

How to Deal with Loneliness: A Guide from Crisis Text Line

We've all been there. Maybe you didn't land an invite to a party. Or, maybe your pals forgot to invite you to lunch. Or, maybe you just have yet to find your people. Feeling lonely isn't uncommon. When the feeling of loneliness continues it can be seriously damaging to your mental health.

Signs of Loneliness

When a feeling of being alone and disconnected persists for extended periods of time (often despite actually surrounding yourself with other humans), quality, rejuvenating alone time transitions into crippling loneliness. Persistent loneliness can lead to:

- Low energy or brain fog
- Sleep problems (including difficulty with falling asleep or problems staying
- Lack of interest in food
- Drinking more or using drugs
- Feeling hopeless, worthless, or increased feelings of depression
- Increased feelings of anxiety
- Getting sick more often
- Physical aches and pains including headaches, migraines, stomach aches, or muscle tension
- Excess shopping or increased attachment to material things
- Binge-watching television

Types of Loneliness

If you're feeling lonely, chances are you are actually not alone in that feeling. In fact, [loneliness](#) is so common that researchers have classified the feeling into three main categories:

- **Situational Loneliness**— Maybe you started a new school, moved away from your friends and family, or just have a new schedule that is making it hard for you to connect with the people and places that used to fill your life. Situational loneliness occurs when there are changes in your life that cause you to feel isolated. Thankfully, this loneliness often gets better with time as you adapt to your new normal.
- **Developmental Loneliness**— It feels like everyone else is moving and shaking without you: acing tests, getting promotions, or starting families. Sometimes, this feeling of being behind—of feeling like everyone is moving on and excelling without you—can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness.
- **Internal Loneliness**— You're out with your friends hitting up your favorite pizza joint. Instead of feeling surrounded by the people you love, you can't shake the feeling of being totally and utterly alone. Sometimes, people feel lonely when they are actually hardly alone at all. Internal loneliness comes from a perception of being alone in any and every situation.

Causes of Loneliness

Maybe you're experiencing a big change in your life. Or, maybe the friends you used to connect with do not seem to "get" you anymore. Or, maybe you are having trouble finding someone to confide in. There are so many reasons you could be feeling lonely. If you are unable to pinpoint how and why you are experiencing loneliness, think back on if any of these events happened in our life recently:

- You moved away from close friends or family
- You lost a friend or loved one
- You made the switch to living alone after living with family/roommates
- You're having difficulties with meeting new people due to access issues
- You have been in poor physical or mental health
- You have avoided social situations because you fear being rejected
- You have recently retired, quit your job, or lost your job
- You have to live in a country where they don't speak your native language or you are experiencing another form of culture shock
- You live in an area that is geographically cut-off from the rest of the world
- You have been spending an inordinate amount of time on social media

How to Deal with Loneliness

Reach out for help if you are feeling lonely. You can also try:

- Reach out to friends and family: in this modern world, there are so many ways you can connect with the people who mean the most to you. Don't live in the same city? Try shooting the special people in your life a text message just to let them know they're on your mind. Here's a start: "Hey, I've been missing you lately. How are you?"
- Get out there and say "hello": Start interacting with the people you see in your daily life. Maybe the barista at your local coffee shop who makes you the perfect cup of joe every single day. Or, maybe it's the crossing guard who keeps you safe on your way to school or work. [Studies](#) show that being kind towards others can actually make you happier. So, next time you get the perfect cup of coffee or make it safely to your next destination, make sure you say please and thank you. And, if you're feeling spicy, maybe even ask their name. There you have it: a new friend.
- Find your people: Studies show that finding a community connection can be pivotal for mental wellness. These days, there's a group for anything. Try a new workout class, start a Quizbowl league, or make a standing brunch date with people you want to prioritize in your life. Not sure who your people are or where to find them? Try [Meetup.com](#) to find people with similar interests in your area.
- Get a pet: According to science, pets could be beneficial for your mental wellness, decreasing stress and mitigating symptoms of anxiety. Use your furry pal as an opportunity to meet other pet owners by hitting up a cat café or dog park. Spending time with your pet and meeting other people—a loneliness-combatting double whammy.

Reach out for help. You're not alone.