

# EDUCATIONAL SCENARIO

## 1. Identification of the educational scenario

### 1.1 Title of the scenario

**“You are not alone”**

### 1.2 Creator

Name, Surname: **Andreia Monteiro & Rita Sousa**  
e-mail: [andreia.monteiro@mentortec.eu](mailto:andreia.monteiro@mentortec.eu) & [rita.sousa@mentortec.eu](mailto:rita.sousa@mentortec.eu)  
Website/ blog: [www.mentortec.eu](http://www.mentortec.eu)  
School/organisation: **Mentortec**

### 1.3 Topics or courses involved

Mental health; Teenager loneliness; social isolation; Citizenship Education.

### 1.4 Educational level

**Primary**

**Secondary** **X** (lower secondary education) 14-15 years old

**Second chance school**

**Reception class**

**Other**

### 1.5 Learning outcomes of the scenario

At the end of the scenario, students are expected to have acquired the skills that will enable them to:

- Be aware of key-concepts and signs related to loneliness and social isolation;
- Know how to proceed when experience or witness cases of loneliness or social isolation;
- Think critically about the impact of loneliness and social isolation in people's life;
- Improve their awareness of others' needs.

### 1.6 Time-duration

**Class time:** 3,5 hours

**Outdoor preparation:** 30 minutes

**How many hours to be used in total:** 4 hours

## 2. Development of the educational scenario

### 2.1 General description

#### 1. Warm-up

**1a.** Challenge students to think and discuss “loneliness”/“social isolation”, based on a theatrical game:

*Group sits in a circle of chairs. Leader/teacher goes around the circle, and gives each student the name of a fruit - ‘Apple’, Orange, Banana’; ‘Apple, Orange, Banana’ etc. When the leader calls the name of the fruit eg Apple – all those students with the name of ‘Apple’ come into the middle of the circle. The leader then gives abstract words to make “fear”, “loneliness”, “social isolation”, “dependency”, “sadness”, “depression”, etc. The students have five seconds to make a physical representation using their bodies. They then sit down, and the leader calls out another fruit, and another representation, and another group of students get up to complete the challenge.*

After the exercise, a discussion in a large group is important to introduce and clarify the concepts of “loneliness” and “social isolation” (**Worksheet 1**). Questions such as: “What you understand by “loneliness” /“social isolation”?” and “Do you consider “loneliness” /“social isolation” a problem? Why?” can be launch by the facilitator. (20 minutes)

#### 2. Discussion to explore

**2a.** Introduce part of the text “Social isolation and its effects among teenagers” to students. (**Worksheet 2**). (10 minutes)

#### **2b. Brainstorm activity:**

Challenge students to think and share some ideas and their perspective about the text, following a set of questions (**Worksheet 2**). (15 minutes)

#### **Tips for the teacher:**

- Is important to promote the participation of different students during the exploring activity, namely when an explanation is requested.
- The most important aspect of this activity is to challenge students to think about feelings, there are no correct and wrong answers.

#### **BINARY OPPOSITIONS to be explored**

1. Should we ask for help when having negative feelings/emotions even considering that is common to have negative feelings/emotions in adolescence?
2. Should we talk to someone else when we know a colleague that is lonely/socially isolated even if the colleague doesn’t want us to do it? Should we respect his/her right to privacy even if we consider that the colleague needs support?

**Binary opposition 1:** Should we ask for help when having negative feelings/emotions even considering that is common to have negative feelings/emotions in adolescence?

### 3. Using Theatre techniques

#### 3a. Discussion

- Divide the class into two groups.
- Each group will discuss the binary opposition, based on key-questions previously prepared, however, teachers can adapt, add or change it. (**Worksheet 3**). The teacher will introduce some reasons that can justify the fact of teenagers do not ask for help. In the **worksheet 3** are identified some possible reasons that teachers can use as support. (15 minutes)

#### 3b. Using theatre techniques

- Based on the real story of the worksheet 2, each group will prepare a monologue, using the documentary theatre technique, showing the behaviour, feelings and posture of the character and, how she could proceed to ask for help (15 minutes).
- Each group will represent the monologue to the large group. The elements of other groups will be challenged to discuss the monologue (15 minutes).

#### 3c. Debriefing

- During the activity students are likely to feel strong emotions. It is important to have frequent debrief sessions and make sure that participants' feelings are not repressed. It is important to start the debriefing by allowing people to describe what they feel or think. The teacher can let them speak freely or can guide them asking some questions, namely: (15 minutes)
  1. Think about the monologue that you prepared:
    - a. what did you feel in your role?
  2. Imagine that you would witness a situation of loneliness/social isolation:
    - a. do you know what you could do?
    - b. would you tell it to someone?

### 4. Dialectical Discussion to reveal meaning

#### 4a. Dialectical discussion to explore

- The teacher guides a discussion based on questions fostering the development of critical thinking skills (**Worksheet 4**). (10 minutes)

#### 4b. Personalization

- The teacher tries to make the whole topic and discussion personal to mobilize students more (**Worksheet 5**). (5 minutes)

**Binary opposition 2: Should we talk to someone else when we know a colleague that is lonely/socially isolated even if the colleague doesn't want us to do it? Should we respect his/her right to privacy even if we consider that the colleague needs support?**

### 3. Using Theatre techniques

#### 3a. Discussion

- Divide the class into small groups of 3 or 4 elements.

- Each group will discuss the binary opposition, based on key-questions previously prepared, however, teachers can adapt, add or change it. (**Worksheet 6**). The teacher will introduce the reasons and context in which teenagers should ask for help. In the **worksheet 6** are identified some possible reasons that teachers can use as support. (15 minutes)

### 3b. Using theatre techniques

- Each group will prepare a scene based on improvisation (participatory theatre technique), defining roles and dialogues. It is expected that the group create and prepare a situation in which they are trying to convince a colleague to talk with an adult or professional. (15 minutes)
- Each group will represent the scene to the large group. The elements of other groups will be challenged to discuss the scene, mentioning what worked and what should be improved. (15 minutes)

### 3c. Debriefing

- During the activity students are likely to feel strong emotions. It is important to have frequent debrief sessions and make sure that participants' feelings are not repressed. It is important to start the debriefing by allowing people to describe what they feel or think. The teacher can let them speak freely or can guide them asking some questions, namely: (15 minutes)
  1. Think about the scene that you prepared:
    - a. what did you feel in your role?
  2. Imagine that you would witness a situation of loneliness/social isolation:
    - a. do you know what you could do?
    - b. would you tell it to someone?

## 4. Dialectical Discussion to reveal meaning

### 4a. Dialectical discussion to explore

- The teacher guides a discussion based on questions fostering the development of critical thinking skills (**Worksheet 7**). (10 minutes)

### 4b. Personalization

- The teacher tries to make the whole topic and discussion personal to mobilize students more (**Worksheet 8**). (5 minutes)

## 5. Action Plan

- The teacher can create an action plan with the students to define how they can deal with this problem.

## Conclusions

- To closure the topic is important to discuss:
  - a) Recall the conclusions of the full activity;
  - b) About what students can do in the case they are living or witnessing someone living loneliness or social isolation, identifying persons or organisations that can support them. (10 minutes)

## 2.2 Worksheets & Resources

- Worksheet 1: Definition of “loneliness” and “social isolation”
- Worksheet 2: Text “Social isolation and its effects among teenagers”
- Worksheet 3: Questions to explore in small groups
- Worksheet 4: Questions for Dialectical Discussion
- Worksheet 5: Questions for Personalisation
- Worksheet 6: Questions to explore in small groups
- Worksheet 7: Questions for Dialectical Discussion
- Worksheet 8: Questions for Personalisation

## 2.3 Infrastructure & Materials needed

- Board
- Paper and pen

## 2.4 Versions-adaptations

## 2.5 Challenges

- In this scenario “loneliness” and “social isolation” are approached as mental health topic. In the scenario, the teachers will have access to some additional information related to it.
- Some students may not want to participate due to personal experiences that can be related to the topic. The teacher needs to be aware of and prepared to deal with this situation.
- The lack of knowledge of teachers related to theatre techniques.

## 2.6. Further reading

- Tavengwa, J. (2017). *Social isolation and its effects among teenagers*. Article available [here](#)
- Kidshelpline – Anytime, Any Reason. Available [here](#).

## 3. Evaluation of the educational scenario

- **Evaluation** - At the end of the scenario, through a focus group, teacher will ask students to write down about:
  - a) what they felt about the activity
  - b) the challenges of the activity
  - c) what they learn with the activity
- **Lessons learned – conclusions**



## Worksheet 1

### Definition of “loneliness” and “social isolation”

“Loneliness” differs from “social isolation” and it is important to distinguish them.

“Loneliness is a feeling that everybody feels in different moments of their lives. A person is lonely when feels that no other person is with or fully understand him/her. This means that he/she can be in a room full of people and still feel lonely. Loneliness can be a complex and painful feeling - it’s more than just feeling sad. It can bring up other strong feelings inside us that are sometimes hard to deal with. Loneliness will usually pass on its own. However, feeling lonely all the time could be a sign that you need extra support.”

Definition of “loneliness” adapted from Kidshelpline – Anytime, Any Reason. Available [here](#).

“Social isolation can be defined as a lack of meaningful contact and emotional relationships with other persons, a situation that can lead to loneliness.”

Definition of “social isolation” by the American Psychological Association, available here:

[https://www.apa.org/monitor/2019/05/ce-corner-isolation?utm\\_campaign=coschedule&utm\\_source=facebook\\_page&utm\\_medium=Society%20for%20the%20Advancement%20of%20Psychotherapy](https://www.apa.org/monitor/2019/05/ce-corner-isolation?utm_campaign=coschedule&utm_source=facebook_page&utm_medium=Society%20for%20the%20Advancement%20of%20Psychotherapy)

## Worksheet 2

### Text “Social isolation and its effects among teenagers”<sup>1</sup>

2a. Introduce the first part of the text “Social isolation and its effects among teenagers” to students:

#### Social isolation and its effects among teenagers

“Alex is a seventeen years old girl. However, she is socially isolated. By many standards, she is a very normal teenager but it is on the close observation that one notices an unusual trait in her. She has little to virtually nonexistent interaction with most; if not all people she encounters every day.



At school in class, she struggles to interact with others. She will not converse, fight, laugh or relate in any way. A new teacher would excuse her coldness to discipline. Alex would rather sit at the back of the class with her head down, buried in her books. Sometimes, she won't even be reading.

Her life of isolation continues, answering only when spoken to and just uttering enough words to satisfy the person who has broken her bubble of loneliness. Nobody approaches her. Her peers and friends might even describe her as a freak, a loser, and an outcast... Alex is an outsider.”

The initial part of the text “Social isolation and its effects among teenagers” by Jo Tavengwa

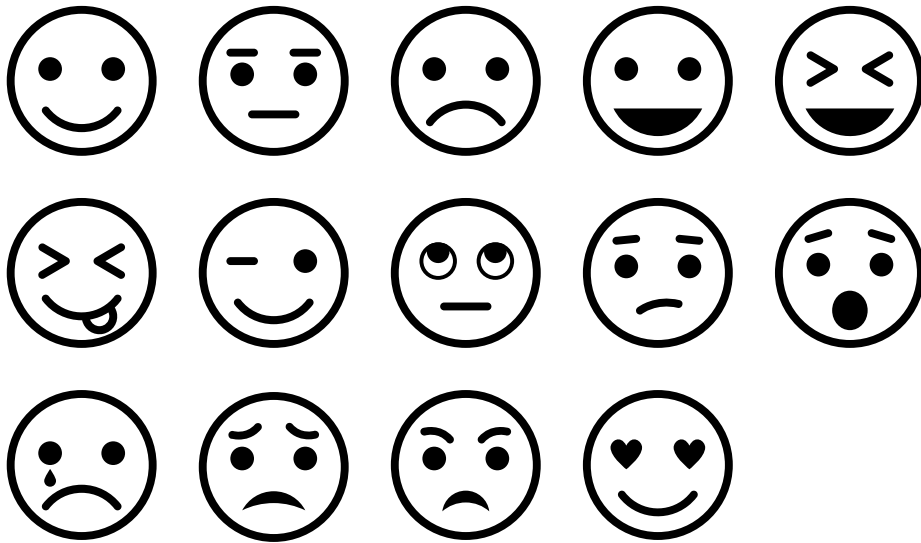
---

<sup>1</sup> Tavengwa, J. (2017). *Social isolation and its effects among teenagers*. Article available [here](#).



## 2b. Brainstorm activity

After reading the text, challenge students to answer the questions identified above, using the emojis:



1. What do you feel after reading the text?
2. In your perspective, what was Alex feeling? Why?
3. In your perspective, which is the most common feeling that a person of her age has? Why?
4. How do you usually feel?
5. How would you like to feel more often?
6. In your perspective, how your colleagues usually feel?

## Worksheet 3

### Questions to explore in small groups

**Binary opposition 1:** Should we ask for help when having negative feelings/emotions even considering that is common to have negative feelings/emotions in adolescence?

#### 3a. Discussion

1. In your perspective, when should a teenager ask for help?
2. In your opinion, who can help and support a teenager when he/she is experiencing negative feelings/emotions?
3. In your perspective why usually teenagers do not ask for help?

#### Why teens do not ask for help?

**"I want help but I can't ask!**

So, what exactly gets in the way of asking for help?

Well, here's a few important things that young people say stop them from reaching out:

- They don't really believe that talking about it, counseling or therapy will help
- They or other people see it as a sign of weakness
- They don't like to rely on others and prefer to do things themselves
- There is no one around that they feel able to talk to
- They're not sure who they can trust and if they will keep what they say confidential
- They've tried asking for help in the past but it didn't go very well and it put them off  
It's hard to know when it's ok to cope by themselves or when they really need help
- They justify their feelings or make excuses to themselves in order to avoid asking for help
- It's too expensive or they don't have the right service in their neighborhood
- They've never done it before and feel scared or worried about what might happen
- They're embarrassed or ashamed"

Source: Kidshelpline – Anytime, Any Reason. Available [here](#).

## Worksheet 4

### Questions for Dialectical Discussion

**Binary opposition 1:** Should we ask for help when having negative feelings/emotions even considering that is common to have negative feelings/emotions in adolescence?

**4a. Dialectical discussion to explore**

1. To whom teenagers can ask for help and why?
2. In your perspective what are the impact of loneliness and social isolation in teenager's life?

## Worksheet 5

### Questions for Personalisation

**Binary opposition 1:** Should we ask for help when having negative feelings/emotions even considering that is common to have negative feelings/emotions in adolescence?

#### 4b. Personalization

1. Did anyone ask you for help for having negative feelings/emotions?

1.a In case of "yes":

- a) What you did to help?
- b) Did you talk to anyone else?
- c) Did your support help him/her?

1.b In case of "no":

- a) What would you do to support a colleague/friend that asks you for help?

2. Do you know to whom you could ask for support to help a colleague/friend of yours?

## Worksheet 6

### Questions to explore in small groups

**Binary opposition 2:** Should we talk to someone else when we know a colleague that is lonely/socially isolated even if the colleague doesn't want us to do it? Should we respect his/her right to privacy even if we consider that the colleague needs support?

#### 3a. Discussion

1. What should we do when a colleague or friend is lonely/socially isolated?
2. What is more important: respect his/her privacy or look for support to him/her? Why?
3. Are you able to identify if a colleague/friend is lonely/socially isolated?
4. Do you ever think about if you are feeling lonely/socially isolated?

### When and why teenagers should ask for help?

#### How to identify symptoms of loneliness or social isolation in others and yourself?

Different people express different symptoms. However, it is possible to identify as most common behaviours the following ones:

- He/she feels upset and worry it's never going to end;
- He/she feels that nobody cares about him/her;
- He/she wants to escape the feeling;
- He/she remembers painful past experiences of feeling abandoned;
- Nothing seems fun anymore;
- He/she feels bad about himself/herself
- You're having trouble concentrating, thinking straight, or remembering things. Your grades may be plummeting because of it.
- He/she feels helpless and hopeless;
- He/she avoids being with other people or is always lonely.

#### When should we ask for help?

In a situation that you are experiencing loneliness or social isolation or in the case you know someone that is in an experience that, you should look and ask for help, whenever you think you or the other person is having trouble to deal positively with that situation and in which the symptoms mentioned above are getting more serious.

**In the case, I have a friend that is in that situation and does not want me to talk with anyone else. What should I do?**

You can talk to your colleague/friend and try to:

- Show him/her that it is normal to ask for help and that everyone does that;
- Reframe "asking for help" as a strength and not a weakness;
- "Be there" for your colleague/friend, try to give him/her attention and listen whatever he/she wants to say, without judging;

- Try not to minimise their feelings, thoughts, or situation. Show you understand that it's hard to ask for help and that you care.
- Encourage him/her to seek for an adult to speak with or for professional help when it's needed.
- Share a story with him/her in your life about a time when you needed help.

Source: Adapted from the website of the Kids Help Line [here](#).

## Worksheet 7

### Questions for Dialectical Discussion

**Binary opposition 2:** Should we talk to someone else when we know a colleague that is lonely/socially isolated even if the colleague doesn't want us to do it? Should we respect his/her right to privacy even if we consider that the colleague needs support?

#### 4a. Dialectical discussion to explore

1. Can we lose our friends if we decide to talk with an adult and professional about him/her?
2. What would we do in the case of a friend/colleague of yours talk to an adult/professional about you experiencing loneliness/social isolation?
3. In case we decide to talk with an adult or professional about the loneliness/social isolation of a friend, should we discuss/inform with him/her first?

## Worksheet 8

### Questions for Personalisation

**Binary opposition 2:** Should we talk to someone else when we know a colleague that is lonely/socially isolated even if the colleague doesn't want us to do it? Should we respect his/her right to privacy even if we consider that the colleague needs support?

#### 4b. Personalization

1. Think about the scene that you prepared, what did you feel in your role?
2. Did you ever experience loneliness/social isolation? Did you ask for help, why? Did anyone notice your feelings?
3. Did you ever notice that a friend/colleague of yours was experiencing loneliness/social inclusion?
4. In the future, do you know what to do if anything like this happens to you or to a friend/colleague of yours?