

Coastal Medical Partnership mental well-being newsletter

May 2022



Mental Health
Awareness Week

9 - 15 May 2022

Together we can tackle loneliness



Loneliness

Next week is mental health awareness week which this year has a focus on loneliness.

We know that social isolation and loneliness has a big impact on physical and mental well-being increasing the risks of depression, anxiety, alcohol and substance misuse, progression of dementia, cardiovascular disease and stroke and increases the risk of premature death.

We know that the number of people experiencing loneliness is increasing especially with the pandemic.

What is loneliness?

Loneliness is a mood, a state of mind and a lived experience. No matter what your age or economic background, loneliness can affect us all in different ways.

Loneliness is a very subjective feeling and everyone's experience will be different.

You may choose to be alone and live happily without much contact with other people, while others may find this a lonely experience.

Or you may have lots of social contact, or be in a relationship or part of a family, and still feel lonely – especially if you don't feel understood or cared for by the people around you (see our information on the [causes of loneliness](#)).

But loneliness can weigh heavily, making us feel unwanted, sad and craving human contact.

What triggers loneliness? We know that loneliness can be triggered by stress, and poor physical and mental health. Significant life changes also spark loneliness – from stopping work to losing someone you love.

The Covid-19 pandemic has made even more of us feel lonely – and sadly, people who were already isolated and lonely may become more vulnerable than ever.

How to cope with loneliness

There is no one way to tackle feeling lonely, but there are a few things that may be able to help.

1. [Talking to someone experienced.](#)
2. [Building confidence and skills to connect and engage with others.](#)
3. [Building meaningful connections.](#)
4. [Making new friends by volunteering.](#)
5. [Connecting or re-connecting with people in your local community.](#)
6. [Wellbeing resources and workshops.](#)



[Find more tips and advice on tackling loneliness.](#)

Loneliness

Do

- ✓ try talking about your feelings to a friend, family member, health professional or counsellor. You could also contact [Samaritans](#), [call: 116 123](tel:116123) or email: jo@samaritans.org if you need someone to talk to
- ✓ consider joining a group or class that focuses on something you enjoy; you could ask to go along and just watch first if you're feeling nervous
- ✓ consider visiting places where you can just be around other people – for example, a park, the cinema or a cafe
- ✓ consider peer support, where people use their experiences to help each other. [Find out more about peer support](#) on the Mind website
- ✓ try the [6 ways to feel happier](#), which are simple lifestyle changes to help you feel more in control and able to cope
- ✓ find out [how to raise your self-esteem](#)
- ✓ listen to [free mental wellbeing audio guides](#)

Loneliness

Don't

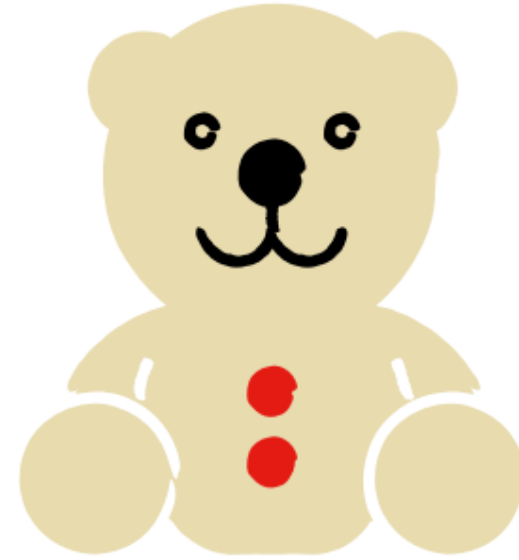
- x do not try to do everything at once; set small targets that you can easily achieve
- x do not focus on the things you cannot change – focus your time and energy into helping yourself feel better
- x try not to compare yourself to others. On social media you usually only see things people want to share
- x try not to tell yourself that you're alone – many people feel lonely at some point in their life and support is available
- x try not to use alcohol, cigarettes, gambling or drugs to relieve loneliness; these can all contribute to poor mental health

Other ways you can connect with your community

There are many ways you can get involved and show what you can do. Here are some examples. You may wish to try others though, like cooking and sharing with your neighbours, or making something like a pillow or a wooden toy. How will it feel to make something and then share it?

Make a trauma teddy

Trauma teddies are made by volunteers and given to children in hospitals or who have no toys. You can contact the Red Cross to send it to someone who needs it and for information on how to make a teddy. You could make other items like hats too.



Connecting through nature

On a walk, when in your garden or simply looking out of your window, keep a note on what you can see. You could draw plants or animals you have seen and try to find out their correct names, for example.

When looking at nature think about how does it feel? What do you notice? How could this help others around you to feel more connected to society and how can you pass this on?



Upcycle and recycle

Look through your old things – are there any items that you no longer need and could give to charity? Recycling items is a kind act, which can give you satisfaction. Or you could upcycle your items – this is where you take someone old and make it into something new. You can learn new skills and even share items with friends and family.



The kind place podcast

Listen to people talk about their experiences of loneliness, discover their coping strategies and join the conversation.

redcross.org.uk

The kind place

In this series, members of the public explore what it means to be lonely:

- how it feels
- how it can happen
- ways to get through it

Recent research has shown that 1 in 5 people in the UK said they often or always feel lonely.

1 in 3 hadn't had a meaningful conversation in the last week.

Now, 38% of UK adults say loneliness negatively impacts their mental health.

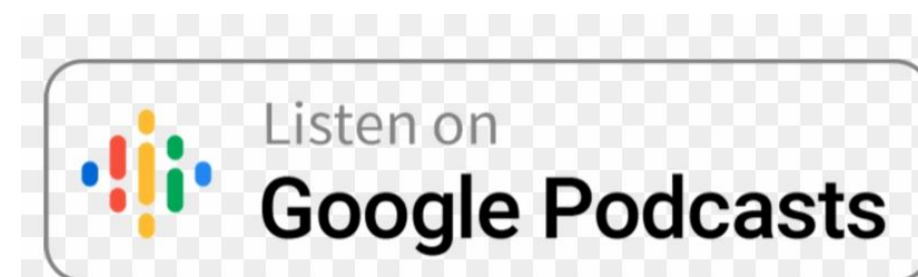
Find the podcast

You can download any of these apps to a computer or smartphone.

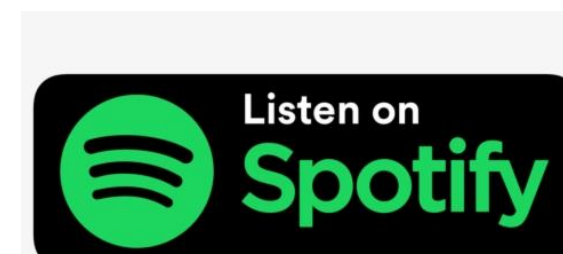
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Where can you get help?

- From Coastal Medical Partnership mental well-being service if you are aged 18-65years
- From the practice social prescriber or health coaches
- www.mind.org.uk
- www.mentalhealth.org.uk who have guides for students and school children
- www.calmzone.net