Tackling Loneliness in Leicestershire

Loneliness can affect lots of people, in many different ways, at different times of their lives. Here in Leicestershire, we are committed to tackling loneliness, to ensure people are able to improve their wellbeing and quality of life, so our residents and communities feel happier, healthier and safer.

TEN TOP TIPS FOR IF YOU'RE FEELING LONELY*

1. **Remember you are not alone.** Lots of people of all ages and backgrounds feel lonely. Millions of people in the UK say they are often or always lonely.

2. **Think about what is making you feel lonely.** Anyone can experience loneliness at some point in their life, but the reasons will vary from person to person. Taking time to think about what's causing you to feel lonely may help with finding out what could help you feel differently.

3. **Be proactive.** Look at what resources are out there. If you're going to the doctors or your local library, have a look for leaflets about any local events, exercise classes, book clubs, coffee mornings, playgroups etc. that may help you connect with your community. Alternatively you can also refer yourself to Lets Talk Loneliness (https://letstalkloneliness.co.uk/).

4. **Take up a new hobby that can be done in pairs or groups.** This could be something like learning a language. If you don't like it, you can always change your mind and do something else.

5. **Don't be afraid to ask for help.** Try opening up to someone who you feel comfortable talking to, whether that's a member of your family, a friend, your carer or your GP.

6. **Accept help when it's presented to you.** It might be a friend or a neighbour just asking you to pop round for a brew. Don't think you're a nuisance, because in all likelihood they will want to see you and spend time with you. Try not to worry about how you're being perceived.

7. **Access free services.** There is a lot of support out there which could help you address some of the causes of your loneliness.

8. **Volunteer.** Volunteering can be a great way to meet new people and make new connections. You could help out at a local charity shop, or use your skills to support others.

9. **Surround yourself with activity.** If you're feeling alone, why not pop out to a coffee shop or somewhere where there's some activity going on? You might meet someone else in a similar situation which could spark a conversation. Try to smile at people; having someone smile back could change your day.

10. **Join groups online.** If you can't leave the house, try joining an online community who share similar interests to you.

#withinyourgifttogive

www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk/tackling-loneliness

*Courtesy of the British Red Cross

Things we can do for ourselves and others

There are many ways in which we can help ourselves and others to feel less lonely. Here are some ideas:

- **Say hello to people in your street.** If you're stuck for something more to say, you could always start off by talking about the weather!
- **Find out more about the people around you.** This could include people you work with and people you are involved in hobbies and activities with, as well as your neighbours. Making connections with those around us can really make a difference to our own wellbeing, as well those around us.
- **Hold a street party or a Big Lunch.** These are great ways of getting to know people in your street and neighbourhood.
- **Start or join a social network in your area.** You can set up a Facebook group for your neighbourhood, or create groups using **https://nextdoor.co.uk** or **www.meetup.com**.
- **Join the Leicestershire Timebank** which allows you to swap, borrow or share skills with others, and make a difference in your local community at the same time. **www.time4leicestershire.org.uk**
- **Volunteer with a local community group or charity.** You can find details about local community organisations through Voluntary Action Leicestershire's volunteering website: **www.volunteerleicestershire.org.uk**
- **Find out what's going on in Leicestershire.** The Go Leicestershire website is a great starting point to finding out about events and activities around the County. **www.goleicestershire.com** You can also find information on Leicestershire County Council's website. **www.leicestershire.gov.uk/whatson**
- **Sign up to join a course to learn something new.** Leicestershire County Council's Go Learn programme has lots of opportunities for adult learners. **www.leicestershire.gov.uk/golearn**

Useful Information:
Campaign to End Loneliness:
www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/
Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness:
www.ageuk.org.uk/our-impact/campaigning/ jo-cox-commission/
Let's Talk Loneliness:
https://letstalkloneliness.co.uk/

Local Sources of Support

- **Social Prescribing Link Workers.** Many GP practices and medical centres now have a Link Worker who can help refer you to local services in the community. Ask your GP or medical practice staff for details.
- **First Contact Plus** is a website which has details of a range of health and wellbeing support services provided across Leicestershire. **www.firstcontactplus.org.uk**
- **Local Area Coordinators** work in local communities, helping people to improve their quality of life. You can find out if there is a Local Area Coordinator near you. **www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk/csi/local-area-coordination.html**
- **Timebanking** is a way of sharing and exchanging tasks and skills with others. **www.time4leicestershire.org.uk/**
- The **Leicestershire Communities** website provides a range of useful information to help local people to actively participate in their communities. **www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk**
- **Voluntary Action Leicestershire** is an organisation which gives advice and support to people involved in running community groups, or people who are thinking of setting up a local group, as well as people who are interested in volunteering. **https://valonline.org.uk/**

VILLAGE HALL

DROP IN! EVERYBODY WELCOME!

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www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk/tackling-loneliness