COMBATTING ISOLATION AND LONELINESS IN PEMBROKESHIRE

(Image 2)

Befriending in Pembrokeshire: A service which helps you get involved in activities in the community, offers help with socialising with people and learning new skills. They also provide company for those whose loved ones may be harder to reach.
01646 699108
mowpembs@royalvoluntaryservice.org.

(Image 3)

Meetup, Haverfordwest Social: A social group providing a comfortable, informal meeting point for people seeking social interaction, with the main goal of getting people talking to one another.

(image 4)

Pembrokeshire Mind: offers a range of services including health and wellbeing projects, environmental projects such as beach cleans. Emotional support and advise is also available with experienced and well-informed workers
01437 769982 hello@mindpembrokeshire.org.uk

(image 5)

Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services: A service which provides a range of volunteering opportunities which cater to all age groups, and all interests.
01437 769422 volunteering@pavs.org.uk

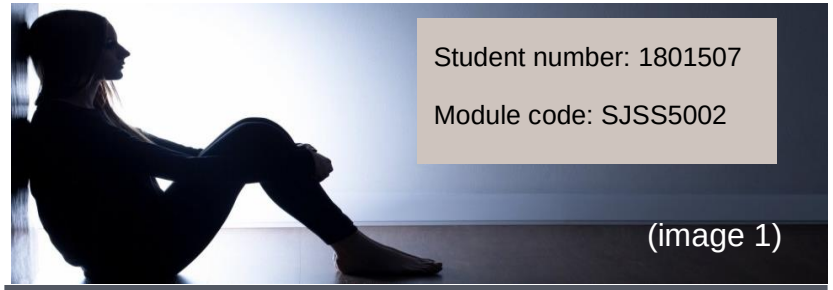
(image 6)

Pembrokeshire Counselling Service: a service offering free support at a confidential basis, free of charge for over sixteens. This support is provided by experienced professionals with the aim of ensuring the highest possible mental health and wellbeing state for people within Pembrokeshire. **01437 76708**
infor@pemrbokeshirecouncellingservice.org

(Pembrokeshire County Council, 2018; Dewis Cymru, 2019; Meetup, 2019; Mind, 2019 (b); Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services, 2019; Pembrokeshire Counselling Service, 2019)

Coping with Social Isolation and Loneliness

For Pembrokeshire people in need



Student number: 1801507

Module code: SJSS5002

(image 1)

A person can experience social isolation when they are experiencing an absence of positive social relationships, referring to sociological status. This can become a problem, when people are experiencing a deprivation of interaction with others or find interaction with others difficult. social isolation can impact on peoples physical and mental health and has been said to be as harmful as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

Loneliness on the other hand is a psychological feeling within oneself, referring to phycological state. Although these issues are separate, they often occur together, as isolation can lead to loneliness and loneliness being able to lead to isolation

If you have reason to believe you, or someone you know is suffering with social isolation or loneliness, use this leaflet to gain an understanding of social isolation and loneliness, and ways of overcoming the problem.

(Luskin Biordi and Nicholson, 2013, p.97; Zaveleta et al. 2014, pg 5; Holt-Lunstad et al, 2015; Welsh Gov, 2018)

CAUSES

Certain groups in society are more at risk of isolation than others, such as single parents, carers, elderly people, unemployed and people with mental and physical disabilities. However, although some groups are more at risk than others, anyone can experience isolation and loneliness, and there are many factors which can contribute to causing it.

Isolation can become a problem due to factors within yourself, such as low self-esteem or confidence, feeling unworthy. It can also be brought about by situations around a person such as living in a deprived area, financial problems or lack of resources.

Resilience also plays a factor, and events which test our resilience can contribute to isolation and loneliness. This can be issues such as having a child, starting a new school, language or cultural barriers or bereavement and grief.

(Perman and Peplau, 1984; British Red Cross, 2016; GOV.UK, 2018)

CONSEQUENCES

Social isolation can have devastating effects on both one's body and mind. Loneliness and isolation can lead to physical health risks such as obesity, anorexia; and are also linked with increased risk of stroke, coronary heart disease and high blood pressure.

Loneliness and isolation can very often lead to mental health conditions such as depression, stress, anxiety and eating disorders. Lonely or socially isolated people are also at a higher risk self-harm and experience suicidal thoughts; and lonely people are more likely to commit suicide. Highlighting the need for intervention as early as possible

(Hawkley *et al,* 2010 British Red Cross, 2016; Campaign to End Loneliness, N/D; Mind, 2019 (a))

WHAT DOES WALES THINK?

Welsh Government (2019) understand that loneliness and isolation are issues which need to be addressed throughout Wales, especially in the most deprived areas. Wales believe in order to do this, firstly stigma and attitudes towards the issues need to reduce, through raising awareness. Resilience also needs to be built in school age children, so they are equipped with the psychological tools to deal with these problems. Creating a better sense of social cohesion, and promotion of physical and emotional well-being within communities through exercise, volunteering within communities. Along with, access to high quality health care, transport and housing services.

OVERCOMING LONELINESS AND ISOALTION

Initially it is important to put yourself in a position where you can begin to become more socially active. This can be achieved by catching up with old friends, whether that be on social media, face to face or a quick phone call. On the other hand, you can create new connections, this can be achieved by joining a social group, joining a sports team or volunteering within the community. Identify your hobbies, things that bring you enjoyment in life, and act on them. When working on improving your social connections small gestures such as saying hello to a neighbour, or someone you bump into while walking the dog can help in creating social relationships, be confident and be positive. (Campaign to end loneliness, ND)

LINK WITH DEPRESSION

If you feel being lonely or isolated is causing you: to struggle sleeping, feel irritable, feel exhausted, feel useless, loose interest in hobbies or activities you once enjoyed, self-harm or experience suicidal thoughts you may also be experiencing depression.

Depression can often occur due to being isolated or lonely, and isolation and loneliness can often occur as a result of depression. If you think you, or a loved one may experience loneliness and/or isolation and depression, here is some useful advice to help overcome the problems:

Depression and isolation can both often result in weight loss or gain, which can make you feel worse. Eating a healthy balanced diet is important for both your physical health, and your self-esteem.

Exercise is also significantly helpful. it is proven that having good physical health can often improve your mental health

Ensuring you do not become alcohol or drug dependant is also important. Alcohol and drugs can make you feel better for a short period, but will likely, make you feel worse on a long-term scale.

Getting plenty of sleep, talking as often as you can, and going outdoors even if only for a short walk, can all also help in combatting these problems

If isolation, loneliness or depression is having a serious detrimental effect on your mental state and lifestyle or resulting in self-harm, or suicidal thoughts, it is important to visit a GP who will be able to asses the best intervention to help you get back to feeling your regular self.

(National Centre of Mental Health, 2014; Royal college of Psychiatrists, N/D

Robert Waldinger's eighty-year longitudinal study identifies that the quality of our relationships has a significantly powerful influence on quality of life, health and life expectancy (Mineo, 2017). Social isolation in contrast occurs when one is lacking in these good quality relationships (Luskin Biordi and Nicholson, 2013). As identified by Huw Irranica Davies, social isolation and loneliness are issues that are posing a significant threat for people in Wales, and unless tackled positively and tactically, is an issue which may only worsen (Welsh Gov, 2018). Along with this, Campaign for loneliness (2017) research has highlighted that two thirds of people in Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire have suffered with social isolation and loneliness, with 9 in 10 people in these areas feeling loneliness is more probable than ever. Highlighting, that this contemporary issue in society needs addressing, and that awareness needs to be raised among society, particularly in Wales and in Pembrokeshire

It appeared important to make people suffering with, or people concerned about someone suffering with isolation or loneliness the target audience of this leaflet. I felt this was appropriate, as a plethora of people suffering with mental health problems, are unaware that they are suffering with such a problem, emphasizing the fact that awareness of these issues are important, so that these people can identify these issues and therefore seek help and overcome them (High watch Recovery Centre, 2019).

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