

Isolation and Loneliness Support Sheet Over Holiday Closure

Feeling lonely from time to time is normal and very common, [2.6 million people reported feeling lonely](#) in England in early 2020. Feelings of loneliness are personal, and each experience of loneliness will be different. One description of loneliness is the feeling we get when rewarding social contact is lacking. Loneliness is not always the same as being alone. 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 and still feel lonely and isolated.

The holiday season or major life events can exacerbate feelings of loneliness for many people, especially this year as the impact of the pandemic has increased levels of isolation. Feeling lonely can have a negative impact on your mental health, research suggests it is linked to an increased risk of anxiety, depression, low self esteem, stress, and problems with sleep. It is important that we all take preventive steps to take care of our mental health and wellbeing. This fact sheet will provide information on what may help to reduce these feelings, you are not alone and there is always support available including helplines you can call for 24/7 support.

1. **What can we do to prevent loneliness?**

2. Build strong connections with people, regularly facetime, and talk to people you trust about how you are both feeling, you will not be a burden on them.
3. Be proactive in making new connections, there are likely many people around you who are also feeling lonely- reach out and check in with other people. [Read other peoples stories.](#)
4. Practice acceptance and compassion for yourself. Do not over focus on the future or ruminate on the past, focus on present moment and getting through the day. Try the CBT work sheet below to practice compassionate thinking.
5. Make time for self-care and doing things you enjoy- reading, learn a new skill, exercise, take a bath, organise your environment, journaling, and gratitude by listing 3 things or people to be grateful for each day.
6. Take a break from screens, do not compare to other people, people often only share the best side of them on social media.
7. Log pleasant events each day on a calendar and plan things to look forward to.
8. Help others, [altruism has health benefits](#)- it keeps things in perspective and creates a sense of belonging and reduces isolation.
9. Visit outdoor places including parks, shops, cafes to be around other people.
10. Practice mindfulness and relaxation techniques.

[Meditation 3 Minute Breathing Space](#)

[Progressive Muscle Relaxation](#)

[Breathing Exercise](#)

Think about what has worked for you in the past and what you would say to a friend who is feeling lonely. Try some self-help audio guides. [NHS Mental wellbeing audio guides](#)

Over the holiday closure. (senior tutor or new inbox for urgent enquiries?).

College wellbeing advice [student support zone](#).

Access free online CBT through [SilverCloud](#).

Who you can contact?

If feeling very low speak to your GP, or the following free listening advice services.

In an Emergency visit your nearest Accident and Emergency department or call 999.

External Support:

If you would like to speak to an external organisation regarding your mental health, please contact the following free listening support services, you can contact them about anything that is making you feel overwhelmed.

Samaritans

Call [Samaritans](#) 24 hours on 116, 123

Email jo@samaritans.org if outside the UK for a response within 24 hours, or contact your local health care provider.

Papyrus

Call [Papyrus](#) 0800 068 4141 9 am -midnight for people under 35, or email pat@papyrus-uk.org

SHOUT

Text [SHOUT](#) to 85258 for 24/7 support

Student Space

[Student Space](#) Call 0808 189 5260 between 4pm and 11pm.

Wellbeing resources and advice for students over the [Christmas break](#).

A comprehensive list of crisis lines worldwide can be found via this link:

https://www.suicidestop.com/call_a_hotline.html

NHS mental health and wellbeing service

NHS 24 Hour Crisis Line [single point of access](#) The Single Point of Access provides one number and one email address for referrals to secondary mental health services and support in a mental health crisis in the Boroughs of Brent, Harrow, Hillingdon, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster, and also Milton Keynes (out of hours).

The Single Point of Access is open 365 days a year. on [0800 0234 650](tel:08000234650) or email cnw-tr.spa@nhs.net

[Call NHS 111](#) for general medical advice.

Additional resources

[Every Mind Matters](#) Looking after your mental health tips.

[Young Minds](#) Mental health support and advice for young people.

[Staying safe from suicidal thoughts safety plan](#) and tips to help yourself from [Rethink](#)

[Mental health charities](#)