

What is loneliness?

‘a mere absence of important relationships’

What does loneliness mean to you?

Loneliness is a universal emotion that is felt in a spectrum of ways. It can affect anyone and everyone, from all walks of life. For international students, loneliness is no stranger. Moving away from your home and the people you love can be isolating, all while being in a new environment and culture with little or no familiarity.

From our questionnaire we found that loneliness is mostly about lack of connection, community and support. While many people enjoy being alone, longing for connection is human nature. You can be in a crowd full of people and still feel disconnected.

‘Loneliness was reported by 72% of international students in the UK’

Our project aim

What is Connectivity Beyond Borders?

Our aim is to spread awareness of the issue of loneliness among international students in the United Kingdom and show them that it is okay to feel this way.

To do this, we collected individual stories from international students about some of their lonely moments and memories that they miss most.

Next, we organised a crafting workshop to bring people together creatively. We gathered a few students with the aim to make objects/ creative works that represent their own lonely moments and memories, and express themselves in a safe environment.

Lonely Moment of ME

Monday, Oct 2nd

*-Eating and cooking Alone
-Shopping Alone
-Visit Exhibition Alone*

user 1

A newly purchased bike was stolen and the police were called by myself as well as the procedures and processes to deal with it.

user 2

When seeing friends at my hometown going out together but I couldn't go

user 3

*-Disrupted ability to make meaningful connections.
-Feeling trapped in a state of loneliness
-Awareness of others' stigmatizing perceptions of oneself as lonely*

user 4

*-Cultural differences
-Language barriers
-Being away from familiar support networks*

user 5

When I'm tired, I couldn't hug my long-distant friend

user 6



Photo



Record



Invite



Share



Document



Chat



Exit Meeting



In our questionnaire, we found
95% of the participants have
felt lonely after they came to the
UK.

20% of them felt lonely quite
often in their daily lives.

Lonely moments in London

‘In Piccadilly Circus, lots of people
were there and I felt a complexed
feeling.’

‘At home in the Winter break when many of
my friends went back to their home countries.
Also the days were shorter and darker. I used
to feel especially lonely in the mornings, right
after waking up.’

‘I was feeling a lot of anxiety because of some
personal issues and all my friends were
sleeping because it was late at night. So I fell
asleep crying alone and I felt very lonely.’

‘I always feel lonely when I came home
alone from a friend's house after a party
at night. It's like waking up from a
dream.’

‘My first night ever being in my bed away from
home, with no background noise of my family
or friends chatting, made me anxious for a bit.
As far as I remember that was the only time I
felt like that since I've been away from home.’

‘Walking in London late at night all by myself’

‘When I heard people I was sitting with in the
cafeteria make plans and I realised I don't
have anyone to do that with’

OUR WORKSHOP

Important Document:

- Participant Project information & Consent Form

Tools:

- Scissors
- Paper Tape, U Glue & Double-side Glue
- Glue Gun & Hot Glue Sticks
- Brushes
- Clear Adhesive
- Sellotape

Material list:

- Assortment of acrylic paints
- Aluminium wire & Small anodised pieces
- Clay & Fimo
- Crayon
- Coloured felt squares
- Coloured pencils
- Pictures for Collage
- Paper in different colours
- Photographic Mirror Paper
- Small wood pieces in different shapes





“ When I travelled to the Seven Sisters alone, I felt like I’ve reached the end of world. I took a stone there and set rice from my hometown into the cracks of stone.” The flowers of longing bloom.

Flowers of Home.



“ All fresh and unknown things became invisible shackles and spikes on body when I came to a foreign country to continue my studies. I miss my home everyday. However, the new friendships and the kindness I felt everyday broke all the chains in my mind.”

Unbound Heart.

“ I missed the time when I stayed with my families and enjoy campfire in the night of summer holiday, that light became a nostalgic memory after I went abroad.

And my mind reached the peak at the moment I saw the campfire after watching the Fireworks show in Battersea Park.”

Memories are made of this I.



“ My kitty is fluffy and soft, my couch at home is furry too. I miss cuddling up to her on the couch and laying down together to relax and enjoy the quiet moments together.”

Memories are made of this II.



A dream

“We’re in different country and living with a time difference of 8h. In the dream, I flew to a country which looks similar to the photos of London that you have sent me, but still didn’t meet you. I found my self crying in the dream. I miss you that much.”

Lonely Plate

I feel lonely in London because I am far away from my family and friends. I feel the loneliest when I am alone in my tiny apartment on weekends, where I usually share a good meal at home.

This comfort object represents mealtime in my family, where I see the circle linking all of us together around the table. The hole seen on the circular table where a delicious and wonderful meal is served depicts the emptiness I feel when I'm alone in my tiny kitchen with my broccoli, while my family enjoys a good meal at home. Even though I'm not with them, I still feel connected with them in spirit, which I believe is the most important aspect.





Hyde Park

When I first move to London, in my 5th day I went to Kensington to get my BRP. After I got it I walk towards the Hyde Park and spent a 2 hours just sit on the bench and thinking about why I am here. These days were the toughest days. I was feeling so lonely and seeing other people with their friends also made it harder.

The abstract figure wearing the hat in the picture is a friend I met when I first came to the UK, and as a first-time foreign student, it was really the greatest comfort to be able to meet friends in class who made friends. The second painting depicts the tree in front of my house, which I see every time I go out and come back home, and it always gives me a feeling of loneliness and determination.

The Women in the Hat



After moving to London, I found solace in crafting my own sanctuary within the new, unknown city where I knew no one—a realm uniquely mine. This collage reflects the moments that have defined my new life, showcasing how I've adapted and thrived in the lonely moments of this unfamiliar environment, devoid of the familiar comforts of home and the presence of loved ones.

In My Realm



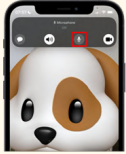
ALONE



When I was in London a few years ago the brp was gone, the VISA expired, and it felt like the only thing left to prove my identity was my passport, and that homeless people still had their homes, but where they lived wasn't really a home anymore.



Tips for dealing with loneliness



Calling and Face Time with friends and family



Adding aspects of your home into your new environment



Encouraging yourself to go outside



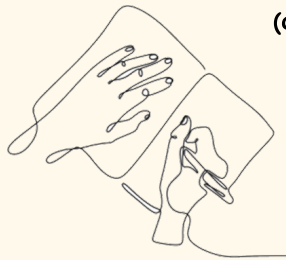
Self care/Being kind to yourself



Starting a new hobby (opportunity to meet new people)



Learning to enjoy being alone and embracing these moments



Journaling / Writing your thoughts



Connecting with others in a similar situation



Reaching out for help

Resources

RCA Student Support :
student-support@rca.ac.uk

RCA International Student Support :
international@rca.ac.uk

Useful websites:

[Nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/life-challenges/loneliness/](https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/life-challenges/loneliness/)

[Mind.org.uk](https://www.mind.org.uk)

[Studentspace.org.uk](https://www.studentspace.org.uk)

[ukcisa.org.uk](https://www.ukcisa.org.uk)



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