

### WHILST WE MAY BE SEEING MORE OF OUR PARTNERS AND CHILDREN THAN EVER BEFORE WE ARE HEARING THAT THERE IS LOTS OF LONELINESS OUT THERE.

Physically, we might be surrounded by our family but at some level there is another type of loneliness which is about real connection. Exposure to social media and how it portrays 'perfect' lives can enhance this feeling of isolation even more and if we add in the effects of continued restrictions and COVID related issues some people are feeling less connected than ever before.

Some of us might be craving some time out for ourselves and some freedom to do what we would like to be able to do to recharge but being a new parent and getting space almost seems impossible. It seems that there is a real need for true connection with our loved ones whilst a need or yearning for some space! Some of us have been getting caught up with social media at bedtimes or throughout the day and this can lead us to wake up feeling overwhelmed or constantly worried about COVID and what lies ahead.

For some couples, there has been an increased understanding of each other's lives and if there has been open, honest and sensitive communication, then maybe they are weathering this year of constant change and adaptation ok. For others, and we suspect most of our new parents, it has been tough.

Whilst under stress it is difficult to always be sensitive to our partners needs and communicate effectively. Whilst the pace of life has settled a bit, the extra stresses due to COVID have placed enormous stress on new families. Irritations and a new focus on the details or habits of our partners might be more obvious than ever before. Maybe you have noticed your partner half listening as they juggle life's demands or be physically present but emotionally absent.

We have all faced a huge amount of loss this year and the grief that accompanies that is hard to hold inside. Sometimes it is easier to turn to our phones and block out everything else than attend to these feelings of grief and loneliness.

We know that being in a crisis exacerbates existing tensions in our relationships and in society in general. It is important to remember that you are not alone in this although it might feel like it. In fact, for the first time in most of our lives we are more connected than ever; all experiencing the same issues.

### Feelings of loneliness are very real right now but here are some ideas to try:

- Acknowledge your feelings and accept them for what they are
- Reach out to others, stay connected and it might alleviate some of those feelings of isolation
- Reach out to those who you feel will really listen and connect with trusted sources
- Pay attention to your own feelings and work out the best way to deal with those safely
- Work out ways with your partner/friends/family as to how to reconnect in a more meaningful way
- Suggest some different ideas for activities together with friends, virtually if restricted
- Take time out for yourself to reconnect with self and nature
- Reassure yourself that this too will pass

Please reach out to Gidget Foundation Australia if we can help. 🌸