

## Activity 7: Combating loneliness (CEFR B2)

**Level:**  
CEFR B2

**Time:**  
90 minutes

**Resources:**  
✓ Handout

**Aims:**

- ✓ To develop skills and knowledge in speaking and listening at Level 1
- ✓ To explore vocabulary connected to L1 topics
- ✓ To develop students' ability to take part in a discussion in the context of planning ways to help older people combat loneliness
- ✓ To practise giving views and opinions, responding to views and opinions, hypothesising and giving reasons

**Exam task focus:** Component 2 Task 4

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**Procedure:**

Combating loneliness

1. Ask students (SS) whether they feel positive or negative about getting older. Ask them to justify their responses. Share handout via chatbox. Tell them to look at activity 1a, the quotes various people have made about getting older and discuss them in BORs in small groups to find out which of them they agree with. Open Break Out Rooms (BORs). Close BORs and return to main room to conduct whole class feedback.
2. Ask SS how many of them still have grandparents – SS can raise hands. Ask them about their relationship with their grandparents. Then tell them to think about older people in their own countries/culture. Direct them towards the statements in activity 1b and give them a minute to read them individually and think about their response. Put them in small groups, preferably with people of different backgrounds and ask them to compare attitudes. Open BORs. Close BORs and return to main room to conduct whole class feedback and give students your own responses and general attitudes to older people in the UK. Mention the fact, that depending on people's background many older people live on their own or in independent living facilities or care homes. Find out whether they have ever been into a care home for the elderly. Explain that attitudes are gradually changing for British Asians some of whose elderly relatives are starting to live in care homes.
3. Ask the SS to read the information in activity 2a about older people in the UK and find out their responses to what they read. Give them a little background about Age UK and elicit ideas for what sort of things they think the charity does for older people. Put their ideas on the board. Ensure you focus on the term 'combat loneliness' and concept check this.
4. Put SS into small BOR groups and ask them to look through the ideas for helping the elderly focusing in particular on how they might help combat loneliness, in activity 2b. Tell them to consider how each suggestion might do this. Check understanding of 'virtual friend' and 'befriender.' Open BORs.

5. Close BORs and return to main room to conduct whole class feedback and ask students whether they can think of any other ideas for combating loneliness. You could tell them about schemes such as young students living with older people for a low rent and cooking and spending time together. Another idea is people coming to grow food in an older person's garden and then share the produce. These ideas are basically preparation for the group discussion.
6. Ask SS to read through the discussion task in activity 3a. Focus on the fact that they need to begin with brainstorming ideas but must come to a conclusion by the end of the discussion. Highlight the fact that it is important that everyone participates. Focus attention on the language in the Language Box. Clarify this by focusing on use, pronunciation and form.
7. Put SS into BOR in pairs. Tell them they have 15 minutes to complete the discussion in activity 3b and emphasise the fact that by the end of the discussion they should have decided on 2 or 3 options. Encourage them to use the language in the Language Box. Open BORs. Visit BORs to monitor whilst they are doing the activity (but don't intervene) and take notes for some delayed feedback.
8. Close BORs and return to main room to conduct whole class feedback on the content of the discussion – ask them what options they considered and why and what they decided to do in the end. Follow this with some delayed feedback on language.
9. Ask SS to look at the questions on activity 3c, reflecting on their contributions to the discussion and ask them what they feel they need further practice in.
10. Focus SS attention on the exam box at the bottom of the handout to explain how the lesson has helped to prepare them for Task 4 of the Trinity Level 1 Skills for Life Speaking exam.
11. Extend the content of the lesson by focusing on the concept of loneliness in general. The questions are worded so as not to be too personal however a lot of people who live in new situations whether from choice or through necessity experience loneliness. They may or may not wish to discuss this, but it is a good opportunity to discuss ways in which they can meet people and become involved in the local community. They may be able to share ideas.

## Handout Activity: Getting older

### Activity 1: Getting older

**a Look at the quotes below about getting old. Which one(s) do you agree with?**

You are never too old to set another goal or dream a new dream.

C. S. Lewis (writer)

As I started getting older, I realised, "I'm so happy!". I didn't expect this! I wasn't happy when I was young.

Jane Fonda (actress)

I've always looked forward to getting older. When I was 14, I couldn't wait to be 16.

Matthew McConaughey (actor)

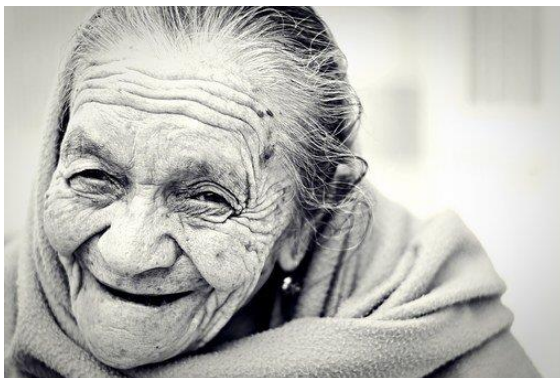
I've been to many different places around the world where getting older is something you look forward to. Not in America!

Alice Walker (writer)

Getting older and adjusting to all the things that biologically happen to you is not easy to do and is a constant struggle and adjustment.

Frances McDormand (actress)

Quotes from <https://www.brainyquote.com/topics/getting-older-quotes>



Images from [www.pixabay.com](http://www.pixabay.com)

**b True or false for your country?**

Older people are treated with a lot respect.

Older people are the head of the household until the end of their lives.

Older people generally live in the family home until the end of their lives.

We rely heavily on older people for childcare.

We make sure that older people always feel valued.

Older people rarely experience loneliness.

**Activity 2: Old age and loneliness**

**a Read the information about old age and loneliness in the UK. Do any of the facts surprise you?**

- Half a million older people go at least five or six days a week without seeing or speaking to anyone at all (Age UK 2016).
- Over half (51%) of all people aged 75 and over live alone (Office for National Statistics 2010. General Lifestyle Survey 2008).
- Two fifths all older people (about 3.9 million) say the television is their main company (Age, U.K., 2014. Evidence Review: Loneliness in Later Life. London: Age UK).

information from <https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/the-facts-on-loneliness/>

**b Age UK is a charity that works to improve the lives of anyone over 60. Look through the ideas for combatting loneliness from Age UK.**

**How do you think they might help someone who is lonely?**



- ☺ learning digital skills such as texting, emailing and making video calls
- ☺ joining an exercise programme
- ☺ getting free transport
- ☺ getting a daily phone call from a virtual friend or visit from befrienders (people who volunteer to make friends with lonely people)
- ☺ getting help with shopping from a volunteer
- ☺ taking part in social activities such as games playing, musical afternoon, tea party

**Activity 3: Volunteering to help older members of the community.**

**a Read the task below.**

You and a classmate have decided to help some of the older people in the local community. Talk about what you can do help them. Agree on what you will do and how you will do it. You have up to 15 minutes to complete the discussion.

*You must ensure that you both have equal opportunities to speak. In addition to giving your own views, ask the other person what they think.*

**Language Box: Giving views and opinions, asking for opinions and hypothesising**

**Giving opinions**

In my opinion / view, the best thing is to + bare infinitive

I reckon / I think we should + bare infinitive

To my mind, the best thing is to + bare infinitive

**Asking for opinions**

XXX, what do you think we should do?

XXX, do you agree?

Do you think that's a good idea?

**Hypothesising**

If we + base form, then we can + bare infinitive

If we + base form, that will help them to + bare infinitive

**b Take part in the discussion.**

**c Answer the questions.**

Did you both participate equally?

Did you feel that you were listened to?

Did your classmate ensure that you were part of the discussion?

What skills do you need to get better at when taking part in a discussion?

### **Activity 4: General loneliness**

It is not only older people who experience loneliness.

Why do people experience loneliness?

What can you do to overcome loneliness?

How easy / difficult is it to make friends when you move to a new place?

#### **Exam Hint**

In task 4 of the Level 1 Skills for Life exam, you will take part in a discussion with another person. You will need to demonstrate that you are able to contribute constructively to a discussion.

You will also need to demonstrate that you can understand and use specific communicative functions such as *giving views and opinions*, *responding to views and opinions*, *hypothesising and giving reasons*. You have practised doing this in this lesson.