

# **Self help matters.**

Helping you to find your solutions

## **Loneliness**

# Loneliness

Growth and change during University produces a variety of feelings. In addition to excitement and anticipation, there may also be feelings of loneliness.

Loneliness is not necessarily being alone. We may be alone for long periods without feeling lonely. But we may feel lonely in a familiar setting without really understanding why.

Feelings of loneliness can emerge because we are in new or unfamiliar surroundings. It can also bring up past issues which we might associate with loneliness, such as with previous relationships. There can be pressure for life at University to be constant action and social stimulation, when the reality for most is quite different – academic work, maybe a part-time job, some social interaction, but also normal periods of being alone.

## Top Tips

**Needs.** Loneliness can be made more intense by what you tell yourself it means. If this is a sign that your needs are not being met, then this gives you motivation to act on this. But what is your need? Friendship, study-buddies, a partner?

**Transition.** It may feel different being alone when home and school might have offered a lot of people interaction. Accept this as a transition period, getting used to a new way of being with yourself and others.

**Temporary.** Loneliness will not last forever – you can change that today.

**Action.** Do something; eat with others, sit with new people in class, join a club or society, go to the gym, volunteer, get involved in activities and interests, look for a job, connect with faith-based organisations.

**Interests.** Put yourself in new situations where you will meet people. Engage in activities in which you have genuine interest and you'll meet people with whom you have something in common.

**Social skills.** Work at developing your social skills. Practice getting to know others and letting them know you.

**Non-judgemental.** Don't judge new people on the basis of past relationships. Instead, try to see each person you meet from a fresh perspective and as a unique individual, just as you are.

**Pace.** Intimate friendships usually develop gradually as people learn or open up to share their feelings and life experiences. Avoid rushing into intimate friendships by sharing too quickly or expecting that others will. Let the process develop naturally.

**Variety.** Value all of your friendships and their unique characteristics rather than believing that only a romantic relationship will relieve your loneliness.

**Developing Yourself.** Think of yourself as a total person. Don't neglect other needs just because your companionship or friendship needs are not being met.

**You.** Use your 'alone time' to get to know YOU. Think of it as an opportunity to develop independence and to learn to take care of your own emotional needs.

**Alone time.** Use your time alone to enjoy yourself rather than just existing until you will be with others.

**Past.** Use what you have enjoyed in the past to help you decide how to enjoy your alone time now. Tools. Keep things in your space, such as books, games or music, that you can use to enjoy in your alone time.

**Anxiety.** It's normal to feel anxious meeting new people. Don't make this an excuse to stop you making friendships.

**Open mind.** Don't decide ahead of time how you're going to feel about an activity. Keep an open mind.

**Future.** You are not defined by periods of loneliness.

## Resources

### MOODZONE

Boost your mood, cope with stress, anxiety or depression or simply improve your overall emotional wellbeing.



**Opening Hours:** Online

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/pages/low-mood-stress-anxiety.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/pages/low-mood-stress-anxiety.aspx)

### LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL

Want to know how to feel happier, more confident & worry less right now? Would you like to learn new ways of dealing with what life throws at you?



**Opening Hours:** Online

<https://littf.com/>

### TOGETHER ALL

Online community of people who are anxious, feeling low or not coping who support and help by sharing what's troubling them. This is a free, online, moderated service and confidential.



**Opening Hours:** Online

<https://togetherall.com/en-gb/>

### MINDFULNESS FOR STUDENTS

Helping you to stay calm, focused & better manage the pressures of student life.



**Opening Hours:** Online

<http://mindfulnessforstudents.co.uk/>

### UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN SERVICES & SUPPORT

A range of support resources for everyone at University



[www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/support](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/support)

### THE MIX

Provides free, confidential support for young people under 25 via online, social and mobile.



**Opening Hours:** Online

[www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)

#### **If you are experiencing a crisis - please contact any of the following**

- **Emergency Services** - telephone 999 (Free) 24 hours
- **Samaritans** - telephone 116 123 (Free) 24 hours
- **Breathing Space** - telephone 0800 83 8587 (Free) Mon-Thu 6pm-2am, Fri-Sun 6pm-6am
- **Nightline** - telephone 01224 272829 (local rate) term-time only, between 20.00-08.00
- **NHS 24** - telephone 111 (Free) 24 hours

For other support resources, please see - [www.abdn.ac.uk/counselling](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/counselling)