



SAFE & SOUND

Providing you with news and updates around safeguarding, prevent and British Values

Depression and loneliness in young adults

Emerging adults are the loneliest generation, despite being more social and more plugged-in than other age groups. Loneliness peaks between the ages of 18 and 29, and feeling lonely increases the risk of mental health conditions—creating an epidemic of loneliness and depression in young adults.

Loneliness is defined as a mismatch between one’s desired and actual social relationships, between how connected we want to be and how connected we are. Young adults crave that sense of belonging and connection with others. When their reality falls short, it can be devastating.

Seasonality and climate may impact rates of loneliness. Research done with university students found that colder weather was associated with a greater desire for social connection.

Young adults typically think of their phones and social media apps as approaches for coping with loneliness. Paradoxically, however, many researchers believe that technology is a primary cause of loneliness. DM-ing and commenting are replacing more authentic and satisfying face-to-face human interaction. Virtual connection is more like virtual isolation. Moreover, social media use increases FOMO (Fear of Missing Out). Scrolling through images of their peers having a great time with friends leaves young adults feeling even more isolated and lonely. And trying to present themselves in a perfect light can leave them feeling disconnected from their true self as well as from other people.

The difference between loneliness vs. depression can be hard to pinpoint. Just as alone and lonely aren’t necessarily the same thing, feeling lonely doesn’t necessarily lead to depressive symptoms. But can loneliness cause depression? Yes, if other risk factors are part of the equation. Young adulthood loneliness can exacerbate or be a catalyst for depression, suicidal thoughts, and substance abuse. The anxiety of being alone too much can escalate into an anxiety disorder or contribute to depression. Loneliness during social isolation significantly increased the likelihood of developing depressive symptoms, particularly among young adults.

Signs of chronic loneliness

Everyone feels lonely now and then. It’s almost impossible for one’s desire for connection to perfectly match up to what’s available, all the time. However, if you find yourself dealing with loneliness frequently, it may be a chronic condition

- Difficulty connecting with others in a deep and authentic way
- Knowing lots of people but not having close friends or a best friend
- Feelings that no one really “gets” you or understands what you’re going through
- Feeling alone and lonely even amid people, at a party or other social event
- Self-doubt and lack of self-worth
- Sense of fatigue and languishing that keep you from engaging in social activities.

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Eight evidence-based strategies for coping with loneliness

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1 Limit your social media use. Reducing time on the apps is proven to increase well-being. In one study, undergraduates were asked to limit their social media use to 10 minutes per platform, per day for three weeks. Researchers found significant reductions in loneliness and depression in young adults who limited their use, as compared to the control group.

2 Spend time volunteering. Research shows that doing things for others offers mental and physical health benefits. It can also provide opportunities to meet like-minded people who care about the same causes you do.

3 Get enough sleep. It makes sense that loneliness could result in insomnia or troubled sleep, but one study found that sleep loss can cause loneliness. Using fMRI technology, the researchers found that sleep deprivation triggers changes in brain activity that trigger social withdrawal and loneliness.

4 Cultivate real connections. Meaningful real-life friendships may need a bit more tending than virtual ones, but the payoff will be worth it in terms of counteracting loneliness. Strong friendships are proven to reduce loneliness and depression in young adults.

5 Find flow. New research finds that experiences of flow—being engaged in an enjoyable activity that requires focus and skill—help people feel less lonely. Where you find flow depends on your specific interests and talents. Dancing, making art, playing a board game, building something, rearranging a room, or cooking can all stimulate flow, along with numerous other experiences.

6 Get moving with others. A research review of three dozen studies found that physical activity done in the company of others reduces loneliness. Join a team, go to a dance class, take sailing lessons, or recruit a running or walking buddy.

7 Cuddle up with a blanket and a hot water bottle. Researchers at the State University of New York and Florida State University found that college students expressed significantly more interest in socializing when asked about it on colder days rather than on warmer days. However, when students wore a heated wrap provided by the researchers, the desire for social closeness decreased. So if you're feeling lonely on a cold winter night, staying warm and cosy can help.

8 Check in with a mental health professional. Therapy can help young adults answer the question, "Am I lonely or depressed?" and uncover the root causes of loneliness, depression, and/or anxiety.

Need some help?

Vetlife offers emotional support to everyone in the veterinary community via the independent, confidential 24/7/365 Vetlife Helpline.

vetlife

Support for the veterinary community

Helpline 0303 040 2551

Anonymous email also available by registering at helpline.vetlife.org.uk

THE BIGGEST KILLER IS NOT THE USUAL SUSPECT

Sepsis is the number one cause of preventable death in the world. It is an indiscriminate, deadly condition that can kill a previously healthy adult in a matter of hours – and that’s despite all the advances in vaccines, antibiotics, and intensive care.

Sepsis is one of the least well-recognised medical conditions and can be hard to diagnose due to the similarity of symptoms to other illnesses.

Sepsis is life-threatening. It can be hard to spot.

When sepsis strikes, the immune system overreacts and starts attacking not just the infection, but everything else around it including the body’s tissues and organs. Any type of infection – bacterial, viral or fungal – can lead to sepsis. Sepsis is sometimes confused with Septicaemia or Blood Poisoning. The latter is now often referred to as Bacteremia and refers to the bacteria present in the bloodstream. The term sepsis refers to the body’s inflammatory response to infection.

There are lots of possible symptoms. They can be like symptoms of other conditions, including flu or a chest infection.

CHILDREN

A child may have sepsis if he or she:

- Is breathing very fast
- Has a ‘fit’ or convulsion
- Looks mottled, bluish, or pale
- Has a rash that does not fade when you press it
- Is very lethargic or difficult to wake
- Feels abnormally cold to touch

ADULTS

An adult may have sepsis if they show any of these signs:

- S**lurred speech or confusion
- E**xtrême shivering or muscle pain
- P**assing no urine (in a day)
- S**evere breathlessness
- I**t feels like you’re going to die
- S**kin mottled or discoloured

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT SEPSIS:

Call 111 or contact your GP if you’re worried about an infection.

Call 999 or visit A&E if someone has one of the sepsis symptoms.

JUST ASK “COULD IT BE SEPSIS?”



新年快乐
HAPPY
CHINESE
NEW YEAR
2023
YEAR OF THE RABBIT

Chinese New Year 2023 is a Year of the Rabbit, more specifically, Water Rabbit, starting from January 22nd, 2023, and lasting until February 9th, 2024.

Did you know the Chinese New Year Date Change Every Year? This is because the date is decided by the Chinese Lunar Calendar, which is based on the cycles of the moon and sun and is generally 21–51 days behind the Gregorian (internationally used) calendar.

The date of Chinese New Year changes every year, but it always falls between January 21st and February 20th. The day of the Chinese New Year is a new moon day, usually the second after the winter solstice.

Important dates in January-March

- Burns night (Scotland) 25th January
- Dydd Santes Dwynwen (Welsh Valentine's Day) 25th January
- Valentine's Day 14th February
- Shrove Tuesday 21st February
- Ash Wednesday 22nd February
- St David's Day (Wales) 1st March
- Holi (Hindu) March 8th
- St. Patrick (Ireland) 17th March
- Mothering Sunday 19th March
- First Day of Ramadan (Muslim) 23rd March
- British Summertime commences on 26th March

Our values...

- V** valuing ideas
- E** empowering our learners
- T** teamwork

- N** nurturing resilience
- U** unleashing potential
- R** respecting others
- S** student-centred approach
- E** eliminating discrimination