

# Facilitator Notes

## Activity sheet 1 -3: what is loneliness?

**Support participants to understand that:** The session will require splitting the larger main group into breakout groups to enable them to hear a range of ideas and opinions. It is always useful to regularly remind participants not to use personal examples that they are not comfortable with others knowing about them (refer to group contract).

There may be a need for setting/revisiting the learning **group contract** and this should be negotiated and agreed upon at the start of each session. Explain to the group that this is a 'dynamic' process, and the contract can be revised and reviewed at any time.

Facilitators should '**check in**' with breakout groups throughout the session to clarify the task(s) and encourage conversation between participants.

This session enables participants to capture their own thoughts and ideas in writing and/or verbally. To ensure that all participants have an opportunity to engage in the group, the facilitator is to offer both options (**considering the literacy levels of the group**).

Videos can be a useful tool to support participants and, if you can, use the videos supplied in your delivery. These are also available on activity one sheet as QR codes for facilitators and participants to scan. Facilitator to consider and **plan for participants without access to appropriate devices/data** to ensure all participants can engage in this activity.

This session is focusing on the **generalised term 'loneliness'** and therefore can include others within the community. This will be important for future sessions when connecting with others.

If the group go 'off topic' (there may be issues around social isolation and loneliness that are out of our control: natural disasters, who are family are how others feel, etc. Facilitator can assure participants that this is further explored in session 2 (What does loneliness look like?).

Activity sheet 1 - participants can be kept by individuals to use the QR codes in the future. **Facilitator to keep a copy of 'What is loneliness?' (activity sheet 1- participants)** to reflect on and as evidence of the activity to support accreditation, etc.

### Quotes for facilitator - negatives about aloneness

"The absence of social connection triggers the same, primal alarm bells as hunger, thirst and physical pain." Cacioppo, J. T. and Patrick, W. (2008).

### Potential difficulties

Participants may have limited understanding/experience of loneliness and may see it as an issue for others (e.g., older people, etc.).

Past experiences (traumas such as exploitation, negative relationships, risk-taking) may be raised this session and future sessions. Therefore, support will need to be provided or an opportunity to access a safe space to explore, challenge and be challenged in their assumptions, bias, etc.

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- **Some examples of reasons why people experience loneliness could include:** sudden changes in environment or routine, spending too much time on social media, becoming a new parent, exams, moving away, bereavement, family or friendship breakdown, long term health condition, etc.
- **Some examples of identifiers of loneliness:** stress, depression, decrease in memory, anti-social behaviour, poor decision- making, substance misuse, poor mental health, etc.
- **Support participants to be aware that:** the images have been used as a representation of a situation, feeling or environmental and are only used as an example that can be expanded on.
- Further resources for locations and people can be found in Session 2 (What does loneliness look like?).

Definitions available to print out on resource sheets 1-3 or a presentation (all downloadable).

**Statistics on loneliness** - [Children's and young people's experiences of loneliness - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)  
[We-are-lonely-but-not-alone-Research.pdf \(coopfoundation.org.uk\)](#)  
2019.

- Further reading: Cacioppo, J. T. and Patrick, W. (2008) Loneliness human nature and the need for social connection. New York Norton.
- The neurobiology of social distance: Why loneliness may be the biggest threat to survival and longevity (no date) ScienceDaily. Available at: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/06/200609104253.htm> (Accessed: 3 September 2021).