

# Loneliness

factsheet



## Why am I feeling lonely or isolated?

Going to university is a big change and all students will experience this change in different ways, with many taking time to adjust to their new life and surroundings. Even though you will be meeting lots of people it can take time to make friends, and students can often feel anxious about fitting in or being left out of social groups. If you are feeling lonely or isolated then you can take positive steps to change your situation.

Loneliness can be common at university for lots of different reasons including:

- being away from friends and family, perhaps for the first time
- it may be the first time in many years when you have had to 'start from scratch' in making new friends
- you may have been lonely before you came to Bath and hoped that things would be different here
- you may be missing old friends and finding it hard to replace them – or you may feel reluctant to engage with new people
- you may be preoccupied with issues that make it hard to be as sociable as you would like
- you may have a long-distance relationship and feel torn between life here and elsewhere
- you may be anxious about work and feel in conflict about spending time on social activities
- you may feel like you don't belong in Bath

Loneliness can lead to you feeling socially inadequate, unlikeable, uncomfortable in the company of others, or angry and critical of other people. These feelings can build up and undermine your self-esteem and energy levels, which can make it harder to take part in social activities and do the things you normally enjoy that help you to feel better. It can also feel hard to say no to things you wouldn't normally do.

## What helps?

The first thing to keep in mind is that you are certainly not the only one feeling lonely. The actual feeling of loneliness is a 'flag' that there is something you need, so take notice of this feeling.

- ♥ look after yourself, as some of us take longer to settle in socially to a new environment. If your initial efforts do not bear fruit, acknowledge the efforts you are making and continue making them
- ♥ don't hide away or avoid people
- ♥ put yourself in situations where you can become involved in conversations and activities
- ♥ take the initiative and talk to other people rather than waiting for them to talk to you
- ♥ say 'hello' or maybe just smile, it will usually be returned
- ♥ be positive when you talk with people
- ♥ get involved in societies, events or voluntary work
- ♥ going online to connect with others safely can feel like a less challenging way to reduce your loneliness, but balancing it with face-to-face experiences is likely to be even more rewarding
- ♥ manage your time, so sometimes you are with people and sometimes you are alone
- ♥ decide if you prefer to talk in groups or have one-to-one conversations or a mixture of the two
- ♥ keep trying even if your first attempts are not very successful - you may be expecting too much of yourself and others

You might want to attend a **Wellbeing Advice drop-in session** (held every day in Student Services). They will listen to your concerns and be able to provide you with practical advice and guidance.

## Ways to get involved

Student societies and student events are a great way to meet people who share your interests:

- ♥ **student societies**  
[www.thesubath.com/socs/](http://www.thesubath.com/socs/)
- ♥ **student media**  
<https://www.thesubath.com/media/>
- ♥ **volunteering**  
[www.thesubath.com/volunteer-groups/](http://www.thesubath.com/volunteer-groups/)
- ♥ **sports teams**  
[www.thesubath.com/sport/](http://www.thesubath.com/sport/)
- ♥ **SU diversity and support groups**  
[www.thesubath.com/diversity-support/](http://www.thesubath.com/diversity-support/)
- ♥ **PG Association**  
[www.thesubath.com/postgrads/pg-exec/](http://www.thesubath.com/postgrads/pg-exec/)
- ♥ **Bath City Socializer**  
[www.citysocializer.com/bath/social-club](http://www.citysocializer.com/bath/social-club)  
  
– free online service for anyone living in Bath who would like to meet new people and discover new things and places to go in the area
- ♥ **The Wellbeing Service** run a Social Networking Group. The group is a low key social group for students who have, for whatever reason, not found close links with anybody in their halls or course. It is a safe place to meet like-minded people. They run events such as film nights, board games, cooking sessions and socials. Come to a drop-in session and speak to Wellbeing about it or email for further information.  
[wellbeingservice@bath.ac.uk](mailto:wellbeingservice@bath.ac.uk)
- ♥ **The Disability Service** also run a social group on a fortnightly basis for students with autism spectrum conditions such as Asperger's Syndrome. Students are encouraged to choose an activity such as films or board games and they also go for walks during the summer months. If you are interested in coming along, please email the Disability Service.  
[disabilityadvice@bath.ac.uk](mailto:disabilityadvice@bath.ac.uk)

## Support at Bath

There are lots of people you can go and speak to about your own concerns, or if you are worried about another student:

**Wellbeing Advice drop-in**  
(held every day in Student Services)  
[www.bath.ac.uk/guides/welfare-and-wellbeing-advice/](http://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/welfare-and-wellbeing-advice/)

**Students' Union Advice & Support Centre**  
[www.thesubath.com/advice/](http://www.thesubath.com/advice/)

**Chaplaincy**  
[www.bath.ac.uk/chaplaincy/](http://www.bath.ac.uk/chaplaincy/)

**Nightline**  
[bath.nightline.ac.uk](http://bath.nightline.ac.uk)

**Peer Support**  
[www.thesubath.com/peer-support/](http://www.thesubath.com/peer-support/)

## Helpful resources

**Student Minds - Resources**  
[www.studentminds.org.uk/resources.html](http://www.studentminds.org.uk/resources.html)

**Mind - Loneliness**  
[www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/loneliness/#.WzNkssiDu70](http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/loneliness/#.WzNkssiDu70)

**The Mix - I'm lonely**  
[www.themix.org.uk/sex-and-relationships/friendship/im-lonely-4526.html](http://www.themix.org.uk/sex-and-relationships/friendship/im-lonely-4526.html)

**Students Against Depression**  
[www.studentsagainstdepression.org](http://www.studentsagainstdepression.org)