

Talking about loneliness and exploring ways to improve young people's social networks and resilience.

Background

Rise is a project facilitated by Make Some Noise consisting of young people aged 9 – 15 working creatively to help create social action to address the issue of loneliness within their peer group.

Participants from the Cooperative Academy in Stoke-on-Trent have written songs and have scripted and storyboarded three short films that can be used to aid discussion around this issue, each film covers a different theme:

Bubble – explores feeling of isolation and being separate from others, empathy and shared experiences

Grow – explores the experience of moving / transitioning from primary school, the feelings connected to this change and reflects the positive experiences of the Rise group.

Start – encourages reaching out to others, building connection with others and saying hello i.e. resilience building / coping skills during transition

Overall aims of the project

1. To engage students in a discussion around loneliness and to reduce the stigma around the experience of loneliness and isolation connected with transition.
2. To encourage students to identify their positive qualities and what would make them a 'good friend.'
3. To raise awareness of the factors that can help increase resilience to loneliness.
4. To encourage students to develop an action plan to build on their existing social support networks.

Format of the session

The session is based around watching the films and then discussing the content in the class. There is also an action plan for each student to complete at the end of the session where they will make a commitment to reach out to someone else.

Included in this pack are helpful questions to aid discussion. This has also been provided in a booklet format to give the students time to reflect on their individual answers before talking through the responses as a group.

We are mindful that the issues raised in the session may be difficult for some of the students in your group and would ask you to offer support to those students who



may be struggling. The back page of the action plan includes information for support services for young people that are confidential and free to contact.

All the Films and Resources are available at

www.make-some-noise.com/rise

Session overview: Rise: Young People and Loneliness, Connection and Resilience- Suggested Activity and Lesson Plan to Accompany the Films

<p>Aims: Reducing the stigma associated loneliness.</p> <p>Explore the difference between being lonely and spending time on your own.</p> <p>Examine what makes a good quality friendship.</p> <p>Explore what fears students have about moving to high school.</p> <p>Students make a commitment to reach out and connect with others.</p> <p>Raised awareness of the support available for students who may be experiencing difficulties.</p>	<p>Objectives: Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Be able to appreciate the proportion of children who reported experiencing feelings of loneliness in the ONS survey 2018 and to understand that it very common to have these feelings some of the time. b) Be able to describe how they would notice if someone was feeling lonely and describe what that person might be feeling and thinking. c) Understand the connection between loneliness and a lack of connection with others and a sense of belonging. d) List some advantages of spending time on your own. e) List the fears that they may have / have had about moving to a new school. f) As a group, generate a list of options to help overcome these fears. g) Describe their experiences of meeting new people and how they got to know them. h) List the qualities that would make them a good friend and create an overall definition of a quality friendship as a group. i) Share their ideas on how they could make connections with others. j) Be able to list at least two support options to use if they need them or pass on to others who may need help.
<p>Participants: max 30</p>	<p>Outputs: Group summaries of what characterises loneliness, the benefits of some time alone, what makes a quality friendship, fears around changing schools and plans to overcome these fears. Individual work completed on: What makes me a good friend, a friendship I have made and how I will connect with others.</p>

Classroom Layout: Any practical layout that will allow students to view the animations, write up their action plans and take part in discussions.

Resources Required:

Audio – Visual equipment capable of connecting to and playing You Tube audio and video or playing saved video files downloaded from the link provided by Make Some Noise.

Printed copies of the Individual Action Plan Worksheet (ensure they are 2 sided to include the help and support info)

Printed copy of the discussion questions worksheet or enough for the class if you intend to use individual reflection time.

Time	Objective	Activity	Resources Required	Outcome/s Output/s
1 min	a)	<p><u>Introduction to the session today.</u></p> <p>Explain that today is about based on some films and music written by young people about their experiences of loneliness and changing schools. Today we are going to watch the films and explore these issues and look at things that can help if you are feeling lonely, isolated or worried about how things will work out at the new school.</p>		
3 mins	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p>	<p><u>Film – Bubble</u> Show the Class the Film.</p> <p>Ask the class Have you ever felt lonely at any time? Note: students don't need to identify themselves to the group, just to reflect on if they have experienced this. Explain – This is very common and doesn't mean that there is something wrong – we will be talking later about what you can do if you are feeling like this.</p>	<p>Film Bubble (2mins) www.make-some-noise.com/rise</p> <p>TN 1 – Bubble Transcript</p>	<p>Communication that feelings of loneliness are a common experience for some young people.</p> <p>Note – Lack of contact with others and recent lockdown experience has been likely to have increased young people's experience of loneliness and prevented much of the normal interactions that they would have had at school.</p>

Time	Objective	Activity	Resources Required	Outcome/s Output/s
10 mins	c)	<p><u>How can you notice if someone is feeling lonely?</u></p> <p>Ask the class and record responses on a flip chart:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do people feel lonely? • When do people feel lonely? • What kind of thoughts can people have when they feel lonely? • What kind of feelings can people experience when they feel lonely? <p>Explain that: It is possible for someone to feel lonely at any time of the day, even when they are surrounded by people if they do not feel a sense of belonging or connection to those around them.</p>	Flip chart and pens to record responses	Recognition that a lack of belonging and connection being a key part in the experience of loneliness.
3 mins	d)	<p><u>Time on your own</u></p> <p>Ask the group</p> <p>Think of a time when it's been good to be on your own...</p> <p>Why it was helpful to be alone – flipchart responses</p> <p>Explain that: Being on your own doesn't mean you are lonely, sometimes it's a useful and helpful experience.</p>	Flipchart and pens to record responses	Clarification of being on your own versus being lonely.

Time	Objective	Activity	Resources Required	Outcome/s Output/s
5 mins	e)	<p><u>Change and Loneliness</u></p> <p>Explain that big changes in life can increase someone’s experience of loneliness and that changing schools for most young people will be one of the biggest changes they have experienced.</p> <p>Ask the group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What fears do you have about moving to high school? (Flipchart the responses) 	<p>Flipchart and pens</p> <p>Note: Leave room against each fear to write the responses from the forthcoming exercise.</p>	<p>Feeling anxious at a time of change is completely normal, students may have lots of fears about the unknown and it’s important to acknowledge them.</p>
2 mins	f)	<p>Film - Grow</p> <p>Explain that the following film was written by Year 7 students inspired by their experience of moving to high school.</p> <p>Show the Film</p>	<p>Film Grow (2mins) www.make-some-noise.com/rise</p> <p>TN 2 – Grow Transcript</p>	
5 mins	g)	<p>What can help with your concerns</p> <p>Ask the group to look at the concerns raised and what they might be able to do about them or tell themselves about it. Add suggestions if they are unable to think of any e.g.:</p> <p>Getting lost – ask a teacher Being bullied – talk to a trusted adult, it will get sorted out.</p>		<p>Some fears can be easily addressed, others such as losing friendships and feeling out of place will take more work.</p>

Time	Objective	Activity	Resources Required	Outcome/s Output/s
1 min	g)	<p>Building Friendships</p> <p>Ask the group</p> <p>Take a moment to think about a time when they met someone and became friends.</p> <p>Ask them to try to remember:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did they meet? • What helped them to become friends? • What helped them to remain friends? <p>No requirement to share this, just to have a think about it.</p>	None	
5 mins	h)	<p>What makes me a good friend</p> <p>Ask group members to complete the worksheet making a list of the qualities and skills that they have that make them a good friend.</p>	Handout 1 – what makes me a good friend. (In the booklet)	
3 mins	h)	<p>What makes a quality friendship?</p> <p>Ask the group to share some of their ideas about what makes them a good friend so that the class can define all the qualities that might make someone a good friend.</p> <p>Collect the responses on a Flipchart.</p>	Flipchart and pens	

Time	Objective	Activity	Resources Required	Outcome/s Output/s
2 mins	i)	<p>Film – Start</p> <p>Explain that this is the final film written by the Rise group and is about the importance of reaching out to others</p>	<p>Film Grow (2mins) www.make-some-noise.com/rise</p> <p>TN 3 – Start Transcript</p>	
2 mins	i)	<p>Making Connections</p> <p>Ask students to consider the following information:</p> <p>Some friendships are quality ones with all the things that they listed in in the what makes a good friendship exercise.</p> <p>Other friendships will be more casual and not so deep.</p> <p>These casual friendships all could potentially develop into quality friendships as you get to know and trust one another.</p> <p>Both good friends and casual friends are important in order to feel connected and have a sense of belonging.</p> <p>A simple smile or hello can make a big difference to someone’s day including your own.</p>		

Time	Objective	Activity	Resources Required	Outcome/s Output/s
10mins	i)	<p><u>Making connections</u></p> <p>Ask students to share their ideas on how to make connections with others and to feel part of something:</p> <p>Consider the following headings to structure the conversation: Where / when are the opportunities to do this? (Are there clubs / events where people who share common interests go) What will / can they do?</p>	Flipchart	
5 mins	i) j)	<p><u>Summary and follow up exercise</u></p> <p>Explain Today's lesson has looked at some difficult subjects and some people might have found it harder than others. Try to remember: Everyone has qualities that can make them a good friend to someone else. It's common for young people to feel lonely, you can help each other to get through it. Going to high school is a big change, but also an opportunity to make new friendships and develop new interests. If you know someone is having a tough time – reach out to them.</p>	Handout 3 – Making Connections (In the booklet)	

Time	Objective	Activity	Resources Required	Outcome/s Output/s
		<p><u>Summary and follow up exercise (cont.)</u></p> <p><u>Follow up Exercise</u></p> <p>Explain:</p> <p>You will be giving a piece of homework to help everyone think about how they can make their own connections and maintain a sense of belonging. The back page of the homework sheet contains information about support services for young people. If you know somebody who is struggling pass on the information, or it may be a service you want to access yourself.</p>		