

# Coping with Loneliness & Isolation

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CMHA Waterloo Wellington




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## About the Presenter

Angela Heeley is the Mental Health Promotion and Education Coordinator and has worked for CMHAWW for 11 years in a variety of roles, including crisis support, group facilitation, outreach, family education and suicide intervention.



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## Content

- 1 When your are by yourself
- 2 Connecting with others
- 3 Resources

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## Feeling Alone

### Alone by Yourself

We lose an important person in our life, like a partner, family member, or close friend.

We're alone, and we want to be with others.

We are not comfortable with solitude.



### Alone with People

- We are around a lot of people, but feel like we don't fit in.

- We are around a lot of people, but don't feel the support or connection we are looking for.

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We define ourselves in relation to others

We are isolated from others

We feel disconnected & it's harder to reach out

## The Cycle of Loneliness

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Some of us are quite used to spending long periods of time alone.

Some of us are driven by social interactions, and struggle when that is taken away.

Practice empathy as we all learn to adapt.




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## Personality Characteristics:

### Introvert

- Find social interaction draining and need to recharge alone
- Often misunderstood as shyness
- Tend to prefer one on one interactions
- More comfortable with people they know

### Extrovert

- Find social interaction energizing
- Often perceived as more outgoing and lively
- Tend to be more outspoken in groups
- Enjoy attention
- More keen to meet new people

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Poll question:

**Are you an introvert, or an extrovert?**

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Now, more than ever, we  
have to work on developing  
our coping strategies




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## Back to Basics

- Set a routine. Have a shower, comb your hair, put on fresh clothes (pajamas count!).
- Work on the basics, eating, sleeping, exercise.
- Commit to self-care.




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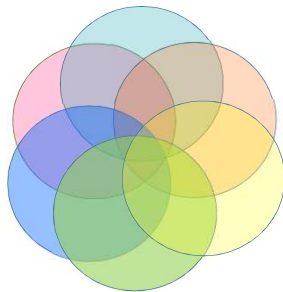
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## Dimensions of Self-Care

Physical  
Social  
Spiritual  
Personal  
Professional  
Emotional




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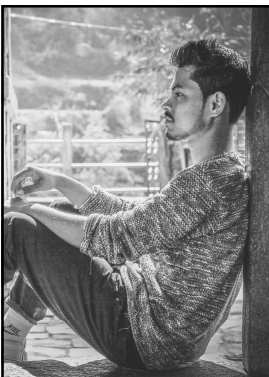
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## Connection with Self

We can learn practices that can be helpful.  
We can also become more aware of our  
unhelpful tendencies.




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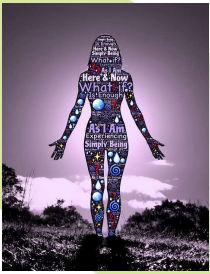
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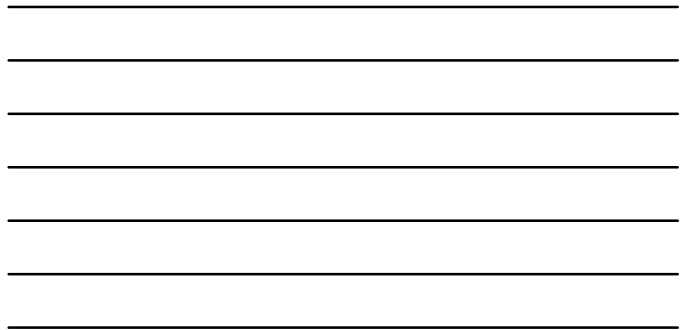
## Self Awareness

- The ability to reflect on one's internal state
- In tune with your emotions
- Notice your reactions and patterns of behaviours
- Awareness around what is helpful to you, and what is hindering you



## Self Efficacy

- Knowing what your talents & strengths are
- Applying your talents and skills on a regular basis
- Learning new skills
- A belief in your ability to achieve
- Can enhance one's feelings of accomplishment
- Achievement reinforces a belief that you can tackle new things in the future
- Baby steps count!



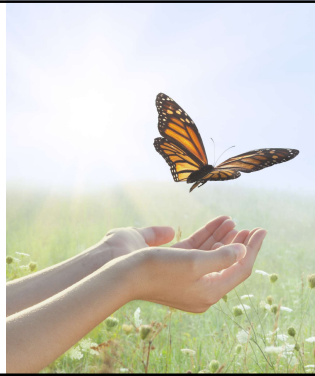
## Optimism

- Often misunderstood as denying reality in favour of a more comfortable view
- A belief in a positive future
- Actively seeking out the good in people and situations
- Our explanatory style with regard to what we control & what we don't



## Acts of hope

- Approach rather than avoid
- Seek information
- Communicate
- People who ask for help are more likely to receive support
- Proactive behaviours
- Using humour to cope




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## Mental Agility



- The ability to look at things from different perspectives
- Problem solving:

Identify the problem  
Determine potential solutions  
Enact solutions  
Evaluate outcome  
Re-strategize if necessary  
Challenge negative thinking

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**Treat yourself as well as you treat others**

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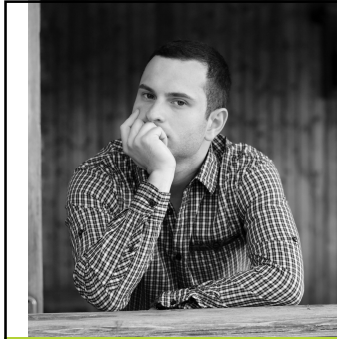
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Challenge the notion  
that you alone  
are not  
"worth it"

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## Distraction

Distraction does not mean you ignore the problem; it simply means you put boundaries around it. You focus on the problem within the limits that it is necessary, and learn to focus on other things.

Ruminating can lead to depression and anxiety. Taking a step back can help prevent this.




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## Distraction

- Set a routine for yourself
- Get some exercise
- Play games that engage your mind
- Take an online class or tour
- Clean and organize
- Comfort yourself
- Read a book/watch a movie
- Cook and bake
- Create

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## Connection

- Interpersonal relationships
- Spirituality
- Safe, healthy and supportive environments (formal or informal), which can include:
  - Family & friends
  - Workplace
  - Community
  - Community agencies

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## Connection with Others

- Be strategic
- Be active, and patient
- Accept that it is okay not to be everyone's friend.
- Aim for healthy relationships
- Identify barriers and potential solutions
- Increase connections



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## Connection

- Social media (use this judiciously).
- Stay informed by a reliable and helpful source.
- Talk on the phone or do a video get together.
- Join a group online.
- Spend time with your pet.
- Write someone a letter.
- Extend the invitation...
- Reach out for help.

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## Be Prepared

Anticipate

Plan

Act

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It's okay not to feel okay.

Although you may feel alone, there are lots of supports available.

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(HERE247)

Call anytime to access  
Addictions, Mental Health  
& Crisis Services

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### Helpful Apps

- Calm
- Insight Timer
- Down Dog
- Headspace
- Mindshift
- Stop. Breathe Think.
- Breethe meditation
- Gratitude Journal 365
- 10% Happier



### Other Websites

- camh.net
- mentalhealthhelpline.ca
- wrspc.ca
- mentalhealthcommission.ca
- 211Ontario.ca
- ccohs.ca



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## "How to be Alone"

Andrea Dorfman

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## For more information:

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Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
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Association canadienne  
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