

## EFFECT OF PSYCHO-SOCIAL FACTORS ON LONELINESS

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### **Abstract**

“Loneliness” as a phenomenon that has given rise to such of being alone, solitude alienation, isolation and loneliness in anxiety. Man is a social animal. He cannot live life alone. Loneliness needs not coincide with aloneness, as both are not the same. Loneliness refers to the subjective discomfort we feel when our social relationship lack some important feature. It is our nature and need to meet people, spend time with them, party and celebrate together. On the contrary, if someone lives alone, does not get along with people, there are no people who spend time with him, and then it is considered a big problem. This is the reason why loneliness has been used as a punishment. People are imprisoned alone in jails. The mentally ill are kept alone with chains. Loneliness is so dangerous that loneliness is being given the status of disease in many countries today. People are being provided psychological help to deal with loneliness. So, is loneliness really dangerous and should be avoided at all costs? How much you get from your family and friends affects your health a lot. Loneliness makes you sick and not just mentally, physically. Loneliness is a painful awareness that one's social relationships are less meaningful than one desire. Keeping this viewpoint the present study “Effect of psychosocial factors on loneliness” has been taken up.

**Keywords:** loneliness, Psycho-social factors, Health, Family, Friends, Society

### **1.0 Introduction**

Loneliness has been defined as a condition that is characterised by subjective feelings of social pain and/or isolation. It may also involve the longing for more social interaction than being experienced at a certain time. Loneliness is commonly related to self-depression, low self-esteem, lower social risk taking, self-consciousness, introversion, less expressed inclusion of the love for others because of timorousness. Loneliness as a very important temperament variable in current psychological literature is of specific interest to social psychologists. Most likely the majority expertise painful feeling of isolation and loneliness at

a while in their lives. **Ponzetti Jr, J. J. (1990)** “opinioned that to feel lonely is to feel excluded from a group, unloved by those around you, unable to share your private concerns, or different and alienated from those in your surroundings”. Almost everyone has experienced loneliness at some point. This is the pain we've felt after a breakup, perhaps the loss of a loved one, or moving away from home. We are vulnerable to feeling lonely at any point in our lives. Many variables related to family or family structure such as family size, parental disinterest, household crowding, child rearing condition, rejected or neglected family etc. are linked more or less to loneliness.

## 2.0 Literature review

Loneliness is a serious problem to the society where individual suffers from different types of mental tension. The studies done in the context of loneliness on various factors are as follows. **Lenger et al. (1974)**, found parental coldness or parental rejection a causal factor of loneliness. Sullivan (1953) postulated that loneliness may be present even in the pre-adolescence. However, it manifests clearly in adolescence. However in one of the most significant studies **Shalini Bhogale (1991)** explored the relationship of age, sex, sibling position, religion and culture with loneliness and in general concluded that Hindus experienced greater loneliness followed by Muslims and Christians. Peplau and Perlman (1982) in an empirical study revealed that sex, education and socio-economic status are closely associated with loneliness. The results of the study indicate that there is gender difference in their relation to kin and non-kin. In an experimental study in which subject had to interact with a stranger **Hawkey, L. C. (2001)**, found that those who are lonely were observed to refer to the other person less, to be less inclined to follow up on topics introduced by the stranger, and to ask fewer questions. **Ammaniti, Ercolani, & Tambelli (1988)** found that loneliness increases with age and is more evident in small town as opposed to medium sized or longer metropolitan areas. **Russell (1980)** found the extremely high positive correlation in loneliness and shyness, and introversion personality. In a study **Russell et al. (1980)** have found that lonely college student is to feel angry, self-enclosed, empty, and awkward. Loneliness has consistently been linked to anxiety level and depression.

### **3.0 Objective of the study**

- To study the relationships among effect of psycho-social factors on loneliness
- To Study various factors related with loneliness.
- To study ways and means for managing loneliness.
- To study effect of loneliness with respect to psycho-social concern.

### **4.0 Concept of Loneliness**

Loneliness refers to an individual's subjective perception that he/she lacks close interpersonal relationships. Loneliness needs not coincide with aloneness, as both are not the same. Loneliness refers to the subjective discomfort we feel when our social relationship lack some important feature. 'Loneliness is the unpleasant experience that occurs when a person's network of social relationships is deficient in some important way, either quantitatively or qualitatively.' Loneliness is a situation experienced by the individual as one where there is an unpleasant or inadmissible lack of (quality of) certain relationships. The subjective evaluation of the network is the intermediating factor between the descriptive, objective characteristics of the network and loneliness. Despite the absence of a direct link between social isolation and loneliness, many of the same factors are associated with both.

### **5.0 Types of loneliness**

This is a brief summary of the types of loneliness that we may encounter throughout our lives. Of course, these are not mutually exclusive categories, so some may overlap each other.

#### **5.1. Relevant privacy**

Loneliness does not always extend to all walks of life; sometimes, it is limited to one context. For example, someone who does not have friends or acquaintances in the faculty who attends classes or work can experience loneliness there, although in another place he feels the closeness of many loved ones.

#### **5.2. Momentary Loneliness**

When analysing the type of loneliness people experience, it is important to consider the time factor. In case of transient, it appears under specific circumstances and does not last for more than a day.

### **5.3. Chronic Loneliness**

This type of solitude does not depend on a specific context or situation; rather it perpetuates itself in time, living in different areas of a person's life. Of course, this does not mean that it will never disappear or that we can do nothing to make it disappear; given the right conditions, it can weaken until it disappears, but it costs more than the other circumstances of the other situation.

### **5.4. Self-attachment privacy**

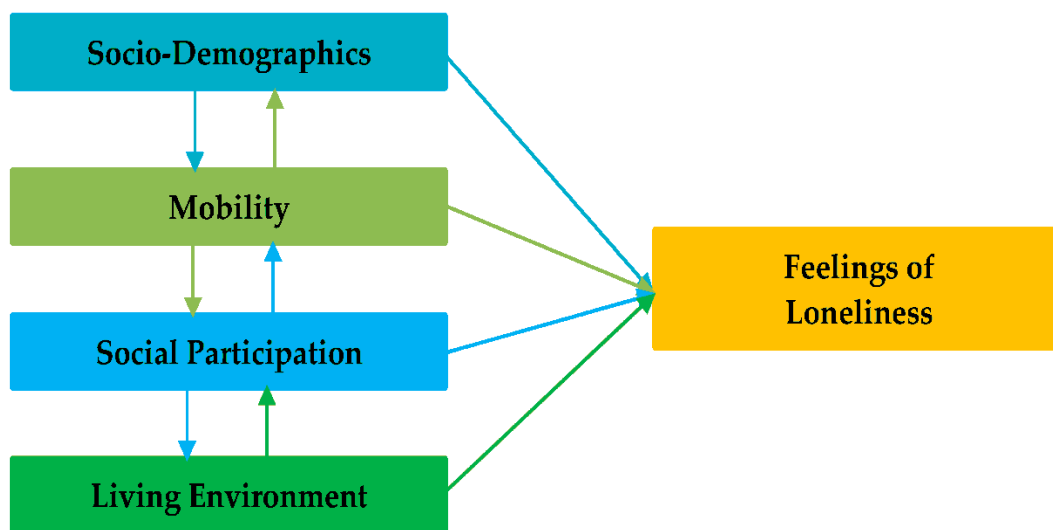
There are cases in which loneliness is the result of a separation that it has decided to use as a defining element of its life. For example, people who are afraid of being cheated by friends or loved ones, and who develop misanthropic attitudes, in general, for mistrust of others.

### **5.5. Existing Solitude**

Existential loneliness is very different from other types of loneliness, as it affects the relatively low quality and quantity of interactions with other people. It is a state in which the feeling of loneliness is mixed with the existential scepticism that exists and connects us to others

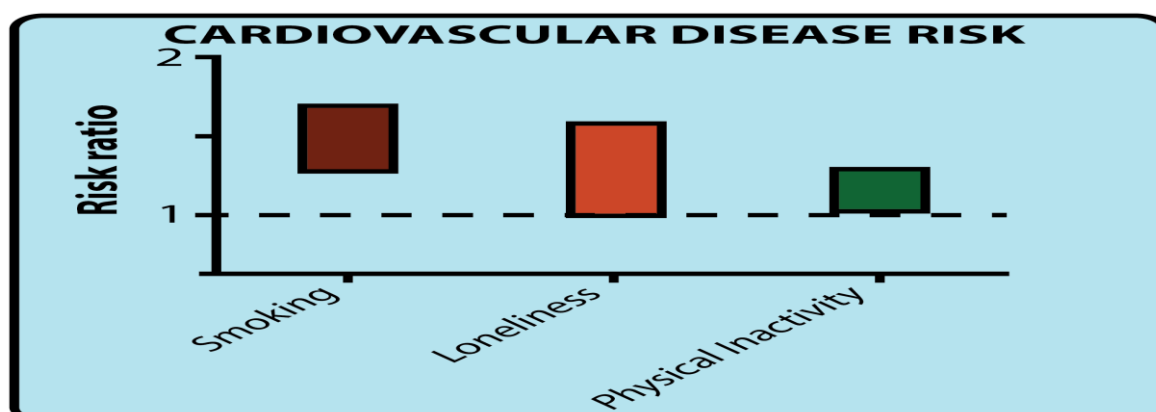
### **6.0 Feelings of Loneliness**

Feelings of loneliness can be of any age and kind. One reason for this is hesitancy, due to which the person becomes uncomfortable to meet. Even if he goes to a group party or lunch, he cannot be comfortable. If not dealt with at the right time, it can cause depression. If you too are struggling with feelings of loneliness or are more hesitant, then these tips can come in handy. The first and important step to deal with this feeling is to accept yourself. No person is perfect, so do not expect to be perfect. Accept your lack of goodness, it will increase your confidence level and make you easy to get mixed up. It is good to be alone, but living in the feeling of loneliness can prove harmful. Being alone and lonely are two different tendencies. You should never make the mistake of understanding them. Whatever I am, I am, I am good; I should accept this thing with a big heart and be a true friend of my own.



### 7.0 Factors Related to Loneliness

Loneliness and weak social connections are associated with a reduction in lifespan similar to that caused by smoking. It is believed that the majority folks had some experiences of loneliness as we have a tendency to develop. This is often very true if one's family has touched from one location to a different or if events like sickness caused implemented periods of solitude. These unpleasant episodes are, however, typically overcome, and don't appear to be the most important cause to adult loneliness. Loneliness is an increasing public health concern that is largely ignored in mental health service delivery and policy. Chronic loneliness is experienced by approximately 10-15% of the general population across all ages (Jopling K. et al, 2016). Two additional factors may also predispose adolescents toward loneliness. First, loneliness may be fostered by features of the sociocultural situation of adolescents. Second, such personal characteristics as shyness, low self-esteem, inadequate social skills and low social desirability may set the stage for loneliness.



## 8.0 Methodology used for Sample and Analysis

The sample consisted of one hundred subjects including 50 males and 50 females' adolescent students. The three groups of high, middle, and low income group of socio-economic status were selected after seeking their parents and living conditions. The subjects were selected from different colleges of Haryana State. The purpose of the study and the details regarding loneliness were explained in their mother tongue. The response was analysed using statistical analysis.

## 9.0 Test Reliability and Validity of the sample:

Test validity was applied to check the reliability of the questionnaire, The coefficient of validity was determined by computing the coefficient of correlation between scores on Comprehensive Anxiety Test and on Taylor's Manifest Anxiety Scale. It was found significant beyond .001 level of confidence.

Reliabilities		
K.R. Method Test-retest reliabilities		
N=100 (Equal Number of Boys and Girls)		
Time gap of 2 weeks' Time gap of 4 weeks		
.72	.83	.92

## 10. Loneliness scale used for analysis

"Loneliness is the unpleasant experience that occurs when a person's network of social relations is deficient in some way". A pool of sixty two statements was prepared to make a prediction of perceived loneliness of respondents. Items were framed quite in concordance with the concept and characterise of loneliness. Scale was framed with concerning the respondent subject to confidence.

## 11.0 Analysis and Interpretation

### 11.01 Loneliness and Anxiety among Boys and Girls

The total sample consisted of 50 boys and 50 girls. 50 boys were divided in two socio-economic statuses; similarly the 50 girls were also divided. They were administered the test given below:

(i) Loneliness Scale

(ii) Anxiety Scale

Scales	Boys (N-50)		Girls (N-50)		t	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Loneliness	79.30	13.50	77.05	11.48	1.03	NS
Anxiety	33.76	7.10	10.50	11.25	1.36	NS

Table: shows that there is difference on loneliness scale of boys and girls. The difference between the two means of boys and girls was 'not found to be significant. The above given results show that (boys & girls) do not differ on loneliness and Anxiety scale. This is obvious that the effect of loneliness on boys and girls are same as well as their anxiety levels which have no significant difference.

### 11.02 Difference on 'Anxiety Scale' among Boys and Girls

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	P
Boys	50	33.23	7.10	17.23	<.01
Girls	50	11.465	2.13		

The Values of table indicates about Difference on 'Anxiety Scale'. Result shows the greater intensity or anxiety in the boys of high. It makes it clear that the boys) are more anxious than the girls). The difference between the mean of boys and girls of average has been found to be insignificant. It may be said the boys and girls of average are found to be having more or less similar frequency of loneliness. The observed 't' value is 17.23,  $p < .01$ . The finding shows that girls are more anxious than the boys with regard to Difference on 'Anxiety Scale' among Boys and Girls.

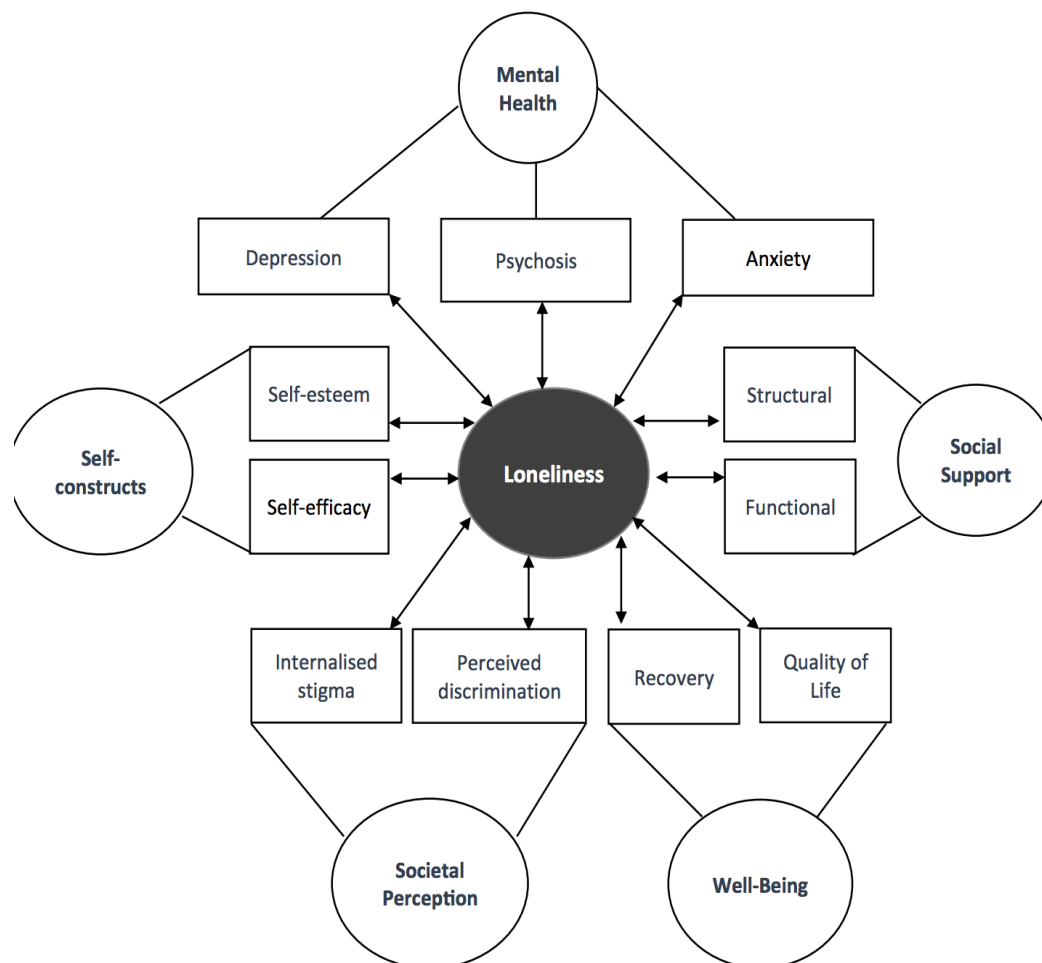
### 11.3 Loneliness and older people

Another scale of loneliness considered with loneliness and older people. Some evidences of loneliness are related with data found in a research study conducted in subject area of the Haryana District. These data shows how older people struggling in this arena with loneliness. Data below mentioned are as follows.

- The number of over-50s experiencing loneliness is set to reach two million by 2025/6. This compares to around 1.4 million in 2016/7 – a 49% increase in 10 years
- There are 1.2 million chronically lonely older people in the city of Hariyana
- Half a million older people go at least five or six days a week without seeing or speaking to anyone at all.
- Over half (51%) of all people aged 75 and over live alone (Office for National Statistics 2010. General Lifestyle Survey 2008).
- Two fifths all older people (about 3.9 million) say the television is their main company.
- There are over 2.2 million people aged 75 and over living alone in Great Britain, an increase of almost a quarter (24%) over the past 20 years (ONS).



**Figure: 1 Theoretical model of loneliness in individuals with psychosis**



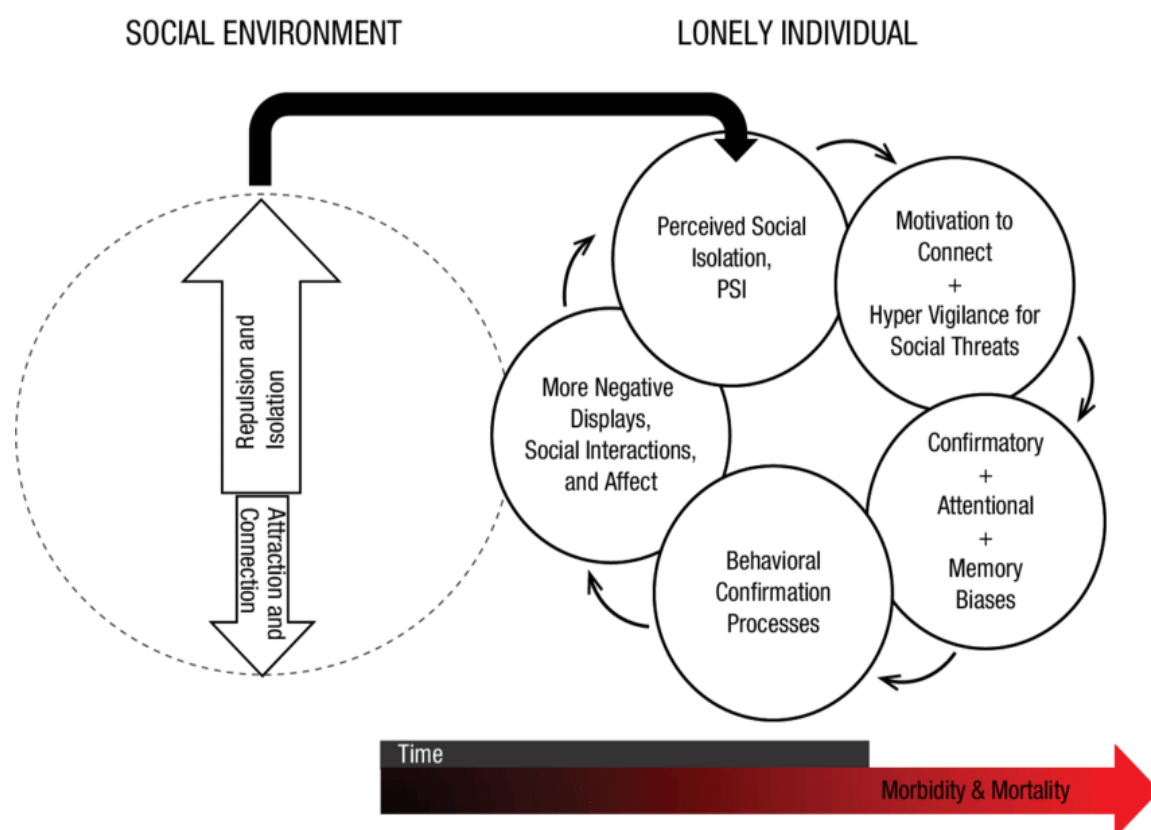
## 12.0 Effect of Loneliness

**12.1 Risk of dementia** - Dementia is a group of many symptoms. In this, the person is not able to remember anything. Dementia occurs more in older people when their children leave them alone. When older people suffer from loneliness, their memory begins to weaken. Then gradually these people fall prey to serious diseases like Alzheimer's or dementia.

**12.2 Risk of Mental Disease** - The risk of becoming mentally ill also increases significantly due to loneliness. It has been proved in many studies that by being alone for a long time, people are exposed to serious mental illnesses such as psychosis.

**13.3 Depression** - A person suffering from loneliness is at highest risk of depression. This has also become evident in many researches. Loneliness leads to a weakening of people's self-confidence and a sense of temper and irritability begins to appear in them.

**14.4 Insomnia problem** - sleeping alone causes problems related to sleep. At the same time, the risk of diseases like insomnia increases later. Due to lack of sleep, the hormones of the body have a bad effect, which also stops the growth of muscles.



## 15.0 Suggested Measures on Loneliness

### 15.1 Benefits of Loneliness

From all the research, it has been clearly known that the friends of introverted people are more strongly connected. Qualitatively they are also associated with better people. For those who are not introverted, being alone for some time can be beneficial. This helps them to relax. According to the survey conducted on ten thousand people worldwide, five top tips to relax people were going to work alone, like reading. The third most popular formula was spending time alone while spending time with friends and family was number 12. Being isolated keeps your brain focused. This gives rise to creativity. When our mind is stable, it

works naturally. He saves memories. Clears out old waste and gives birth to new ideas. This is the reason that often our best ideas are born in the bathroom or on a walk alone. We get more benefit from loneliness. That is, we feel the need to connect with new people and expand our scope. So if you constantly feel lonely. If you are a victim of depression or you have other health problems, you should contact a doctor. But if you want to spend some time alone with yourself, if you want to read something or do something different, then enjoy this loneliness.

### **15.02 How to overcome loneliness**

A person who is struggling with loneliness and goes into depression, then under treatment, a complete profile of his personality, family and the surrounding environment is made. The factors of his loneliness are understood and through counselling, medicines and psychotherapy he hopes to live in it. In this way, an effort is made to give him a healthy, meaningful social environment. When someone goes away and feels lonely because of his lack, then think that he wanted to see you happy, not unhappy. Do not separate yourself from friends and family during your loneliness due to being deceived in love. Stay around them. Do not blame yourself Keep yourself fit with regular exercise and healthy lifestyle. Do not let negative thoughts come to your mind. Stay away from the consumption of alcohol and drugs.

### **15.03 Loneliness and social behaviour**

Several studies were done to know that social contracts of lonely people. Actually loneliness is not related to the told number of infractions, average length of interactions, proportions of interactions with opposite sex, or perceived intimacy level of the interactions. Loneliness concerns the strategies that people adopt in order to cope with and solve their feelings of loneliness. Every person is connected to a daily envisaged life apart from his normal life. Such a life is lonely. In a way, it is a world of personal suffering. These sufferings in the mind of the person are emotional breakdowns of the problems of daily life, from which neither a person's effort for liberation is successful nor does he get any help. Lonely people may lack positive feedback from their social environment, which leads them to devalue themselves as well as to expect rejection. The available evidences suggested that lonely subjects tend to behave in a less responsive, less intimate and more self-focused manner in interactions with others. **Ostrov and Offer (1976)** reported that, for both boys and girls, self-

reported loneliness was more widespread in the younger age groups. **Susan L. Duncan, R.N. (1995)** in her article 'Loneliness: A health hazard of modern times', describes loneliness as solitary without company, lacking sympathetic or friendly companionship or relationships. Loneliness is a condition that crosses all gender ethnic and socioeconomic barriers.

## 16.0 Conclusions

Research that causes us comprehends the connections among dejection and significant factors in individuals with psychosis stays at its earliest stages because of an absence of excellent examinations. Thinking about the significant job of dejection in recuperation from psychosis, a multi-viewpoint psychosocial intercession which explicitly measures and targets depression is woefully required. The concept of anxiety occupies a very important place in the study of human personality and multitude activates of the mind. Broadly speaking, anxiety is a mental state of an organism which is characterized mainly by nervousness, apprehension and uneasiness. In fact, evidence has been growing that when our need for social relationship is not met, we fall apart mentally and even physically. Despite the negative effects of loneliness, it can hardly be considered abnormal. It is a most normal feeling. **Russel and his colleagues (1980)** indicated that there is a relationship between loneliness and socioeconomic status, respondents who report having larger incomes and greater educations are less lonely. In fact, evidence has been growing that when our need for social relationship is not met, we fall apart mentally and even physically.

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