



Tackling loneliness

Loneliness is a feeling that one is lacking a sense of closeness or social interaction with others. It is an emotional state, and even though we can't always change our situation, the aim of this session is to help you identify how someone can change their response to loneliness.

In 2018, a survey was completed by over 55,000 people as part of research called *The Loneliness Experiment*. The research found that about 40% of teenagers said they felt lonely often or very often. The feeling of loneliness is less common in adults but is very common in the elderly. The research also found that most young people didn't know how to address their loneliness.

> It is normal to feel lonely sometimes but important that when we feel lonely we have some ways to address that feeling.

Task 1. Type into Youtube "Why do young people feel so lonely? BBC" and select the below Youtube video. Listen to the video and answer the below questions



1. Which country has a loneliness Minister that helps the government address loneliness?
2. Which section of society is most impacted by loneliness?
3. What does it mean to say young people are 'plagued' by loneliness?
4. Where is the most isolated place on the planet?

We would like to **celebrate** work completed by students during Character Week 2020. If you would like to, please send any photos or copies of your work to CW2020@bishopchalloner.bham.sch.uk



Many people believe that loneliness in teenagers has been rising in the last ten years because of social media. When people use social media to post information or images about their lives they usually only post positive things, it is also well known that people exaggerate or don't post the truth. Due to this, when using social media, people may feel their lives are not as good as other people's lives leading to feelings of inadequacy, loneliness and social isolation.

Task 2. Look at these images taken from social media. Consider these questions...

A. Can you work out what is happening in the images and what the person is faking?

B. What leads someone to post things on social media that are exaggerated or not true/real? Can you think of three reasons why they would do this?

C. How can we stop social media from impacting on our emotions?



Due to the lockdown and social distancing, it likely that loneliness is even more common now. *The Mental Health Foundation* believe that loneliness is associated with an increase risk in certain mental health problems, including depress, anxiety and increased stress. The impact of long-term loneliness on mental health can be very hard to manage. Therefore, it is very important to tackle loneliness proactively and share how we feel.

Loneliness can be caused by not spending time with people, like during lockdown, but even when we are surrounded by friends and family we can still feel lonely. Some people believe this kind of loneliness is associated with not having a purpose or a routine that helps us fill our days in a meaningful way that we appreciate.



There are lots of things that people can do to try to tackle their loneliness. Here are some ideas that could be used so long as social distancing guidance is followed...

- Go for a social distancing picnic or walk with a friend or family member
- Organise a Watsapp /online video call – it could be with an individual or group
- Plan a group quiz, be the quiz master and deliver it over a video call
- Create a games night, quiz or treasure hunt for your family
- Bake something or make something and share it with a neighbour
- Come up with some random acts of kindness for local people or charities
- Help a family member with their chores or work
- Create a gratitude journal to remind yourself each day of the positives in your life
- Take up a new hobby and share how it is going with friends and family
- Make sure you leave your bedroom and spend time in communal areas of the house
- Stick to a routine that keeps you busy and active, ensure you get enough sleep and have productive times of the day
- Join an online fitness class
- Share how you feel with a family member or friend, especially an adult . If you can't speak to someone you know the you can speak to someone at Childline. Childline has an online chat and a number to call that will not appear on a bill (the number is 0800 1111



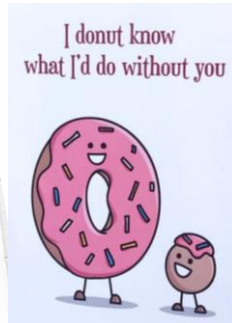
Task 3. Read the example case studies below. Using the bullet point list on the left, write a response to each person sharing the three best pieces of advice you think they should do.

I have felt lonely for a while now. I don't have many friend and my family is always busy. Being home all day is boring and I don't really do anything except for sit on my phone. After so many weeks at home it is really starting to change my mood, I am always grumpy and snapping at my family.



I see my friends at the park to play football a couple times a week and my family are always at home chatting away to me but, I still feel lonely. I find it hard to talk to people about feelings. I don't understand why I feel lonely when I have friends and family.

Task 4. Create a note to send to a friend or family member that shows them you care and they don't need to ever be lonely even when you are not there. The note should be no bigger than a post-it note or post-card, something they can keep to remind them of you. Use a printed photo or draw something on it to brighten their day. On the note you should share what it is that you like about that person, what you hope they would do if they felt lonely and **how they should never be lonely with your friendship.**



For more information: <https://www.mind.org.uk/>
Struggling with loneliness? Speak to an adult at home or speak to childline