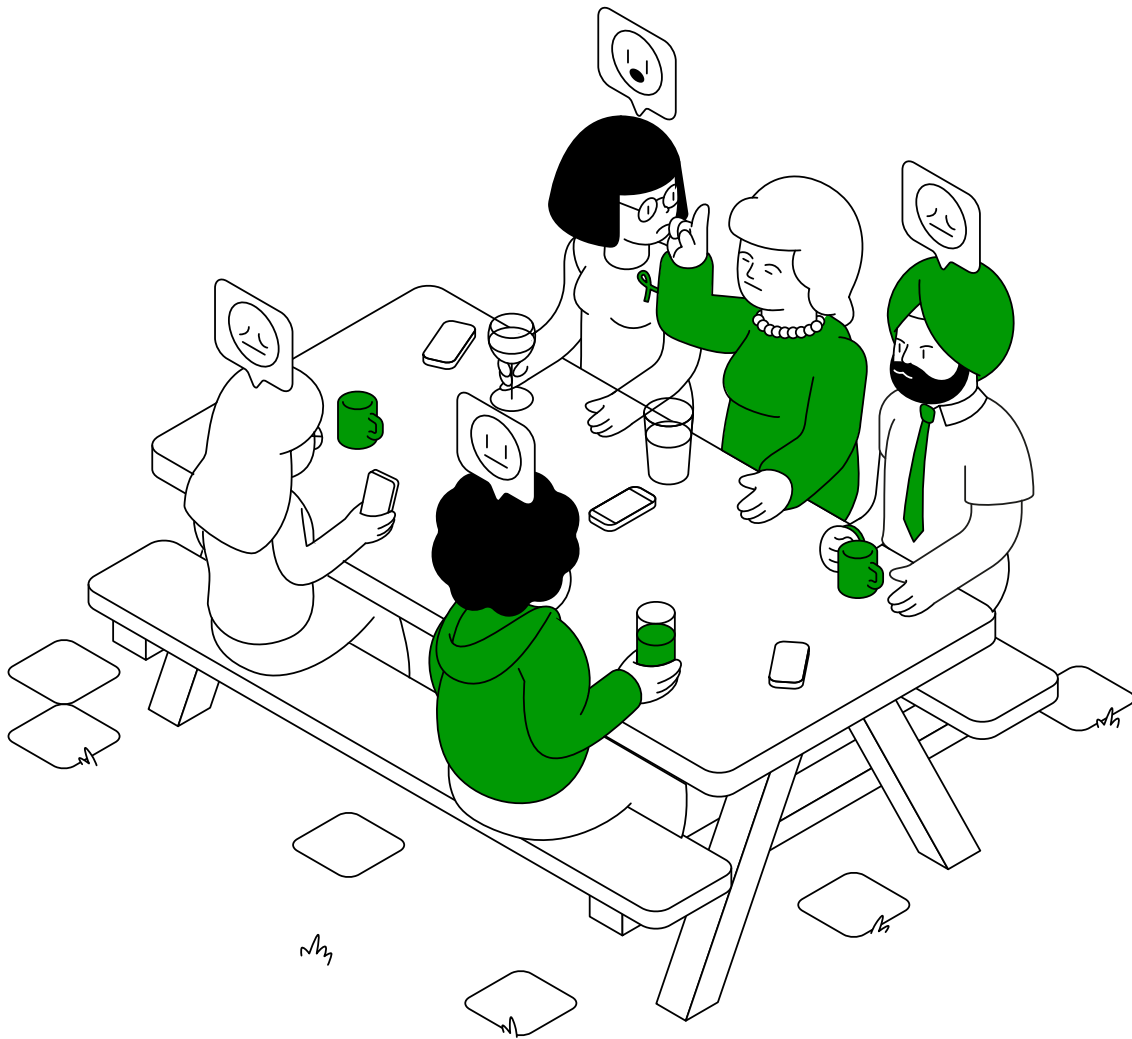




Peer  
Education  
Project



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Foundation



# Loneliness

Finding our connections  
to feel less lonely

Lesson

## Lesson plan:

- **Welcome**  
Slides 1 & 2 ..... 7
- **Being in the moment**  
Slide 3 ..... 9
- **Building connections**  
Slide 4 ..... 10
- **Introducing the topic**  
Slides 5-13 ..... 12
- **Learning through activity**  
Slide 14 & 15 ..... 23
- **Reflecting on the learning**  
Slides 16-20 ..... 25
- **Being in the moment**  
Slide 21 ..... 28

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## A L T E R N A T I V E   A C T I V I T I E S

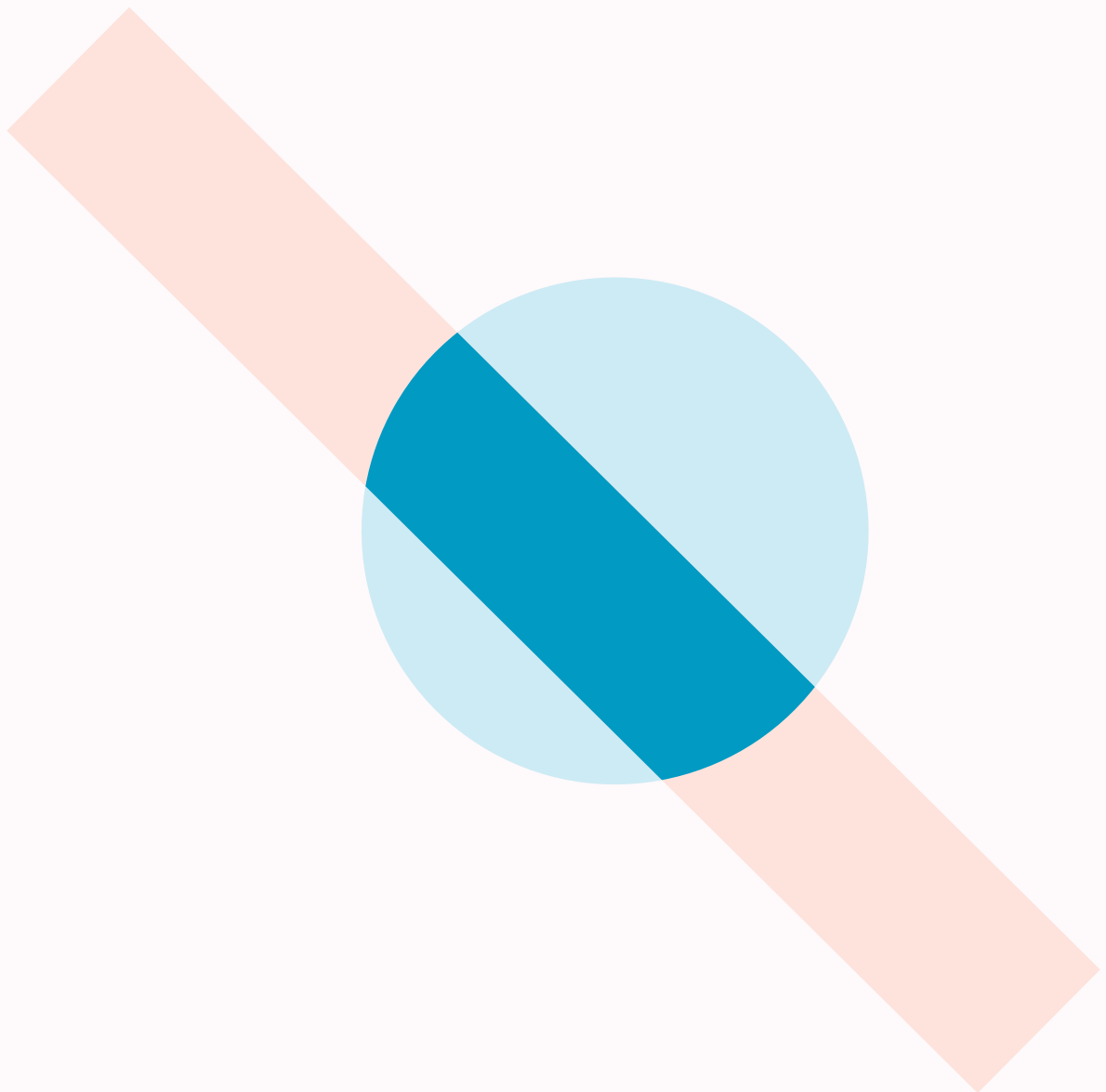
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- **Taking action**  
Slides 23-29 ..... 31
- **Challenging thinking**  
Slide 30 & 31 ..... 37
- **Resources**  
Reflection worksheet ..... 41



This lesson has been developed from the Mental Health Foundation's Peer Education Project (PEP) - a secondary school-based, educational programme that aims to give young people the skills and knowledge they need to safeguard their mental health and that of their peers. PEP is a carefully researched, effective approach to mental health education whereby older pupils within school or college deliver mental health lessons to younger pupils.

For more information about PEP and how your school can get involved, [click here](#).





## Lesson aims:

- To understand that loneliness is something we may all experience and is linked to a difference between the relationships we have and the ones we want.
- To address some common myths around loneliness.
- To consider ways to support ourselves, and others, when feeling lonely.

## Resources checklist:

- PowerPoint slides
- The [‘What’s Up with Merve?’ video](#)
- Reflection worksheet (optional)
- Paper and pens (optional)



## Preparation checklist:

- Plan two ‘Being in the moment’ activities, referring to the [Mindfulness Activities Pack](#).
- Plan a ‘Building connections’ activity, referring to the [Ice Breaker Activities Pack](#).



## How to use the lesson plan:

This lesson plan is designed to be delivered by pupils aged 15 and upwards (known as Peer Educators) to pupils aged 11 to 14 (known as Peer Learners).

The recommended lesson plan is primarily suited for pupils aged 11 or 12 and can be delivered as a 50-minute lesson or two 30-minute lessons.

The revised lesson plan offers alternative activities related to taking social action or challenging mental health information. The revised lesson plan provides pupils, particularly those who are older or who already have basic mental health awareness, an opportunity to explore the topics in more depth.

Recommended lesson plan 50 Minutes	Recommended lesson structure 2x 30 Minutes		Revised lesson plan 50 Minutes
	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	
Welcome 5 Minutes	Welcome 5 Minutes		Welcome 5 Minutes
Being in the moment 5 Minutes	Being in the moment 5 Minutes	Being in the moment 5 Minutes	Being in the moment 5 Minutes
Building connections 5 Minutes	Building connections 5 Minutes		<b>Select either:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the 'Taking action' section; or</li> <li>the 'Challenging thinking' section.</li> </ul> 25 Minutes
Introducing the topic 10 Minutes	Introducing the topic 10 Minutes		
Learning through activity 10 Minutes		Learning through activity 10 Minutes	Reflecting on the learning 10 Minutes
Reflecting on the learning 10 Minutes		Reflecting on the learning 10 Minutes	
Being in the moment 5 Minutes	Being in the moment 5 Minutes	Being in the moment 5 Minutes	Being in the moment 5 Minutes

If the lesson is being delivered by Peer Educators, as per the Peer Education Project model, each activity is recommended to be delivered either by Peer Educators or School Staff.

## How to do it:

The instructions for each activity are split into these steps:



Actions required such as presenting slides or handing resources out.

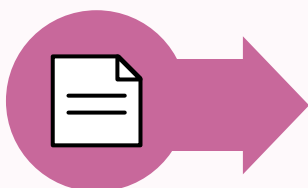


Key messages and activity instructions to be said.



Questions to be asked to extend the discussion or gauge understanding.

## Notes and troubleshooting:



There is additional information to support lesson delivery such as activity adaptations, considerations for classroom management, and key preparations for the lesson.

## It's not a script:

The lesson plan is not a word-for-word script. Prior to delivery, preparation time should be allocated to make key notes and plan how each activity will run.

# Welcome 5 mins

Resources needed: • Slides 1 & 2



## Slide 1



# Loneliness

Finding our connections to feel less lonely

## Lesson



Do:

### Present Slide 1.

Welcome the class and the Peer Educators to the lesson. Explain that the Peer Educators will be leading some of the activities during the lesson – an opportunity for Peer Learners to get to know them and learn from those who are similar in age.



Say:

**"In this lesson, we are going to explore the ways to support ourselves and others when feeling lonely."**



#### Ways of working



SLIDE 2

#### We will:

1. Respect and listen to each other, giving space for everyone to be heard.
2. Value everyone's opinion, even if it's different to yours.
3. Ask questions, especially if you are unsure about the information or activities.
4. Be kind to yourself and others, reaching out for support if you need it.

Any others? \_\_\_\_\_

Click to add text



Do:

Present Slide 2.



Say:

**"It is important for us all to feel safe and confident to share our thoughts, ideas and questions in this lesson."**



Do:

Read out the slide and ask the Peer Learners and the Peer Educators for any other points they would like to add. Write them directly on the slide.



#### Notes and troubleshooting

**Variations:** It can be useful to have the 'Ways of Working' list visible throughout the lesson. You could write these on a board or poster paper to display in each lesson.





# Being in the moment 5 mins



Resources needed: • Slide 3  
• A mindfulness activity

## Slide 3

### Being in the moment



SLIDE 3



Do:

Present Slide 3.



Say:

"We're going to start with a short exercise to bring our focus to this lesson."



Do:

Read out the mindfulness activity you have chosen.



### Notes and troubleshooting

**Prepare:** Select a mindfulness exercise from the [Mindfulness Activities Pack](#). You may want to explain what mindfulness is to the pupils.



# Building connections 5 mins



Resources needed: • Slide 4  
• An ice breaker activity

## Slide 4

### Building connections



SLIDE 4

What three words come to mind when you look at this image?



Robert Delaunay, *Relief-disques* (1936)

## Recommended ice breaker



Say:

"Today's welcome exercise is designed to get us thinking about how we connect with, and experience situations differently."



Do:

Present Slide 4.



Ask:

"What three words come to mind when looking at the image?"



Do:

Encourage pupils to think about what they see, how the image makes them feel and what the image inspires in them.

*Time to complete: 1 minute.*

*Continued...*



## Building connections (continued)



Do:

Invite Peer Learners to share their three words with the class.



Say:

“From looking at this image, we have come up with lots of words and phrases. Some of these are similar and some are different. It is important to remember that even when we share a similar experience, each person’s thoughts and feelings may be different and unique.

This lesson focuses on understanding the common experience of loneliness, and how this may look different for everyone. Finding connections with ourselves, others and the world around us, is one way to support ourselves and others when feeling lonely.”



### Notes and troubleshooting

**Prepare:** This recommended ice breaker activity is directly relevant to the lesson content. However, you can select an alternative activity from the [Ice Breaker Activities Pack](#).

**Variations:** If pupils would prefer to write down their three words, hand out paper before beginning the activity.



# Introducing the topic 10 mins



Resources needed: • Slides 5-13

## Slide 5

### Introducing the topic



SLIDE 5

Loneliness is when we feel we do not have the meaningful relationships we want around us.



Do:

Present Slide 5.



Say:

“Loneliness is often described as feeling like we do not have the meaningful relationships that we want to have around us. It is something we can all experience from time-to-time, throughout our lives.

Experiences of loneliness are personal to us and will be different for everyone. Some people may enjoy spending time alone without experiencing loneliness, whereas others may feel lonely when spending time alone. Some people may feel lonely when spending time with others, perhaps feeling like others don't understand or care about them, or that they don't belong or fit in.”

*Continued...*



## Introducing the topic (continued)



“Feelings of loneliness can come and go depending on the experiences we face. However, sometimes we can feel lonely for longer periods of time. It is important that when those feelings stick around, we reach out to someone we trust and ask for help.

Although we may all experience loneliness at some point in our lives, loneliness can often be misunderstood. We are going to look at some things people believe about loneliness.”



## Introducing the topic (continued)

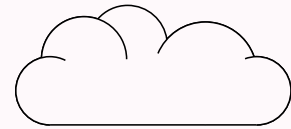
Slide 6

### Introducing the topic



SLIDE 6

Statement 1:  
**Only older  
people experience  
loneliness.**



Do:

**Present Slides 6-13.**

For each statement, ask the class to vote:

- hands up for true, and then
- hands up for false.

Then reveal the answer and explanation.



Do:

**Present Slide 6**

Read the statement.



## Introducing the topic (continued)

### Slide 7

#### Introducing the topic

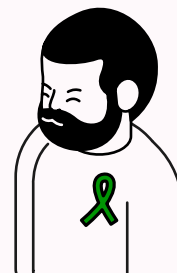
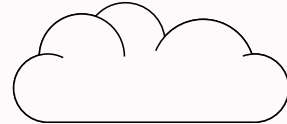


SLIDE 7



Statement 1:  
**Only older  
people experience  
loneliness.**

# FALSE



Do:

Present Slide 7.



Say:

**"False. Loneliness can affect all people, whatever the age and at any point in life."**



## Introducing the topic (continued)

### Slide 8

#### Introducing the topic



SLIDE 8



Statement 2:  
**Loneliness**  
means the same as  
being alone.



Do:

**Present Slide 8.**

Read the statement and ask the class to vote.





## Introducing the topic (continued)

Slide 9

### Introducing the topic

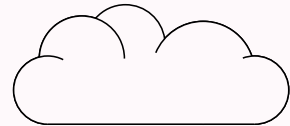


SLIDE 9



Statement 2:  
**Loneliness**  
means the same as  
being alone.

# FALSE



Do:

Present Slide 9.



Say:

“False. Being physically alone does not necessarily mean a person is lonely. Although loneliness is often connected with being alone, they do not mean the same thing, or always occur together. Being alone, sometimes referred to as social isolation, means being physically separated from the people, and the things that bring you comfort and support. Being socially isolated can be a difficult experience.

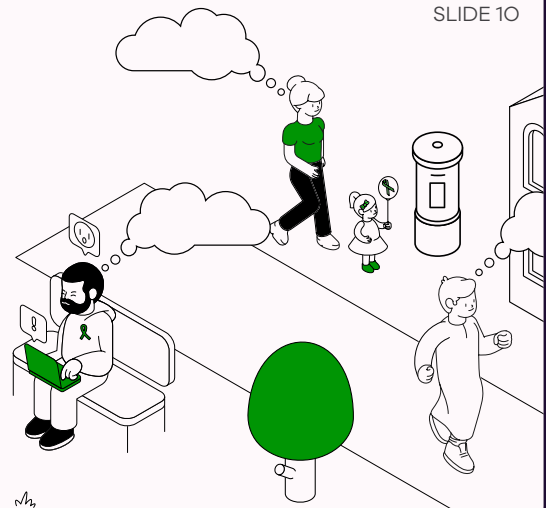
Some people may find comfort in having some time on their own. Whereas others can feel lonely even when they are with other people.”



#### Introducing the topic



Statement 3:  
**We are all equally  
likely to experience  
loneliness.**



Do:

**Present Slide 10.**

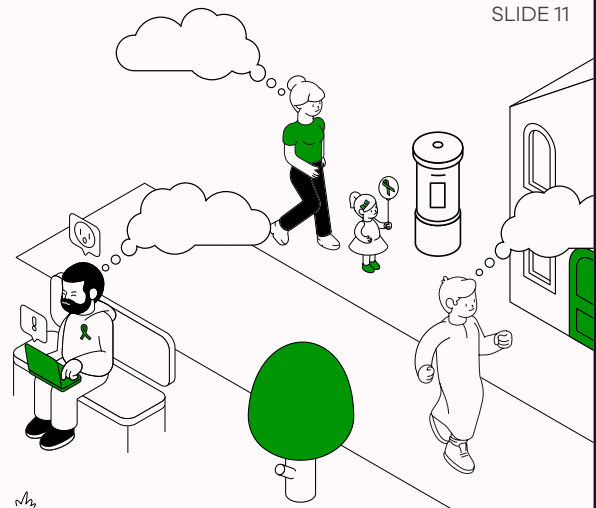
Read the statement and ask the class to vote.

#### Introducing the topic



Statement 3:  
**We are all equally  
likely to experience  
loneliness.**

**FALSE**



Do:

Present Slide 11.



Say:

“False. Although loneliness is something that we will all likely experience, we are not all equally at risk of loneliness. For some, the risk of loneliness is higher because of their situation and experiences. For example, some people feel lonely if they cannot afford to go out with friends or if they have responsibilities at home that mean they don’t have time to do things they enjoy. Difficult circumstances and experiences can also make it more difficult to do the things that help us feel less lonely.”

## Introducing the topic (continued)

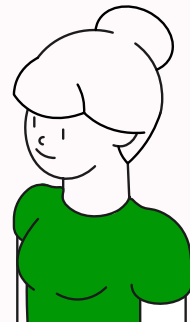
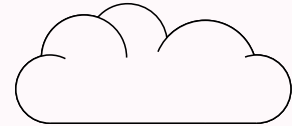
Slide 12

### Introducing the topic



SLIDE 12

Statement 4:  
**Loneliness and  
mental health are  
connected.**



Do:

**Present Slide 12.**

Read the statement and ask the class to vote.



## Introducing the topic (continued)

Slide 13

### Introducing the topic

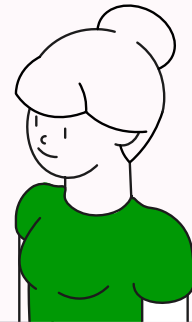
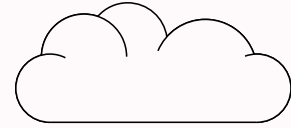


SLIDE 13



Statement 4:  
**Loneliness and  
mental health are  
connected.**

**TRUE**



Do:

Present Slide 13.



Say:

"True. Although loneliness is not a mental health problem, it is an experience that can affect our mental health, including our thoughts, feelings and behaviour. When we feel lonely for a long time, we might start to experience low mood and low-self-esteem.

Sometimes, if we are already struggling with our mental health, and we do not feel that others understand what we're going through, this can lead to feeling lonely.

There are many things we can do to look after our mental health and support ourselves when we are feeling lonely. Sometimes, it can be helpful to find meaningful connections with ourselves, others and the world around us, to reduce feelings of loneliness."

*Continued...*





### Notes and troubleshooting

**Classroom management:** Managing a discussion amongst the class can be tricky. Here are a few questions you could ask:

- “Why do you think it’s important that we know the right information about loneliness?”
- “Does anyone else agree or think differently?”
- “Will you do anything differently now that you know this is true/false?”

When you want to wrap up the discussion, try saying something like: “There were some really interesting thoughts in that discussion, let’s move on to our next activity.”



# Learning through activity 10 mins



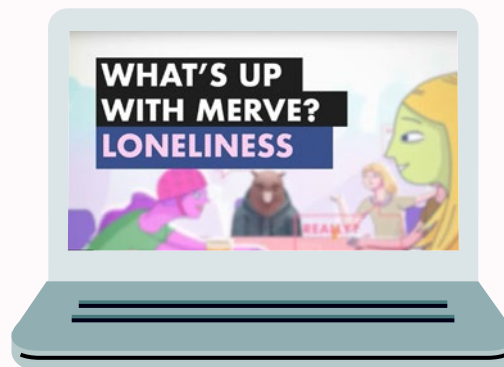
Resources needed: • Slides 14 & 15  
• 'What's up with Merve' video?

## Slide 14

### Learning through activity



SLIDE 14



<https://www.whatsupwitheveryone.com/loneliness.php>



Do:

Present Slide 14.



Say:

"It is important to think about what we can do when we are feeling lonely, but also what we could do to support someone else who is feeling lonely. We are going to watch a short video about someone called Merve, who is feeling lonely."



Ask:

Play the 'What's up with Merve?' video.



## Learning through activity (continued)

Slide 15

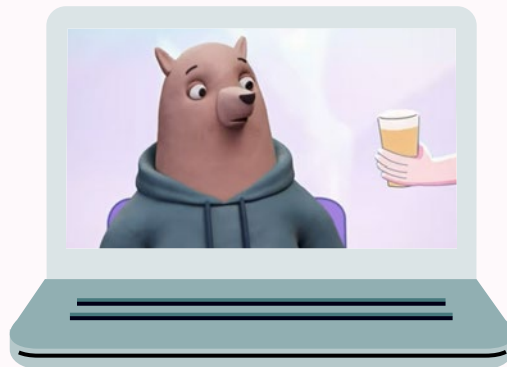
### Learning through activity



SLIDE 15

What could you say or do to support Merve?

What could Merve do for himself that might help him feel less lonely?



Present Slide 15.



Following the video, ask the Peer Learners:

- “What could you say or do to support Merve?”
- “What could Merve do for himself that might help him feel less lonely?”

*Time to share: 5 minutes.*





# Reflecting on the learning 10 mins



Resources needed: • Slides 16-20 • Pens and paper  
• Reflection worksheet (optional) (optional)

## Slide 16

### Reflecting on the learning



SLIDE 16

One thing I have learned.

One thing I will do differently.

One question I would like an answer to.



Present Slide 16.



"Spend two minutes thinking about these reflection statements:

- One thing I have learned.
- One thing I will do differently.
- One question I would like an answer to."

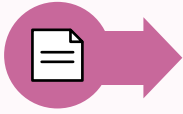


Invite pupils to share their reflection with the class for each statement. Write their responses on Slides 17-19.

Continued...



## Reflecting on the learning (continued)



### Notes and troubleshooting

**Prepare:** If using the worksheet, print copies ahead of the lesson and hand out to Peer Learners for this activity.

**Classroom management:** Their comment, question or thought doesn't have to be about mental health – it can be about the lesson itself, the activities, how it went, etc.

If using the worksheet, ask pupils to write down their responses to the reflection statements.

**Follow-up:** Collate any questions that weren't answered, and follow-up with responses to the pupils in the next lesson.



## Reflecting on the learning (continued)

### Slide 20

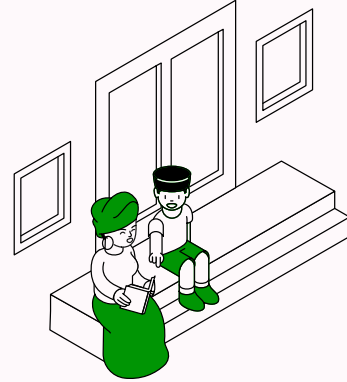
#### Lesson summary



SLIDE 20

Loneliness is often described as feeling like we do not have the meaningful relationships that we want to have around us. It is something we can all experience from time-to-time, throughout our lives.

If you are feeling lonely, think of the support network you have around you and ask for help.



Do:

**Present Slide 20.**

Read out the lesson summary.



# Being in the moment 5 mins



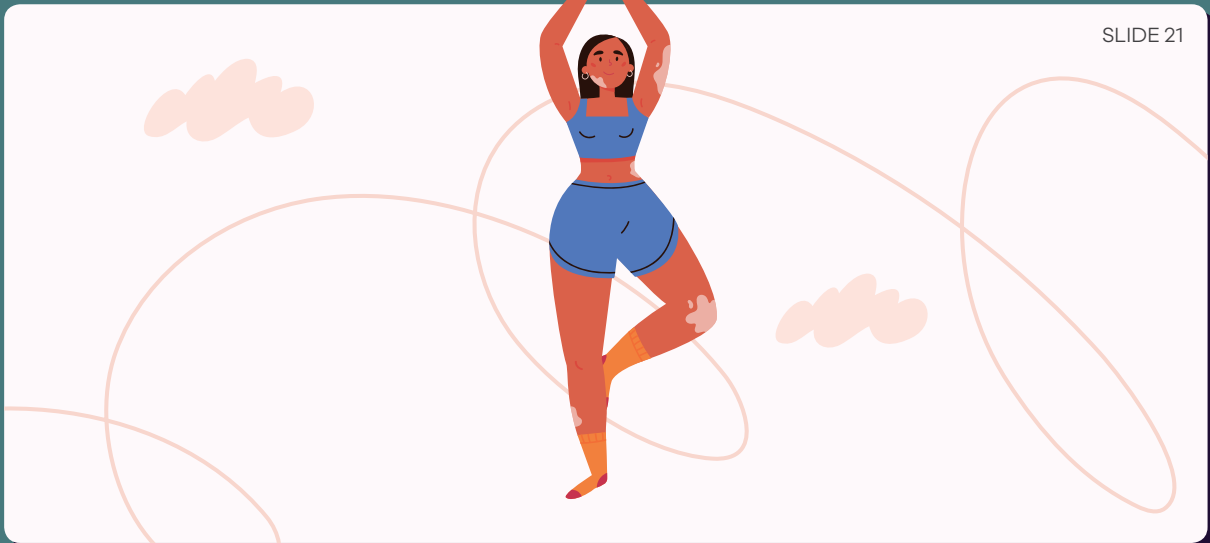
Resources needed: • Slide 21  
• A mindfulness activity

## Slide 21

### Being in the moment



SLIDE 21



Do:

Present Slide 21.



Say:

"We'll finish the lesson with another short mindfulness exercise."



Do:

Read out the mindfulness activity you have chosen.



Say:

"That's the end of the lesson. Thank you everyone for your contributions."

Continued...



## Being in the moment (continued)



### Notes and troubleshooting:

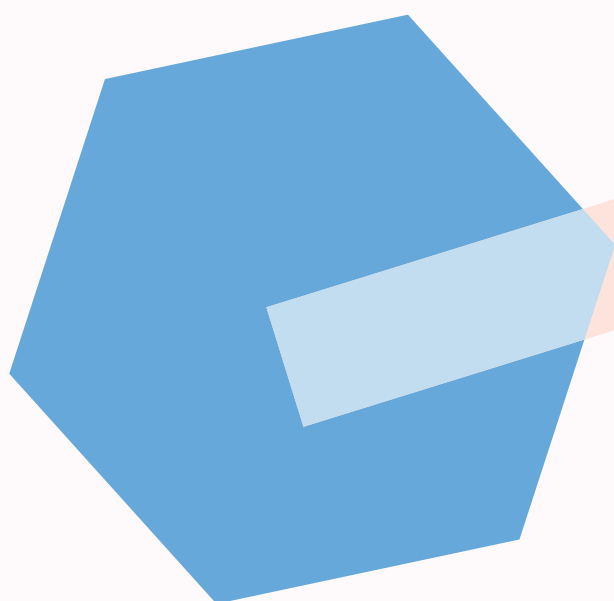
**Prepare:** Select a mindfulness exercise from the [Mindfulness Activities Pack](#).





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# Alternative activities



# Taking action 25 mins

Resources needed: • Slides 23-29



## Slide 23

### Taking action



SLIDE 23

Loneliness is when we feel we do not have the meaningful relationships we want around us.



Present Slide 23.



"Loneliness is often described as feeling like we do not have the meaningful relationships that we want to have around us. It is something we can all experience from time-to-time, throughout our lives."

*Continued...*



## Taking action (continued)



“Experiences of loneliness are personal to us and will be different for everyone. Some people may enjoy spending time alone without experiencing loneliness, whereas others may feel lonely when spending time alone. Some people may feel lonely when spending time with others, perhaps feeling like others don’t understand or care about them, or that they don’t belong or fit in.

Feelings of loneliness can come and go depending on the experiences we face. However, sometimes we can feel lonely for longer periods of time. It is important that when those feelings stick around, we reach out to someone we trust and ask for help.

We are going to watch a short video about someone called Merve, who is feeling lonely.”



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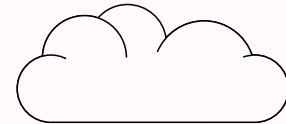
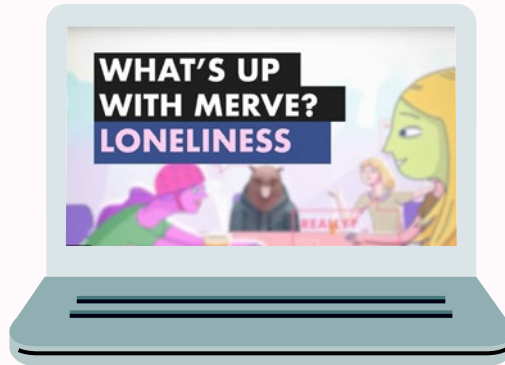
## Taking action (continued)

Slide 24

### Taking action



SLIDE 24



<https://www.whatsupwitheveryone.com/loneliness.php>



Do:

Present Slide 24 and show the 'What's up with Merve' video.



## Taking action (continued)

Slide 25

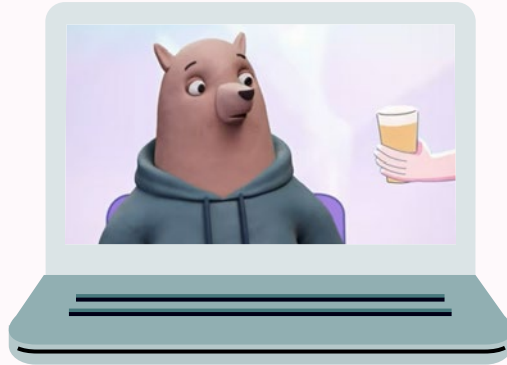
### Taking action



SLIDE 25

What could you say or do to support Merve?

What could Merve do for himself that might help him feel less lonely?



Do:

Present Slide 25.



Ask:

Following the video, ask pupils:

- “What could you say or do to support Merve?”
- “What could Merve do for himself that might help him feel less lonely?”

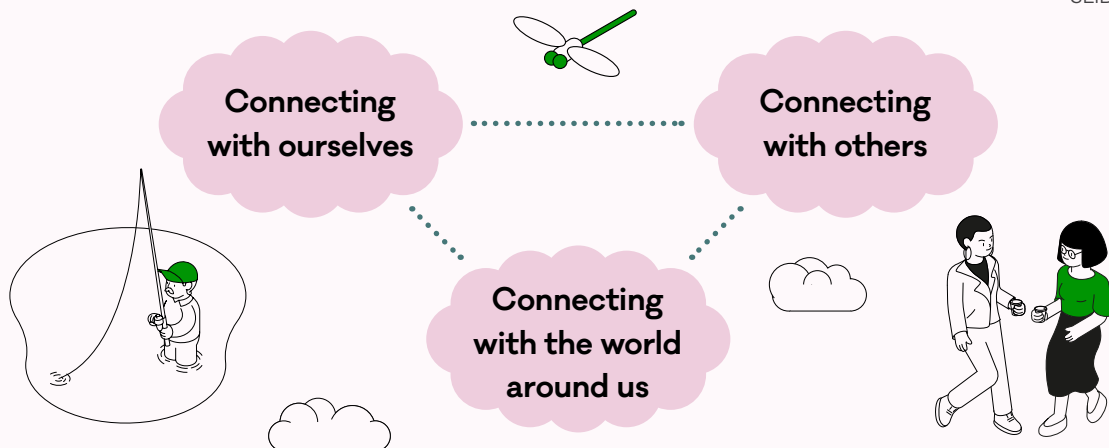
*Time to share: 5 minutes.*



### Taking action



SLIDE 26



Do:

Present Slide 26.



Say:

"There are many situations or spaces where someone can feel lonely. It is important to find connections, whether this be with ourselves, with others, or with the world around us, to help ease feelings of loneliness."

## Taking action (continued)

### Slides 27-29



Do:

Present Slide 27-29.



Say:

"There are many situations or spaces where someone can feel lonely. It is important to find connections, whether this be with ourselves, with others, or with the world around us, to help ease feelings of loneliness."



Do:

Ask pupils to think of activities that could be done to connect with ourselves, with others, and with the world around us.

Invite pupils to share their ideas and write them on the slides.

*Time to share: 15 minutes.*



# Challenging thinking 25 mins



Resources needed: • Slides 30 & 31

## Slide 30

### Challenging thinking



SLIDE 30

Loneliness is when we feel we do not have the meaningful relationships we want around us.



Present Slide 30.



"Loneliness is often described as feeling like we do not have the meaningful relationships that we want to have around us. It is something we can all experience from time-to-time, throughout our lives.

Feelings of loneliness can come and go depending on the experiences we face. However, sometimes we can feel lonely for longer periods of time. It is important that when those feelings stick around, we reach out to someone we trust and ask for help."

*Continued...*



## Challenging thinking (continued)



"Although loneliness is something that we will all likely experience, we are not all equally at risk of loneliness. For some, the risk of loneliness is higher because of their situation and experiences."



## Challenging thinking (continued)

Slide 31

### Challenging thinking



SLIDE 31

**Individual factors**



Click to add text

**Social factors**



Click to add text

**Environmental factors**



Click to add text



**Do:**

**Present Slide 31.**

Divide the class into small groups.



**Do:**

Ask pupils to discuss what individual, social and environmental factors could increase the risk of loneliness.

*Time to discuss: 5 minutes.*



**Do:**

Ask pupils to share their ideas and write them on the slide.

*Time to share: 5 minutes.*



**Do:**

Ask each group to select one of the factors and prepare a two-minute presentation to discuss what individuals, peers and the wider school community could do to reduce the risk of loneliness.

*Time to prepare: 5 minutes.*

*Continued...*



## Challenging thinking (continued)



Do:

Invite each group to present their presentations to the class.

*Time to present: 10 minutes.*



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# Reflection worksheet



One thing I have learned:

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One thing I would do differently:

---

---

---

One question I would like an answer to:

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