



**LEADERS
UNLOCKED**

**15 THINGS
TO DO
IF You're
feeling
LONELY:
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**



Tips and advice to help you cope with feelings of loneliness and isolation. Written with care, for you, by young people.

**Whatever it
is that makes
you feel lonely,
and whatever
loneliness means
to you – know
that we are here
with you and
want to help.**

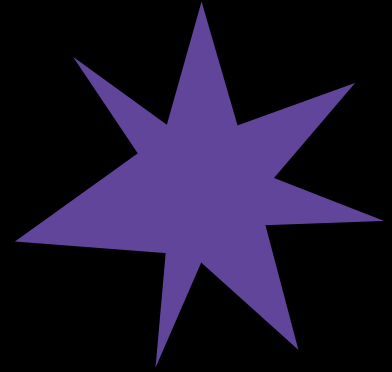


**This was created in partnership
between the Mental Health
Foundation and Leaders Unlocked.**



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Your feelings of loneliness matter



Anyone can experience loneliness. However, the way you experience loneliness can be different to somebody else.

Some people can be alone and not feel lonely and others can be surrounded by people and feel lonely.

“I shouldn’t feel lonely?”

Do you relate to this phrase? If so, know that a lot of young people think that too, including us. But what you may not realise is that loneliness is a common feeling in young people.

- **Almost 10% of young people said they were ‘often’ lonely¹.**

- **Almost 70% of young people said they have felt alone some or all of the time during the pandemic².**

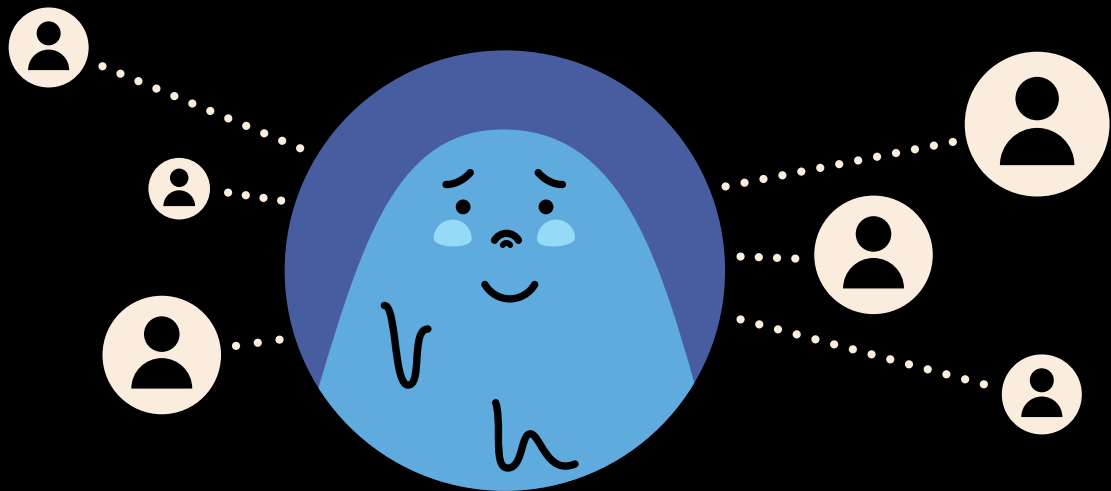
We want to help you reduce the stigma you may feel around loneliness and get you to a place where you can say:

“It’s okay that I feel lonely sometimes.”

1. Children’s and young people’s experiences of loneliness - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

2. <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/our-work/research/coronavirus-mental-health-pandemic/>

How loneliness feels to us...



Here we share with you how loneliness makes us feel. We hope that our openness and honesty helps you to feel less alone and more understood.

Sharing can be a great way to tackle those feelings of shame around loneliness.

"I feel like I'm not important to anyone."

"I feel like nobody needs me."

"I feel like I don't really exist."

"I feel alone within myself."

"It feels safer to be alone – then I can't get rejected."

"I feel numb when I feel lonely."

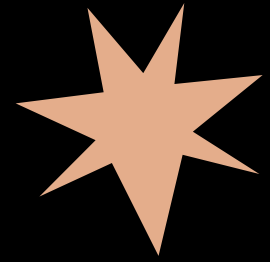
"I feel like I don't have any meaningful relationships."

"I feel like I don't have anyone to tell my good news to."

"I feel alone when I'm surrounded by people."

We want you to know that we have been there. We have felt it. We want to help you feel empowered and able to tackle loneliness.

15 tips to empower you when you're feeling lonely:



1. You are connected to the world: right now, you are sharing this experience of loneliness with young people all around the world.

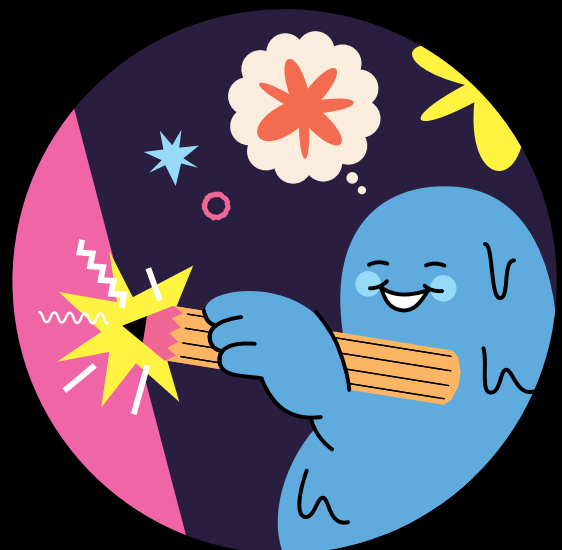
Remember that loneliness is a universal experience - a part of being human.

2. You are in control: you can use the power within yourself to make positive changes to your life. You could do this by relaxing, reflecting or doing a new hobby.

We believe in you. You can take action.

3. You can embrace your creativity: try to represent your experience through art and creativity and share it with others.

Own your experience. Take its power away. Share it with the world.

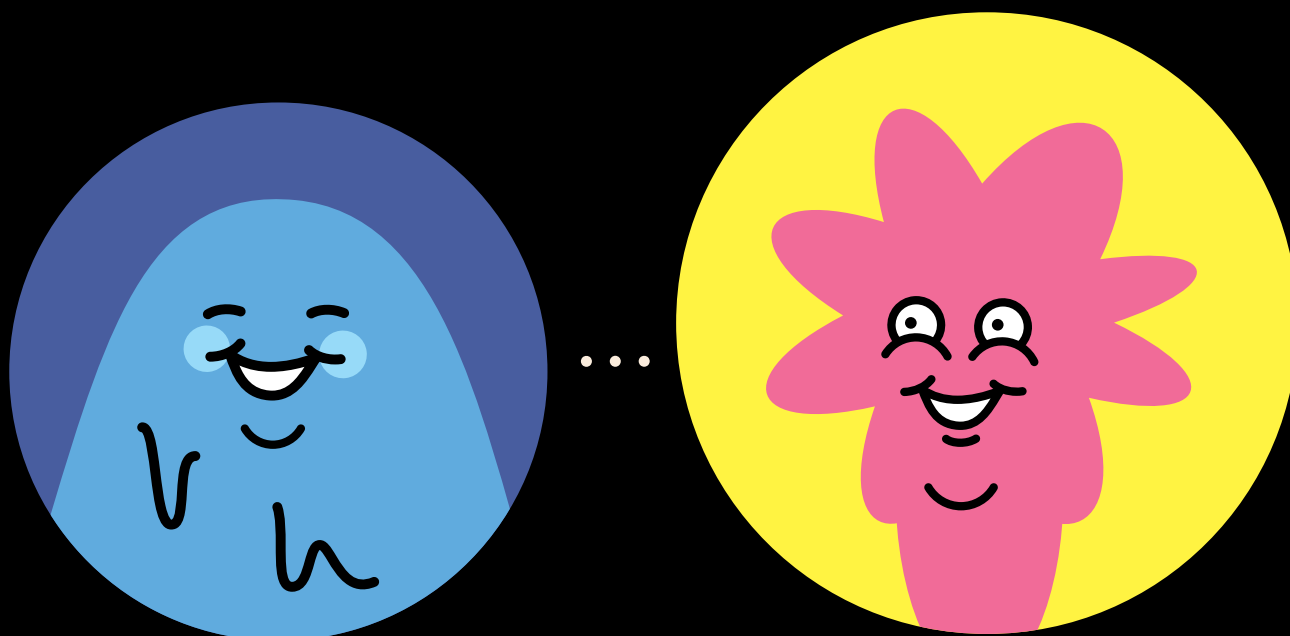


4. You are cared for: we care about you, as do support services, friends and family (or your created family).

They are already out there. Reach out and let them in.

5. You deserve quality relationships: make building quality relationships a priority over a quantity of relationships. The bonds you have with people can help to combat loneliness.

Take time to strengthen your relationships. Tell yourself you deserve this.



6. Your hobbies and interests are important: we care about what you enjoy. It could be anything from finding a new TV show to learning a new sport.

Remember that the things that feel a little scary can help us grow.

7. You can express your emotions in a healthy way: practice sitting with your emotions. Being present with your emotions. Reflecting and accepting your emotions.

Connect to you. Journal, doodle, voice-memo and express yourself.

8. You can get curious about guilt and shame: try and have a conversation with them. Tell guilt and shame that you are not to blame for your feelings of loneliness.

Remind yourself that it is not your fault. That these feelings are okay.

9. You are unique: not following the crowd doesn't make you alone, it makes you unique.

We love who you are. There is nothing to be ashamed of.

10. You are allowed to open up: opening up about how you feel is not a weakness, it is courageous. Try sharing how you feel with someone you trust.

Getting honest and vulnerable can help create connection.



how u doing?

11. You can create space between your feelings and social media: try to become active not passive when using social media. What feelings arise? Are you making judgements about someone else's life or your own? Could you take a break from social media?

Unfollowing or muting accounts that bring up difficult feelings and following accounts that make you feel empowered can help with feelings of loneliness.

12. You can find your community: by joining a group whether based on a hobby, religion, spirituality or an interest can help you 'find your tribe'.

There are people out there waiting to connect with you. Who are just as scared to make the first move.

13. You can find peace in a busy world: if you are feeling disconnected to yourself try and get into nature. Whether that's noticing a houseplant, finding a little park or getting into a forest.

Getting into nature can help you to feel at peace with yourself.

14. You deserve to treat yourself: show kindness to yourself with a little gift. Whether that's buying your favourite chocolate bar, putting time aside to play video games or dancing to your favourite song.

You can be your own friend. You can be kind to yourself.

15. We are grateful for you: we've taken a moment to be grateful for you. So, why don't you take a moment to be grateful for the small wins in your life.

It could be for getting out of bed today. It could be for watching a bird patter across a roof. It could be for a great new show you've found.

Try having the glass half full rather than half empty.



By taking the time to read our tips you have taken the first step to telling yourself that you deserve support.

Thank you for showing up today for you and for letting us in. Remember that we're in this with you and you are not alone.

All our care...

Tyra



Amber

Tia

Kas

Joshua

Jesse

Huma

Jazz

Special thanks to Bethan and Shivani from the Mental Health Foundation and Leaders Unlocked. Design by David Peasland.



Further Resources

- British Red Cross: Free mental health and wellbeing tools to reduce loneliness for young people.
- Young Minds: Things you can do to stop feelings lonely
- Let's Talk Loneliness: Toolkit, resources and support
- Every Mind Matters: what you can do if you feel lonely during the coronavirus outbreak

Helplines

- The Mix: 0808 808 4994 (UK). They also have a crisis messenger service.
- Young Minds: Crisis messenger. Text YM to 85258 (UK).
- Samaritans: Call 24/7 for free on 116 123 (UK).

**Want to
be kept up to
date with our work?**

Have you felt inspired by the work from our MHF Young Leaders? Would you like to be kept up to date with the work the Mental Health Foundation is up to? Then sign up to our newsletter below:

Sign up

