Loneliness in adolescence

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Why is this important?
Loneliness can reduce mental performance

Lonelier people are more likely to be impulsive

Chronic loneliness is as detrimental as obesity and high blood pressure
Alcoholism and drug use

Increased stress levels

Depression and suicide

Cardiovascular disease and stroke

Antisocial behavior

Alcoholism and drug use
How should we tackle the loneliness epidemic?

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The loneliness epidemic

Press release

PM launches Government’s first loneliness strategy

Prime Minister Theresa May launches Government’s first loneliness strategy.

From: Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street, Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, Office for Civil Society, and The Rt Hon Theresa May MP

Published: 15 October 2018
Last updated: 16 October 2018, see all updates
Three quarters of GPs surveyed have said they are seeing between one and five people a day suffering with loneliness, which is linked to a range of damaging health impacts, like heart disease, strokes and Alzheimer’s disease. Around 200,000 older people have not had a conversation with a friend or relative in more than a month.

Up to one fifth of all UK adults feel lonely most or all of the time and with evidence showing loneliness can be as bad for health as obesity or smoking, the Prime Minister has also announced the first ever ‘Employer Pledge’ to tackle loneliness in the workplace.

Loneliness is one of the greatest public health challenges of our time. Theresa May said today as she launched the first cross-Government strategy to tackle it.
Loneliness in adolescence

Adolescent Loneliness and Health in Early Adulthood

Bridget J. Goosby, Anna Bellatorre, Katrina M. Walsemann, and Jacob E. Cheadle

See other articles in PMC that cite the published article.
Loneliness is most prevalent during adolescence with more than 70% of adolescents experiencing recurring loneliness at age 18, a rate that declines to 60% by ages 35–40, and 39% for older adults (Heinrich and Gullone 2006; Parlee 1979; Savikko et al. 2005).
Extant research using clinical and non-representative U.S. samples suggest that loneliness is directly associated with poorer mental and physical health during adolescence and early adulthood. For example, lonely adolescents report higher rates of depression and anxiety (Koenig and Abrams 1999), social withdrawal (Crick and Ladd 1993), suicide ideation and attempts (see Heinrich and Gullone 2006), psychosomatic complaints (i.e., headaches, nausea, etc.; Ponzetti 1990) and poorer overall general health (Mahon et al. 1993).

Cacioppo et al. 2009; Heinrich and Gullone 2006). There are several studies reporting that childhood loneliness is also linked to high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity, and major depressive disorder in adulthood (Danese et al. 2009; Cacioppo, Hawkley, and Thisted 2010; Caspi et al. 2006). Depression is also tied to an

Even in the presence of social support, however, lonely youth may be less able to adequately cope with stress (Larose and Bernier 2001). Specifically, individuals who feel socially isolated may have
Erdley 2007). Adolescents who do not feel like they are part of their school report poorer self-rated health and elevated depressive symptoms in early adulthood (Goosby and Walsemann 2012; Walsemann, Bell, and Goosby 2011) thus demonstrating the importance of social connections for subsequent health.
Consider a time when you have felt lonely.
What is loneliness?
Loneliness is a painful emotional state that occurs when there is “a discrepancy between...the desired and achieved patterns of social interaction” (Peplau and Perlman 1982, p.5).
What is a desired social interaction?
Desired Social Interaction

- Ability to share vulnerability
- Meaningful connection
- Common interests and values
- Purpose
The cure for loneliness
Connections
connection

/ˈkənˈnekt(ə)n/

See definitions in:

- All
- Electrical
- Crime · Informal
- Narcotics · Informal
- Christian

noun

1. a relationship in which a person or thing is linked or associated with something else. "the connections between social attitudes and productivity"

Similar: link, relationship, relation, relatedness, interrelation
FOMO vs JOMO
Solitude vs Loneliness
Home
Stigma
Press release

‘Let’s Talk Loneliness’ campaign launched to tackle stigma of feeling alone

As Loneliness Awareness Week begins today, a new campaign launched by Loneliness Minister Mims Davies is helping to tackle the stigma of loneliness and encourage people to speak out.
Previous research shows nearly three quarters (74%) of people said when they felt lonely, they didn’t tell anyone despite most having someone they could count on.
Founder of the Marmalade Trust Amy Perrin said:

“People rarely talk about loneliness, despite it being a very common feeling. When people do talk about loneliness, it’s often in **negative terms**, something that is **suffered from** or perhaps to say; ‘I admit it, I’m lonely’.

“Our wish is to change this habit of loneliness being seen as a **negative, weak or hopeless thing**. Though it can be an uncomfortable feeling, with the right support it can be temporary and can in fact be framed positively - a blank canvas on which currently lonely individuals can fill their lives with new friends, new conversations and new experiences.”
Loneliness in adolescence – COVID -19

Results

The prevalence of loneliness was 27% (530/1964). Risk factors for loneliness were younger age group (OR: 4.67–5.31), being separated or divorced (OR: 2.29), scores meeting clinical criteria for depression (OR: 1.74), greater emotion regulation difficulties (OR: 1.04), and poor quality sleep due to the COVID-19 crisis (OR: 1.30). Higher levels of social support (OR: 0.92), being married/co-habiting (OR: 0.35) and living with a greater number of adults (OR: 0.87) were protective factors.

Conclusions

Rates of loneliness during the initial phase of lockdown were high. Risk factors were not specific to the COVID-19 crisis. Findings suggest that supportive interventions to reduce loneliness should prioritise younger people and those with mental health symptoms. Improving emotion regulation and sleep quality, and increasing social support may be optimal initial targets to reduce the impact of COVID-19 regulations on mental health outcomes.
COMMENT | VOLUME 8, ISSUE 5, P353-354, MAY 01, 2021

Child mental health in England before and during the COVID-19 lockdown

Tamsin Newlove-Delgado » Sally McManus » Katharine Sadler » Sharon Thandi » Tim Vizard » Cher Cartwright » et al.

Published: January 11, 2021 » DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(20)30570-8 » Check for updates
More than a quarter of children (aged 5–16 years) and young people (aged 17–22) reported disrupted sleep and one in ten (5.4% of children and 13.8% of young people) often or always felt lonely. Both problems were more common in those with probable mental health problems, of whom 18.0% felt fearful of leaving the house because of COVID-19. Children with a parent in psychological distress were more likely to have a probable mental health problem. This is particularly concerning because parents, compared with working age adults without young children, have experienced larger than average increases in mental distress during the pandemic, which suggests that support for parents at this time matters for child mental health.¹
Those who perceive themselves as lonely may not necessarily lack social relationships, but instead may consider their relationships as inadequate or poor in quality (Hawkley and Cacioppo 2010).
Thank you for listening

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