

How should students deal with loneliness

Yupeng Hua
Jason Fong Shen Yik
Zhenhao Shao



Photo Source: No Name (2020) at <https://www.medicircle.in/loneliness-obesity-biggest-killer-elderly>

What is loneliness?

As stated in *Loneliness* (n.d.) done by The University of Melbourne, loneliness can be experienced at any time in many forms by both domestic and international students.

What's more, *Loneliness* (n.d.) also points out that loneliness differs from aloneness and isolation and while spending some time alone can be a deliberate decision, loneliness is seldom a choice. When separated from usual friends, support networks or family, students can feel both isolated and lonely. One may feel lonely when surrounded by people and experience a sense of disconnection from the rest of a group.

Loneliness. (n.d.). Retrieved November 26, 2020, from <https://services.unimelb.edu.au/counsel/resources/relationships/loneliness>

Why do international students feel lonely?

1. **International students** feel lonely because it's difficult to make friends when cultural differences between people.
2. **International students** feel lonely because long-distance relationships can't replace in-person relationships.
3. **International students** feel lonely because their family and old friends cannot fully relate to them (Because of the distance).

Michelle H Lim, T. (n.d.). Many of Us Are Lonely During The Pandemic But Struggle to Admit It. Here Are The Signs. Retrieved November 26, 2020, from <https://www.theserviette.com/blog/5-reasons-internationals-feel-lonely>



Photo Source: Arlie Whitlow (2016) at <https://arliewhitlow.com/how-to-get-happy/>

Strategies for overcoming loneliness

According to the article, *Loneliness* (n.d.), written by The University of Melbourne, here are some tips for dealing with loneliness.

Extending your network

Be proactive and reach out to people both within and outside of the university community.

Deepening relationships

Relationships where you can share personal, private parts of your life and feel understood can significantly ease loneliness.

Reducing personal obstacles

Awkwardness, shyness or anxiety can get in the way of interactions with others. Many students experience some level of discomfort when meeting new people or interacting in group settings.

Spending time alone in a meaningful way

Among other mechanisms used to cope with loneliness, *Rokach & Brock (1998)* named the frequent use of self-reflective and self-development strategies. Spending time alone offers the opportunity to discover more about oneself and practice individual creativity. Being mindful of how you spend your time alone helps insuring those activities will be pleasurable and fulfilling for you.

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Photo Source: Iyana Jones (2020)
at <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/how-to-deal-with-loneliness>

How loneliness affect your health?

Hwang, T., Rabheru, K., Peisah, C., Reichman, W., & Ikeda, M. (2020, October) in the article "Loneliness and social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic" point out that loneliness is associated with various physical and mental repercussions, including elevated systolic blood pressure and increased risk for heart disease. Both loneliness and social isolation have been associated with an increased risk for coronary artery disease-associated death, even in middle-aged adults without a prior history of myocardial infarction. Furthermore, research has shown that both loneliness and social isolation are independent risk factors for higher all-cause mortality



Photo Source: No Name at
<https://pixabay.com/es/illustrations/covid-19-virus-coronavirus-pandemia-4960254/>

Problems

Hwang, T (2020) suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to implementation of unprecedented "social distancing" strategies crucial to limiting the spread of the virus. He says, "In addition to quarantine and isolation procedures for those who have been exposed to or infected with COVID-19, social distancing has been enforced amongst the general population to reduce the transmission of COVID-19."

Loneliness and social isolation frequently co-occur and are all too common in older adults. "While the term loneliness refers to subjective feelings, social isolation is defined by the level and frequency of one's social interactions." Hwang, T (2020) says. As a generally accepted concept, loneliness is defined as the subjective feeling of being alone, while social isolation describes an objective state of individuals' social environments and interactional patterns. Studies suggest that while loneliness and social isolation are not equal to each other, both can exert a detrimental effect on health through shared and different pathways.



Photo Source: Avsnitt at
<https://poddtoppen.se/podcast/1150124880/somethin-g-you-should-know/how-to-deal-with-defensive-people-understanding-the-mother-son-relationship>

How to deal with loneliness in the current pandemic

- 1) **Keep connections:** -spend more time with family -maintain social connection through technology (Video Call / Voice Call)
- 2) **Manage emotions and psychiatric symptoms** -Listen to **relaxing music** (Can act as a distraction to your emotions) - Play video games or look up for something to learn online
- 3) **Maintain basic needs and healthy activities** -do outdoor activities while following the social distance rules -maintain physical and mental activities to prevent overthinking (Meditation, Home Workout)
- 4) **Have meaningful conversations.** Don't talk too much about the pandemic, Talk about something interesting in your life, like your pet, or a wonderful football game.