



A quick guide to loneliness

This year, **Loneliness Awareness Week** - hosted by the Marmalade Trust - takes place between **10th-16th June**.

In a bid to help us all understand loneliness a little better, our mental health experts here at Vita Health Group have shared a quick guide, including the most important points to know about loneliness and advice on how to support someone who you think might be lonely.

Five important points to know about loneliness



Meaningful relationships are essential for our wellbeing

Regular social interactions provide emotional support, reduce stress, and enhance our overall quality of life.



Most people will experience a form of loneliness in life

Loneliness is a universal human experience. We are inherently social beings wired for connection - loneliness serves as a signal that we need more meaningful interactions.

Regardless of age, circumstance, or background, most of us will encounter loneliness at some point in our lives. However, loneliness does manifest differently for each individual.



Loneliness is not a mental health condition, but it can have a tangible impact on mental health

Loneliness is associated with an increased risk of depression. Individuals who feel consistently isolated are more vulnerable to developing depressive symptoms.

Research studies have provided evidence for associations between loneliness, and anxiety and depression in young people. Addressing loneliness early can help prevent these mental health challenges.



Loneliness is highly stigmatised, but we can work together to change that

By openly discussing loneliness, we can break down the stigma associated with it. Recognising and acknowledging loneliness allows us to seek the support we might need and build meaningful connections.



Loneliness is not just something older people feel

When we imagine a lonely person, the stereotype often features an older individual living alone and rarely interacting with others. While it's true that loneliness affects older adults, recent studies reveal surprising differences across age groups.

According to the BBC Loneliness Experiment, 27% of individuals over 75 reported feeling lonely often or very often. However, the highest levels of loneliness were observed among 16-24 year-olds, with a staggering 40% experiencing frequent loneliness.

How to support someone who you think might be lonely

Remember, loneliness affects us all, and it's important we support one another. Let's foster connections, break down barriers, and work towards a world where no one feels truly alone.

If you suspect someone is lonely, there are a number of ways you can support them. Consider taking these steps:



Reach out

Initiate conversations and check in regularly. A simple message or phone call can make a significant difference.



Be present

Spend time with them. Whether in person or virtually, your presence matters. Engage in activities together or simply listen to what they have to say.



Encourage social activities

Suggest you take part in a group activity together, such as a craft club or an exercise class. Connecting with others who share similar interests can help to alleviate loneliness.



Help to build connections

Introduce them to new people or invite them to social gatherings. Sometimes a gentle nudge in the right direction can result in them developing meaningful friendships.



Empathise

Understand that loneliness is a valid emotion. Show empathy and validate their feelings without judgement from your side.