

Session	Loneliness and Isolation
Background Information	Loneliness can affect people at any age, but we often think of loneliness as only affecting the elderly population. Loneliness cuts across all ages and stages in life. Feeling lonely isn't in itself a mental health problem, but the two are strongly linked. Having a mental health problem increases your chance of feeling lonely, and feeling lonely can have a negative impact on your mental health. Lonely individuals are more likely to visit their GP, use more medication or self-medicate and have a higher incidence of falls.
Aim	To raise awareness loneliness and isolation and their impact on mental health and wellbeing
Objectives	<p>Participants will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dispel some of the myths around loneliness and isolation 2. Discuss the difference and links between loneliness and isolation 3. List examples of what can make people socially isolated 4. Describe the impact loneliness and isolation can have on mental health 5. Explore strategies to tackle loneliness and social isolation
Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.5 hours
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT • Presentation • Quiz • Flipchart/pens • Session handouts • Reflective practice tool

Learning outcomes	Participant Activity	Resources	Time
1. Dispel some of the myths around loneliness and isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myth buster 	Quiz	10 min
2. Discuss the links and difference between loneliness and isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	Slide	5 min
3. List examples of what can make people socially isolated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What makes people socially isolated? 	Flipchart/ pens Slide	15 min
4. Describe the impact loneliness and isolation can have on mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on mental health 	Flipchart/ pens Slide	15 min
5. Explore strategies to tackle loneliness and social isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can we do? 	Flipchart/ pens Slide	20 min
6. Looking after our own mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-care 	Slide	5 min

Loneliness and Isolation

Facilitator notes

Slide	Notes	Time	Resources
Slide 1	Welcome participants and introduce yourself before offering an overview of the session. Have the title slide up and visible whilst doing this.	5 min	Slides
Slide 2	Put up the session overview slide and read out what will be covered today. Highlight that this session is not to make participants experts on loneliness and isolation but to raise the issue of these, the impact they can have on mental health and wellbeing and what we can do to address loneliness and isolation.		
Activity	Loneliness and Isolation Quiz Let's start by looking at some of the myths that surround loneliness and isolation. Distribute the quiz to participants. This can be done on an individual basis or as a group. Ask participants to complete the quiz, true or false. This is a good starting point and gives an insight into the participants' knowledge and attitudes to loneliness and isolation. Once completed, go through each of the questions to generate discussion. Using the supporting statements to provide the correct answers and provide information. Discussion point: Were there any surprises? Highlight that loneliness and social isolation are starting to receive increased attention from local authorities, health and social care providers and third-sector organisations due to growing evidence around the negative impacts they have on health and wellbeing.	10min (5min activity, 5 min feedback)	Quiz
Slide 3&4	What do we mean by loneliness and isolation? Do not put the slide up until you have posed the discussion point below Discussion point: Ask the participants to think about loneliness and isolation, are they the same? Invite the participants to share their thoughts and views and encourage discussion. Now put up slide 3 and read through each of the bullet points, then move onto Slide 4. Summarise the points from the slide by saying that loneliness and isolation are used interchangeably due to the similar factors that contribute to the development of the conditions. Highlight that being lonely isn't the same as being alone.	10 min	Slides

Slide	Notes	Time	Resources
Slide 5	<p>Statistics</p> <p>The purpose of the statistic section is to help build a picture of the scale of loneliness and isolation and why it is a priority area we need to address. The statistical information is lifted from the Holyrood Report: Equal opportunities committee Age and Social Isolation October 2015 which is available at http://www.parliament.scot/S4_EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/Reports/EOS042015R05.pdf</p> <p>Inform the participants we are going to look at some of the statistics relating to loneliness and isolation.</p> <p>Read the information off the slide highlighting loneliness and social isolation statistics.</p> <p>Discussion point: once you have read off the information, ask the participants what their thoughts and views are on the statistics, are they alarmed by them, or did they expect worse? Again highlight that the statistics provide a snapshot of the scale of the loneliness and isolation problems.</p>	5 min	Slide
Activity & Slide 6	<p>What can cause people to become socially isolated?</p> <p>Now we are going to look what can cause individuals to become socially isolated?</p> <p>Divide the participants into groups, provide flipchart and pens.</p> <p>Invite the groups to draw an outline of a body on the flipchart and to write down possible causes of social isolation in and around the body.</p> <p>Take feedback from each of the groups, one/two examples from each. Put up the slide and highlight some examples, the list is not exhaustive.</p>	15 min (10 min for activity and 5 feedback)	Flipchart/ pens Slide
Activity & Slide 7	<p>What impact can loneliness and isolation have on health?</p> <p>Keep participants in their groups, provide flipchart.</p> <p>We have looked at what can cause people to become socially isolated and the next part of the session explores the effects loneliness and isolation can have on health, mental, physical and social.</p> <p>Invite them to think about the impact loneliness and isolation can have on our mental, physical and social health. Write these down on the flipchart.</p> <p>Take feedback from each of the groups, one/two examples from each.</p> <p>Put up the slide and share some examples, make comparisons to what the groups have shared. Highlight the list is not exhaustive.</p>	15 min (10 min for activity and 5 feedback)	Flipchart/ pens

Slide	Notes	Time	Resources
Group Activity & Slide 8	<p>What can we do to address loneliness and isolation?</p> <p>This part of the session will explore what can be done to tackle loneliness and isolation and highlight resources to support mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Keep participants in their groups and ask them to consider what we can do to address loneliness and isolation.</p> <p>Put up slide 8 with the three key areas that are considered to help address loneliness and isolation. Ask the groups to consider each of these and list examples of activities etc in each.</p> <p>Take feedback from the groups, one/two examples of from each.</p> <p>Highlight that there are various interventions that can tackle loneliness and isolation. Highlight that one size does not fit all, and this will be dependent on the individual and the community they live in.</p> <p>Distribute the mental health supporting resources document (child/youth or adult). This gives examples of some useful mental health resources and supports.</p> <p>Discussion point: are there any local resources that participants would like to share information on?</p>	<p>15 min</p> <p>(10 min activity, 5 min feedback)</p>	<p>Slide</p> <p>Mental health resources handout (adult or child/youth)</p>
Activity & Slide 9	Remind the participants of the importance of looking after their own mental health and provide a self-care activity.	5 min	Slide
Session close	Thank the participants for their time and ask them to complete the reflective practice tool before closing.	5 min	Reflective practice tool



Loneliness and Isolation Quiz

True or false statements

(please circle)

1. Loneliness can affect people at any age	True/False
2. Loneliness is a mental health problem	True/False
3. Lonely people are more likely to visit their GP and other health/social care services	True/False
4. Loneliness can have a negative impact on your health	True/False
5. Loneliness and isolation are the same	True/False

Loneliness and Isolation Quiz Answers

Answers

1. Loneliness can affect people at any age	True Loneliness can affect people at any age, but we often think of loneliness as only affecting the elderly population. Research carried out by NSPCC highlighted that over 5,000 children contacted Childline about loneliness, sadness and isolation as their main problem (April 2008- March 2009).
2. Loneliness is a mental health problem	False Feeling lonely isn't in itself a mental health problem but the two are strongly linked. Having a mental health problem increases your chance of feeling lonely and feeling lonely can have a negative impact on your mental health.
3. Lonely people are more likely to visit their GP and other health/ social care service	True Reports highlighting that older people often present to their GP's/or other services because they have no-one else for company.
4. Loneliness can have a negative impact of your health	True Some research has found that loneliness can increase the risk of heart disease and links between loneliness and dementia rates.
5. Loneliness and isolation are the same	False You don't have to be socially isolated to be lonely.