



COLLEGE

LIFE

CAN BE LONELY



Ollscoil
Teicneolaíochta
an Atlantaigh
Atlantic
Technological
University

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Are you feeling lonely today?

Loneliness is a feeling that everyone experiences every now and then.

It is normal. Nearly 50% of young adults feel lonely regularly.



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Being alone from time to time is good. Enjoy some quality **'me-time'**, you might not feel lonely at all.



Feeling lonely temporarily is normal. However, the lonelier we feel, the more we might withdraw and isolate ourselves.

Continuously avoiding connections with others can result in prolonged loneliness, depression or social anxiety.

Loneliness means
different things to each
one of us.

You might feel lonely in the middle of a crowd, you
might lack in quality of friendships or haven't
managed to make any friends yet.



If you start to feel unwanted, disconnected or lonely all
the time, it is time to get proactive and try to connect to
others.

“Connections to others” can mean friendships, relationships being part of a team or class, or feeling emotionally close to someone. **It is an important part of life**, feeling content and essential for your physical and mental health.

Feelings of loneliness isn't a sign of failure or not being loved.

It is a feeling that shows **you that you need to reach out and strengthen your social connections.** Just like hunger is alerting us to the need to eat.

Connecting to others....

can be difficult for all of us.

20 ideas how to connect to others and make friends during your time in college:

- Be open and pro-active about social connections.
- Don't wait until someone approaches you, try to reach out to others.
- Small talk can be a good first contact, with classmates, a neighbour or someone at the supermarket.
- Sit in common areas in your accommodation or on campus
- Try not to hide behind your mobile or wear earphones, be approachable.
- Notice your surroundings, make eye contact, smile, say hi.
- Get active and join a Club or Society at ATU
- Ask someone to join you for a coffee or lunch.
- Ask someone a question. Respectful curiosity can help to find like-minded people.
- Pay someone a compliment as a conversation starter.
- Check out local resources, sports clubs, cultural events, walking groups, ... whatever you are into.
- Do some volunteering to meet other people
- Try out saying "yes" if someone asks you to join in, even if you are nervous to.
- Find a balance between studying, downtime and socialising. Take study breaks to work on your connections.
- Online groups like meetup.com can be a first step to meet others. Mind your online safety.
- Re-connect with old friends or classmates. People change and new friendships might develop.
- Long distance connections usually take more effort, but they can be worthwhile.
- Work on your confidence. What might new friends like about you?
- Be patient with yourself and others. Building connections takes time.
- Remember: you do not need to be perfect to be a great friend. Be yourself!

If you have tried a few of these and you are still struggling, it is ok to ask for support by emailing counselling.donegal@atu.ie

