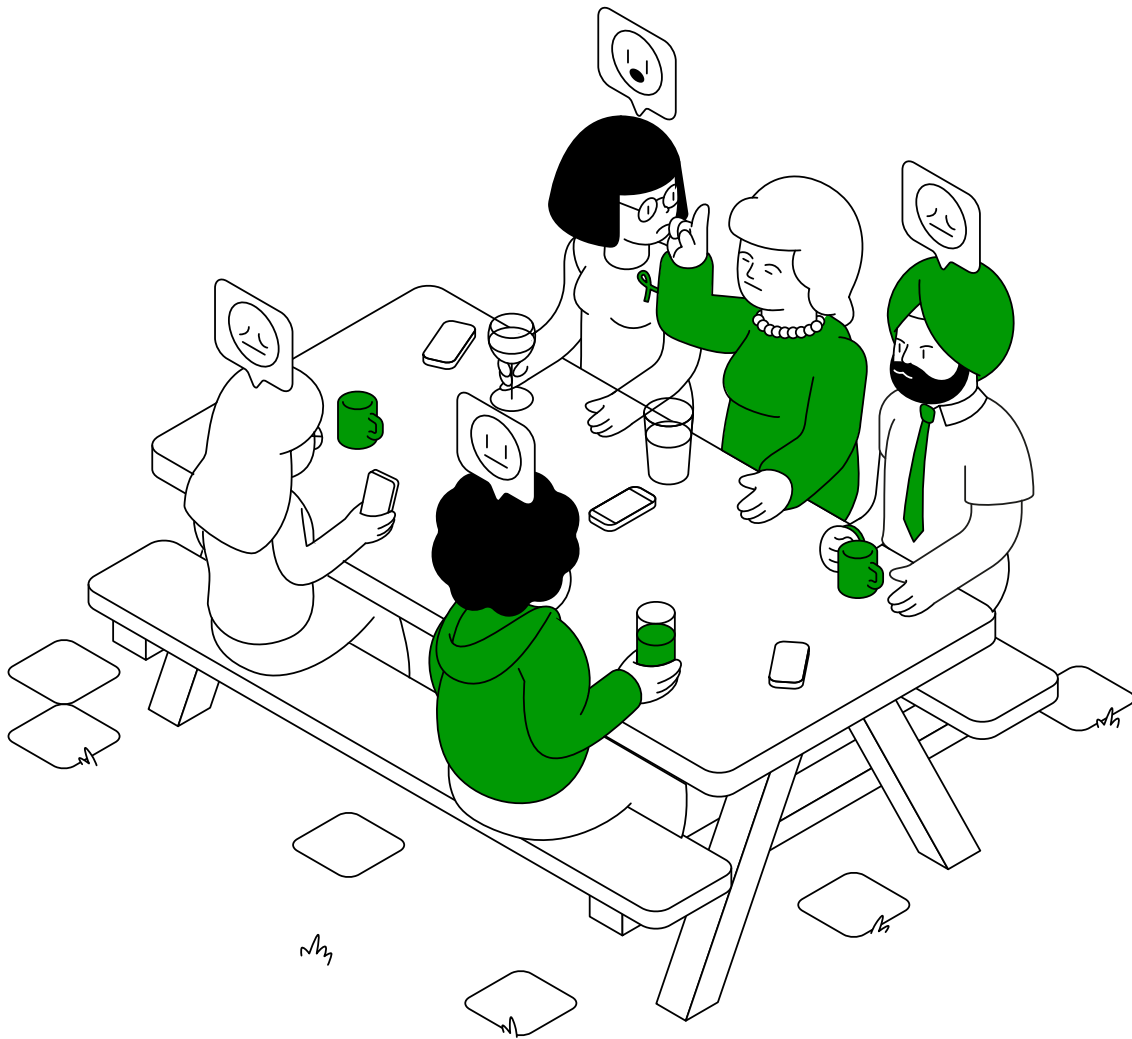




Peer
Education
Project



Mental Health
Foundation



Loneliness

Finding our connections
to feel less lonely

Assembly

Assembly script:

- **Cover slide**
Slide 1 5
- **Introduction**
Slide 2 6
- **What do we mean by loneliness?**
Slide 3 7
- **The inequalities in experiencing loneliness**
Slide 4 8
- **The difference between feeling lonely and being alone**
Slide 5 10
- **What is mental health?**
Slide 6 11
- **Loneliness and mental health**
Slides 7-8 12
- **Connecting with ourselves**
Slides 9-10 14
- **Connecting with others**
Slides 11-12 16
- **Connecting with the world around us**
Slides 13-14 18
- **Final thoughts**
Slide 15 20
- **Where to find further information and support**
Slide 16 21

Overview



Mental Health
Foundation



This assembly 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](#).

Assembly 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 understand how loneliness can affect our mental health.
- To learn ways to support ourselves, and others, when feeling lonely.

You will need:

- Assembly script
- PowerPoint slides

Estimated delivery time:

- 20-30 minutes
- The assembly script can be divided into smaller sections and delivered across multiple assemblies, form times or lessons to fit into your timetable.

To ensure the content is most relevant, update the assembly script and PowerPoint slides to share support options in school or college and the local community with your pupils.

Slide 1



Loneliness

Finding our
connections to
feel less lonely

Assembly

Script

Welcome to today's assembly on finding connections to support ourselves, and others, when feeling lonely.

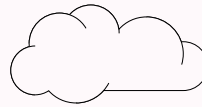
Slide 2

Introduction



This assembly will cover:

- What loneliness is.
- How loneliness can affect our mental health.
- How we can build connections to feel less lonely.



SLIDE 2

Script

Loneliness is something we can all experience from time-to-time, throughout our lives, and will be different for everyone.

This assembly is an opportunity to understand:

- what loneliness is,
- how it can affect our mental health; and
- how we can build connections to feel less lonely.



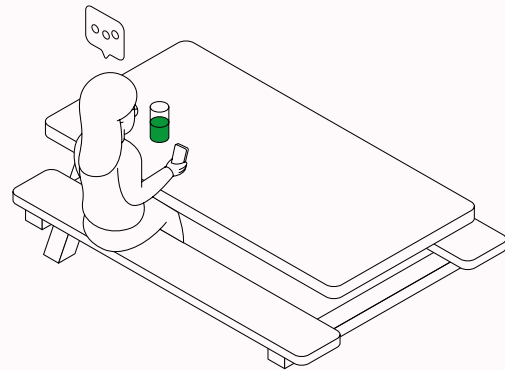
Slide 3

What do we mean by loneliness?



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

Feelings of loneliness can come and go depending on our circumstances and the experiences we face.



SLIDE 3

Script

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

Many of us feel lonely from time-to-time. Feelings of loneliness can come and go depending on our circumstances and the experiences we face. For example, we may feel lonely when starting a new school or sports club, exploring our sexuality and gender identity, or being bullied. Social media, even with many followers and likes, can make us feel lonely and disconnected.

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.



Slide 4

The inequalities in experiencing loneliness



We are not all equally at risk of experiencing loneliness.

The circumstances and experiences some people face mean they are more likely to experience loneliness.



SLIDE 4

Script

Although loneliness is something that we will all likely experience at some point, some people may be more likely to feel lonely, especially over a longer period of time. This may be due to the circumstances and experiences they face which make it more difficult to put things in place that help reduce feelings of loneliness.

For example, [research](#) has shown that children aged 11-15 from lower socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to experience loneliness, with limited financial support to be involved in sports and social clubs, and take part in activities with friends.

Underrepresentation, feeling like we don't belong, and experiencing racism or other types of discrimination can lead to loneliness.

Continued...



Slide 4 Script cont.

For example, a [report](#) found that 38% of individuals from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities are more likely to feel lonely compared to 28% of people of white ethnicity, and are more likely to report feeling less able to access support.

It is important to be kind to ourselves and others. We will all have our own circumstances and experiences to face, and these might influence when we feel lonely and how we prefer to be supported.



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Slide 5

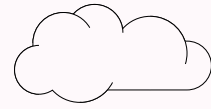
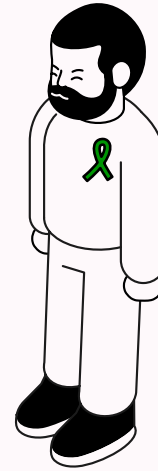
The difference between feeling lonely and being alone



Social isolation:

The physical separation from the people, and things, that bring you comfort and support.

A person who is socially isolated is not necessarily lonely.



SLIDE 5

Script

Loneliness can often be connected to being alone. However, they do not mean the same thing, or always happen together.

Being alone, sometimes referred to as social isolation, is the physical separation from the people, and things, that bring you comfort and support. A person who is socially isolated is not necessarily lonely.

Some people may enjoy spending time by themselves, 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. Loneliness can begin to affect our mental health and wellbeing and be associated with other concerns such as social anxiety.



Slide 6

What is mental health?



Script

Mental health is made up of our thoughts, feelings, moods, and behaviours. Mental health is not fixed throughout our lives. Just like physical health, mental health can change depending on experiences and circumstances, as people move through different stages of life.

Mental health is something we all have and need to look after. Each of us will find different things helpful for our mental health.

Understanding what loneliness is, and the ways we can connect with ourselves, others and the world around us, can help us improve the health of our minds.



Slide 7

Loneliness and mental health



Although loneliness is not a mental health problem, it is an experience that can affect our mental health.



SLIDE 7

Script

Although loneliness is not a mental health problem, it is an experience that can affect our mental health and is [reported](#) to increase the risk of mental health conditions such as depression.

When we feel lonely, we may experience low mood, low-self-esteem, and worrying thoughts. For example, a [report](#) found that 61% of lonely young people say that 'feeling lonely makes them lose confidence in themselves'.

The relationship between mental health and loneliness is often described as cyclical. Sometimes, if we are already experiencing poor mental health, and do not feel understood, this can lead to feeling lonely. Experiencing loneliness can also increase the risk of poor mental health. For example, a [report](#) found that 53% of young people felt low-mood and depression as a result of feeling lonely.



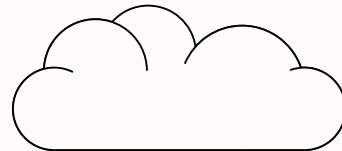
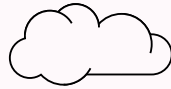
Slide 8

Loneliness and mental health



To support our mental health, especially when feeling lonely, we can find meaningful connections with:

- Ourselves
- Others
- The world around us



SLIDE 8

Script

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

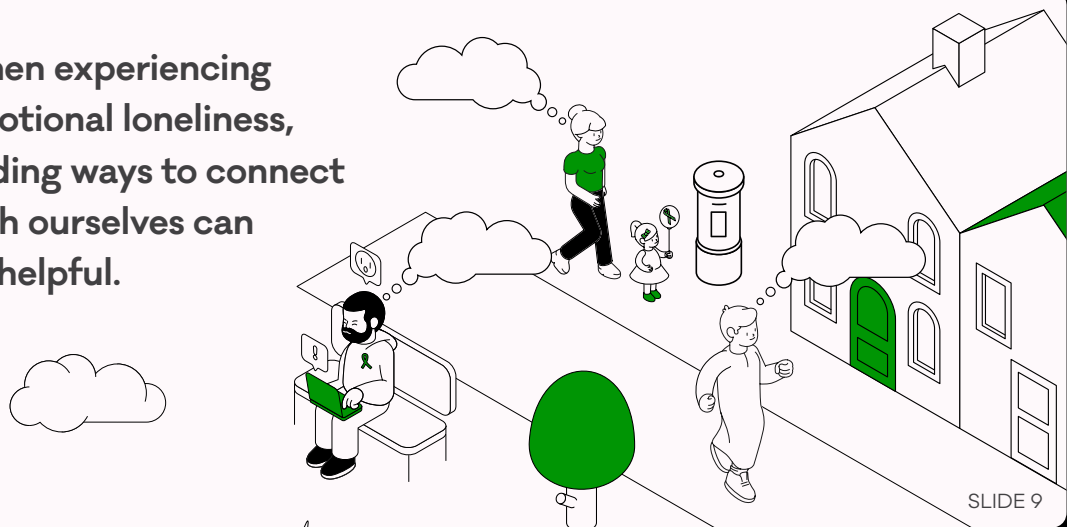


Slide 9

Connecting with ourselves



When experiencing emotional loneliness, finding ways to connect with ourselves can be helpful.



Script

Sometimes we may feel uncomfortable or disconnected with who we are. When we are feeling this way, we may be experiencing emotional loneliness. This is something we may all feel at points in our lives – it can take time to learn and develop what makes you, you.

It can be useful to think about things you enjoy as a reminder of the different parts of ourselves and what matters to us.

When experiencing emotional loneliness, finding ways to connect with ourselves can be helpful. It is important to remember to be kind to ourselves when we are feeling disconnected from who we are. It can be useful to think about how we would talk and support a friend who was feeling like this.

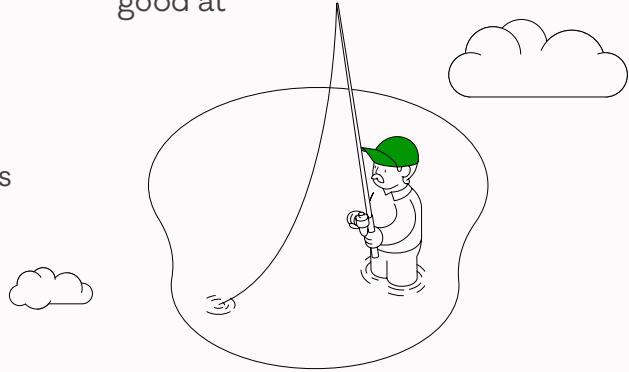


Slide 10

Connecting with ourselves



- Practise mindfulness
- Listen to music
- Write in a journal
- Practice stretching exercises
- Paint a favourite place
- Try something new
- Do something that we are good at



SLIDE 10

Script

Here are some ways that we can connect with ourselves:

- Practise mindfulness by doing some breathing exercises or colouring.
- Listen to our favourite music - maybe even have a dance around our room!
- Write down or draw how we are feeling in a journal or use voice notes.
- Try stretching exercises such as yoga.
- Paint a picture of a favourite place we have visited.
- Try something new.
- Do something that we are good at.



Slide 11

Connecting with others



Social loneliness is feeling like you do not have the supportive relationships you would want.

It can take time to build meaningful connections with others.



SLIDE 11

Script

Sometimes, we may be surrounded by others, but if we don't feel like we have meaningful connections with them, we can feel lonely. This is called social loneliness, when you feel like you do not have the supportive relationships you would want in your life.

Finding like-minded people with similar interests that you can relate to is one way of helping ease the feelings of social loneliness.

A [report](#) found that 51% of young people who've felt lonely said a friend reaching out to them makes them feel better.

It can take time to build meaningful connections with others, and there will be many opportunities to make these connections.



Slide 12

Connecting with others



- Call or text a friend
- Offer a hug to someone we care for
- Do an activity with someone
- Join a new club or activity
- Speak to a trusted adult



SLIDE 12

Script

Here are some ways that we can connect with others:

- Call or text a friend to see how they are doing.
- Offer a hug to someone we care for - a friend or family member.
- Do an activity with someone – play a game, bake a cake, watch a movie.
- Join a new club or activity for something we enjoy, this may be a space where we can meet people with similar interests.
- Speak to a trusted adult.

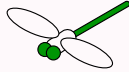


Slide 13

Connecting with the world around us



Existential loneliness
is feeling a lack of
connection to the
world around us.



Script

Sometimes, we may feel a lack of connection to the world around us.
This is called existential loneliness.

Even if we have meaningful relationships in our lives, we may not feel a
sense of belonging when it comes to our communities and wider society.

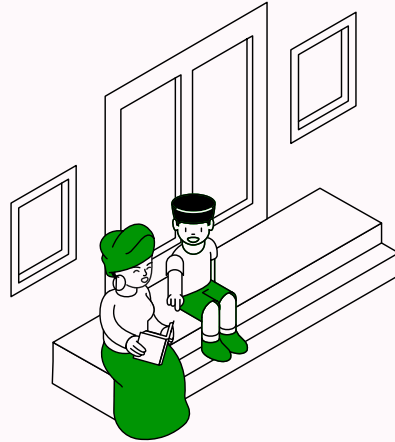


Slide 14

Connecting with the world around us



- Go for a walk
- Visit a local community space
- Sign up to volunteering opportunities
- Learn about different countries, cultures, and traditions



SLIDE 14

Script

Here are some ways that we can connect to the world around us:

- Go for a walk outside, connect with nature.
- Visit a local community space such as library.
- Learn about different countries, cultures, and traditions.
- Show kindness to the world around us by going litter picking in the local area or signing up to volunteering opportunities.



Slide 15

Final thoughts



**We may all feel lonely
from time-to-time,
and that's OK.**



SLIDE 15

Script

We may all feel lonely from time-to-time, and that's OK. There are many things we can do to support ourselves when feeling lonely.

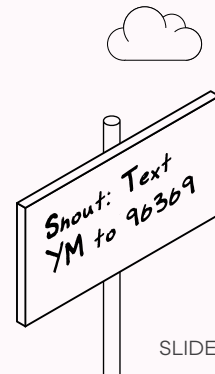
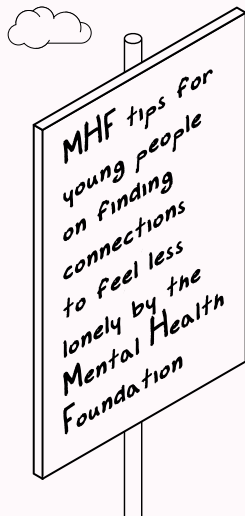
Remember, reach out to someone you trust and share how you are feeling. Talking about how you are feeling is not a sign of weakness, it is courageous!

We can also support others to feel less lonely by being careful and inclusive in our words and actions, and being considerate of the circumstances and preferences of others when they need support.



Slide 16

Further information and support



SLIDE 16

Script

If you are feeling lonely, speak to a trusted adult – this could be a member of staff at school, someone at home, or another person in your life.

Add information about support options within your school and local community.

Or: you can connect with Shout - a free, 24/7 text messaging support service. Text YM to 85258.

You can find out more tips for connecting with yourself, others and the world around you by reading the [MHF Tips for Young People on Finding Connections to Feel Less Lonely by the Mental Health Foundation.](#)





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