

TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION GUIDE WAYS TO COPE

Discuss these concepts with the class:

If a person feels lonely a lot, he/she needs to ask themselves these questions:

1. **Do I belong with the group I want to join?**
Try to remember that few people are always left out, just as few are always picked. If you feel "on the fringe" all of the time, and left out most of the time, it may be time to look to a new group of friends. Forcing your way into a group may leave you feeling "in", but not accepted.
2. **Do I make the first move to be friendly or pay attention to others?**
Wishing that others would pay attention to you does not solve the problem of feeling alone. It may be easy for some to blame others for your loneliness and feel resentful for your isolation. A better attitude would be to take action and do something positive to replace those lonely feelings.
3. **Do I miss opportunities for friendship?**
Sometimes lonely persons search for friendship with blinders on. They don't seek anyone who isn't just the right age, sex, color, or social class. They may be so exclusive in demands that chances for friendships may be lost.
4. **Do I invest in others?**
A well-known cure for loneliness is to offer companionship to others. Get involved in a project for someone else's benefit. Of course, it isn't easy to spend time and energy for others when you are the lonely one. From your viewpoint, others should show concern for you. Yet when people who feel alone reach out to others who are even more lonely--the aged, shut ins, children in hospitals, etc.--they usually feel very good about it. Sometimes close ties and friendships follow.
5. **Do I build resources in myself?**
Crafts and hobbies can play an important part in life. Such activities are not limited to either sex or age. Taking up a new sport, developing reading or computer skills, learning a new hobby, or joining a group are just a few ideas.

The answers to all of these questions lead to ways to initiate friendships. If they are explored, examined, and applied, friendships should prevail!