

REFRAMING LONELINESS

How to become friends (and cope)
with an unpopular feeling

WHAT IS LONELINESS?

Aloneness

= a physical state;
being apart from others

Loneliness

= a mental and emotional state;
the feeling of being disconnected



Loneliness isn't about how many people you have in your life. It's about the quality of your relationships.



Loneliness in 2021



GB

34%



GER

26%



USA

31%

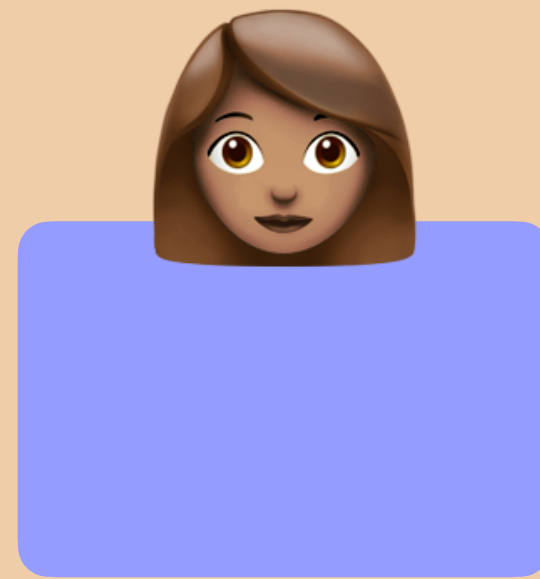
* of the people asked state that they feel lonely „often, always or some of the time“ (Feb. 2021)

Loneliness during the pandemic by age



24%

of adults between
55 and 65



61%

of young adults
between 18 and 25

... reported feeling serious loneliness in the prior month of the study



Loneliness is a
widespread phenomenon
that can affect
anyone at any time.



How chronic loneliness affects our health



Heart disease



Depression



Higher stress



Decreased memory



Drug abuse risk



Neurological changes



I felt lonely, because...

I knew nobody
in my town.

I was traveling for
work non stop.

My husband
passed away.

I had nobody
to talk to.

I had a
depression.

I was dating
but I couldn't
find love.

**HOW DOES
LONELINESS
ARISE?**



Stage 1

Temporary isolation

Stage 2

Social withdrawal

Stage 3

Chronic loneliness



EXERCISE

CIRCLE OF THE CLOSEST



1. Make a list of the people in your life – it's ok if there aren't many.
2. Choose all the people or just a few from the list and write them in the circles. The closer the people are to the inner dot, the closer they are to you (emotionally).
3. Reflect on the situation: Do you like it that way? What could you do to change things?
4. Pick out one, two or three people you'd like to talk to within the next days and schedule a meeting.



Nobody cares about me.

ETC.
I'm the most uninteresting person on earth.

Nobody understands me.

I'm wrong.

Nobody likes me anyway.

I'm a burden.

ETC.

ETC.



EXERCISE

ASKING FOR A FRIEND



Ask yourself the following:

1. What do I like about myself?
2. What kind of negative thoughts am I having about myself?
Do they depict reality?
3. What do others like about me?
4. When was the last time that I felt really good? What was I doing then?
5. What could I talk about / do for hours without getting bored?



Loneliness can motivate us
to rethink and reshape
our relationships with others
– and with ourselves.



EXERCISE

ANTI SMALL TALK



„Hey, I’m trying something new.
Is it ok if I ask you something?“

„Was there something that caught
your interest lately, if so, what was it?“

„What’s your favorite place on
earth and why?“

„What did you think of me when
we first met?“

Further resources



Books

- Cacioppo, J: Loneliness
- Spitzer, Manfred: Einsamkeit - die unerkannte Krankheit
- Dr. Wolf, Doris: Einsamkeit überwinden



Podcasts

- This American Life: How to Be Alone
- Work life: We don't have to fight loneliness alone
- The Lonely Hour



Videos

- In a nutshell: [Loneliness](#) (source: Youtube)



Thank you!

hello@shitshow.de | www.shitshow.de

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