

## **NEDDC Employee Wellbeing Update – 25 June 2020**

### **Steps we can all take to help?**

- Remember 2 metre Rita and 6 feet Pete!
- Limit contact with others as much as possible
- Wash your hands regularly



### **Today's Theme: Loneliness**

One of the feelings millions of us are experiencing during the current pandemic is loneliness. In our combined efforts to stay safe, our usual ways of seeing family, friends or just familiar faces have been put on pause. Many of us feel lonely from time to time and these short-term feelings shouldn't harm our mental health. However, the longer the pandemic goes on for, the more these feelings can become long-term. Long-term loneliness is associated with an increased risk of things including depression, anxiety and increased stress. The impact of long-term loneliness on mental health can be very hard to manage.

The government is telling us to stay two metre away from other people and wash our hands as soon as we get home. That means we need to adapt how we connect with people and find new ways to stay in touch during this time. Now, more than ever, is the time to keep up those strong social networks that act like a buffer against poor mental health.

Staying in touch via video calls, WhatsApp or just regular phone calls, is vital. Keep up your routines where possible – for example if you play cards with your friends on a weeknight, try keeping this in the diary and playing a game on a video call instead. Or potentially join one of the many online quizzes hosted on Facebook or YouTube, playing as a team. If you're not tech savvy, regular phone calls, messages or even writing letters are lovely ways to show someone that you're thinking of them.

If you're feeling lonely try calling a friend, family member, health professional or counsellor to talk about your feelings. You could also contact [Samaritans on 116 123](https://www.samaritans.org) or email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) if you need someone to talk to. Join an online group or class, that could be anything from an online exercise class, book club etc. Consider going for short walks in public places (while keeping a two metre distance). This is a challenging and sometimes lonely time, but it will pass. There will be lots of hugs, shared pots of tea, parties and celebrations in the future. For now, let's be as kind as possible to ourselves and others.

Also if you suspect someone may be lonely or struggling then reach out to them, a simple message or phone call can have a massive impact on someone's mood and wellbeing.

### **More Information:**

- How to look after your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak - <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus>
- What you can do if you feel lonely during the pandemic - <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coping-loneliness-during-coronavirus-outbreak/>

### **More Information on Health & Wellbeing?**

Please contact your manager or the HR Team on ext. 7677 and guidance is available in the Coronavirus Toolkit on the Extranet pages or S Drive HR & Payroll public folder.