Loneliness & Connection

Understanding loneliness and finding connection that feels right for you

Loneliness is the feeling that your connections do not meet your needs. You can feel lonely in a crowd, in a relationship or when you spend a lot of time alone. Being alone and feeling lonely are not the same.

There is no correct number of friends or social activities. Meaningful connection can be quiet, gradual, online, in person or built around shared interests.

A connection map

WHAT I NEED	+	WHAT MAY HELP
Understanding, safety, belonging		People, places, shared interests

Connection starts with noticing what feels meaningful, not forcing yourself into situations that drain you.

What you will explore

1. Understanding loneliness and different kinds of connection
2. Mapping current connections and missing support
3. Identifying barriers and what makes contact easier
4. Planning a small, comfortable connection step
5. Building a sustainable connection plan

Worksheet 1 | My Connection Map

Think about people, communities, pets, places or shared activities that give you a sense of belonging. A connection can be meaningful even if contact is occasional.

People or places where I feel accepted or understood

Connections I would like more of (or a different kind of)

What I value most in a connection

Reflection: being alone by choice can be restorative. Which moments feel lonely rather than restful?

Worksheet 2 | What Gets in the Way?

Barriers might include anxiety, fatigue, accessibility, sensory overload, transport, rejection, grief, time or past experiences. Notice without judging yourself.

When do I feel most disconnected?

What makes reaching out difficult?

What would make connection more accessible or comfortable?

A boundary that helps me feel safe

There is no pressure to maintain contact with people who make you feel unsafe or diminished.

Worksheet 3 | A Small Connection Step

Choose one low-pressure action. It might be sending a short message, visiting a familiar group, reconnecting with someone or exploring a shared-interest community.

Gentle message: “I was thinking of you. Would you like to catch up sometime?”

Clear request: “I would enjoy meeting, but a quiet place and a short visit work best for me.”

Shared interest: “I am interested in this group. Could you tell me what to expect?”

One person, group or activity I might approach

My smallest comfortable first step

How I can make this manageable for my energy and needs

A response may take time or may not come. It does not determine your worth.

Worksheet 4 | My Connection Plan

Build connection at a pace that feels safe and sustainable. You can change your plan as your needs change.

A connection I would like to nurture

One step I will try and when

What support or adjustment could help?

How will I know this feels supportive?

What will I do if the first step does not work out?

A gentle reminder

Loneliness is a human experience, not a personal failure. You deserve relationships and communities where you can be yourself. If isolation is affecting your mental health, consider talking to a trusted person or professional.