

Thrive 365

Dragonfly: Impact Education



Did you know?

Feeling connected is good for you - socially, emotionally and physically. It's also linked to lower levels of depression and anxiety. It's not surprising then that at the other end of the spectrum, loneliness is bad for our health.

People who are lonely are more likely to be anxious, depressed and are more likely to demonstrate antisocial behaviour.

It's common to associate loneliness with older people living alone. However, 16-24 year olds are the group most likely to be affected by loneliness. Raising awareness of this can help young people open up more about feelings of loneliness.

2 Quality matters

Research shows that we only need between three and five close friends to have the highest levels of life satisfaction. Having too many friends can actually make it harder to form close bonds, this is why people can sometimes feel lonely even though they have lots of friends. We need people we can connect with on a deep level. Think about who these people might be for you - who makes you feel uplifted and happier after spending time with them?

Smiling and saying hello to people as you pass can make a big difference to our feelings too as it connects us to our community. Set yourself a challenge to do this for a day and see how it makes you feel.

1 Challenge stigma

It's important to know that there are different types of loneliness. For example, you can be surrounded by people but if you don't feel connected you might feel lonely. If you've experienced a family breakdown or bereavement, you might feel lonely because you miss a specific person. Knowing this can make it easier to express feelings of loneliness. Also, thinking about the language you use to describe loneliness is important. It's not a mental health condition and it's often temporary - but left unchecked it can affect your mental health. Rather than saying someone 'suffers' from loneliness, try using words like 'experiences' loneliness. If you feel embarrassed to say you feel lonely, try saying that you need more connection.

3 Natural connection

Sometimes, we feel lonely because we feel disconnected from ourselves and the world around us. Getting out into nature can make a huge difference if this is the case. Whether it be noticing a plant, or visiting a local park or a nature reserve - being in nature can slow down the mind and help you feel at peace and more connected to both yourself and the world around you.

Other ways of reconnecting with yourself are to express your feelings. You can write them in a journal, draw or create music. Feeling at peace with yourself can help you feel more connected to others when you're with them.

The research and figures in today's edition come from <https://www.marmaladetrust.org/>

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