

## Safeguarding Newsletter for May: Mental Health Awareness

The Mental Health Foundation has announced from 9th May until 15th May it is Mental Health Awareness Week and the theme is 'loneliness.'

The Mental Health Awareness Week will explore the experience of loneliness, its effect on mental health and what we can do to reduce loneliness in our communities.



We can all experience feelings of loneliness at any time in our lives. Loneliness affects millions of people in the UK every year and is a key driver of poor mental health. Recent research has found that loneliness has been exacerbated by the Covid pandemic.

**Loneliness, is not necessarily about being alone. Instead, if you *feel* alone and isolated, then that is how loneliness plays you're your state of mind.**

Some research suggests that loneliness is associated with an increased risk of certain mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, sleep problems and increased stress.

**To support our learners and colleagues here at Riverside the Safeguarding team have put together some resources to support you and offer practical steps to address it.**

### How to tell if someone is Lonely?

It can be difficult to admit they are feeling lonely and it can be even harder to ask for help Here are some clues that could indicate a person is feeling lonely;

- Having a significant change in their routine (e.g. getting up a lot later)
- Neglecting their appearance or personal hygiene
- Not eating properly
- Putting themselves down
- Not being themselves.

## What Causes Loneliness?

- Experiencing a bereavement
- Going through a relationship break-up
- Retiring and losing the social contact you had at work
- Changing jobs and feeling isolated from your co-workers
- Starting at university
- moving to a new area or country without family, friends or community networks.

## Here are some Top Tips!



### Do's

- ✓ Try talking about your feelings to a friend, family member, health professional or counsellor. You could also contact Samaritans, Call 116 123 or email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)
- ✓ Consider joining a group or class that focuses on what you can enjoy
- ✓ Visit places where you can be around people such as a park, cinema or a café
- ✓ Consider peer support , more information on the Mind website
- ✓ Look after yourself



### Don't

- ✓ Do not try to do everything at once, set small targets
- ✓ Do not compare yourself to others such as on social media
- ✓ Try not to use alcohol, cigarettes, gambling or drugs to relieve loneliness. These can contribute to poor mental health
- ✓ Do not focus on what you cannot change- focus your energy into helping yourself feel better

## Here are Some Fabulous Resources

[Mind](#)

[NHS](#)

[The British Red Cross](#)

