

Understanding Loneliness And Ways You Can Help

Emotional

Emotional loneliness is when someone feels the lack of intimate relationships, possibly due to the loss of a close partner or friend.



Help by:

- Grief and bereavement support can help provide the tools needed to cherish that relationship and move forward to exploring new ones.
- Incorporate activities to honor their loved one (e.g., make a scrapbook or photo album).

Social

Social isolation and loneliness occurs when there is a lack of satisfying contact with family, friends, neighbors and other community members

Help by:

- Engage others in social activities to help mitigate this one. Encourage the person to dine with others and find activities that inspire them to interact including music, games and other activities hobbies.
- If appropriate, incorporate education in the use of smart phones or computers for communication with family and friends.

Collective

Collective loneliness is a feeling of not being valued by the broader community

Help by:

- Lend a listening ear.
- Coordinate a small support group within the community where participants can:
 - Share their stories with others and help.
 - Encourage and uplift one another and lift each other up with words of kindness and praise.
- Identify opportunities for community involvement.
- Facilitate activities that engage the resident and the community in which residents assist the community (e.g., knit caps for newborns).

Existential

Existential loneliness is the sense that life lacks meaning or purpose

Often older adults feel they have moved from providing for their family to being becoming a burden on them. Help them find a new meaning and purpose with:

- Explore small chores in the facility such as:
- Helping with a pet therapy animal.
- Watering or tending plants/gardens.
- Feeding the birds.
- Delivering mail or papers.
- Shower them with lots of appreciation for their contributions – no matter how big or small.

