

# Tips for dealing with loneliness



If holidays bring up depression or other difficult feelings for you, you're not alone.

About 1 in 5 older Australians suffer from loneliness, and the festive season may bring attention to such feelings. You may feel lonely if you live far away from your loved ones. Or perhaps you've experienced loss or recent changes in your lifestyle which are difficult to adjust to.

Even during this difficult time, it's possible to reduce social isolation and loneliness. It can help to find ways to connect with others and celebrate together. Increasing your social connectedness will not only improve your mood, but also your overall health.

Here are some tips for how to deal with loneliness during the holidays.



## Ways to connect with others:

### Reach out to your loved ones

It's important to reach out to stay connected to your family and friends. This can mean picking up the phone first, rather than waiting for them to call.

We interviewed Margaret, who is 86 and uses her phone and iPad to [stay in touch with long-distance family](#).

Holiday cards, messages, or phone calls can show people you're thinking of them. This gesture could strengthen your bonds with each other.

### Start new traditions

Old traditions can provide a sense of stability and comfort. But sometimes they have to change due to changing life circumstances.

You can always create new holiday traditions to keep this season special. That might mean baking holiday cookies with young grandkids or decorating and gathering in a new home. New traditions can give you something to look forward to each year, even as life keeps changing.

[Join Margaret as she introduces a Christmas tradition to her great grandson Isaac.](#)

### Connect with your community

It's very likely you'll be able to find community events that celebrate various holidays. Your [local library](#), community centre, or seniors centre may have events such as potlucks, fairs, or concerts scheduled. [Engaging with your community](#) not only helps prevent loneliness; it also fosters your sense of belonging.

If finding transport is holding you back, there may be services you can use. You could be eligible for assistance under the Commonwealth Home Support program or as part of a Home Care Package. And don't forget that as an older Australian, you have access to subsidised public transport. [Learn more about using transport services.](#)

## Connecting from home

You can use technology to connect to a wider community than just your local one. If for any reason you can't get out and about very often, it might be helpful to join online groups that share your passions. You may be able to find online book clubs, hobby groups, or discussion forums. You can join a community of your peers, such as the [ConnectUp Facebook group](#).

Or you could go back to basics and try chatting with your neighbours. If you get along, you could even invite them over for a cup of tea.

You may also be able to [request a volunteer visitor](#) through the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme. Socialising improves your health and quality of life, so it's worth looking into all the ways you can make it happen.

## Volunteer

Helping others can prevent isolation while also bringing joy and fulfillment.

You can volunteer your time, skills, or crafts to local organisations who need help during the holidays. This could mean being a helper at a soup kitchen or donating hand-made toys and clothes to charities.

[Learn more about volunteering here.](#)

To learn more about fostering meaningful social connections, visit [Ending Loneliness Together](#).



# And here are some ways you can be kind to yourself:

## Do things you enjoy

Explore your hobbies or discover new interests.

[Learning new skills](#) or enjoying a challenge that interests you has many benefits. It can give you a sense of mastery and purpose, while also promoting your brain health.

Hobbies to explore could include [painting](#), [crafting](#), [dancing](#), singing, or more. Creative activities are good for your brain health and can help lift your mood during tough times.

## Practice mindfulness

Mindfulness activities such as meditation or journaling can also help to bring you a sense of peace during the holiday bustle.

[Yoga](#) and [Tai Chi](#) are good activities to consider, since these exercises are restorative for your mind and body both.

## Move your body

[Physical activity](#) is very helpful in dealing with loneliness. It was shown to be an effective measure against poor mental health during the pandemic.

Consider joining a local exercise club, where you can keep active and spend time with others in your community. Doing so outdoors would be especially uplifting.

Perhaps there's a [walking](#) group in your area? Call us at 1800 951 971 and we can help you find out.





## Ask for help if you need it

If you struggle with holiday season depression, or if difficult feelings become overwhelming at times, it may be helpful to speak to a health professional about how you feel.

You can ask your GP about where to begin. You can also look online for a psychologist who understands the challenges faced by older adults during the holidays.

There are also helplines you can call in a crisis, or when you just need to talk to someone:

- [Lifeline](#) - call 13 11 14, 24/7, text 0477 131 114, or [chat online](#).  
LifeLine's crisis support service is available 24/7. Anyone in Australia can speak to a trained Crisis Supporter any time of the day or night.
- [Beyond Blue](#) - call 1300 22 4636 (24/7), or [chat online](#).  
Beyond Blue is a mental health support service that connects you to a person to talk to on those days when things seem too much, or something isn't quite right.

[Learn more about finding mental health support here.](#)

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## CONTACT US

**Website:** [liveup.org.au](http://liveup.org.au)

**Email:** [support@liveup.org.au](mailto:support@liveup.org.au)

**Phone:** 1800 951 971

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/LiveUpAus](https://facebook.com/LiveUpAus)

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