

# Loneliness: an introduction



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**Adolescent's Loneliness**

According to APA Dictionary of Psychology, Loneliness means cognitively or emotionally discomfort of perceiving oneself to feel alone or solitary.

However, different subfields of psychology can explain it differently. Social psychology explains loneliness is a kind of emotional distress when social relationship becomes a problem while Cognitive psychology says it is an emotional distress when an individual wants and actual social relationship isn't met.

Loneliness is rather a subjective feeling. Different persons can experience level and duration of loneliness differently. This applies to adolescent as well. For example: when Harry failed his exam, he got so desperate that he kept himself isolated for a month. Meanwhile, Tom also failed his exam. He felt bad but able to pull himself after a week. One can face loneliness in a temporary or long condition. Not all the persons face the same situation will result in experiencing loneliness in the same condition. One can feel, think and face the problems that lead to loneliness differently.

Loneliness is totally different from solitary. Solitary doesn't accompany with negative emotions such as fear and sadness while loneliness do. One can feel lonely when distress and one can enjoy work things alone without feeling lonely. So, when one is accompanied with negative emotions, it is possible for one to feel lonely. The negative emotions are usually associated with fear, anxiety, depression, guilt and etc. Also, loneliness can also make a person thinks negatively which normally links to depression. Sometimes, to an extreme extend, loneliness can cause one to suicide or self-injured.

**Signs of loneliness**

Normally, lonely people have these signs of loneliness: First, they can have negative emotions. Secondly, they can have very little friends. Thirdly, they can have poor communication skills. Forth, they can feel left out. Firth, they can be good in recognizing emotional expression. Sixth, they like talking more about themselves rather than taking interest listening to what their partner has to say.

**Causes of loneliness**

First reason for adolescent to get lonely is moving out to a new environment such as a new country or school. This usually applies to fresh students who have just transfer to a new college or university. Especially if they live far outside from their home, they are likely to miss their family and their loved one. Thus, it causes them to feel lonely. However, this usually lasts temporarily until we become closely adjusted to the environment and makes new friends.

Second reason is to get caught in lovesick because of falling out in love for the first time or had a broken intimate relationship. It is one of the detrimental problems to adolescent. Lovesick victims, they often think breaking up with someone you love is just like losing him or her by your side and losing someone special from your life. This feeling often similar to the death of someone you love. This gives the feeling of torment, painful and powerful enough to turn a lovesick person to a lonely person.

Third reason is sexual abuse. When one is sexually abused during adolescent, whether is going to lead to emotionally or physically traumatized, he or she can feel desperate and lonely, doesn't know who to

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talk to but to suffer every time when thinking about it. This may slowly make the victim avoid talking to others. Since sexually abuse is rather a shame topic, it is unlikely the victim would want to bring up and talk about it even to a closest friend or family member.

Fourth reason is interpersonal rejection such as relationship rejection, friendship rejection and playmate rejection. Sometimes, when a person often got rejected, it is possible that one will expect a negative expectation on the successful of attracting and forming an interpersonal relationship with others. They become depress and pessimist. Slowly, they feel lonely because they believe no one would accept them. They are likely to feel lack of caring and love.

Fifth reason is feeling of having poor body image; Especially girls who looks fat, overweight, lot of pimples on their faces are likely to feel their body are negative than males. They may loss confident on their attraction on others and are likely to shutdown themselves. They are afraid of being rejected by others or hate the way they look. Unlike guys, girls tend care a lot of their self-image especially body image.

### **Effects of loneliness**

The first effect of loneliness is shut down. Most of the time, we can get shut down when we are caught in a lovesick, broken heart or rejection. Because we are so afraid to experience those emotional fallouts again, we tend to shutdown. Girls are more likely to shut down when they got seriously rejected or reject a guy because of the hurt that the guy has caused making the girls to lose all the trust and acceptance. We can sometimes feel lonely

and want to establish a new relationship but at the same time feeling afraid to love because of the possibility of emotional falling.

The second effect of loneliness is depression and suicide. It is dangerous when adolescences experience loneliness with completely sense of hopelessness, results in despair and can sometimes lead to suicide. When we feel really lonely, we can feel really depress; lost the ways to solve their problems cause us to feel worthless. Since lonely, depress persons are likely to think negatively, they tend to feel selfish for not thinking of others who cares for them. This kind of situation can be very likely to give us an unconsciously feeling or thought for an attempt to suicide.

The third effect of loneliness is self-injured. Sometimes, lonely people with full hopelessness choose self-injured as an alternative to suicide. Because they are afraid to die, they choose to hurt themselves in such way that sometimes for just a purpose to draw attention from others to care for them so that they can avoid being lonely. Sometimes, they do it to control or release their emotions such as self-punishing for being guilty. For some reasons, most victims are female.

The fourth effect of loneliness is the use of alcohol and other forms of drug abuse. Sometimes, lonely adolescents sometime choose drugs as a way to express their negative emotions such as regret and sadness. Lonely adolescents with depression, they usually blame themselves for being useless or sometime guilty or regret for things they have done.

**Dealing with loneliness**

Lonely persons often aware that they are lonely but do not know how to deal with the loneliness. Here, we have 5 ways to deal with loneliness:

The first way to deal with loneliness is join in activities that you can social with others. For example, join volunteer or community works. Also, try going to social gathering can help you to get exposed to many people. When you go, introduce yourself to someone and begin a conversation, you may likely to find someone who shares similar interest with you. In addition, try joining in any sport club or any other activities that may interest you. Doing something that interest you can be really enjoyable. It makes you happy and this can help to motivate ourselves to share our feeling and passion with others.

The second way to deal with loneliness is engage in positive behaviors when meeting new people. This will help to improve your self esteem during a conversation. Try acting out that you look like a nice, considerate, honest, kind, gentle and trustworthy person. Most important, always make positive comments rather than good comments even if you feel to disagree with your speaker. Then, you are most likely welcome to make new friends because of your first impression on others.

The third way to deal with loneliness is thinks positively. Thinking optimistically and avoid pessimism thought is a good start because it helps to increase your positive mood and confidence level. These can really help to deal with stress, depress and lonely situation. Sometimes, learning to think positively helps to control our social world and environment.

The fourth way to deal with loneliness is to read a self-help book that help to deal with loneliness; It can be really helpful alternative choice if you do not wish to get help from a counselor service. Although give yourself a chance to see a counseling psychologist is really helpful to get rid of your loneliness, you may still feel insecure to do. So, let yourself open up the book, read and understand about loneliness is a beginning step to knowing more about your own loneliness. You can allow yourself to accept your own loneliness and learn to deal with it.

The fifth way to deal with loneliness is to see a professional therapist. A professional therapist will consult with your problems and sometimes offer therapies. Here is an example of a common therapy for social problems. It is Social skill training. It helps lonely persons who can't deal with social, interpersonal situation. There are numbers of approaches in this training. One generally used approach is to observe the positive behaviors in a particular video and then practice, rehearse to mimic these behaviors. When ready, he or she will be put into an actual conversation practice. The effectiveness is proven to be remarkable and marvelous during short period and long period. Once a lonely person learns to think a social situation into a new, positive way, he/she can confidently interact with people. This helps them to build more positive self-image and capable of making new friends in the future.