



What to do when you are... Feeling lonely, isolated or disconnected



5 Key Messages

1. Reach out to other people where you can
2. Focus on building the relationship with other people that you want
3. Look out for what helps you to feel more connected and do more of it
4. Try different things to see what works best for you
5. Friendships and relationships can be hard work, but don't give up!

Arrange regular times to talk to your family members or friends.

1. Reach out to other people where you can

It is not always easy or comfortable to be open and honest with others, but try to see this as an opportunity to feel closer to other people.

Tell someone else what you've done with your day.

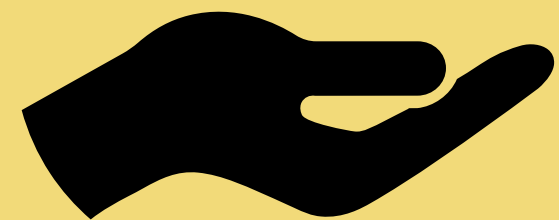
Pick out something you are comfortable to share, this could be something you did or something you saw online.

Think about what you could do to help others.

Looking out for other people not only helps them, but can also help you to feel more connected to them.

Start small, think about what you can do to help a member of your household or someone you are already connected with

You could make them a cup of tea! Then you could think about what else you could do (Sending someone a card in the post?)



Focus on having the friendships and relationships with other people that you want.

Don't focus on what other people have or what you think they have.

Try to avoid making comparisons with others.

It may or may not be true that other people have lots of friends, but the most important thing is about having the relationships that you want.

2. Focus on building the relationship with other people that you want



If it feels too difficult right now to make new friendships, give yourself a break and instead make a plan to do it in the near future.

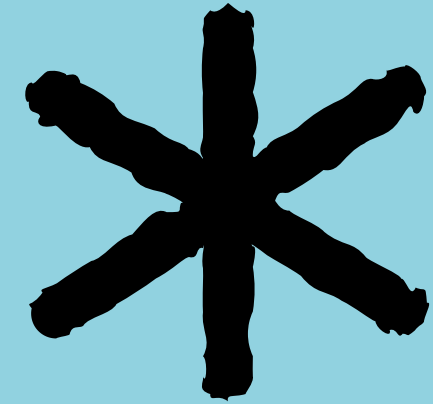
For example, think about where you could go to find people that share your interests, views and/or passions?

Appreciate the friendships and relationships with other people that you do have.

Identify who you have in your life that you might be able to connect with (either in-person where possible or online), for example family members, friends, sports teams, youth clubs.



3. Look out for what helps you to feel more connected and do more of it



Feeling connected is about the quality of the interaction.

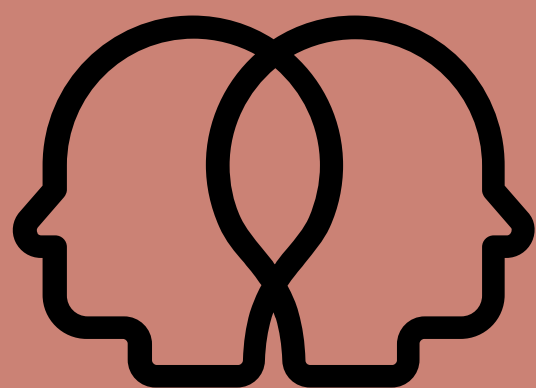
For some people, using videos can help maintain that connection - seeing other people's body language and facial expressions.

Pay attention to what works for you.

Think about what you find most enjoyable and/or makes you feel most connected - and to do more of that.

What helps with feeling connected won't be the same for everyone.

Options could include video calls, playing online games with others, text conversations, or live online workshops.



4. Try different things to see what works best for you

Consider meeting up with others who enjoy the same sorts of activities as you.

Get involved in activities that you might enjoy with other people who are similar to you or like similar things.

It can be difficult to change the people that you have to spend time with (e.g. at school or home), but there may still be ways to meet new people now or in the future.

Even if this isn't possible to do activities now, think about what groups or clubs you could join once things change and make some plans now.



5. Friendships and relationships can be hard work, but don't give up!

Lots of young people have been feeling lonely or disconnected during the pandemic, you are not alone!

Try not be too hard on yourself if you are feeling this way and we have all had to adapt to not seeing as many people face to face.

It is important not to give up on relationships completely when there are some challenges.

If you feel that you can, work through these challenges alongside the positives that come from the relationship.

Everyone is interacting with other people in new and different ways - and this isn't always easy.

Remember that everyone is likely to make some mistakes, and that we should be kind to ourselves and each other about this.

Relationships with other people can be hard work and sometimes we don't always get it right.

What should someone do if they are struggling with their mental health?



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- If anyone is struggling at a level where it is getting in the way of daily life (e.g., causing distress, interfering with sleep, schoolwork, concentrating in lessons, socialising with friends), it is important to seek help.
 - This could be talking to a trusted friend or family member. Often a good starting point is to speak to someone at school (a school nurse, school mental health champion); this information can typically be found on the school website or by asking a form tutor.
 - Another option is to speak to a health professional, e.g., GP.
 - More information on sources of support (and other useful resources) can be found here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/youth-mental-health/>