



FACT SHEET 4:

Loneliness - a Lifeline Counsellor's perspective

What is loneliness? How would you define it?

A sense of isolation from people and activities around them. That isolation would tend to be at a level where the person feels they lack "normal" social interactions.

A person could be lonely at work where their interaction with those around them related purely to the work environment. They lack discussion with their peers in connection to such issues as extracurricular activities, and "chit-chat".

They may have become lonely because they "don't fit in" for various reasons such as culture e.g. language, appearance, beliefs, physical appearance, hygiene, or disability.

What are the feelings experienced by people who are lonely?

Feelings can include sadness, isolation, poor self esteem, poor self worth (inferiority), hopelessness, lack of direction in life.

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

Examine ways they can establish a connection.

Strategies might include:

1. Set some goals. May need assistance with this through face to face counselling.
2. Self improvement, ongoing education.
3. Involvement in an organisation as a way of connecting with others.
4. Utilise the internet as a way of connecting with others.
5. Address personal issues that may have been identified.

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

Simple involvement starting with a minor level of social involvement.

Keeping this uncomplicated so that it does not place the person in a challenged position e.g no physical activity unless you know the person is capable of doing this, no alcohol as it may lead to situations that may cause embarrassment or heighten depression.

An example could be a nice café or coffee shop for a chat in an effort to create some level of rapport that can then be built on.

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

1. WEA courses
2. Volunteer services
3. Local council for volunteer opportunities
4. Community centres
5. Sporting organisations
6. Social organisations
7. Search the internet, yellow pages, local community guide
8. Any activity that connects them to something or someone

Information supplied by:

John Reed, Volunteer Telephone Counsellor, Lifeline Adelaide

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.



Uniting Church. **Uniting People.**