

LONELINESS HELPSHEET FOR PARENTS

In recent years, teens and young adults have emerged as the loneliest people group on earth. Youth often have little experience with being alone, and their developing brains may not be ready to tolerate the discomfort of feelings that come from perceived isolation. Loneliness is a state of mind not a measure of connectedness and four out of ten teens say they feel loneliness regularly.

NOTICE THIS:

Your teen seems to feel alone and excluded, even when they are with others.



WATCH FOR THIS

Excessive online involvement leaving youth feeling excluded, unwanted, or missing out on the socially full life they believe everyone else is living.

Feeling like there is no one who understands them or truly cares about them.

Falling self-esteem and sense of self-worth causing self-isolation.

Your teen seems to possess few options for coping with difficult feelings and situations.

Looking for things that will soothe the unbearable feeling of isolation, such as increased eating, sleeping, gaming, drinking or drug use.



SAY THIS

The presence of just one trusted adult greatly reduces the impact of severe loneliness. You can connect with lonely young people through invitations like this:

“I need to run to the store. Would you like to come along? I’d love your company.”

“We miss you when you’re not here because you bring _____ to our family.”

“You’re really good at _____. Let’s think of places where you could use that to help people who need what you have to bring.”

“When you feel alone, what things do you think are true about yourself? How do you deal with those thoughts and feelings?”



TRY THIS

Belonging - Teens need to know they are invited, expected, noticed and missed—even in their own family. Make space for them and continue to invite them in.

Giving - Youth possess great empathy and feel needed and connected when volunteering their abilities.

Risking - Help them plan small steps toward making connections, perhaps with others who feel lonely. Help them name and face their fears.

Coping - Help them create a coping list for managing their feelings.

Faith - Invite them to explore connecting with God who is with them always, even when they are alone.



RESOURCES

To access all of our helpsheets online, visit youthunlimited.com/teentools

Credit to: lifeteams.ca

Remember:

“The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

(Psalm 34:18)