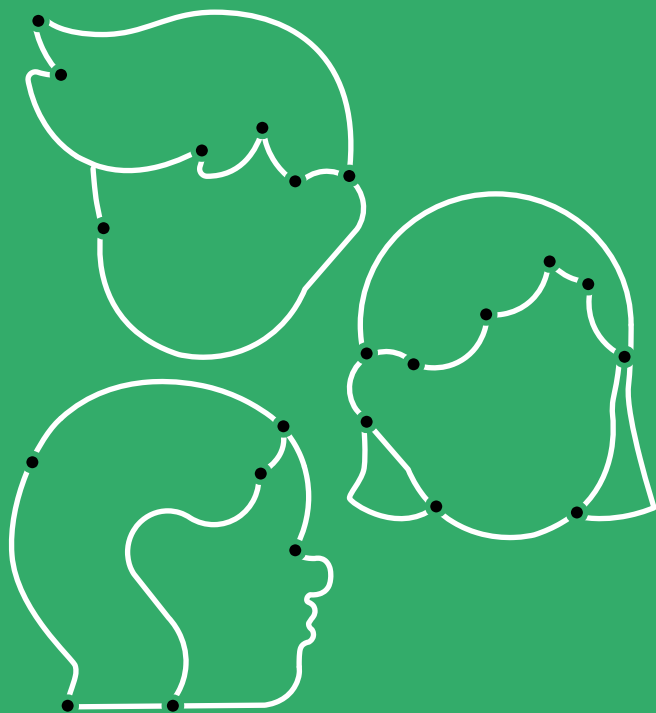# GUIDE FOR THE PREVENTION, DETECTION AND MONITORING OF ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN SITUATIONS OF LONELINESS

Municipal strategy for combating loneliness 2020-2030

Barcelona
City Council

BARCELONA
COMBATING LONELINESS ●

CONTENTS

01

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The Guide for the prevention, detection and monitoring of adolescents and young people in situations of loneliness is a resource aimed at all professionals working with adolescents and young people which can serve as a useful resource for consultation and for specific guidance on situations of loneliness or social isolation in this age group. It is a guide that has been developed with contributions from large numbers of professionals from the sector through the conference **"Let's Put On Our Glasses: Loneliness Is Also about Young People"** held in December 2020 and organised by Barcelona City Council's Directorate of Services for Children, Youth and Older People within the framework of the Municipal Strategy for combating Loneliness 2020-2030. The conference provided a space to think about and analyse strategies and resources for dealing with these situations. This material has served as a source of information and validation of the guidelines contained in this guide.

The aim is for this resource to be accessible to and shared by professionals working with adolescents and young people, ensuring it is easy to access and search for guidance or useful resources. In this regard, it is intended to be a practical, easily accessible and simple tool.

Its practical application will be the best proof of its timeliness and usefulness. For this reason, one of its aims is to become a dynamic tool, so that it can be updated and completed as strategies or resources that deal with these situations arise.

02

LONELINESS, ADOLESCENCE AND YOUTH

LONELINESS, ADOLESCENCE AND YOUTH

2.1 FROM A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Within the framework of the Barcelona City Council Municipal Strategy for combating Loneliness 2020-2030, the need for appropriate resources and strategies for working with adolescents and young people is proposed. In this regard, the following proposal has been formulated to provide a resource, in the form of a guide, which can help to introduce the perspective of loneliness in interventions with adolescents and young people. The ultimate aim is to provide practical guidelines to promote and create new links to alleviate loneliness during adolescence and young adulthood. In this context, the guide responds to one of the objectives that underpin the main lines of the Municipal Strategy for combating Loneliness 2020-2030.
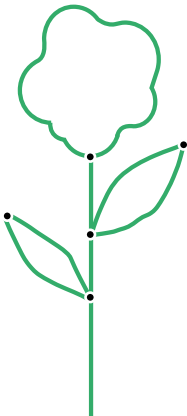
Strategic line

To develop resources and services to prevent, detect and attend to situations of loneliness

Goal

Providing tools for professionals who are in contact with people to detect, prevent and intervene in cases of loneliness, especially with regard to intervention in life transition scenarios that involve a higher level of risk in relation to loneliness

Loneliness, an often hidden reality and an epidemic of the 21st century that widely affects young people

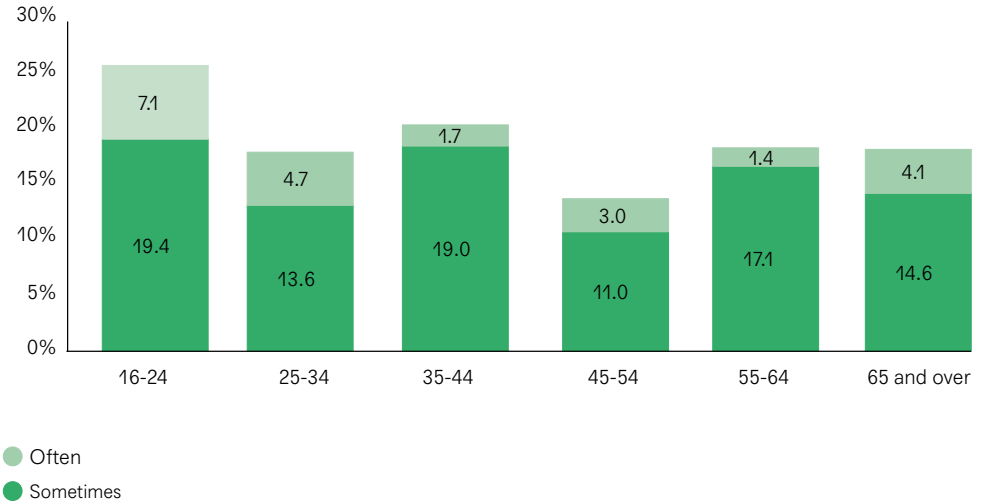Loneliness is a reality that is often hidden, socially unaccepted and, probably for this reason, is forgotten or considered a problem that mainly affects older people who are left alone. Although this perception is true, it must be said that there are many other people, including adolescents and young people, who also suffer from this feeling. In fact, it is a very serious health problem, considered by the WHO to be one of the most important epidemics of the 21st century, and can affect everyone at any time of life.

As youth professionals, it is essential to become aware of this issue and to incorporate this perspective of analysis and action in all socio-educational practice and youth policies as a whole, because loneliness also has an impact on adolescence and young adulthood.

The study conducted by Professor Amoris Laetitia in collaboration with the Fundación Casa de la Familia in January 2020 (just before the impact of the pandemic), which focussed on the Community of Madrid (Vidal and Halty, 2020), concluded that the feeling of loneliness increases the younger one is, going from 14.7% among people over 60 to 31% among young people under 30. Loneliness is not an epidemic of older people, but also widely affects young people. The data also confirms that young people feel less satisfied with their lives (54.6% satisfaction among young people compared to an average of 70% for the population as a whole) and suffer more from social isolation (5% in the case of young people and 3% on average for the population as a whole).

Feels lonely (sometimes or often) depending on age. Òminbus survey. Barcelona, 2020.

| Age	Often	Sometimes
16-24	7.1	19.4
25-34	4.7	13.6
35-44	1.7	19.0
45-54	3.0	11.0
55-64	1.4	17.1
65 and over	4.1	14.6

● Often
● Sometimes

Data from the Omnibus Survey carried out in June 2020 shows that 26.5% of young people in Barcelona aged between 16 and 24 feel lonely often or sometimes, followed by adults aged between 35 and 44 (20.7%) and older people over 65 (18.7%).

Loneliness among young people

The study *Loneliness among Young People* based on the Barcelona 2020 Youth Survey indicates that the nature of loneliness in young people is linked to experiences of frustration and uncertainty in the transition to adulthood (Marí-Klose and Escapa, 2021). Leaving home, economic and job security and having a stable partner are elements that protect against feelings of loneliness. The study shows that young people who have left the family home are less likely to feel lonely than those who still live with their mother and/or father. Those who are working or studying are significantly less likely to feel lonely than those who are unemployed. Likewise, young people who are financially dependent are more likely to feel lonely than those who earn their own money.

Intimate relationships play an important role in the transition to adulthood, as well as in feelings of emotional loneliness. The stage of adolescence and young adulthood is characterised by the first relationships and romantic experiences that are the origin of emotional bonds that contribute to the development of self-esteem and well-being. The data indicates that the probability of feeling lonely increases considerably (more than double) among young people who do not have a partner or who have a non-stable relationship, compared to those who have a stable partner.

Probability that the young person feels lonely based on their emotional-sexual relationship

Source: 2020 Barcelona Youth Survey. Barcelona City Council.
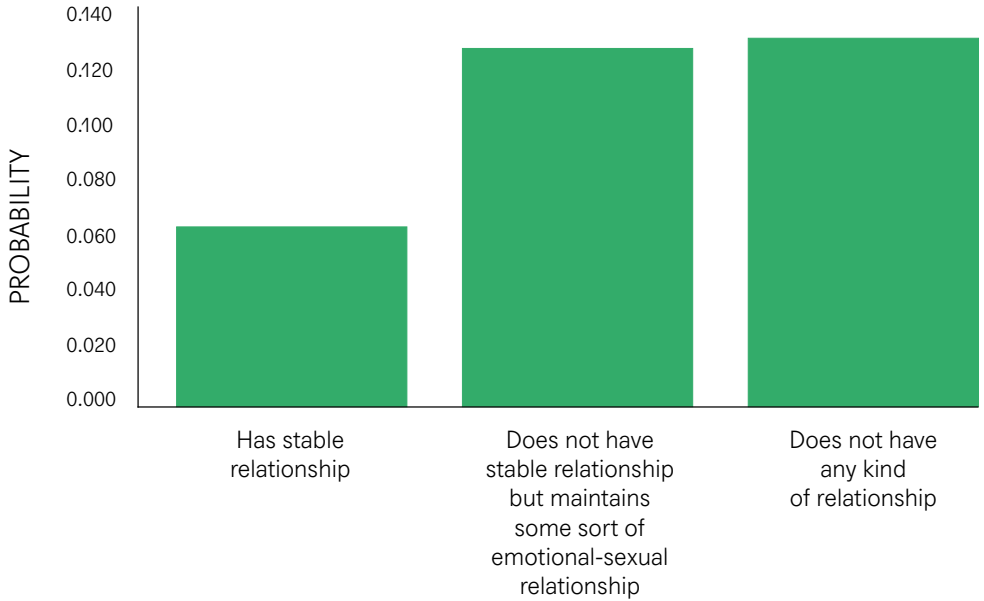
Loneliness and isolation

Loneliness is understood as a mismatch between the quantity and quality of the social relationships we have and those we would like to have, and is linked to moments of transition in our lives. Loneliness is a subjective and unwanted feeling. A person's subjective perception of his or her expectations. This implies that people with very similar lives may have different experiences. Self-image and self-concept, for example, are elements that can influence this feeling. Perhaps the person who seems to feel the least lonely is the one who suffers the most from loneliness. The knowledge that we professionals have of these adolescents and young people, as well as of the factors and indicators that can alert us to this situation, can be of great help. Adolescence and young adulthood are times of life changes and transition where this feeling and perception can appear and give rise to significant situations of loneliness.

Social isolation occurs when a person's network of family or friends is small, or distant, or when there is little confidence in getting support when it is needed. It is an objective state, which refers to a person's social network and frequency of contact. It is directly related to the loss of social network and the Hikikomori *syndrome*.

It is important to take an anthropological view

There are important cultural differences in how people experience being alone or how they analyse and value the social relationships they have. In Mediterranean culture, for example, family and friendships are highly valued, but in other cultures, being separated from family and friends and moving house many times throughout

life is seen as a normal occurrence and, therefore, the subjective experience is very different. There is a need to be respectful of each individual and each culture's ways of thinking and living. Being alone is not necessarily an indicator of loneliness.

Loneliness, cause or consequence

Loneliness can generate and be the cause of various problems. It can also be the consequence of some of these same problems and lead to social isolation. It is necessary, in each case, to know how to make a concrete analysis and to distinguish the causes and consequences of the situation. For example, many people with an alcohol problem suffer from loneliness. However, alcoholism can be both a cause and a consequence of loneliness. One may start drinking to fill the emptiness caused by loneliness, but drinking may reduce the number of social relationships one has.

Loneliness is usually progressive

Knowing the possible causes can help to ensure early detection of the elements and factors that affect the appearance and development of this experience, establishing preventive actions. It is important to know both the protective factors that can prevent or reduce the chances of a person suffering from loneliness, as well as the risk factors that can increase these same chances and make this illness more likely.

Attention to risk and protective factors

Risk factors are understood as those elements that can be considered potentially decisive in the generation or appearance of situations or experiences of loneliness. It is worth bearing them in mind because they can help us to identify contexts, situations or people who may be in a situation that can easily lead to loneliness or social isolation.

Protective factors, on the other hand, are factors that are recognised as good strategies or resources because they favour protection or prevention and, therefore, can act as a protective mechanism against risk situations. Educational work must take these strategies and resources into account in order to bring them into play and incorporate them into socio-educational intervention practices.

It is important to have a community perspective in order to combat loneliness

The community becomes one of the main protective factors. Establishing close, good quality links with the community is essential to prevent situations of loneliness. A strong, close-knit community, with adequate public spaces that take into account their social function, neighbourhoods that care for the people who live there and quality relationships between neighbours, is the best medicine for this epidemic. It is therefore essential that the community perspective becomes one of the backbones of any action to combat loneliness.

2.2   WORK AREAS OF THE GUIDE

The approaches set out in this guide are organised into four key areas. Given that the very concept of loneliness is closely linked to the social relationships that each person establishes, this criterion has been taken into account to order and present the approaches and guidelines. The guidelines cover both the actions that affect the adolescent or young person in particular, as well as proposals that involve the people close to their environment and the context in which these relationships take place.
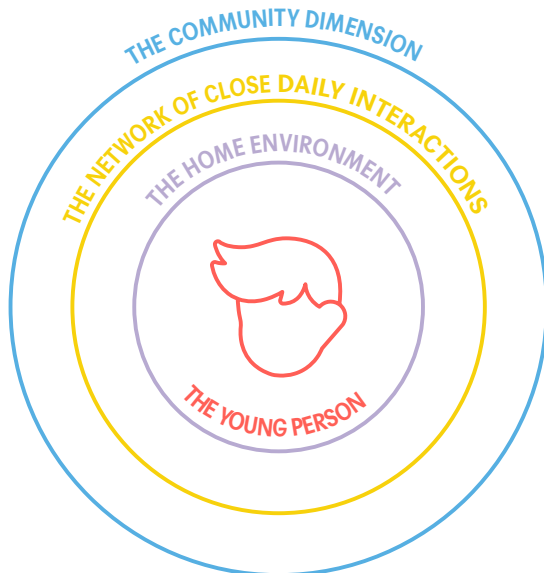
THE YOUNG PERSON
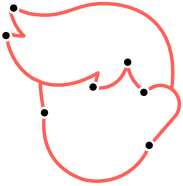
This is the personal, individual sphere of life that defines the young person and from which the young person relates to the other spheres. It includes those aspects most closely linked to the personal characteristics of each adolescent or young person. This can include their own life projects, health problems, personality traits, daily life or their routine or the way their time is distributed, etc.

THE HOME ENVIRONMENT
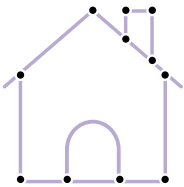
This is the area that includes those aspects most closely related to the space in which young people and adolescents live and the people they live with. This area encompasses relationships with the immediate family, affective or couple relationships, the socio-economic situation of the household or the characteristics of the dwelling in which they live, also taking into account residential or penitentiary centres.

THE NETWORK OF CLOSE DAILY INTERACTIONS
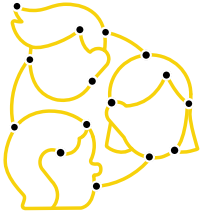
This is the area that includes those aspects most closely linked to the relationships that young people and adolescents establish outside their immediate household. It includes relationships with friends, the areas of study and work, the use they make of social networks and the leisure activities they carry out. This is the area that refers to all those close relationships with whom, despite not living together, they share a lot of time.

THE COMMUNITY DIMENSION
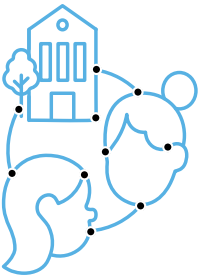
This includes those aspects that are more linked to the community environment in which adolescents or young people live and interact with other people. We can include the use and organisation of public space, mobility, relationships with neighbours, neighbourhood organisations and associations, the role of public facilities and youth professionals, among others.

Each of the guidelines in the guide is classified according to two important criteria when it comes to assessing the educational work to be carried out: whether it is a fundamentally interesting proposal for **detection or prevention** work or whether it is designed more as an approach to **monitoring or follow-up of** cases of loneliness that have already been detected and require socio-educational action. These two criteria are related to two criteria that are essential in addressing situations of loneliness: risk factors and protective factors.

In terms of guidelines for detection or prevention, we refer to guidelines aimed at preventing situations of loneliness, either by ensuring risk factors do not arise or by generating protective conditions for the well-being of young people. We also refer to proposals aimed at the analysis or diagnosis of situations considered relevant from the point of view of loneliness.

In relation to the guidelines for monitoring or follow-up, their aim is to inform the ongoing work of professionals. Depending on the diversity of situations, the focus of the intervention can be the ongoing work to connect young people with different aspects of their local surroundings, evidencing professional planning beyond specific actions.

In order to differentiate between the different types of work, the following symbols are used in front of each guideline:

| Detection or prevention work | Monitoring or follow-up work | Detection or prevention work and monitoring or follow-up work |
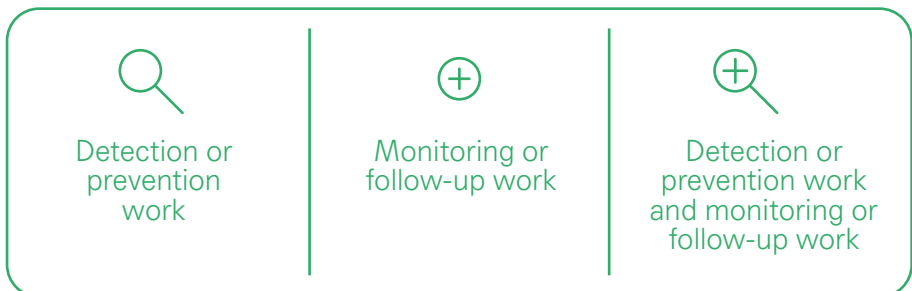
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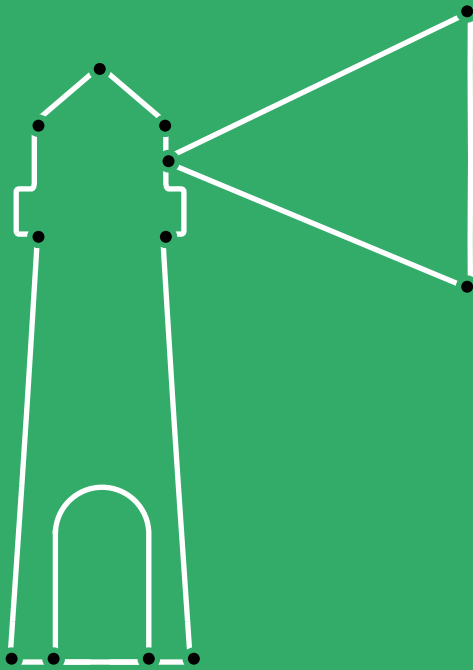
RECOMMENDATIONS AND GUIDANCE

THE YOUNG PERSON
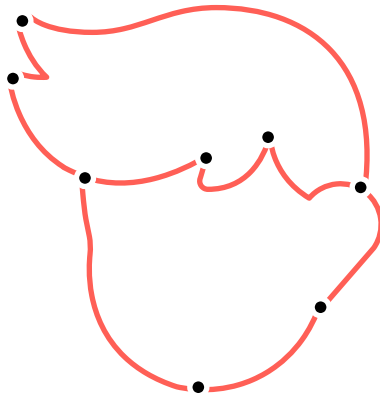
Build a relational map of those young people or adolescents who we believe are suffering from loneliness or isolation

- Analyse their social relationships according to parameters of quantity and quality (family, friends, people they meet, etc.).
- Pay special attention to the detection of the "diet" that shapes their relationship habits and the detection of significant, trusted people who, at critical moments or times of distress, can approach them, talk to them or support them.

28   🔍 **Detection or prevention work**
      ⊕ **Monitoring or follow-up work**
      🔍 **Detection or prevention work and monitoring or follow-up work**

⊕ ## Activate the alliances and assets of the relational map

- Seek alliances and support with other professionals to break the situation of loneliness or isolation based on the different assets detected in the relational map.
- Suggest to those in the young person's close everyday relationship network that they help the person to undertake a personal project or activity that motivates them.

🔍 **Construct a time-occupation map** with those young people or adolescents who we believe to be in a situation of loneliness or social isolation.

- Analyse how they spend their time (work, studies, care tasks, leisure, sport, culture, etc.) and write a short description of the activities they do: whether they do them alone or accompanied, the number of hours they spend on the activity, the perception they have...
- Pay special attention to the lack of healthy lifestyle habits (diet, physical activity, hours of sleep, etc.).
- Generate a space for assessment and analysis with the young person or adolescent and jointly distinguish what is satisfactory and what is desirable.
- Invite them to take part in a training activity on routines and time management.

⊕ Identify the **interests and motivations** of these young people and adolescents

- Tailor the relationship based on a close, trusting relationship that favours communication.
- Guide the person through the definition and execution of projects or activities that motivate them and that help them to interact with others.

⊕ Be active and alert in **special situations or periods**: holidays, public holidays or exceptional situations

- Carry out activities that may attract the interest of young people, especially those we think may need to socialise.
- Be proactive with calls, chats, video-conferences, text messages, etc., with those adolescents or young people who may need it and look for times and occasions to provide guidance or collect information.
- If important risk factors are detected, follow up the case and act in accordance with the protocols established in risk situations. If necessary, refer the follow-up to a specialist service that can respond during this special period.

⊕ Offer support to those young people or adolescents who **have a number of risk factors** for loneliness or who suffer from specific situations that may isolate them socially.

- Be alert to those young people who are more vulnerable to social isolation: eating disorders, addictions, mental illness, functional diversity, victims of violence, violent

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🔍 **Detection or prevention work**
⊕ **Monitoring or follow-up work**
🔍 **Detection or prevention work and monitoring or follow-up work**

and disruptive behaviour, migratory processes, unaccompanied young people, young people without documentation, girls from specific groups who are very isolated when they finish school, etc.

- Coordinate with other professionals and refer the case if the situation requires it.

🔍 Detect situations of loneliness derived from lack of knowledge of **the vehicular language or sensory difficulties**

- Identify if there are adolescents or young people who may suffer loneliness or isolation due to lack of knowledge of the vehicular language and refer them to resources that can help them learn the language and understand the most basic elements for social relationships and life in the municipality.
- Identify adolescents and young people with sensory disabilities that can lead them to a situation of isolation.

🔍 Present the activities in a way that makes them **accessible to all adolescents and young people**, also to specific profiles that may suffer from loneliness

- Make sure that the activities and resources we offer are accessible to people with a low command of the vehicular language, with functional diversity or disability, or with financial difficulties.
- Offer information on free activities, grants, aid or other aspects of interest for specific groups that allow them to participate in the activities they want and help them to lead an independent life.

Promote **training activities** for adolescents and young people to enable them to acquire preventive tools for loneliness or strategies to cope with it

- Plan and carry out training activities on different themes but always with the aim of facilitating knowledge and relationships between different adolescents and young people.
- Look for proposals of interest that have a good educational component and that provide useful tools that can act as a protective factor, empowering people to find their own strategies. This can include content such as: emotional management, self-esteem and self-knowledge; social skills and positive relationships; emotional and sexual education; healthy lifestyle habits; humour and an optimistic life view and so forth.

Generate **spaces of trust** which adolescents and young people feel part of and where they can feel listened to, recognised and valued

- Offer a space for active listening and activities where these people can go and feel supported, beyond the institutions or services that provide them with treatment or care.
- Tailor the guidance provided to each adolescent or young person by creating a link with the professional contact person. It is important that the contact person with whom the adolescent or young person has established a link is maintained as a reference person even if the person attends other services.

32   ⚲ **Detection or prevention work**
      ⊕ **Monitoring or follow-up work**
      ⚲ **Detection or prevention work and monitoring or follow-up work.**

- Promote support groups among people in similar situations that help them to network (loneliness, illness, bullying, addictions, situations of violence and abuse, eating disorders, new motherhood/parenthood, carers, migration processes, etc.).
- Provide support during the mourning period for the death of a loved one, or for a separation.
- Promote spaces geared towards generating bonds through everyday activities such as school work, socialising or leisure activities, or care spaces where they feel listened to.
- The pressure or urgency of professional work must be compatible with respecting the time of each young person when it comes to verbalising situations of loneliness.

⊕   Promote actions to **destigmatise being alone**

- Identify the concept of loneliness held by young people and adolescents. Take into account that there may be different cultural constructions around the perception of loneliness.
- Promote a positive view of the time a person spends by themselves and share strategies to make this time quality time.
- Promote a positive view of solitude as a process of learning and growth.

THE HOME ENVIRONMENT

Understand the **family and/or household situation** of those young people or adolescents who we think may be suffering from loneliness or isolation

- Detect risk and protection factors related to the family situation and the home where the person lives: composition of the household, quantity and quality of the space in the home, emotional support, etc.
- Coordinate with other professionals working with the family to obtain more information, share work objectives and/or refer the case.

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🔍 **Detection or prevention work**
⊕ **Monitoring or follow-up work**
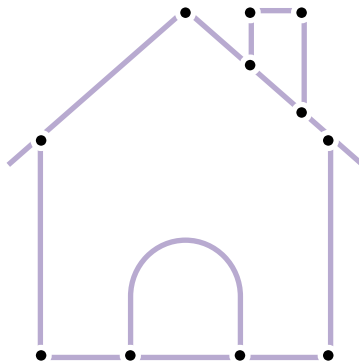🔍 **Detection or prevention work and monitoring or follow-up work**

🔍 Offer support to those adolescents or young people who may suffer loneliness in their home environment **arising from or aggravated** by exceptional situations

- Detect changes that have taken place in the young person's home environment arising from exceptional situations that may have an impact on loneliness. For example: concern and fear due to the health problems of a close relative, or due to their own illness as a factor of social isolation.
- Establish support networks and actions for those people who need it in periods of isolation due to illness or confinement (make contact with other professionals who can help them, establish channels of communication, facilitate resources that allow them to maintain social relationships, etc.).

🔍 Develop strategies to ensure the **physical and emotional well-being** of people where they live

- Offer support to the families of adolescents and young people such as: information on resources where they can find psychological, financial or emotional help; training and advice on how to cope with loneliness; guidelines to promote meeting and communication spaces within the family; work with groups of families and establish social and cooperation networks between them; etc.
- Promote initiatives to support people who do not want to/ cannot live alone or who have problems with those they live with and are looking for alternatives. For example: a consultation room for problems with flatmates or a space for exchanging advertisements to look for flatmates.

- Generate spaces for young people over 20 years of age to address the concerns and uncertainties arising from the processes of leaving home and becoming independent typical of this stage.

🔍 In cases where it is necessary, provide advice on **daily life management**

- Prepare and disseminate informative materials on daily life management. For example: legal formalities, how the administration works, housing assistance, useful resources for finding a flat, etc.
- Carry out training activities on topics that make it easier for adolescents and young people to manage their daily lives. This includes the management of their own finances or advice on how to find shared housing.
- Set up spaces where advice can be given on managing daily life. Pay special attention to people who have difficulties in this area. Among others, people with functional diversity, people with addictions, people in exile, people and families in a vulnerable economic situation, migrants or refugees.
- Where necessary, facilitate links with the home environment of adolescents and young people who find themselves far from this network (young people who have recently arrived, those who have been released from detention, etc.).
- Support in establishing relationships with young people and their families who may have difficulties understanding the culture of the environment in order to facilitate contact.

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🔍 **Detection or prevention work**
⊕ **Monitoring or follow-up work**
🔍 **Detection or prevention work and monitoring or follow-up work.**

Promote a **positive view of emotional relationships and couple relationships.**

- Propose activities and training actions that aim to normalise different types of emotional-affective relationships, including the fact of not having a partner, and promote relationships based on respect.
- Offer a space for support and activities in relation to motherhood and fatherhood where those who participate can share experiences with other people who are going through the same thing.
- Generate spaces for debate and reflection on the new ways of initiating emotional-affective relationships (apps for flirting, types of bonds that are established, fears and doubts, etc.).

THE NETWORK OF CLOSE DAILY INTERACTIONS
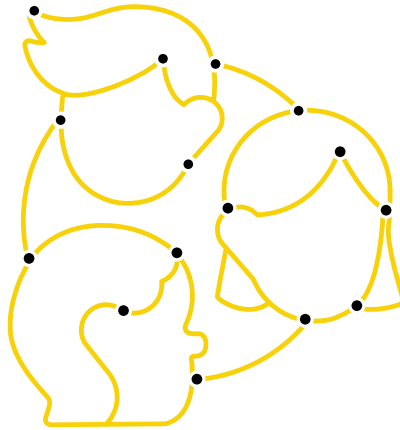
Offer support to young people and adolescents who are at risk of isolation from their **network of friends**

- Detect situations of separation and/or non-acceptance by the peer group or due to lack and/or break-up of friendships that can lead to situations of loneliness.
- Through information and training activities, help to ensure adolescents and young people are alert and are able to detect situations of loneliness in their close environment.

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⌕ **Detection or prevention work**
⊕ **Monitoring or follow-up work**
⌕ **Detection or prevention work and monitoring or follow-up work**

⊕ Support adolescents and young people who suffer **bullying, either in the academic or work environment.**

- Detect situations of *bullying and harassment at work that adolescents and young people are suffering.*
- Alert and coordinate with the professional teams in the environment where the bullying is taking place and work together if possible.
- Organise activities and advice processes on work-related issues at a legal level (labour rights and duties, etc.).
- Coordinate with specialised services and refer the case if the situation requires it.

⊕ Promote a positive and empowering view of the **different types of diversity** (cultural, religious, sexual, etc.)

- Through our activities, encourage the active fight against any form of discrimination.
- Organise training activities to promote a positive view of diversity and provide tools to confront discrimination.
- Work on a positive and empowering experience of diversity with groups and individuals who experience discrimination on any grounds. For example: with racialised youth groups, LGTBI people, etc.

⊕   Offer advice to young people when looking for and/or changing **jobs** or improving their working conditions.

- Provide young people with information on job searches, job offers, improving working conditions and the working environment, and resources and equipment that can help them with procedures and formalities related to the world of work.
- Connect young people and adolescents with training activities that work on job searching, developing transferable skills, creativity and entrepreneurship or the projection of their own professional project, among others.

⊕   Support young people so that they can achieve their **academic goals**

- Provide young people with information on courses and resources and equipment that can help them to make decisions or obtain more information.
- Provide careers advice spaces to support young people in their decisions about their future. For example: support them in the administrative procedures for enrolment, in their transition from school to high school or in the organisation of their study routines.

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⚲ **Detection or prevention work**
⊕ **Monitoring or follow-up work**
⊕ **Detection or prevention work and monitoring or follow-up work**

Analyse, when necessary, the relationship adolescents and young people have with **social networks and new technologies**

- Analysis of the use of social networks and new technologies to identify people who do not have access to social networks and new technologies; people with addictions to social networks, video games, online games, gambling; and people promoting and/or on the receiving end of bullying through social networks.
- Organise training activities to promote a positive use of social networks and new technologies and reflect on the positive and negative impact they can have in situations of loneliness.
- Provide resources and equipment to people who do not have access to these to enable them to access information and communication technologies.
- In cases where ICT addictions are detected, coordinate with specialised services and refer the case if the situation so requires. Continue their follow-up.
- Create spaces for professionals and adolescents and young people to interact with each other through social networks. They can help communication, detection and support.

Promote **group activities** to encourage interaction between adolescents and young people. The aim is to expand their friendship network, to achieve successful experiences when relating to other people and to generate complicity with professionals.

- Promote, as far as possible, face-to-face group activities with the aim of favouring relationships and contact between people and promoting their importance.
- Organise group activities that enable adolescents and young people to meet other young people with the same concerns and interests to share healthy leisure spaces that are accessible to all: sports, creative and artistic activities, leisure activities, etc.
- Facilitate the implementation of activities proposed by the young people themselves to increase their feeling of belonging to a group or project.
- Refer adolescents and young people to those resources where they can carry out activities that interest them.

THE COMMUNITY DIMENSION
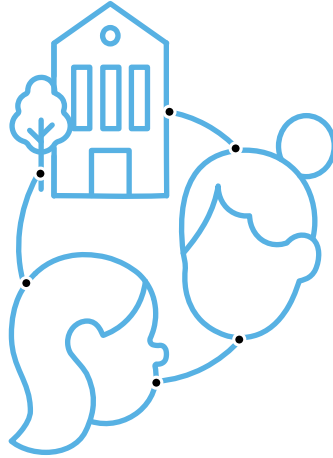
Activate a **joint strategy with professionals** and youth organisations in the territory to tackle loneliness.

- Increase knowledge about the situation of loneliness among adolescents and young people in the city by collecting data and studies and promoting awareness of loneliness and de-stigmatisation of these situations.
- Establish spaces for youth professionals to share information on loneliness and actions to address it through youth policies and projects. Community training sessions can be organised with different professional profiles based on shared interests or agreeing on shared prevention and action protocols.

For example: having a shared list of indicators for detecting situations of loneliness or establishing common guidelines for a good use of social networks.

- Promote networking circuits for the detection, referral and support of cases of loneliness from a community perspective. This implies a shared knowledge of existing resources and projects and a direct relationship between professionals. If deemed appropriate, specialised working teams on loneliness can be set up and shared throughout the territory.
- Propose strategies to reach all adolescents and young people, since not all of them access youth services. Networking with and from schools and high schools can be key to carrying out preventive actions, detecting cases of loneliness, providing guidance and advice on different resources and referrals. Social media can be a good strategy.
- Give adolescents and young people a voice in proposing solutions to loneliness and promote their involvement in the strategy. Take them into account when detecting situations of loneliness in their immediate environment.

⊕ Build a **geographical map** of the physical distance between the young person and their support network, when necessary.

- Understand the distance of those young people experiencing loneliness or social isolation, starting from the place where they live, their relatives, friends, basic services, school, work.

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🔍 **Detection or prevention work**
⊕ **Monitoring or follow-up work**
🔍 **Detection or prevention work and monitoring or follow-up work**

- Identify the transport available to them and how easy or difficult it may be for them to get closer, when they need it, to their support network (availability of transport, proximity, timetables, economic resources, etc.).
- Promote activities that put people who are geographically close to each other in contact with each other in order to facilitate new knowledge and friendships that enable the young person to establish closer support relationships.
- Provide young people who need it with information and resources to improve their mobility (car sharing, transport aids, etc.).

Carry out actions that make the **territory** a space in which social relationships are strengthened

- Identify any physical barriers that might be detrimental to good quality social relationships and also spaces that favour them. Young people can get involved in this process, demand changes from the competent public bodies to bring them closer to a view of public space as a space for social relationships and participate in its design, incorporating an inclusive vision that generates links.
- Together with young people, carry out actions that propose modifications to public space to highlight the need for proximity between people. For example: marking a line between two individual benches that joins them together; making a collective mural with neighbours.
- Take into account the spaces on the street, where young people meet, and enhance them as safe and open environments to promote positive relationships between young people. And also as spaces for intervention and

observation by professionals when detecting situations of loneliness. Add a gender perspective.
- Promote activities that bring neighbours together, also favouring spaces for intergenerational relationships (neighbourhood festivals, activities open to the street organised by young people and neighbours, knowledge, solidarity and neighbour-support initiatives). Young people should be the ones to initiate these relationships with their neighbours.

⊕ Facilitate **knowledge of the neighbourhood** among adolescents and young people

- Create lists so they can get to know the territory's resources and facilities, shops and so forth. Not only the space, but also the activities that can be carried out and the people who work there with the aim of "strengthening the neighbourhood".
- Organise activities together with the shops and facilities so that young people identify them as places where they can meet. This can be done by taking advantage of the space in these shops and facilities so that young people identify these places as safe, caring, meeting spaces where they can interact with others, etc. For example: hold a film forum or organise support groups in a bar and then have dinner with the person in the bar.

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⚲ **Detection or prevention work**
⊕ **Monitoring or follow-up work**
⚲ **Detection or prevention work and monitoring or follow-up work**

⊕ Promote **associationism** and **volunteering** by generating personal relationships.

- Promote spaces where voluntary work opportunities can be published so that people can offer themselves as volunteers and entities can offer a voluntary work.
- Promote volunteering actions with neighbourhood organisations, centres of worship and organise activities together or participate in the activities they organise. High schools can promote community service and service learning projects as strategies that also strengthen the community and social relations.
- Promote actions that connect people with community-based leisure

⚲ Prioritise the promotion of a **neighbourhood free of discrimination and aggression** of any kind as a preventive mechanism for situations of loneliness or social isolation

- Make available resources people can turn to when they feel discriminated against
- Understand that situations of discrimination require a community response. For example: when faced with a situation of discrimination, the youth worker gets involved in reporting and resolving it.

Promote the establishment of **intimate and quality relationships,** away from the current trend of consumerism and immediacy

- Promote, with young people, training activities that promote closer and more meaningful relationships.
- Promote spaces for reflection on consumerism and the impact it can have on the perception of loneliness, as well as alternatives to consumption.

Ensure youth leisure facilities and programmes are available during **holiday periods**

- Encourage the opening of local youth facilities where it is possible to guide young people who want or need to establish friendships during holiday periods
- Ensure a programme of activities is available in these facilities during holiday periods, coinciding with the period when young people are most likely to be lonely

RECOMMENDATIONS AND GUIDELINES

🔍 **Detection or prevention work**
⊕ **Monitoring or follow-up work**
🔍⊕ **Detection or prevention work and monitoring or follow-up work**

THE YOUNG PERSON

🔍 **Build a relational map** of those young people or adolescents who we believe are suffering from loneliness or isolation

🔍 Detect situations of loneliness derived from a lack of knowledge of the **vehicular language or sensory difficulties**

🔍 Present the activities in a way that ensures they are **accessible to all adolescents and young people,** also to specific profiles that may suffer from loneliness

⊕ **Activate the alliances and assets of the relational map**

⊕ Identify the **interests and motivations** of these young people and adolescents

⊕ Generate **spaces of trust** which adolescents and young people feel part of and where they can feel listened to, recognised and valued

🔍⊕ **Construct a time-occupation map with those young people or adolescents who we believe to be in a situation of loneliness or social isolation.**

🔍⊕ Be active and alert in **special situations or periods:** holidays, public holidays or extraordinary situations

🔍⊕ Offer support to those young people or adolescents who **have a number of risk factors** for loneliness or who suffer from specific situations that may isolate them socially

🔍⊕ Promote **training activities** for adolescents and young people that allow them to acquire preventive tools for loneliness or strategies to cope with it

🔍⊕ Promote actions to **de-stigmatise the fact of being alone**

THE HOME ENVIRONMENT

🔍 Understand the **family and/or living situation** of those young people or adolescents who we think may be suffering from loneliness or isolation

🔍⊕ Offer support to those adolescents or young people who may suffer loneliness in their home environment - **arising from or aggravated** by exceptional situations

🔍⊕ Develop strategies to ensure the **physical and emotional well-being** of people where they live

🔍⊕ In cases where it is necessary, provide advice on **daily life management**

🔍⊕ Promote a **positive view of emotional relationships and couple relationships**

THE NETWORK OF CLOSE DAILY INTERACTIONS
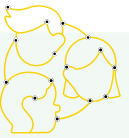
🔍 Offer support to those young people and adolescents who are at risk of suffering isolation from their **network of friends**

⊕ Offer advice to young people when looking for and/or changing jobs or improving their working conditions

⊕ Support young people to achieve their **academic goals**

🔍⊕ Offer support to adolescents and young people who suffer **bullying,** whether in the academic or work environment

🔍⊕ Promote a positive and empowering view of the **different types of diversity** (cultural, religious, sexual, etc.).

🔍⊕ Analyse, when necessary, the relationship adolescents and young people have with **social networks and new technologies**

🔍⊕ Promote **group activities** to encourage interaction between adolescents and young people. The aim is to increase their network of friends, to achieve successful experiences when interacting with other people and to generate complicity with professionals

THE COMMUNITY DIMENSION

🔍 Activate a **joint strategy among professionals** and youth organisations in the territory to tackle loneliness

🔍 Prioritise the promotion of a **neighbourhood free of discrimination and aggression** of any kind as a preventive mechanism for situations of loneliness or social isolation

⊕ Build a **geographical map** of the physical distance between the young person and their support network, when necessary.

🔍⊕ Carry out actions that make the **territory** a space where social relationships are strengthened

🔍⊕ Facilitate **knowledge of the neighbourhood** among adolescents and young people

🔍⊕ Promote **associationism** and **volunteering** by generating personal relationships

🔍⊕ Promote the establishment of **intimate and quality relationships**, away from the current trend of consumerism and immediacy

🔍⊕ Ensure youth leisure facilities and programmes are available during **holiday periods**

3.1 PROPOSED EVALUATION OF THE INITIATIVES FOR TACKLING LONELINESS

As part of the actions to tackle loneliness carried out by youth professionals, some key questions are proposed below to invite reflection. Specifically, there are two for each area and they help professionals to incorporate the loneliness perspective into their daily work. They can accompany the action to be carried out or serve as a self-assessment of the actions that are being carried out to identify or support young people who find themselves in a situation of loneliness. But they can also serve as an analysis of the initial situation of the group of adolescents and young people with whom we are working.
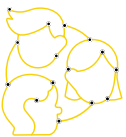
The young person
- Do we know who the young person interacts with and how?
- Do we know what needs and interests they have and what risks they face?

The home environment
- Do we know what the young person's family and living situation is?
- Do we know what the young person's physical and emotional well-being is?

The network of close daily interactions
- Do we know if the young person's friendship network produces healthy and positive relationships?
- Do we know if the young person needs specific support for personal goals?

The community dimension
- Do we work together with other professionals and services in the area?
- Do we know if the young person is aware of the services and opportunities offered by their reference community?
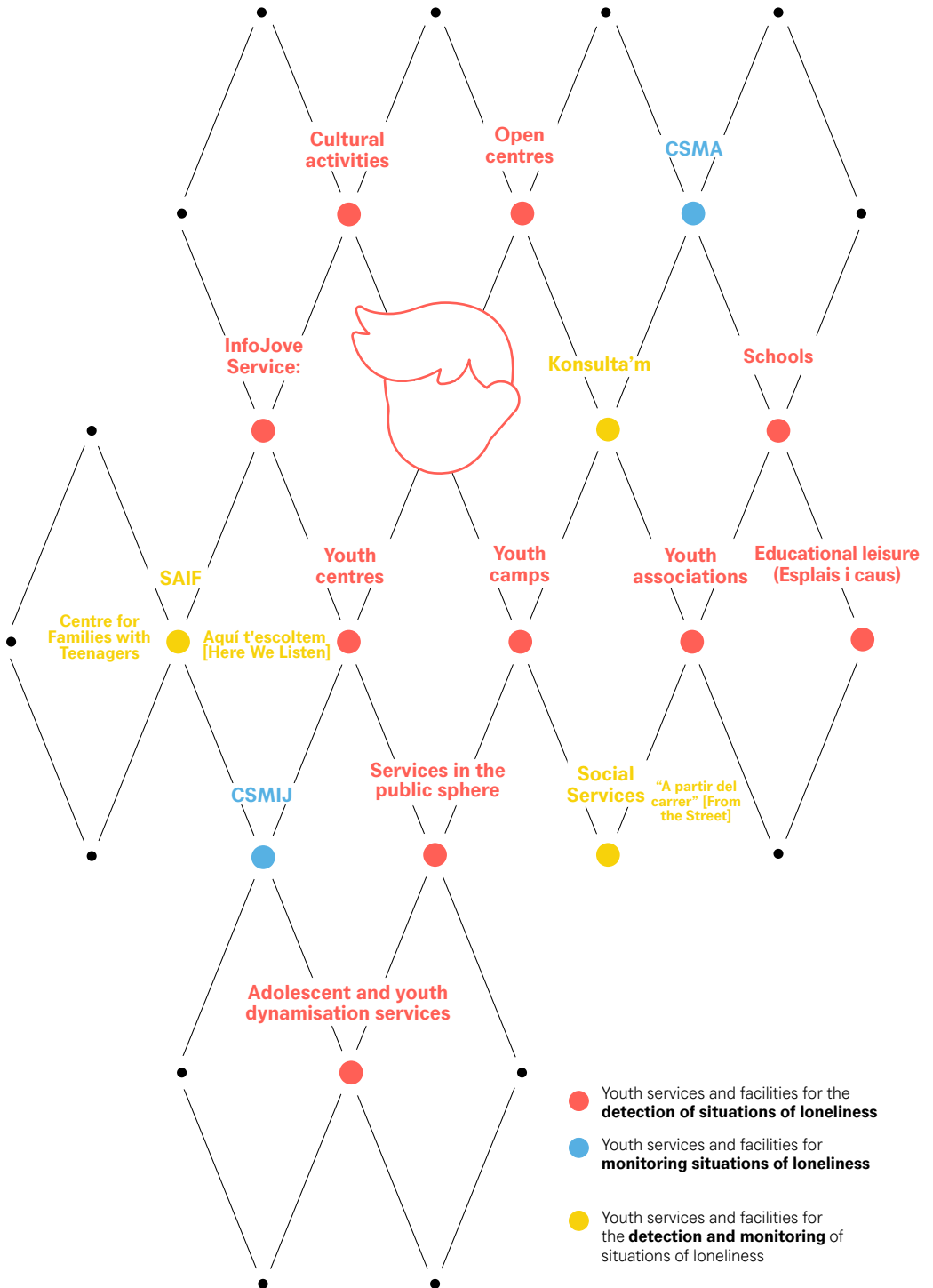
04
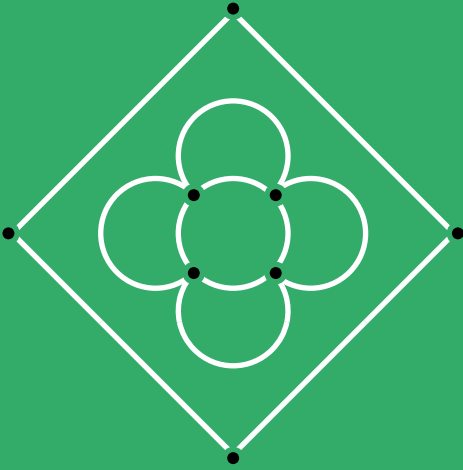
RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO WORK WITH

RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO WORK WITH

The following is a graphic compilation of different resources and services in the immediate environment with which to create alliances to tackle loneliness. Some of these resources are youth facilities and services that can detect cases of loneliness in adolescents and young people. Others have a more supportive and monitoring function in these situations. And there are also services and programmes that can serve both purposes. There will certainly be many other services and programmes with which we can work in a network, but these can serve as a starting point; knowing our immediate environment will be key to discovering them and, between all of us, weaving a network that serves to support adolescents and young people in situations of loneliness, where the young person is at the centre of this network.

- Youth services and facilities for **detecting** situations of loneliness
- Youth services and facilities for **monitoring** situations of loneliness.
- **Youth services and facilities for detecting and monitoring** situations of loneliness.

Cultural activities

Open centres

CSMA

InfoJove Service:

Konsulta'm

Schools

SAIF

Youth centres

Youth camps

Youth associations

Educational leisure (Esplais i caus)

Centre for Families with Teenagers

Aquí t'escoltem [Here We Listen]

CSMIJ

Services in the public sphere

Social Services

"A partir del carrer" [From the Street]

Adolescent and youth dynamisation services

● Youth services and facilities for the **detection of situations of loneliness**

● Youth services and facilities for **monitoring situations of loneliness**

● Youth services and facilities for the **detection and monitoring** of situations of loneliness

05

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