



LONELINESS

UNDERSTANDING AND TACKLING LONELINESS

Mob has strong connections to our land, our community, our ancestors, and our culture. These connections make feelings of loneliness really hard on our spirit.

This fact sheet aims to increase understanding of loneliness, its signs, and to suggest coping strategies using the strengths from within our culture and community that can protect us against loneliness.

What is Loneliness?

Loneliness is a difficult emotional experience, understood by feelings of emptiness or feeling like we have no one, even when around mob. It involves a self-sense of being alone and distanced, but you don't have to be. It can arise from several things, including a sense of disconnection from yourself, family and/or community, longing for country, experiencing a loss, or experiencing cultural disconnection or discrimination. Loneliness varies significantly between every person and can affect anyone, no matter your age or job.

WHAT DOES LONELINESS LOOK LIKE?

Knowing what loneliness feels and looks like is an important step in dealing with it. Some common signs include:

- Feeling alone or disconnected, even in the company of mob.
- Feeling misunderstood or unknown by those around you.
- A nonstop intense sense of sadness or low mood, especially when alone.
- A lack of motivation or not feeling happy even when doing things that used to make you happy.
- Overpowering feelings of not being good enough or low self-esteem.



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PROTECTIVE FACTORS AGAINST LONELINESS

Our Indigenous culture and community offer protective factors that can help us guard against feelings of loneliness:



Cultural Identity and Practices: Embracing our culture and engaging in cultural practices can create a deep sense of belonging and community.



Connection to Country: Our connection to country is a big part of our culture. Spending time on the land can restore our sense of balance and connection.



Connection to Community: Being active in community events, ceremonies, and gatherings can strengthen social connections and shared understanding of culture.



Support from Elders: Elders hold a wealth of wisdom, guidance, and understanding. They can provide cultural, emotional, and spiritual support, strengthening resilience against feelings of loneliness.

STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS LONELINESS

Stay Connected With Mob: Stay connected with your mob and friends, even try to make new ones, by doing things like joining a local club or footy team, participating in community activities, or offering to help Elders.

Seek Professional Help: If feelings of loneliness are too strong, or your spirit becomes too sad, consider going down to your local Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) or hospital. Mental health professionals can equip you with coping strategies to handle loneliness and its impacts. Doctors can also prescribe medication in support of your healing journey.

Self-Care Practices: Regular exercise, eating good food, sleeping for at least 8 hours, and mindfulness or relaxation techniques can strengthen our mental health and aid in managing feelings of loneliness.

Expressing Feelings: Sharing your thoughts and feelings in safety through writing, art, or conversation with trusted mob can help you and others understand what is going on for you. Remember, experiencing loneliness is part of being human, and it is okay to seek help when you need it.

You are an important part of your resilient and vibrant Indigenous community, rich with cultural heritage. Despite loneliness, remember that you are never truly alone – support is only one yarn away.