



# Guide to Loneliness

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This package was created by Healthy U: Peer Health & Wellness at the University of Manitoba. We are a group of trained, non-judgmental, and confidential student health and wellness leaders on campus.

We provide outreach activities, workshops, and one-on-one support for our fellow students on a variety of health and well-being topics. Feel free to drop in to chat or pick up more information packages.

If you would like to request or attend one of our workshops or events, check out our website for details.



# Social Needs

"I'm surrounded by people but I feel so alone"

68%

of U of M students felt lonely at some point in the last year.

Loneliness can make a person feel unloved, or that they're meant to be alone. Feeling lonely isn't in itself a mental health problem, but the two are strongly linked. Having a mental health problem increases your chances of feeling lonely, and feeling lonely can have a negative impact on your mental health.

from [counsel.acadiau.ca](http://counsel.acadiau.ca)

## Remember:

- Although most people need some kind of social contact to maintain good mental health, everyone has different social needs.
- You may be someone who is content with a few close friends, or you may need a large group of friends and acquaintances to feel satisfied.
- Feeling lonely is a common, human emotion experienced by everyone at times. You aren't defective or strange for feeling lonely.

# Myths & Facts

## **Loneliness is caused by being alone**

While you may be more susceptible to loneliness and depression from being alone for long periods of time, there are many people who are very active in group settings, hang out in crowded environments, and work around large numbers of people who are just as lonely as those in isolation. Likewise there are many people who are frequently alone who feel more re-energized, more productive, happy and content than when they're with large numbers of people.

## **Getting into a new relationship will end your loneliness**

Although it is true that having a meaningful relationship can help you feel connected and happy, you shouldn't depend on your partner to eliminate loneliness from your life.

## **Only certain kinds of people feel lonely**

Loneliness does not discriminate by age or personality type.

## **Having sex will eliminate loneliness**

While sex can be very enjoyable, it's not going to cure loneliness. It's certainly not a reason to push yourself to go out and hook up with others. Some people feel lonely particularly because of sex, as it can draw attention to the lack of a meaningful relationship with those they are having sex with.

## **Being an “only child” or the youngest makes you more susceptible to loneliness**

Numerous studies on family sizes and development show there is no relationship between the number of children and how lonely they feel. It is based along the same common myth that if we interact with more people we will become less lonely.

## **Resist the Temptation to Perpetuate Loneliness!**

Once people are lonely, they are more inclined to use counterproductive coping strategies like isolation, sleep, alcohol, and drugs. Break the cycle with a problem-focused strategy and take charge.

# Take Action



- Visit the Student Counselling Centre on campus
- Connect with a loved one and tell them how you're feeling.
- Volunteer somewhere - it will let you interact with people while doing something valuable.
- Join a student group.
- Take care of yourself - shower regularly, exercise, go for walks, and make sure you're sleeping well.
- If you aren't comfortable with a lot of interaction yet, try going somewhere that you aren't expected to socialize a lot right away. Try a cafe, a sports group, or trying a new class.
- Don't hide away or avoid people. When you have plans with someone, do your best to follow through.
- Take initiative and talk to other people, rather than waiting for them to talk to you.

# Resources

## On Campus

### **Student Counselling Centre (SCC)\***

Attend a workshop, group session, or individual counselling. Free for UofM students!

474 UMSU University Centre

204-474-8592

<http://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/counselling-resources-students>

### **Health and Wellness Office\***

Talk to the Health and Wellness Educator about loneliness and social wellness

469 UMSU University Centre

204-295-9032

<http://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/health-wellness>

[healthandwellness@umanitoba.ca](mailto:healthandwellness@umanitoba.ca)

### **Healthy U\***

Talk to a peer health and wellness volunteer about loneliness.

474 UMSU University Centre

<https://www.healthyuofm.com/>

\*There are no in-person services at the University of Manitoba currently.

Check the relevant websites for remote services and updates.



## Student Clubs

Becoming a member of a student club can be a great way to meet new people and enjoy the 'student experience.' There are many clubs on campus for students who share common interests, ranging from hobbies, social causes, religion, culture, and more.

The following link lists all the student clubs through UMSU that are available to join. Find one that suits you and get involved today!

[umsu.ca/get-involved/student-clubs](https://umsu.ca/get-involved/student-clubs)

You can also check in with your department or faculty for available associations.