

Useful contacts

Mind's helplines provide information and support by phone and email.

- Infoline: 0300 123 3393
- Email: info@mind.org.uk
- Post: Mind Infoline, PO Box 75225, London, E15 9FS

Samaritans Samaritans are open 24/7 for anyone who needs to talk.

- Call 116 123 (freephone)
- jo@samaritans.org (email response may take several days)

Campaign Against Living Miserably

(CALM) CALM runs a phone line and web chat that's open 5pm to midnight everyday. Chats are free, confidential and anonymous.

- Call 0800 58 58 58
- <https://www.thecalmzone.net/>

Sources:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/loneliness/about-loneliness/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/life-challenges/loneliness/>

If you have any queries, please contact:

The Pain Clinic

Zone F, Department F18
RNHRD and Brownsword Therapies
Centre - Royal United Hospitals Bath

If you need advice during out-of-hours, please contact your GP or NHS111.
For Emergency please dial 999.

Guide to Loneliness

Patient Information Leaflet

The RUH, where you matter

Royal United Hospitals Bath
NHS Foundation Trust
Combe Park, Bath, BA1 3NG
01225 428331 | www.ruh.nhs.uk

If you would like this leaflet in email form, large print, braille or another language, please contact the Patient Support and Complaints team on 01225 825656 or email ruh-tr.psct@nhs.net.

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What is loneliness?

Everyone's experiences of loneliness are different; it's very subjective and personal to us. You should not blame yourself for feeling lonely now or at any other time, and it's also important to remember that loneliness and difficult feelings can pass.

Some ways loneliness can be experienced are:

Emotional loneliness – a lack of emotional attachment to someone such as a close friend or partner.

Social loneliness – a lack of friends to go out with, or who share our hobbies or interests.

Existential loneliness – a sense of being in a room of people you know and still feeling alone.

Some people experience loneliness occasionally – perhaps only at certain times, such as Sundays or Christmas – while others feel lonely all the time, which is sometimes called chronic loneliness.

Signs or symptoms of loneliness

- getting nervous about or avoiding going to social events
- changing your daily routines, such as stopping cooking for yourself, caring about your appearance or getting up early
- finding it difficult to get to sleep or staying asleep.

Loneliness and our health

If loneliness is very severe or lasts a long time, it might increase the risk of some physical conditions, such as dementia and mental health conditions, such as stress, anxiety, low mood or depression.

What causes loneliness?

Certain life events or experiences may make you feel lonely, such as:

- Experiencing a bereavement
- Going through a relationship break-up
- Retirement
- Changing jobs
- Starting at university
- Experiencing mental health problems
- Becoming a parent
- Moving to a new area or country without family, friends or community networks

Tips on dealing with loneliness

- **Try talking therapies.** Talking therapies can help you explore what feeling lonely means to you. Your therapist can help you develop different ways of managing your feelings. You may self-refer or ask your GP to refer you.
- **Keep in touch with people.** Regular chats with friends and family can help to combat loneliness. Just talking to

someone in that moment can really help when you feel alone – and help the person you contact.

- **Join a group.** Being part of a group or club is a great way to connect with and meet people. Look for groups to join in person or online that focus on things you like or activities you would like to try.
- **Do things you enjoy.** Filling your time doing things you like might be a way to stop you from focusing on your loneliness, which can improve your wellbeing.
- **Share your feelings.** Talking more openly about how loneliness affects you can really help. Hearing a familiar voice or seeing a friendly face can also make us feel less isolated.
- **Connect with others or volunteer to help.** Think about people you know who might be feeling lonely and try to connect with them. This might also make you feel less lonely.
- **Invite someone along to activities near you.** Arranging to meet new friends in a safe, public place for a walk outside, or inviting someone out for a cup of tea or coffee can be a great way to help lift each other out of loneliness.
- **Look after yourself.** Physical activity can be very helpful for your mental wellbeing. Some people also find it helps to improve their self-esteem.
- **Spend time in nature if you can.** This can improve your sense of wellbeing and reduce feelings of loneliness.