

Age of Loneliness: Learning and Sharing at from Awareness day 2016

THE QUESTIONS WE THOUGHT ABOUT AND SUGGESTIONS UNDERNEATH EACH:

1. HOW CAN WE HELP OTHERS TO OVERCOME LONELINESS?
2. HOW CAN WE NOTICE SIGNS OF LONELINESS IN OTHERS AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO SHARE THIS?
3. HOW TO GET TO KNOW PEOPLE TO PREVENT LONELINESS
4. LEARN ABOUT THE CAUSES OF LONELINESS
5. HOW TO PREVENT OR STOP LONELINESS:

1. Causes:

The BBC Programme "Age of Loneliness" covered all aspects of loneliness. Throughout there were a range of examples of the "who" and "why" of loneliness and we realised that EVERYONE can experience it: young, old, married, single, in a family as single parent or intact family. We should NEVER assume someone would NOT be feeling loneliness; whether employed, unemployed, in isolation or in a big city, busy or not. The more common reasons for loneliness included divorce, old age and bereavement, but there were multiple other causes.

2. Some of the signs to look out:

Someone coming in late, leaving early or not attending meeting.

A change in behaviour/presentation, noticing if there are less smiles/cheerfulness/involvement in activities.

LISTEN for loneliness in conversation.

We noted how hard it is for people to share that they might be lonely. As with many difficulties people are reluctant to say if they are finding life difficult and need a helping hand. Therefore it may be difficult to spot loneliness in others and our assumptions may get in the way.

3. Getting to know others:

Join in groups in the local community even if they are non-Christadelphian. Mixing with others is important and joining in was a strong theme throughout the day.

Taking initiative and being pro-active. If and when able to, get out and about. Have a purpose/structure as much as possible.

Invite others for tea & chat or meal or to go out.

Planning or organising future events/activities to look forward to can help reduce the sadness of going home alone.

4. Helping prevent or overcome Loneliness.

5. What we can do:

Encourage involvement in charity or voluntary work (start in local ecclesial community if no welfare need in own ecclesia). This gives a sense of purpose and social contact.

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Join social groups online, Facebook offers a range of groups such as Fellowship Group / discussion forums and "Separated, divorced & widowed" group. We are looking to try and think of an alternative for those that do not use Social Media. Any ideas and willing volunteers welcome!

Join in social events in local community. Some examples included dancing classes which were highly recommended and sounded like a lot of fun. Local churches organise groups-take a look around, there may be more going on than you realise.

Visit others in need or that you think may appreciate social contact. This might include text/email or even better...a phone call. ***"Little kindnesses can make a BIG difference."*** Helping others is a recognised way of helping ourselves.

Invite or organise others to get together for board game evening/knitting/reading/study/meal etc...

Positives about Loneliness: We should note that there can be positives in loneliness and a question was raised about is it possible for alone-ness to bring us closer to God? To give more time to Him?

For some there is comfort in alone-ness and solitude.

Final thought:

NEED TO CONNECT AND GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER.

We cannot notice change if we don't know each other.

CSN Helpline offers friendly listening ears for befriending/support: **0800 9545 099** and choose option <http://www.chsn.org.uk/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/feeling-lonely/>

BBC Age of Loneliness Documentary: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1249349565080240>