

## WHEN YOU FEEL LONELY

### Overcoming Loneliness

#### When Do You Feel Lonely?

- ✓ Do you feel lonely at the end of the day? On weekends? Because you have just moved? Because a friend or family member has died?
- ✓ Answering these questions can help you decide what steps to take to feel better.

#### Reach Out

- ✓ Try to reach out to one person each day – either an old friend or someone new that you would like to get to know.
- ✓ Call on the phone, send an email or write a letter just to say hello. Or, suggest spending time together.
- ✓ The more you practice reaching out to others, the easier it will get.
- ✓ When starting a conversation with someone new, try talking about things you have in common.



#### Pursue Friendships

- ✓ When you meet someone you would like to know better, don't wait for him or her to call you. Take the first step.
- ✓ Remember that everyone is at least a little afraid of making new friends and your efforts will be appreciated.
- ✓ Even one good friend can make a difference.



#### Try Something New

- ✓ Make plans to take a class or join a club. Join a group trip or event.
- ✓ Seek out opportunities to volunteer in your neighborhood or city.

#### Avoid Escapes

- ✓ Surfing the web, watching TV and movies, and reading novels are all great sources of entertainment, but be careful not to use them to avoid social contact.
- ✓ Do you use alcohol, other drugs or food to help you feel less lonely? If so, seek professional help.



#### Plan Ahead for Holidays

- ✓ Make plans ahead of time for holidays, vacations or other times when loneliness hits the hardest.
- ✓ Accept invitations from acquaintances, or rely on community resources. Many community groups, churches, synagogues and clubs have planned activities for holidays.
- ✓ Volunteer at a community service for the holidays. This is a good way to meet new people while you are helping others.

#### Take Care of Yourself

- ✓ If you try to look your best, you will feel better about yourself and it will be easier to get to know people.
- ✓ Make your home a place you want to bring new friends. Rearrange the furniture or put flowers on the table.

#### Seek Professional Help

- ✓ If you are feeling overwhelmed by loneliness or having trouble making changes, seek help from a therapist, doctor or other professional.

### What Is Loneliness?

Like hunger, loneliness is a signal. Feeling lonely tells you that you need emotional nourishment much the same way that feeling hungry tells you that your body needs food. If you learn to listen to that signal, you can get the nourishment you need.

#### Who Gets Lonely?

At some point in our lives, we all feel lonely. It can be a fleeting feeling at the end of the day when you return home alone, or it may creep in following a crisis. You may have felt lonely for years and have accepted it as a part of life. But no one needs to live with ongoing loneliness.

#### Why Make a Change?

Medical studies have shown that isolation can lead to problems such as depression, alcoholism and other illnesses. Taking steps to overcome loneliness can help you become happier and healthier.

