

Coping with loneliness blog



This short blog is about one person's experience of loneliness and the strategies they use to cope.

I live on my own. At the weekend, when I'm not at work, I can sometimes feel a bit lonely – especially if my friends are all busy. This often makes me feel sad, particularly if I haven't chatted to anyone all day. I wonder if anyone would notice (or care) if I disappeared. Thinking about this makes me even sadder, and then I don't want to leave my house at all.

I know it isn't good for me to stay inside and think about being lonely all day, so I have a few strategies that help me when I'm not seeing my friends and I don't have anything to do:

I take the bus into town and try to start a conversation with people at the bus stop – even if it's just about the bus times or the weather. Sometimes, I ask for directions to a particular shop or check what the time is... anything to have a bit of human interaction.

I go to some speciality shops, for example, the fishmonger for some fish and the baker for some bread (and maybe a cake, too). The shopkeepers usually chat to me about the food I'm buying as they wrap it up for me. Often, other customers in the shop join in with the conversation.

If I have to go to a supermarket for things that the other shops don't sell, I don't use the self-service tills. I'd rather queue up and be served by a cashier – they're usually very chatty if you make the effort.

There's a man who sits outside the supermarket; I think he might be homeless. I have the money, I ask him if he'd like a coffee or something to eat. Even when I don't have any money to spare, I still stop for a chat and he's still happy to see me.

If someone's collecting money for a charity, I'll stop and ask them about the cause. It's really interesting hearing about all of the different campaigns. Sometimes they encourage me to volunteer for their charity – and I'm thinking about offering to volunteer somewhere nearby.

Questions to discuss

What strategies did the author use to help combat loneliness?

What do you think of the strategies? Do they work? Do you think some are better than others?

What do other people need to do to make the strategies work? For example, the people at the bus stop need to be friendly, and the shopkeepers need to be welcoming.

What else could the author try to help fight loneliness? Are there other strategies they could use?

Have you got time to explore deeper?

Why not create a drama or roleplay to show these strategies for avoiding loneliness? Different groups could work on different versions: one where people are happy to talk to the lonely person and another where people don't want to get involved. What might happen in each version? Is it important to be kind to people in your community? How should people react to the lonely person?

In partnership with

