Loneliness and coronavirus

As a result of the coronavirus outbreak, the usual ways that we can connect with our families and friends have changed. This can have a real impact on our mental wellbeing, particularly on feelings of loneliness.

Loneliness has been said to be the feeling that we get when our need for meaningful and rewarding social contact and relationships isn't being met. Feeling lonely is a completely normal reaction to times like this and we can all feel lonely at times (even if we are living with others).

There are, however, some things that you can do that may help.

Connect with yourself

Firstly, when we feel lonely this can often be just as much about how we feel about ourselves as we do about our connections with other people. If you can't connect with yourself, it will be hard to connect with the people in your life in a meaningful way. Take some time just now to pause and think about the things that are important to you and make sure that you keep some time aside to do them over the coming weeks.

Stay in contact

Although practising social distancing means that we can't go about our normal day-to-day life, human connection is important for our general sense of wellbeing.

In Scotland, we can now meet with other households outdoors. You could go for a socially distant walk, host a picnic or a BBQ with your friends and families. Thanks to technology, there are also now more ways than ever to stay in touch while we are apart from our loved ones; whether that's through text, social media or video call.

When it comes to connecting with others, remember that quality is more important than quantity. Rather than interacting with people in your lives in small doses, why not look at spending your time deepening your relationships with the people who really matter to you. Make it a priority to schedule in regular catch ups with them to maintain a feeling of closeness.

Plan some fun activities

Although you may not be able to go out and do all the things that you normally would do, use this time as an opportunity to try out some fun activities. You could look to bake something you've never tried before, and maybe even have a baking party over video chat with some friends while you do it. You can then all compare your masterpieces together after!

Add some background noise

If you are living alone, things may feel a little quieter than usual. Why not have the radio on as some background noise while you're working or going about your day? You could also play some of your favourite songs that you can dance along to in the kitchen.

Create something

Learning a new skill has been shown to improve our sense of wellbeing, and is a great way of keeping yourself occupied. You could start an art project like knitting, origami or painting. If you don't have some of those things to hand, there are also lots of things you can do with just a notebook, paper and some pens. You could try immersing yourself in a writing project like journaling or calligraphy, for example.

Don't put too much pressure on yourself to create something amazing or to always be productive. It's important to look after yourself and it's fine if you don't find a new hobby or get through your 'to-do' list during this time.

Also remember that each day is different and you will find some days harder than others - your needs will change and 'doing your best' will look different on different days.

Reach out for support

Finally, don't be afraid to reach out for support if you need it or want it. There are lots of organisations who are here to listen to you, including:

- Samaritans National Line (24/7) - Call: 116 123
- Breathing Space Helpline (6pm to 2am) – Call: 0800 83 85 87
- CALM (5pm to Midnight) – Call: 0800 58 58 58

We've also moved a number of services online - you can find out more about them by clicking on the links below:

- Edinburgh services
- Midlothian services
- Scottish Borders services

- [East Lothian services](#)
- [West Lothian services](#)
- [National services](#)