

Loneliness and grief

What is loneliness?

Loneliness is when you don't feel connected to other people. It can also be described as having a lower level of social contact than you want. Building connections with other people is an important part of leading a healthy life.

Loneliness is different to being alone. Being alone can make you feel free, creative, and comfortable. It can give you space to understand your thoughts and feelings. Loneliness, on the other hand, is a feeling of not belonging, of not being connected or understood. You can feel lonely even when you're surrounded by people.

In Australia, 44% of people regularly feel lonely. And loneliness can have a profound impact on your life, affecting not only your mental health but your physical and spiritual health too. But knowing stats about loneliness doesn't make it any easier to deal with.

Loneliness and grief

Loneliness is often felt in conjunction with grief. Grief can happen for a variety of reasons, not just the loss of a loved one or pet. Major life changes can create feelings of loss, grief, and loneliness.

What causes loneliness?

There are many factors that contribute to loneliness and they're often not in our control.

Grief

It's normal to feel lonely after losing a loved one.

Health

Living with a disability, psychiatric disorder, or poor physical health can create feelings of loneliness.

Life changes

Going through big life changes can leave you feeling disconnected and lonely.

Cultural differences

Living in a country where you don't speak the language and you're not familiar with cultural customs can increase your risk of loneliness.

Social isolation

Sometimes, situations beyond our control (such as a pandemic) force us into social isolation and make us vulnerable to loneliness.

Coping with loneliness

Finding ways to connect with others will help you work through your feelings of loneliness.

Make animal friends

Hanging out with animals is a good way to manage loneliness. Head to your local dog park or approach friends and colleagues about walking their dogs or minding their pets when they're away.

Volunteer

Volunteering is a great way to get out of the house, interact with new people, and help others. Your local sporting club, community group, or school are good places to start your search. You can also find volunteering opportunities through [Govolunteer.com.au](https://www.govolunteer.com.au)

Support is available

You can connect with others who understand on the Griefline forums griefline.org.au/forums. And check out the 'Care to Call' program, which offers a free befriending service to eligible participants experiencing loneliness as a result of grief or loss on griefline.org.au/get-help/care-to-call. And you can always call our free helpline on **1300 845 745** to speak to a trained volunteer.