

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 found that college students expressed significantly more interest in socialising 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:

Slurred speech or confusion

Extrême shivering or muscle pain

Passing no urine (in a day)

Severe breathlessness

It feels like you're going to die

Skin 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?"

‘Brain rot’

“Brain rot” has been announced as the Oxford word of the year for 2024, amid concerns over endless social media scrolling and mind-numbing content.

In an increasingly digital world, screen time has become integral to our lives. Whether it’s for work, studying, or leisure, our screens constantly demand our attention. However, managing screen time effectively and understanding the pitfalls of multitasking, especially during study sessions, is crucial for maintaining mental and physical health.



Managing Screen Time

Excessive screen time can lead to various health issues, such as eye strain, headaches, and disrupted sleep patterns. Here are some strategies to manage your screen time effectively:

Set Screen Time Limits: Use apps or built-in device features to track and limit your usage. Establish specific time limits for social media, gaming, or other non-essential activities.

Take Regular Breaks: Follow the 20-20-20 rule—every 20 minutes, take a 20-second break and look at something 20 feet away. This helps reduce eye strain.

Create a Schedule: Allocate specific times of the day for screen-based activities and stick to this schedule. Ensure you also schedule non-screen activities such as exercise, reading, or spending time outdoors.

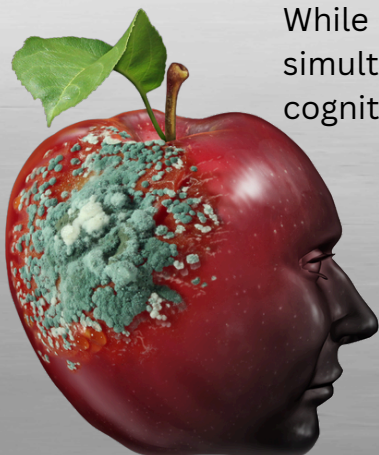
Establish Tech-Free Zones: Designate certain areas in your home as tech-free zones, such as the dining table or bedroom. This will encourage you to engage in non-screen activities and improve sleep quality.

Dont try and multi-task

While multitasking might seem like an efficient way to manage multiple tasks simultaneously, it often leads to decreased productivity and impaired cognitive function, especially during study sessions

You can manage your screen time more effectively, avoid the downsides of multitasking, and maintain a healthy balance in your daily life.

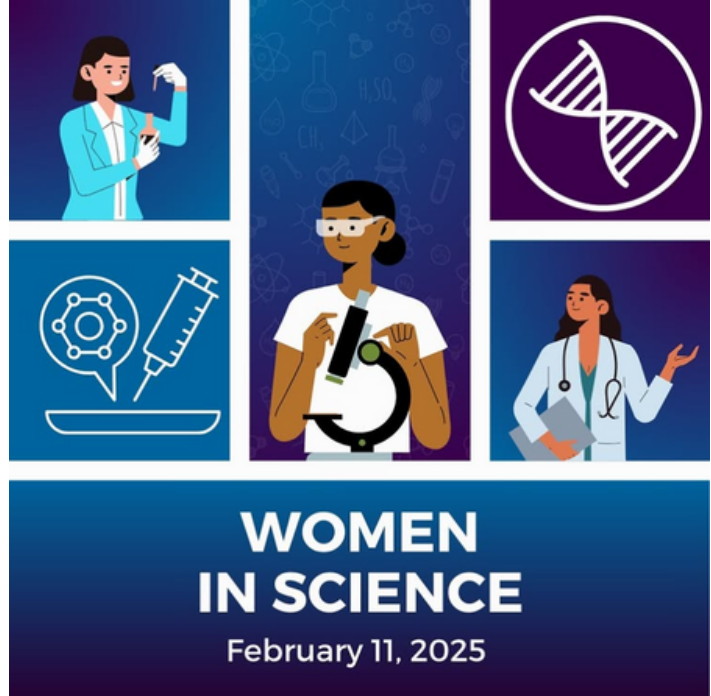
Prioritising your well-being in this digital age is crucial, and with a little effort, you can create a more balanced and productive lifestyle.



International Women of Science: Pioneers of Discovery and Innovation

Throughout history, women from around the world have made groundbreaking contributions to the field of science, often overcoming significant challenges and barriers to do so.

These trailblazers have not only advanced our understanding of the natural world but have also inspired future generations of scientists. Here are a few remarkable international women of science whose work continues to shape our lives:



Marie Curie (1867-1934)

Marie Curie, born in Poland and later becoming a naturalised French citizen, was a pioneering physicist and chemist. She was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize and remains the only person to win Nobel Prizes in two different scientific fields—Physics and Chemistry. Her research on radioactivity laid the foundation for significant advancements in medicine and nuclear science.

Rosalind Franklin (1920-1958)

British chemist Rosalind Franklin's work was crucial in discovering the structure of DNA. Her X-ray diffraction images of DNA provided critical insights that led to the identification of the double helix structure.



Tu Youyou (born 1930)

Chinese pharmaceutical chemist Tu Youyou discovered artemisinin, a drug that has significantly reduced the mortality rates of malaria. Her work, rooted in traditional Chinese medicine, earned her the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 2015. Tu's groundbreaking discovery has saved millions of lives worldwide and continues to be a cornerstone in the fight against malaria.

Important dates

- Valentine's Day 14th February
- First Day of Ramadan (Muslim) 28th February
- St David's Day (Wales) 1st March
- Shrove Tuesday 4th March
- Ash Wednesday 5th March
- Holi (Hindu) March 14th
- St. Patrick (Ireland) 17th March
- Mothering Sunday 30th March
- British Summertime commences on 30th March