

When You Need Connection, But No One Feels Safe

Sometimes the hardest moments are when you want comfort, understanding, or closeness, but no one feels safe or available. That can feel lonely, painful, or even hopeless. While nothing replaces safe relationships, there are ways to help your nervous system through the moment until connection becomes possible.

1. Notice what you need

Ask yourself:

- Do I want someone to listen? Do I want reassurance? Do I want comfort? Do I want to feel understood? Do I want someone simply nearby?

Sometimes naming the need makes it feel less overwhelming.

2. Understand

Your nervous system is asking for connection. That doesn't mean you've done something wrong. It doesn't mean you'll always feel this way. Your body is signaling an important need.

3. Find the closest available form of connection

It won't be perfect, but it might help your nervous system get through this moment.

Need	Ideas to try...
Connection with yourself	Wrap yourself in a blanket Hold a warm mug Place a hand over your heart Speak to yourself the way you would speak to someone you love Rock gently or hug a pillow
Connection with living things	Sit with a pet Watch birds outside Visit a park Water a plant Notice trees, flowers, or the feeling of the breeze
Connection through others (without interacting)	Sit in a coffee shop or library Walk where other people are present Listen to people talking nearby Watch a livestream of people quietly studying, creating, or walking through a city Make eye contact, smile, or small talk with a stranger
Connection through someone's words	Read a favorite book Listen to a podcast Listen to an audiobook Read encouraging letters or saved text messages Listen to music that makes you feel understood
Connection through creativity	Draw Knit Cook Play music Build something with your hands *Creating can help you feel connected to yourself.

4. If the feeling is still there

You don't have to make the loneliness disappear.

Instead, try saying:

- This is a lonely moment.
- It makes sense that I want connection.
- I'm caring for myself until connection is available.
- I don't have to solve this feeling right now.

When You Are Missing Safe Touch

If you need a hug...	Ideas to try
Pressure	Wrap yourself tightly in a blanket, use a weighted blanket (if comfortable), hug a pillow or stuffed animal.
Warmth	Hold a warm mug, use a heating pad (if appropriate), take a warm bath or shower, wrap up in a blanket fresh from the dryer.
Gentle contact	Place one hand on your heart and one on your stomach, gently rub your arms, hold your own hands, or give yourself a gentle squeeze.
Rhythmic soothing	Rock in a rocking chair, sway while standing, slow dancing to music, gentle stretching.
Living connection	Spend time cuddling with a pet if you have one.

**These aren't substitutes for a safe hug from someone you trust. These ideas can help support your nervous system until safe connection is available.*