Loneliness

There are times in everyone's life when we feel lonely or isolated. It can be for reasons like adjusting to the ending of a relationship, having problems with family and friends, or being away from home. You can also feel lonely because of the thoughts that are going through your head that you may not be sharing with other people or because you feel emotionally cut off from people around you.

Here are some tips for recognising loneliness:

Realise that loneliness is a feeling, not a fact – when you are feeling lonely, it is because something has triggered a memory of that feeling, not because you are in fact, isolated and truly alone. Write a list of all the people you have in your life either through work or personal relationships.

Reach out because loneliness can be difficult to deal with alone – people can do one of two things when they feel lonely…they might react by withdrawing into themselves and their thoughts, which will cause them to feel even more isolated and alone. Or, at best, they might move towards friends and family which will help to alleviate painful feelings. Make good efforts to reach out to others even when loneliness or depression are telling you not to.

Catch your thinking – what stories go through your mind about why you are so alone? Many people can create defeating stories about themselves e.g. "no one likes me, I am an outcast…" They then believe these stories as if they are the literal truth and feel even worse. Objectify your thoughts were possible and introduce more compassionate thinking e.g. "there is no reason to think no one likes me, this is just a difficult time in my life which will pass over. I am doing really well given the current challenges I am facing".

Get busy – keeping yourself busy is a really effective way of dealing with loneliness – feeling needed or purposeful can be really useful way of dealing with loneliness. List some things that you can do to occupy your mind and time.

inspire® workplaces
wellbeing at work
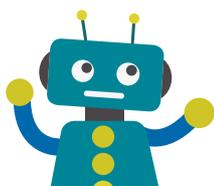
Focus on the needs and feelings of others – put less attention on your lonely thoughts and feelings. Are there people in your community who you can support in some little way? Helping others often helps ourselves to feel better and gives us a sense of purpose in addition to allowing us to make connections.

Explore new interests – keep trying new activities until you find what excites and energies you. Be persistent – even if a particular activity or group seems to be a dead end for you, try another. This is an ideal way to meet people who share your interests and can be a natural basis for beginning a friendship.

Build your network – once you have a friend or two, nourish those friendships with time and attention. Try to remember that loneliness can motivate a person to cultivate new friendships which is the healthiest thing for us to do when feeling isolated.

You are not alone – remember that everyone goes through lonely times. This can be a normal, albeit uncomfortable part of life. Remind yourself that this time of your life will pass over.

Past experiences – Reflect on a time you felt lonely in the past. What helped you to get through this time? Come up with a list of what you did that was helpful versus, what you did that may have made it worse... Everyday focus on doing one that worked for you.

Self care – remember to do something nice for yourself on a day you need it the most.

inspire®
workplaces
wellbeing at work