



Loneliness and isolation

We all experience loneliness at times. When you're lonely, you feel like you're on your own, even if you're surrounded by people. You may feel that people don't understand you or care for you the way you want them to.

A lack of connection can make you feel sad and affect your self-esteem.

Your feelings of loneliness may be caused by a recent change in your life, like

- Starting college or starting on a new course of study
- Moving to a new place
- The end of a romantic or platonic relationship
- Grieving someone who has died
- A traumatic or difficult experience that other people don't understand
- Becoming unwell or losing the ability to do things you'd previously enjoyed

Try these tips and strategies when you experience feelings of loneliness.

THINK OF WHAT YOU HAVE

Your feelings of loneliness may be triggered by memories of previous experiences. They may not reflect the reality of your life. Make a list of the people in your life – family, friends, classmates, neighbours – and recognise that you aren't really alone.

Keeping a [gratitude diary](#) can help you appreciate the good things in your life.

REACH OUT

Don't withdraw further into yourself if you feel lonely. It may feel uncomfortable at first, but reaching out and connecting with people will make you feel less alone.

CHECK YOUR THINKING

Negative thoughts can have a damaging effect on your mental health. Your inner voice can often be intensely critical and judge you much more harshly than anyone else ever would. Be more compassionate towards yourself – 'this is a difficult time, but it will pass', 'I am doing well and dealing positively with challenges'

Try these [self-help techniques](#) if you need to change your thinking.

BE SMART ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media and other online interactions can be a way to connect, but they can also drive feelings of loneliness and negativity. What people share online is usually a filtered, perfected picture of their life. Mute or unfollow accounts and topics that make you feel bad about yourself.

BUSY YOURSELF

Think of ways you can occupy your mind and your time. Getting things done gives you a sense of achievement and helps you feel purposeful and useful.

THINK ABOUT OTHERS

Rather than focusing on your lonely thoughts and feelings, consider if there's anything you can do for other people in your community. Helping others helps you feel better about yourself, lets you make new connections and gives you a sense of purpose.

EXPLORE NEW INTERESTS

Keep trying new interests and activities until you find one that excites and energizes you. This is a great way to meet people who share your interests and build new friendships.

LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

Keep doing the things that you enjoy. Try to build some you-time into every day, especially days when you feel low.

Remember, you're not alone

You are not the only person who feels this way. We've all

experienced lonely times. These feelings will pass over.

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