

## **Loneliness in later life and how to combat it.**

Loneliness in later life is fast becoming a major scourge of our generation

Causes can be as simple as a divorce, bereavement, retirement, family moving away or through disability or illness. Whatever the cause this situation can easily lead to feelings of isolation, depression and a decline in physical health and wellbeing.

According to Age UK, *“more than 2 million people in England over the age of 75 live alone, and more than a million older people say they go for over a month without speaking to a friend, neighbour or family member.”* That is a sad indictment of our society today.

Particularly in the over 50's there is a stigma surrounding loneliness and people tend not to ask for help because they have too much pride, compounding the issue.

There are many ways the NHS recommends to help combat loneliness.

- Invite friends, family and neighbours for tea. It need not cost a fortune to host and everyone loves an invitation.
- Keep in touch by phone. Having a chat with a friend or relative is the next best thing to meeting up.
- If your family lives at a distance, talk to them about setting up Skype, Facetime or a similar web chat system. It can help to keep in touch.
- Plan ahead activities such as a walk in the park, a coffee shop visit, library, cinema or museum visits. Put it all in your diary.
- Smile, even if it feels hard to, and grab any chance to start a conversation. If you are not sure what to say, try asking people about themselves.
- Volunteer or join the University of the Third Age (U3A).

### **Part time employment**

Many lonely people look to find meaningful part time employment, and of course that is not easy in today's world of fast food, fast cars, fast computers and lack of compassion in the business world.

Fortunately there are companies around with a more kind-hearted nature that seek and even prefer to employ life experienced seniors who have a compassionate, caring manner, offering flexible well paid employment to suit each individuals' lifestyle. One example is Seniors Helping Seniors<sup>®</sup>, a company built on compassion with over 300 family owned independent businesses across the world all working to a proven formula and system.

The company was founded by Kiran Yocom in the USA in 1998, following 15 years working with Mother Theresa. Brought to Kent in 2013 by Christian & Sally Wilse, Seniors Helping Seniors is fast expanding across the South East of England. Locally Barbara & Keith Reddy own and operate the branch covering Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & West Malling and the surrounding area.

Keith believes it offers a very unique opportunity to help combat loneliness in the over 50's, with able seniors providing companionship and non-medical, non-personal care to other local less able seniors. As the company strapline says *“it's like getting a little help from your friends<sup>®</sup>”*.

If you are lonely, but compassionate, caring, empathetic and would genuinely like to help others, give Barbara or Keith a call for an informal chat on 01732 495665.