

# Employee Assistance Program

## Overcoming Loneliness

Are you struggling with feeling lonely or know someone who is? You are not alone. Nearly one in four adults reported feeling lonely according to a 2023 Meta-Gallop survey. Feeling disconnected can lead to sadness and depression, as well as physical health issues. The following are suggestions to help combat loneliness.



### To expand your opportunities for connecting with others:

- **Join a class or club** to develop friendships with people who share a common interest.
- **Volunteer** to meet others who also believe in a cause that is important to you.
- **Join an online group** such as a Facebook or Meetup group of people with similar interests (taking caution with your personal information).
- **Adopt a pet** which can help you meet other pet owners.
- **Engage with others** you come into contact with throughout the day to increase social exchanges.

### If you feel lonely despite having a wide social network, try the following:

- **Deepen existing positive relationships** by reaching out to and spending time with people whose company you enjoy and who make you feel accepted and supported.
- **Build in opportunities to strengthen the quality of your interactions** by intentionally asking questions that go a little deeper or build upon prior conversations.
- **Open up and share more with people you trust.** This is typically reciprocated, resulting in creating deeper bonds.
- **Eliminate negative interactions.** Research shows that negative social exchanges contribute to feelings of loneliness (Silva, 2023). If certain people routinely make you feel stressed or discouraged, establish firm boundaries or determine whether to avoid interacting altogether.
- **Consider meeting with a therapist** to develop strategies to help you feel more connected.

Contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at the toll-free number below for a list of volunteer opportunities, classes, clubs, and other groups in your area that could help you expand your circle, or for a referral to a counselor in your area.

*Reference: Marter, J. "The Psychology of Emotional Spending". Psychology Today. Accessed November 20, 2023 from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/mental-wealth/202305/the-psychology-of-emotional-spending>*

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