

Spark



Igniting human connection

Ignited by



University of
South Australia

Spark evolved from The Loneliness Project,
a community co-design collaboration between



University of
South Australia

Supported by project partners



How might we create new solutions to address loneliness?

Co-design with community

- Online Surveys
- Face to face interviews
- Co-design Workshops
- Program design sessions



Did you know that
one in three Australians
feel lonely?
We'd love you to be part
of finding solutions!

Start the conversation
tinyurl.com/TheLonelinessProject



“As groups of people we can make a difference....where we can share ideas, talk, listen, move forward and make a difference. You can't always do it alone and the more hands-on deck the better.” - Co-design Participant

Community-led initiatives

Spark conversation

Weekly groups to spark meaningful conversation and connection



Karkoo Nursery Oakbank
Every Tuesday 10.30am-12.00pm
18 Oakwood Road Oakbank

The Britannia
Every Wednesday 10.00am-12.00pm
14 Princes Highway Kanmantoo

Miss Perez
Every Thursday 5.30pm-7.00pm
2 Druid Avenue Stirling

In collaboration with   

www.sparkconnection.org.au

An 8 week series to...

Nurture yourself & ignite meaningful connection with others



Spark self connection

Join experienced practitioners Lia Parsons and Elja Parsons who will empower you to spark connection through exploring meaningful conversations, expressive art techniques and self reflection.

Saturdays 2pm-4.30pm
22nd February-12th April
Forest House Millers Corner, Mount Barker

\$80 per person for 8 sessions
Or \$40 for concession holders
<https://tinyurl.com/sparkselfconnection>

Book here! 

In collaboration with   

www.sparkconnection.org.au

Spark social

Monthly walks to spark joy and connection!



Mylor Conservation Park Walk
9.00am Sunday 2nd November

Spark some Spring joy and join our November nature walk led by friendly Sparkies Eilidh and Hayley! Meeting in Mylor, we'll loop through the beautiful Mylor Conservation Park. A wonderful opportunity to connect with nature, with each other and nourish yourself.

- Meet at 9am in front of Verte Kitchen in Mylor
- The walk will be approx 1.5 hours followed by a coffee and chat if you'd like to stay
- No need to book, it's free, just turn up!
- Any questions? Connect with Hayley 8339 4400 or hayley@sparkconnection.org.au

Everyone is welcome!

In collaboration with 

www.sparkconnection.org.au



Community-led initiatives

Spark social

Monthly creativity to spark joy and connection



My Personal Tree Workshop
Growing from within
Sunday 29th June 1pm-3pm
Woorabinda Environment Centre, Stirling

Join Sparkies Niki and Jo to explore personal strengths, dreams, and reflections through creating an individual tree artwork.

Niki Bonfield is a qualified counsellor and art therapist who will lead you through this workshop to connect with self, and then share together and celebrate the group's collective journey.

No need to book, just turn up, it's free!
Woorabinda Environment Centre
8 Woorabinda Drive, Stirling
Connect with Hayley for any queries
hayley@thehut.org.au or 8339 4400

Everyone is welcome!

www.sparkconnection.org.au

In collaboration with 

Spark mateship

A group for men to drop in for good company & real conversation.



Every Thursday
5.30-7.30pm
At Bridgewater Sports & Social Club, 8 Towers Road

Pool, darts, cards, and a sausage sizzle each week.
\$5 covers food and fun
Your first visit is free!

www.sparkconnection.org.au

In collaboration with  

Spark ColWork Club

Coffee, Co-working, Connection



Craving real-life connection in your work week?

CoWork Club is for work-from-homers who get things done – together, every other week. There's no agenda, just a welcoming space to bring your laptop, grab a coffee, and share the morning with like-minded people.

Fortnightly on Tuesdays starting June 3rd
9.30am - 12pm at Miss Perez, Stirling

- ★ Please take your phone/video calls outside
- ★ Prefer not to chat and just want to work - no problem.
- ★ No need to book, it's free, just turn up.

www.sparkconnection.org.au

In collaboration with 



“I have suffered a lot with loneliness and isolation and having some structure around socialising for me personally helps a lot.”

- Sparkie Forte

Sparkies

Are a constellation of volunteers who are trained to create welcoming, safe and inclusive environments.

“Loneliness is something I have dealt with a lot, most potently in the past five years whilst recovering from some challenging health issues”

- Sparkie Jo



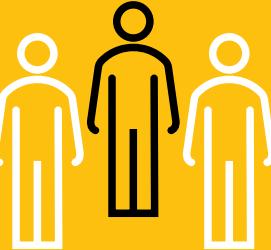


Why do we need to take
action against loneliness?

Loneliness has been declared by the WHO as a global health epidemic

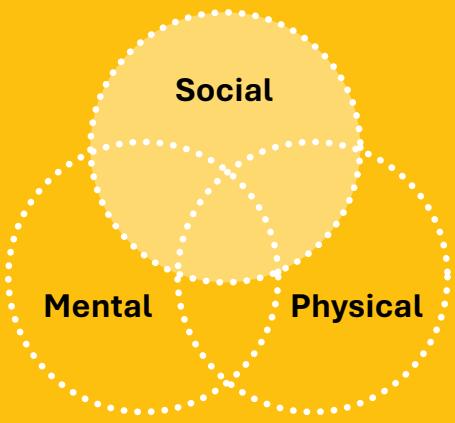
Almost

1 in 3 Australians
feel lonely



1 in 6 are severely lonely

66% Over half of South Australians have reported experiencing loneliness in their lifetime



WHO define Health as a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing. An absence of one can strongly affect the other two.

Loneliness and social isolation have clear links with critical physical and mental health outcomes.

Australians who feel lonely are:



Less engaged in physical activity



More likely to have social media addiction

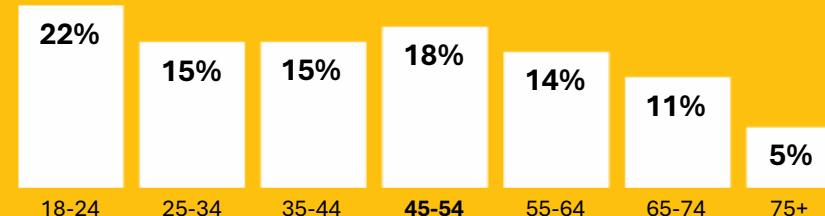


Less productive at work

4.6x More likely to have **depression**

5.2x More likely to have **poorer wellbeing**

Young people and those in middle age report the highest levels of loneliness (feeling lonely 'often')



Australian who feel lonely are also twice as likely to have chronic disease

Terms

Social health

Adequate quantity and quality of relationships in a particular context to meet an individual's need for meaningful human connection.

“Everyone has had the experience of waking up either physically sick or mentally down, and the idea of getting out of bed seems both impossible and unappealing. Now imagine waking up and thinking that no one in the world cares about our presence in it. A similar sentiment would take hold, and that may be the essence of what we call ‘social health.’”

Doyle & Link, 2024, Health Psychology Review, 18(3)

Terms

Social disconnection

An absence or deficit in the structure, function or quality of relationships.

Structure – *Who and how many?*

e.g., Accessibility of others, physical or virtual

Function – *What do these connections provide?*

e.g., Feedback, recognition, validation

Quality – *How does it feel?*

e.g., Trust and mutual respect among colleagues

Terms

Loneliness (*Subjective*)

A distressing feeling that arises when your current relationships do not meet your social needs

Social isolation (*Objective*)

Being alone

Having few people around you.

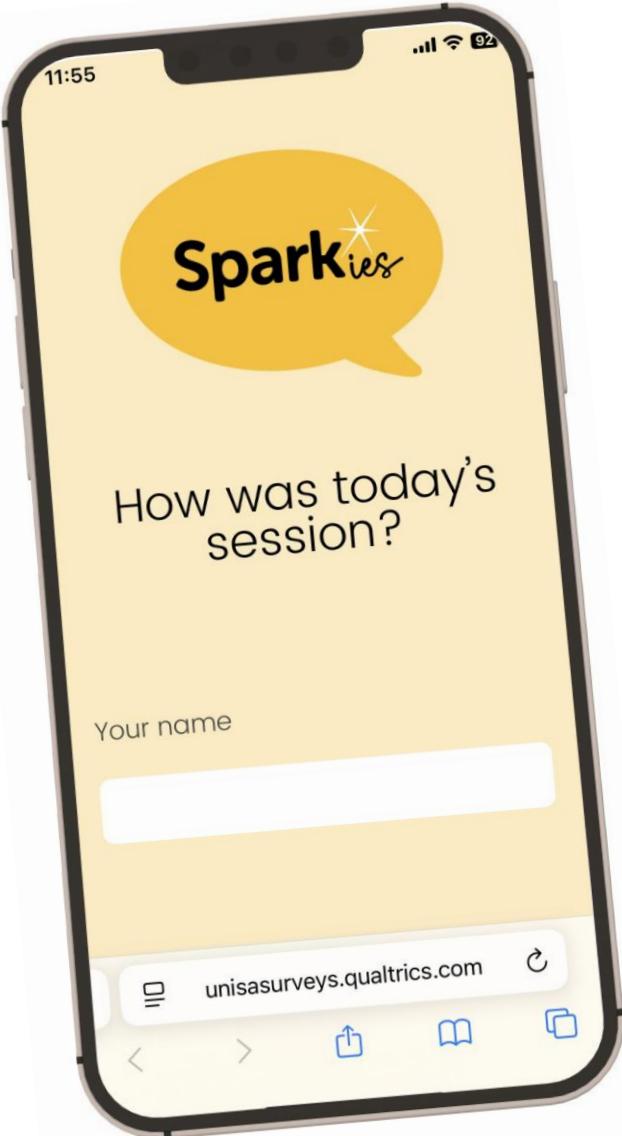
What does 'meet your social needs' mean?

Connecting to people in a way that is important to you

Being seen, valued, heard

Built over time with effort

Source: Ending Loneliness Together, Understanding loneliness Resource Pack lonelinessawarenessweek.com.au



Sparkies are citizen scientists

They upload qualitative and quantitative data to the 'Sparkie Data' digital platform after each Spark session.



Community impact of Spark after 12 months

6	193	1024	38	984
Initiatives created	Total Sessions	Total Attendances*	Active Sparkies	Volunteer Hours

* Reflects non-unique attendances, where approx 70% are repeat visitors.

“

Really engaged, chirpy, nice to get fresh faces. // Lots of wonderful conversation, laughter and happy tears. // It was a very diverse group of ages and back grounds. At times a couple of the older men were very quiet but then at times some intense vulnerability was shared by them. The cards definitely enabled the ability for all people to share. // This was a vibrant session with some whole group conversations and some breaking off into smaller conversations.



The wider impact of Spark

- 14 partners including community organisations, local and state government.
- Approx \$1m in **national competitive grant funding and community grants**, including almost \$500k in-kind commitment from partners.
- > 20 **positive media engagements with** local and national radio, tv and newspapers.
- Multiple invitations to **present Spark** at local and national level.
- Spark twice tabled in the **SA Parliament Hansard**.

Bernadette Reading

The Hut Community Centre

Community Development Manager



A collage of five images. 1. A group of women in a meeting room with a whiteboard. 2. Three women in yellow shirts smiling. 3. A newspaper clipping about funding. 4. A group of women standing outside. 5. A group of women standing in a garden.

Spark

Igniting human connection

Katrina



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Connect with the Spark team!

**We'd love you to complete the
Expression of Interest Form
if you would like to explore collaborating
with Spark in your community**



Visit our website, subscribe to our newsletter at **sparkconnection.org.au**



Thank you

“ The costs of inaction are **high**.
The benefits of connection are **far reaching**.
The time to prioritise social connection is **now**.

Dr Vivek Murthy, Chair WHO Commission on Social Connection



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