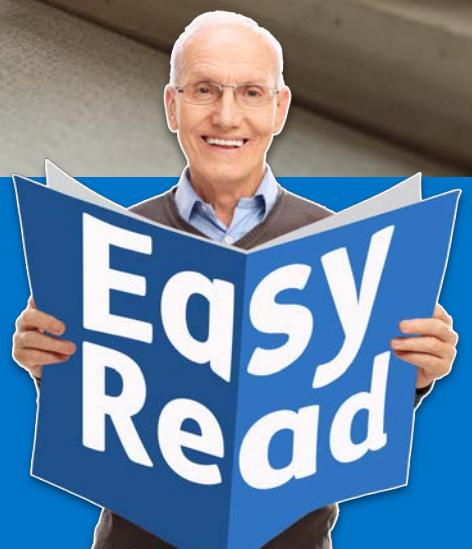
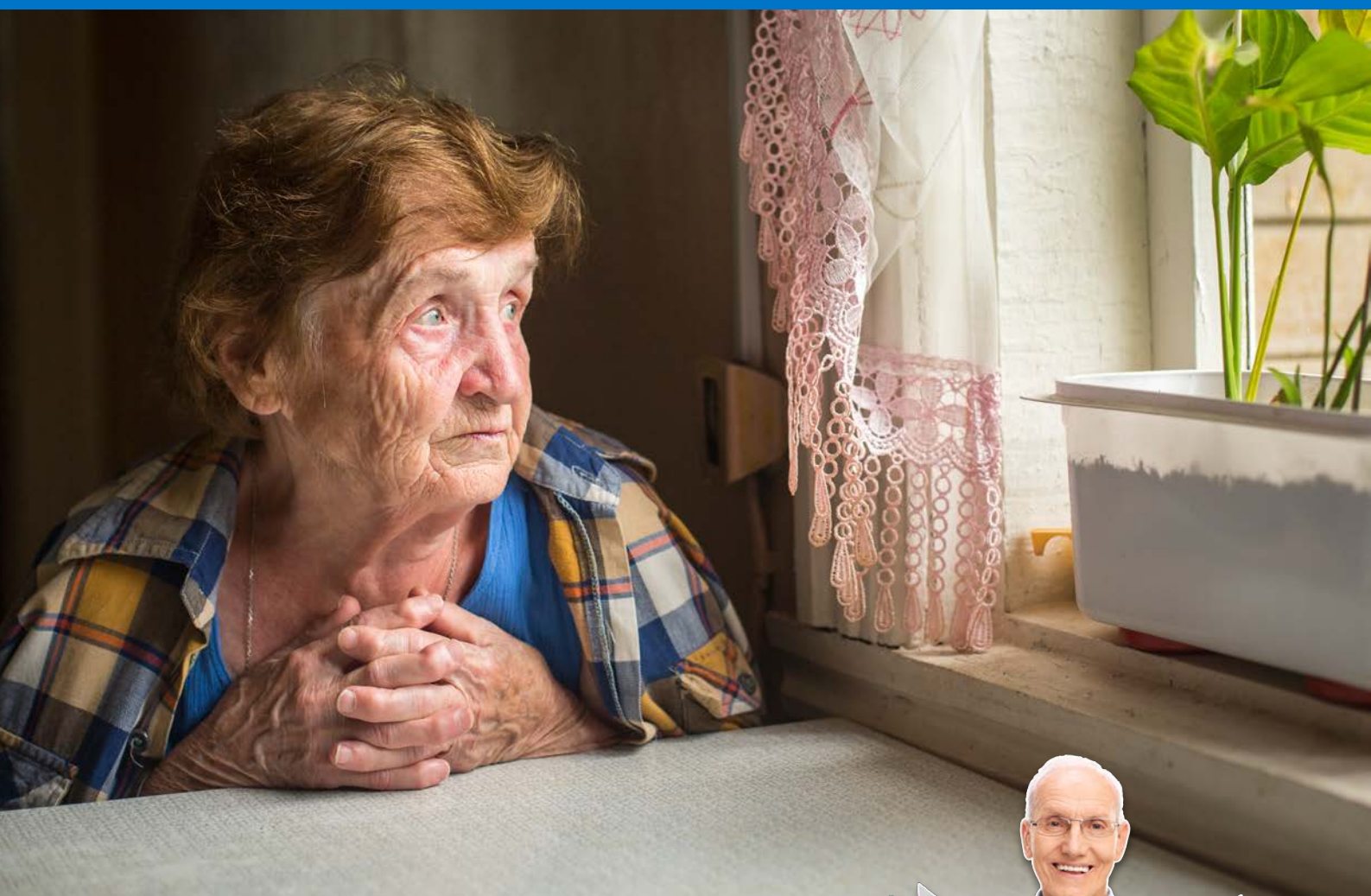


# I am lonely



**MindEd**  
**for Families**

*online advice and support you can trust*

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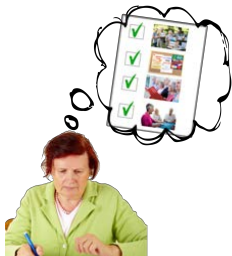
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# Loneliness



**Loneliness** is an unpleasant, painful feeling.



We feel lonely if we think we don't have enough good relationships.



It's different from being alone.

Sometimes, we can be surrounded by people and still feel lonely.



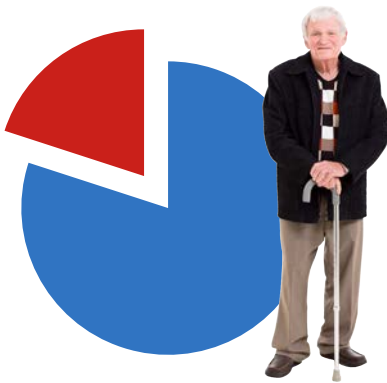
At other times, we can have only a few people in our life and we are happy with this.



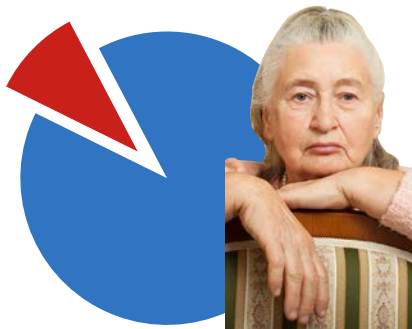
**3 million**

In the UK:

- Nearly 3 million older people feel they have no one to turn to for help and support



- About 1 in every 5 older people are lonely



- About 1 in every 10 older people are very lonely



# What can cause loneliness?



Loneliness can be caused by:

- The death of a loved one



- The end of a marriage or relationship



- Retirement or loss of a job



- Becoming a carer. As we grow older we might spend more time caring for someone else, and less time on our friends and our own wellbeing



- Moving home and moving away from friends and family



- Becoming ill. If it is harder to get out we can become lonely and stuck in the house all day



- Finding it harder to get around. Old age can make it harder to get out and see friends



- Money worries. If you have a small pension and less money, it might be harder to get out and see people



Often it is not just one thing that causes loneliness. Often there are a few different things that lead to loneliness.

# Is loneliness the same as being depressed?



Loneliness is not the same as depression but it can lead to mental health problems.



Depression can lead to loneliness, and loneliness can lead to depression.



People who are lonely can also have depression.



If we can work out what has caused the loneliness, we might be able to help the depression.

# What can be done?



There are many things you can do if you are feeling lonely:

## ● Volunteering

Volunteering is a good way to meet people and do something useful.

You can often do as much as you want at the times that suit you.



## ● Spending time with people you know

It is easier to speak and have fun with people you already know than talking to new people.



Invite someone round, or arrange to meet up. You could phone or email them.







- **Meet new people who like the same things as you**

There are many clubs and groups of people who are interested in the same things as you.



You can often find information about these in community centres, churches, or your local library.



- **Speak to someone who understands**

Sometimes it is easier to talk to someone you don't know. You can often do this over the telephone.



Organisations with telephone lines which provide emotional support are:



- Silverline: **[www.silverline.org.uk](http://www.silverline.org.uk)**

- Samaritans: **[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)**



- Breathing Space: **[breathing space.scot](http://breathing.space.scot)**



## ● See your doctor (GP)

If you have been suffering from a low mood for some time you should see your doctor.



They might be able to offer some medication or other treatments that may help.



They may be able to tell you about places where you can meet people and feel less alone.



## ● Finding things to do when you feel most lonely

Some people feel most lonely at certain times, like weekends, holidays, bed time etc



You could find something to do at these times to help you to feel calm and relaxed, like watching a favourite film, having a warm shower before bed etc

# What can others do?

If you think someone you know might be feeling lonely, you could:



- Try to start a conversation

Give them time. Don't hurry them



- Offer to help them with something.

You could offer to drive them to an appointment or to a meeting or to friends.



You could help them with the shopping or small jobs around the house.



- Offer to talk to them about how they are feeling

It might help them to talk about how they are feeling.

You don't have to solve their problems. Just being there to listen is often enough.

- Help them to take the first step



You could offer to help them to do the first few things to meet other people and find friends.

Your help could make the first meeting less frightening.



## Look after yourself

If you are looking after someone, it is important to also look after yourself.

If you live in the UK you can get help from the **Carers Direct Helpline**.

Tel: **0300 123 1053**



# For more information

If you want more information you could go to:



Campaign to End Loneliness in Britain

Web:

**[www.campaigntoendloneliness.org](http://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org)**

Tel: **0203 8653908**



The Royal Voluntary Service

Web:

**[www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk](http://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk)**

Tel: **0845 608 0122**



Volunteering Matters

Web: **[volunteeringmatters.org.uk](http://volunteeringmatters.org.uk)**

Tel: **020 3780 5870**



Your local Mencap Group

Web: **[www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/local-groups](http://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/local-groups)**

Tel: **0808 808 1111**





Contact the Elderly

Web: [www.contact-the-elderly.org.uk](http://www.contact-the-elderly.org.uk)

Tel: 0800 716543



Age UK befriending services

Web: [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

Tel: 0800 169 2081



Silverline

Web: [www.thesilverline.org.uk](http://www.thesilverline.org.uk)

Tel: 0800 4 70 80 90



Samaritans

Web: [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

Tel: 116 123



Breathing Spaces

Web: [breathingspace.scot/need-help-now/](http://breathingspace.scot/need-help-now/)

Tel: 0800 83 85 87



Carers Direct Helpline

Web: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

Tel: 0300 123 1053



The University of the Third Age

Web: [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk)

Tel: 020 8466 6139

This resource is part of the MindEd online learning site.

For more information please contact:-



**Web:** [www.mindedforfamilies.org.uk](http://www.mindedforfamilies.org.uk)



**Email:** [MindEd@rcpsych.ac.uk](mailto:MindEd@rcpsych.ac.uk)



**Twitter:** @MindEdUK

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