

# LET'S TALK ABOUT LONELINESS

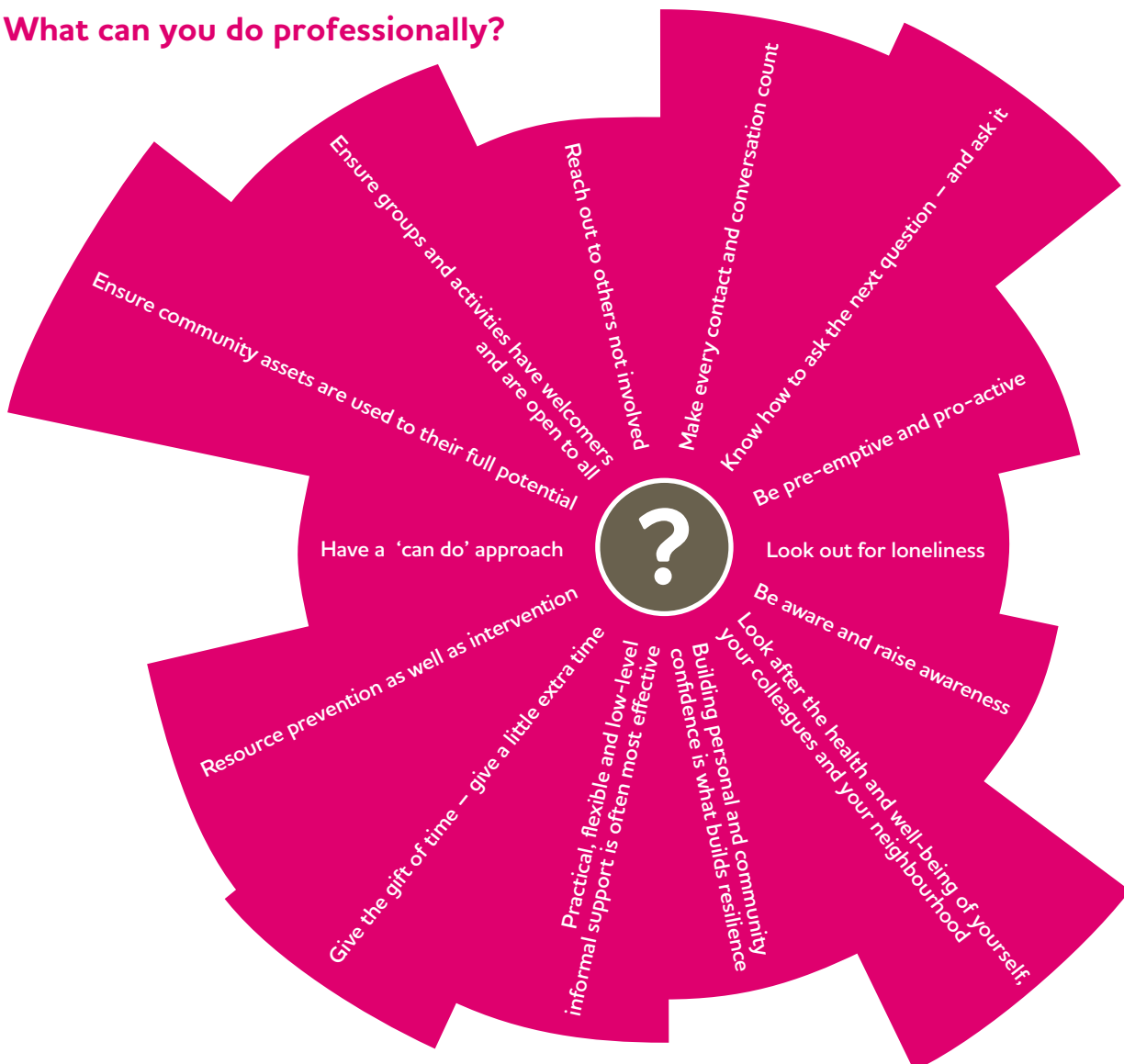
Loneliness is a mismatch of the relationships we have and those we want. It is our internal trigger, letting us know it's time to seek company as hunger lets us know it's time to eat.

Loneliness is a sign that something needs to change. Anyone can reduce loneliness – their own or that of others – where we live and where we work; in fact, wherever we are.

## Key messages:

- Loneliness kills people and communities.
- Regulation kills kindness and reduces action.
- Lonely people are vulnerable. This is a safeguarding issue.
- Building personal and community confidence builds resilience.
- The stepping stones to engagement and education need to be put back.
- There is a real contradiction between society's ideals and individual experience.
- The process is crucial to neighbourhood approaches to loneliness. You can take the ideas out of the process. You cannot take the process away from the ideas.

## What can you do professionally?



Promote self help, keep in touch with others and encourage community action

Denholme taster sessions e.g. dance, walking group, youth activities

Newsletter to establish interest in community events and activities

Dedicate an hour to Denholme, encourage volunteering

Neighbourly Campaign, call in and chat

Making the most of community facilities

Bring back the picture house – film club

Improve medical and health support, easier access to counselling/health trainers

Improve signposting for all, have a 'What's On', promote good news stories

Empowering young people, listen to what they have to say, give them a voice

Reduce social barriers – welcome and integration of new people

Improving access and more user-friendly community centre and facilities – welcoming environment

### DENHOLME

What can all of...

### CARR ESTATE

Support people with life transitions – welcome new people to area, welcome packs

Intergenerational activities, develop living history project or cookery projects

Encouraging older people to stay involved, adopt a granny/adopt a family

Gather, promote and share information, What's On guide, community-led newsletter

Clubs and activities for young people aged 5-25

Look out for young people and see their potential

Getting to know your neighbours and your community, neighbourly schemes

Peer support and self help – develop easily accessible self-help and group therapies

Skill building, courses and supporting opportunities for volunteering

Confidence and self-esteem courses

Supporting families, after-school family fun and holiday activities

Targeted support for isolated and single parents – e.g. shopping and support schemes

Open up and use existing facilities

More opportunities to get engaged – pop up café or a Big Lunch

Let's clean the streets and make them safe to walk around/walking buddies  
Integrated youth clubs/working with carers/youth workers to work in the community/streets

# What we do?

## NEW EARSWICK

- Peer support groups around bereavement, isolation, carers, young people, depression
- Red Lodge (care home) redevelopment, respite room for carers, adult park, trim trail, seating
- Befriending for all ages – community networkers
- Events and activities on The Green
- Community growing spaces, raised beds etc
- Let's look for opportunities for land-sharing large gardens/Time Bank
- Folk Hall becoming heart of community with outreach days, welcome to groups, talk table in cafe
- Make every contact count – Smile Campaign – say hello
- Raise awareness of loneliness and reduce stigma
- Intergenerational approaches that are inclusive and developmental
- Information/welcome pack & welcome wagon
- Skills exchange, LETS scheme
- Community market & hobby and craft fair to share hobbies and produce

## BRADFORD MOOR

- ESOL classes, communication, activities, a culture coffee morning
- Create environments to support people to embrace differences between each other
- Develop a phone service for those unable to get out
- More weekend activities for all members of community
- Useful courses and events so people have a reason to go out
- Do preventative work to prevent peer pressure, courses to develop confidence
- Safe places for children to go e.g. youth/homework clubs with young people as leaders
- Befriending networking services, pair people up with similar interests
- Social networking
- Provide a space or event that welcomes all cultures to share their language and lifestyle
- Job centre and employment services in community hubs/volunteering schemes to help unemployed build confidence to get into work
- Encourage/support parents to spend time with children/activities and events for fathers
- Community champions – local people who are aware of what's on & can refer people through "word of mouth"
- Skills sharing/intergenerational activities e.g. cooking classes, sharing experiences/story telling
- A hub to meet & exchange skills & play
- Develop neighbourhood care programmes, know your neighbours schemes
- Encourage/support parents to spend time with children/activities and events for fathers
- Group welcome to social drop-ins in our mosques and churches etc and open to all

## Let's get personal

*"Really, I was lonely but you don't say so, not even to yourself, let alone anyone else."*

Anyone at any age can be lonely – even busy people, even you – whether we are alone or within a group, at work or at home with family.

Loneliness, like confidence and fragility, can come and go – often taking us by surprise.

Some people seek solitude, but few choose to be lonely, primarily because it isn't good for our physical or mental health.

Loneliness is a real health issue. There are links with early death. The risk factor is similar to smoking and worse than obesity. It is also

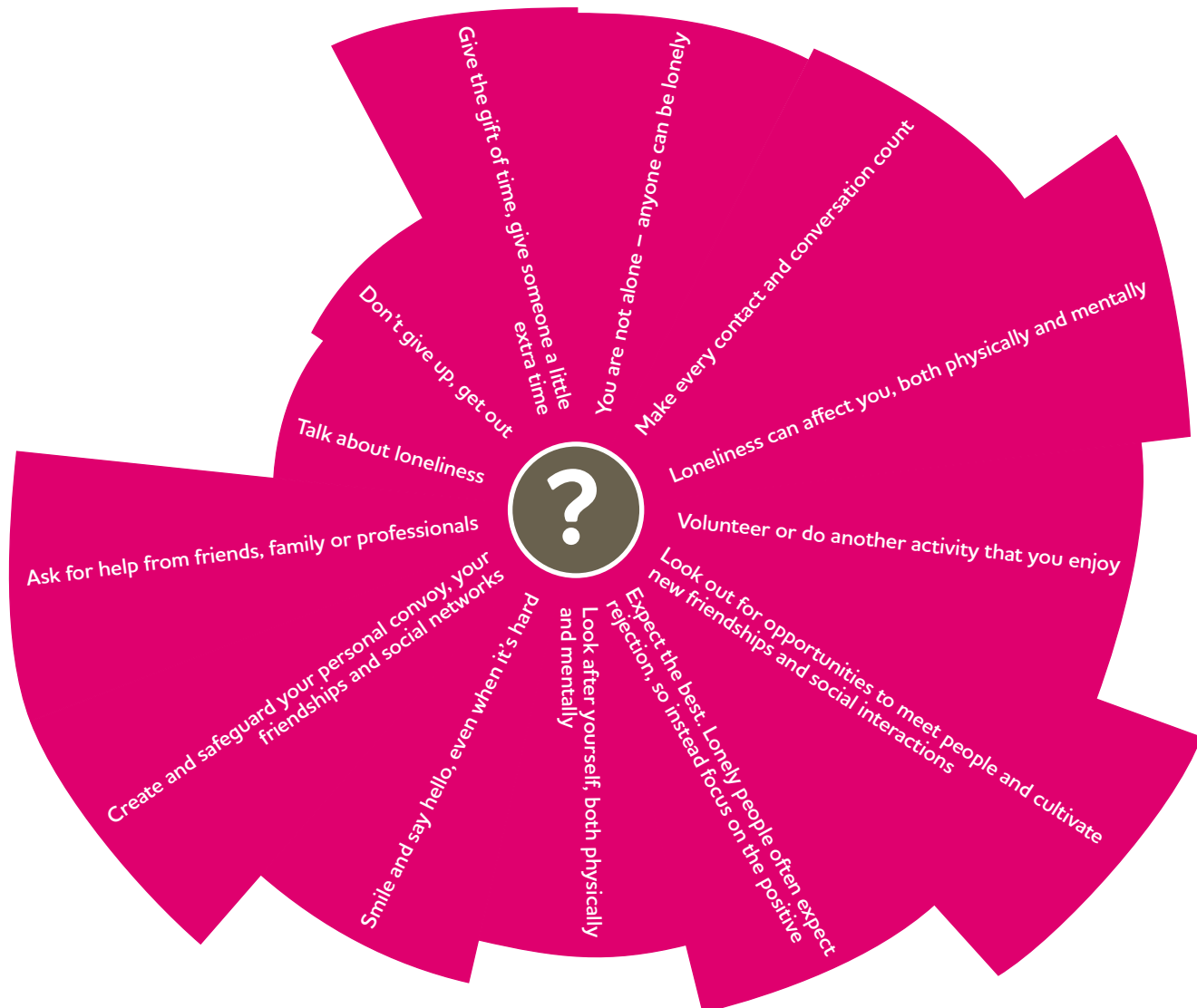
associated with poor mental health and, more surprisingly, with conditions such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension and dementia.

*"I can honestly say I have never felt so lonely as I did when I embarked on this research. Reassessing my life and times of transition and loss, I recognised – for the first time – the many times I had felt lonely, which included starting my new job.*

*"It is true that when you see it, you really do see it everywhere. It has changed my life. Although I have always been a people person, I used to 'switch off' when I had finished work, but now I smile, talk and spare the time for anyone, even when I don't feel like it. It matters. It changes how I feel and it makes a difference. I can see it in their faces."*

Tracey Robbins, Programme Manager

## What can you do about it personally?



We have learned a great deal over the past three years and look forward to sharing this with you and hearing your views. To find out more about Neighbourhood approaches to loneliness, visit <http://www.jrf.org.uk/work/workarea/neighbourhood-approaches-loneliness> or contact Tracey Robbins on 07580 071818, email [Tracey.Robbins@jrf.org.uk](mailto:Tracey.Robbins@jrf.org.uk), Twitter @TraceyJRobbins