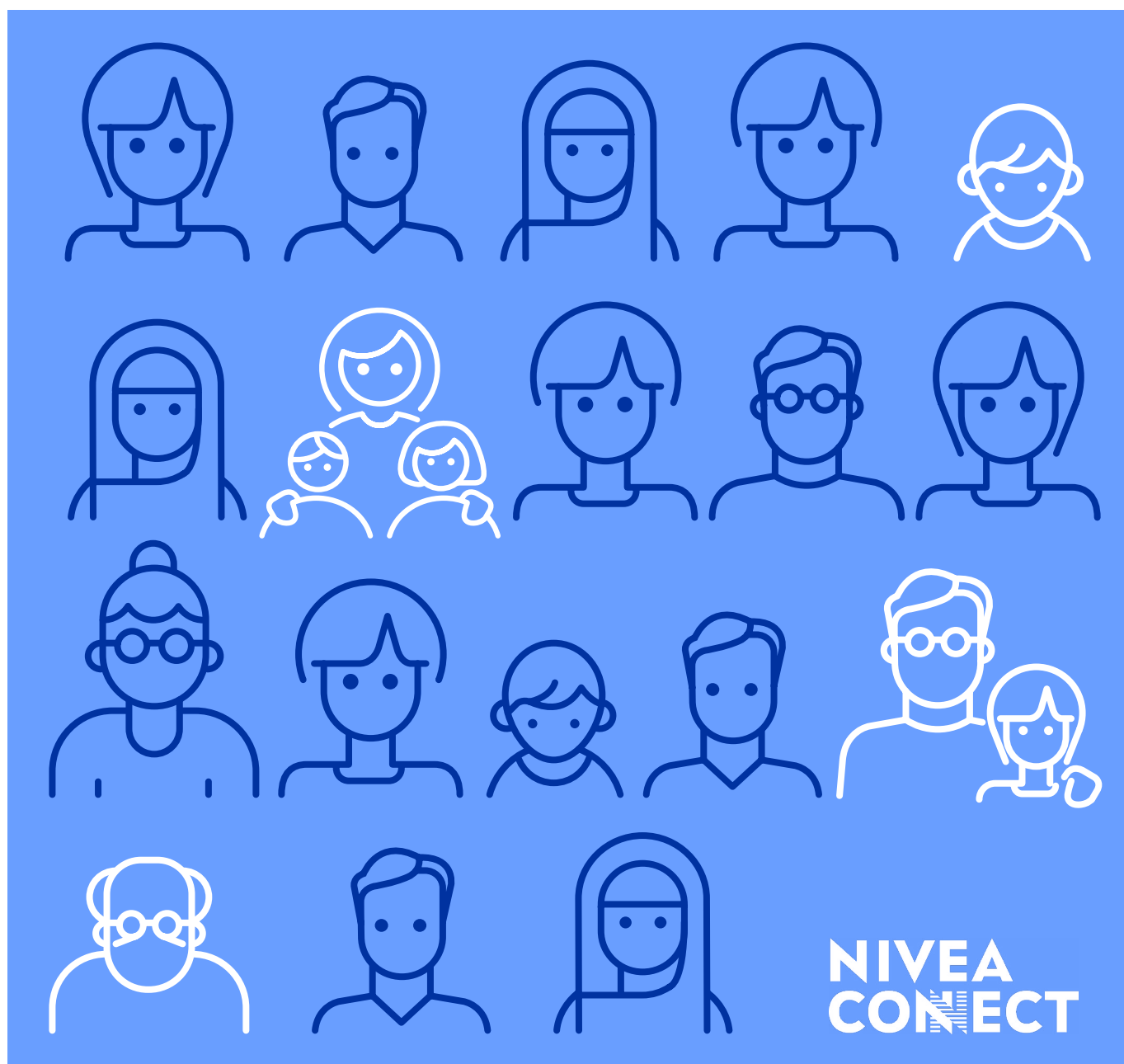


STRONGER TOGETHER: LEAVING LONELINESS BEHIND

Adults' and parents' guide



STRONGER TOGETHER: LEAVING LONELINESS BEHIND

Our guide

You're not alone if you're feeling alone. This guide is here to help you rethink, turn things around and support others when feeling lonely.

It is our wish that we can all speak up, share openly and find support for ourselves, our children, our loved ones and our friends, because we believe everyone deserves the social connections they need to thrive.

Check out some facts

The World Health Organizationⁱ (WHO) states that:

- Loneliness is the social pain of **not being connected**
- **Social isolation** is not having enough social connections
- Both **social isolation** and **loneliness** have serious impacts on our health
- Both can affect **anyone, anywhere**

A recent NIVEA surveyⁱⁱ has found that **one in five** people feel lonely often.



Who's most commonly affected?

Young people
aged 16 – 24



Those facing
economic hardship



Singles, single parents
or people living alone



People with lower
education levels



Heavy users of
social media
(multiple times an hour)



Half of people who report feeling lonely have one thing in common: They find it difficult to reach out to others for help, some don't even know how or where to begin.

Have you ever worried about appearing weak or that you might be rejected or be seen as a burden? These are very normal and common concerns, and they can feel hard to shake off.

ⁱ <https://www.who.int/news/item/15-11-2023-who-launches-commission-to-foster-social-connection>
ⁱⁱ NIVEA CONNECT COMPASS 2025

When and why people feel lonely

Every second person feels lonely sometimes – **one in five people** experience loneliness often. The chances are high that you are one of them – or know a few of them. You might be wondering why and when you are more likely to feel lonely. Here are some insights we gained from talking to 30,000 people in 13 countries around the world.

Anyone and everyone is somewhere on a continuum of loneliness. Some might have lost loved ones or moved to another location. Others might have separated or divorced, taken on new work or struggled with economic problems. In some cases, loneliness can occur even when surrounded by others, if we feel like we don't belong or are not as close as we would like to be.



Source: NIVEA CONNECT COMPASS 2025

It's mostly about the desire to have more or better connections than you are currently experiencing.

Of course, everyone is different, and there will be some people who are quite happy to be alone, but this is likely to be a minority.

The problem with loneliness

Regardless of gender, age or geography, people who have better relationships are healthier than those who don't, says Dr Julianne Holt-Lunstad, a professor of psychology and neuroscience and technical advisor to the WHO. She says:

"Social isolation and loneliness are increasingly being recognised as a priority public health problem and policy issue across all age groups."

World Health Organization (WHO)ⁱⁱⁱ

"People who are more socially connected live longer. Though the occasional lonely spell is part of life, it can bring sadness, depression, and anxiety if we feel lonely for a long period of time. This could be a problem and could lead to serious health risks such as coronary heart disease, strokes, diabetes, mellitus and dementia, and even to earlier death."

iii [www.who.int./news/item/15-11-2023-who-launches-commission-to-foster-social-connection](https://www.who.int/news/item/15-11-2023-who-launches-commission-to-foster-social-connection)

How to build up connections and make friends

It can feel really hard to open up and tell people how we feel. There's something about admitting we're lonely that can feel really uncomfortable and embarrassing.

What about starting small and practicing small talk? If this feels awkward to start with, rest assured, it will become more natural with time.

We've compiled some ideas to inspire and motivate you to take the first step, get out there and help others to do the same. You could also create your own list or write out a plan of action for the next day, week or month.

"I overcame loneliness by joining a support group, forming connections and finding a sense of community and belonging."

Say hi to a neighbour when you see them.	Ask a friend to join you for a walk.	Volunteer at a local charity.
Engage with like-minded groups online.	Say yes to invitations.	Contact someone you can be yourself with and have an honest chat.
Trust that people around you are kinder than you think.	Join a new group, club, class or community.	Join a game night.
Tell your doctor how you feel.	Hold doors open, smile and give compliments.	Try something new you've always wanted to do.
Share meals with others whenever you can.	Text a friend and tell them you appreciate them.	Find time for self-care.



Keeping safe. There's a very big difference between stepping out of our comfort zone and putting ourselves in potentially dangerous situations – never meet someone alone that you don't know without telling someone and never share your private information online.

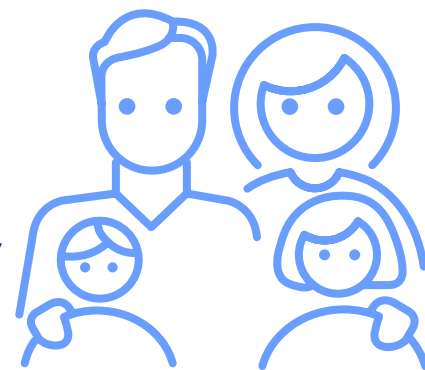
What other support can I get?

If your loneliness is having an effect on you please seek professional help from medical professionals as soon as you can. It may also be useful to share any changes to your social connections with them.

There's lots of support available for everyone from local charities, community support organisations or agencies and from health and well-being professionals. So, be sure to reach out and contact them in addition to, or instead of, asking for more direct support from those around you.

For parents and carers – supporting our children

It can be tough managing our own loneliness but it can feel even tougher to know how to navigate loneliness in the children we care for. Many of the same reasons for loneliness apply to children as well as adults, but as children they are much more reliant on their carers or parents.



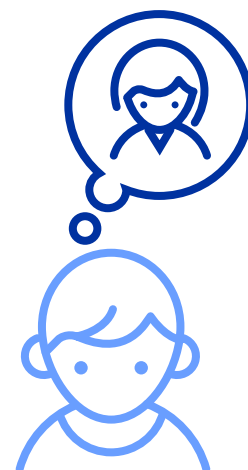
How can you identify if your child feels lonely?

- You may notice your child comes home from school or clubs feeling flat or sad.
- When you ask them about their day they may say they spent time alone or didn't play with anyone.
- They might not talk about friends, ask to go and see them or invite them over.
- They may spend a lot of time alone and seem quiet or withdrawn.
- They might spend lots of time scrolling on social media or playing games online alone.

Why children feel lonely

The NSPCC in the UK created a list of common reasons a child may feel lonely. These include:

- Feeling like they need more friends or to feel closer to the friends they have.
- Not having as many chances to socialise and see friends as they'd like.
- Wanting a closer relationship with family or their community.
- Problems with self-esteem, meaning they might not feel confident about making and keeping friends.
- Struggling with a physical or mental health problem.
- Life changes, such as moving house, changing schools or parents or carers separating, meaning it's more difficult to see their usual support network.



Turns out listening and talking goes a long way

Many children will welcome a personal chat, others may find this difficult or may not be able to express how they feel. Here's how you can help:

- One of the first things we can do is to ask a few gentle, open questions and then really listen to the answers – we can check back with them to make sure that we understand exactly what they are feeling, even if it's hard to hear or accept. If they don't feel like talking, maybe they could draw how they feel or write it down.
- Tell them how proud you are that they have shared their true feelings with you and remind them that everyone feels lonely sometimes and that it's a normal human reaction to lacking connections. You can reassure them with this and remind them that there are many other children around the world who will be feeling just like them.
- Tell them that you will help them to find some solutions, and then put these into action.

Help them to strengthen connections and make friends

- Find a way to give them more of your time – be fully present, no phone or other distractions.
- Arrange meet-ups or get-togethers with other parents or carers and their children – perhaps this could become a regular arrangement.
- Support and encourage them to take on a new hobby or join a new club or group.
- Encourage and support them to step out of their comfort zones – one step at a time.
- Make it a point to regularly check in and allow them space to talk honestly about how they feel – doing this side by side rather than face to face can make it less intense.



What other support can we get?

If you have any concerns or worries, always reach out to your local healthcare support team or other local charities or organisations. It could also be useful to talk to their school teachers or club/group leaders, etc. so they can support them too.

By connecting to each other in small, meaningful ways, we can begin to build the connections we desire, reducing and preventing loneliness. And who doesn't want that?

NIVEA CONNECT is a global mission to fight social isolation and foster meaningful connections. To find out more click [here](#).



This guide has been developed by Kate Daniels, teacher, educational consultant and author, in partnership with NIVEA CONNECT, and reviewed by Dr Julianne Holt-Lunstad, professor of psychology and neuroscience at Brigham Young University and scientific advisor to NIVEA CONNECT, as well as by our project partner from the UK, the NSPCC.

The NSPCC is the UK's leading charity protecting children from abuse and neglect. Founded in 1884, we support young people through Childline and a range of specialised services, making sure they always have someone to turn to. We work to prevent abuse from ever happening, and we're here to help children recover so that it doesn't shape their future. We want everyone to know the part they can play. We campaign for and create change in schools, online and in local communities across the UK and Channel Islands.

NSPCC, registered charity number 216401.
NSPCC, charity registered in Scotland,
charity number SC037717.

ABOUT NIVEA CONNECT.

NIVEA CONNECT is a global mission to fight social isolation and promote meaningful human connections. NIVEA has pledged to raise awareness to help reduce the stigma of social isolation and to educate and enable meaningful social connections.

To find out more click [here](#).

NIVEA CONNECT REPORT 2025

Loneliness Unmasked:
A Global Crisis in Isolations

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