk.org.uk
www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru
www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland
www.ageuk.org.uk/northernireland

CITIZENS ADVICE

www.citizensadvice.org.uk
www.cas.org.uk/
www.communityni.org/
www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/northern-ireland

GOV UK

www.gov.uk
www.gov.wales
www.gov.scot
www.nidirect.gov.uk

Mind

Mental Health

Marmalade Trust

Samaritans

Cruse Bereavement Care

Silver Line 0800 4708090

Your GP

Police Mutual Services

Worrying about money can be extremely stressful and may lead to mental health conditions. Police Mutual are here to help.

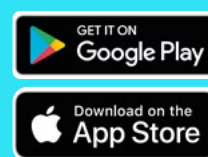
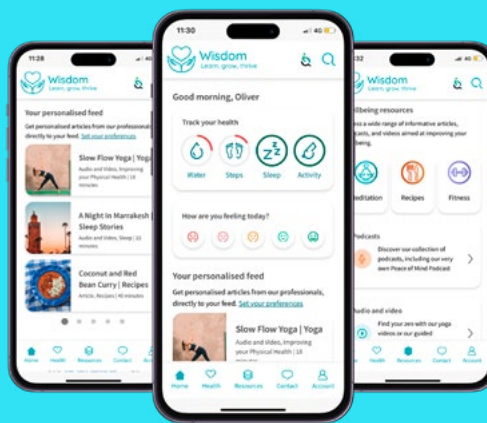
We've teamed up with [PayPlan*](#), one of the UK's leading free debt advice providers, who offer free and confidential advice to anyone in serious financial difficulties.

They're able to advise you on a range of debt solutions suited to your individual circumstances, helping to protect you and your family with a sustainable way to manage your debt.

Get free and confidential help to combat your debt, call [PayPlan*](#) on **0800 197 8433**.

Our Care Line Service provided by Health Assured can offer advice and information, helping with a range of concerns including emotional support. Take a look at the e-portal or download the APP.

Wisdom App



Download the **Health Assured App** and register today - your code is **MHA107477**

Police Mutual

To read more of our wellbeing guides take a look at the wellbeing pages on the NARPO website.

Visit policemutual.co.uk



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