



Peer
Education
Project



Mental Health
Foundation



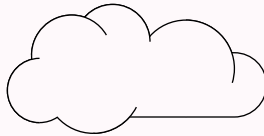
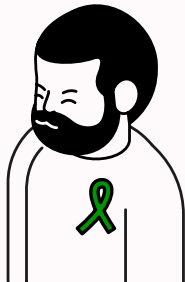
Loneliness

Finding our connections
to feel less lonely

MHF Tips for Young People Series

"If you want to reduce the feelings of loneliness, taking small steps is okay. For example, talk to someone like parents or friends that you trust and are close to. You could go out with them for something small like a tea and coffee or just something nice."

Peer Educator from the [Peer Education Project](#)



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Connecting with ourselves

Explore your feelings

Each day, we may experience different feelings and emotions. Sometimes, it can be difficult to understand how we are feeling and why.

It is important to learn to connect with how you are feeling. By understanding your feelings, you can begin to put things in place, and ask for support, to look after yourself.



Read this [guide](#) on understanding feelings.





Follow along this [video activity](#) to explore your circles of control.

Connecting with ourselves

Be kind to yourself

When we feel lonely, we may also experience feelings of guilt or shame. It's ok to feel this way. These feelings are part of the everyday human experience. Just because we feel a certain way now, it doesn't mean that we will always feel this way.

Mindfulness is one way we can show kindness to ourselves. It is the skill of paying attention to what is happening in your mind and body right now, without judgement.



Watch this [short video](#) on how to sit with passing thoughts and feelings.



Take inspiration from a [young person's blog](#) on showing up for yourself like you would do for a friend.

Connecting with ourselves

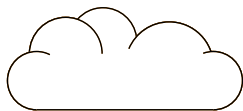


Express yourself

Keeping our feelings inside, to ourselves, can sometimes feel like the only option we have. Yet, this can often lead to feeling overwhelmed and uncomfortable.

Finding healthy ways of expressing our thoughts and feelings can help us look after our mental health. The ways we express ourselves will be different for each of us and may depend on what we are going through.

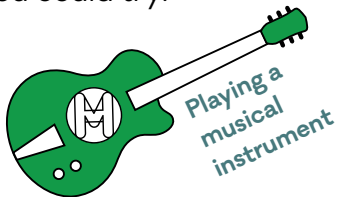
It may take time, and practice, to find your ways of connecting with your thoughts and feelings.



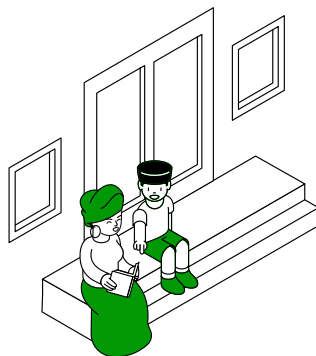
Expressing yourself through activities



You could try:



recording voice memos



Chatting to someone

Connecting with others



Find ways to open up with others

Sometimes it can be difficult to share how we are feeling. It is important to do it in our own time. Opening up about how you feel is not a sign of weakness. It is courageous.

There are many support services we can reach out to if we are feeling lonely, as well as our own support networks.

Even when you are finding things a little more difficult, and perhaps you don't feel like you are shining so brightly, you are still connected to others who are there to help.



Read these [tips](#) on reaching out for support with your mental health and wellbeing.



Read [advice](#) on how to communicate with others when feeling lonely.

Activity - Constellations of Connection Doodling

Step 1: Draw a star in the middle of a piece of paper. This star is you.

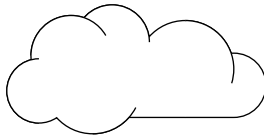
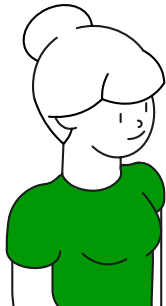
Step 2: Draw other stars on the page. These other stars represent the people, places and activities you have in your life that you can turn to for support or that help you feel better.

Step 3: Draw lines from your star to these other stars to show your connection.



“To help reduce feelings of loneliness, you should find someone who you feel confident talking to and tell them how you are feeling.”

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Connecting with others

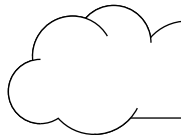
Spend time with people you trust

Developing healthy, supportive relationships with others is more important for reducing feelings of loneliness than having many relationships in our lives that do not provide us with support and care.

It takes time to develop healthy relationships with others, and form trust. Spending time with others can support you in forming supportive relationships.



Read about the importance of spending time with friends.



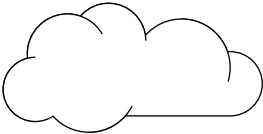
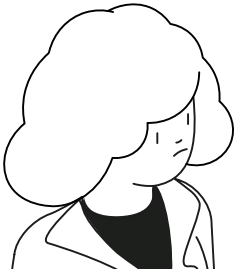
Read this advice on healthy and unhealthy relationships.





“We can reduce feelings of loneliness by talking to someone we trust or doing something we love. This could include talking to your parents and friends or planting trees or cooking.”

Peer Educator from the [Peer Education Project](#)



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Connecting with the world around us



Find people with similar interests to you


Joining a group, whether based on a hobby, faith, or a skill, can help us feel more connected to ourselves and others. If we think about what we are most interested in and enjoy doing, it might help us find a community that would be the most supportive for us.

Social media can help us feel connected and be a great way to share interests. However, sometimes social media can make us feel more lonely.



Take inspiration from a [young person's blog](#) on social media and practising self-care.





“If you are feeling lonely... it might help to try to get involved with a group or something that is going on. For example, joining a club so you feel more involved with something and have a safe space.”

Peer Educator from the [Peer Education Project](#)



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Connecting with the world around us

Show gratitude to yourself and others

Gratitude means feeling thankful for all the different things and experiences we have in our lives. This includes small, simple things that we might take for granted everyday, such as someone holding a door open for us or the rain that helps plants grow. Gratitude also includes being kind to ourselves and others.

It's not always easy to feel and show gratitude. But, by learning to show gratitude for the things around, you can feel more connected and less lonely.



Explore
what gratitude
is and how to
practise it.



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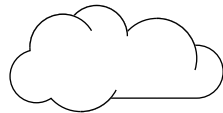
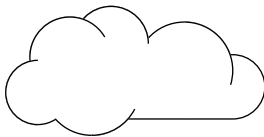
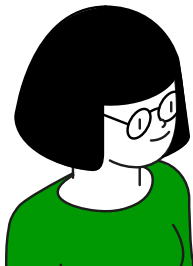


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“When my friend feels lonely, I make sure to reassure them and let them know how much their company is appreciated.”

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People who will listen



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Shout

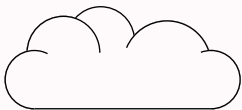
Trained Shout Volunteers are here for you if you need to talk, 24/7.

Text **SHOUT** to **85285**

Samaritans

If you need someone to talk to, Samaritans Volunteers are there to listen, 24/7.

Call **116 123**



Childline

If you need support, a trained counsellor is available to listen, 24/7.

Call **0800 1111**

