# COVID-19 Loneliness & Isolation

Throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic millions of people have been and still are experiencing loneliness due to government lockdowns. In an effort to save lives and prevent the spread of the virus our usual activities of seeing friends, family may have been severely restricted.

A survey of UK adults took place before lockdown and 10% of people said they had feelings of loneliness. The same survey was conducted during lockdown and that number jumped from 10% to 25% in a matter of weeks. This has effected younger people (18 – 24) in particular with 16% feeling lonely before, jumping up to 44% just weeks into lockdown.

## Effects of loneliness on mental health

Most people have experienced loneliness at some point during their lives. However, experiencing loneliness for a prolonged period can affect our mental health by causing stress, heightened anxiety and depression.

## Preventing loneliness

During unusual times we need to adapt the ways we stay in touch with one another to maintain the social networks and relationships we have.

There are various ways we can easily stay in touch using technology when meeting in person isn't possible.

It is also important that we try to maintain routines and interactions where possible, whether that's playing games online with friends or hosting a virtual quiz, socialising around something fun can be very beneficial.

## Helping others who might be feeling lonely

Be aware of those who may be experiencing feelings of loneliness in the current climate, this could be people living on their own or not. Even people living with spouses or others might feel lonely at times from lack of external social interaction, especially those that are shielding.

Give them a call, a face-time, a nice gesture, get creative and brighten up their day. It will make you feel good too!

## What if you're feeling lonely?

If you're feeling lonely it can be easy to fall into a rut which makes it hard to get motivated and reach out, but a little effort has to be made to counter that.

Call a friend or family member for a chat, utilise social media or forums about things that are of interest to you and speak with like-minded people and remember, you're not alone.

All of us have experienced or may still be experiencing the feeling of being cut off from our social interactions, some more than others, so we need to look after each other. This time will pass and we will have a new found appreciation for those social interactions but until then, take the time to look after yourself and others around you.

## More information

If you feel you may need some support, you can contact Care first. Care first is a leading provider of confidential, professional counselling, information and advice services. All employees are eligible to use Care first, our services include; telephone counselling, information services and online support. Call Care first on the Freephone number provided by your organisation and you can speak to a professional in confidence.

If you would like to view the Webinar on **'COVID-19: Loneliness & Isolation** this is being delivered live on **Thursday 8$^{th}$ October at 12pm-12:30pm**, please use the following link to register for this session –

https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2249585807111677198

If you are unable to join the webinar live, a recording of the session can be accessed using the same link above after the webinar has taken place.