

# Building Connections

An **NSPCC** service



Build SUPPORT. Build CONFIDENCE. Build CONNECTIONS.

# Information for Professionals



**Building Connections**

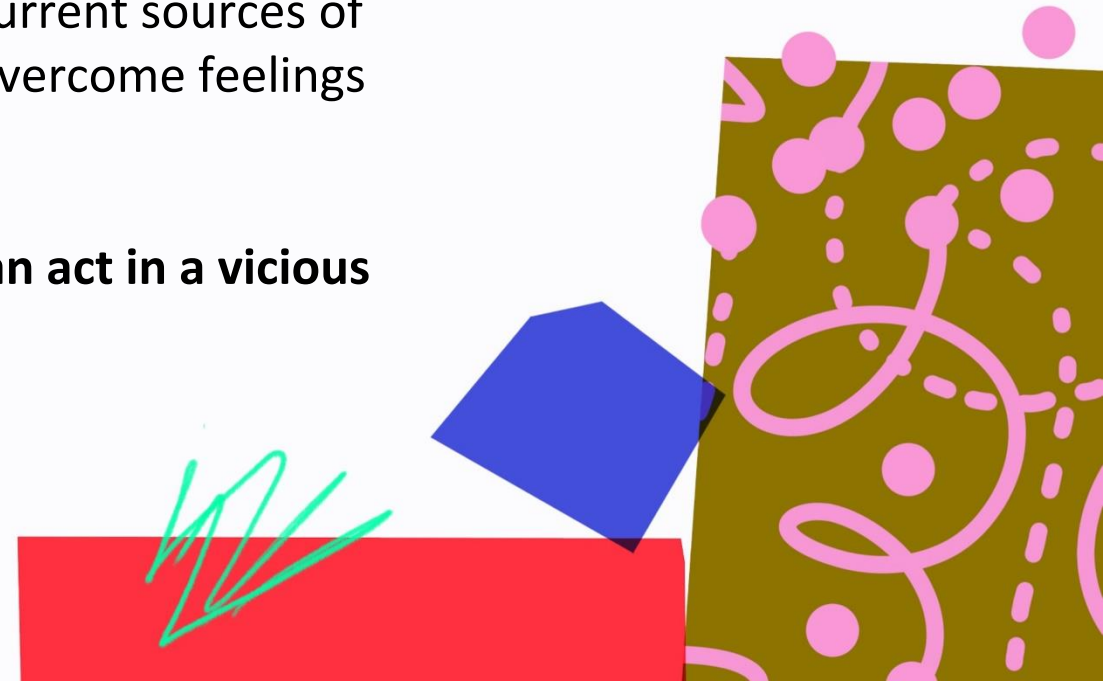
An NSPCC service

# Our Vision

Our goal is for every child to have a strong network around them, meaning they're able to share their highs and lows with a supportive group. The Building Connections Service works with young people who don't feel they have this kind of support.

Young people will work with one befriender, building their relationship over several sessions. They'll discuss strengths and vulnerabilities, current sources of support, resilience and goals, and steps they can take to help overcome feelings of loneliness.

**Loneliness is closely linked to poor mental health – the two can act in a vicious cycle, with one reinforcing the other.**



# What is Building Connections?

Building Connections is an NSPCC Service that was launched in October 2023 empowering young people to tackle loneliness. Building Connections has been developed to help young people cope.

- For young people loneliness can be caused by changes, particularly those caused by shifting relationships.
- 65% of secondary school students said they didn't feel equipped to cope with loneliness in a recent survey.
- Research suggests many young people struggle with loneliness, often using risky and potentially dangerous coping strategies.



# Context

Building Connections is an online text messaging service for young people up to the age of 19 who are experiencing loneliness.

The service is available Monday-Friday (8am – 8pm) and across 11 sessions, participants work through a seven-step programme with a befriender.

Each Building Connections session gives the young person tools that can support them and help them develop resilience and coping techniques.

A young person will work with a befriender, who will support them to find their way through loneliness.

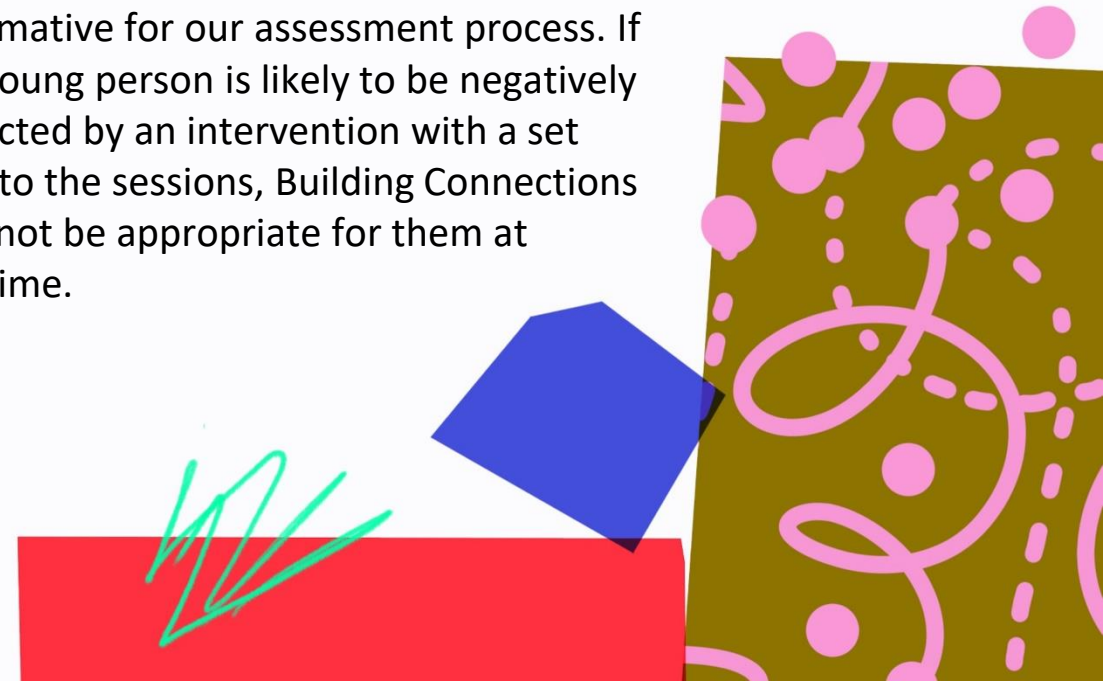
Referring agencies will be advised when a young person completes their sessions, but it would be up to the young person to share anything from the sessions.



# Suitability for Service

The team needs to be able to evidence that each young person is struggling with the impact of loneliness to a degree that is observable or has an impact on their lived experience. Any information on each of these concerns would help assess a young person's suitability:

- **Transitional periods** - such as moving to a new school or geographical area or may have recently been resettled. Or they may be currently struggling with school avoidance or refusal.
- **Emotional Health** - such as stress, low self-esteem, social anxiety, low mood or social isolation.
- **Friendship issues** - struggling to make friends or maintain relationships with peers, Similarly, this young person may have a friendship group but struggle with a lack of connection to the people they view as their friends.
- **Bullying** - either online or in a face-to-face setting, and needs support in recognising dysfunction or inequality within their existing relationships
- **Sense of otherness** - The young person may experience a sense of otherness, due to how peers have reacted to their sexual or gender identity, race, religion or a combination of other protected characteristics.
- **Attachment concerns** - ability to cope with endings is informative for our assessment process. If the young person is likely to be negatively impacted by an intervention with a set limit to the sessions, Building Connections may not be appropriate for them at this time.



# What we offer

Across 11 online sessions, young people participate in a seven-step programme and each session will be 40-60 minutes long:



# Benefits

- Provides a service to young people who are experiencing or struggling with the impact of loneliness and poor relationships
- Provides early intervention to young people who may be experiencing these feelings, which sometimes lead to other severe mental health needs like anxiety, low self-esteem, etc.
- Provides a service that supports resilience and confidence building in young people who are not confident in accessing mental health services



# To find out more...

Come along to a presentation:

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September from 4.00 – 4.45pm

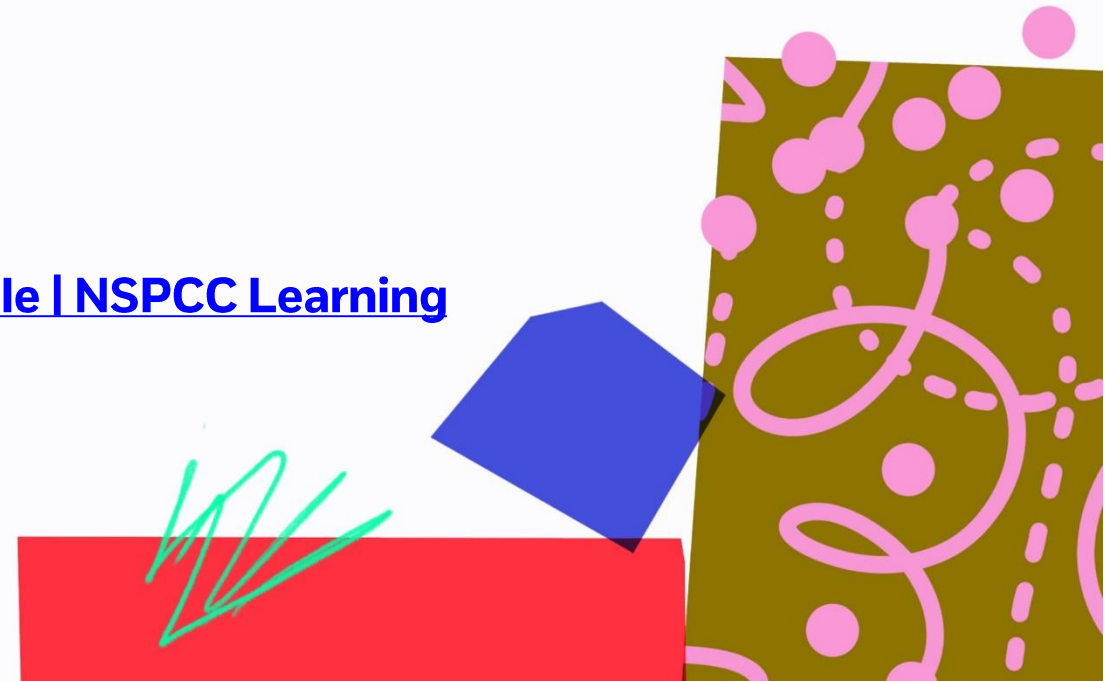
or

Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> October from 4.00 – 4.45pm

Email: [kevin.lynch@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:kevin.lynch@nspcc.org.uk)

Watch: [Building Connections CYP Video](#)

Visit: [Building Connections | Support service for young people | NSPCC Learning](#)



Thank you



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