

# MENTAL HEALTH

9 - 15 May 2022

Police  
Mutual

Mental health problems can affect anyone, any time of the year, but mental health awareness week is a great time to show your support for better mental health and looking after your own wellbeing.

Hosted by the Mental Health Foundation, the theme for **Mental Health Awareness Week**, 9-15 May 2022 is 'Loneliness'.

The week will explore the experience of loneliness, its effect on our mental health and how we can all play a part in reducing loneliness in our communities. For more details of the week click [here](#).

The Week is an opportunity for people to talk about all aspects of mental health, with a focus on providing help and support.

Loneliness is affecting more and more people in the UK and has had a huge impact on our physical and mental health especially during the pandemic. The connection to other people and community is fundamental to protecting our mental health.

Most people will feel lonely at some point in their lives, regardless of age or background. It's a deeply personal experience that in most cases will thankfully pass. But for a growing number of people, loneliness can define their lives and have a significant impact on their overall wellbeing.



Loneliness will be felt differently for everyone, it may still occur when you have loving support around you. It's not always the number of social contacts but the perception of those relationships that count. Feeling lonely is different from being lonely.

It is expected that the need for mental health and psychosocial support will substantially increase in

the coming months and years.

Taking care of your mental health is as important as taking care of your physical health.

Mental health problems affect around one in four people in any given year\*. They range from common problems, such as **depression** and **anxiety**, to rarer problems such as **schizophrenia** and **bipolar disorder**.



Certain life events, such as a bereavement can trigger such feelings, even if other family members rally around in support. Loneliness can be caused by many other things including leaving the workplace, children or friends moving away, debilitating health condition or illness, no longer being able to participate in normal hobbies or activities and lack of access to transport.

Sometimes loneliness may improve with time. However, often it's advisable to address the situation in the early stages to prevent it becoming a chronic issue. Loneliness is now being recognised for its damaging effects, such as mental health conditions, cardiovascular issues, and sleep problems, it is therefore important to try and overcome the feeling of isolation.



## What can you do if you're feeling Lonely?

### Catch up with friends -

Connecting with the people around you, your family, friends, colleagues, and neighbours are key to your overall wellbeing. These relationships will support and enrich you.

**Make new friends** - Join local groups or classes based on your interests, not only will you be doing something you enjoy, but you'll meet new people with similar interests.

**Help others by volunteering** - Giving to others is a great way to boost your wellbeing. It can give a sense of purpose and create feelings of positivity. It is also a great way to meet new people whilst helping the local community.

**Do things you enjoy** - Plan your week to include activities that you enjoy and make you feel good.

**Learn a new skill** - Continued learning throughout your life helps

to enhance your self-esteem and encourages social interactions.

**Spend time outdoors** - Fresh air, natural light and exercise combined are great for our mental health. Whatever the weather it's great to get outside.

**Focus on the positives** - When you are feeling lonely, you can sometimes be in a negative frame of mind. Thinking about the good things in your life, remembering happy times or identifying at least one thing each day to be thankful for can help you to think more positively.

**Look after yourself** - Self-care is essential. Make sure you are sleeping well, eating healthily and being as active as possible. Prioritise looking after yourself.

**It's good to talk** - If at times, life gets too much for you, it's important that you speak to someone about how you are feeling, this may be a family member or trusted friend, your GP, or a professional organisation.

**Research has shown that emergency services workers are twice as likely as the public to identify problems at work as the main cause of their mental health problems, but they are also significantly less likely to seek help. So it's even more important to look after your own mental health when working on the frontline.**

### **Here are some tips:**

**Think about your purpose:** Be clear about why you are doing this job.

**Be clear on expectations:** Make sure you know what is expected of you and whether it is realistic.

**Keep your boundaries:** Establish clear boundaries between work and personal life, don't take work home with you.

**Talk to colleagues:** Make time to talk to your colleagues about your experiences and share fears and concerns.

**Value your own family and relationships:** While work is important, your family and relationships need to be valued.

**Exercise:** Regular exercise can boost your self esteem, can help you concentrate, relax and increase your overall wellbeing.

**Get plenty of sleep:** Sleep helps regulate the chemicals in our brain that transmit information. These

chemicals are important in managing our moods and emotions and an imbalance in those chemicals can result in us becoming depressed or anxious. Read our sleep guide [here](#).

**Eat well:** A balanced diet that is good for your physical wellbeing is also good for your mental wellbeing. Your brain needs a mix of nutrients to stay healthy and function well.

**Avoid alcohol:** The numbing effects of drinking are only temporary and can often lead to mental health issues. It's advised that if you do drink, that you stay within the governing bodies recommended unit guidelines.

**Keep in touch:** It's good for you to catch up with friends and family face to face or over the phone.

**Take a break:** A change of scenery or pace is good for you.

**Do something you're good at:** Enjoying yourself can help beat stress

**Care for others:** Supporting others uplifts you as well as them.

**Ask for help:** If at times, life gets too much for you, it's important that you speak to someone, this may be a family member or trusted friend, your GP or a professional organisation, see the list at the end of this guide for details.



Making positive change is more important than ever, but it's difficult to know where to start. Do one thing today, whether it's going for a walk, learning a new skill or doing something creative, taking the first steps to getting support for yourself, or reaching out to someone else, take the opportunity to do one thing during **Mental Health Awareness Week.**

**Whatever you've been through this year, Mental Health Awareness Week is a chance to make a positive change for your mental health.**

### Useful links:

[NHS](#)

[Samaritans](#)

[Mind](#)

[AnxietyUK](#)

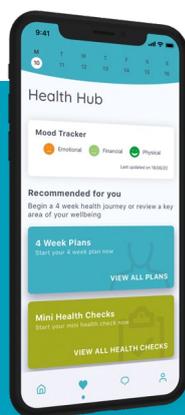
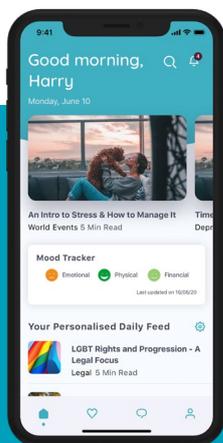
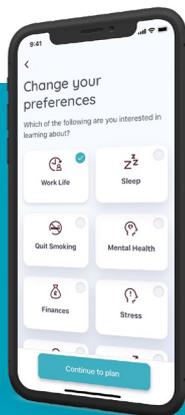
[Mental Health Foundation](#)

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They're able to advise you on a range of debt solutions suited to your individual circumstances, helping to protect you and your family with a sustainable way to manage your debt.

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**Health & Wellbeing e-portal:**

<https://healthassuredeap.co.uk>

**Username:** policemutual

**Password:** careline

To read more of our wellbeing guides take a look at our **Wellbeing Hub** [here](#).

**Call us 01543 441630**  
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**We're open from**  
**9am - 5pm Mon - Fri**

\* Time to Change. Attitudes to Mental Illness 2014 Research Report

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