



SELF



RELATIONAL



The Connection Inventory Workbook



COLLECTIVE



INTIMATE



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Connection Inventory Workbook



Welcome to the Connection Inventory Workbook.

Here at Counselling West Bridgford, our mission is to increase knowledge, encourage conversations, and call on everyone to play our part in ending the global pandemic that is loneliness.

Loneliness and connection have a number of aspects, described as 4 “Dimensions”: feeling part of something bigger than ourselves, groups of friends, our intimate partner or best friend, and our connection to self:

<https://www.counsellingwestbridgford.co.uk/2020/09/21/four-dimensions-of-connection/>

By reflecting on each dimension, what we need, what have lost or gained, and what may potentially be available to us, we can take action to reduce loneliness. This workbook and instructions are designed to help you with that thought process.

Page 3 has the definition of each dimension, page 4 has the detailed instructions for how to complete it, and pages 5 to 8 contain the workbook, where you will find questions for reflection as well as somewhere to write your thoughts.

It could be something you complete on your own, with someone you are close to, or in counselling. If you would like to book an appointment to discuss, go to <https://www.counsellingwestbridgford.co.uk/booking-page/> to book online.

If you are feeling particularly vulnerable, it might be better to leave it for now, and return when you are feeling better.

If you are worried about your mental health, wellbeing, or ability to cope, here are some useful links:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

<https://giveusashout.org>

<https://www.samaritans.org/>



Four Dimensions: Definitions

Self



Self relates to how we understand ourselves and being 'comfortable in our own skin'.

Strong connection in this dimension helps us to spend more time alone and be ok with our thoughts.

It also helps us understand which connections are good for us, and those that aren't.

It can be as simple as knowing how to occupy our time when we're on our own. Finding out what gives us joy as solo activity, is a starting point which can develop into a deeper understanding of ourselves.

Relational



Relational is our circle of friends and is a broad category. We have multiple layers of friendships, from those we speak to and see regularly, through to those we would come across occasionally.

From your group of mates to the bloke on the till at Sainsbury's that you always chat to.

Collective



Collective is the category of 'something bigger than me', a community.

Examples are your Pilates class, the football team you support, religious faith, a charity you are passionate about, a cause you feel strongly about, or the company you work for.

This dimension has been shown to be the most vital in combatting loneliness. If we are part of something bigger than ourselves, especially if it's an 'act of service' (helping out), then it improves our self-worth and improves the dimension 'Self'.

Intimate



Intimate connections are the one or two people we are closest to.

It is often your intimate partner but can also be your best friend.



How to use the Workbook



'How things are now'

With any journey, in order to plan the route to get to where we want to go, we need to know where we're starting from.

For each dimension, write down your current situation, and how you feel about it. There are helpful 'Questions for reflection' on each page.



'How I want things to be'

In order to change, it's easier if we know what we want to change, and how we'd prefer things to be.

For each dimension, write down how you would want your life to be in the future. There are helpful 'Questions for reflection' on each page.



Actions I can take

What steps could you take in the direction of how you'd like things to be? Sometimes getting involved in one dimension e.g. joining a club in the 'Collective' dimension can lead to making new friends ('Relational') that may lead to meeting a partner or best friend

Some questions for reflection: Actions

- What easy first steps could I take?
- How do I research some of the things I'm interested in?
- Are there open days I can attend?
- Do you know anyone already involved in an activity you are / could be interested in?
- Do you need some help e.g. counselling or mentoring to understand yourself better?
- Who do you know that might help you?



Self



knowing ourselves

How things are now

How I want things to be

Questions for reflection

- What do you like to do for fun?
- What helps you to calm down?
- What gets you excited?
- What's important to you?
- What are your values?
- What hobbies do you like / might you like to try?
- When were you happiest in your life? Why was that?
- When was the worst time of your life? Why was that?
- How would you describe yourself?
- Do you find it easy to trust others?
- Do you find it easy to open up to others?
- What inspires you?
- What holds you back?

Actions I can take



Intimate



*partner or best
friend*

How things are now

How I want things to be

Questions for reflection

- Who in the world knows you best?
- Who's 'got your back'?
- Who do you turn to when things are tough?
- Who are you there for?
- Is there someone you ring when something great happens?
- Who in your life do you have the most regular contact with?
- What do you want from a best friend / intimate partner?

Actions I can take



Relational



group of friends

How things are now

How I want things to be

Questions for reflection

- Who are your mates?
- Who can you rely on for a get together?
- Are you part of a team?
- What hobbies / activities do you / could you do with others?
- Who do you get on with at work?
- Do you get on with your neighbours?
- Who turns up for your birthday lunch / party?
- What do you want / need from friendships?
- Who doesn't have your best interest at heart?
- Who holds you back?
- Who are your cheerleaders?

Actions I can take



Collective



*something bigger
than us*

How things are now

How I want things to be

Questions for reflection

- Is there a sports team you follow?
- Is there a cause or issue you are passionate about?
- How do you feel about work / your place of study?
- Do you / could you volunteer?
- How do you connect to the wider world? (e.g. news, social media)
- Do you / could you belong to a membership club, or political party?
- Are there events and activities at those places mentioned above that you do / can get involved in?

Actions I can take