



## **FACT SHEET 1:**

### **Loneliness - a Minister's perspective**

#### **What is loneliness? How would you define it?**

Loneliness is a feeling.

It is a feeling that comes when we feel disconnected with other people around us, because we are not able to connect ourselves to community (perhaps due to depression, disability, lack of social skills) or because community doesn't make connection with us.

#### **What are the feelings experienced by people who are lonely?**

Feelings include sadness, disinterest, loneliness, disengagement, helplessness, powerlessness, numbness, overwhelmed, withdrawn.

#### **If a person who feels alone were to ask you how to change their situation, what would you advise them to do?**

Begin by smiling at people you encounter...just a gentle smile that acknowledges that you have seen them...and watch for those who smile back. Receive their smile.

Walk along your street and say hello to anyone in their front yard. Repeat in a day or so.

Read your local Messenger Press and look for local activities that might be of interest to you.

Telephone – if there is a contact number for a local activity of interest, use your phone to make contact and ask for information.

Telephone your nearest church and ask if someone is available to visit you.

**If a person knows someone who is experiencing loneliness, how could they go about helping this person?**

Smile at the person.

Ask if they would like you to pop in for a chat for a few minutes. Accept their response. If it is yes, make a time immediately to call by. If it is no, let them know if they change their mind, you would be happy to drop in some time.

Observe the person, to see how they spend their time or where they go, e.g. if they are always reading the paper on the front porch perhaps offer an article you have read that you found interesting & ask their opinion. If you see them shopping, stop and chat about your groceries. Try & develop a friendly relationship.

If people are isolated in their homes, telephone to ask if they would like a visit.

At a visit, tell them about your life and ask about theirs.

**What other resources are available (online or other) which would be helpful for people who are feeling alone?**

Mobile Library from local council

Facebook (online)

Information supplied by:

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**This fact sheet is designed as a resource tool.**

**The Uniting Church SA recommends that those struggling with loneliness or isolation seek professional help.**

**A helpful starting point is to contact Lifeline on 13 11 14.**



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