

# WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE SAY HAS HELPED THEM TACKLE LONELINESS

Between October 2021 and December 2023, we invited young people to share their experience of loneliness and the one small step they'd taken to tackle these feelings.

We've read through all the stories young people bravely shared and we've grouped them into themes. We hope by doing this, it will highlight the key solutions that are helping young people to tackle feelings of loneliness. We also hope this will give charities, youth organisations and other funders the insight they need to make informed decisions around extra funding or resources in these areas to help young people feel less alone.

## FINDING YOUR COMMUNITY

Young people from across a number of different constellations on the Lonely Not Alone universe mentioned that finding others who they feel understand them and are part of the community they feel they're part of - such as the LGBTQIA+ community, those who are neurodivergent, those who are refugees, etc - helped them to feel less alone.

They referenced social media community groups or pages and support groups as two of the main ways they have found people from their community.

## SPEAKING UP

Many young people mentioned sharing their experience of loneliness with someone they know - whether that be a family member, friend, teacher, youth worker, mentors, etc - helped to make them feel less alone.

## PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Youth charities, such as Childline, were mentioned as a helpful resource that a number of young people had used to feel less alone. On a more local level, they mentioned university mental wellbeing services as a valuable source of support too.

Although young people weren't necessarily accessing therapy as a result of their loneliness, discussing what they were going through with a trained professional helped them to identify ways to cope when feeling lonely.

## JOINING A CLUB

One of the most popular ways young people have tried to combat feelings of loneliness is to join a club or group where they can find people who share similar interests to them. The types of clubs and activities that were mentioned included things like sports, book clubs, cos play groups, theatre clubs, poetry groups and art or writing classes.

## REFRAMING LONELINESS

A few stories on the digital universe talked about how the young person had learned to reframe how they viewed time alone. Instead of focusing on their loneliness, they said they learned to appreciate time alone for how it's a moment for appreciation and reflection.

## PUTTING YOURSELF OUT THERE

Although many people on the digital universe expressed how difficult it was to make friends and put themselves out there, those who did build up the courage to do so - by doing things like asking people at work or university if they'd like to go for a coffee or to an event - mentioned how it really helped them combat feelings of loneliness.

If you have any questions about this resource, please contact Sophie Beresford on [sophie.beresford@coop.co.uk](mailto:sophie.beresford@coop.co.uk)



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