A MINDPEACE RESOURCE

Helping Your Child Navigate Loneliness

Effective ways to help kids and teens feel seen and connected

For parents & caregivers



Being **alone** and feeling **lonely** aren't the same. Loneliness is the painful sense of being unseen or left out, which kids can feel even in a crowded classroom. A short bout is a normal signal that we need connection; when it lingers, your support matters most.

Six ways to help at home

1 Name it, without shame

Loneliness is a human signal, not a flaw. Share a time you felt lonely and what helped you.

2 Catch the "nobody likes me" thought

Help your child name the thought behind pulling away, then gently question it together.

3 Lead with curiosity

Ask open questions about how they see things before offering fixes. Feeling heard helps.

4 Go beyond small talk

Deeper talks build closeness, and practice at home carries over to friendships.

5 Protect face-to-face time

Plan screen-free time together, notice online habits and encourage clubs and group activities.

6 Reconnect, and model it

Help them reach out to an old friend. Let them see you nurture friendships and repair conflict.

Try a conversation menu

Start light, then go deeper. Car rides and dinner work well.

Easy starters

- What was the best part of today?
- Who did you sit with at lunch?

A little deeper

- When do you feel most like you?
- Is there anyone you miss hanging out with?

Deeper

- Do you ever feel left out?
- What do you wish more people knew about you?

When to reach out for support

- Loneliness that lasts for weeks, not days
- Pulling away from friends, family or favorite activities
- Irritability, or avoiding school or social situations
- Talk with your child's school counselor or pediatrician.

In a crisis

Worried about your child's safety? Call or text **988** (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, 24/7). In an emergency, call **911**.

Sources

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