Have A Chat

Five ways you can help end loneliness

During lockdown, more people in the UK and Ireland have experienced loneliness than ever before[1,2] and while the causes of loneliness are complex, there are little ways you may be able to help. There are lots of things we can do to check-in with those around us, even with social distancing in place. This can be anything from a friendly smile to a stranger, to saying hello to your neighbour over the garden fence. **It's often these small check-ins that can mean much more than you think.**

That's why the Campaign to End Loneliness and biopharmaceutical company Bristol Myers Squibb have joined forces to create the #HaveAChat campaign. Together, we are passionate about supporting our communities and those affected by loneliness.

Check out our five simple tips for making a new connection in under five minutes, whether that's with someone you know, or someone new and unexpected. You never know the difference it could make.

> **During lockdown, more of us have been affected by loneliness than ever before.[1,2] Take the time to check-in with those around you. You never know the difference it could make.**
> **#HaveAChat**

How can I check-in?

1
Smile and wave
Even if you're really busy, taking the time to smile at your neighbour or wave at someone on the street can really brighten someone's day.

2
Stop and say hello
Sharing a quick, simple greeting is a great way to make a connection. As you do your weekly food shop at the supermarket, try making eye contact with the cashier, or someone in the queue, to say hello.

3
Have a chat
Sometimes this can feel overwhelming, especially if you don't know the person well. But as soon as you break the barrier of initiating a conversation you should feel more relaxed. In fact, people often underestimate just how much the person they're having a conversation with is enjoying their company.[3] Remember that a **quick chat**, can mean a lot to someone. If you are stuck on what topic to pick to make a conversation, the weather is always a good place to start!

4
Ask someone how they are
In our busy lives we sometimes forget to check-in with people. If you have **a few minutes**, how about asking someone how they are. Call an old friend for a chat, check up on a family member or chat with the waitress, see how they're doing today. If you know someone who's living alone, take the time to check-in with them.

5
Ask someone how they really are
Loneliness can affect anyone, even those you wouldn't expect. It's easy to hide how you're feeling, and with technology being used more than ever it's even easier to hide your emotions. If you have **five minutes** or more, take the time to ask someone how they really are.

References:
1. Office for National Statistics. Coronavirus and loneliness, Great Britain: 3 April to 3 May 2020. Available from: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/coronavirusandloneliness-greatbritain/3aprilto3may2020 Last accessed: October 2020.
2. Central Statistics Office. Social Impact of COVID-19 Survey April 2020. Available from: https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-sic19/socialimpactofcovid-19surveyapril2020/introductionandsummaryofresults/ Last accessed: October 2020. **3.** Boothby EJ., Cooney G, Sandstrom GM., et al. Psychological Science. 29(11): 1742-1756.