

Quick guide to loneliness

Secondary

1 It's completely natural

We all feel lonely at times – it's a natural human emotion. We all need to feel connected to other people. Loneliness is the unsettling feeling we get when this need is not being met. Just like feeling thirsty is a sign to grab a drink, loneliness is our body's way of telling us we need more meaningful connections.

2 It's not just for older people

16-24-year-olds are the loneliest age group in the UK. 45% of adults in England (25 million people) say they feel occasionally, sometimes or often lonely.

3 It's not the same as being alone

We might feel lonely because we're not having much contact with other people, or because the contact doesn't feel meaningful to us. You don't have to be on your own to feel lonely - you might feel lonely with friends or family, on social media, or at school. You can feel lonely if you feel like you are not being understood by those around you.

4 It's not embarrassing

There's nothing wrong or shameful about loneliness. It's best to use neutral or positive language to describe it. Using kind, accepting words to describe loneliness can help further remove the stigma.

5 It's fixable

However horrible it can feel when you're in it, there is always something you can do to feel better. Most loneliness is temporary. Tell someone you trust how you're feeling, think about what you need (we are all different) and make a plan to start getting those social connections you need.

6 It's not a mental health condition

Loneliness is a normal emotion, like excitement or anger. If you've felt lonely for a long time, it can start to affect your mental and physical health but it's important to know that first and foremost, it's a natural feeling.