

Mental Health Awareness Week 2022

As we come to grips with the pandemic and begin to shift to a way of living with COVID19, we will continue to better understand just how much this public health crisis has affected us, be it physically, mentally, and socially. For nearly all of us, COVID19 fragmented our lives, and left many of us feeling disconnected from the people and things we love. In fact, COVID19 left many people feeling lonely and socially isolated. Loneliness is a subjective state, a feeling where individuals are unhappy that their social needs are not met by the qualities and quantities of their social interactions. Loneliness can last a brief period and be specific to a particular situation, or it can last a very long time. Social isolation is an objective state, one where people lack any interaction with other individuals or communities. Both loneliness and social isolation are associated with mental health symptoms and disorders. Today, within the UK, a major policy priority for the [Department of Health and Social Care](#), is to address loneliness. In fact, mental health awareness week this year is dedicated to addressing [loneliness](#).

Sport and exercise can be wonderful vehicles for promoting all sorts of aspects of health, especially the way that people come together socially. Sport and exercise can be used to create welcoming and inclusive spaces, ones that also help people celebrate diversity. During the pandemic, I became curious as to how people learned about, understood, and addressed their own loneliness and isolation. Below are a couple of resources that you may find useful, should you wish to explore these topics further.

[Commentary – social isolation and loneliness in elite athletes during a pandemic](#)

[Loneliness in sexual minority and heterosexual individuals: a comparative meta-analysis](#)

Other resources, those available through the [Campaign to End Loneliness](#), are also very helpful.

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