

ACTIVITY 2

Connecting through circles

This activity encourages students to explore the different ways we feel connected, or disconnected, and consider how we can make new connections.

NB: Be particularly aware of care-experienced students, adopted students and those in kinship care during this activity, and students who may have limited contact with parents or other family members.

- Seat the class or group in a circle. Do a simple warm up game around the circle, such as passing an object around whilst saying their favourite food.
- Set the ground rules (including confidentiality and the right to 'pass'). Outline that the theme of the circle is 'Let's Connect'.
- Go around the circle (using the object) and invite each student to say when they feel most connected to others. E.g. "I feel most connected to others when..."
- As a class, talk about loneliness. You may want to discuss the definition provided by the Mental Health Foundation. Loneliness can be defined as the state of distress or discomfort that results when we perceive a gap between our desires for social connection and actual experiences of it.
 - Who in society do they think may experience loneliness? Old people or students? Those who identify as heterosexual or those who identify as LGBTQ+? Those with with disabilities - including hidden disabilities - or those without? The take home message is that anyone can feel disconnected and lonely, but some groups may be particularly at risk due to discrimination and oppression.
 - Research from the Mental Health Foundation has shown that, even pre-pandemic, younger people were more likely than older people to report feeling lonely ([read more here](#) )
- Go around the circle and invite each student to say when they feel disconnected from others. E.g. "I feel disconnected from others when..."
- As a group, can they generate ideas for how to feel more connected to others? Can they think of ways to connect with those who feel disconnected or alone?
- Invite the students to generate some practical tips and advice for other students who may feel disconnected. Can this be turned into a poster?
- Where can this advice be displayed? (e.g. display board, school website). Who can students turn to when they feel disconnected in school (e.g. mentors, form tutors, counsellor etc). Consider highlighting helplines /text services such as Shout or Kooth.



This activity is designed for 11-14 year-olds, but could be used with other age groups too. To extend the content, refer to our other activity ideas.