

How to Deal with Loneliness



When we're lonely, it can be difficult to cope with our emotions and find ways to feel connected again. Kids and teens have been struggling with loneliness more since the pandemic began: in 2020, studies showed that the main concern among young people was loneliness. 69% of teens reported feeling alone "sometimes" or "often," and 59% said they didn't have anyone to talk to "sometimes" or "often."

If you resonate with these feelings, know that a lot of people around your age are struggling with this, too. The good news is, there are a lot of things you can do to feel better. Here are some simple ways to cope with loneliness.

Here are some tips for learning to overcome rejection:

- **Take the opportunity to do things you enjoy.** Having a lot of alone time can be a positive thing if you take advantage of it! Ask yourself: what is something I enjoy doing when I'm alone? Now is a great time to pick up a new hobby or get better at a skill you're trying to learn. If you're lonely, you also might have more time in the day for self-care. You can start adding a mental health activity to your daily routine, such as meditating or journaling.
- **Do a social media detox.** When you use social media, do you find yourself comparing your life to your others and feeling worse afterwards? If so, it might be time to go offline for a while. A 2017 study showed that people who use social media a lot are more likely to feel socially isolated than people who use it less. Remember that you don't have to be alone to feel lonely - you can be surrounded by people and still feel lonelier than someone who is by themselves. Loneliness is a perceived feeling. By taking a break from social media, you might find that you feel less lonely because you don't compare yourself to others as much. It might also help you appreciate the relationships you already have in your real life.

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- **Be gentle with yourself.** If you're having negative thoughts about yourself, remember that it's common to feel lonely! Don't look down on yourself or think that you're less than just because you're struggling with loneliness. Speak to yourself with kindness, as you would to others.
- **Practice mindfulness.** When someone is mindful, they pay attention to their thoughts and feelings, and accept their emotions. If you're feeling lonely, notice the thoughts you're having. Accept how you are feeling and know that your emotions are valid.
- **Consider why you're feeling lonely.** Have you been through a big life change recently that's caused you to spend more time alone, like moving to another city? Are you having a hard time making friends? Identifying the reasons why you feel alone will help you understand the problem and brainstorm ways that you can solve it.
- **Appreciate your current relationships.** Sometimes, we feel lonely when we focus on what we don't have instead of the amazing people that are already in our lives. Don't hesitate to reach out to people when you're feeling alone. If you have a friend or family member who you can talk to, put time and attention into that relationship.

To summarize, try changing your mindset and looking at alone time as an opportunity to learn new things and do activities you enjoy. Taking a break from social media, accepting your emotions, and reaching out to friends and family are all easy things you can do to feel less lonely. Finally, loneliness can cause us to feel a lot of negative emotions. If you're having a tough time coping with these feelings, talk to a trusted adult who will provide a listening ear and guide you in the right direction.