

SAWUBONA

Who is beside you?

Loneliness, listening
and belonging

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L2M Coaching



A room with choice

- 1** You can speak, write, draw or pass.
- 2** Share only what feels safe today.
- 3** Ask before giving advice.
- 4** Keep other people's stories private.

The facilitator will explain the limits of confidentiality.

How connected do I feel today?

My private reflection



What would one point higher look like?

0 = I feel very disconnected 10 = I feel as connected as I need

What we will practise

- 01 Notice the connection I need

- 02 Map the support available to me

- 03 Listen with permission

- 04 Choose one small next step

Old sayings, thoughtful questions

“No person is an island”

“You cannot clap with one hand alone”

“A problem shared is a problem halved”

Who helps? What kind of help? What feels safe to share?

Alone, isolated or lonely?

SOLITUDE

Time alone that I choose and may enjoy.

SOCIAL ISOLATION

Too few relationships, roles or interactions.

LONELINESS

A painful gap between the connection I have and the connection I need.

A person can feel lonely in a busy room.

Connection has several dimensions

WHO IS THERE?

People, roles and opportunities to meet.

WHAT SUPPORT?

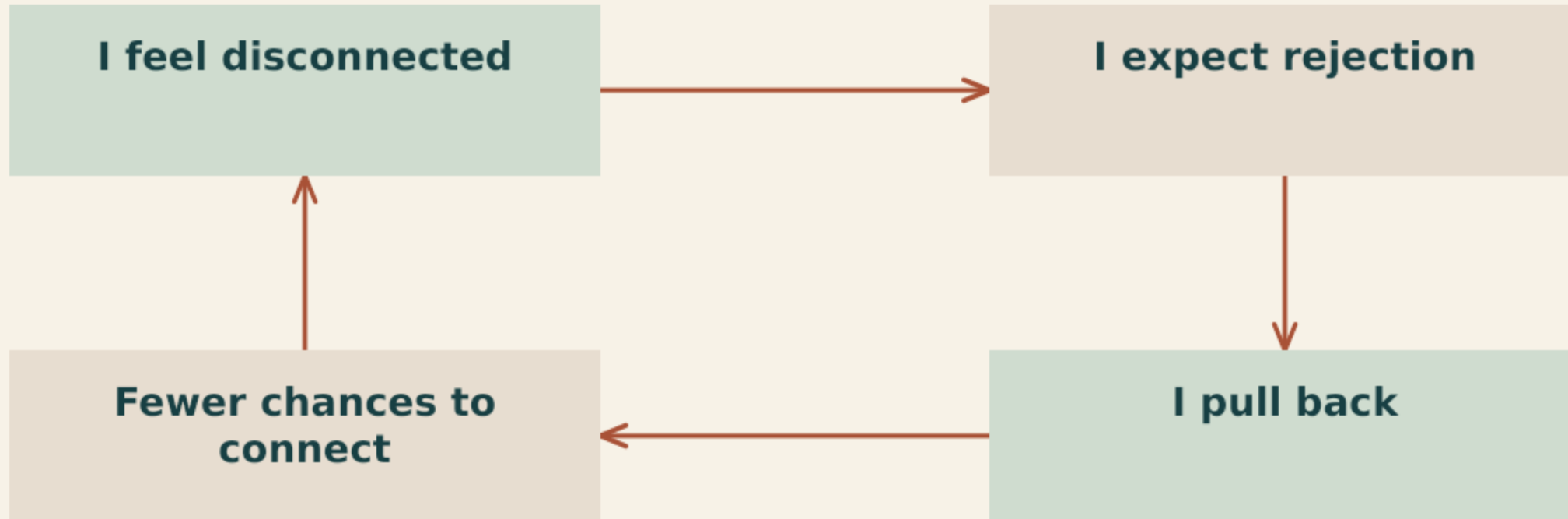
Company, understanding or practical help.

HOW DOES IT FEEL?

Safe, respectful and welcome?

A larger circle can offer more options. The quality of connection matters.

A possible pattern of disconnection



Where could a small, supported action interrupt this pattern?

Tariro's busy week

TARIRO

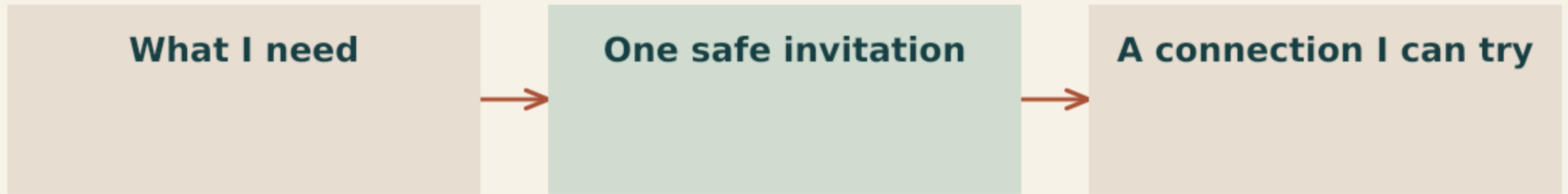
Messages arrive all day.

Tariro helps colleagues and family.

At night, there is nobody they feel able to call.

What might Tariro need before another invitation would help?

The first bridge can be small



A person, a place or a service

“Would you have ten minutes for a catch-up this week?”

My support map



Use initials, symbols or roles. A possible connection can go on the map too.

A map with room to grow

- 1** Add what already exists.
- 2** Mark what feels supportive.
- 3** Circle one connection to strengthen.
- 4** Add one possible route where a gap remains.

What do I need that this map does not yet offer?

Pause

Five minutes to rest

Water, quiet or movement if you choose

Permission comes first

“Is now a good time?”

“Would you like me to listen?”

“What would feel useful?”

The person chooses what to share and how much.

Sawubona listening

INVITE

Offer time and choice.

LISTEN

Allow pauses. Stay with their meaning.

REFLECT

“Have I understood you?”

AGREE

Ask what happens next.

A useful question: “What would help you feel less alone with this?”

Three roles, one conversation

SPEAKER

Choose a mild everyday topic or use Tariro.

LISTENER

Ask permission, listen and reflect.

OBSERVER

Notice choice, attention and consent.

Three rounds of 3 minutes. Rotate roles each round.

What helped me feel heard?

- 01 What did the listener do?
- 02 What felt uncomfortable or missing?
- 03 What will I practise again?

Discuss the listening process. Keep the speaker's story private.

Sharing the load



Share only what each person needs to know.

The problem may remain. The support around it can change.

A healthy boundary protects connection

“I can listen for ten minutes.”

“I cannot keep you safe on my own.”

“Shall we find the right support together?”

Choose a safe person, a suitable time and a level of detail that feels right.

When reaching out feels difficult

“I do not want to be a burden.”

Ask for a small, specific amount of time.

“I do not know anyone.”

Ask a host or service to help with a first introduction.

“They have not replied.”

Choose another safe option and give yourself time.

What practical barrier could a host, employer or community help remove?

One connection in the next seven days

WHO OR WHERE?

A safe person, group or service.

WHAT AND WHEN?

One specific, manageable invitation.

IF IT DOES NOT WORK?

A second route or a smaller step.

HOW WILL I REVIEW?

Notice what helped and what I need next.

Optional: agree one check-in, with permission and a clear date.

What is different now?

- 01 How connected do I feel today?
- 02 What helped me feel seen or heard?
- 03 What is my next small step?

A steady score is allowed. Support can take time to build.

A place beside you

Who could sit beside you this week?

Who could you gently invite?

Sawubona. I see you. I hear you.

Evidence and inspiration

WHO Social connection Q&A (2025)

WHO Commission on Social Connection report (2025)

Gallup workplace friendship research (updated 2024)

Inspiration: Joshua Freedman / Six Seconds community post

Full links and source notes appear in the facilitator guide.

Activities and layouts are original. These sources do not endorse this lesson.