



Faithful Conversations: Embracing Mental Health and Wellbeing

Loneliness And Re Socialization
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Background

**Meredith College:
Undergraduate degree in Social Work**

**North Carolina State University:
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**Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor
Associate**

Social Worker with families and
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School Counselor

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***All of us experience loneliness at some point in our lives.**

***Loneliness is not simply being alone. You can be in a relationship or part of a large family and still feel lonely.**

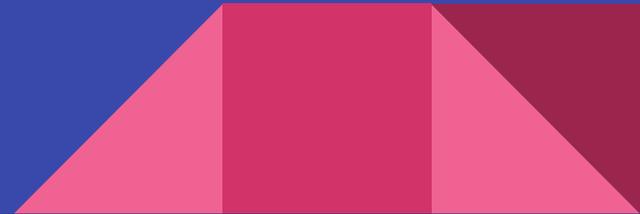
***You can be successful and fulfilled by many aspects of your life and also feel lonely at the same time.**

***Just like other feelings, loneliness can fluctuate.**

***Some of us enjoy being alone**

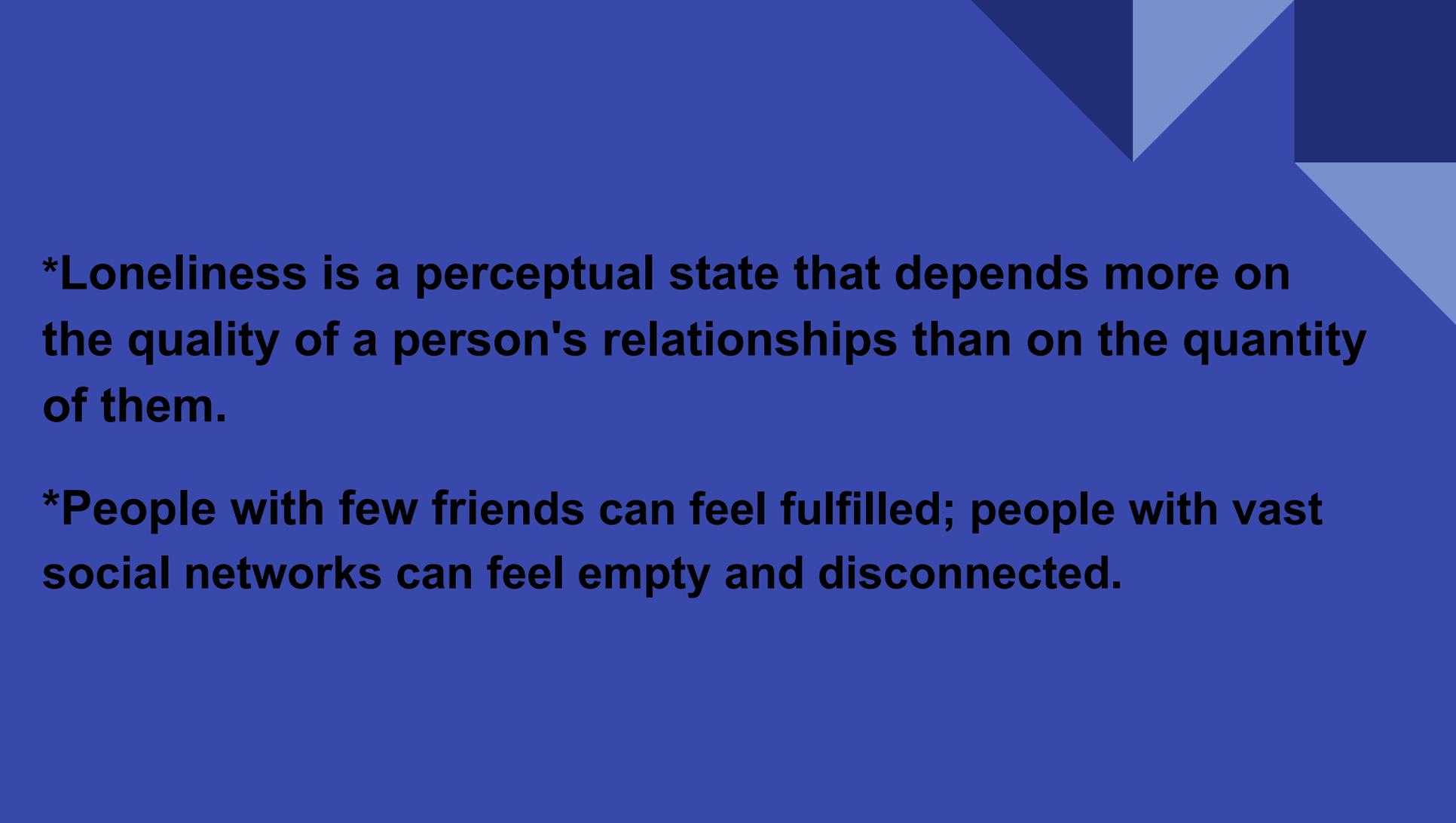
***There are some of us that crave solitude, which feels restorative and peaceful when desired.**

***What might qualify as pleasant for some, however, can be misery for others**



**Some people don't want
to admit that they are
lonely because they want
to appear strong,
independent and
capable.**

**However, you can be
strong, independent,
capable and still
experience loneliness.**



***Loneliness is a perceptual state that depends more on the quality of a person's relationships than on the quantity of them.**

***People with few friends can feel fulfilled; people with vast social networks can feel empty and disconnected.**

What can trigger feelings of loneliness?

*Moving to a new job or city

*Changing from in person to remote work

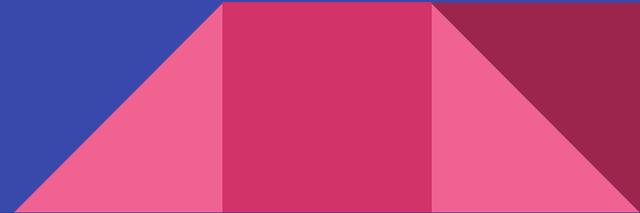
*Ending a friendship or relationship

*Living alone for the first time

***Depending on the root cause, the adjustment period will vary.**

***These feelings can dissipate over time as you create new bonds.**

***However, if you have lost a partner or friend, it's understandable for loneliness to persist for a longer period of time.**



Is Loneliness a Mental Health Condition?

***Loneliness itself is not a diagnosable mental health condition in the DSM 5.**

***However, prolonged loneliness can affect mental health. It can make any symptoms you're already dealing with worse and can become a core component of a variety of disorders.**



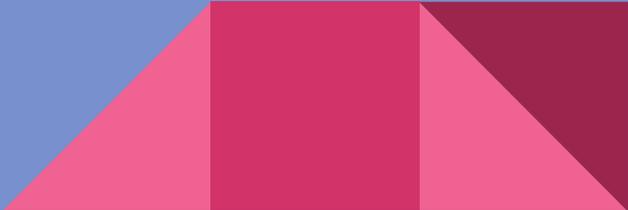
Mental Health and Physical Conditions that can be associated with Loneliness

***Depression**

***Substance abuse**

***Chronic loneliness can also place individuals at much greater risk for a variety of physical problems such as sleep issues, heart problems, obesity and cognitive decline.**

*



Pulse check



Have you felt lonely over the past 2 years?

or

Has there been a time in your life where you have felt lonely?



How do you cope with feelings of loneliness?

Ways to cope with loneliness

Acknowledge the loneliness

Recognize that loneliness is a shared human experience and that others are also experiencing it.

Confide in someone about your feelings or write about your feelings in a journal.

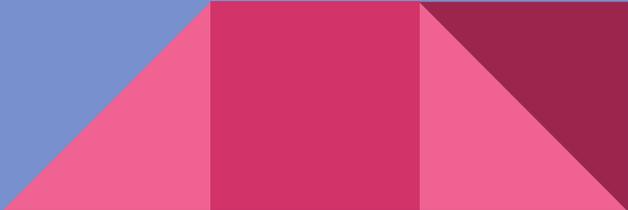
Lean on your Faith

Reach out to someone; Cultivate connection

Seek community

Practice gratitude (Helpful in connecting you with some of the good things you have in life)

Do something that brings you joy.



Re Socialization

***Many of us have had to change our lives and how we socialize over the past 2 years and have experienced loneliness. Some of us are beginning to start socializing with our friends and family again.**

***This is a new experience for many of us. We have some people who are ready to be around people again and resume the social life that they had 2 years ago.**

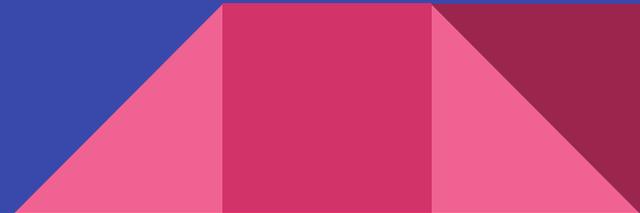
***We have others that want to socialize but are still fearful that they might get sick or that being around a lot of people feels awkward to them.**

The level of uncertainty inherent in the pandemic has been anxiety-provoking for many people.



Children and Adolescents

- *Some children and adolescents may be experiencing anxiety when returning to school or other social events where a lot of people gather.**
- *Children and adolescents have missed a lot of opportunities for socializing that they normally would have had.**
- *They are having to relearn basic classroom procedures and social norms with peers.**
- *Emotional regulation also seems to be a challenge for many of them.**





***With both adults and children attempting to resume activities while the pandemic is still ongoing, it is another transition that the brain needs to adapt to, in a short span of time.**

***So, it's not surprising that this new transition would be anxiety-provoking**

***It's okay to experience re-entry anxiety.**

Good News

***The good news is that many people are experiencing the exact same thing as you are right now.**

***That means that our social awkwardness is a collective experience we can relate to and commiserate with as we are going through it together.**

Scripture

Jeremiah 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

Joshua 1:9

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Resources

National Alliance of Mental Illness www.nami.org

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
(SAMHSA) hotline (800)-662-HELP (4357) <http://www.samhsa.gov/>**

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800)273-8255