

LONELINESS IS NO BIG DEAL

(SAID NO ONE EVER)

Youth guide



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Does loneliness feel like an embarrassing word to you? Would you feel comfortable admitting to yourself or others if you were lonely? Do you feel that loneliness comes from being different or unlikable, or that people bring it on themselves?

In this guide, we're going to deal with these outdated stereotypes and give you some simple ideas on how to rebuild your connection to others, feel more in control and know that you're not alone – whether you're one of the many, very normal, lonely people in this world, or whether you are worried about someone else.

So, what do the experts say about loneliness?

The World Health Organizationⁱ (WHO) explains:

Loneliness

is the **social pain** of not feeling connected...



Social isolation

is not having enough social connections...



...both of which can **affect anyone, anywhere.**



NIVEA research finds that half of those surveyed have experienced loneliness sometimes, and **one in five** have to deal with feelings of loneliness often.



ⁱ [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)

What does this have to do with young people?

- Young people are the most commonly affected age group when it comes to loneliness.
- One in four young people feel lonely often.

So, if you're feeling alone, lonely or left out, you are most definitely not the only one, you are actually one of millions.

Why do I feel lonely even when I'm with other people?

Childlineⁱⁱ in the UK points out:

"Loneliness is a perfectly rational response to a lack of human connection.

Being lonely doesn't actually mean that you're physically on your own. You could be surrounded by people – family, friends, schoolmates – but if you feel as if you're on your own, or that nobody really understands or gets you, then you're lonely."

But why?

It's all about the gap between how connected you feel and how connected you want to be. That gap can happen for many different reasons.



For more information you can read the NIVEA Connect 2025 survey [here](#).

ii <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/feelings-emotions/loneliness-isolation/>

Why is loneliness a problem if it's normal?

Regardless of gender, age or where we live, **people who have better relationships are healthier than those who don't.***

People who are more **socially connected** actually **live longer** and although the occasional lonely spell is part of life, if we feel lonely for a long period of time this could be a problem and could lead to serious health risks.*

*Dr Julianne Holt-Lunstad, professor of psychology and neuroscience.

To get an idea of the level of impact being talked about, Dr Julianne Holt-Lunstad has come up with evidence that:

"Lacking social connection is comparable to smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day."

Now that really hits home – and gives us even more reason to make it our priority to get socialising.

When and why do people feel lonely?

Being alone during important moments such as:ⁱⁱⁱ

When...	Birthdays	Holidays	Evenings	Weekends
				
and why...	Feeling misunderstood 	Little self-confidence 	Struggling with money 	Difficulty approaching people 

If I tell them, they'll think I'm weird.

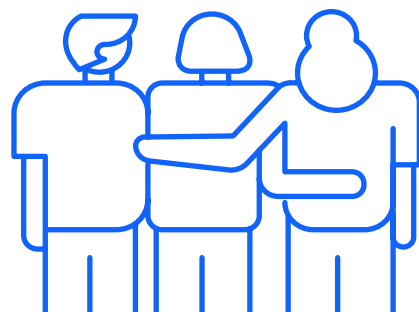
If they ask, I'll pretend I'm fine.

Have you ever experienced similar thoughts in yourself or someone else? It can be really hard to open up and can feel really embarrassing. But we have to push through and be honest with the people we feel safe around. As soon as we've opened our mouth, the support and connection can begin for us – and for them.

How can I make new friends and build connections?

We understand that if you're feeling disconnected it can be hard to see a way out. Stepping out of our comfort zones is always going to be scary but reminding ourselves that we are one of many people who feel lonely will help us to find our people and get connected once again.

Here are some ideas for how to move out of your current lonely spot, or how to help others do the same – we hope you'll get a few "YES!" moments.^{iv}



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 or teacher 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?

There's lots of support available for young people from local charities, community support organisations or agencies, and from health and well-being professionals, so be sure to reach out and contact them.

We hope you've now thrown off those outdated stereotypes, got some ideas on how to rebuild your connection to others, feel more in control and, most importantly, know that you're not alone. It's time to speak up for ourselves, share our true feelings openly and support our friends and loved ones to do the same, so we can build real connections.

^{iv} You could also create your own list or write out a plan of action for the next day, week or month.

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.

ABOUT NIVEA CONNECT.

NIVEA CONNECT is a global mission to fight social isolation and foster 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](#).

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