

# WHAT IS LONELINESS?

Lonely, alone and socially isolated are often used interchangeably, which can make understanding loneliness difficult. To help, we've explained the difference between the terms below.

## Lonely

Loneliness is a distressing feeling that arises when your current relationships do not meet your social needs. People have different social needs and for most people, they desire having closer relationships. You can be surrounded by people and still feel lonely.

## Alone (socially isolated)

Being alone, or socially isolated, is not the same as feeling lonely. Being alone is a physical state where you have fewer interactions with others. Some people may enjoy being alone, but for others it can be distressing and lead to loneliness.

## Meaningful social connection

Meaningful social connection is feeling connected to other people in a way that is important to you. Most people want to feel valued, heard and seen.

Building these connections takes time. Strong relationships are made through shared values, repeated interactions and effort over time.