

225,000 older people won't speak to anyone this week

You can change someone's life today by just saying "hello" this #FriendshipMonth

One in five of us say that they are lonely some or all of the time. Loneliness can be more damaging than obesity or smoking 15 cigarettes a day. It can happen to any of us, even if we're surrounded by people.

If you think someone you know may be lonely, it can be hard to know what to do or say, especially if they don't talk to you first.

As part of the #DoingOurBit #Makethefirstmove campaign, we're encouraging everyone to spend just a few minutes saying hello. Often people who feel lonely don't have the confidence to say how they feel or even approach other people.

***"Those little spontaneous interactions really can lift someone's day."
Oddfellows, UK***

What can you do?

Lonely people don't expect you to be there for them 24/7, but you could:

- just have a quick chat about what they're up to - even a 'hello' can stop them feeling invisible.
- call to check in on them occasionally or ask them to go with you on an errand
- help them make connections by introducing them to others and to things [happening where they live](#), such as friendship groups. Staffordshire Connects lists many of the [organisations and groups](#) that are ready to help and [Oddfellows UK run social groups across the UK](#).

Encourage others to #makethefirstmove too