Participant number 20 – Female, 18, Barking

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. Can we start by talking about what you put first please.

Interviewee: So I’ve put darkness, ‘cause like when… like usually when something’s happened and I like need to get away and like, sometimes I need to be alone, so I’d like go in my room, just turn off the light, just go on my phone, just be alone. But um… but then I’m also like scared of the dark as well. So it’s kind of like, need to get away from everything, but also put myself in that situation. So… yeah. And like… like my head goes into a dark space as well. [Interviewer: mm] Like they all kind of link together, kind of thing. [Interviewer: mm] And… but yeah. That’s all I can really say about the first one. [Interviewer: mhm] Like alone, on your own, in a place, in the dark, like… and it’s also about your mind as well. Like my mind goes to a lonely, dark place as well. [Interviewer: mm] So yeah.

Interviewer: Um, so what you’re saying is, um… you want to go into your room, by yourself [Interviewee: yeah] because you feel like that’s an… that place is an ease for you.

Interviewee: Yeah, definitely.

Interviewer: Tell me more about that.

Interviewee: Um… because like, I’ve been through a lot… in my life. Like, to be alone is like the best thing for me, ‘cause sometimes I can either get angry and make the situation worse, so I’d rather go in my room, in the dark, and just calm myself down, and be alone. But um… yeah, it definitely helps me a lot to just… be on my own.

Interviewer: Mm. When you say that you’ve been through a lot in your life [interviewee: mhm], can you tell me about that?

Interviewee: Erm… well it’s just one thing after another that I’ve lost all my grandparents, um I’ve got one… one left, he’s got dementia. So it’s kind of hard ‘cause I’d go see him maybe, and like he don’t remember me so it’s really hard. Um… and I’ve got family members that have been through drug abuse as well, so… it is hard, and it’s still going on to this day, so then I’ll just kind of need to separate myself from that situation, because there’s no getting past it at the moment. And as a family it’s kind of like breaking us down. So… I’d just rather separate myself. Like, so, I live with my boyfriend and um… I’d rather not be at home, I’d rather stay with my boyfriend, to get away from my family, but then it makes me feel alone, like… like the other day like I got upset because I miss them but I feel… feel like I can’t go back there. So it’s kind of like a mixed situation. Yeah.

Interviewer: Sounds like what you’re saying is you care about your family [interviewee: yeah, a lot] um… you, you love them [interviewee: mhm] but seems like the drug abuse is kind of driving you away [interviewee: yeah] and you’d rather spend some time away-

Interviewee: Yeah, and like, ‘cause his family is very family… they all live in the same area, and my household is just like the four of us, and everyone else lives in like the countryside and hackney and whatever and um… so it’s just us four and we have really… we haven’t really got anyone else. But to be with, living with my boyfriend, I see how, like how a family should be. So yeah, it’s not… like I’d rather get away from my house and go to his or… if I can’t go to his, then I’ll go in my room and try and separate myself from that situation. But yeah.

Interviewer: Um, and how does it make you feel, seeing for example you… your partner, you know with his family [interviewee: yeah] and you being separated from yours or not having the same?

Interviewee: It is… it is… it’s nice to be accepted into another family, but it is hard because I would love that to be how my family are. So… it is hard, but good at the same time. But um… but then I feel like I’m, when I go back home, I get used to what a family should be, but then I find it hard when I go back home, because it’s like, and I can’t stay there for like more than one or two days, ‘casue it gets to me and I get emotional and upset. But like they’re trying to make a change, but it’s just not as fast as I would like it to be, and obviously it’s gonna be hard, but it’s not… it’s not what they, like how we should be. ‘Cause it used to be good, our family used to be good. It’s just gone downhill as the time’s gone… gone by, and I’ve got older and like understanding things and… stuff like that, yeah.

Interviewer: You say you… like you get emotional when you go there [interviewee: mhm], can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: So like um… er… so I’ll get in an argument… I’ll try, I’ll try really hard to control my anger, and… when I can’t, I just get so angry, and I’d rather like argue it out and understand why they can’t just fix up and like… it’s not a life to live, do you know what I mean? And um it’s hard for me to understand like ‘cause I… I don’t understand how can you waste your life for that long and not fix it? That’s not a way to live. And um… yeah so I’d get angry, get upset, leave in like the middle of the night, go to my boyfriend’s house… there’s just a lot to have on my mind. But yeah.

Interviewer: How does that make you feel?

Interviewee: Makes me feel disappointed, it really does. ‘Cause my family was alright, and then it just went downhill. Er… ‘cause my mum had a gastric band, ‘cause she was really overweight, so she had that done, and then um… she then er… they gave her like drugs and they messed up the operation as well, so she can’t eat and drink at the same time, so that’s messed her up. And like seeing my mum go from such a happy woman to then go to have like anorexia, like she’s so skinny and then turn to drugs it wasn’t, it was just one thing after another. And she has like a very addictive personality. So it’s just one thing after other. Like she is off it now, but to know that your own mum is been down that road, you wouldn’t think it, and especially ‘cause I was young when it all, when it was all going on. It’s still going on today. Like the effects of it are around today. Yeah. So as a family, even though we’re, it’s us four, it really should be five, ‘cause my brother lives in Germany, so kind of just left us, um, we do feel like it’s just us against the world, like we have no one else. So as a family, even though we’re together, but kind of separated, we are alone, if you get what I mean. That makes sense?

Interviewer: So it sounds like what you’re saying is, even though like, you might be together but you’re separated…

Interviewee: Mm. Like, I’ll always have some like… a home to go to, but we… but it’s very separated, like my mum and dad will just stay upstairs and it’ll be me and my sister downstairs, so it’s kind of like a hotel. But we only meet in the kitchen, and it’s just, yeah, so it is very… it is very lonely… there.

Interviewer: How does that make you feel?

Interviewee: Upset. Angry. Um… disappointed, like I said, ‘cause we shouldn’t be like that. But yeah.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you want to say about that box?

Interviewee: Um… not really.

Interviewer: Thank you. Um, can we talk about… can we start talking about what you put next please.

Interviewee: Like I’ve put, um, locked in your mind. That’s because, um… like it all links together, so um… even though I’m at my boyfriend’s, I still feel alone, ‘cause it’s not my family. But even though they’ve accepted me, I’ll get like locked… it kind of links with this one, ‘cause I worry, and I’m locked in my own mind. So like the other night, I was thinking of like my mum and thinking about my future and will she still be here and… and just getting myself worked up, and I worry like a lot. I worry a lot a lot. And um… er… yeah so it makes me feel like… I’m, like there’s no one there for me, type thing. Because I’ll call my mum up and it will be like oh, I’m a bit busy, or something or… there’s always something going on. Um… so then… locked in my own mind, like um… I overthink things… erm… but there’s always, like I think the worst things, the worst possible thing that can happen, like when I get ill I think oh, am I dying. Like, I shouldn’t be like that. And it does make myself like… I do feel… upset when I do do this, ‘cause I try a lot not to get in my own mind, not to get in my head, and it’s just like constant ticking, like what’s… like what, what’s gonna happen next, like… where is it gonna go, just constantly overthinking. But yeah.

Interviewer: So it sounds like you worry, and you worry especially about the future.

Interviewee: Yeah, and about my parents, and about my family. Yeah.

Interviewer: And when you said earlier that you were you know worried about your mum, um… you’re worried about your mum, you know if she’s gonna be here and so on. How does that make you feel?

Interviewee: It makes me feel um… like down and upset and worried, ‘cause her actions of her past probably gonna affect her future, and that’s why I think I’m so worried. Because, the things that she’s done could affect her health and that, so then it could give her a shorter life. And I was thinking about it, the way I’ve lost my grandparents, it’s like I don’t want… say, say when I have children, I don’t want them to feel alone, and like they can’t go to their family. Because not having grandparents, like you see the difference between, um… my boyfriend’s family, ‘cause he still has all his grandparents, and like he… they all live round here and um… and like he could just go to their house or talk to them and… and I can’t do that anymore, ‘cause they’ve all passed away. Um… so yeah, you definitely feel like it’s just you against everything. Like, we have no help like, say if um… we haven’t got money for electric or something like…. we have no one to go to. But if you had like your grandparents you can be like oh, can you help us out or whatever. Which they did when they was here, and then um… so yeah, it makes me feel… it makes me feel sad. ‘Cause I have no one around to then… when I have kids, I want them to be able to go to their grandparents, ie. my mum and dad, but yeah, and not feel the way I feel now, and hopefully change, make them have a good… like family orientation. Yeah.

Interviewer: So it sounds like you value family orientation.

Interviewee: Yeah I do. But it’s hard when… like my family’s not very family. Like they’re not… we can’t all sit together, ‘cause it always ends up in an argument, something always goes wrong. And although like, because I want that family to like all sit together and have dinner and whatever, but it is very lonely, like you’re very… um… like erm, independent. You always do things on your own, and even though- that’s what I’m saying before- even though we’re a family, we always do things on our own. Like, we’re not together most times. But yeah.

Interviewer: How does that make you feel?

Interviewee: Um… just upset and disappointed. But I… I feel like I’m not that… giving you like… interesting…

Interviewer: Oh no, don’t worry, no no, it’s not about that [interviewee laughs] I’ll… no…

Interviewee: ‘Cause they all link, they’re all the same but I feel upset, disappointed [interviewer: it’s okay] for most of them. Um… like gutted as well. ‘Cause it shouldn’t be like that, it shouldn’t be like… because we were… like I said before, were good family type of thing, but it all went… kept going and going, and still is like… I don’t see my brother any more, um… because him and my mum had like a massive argument. So we don’t talk to each other anymore. And it’s just breaking us apart. Like everything that’s gone on. So yeah. And I really like… I’d… like, idolise my brother, because he’s like gone in the right path, like he’s got his own career, like he’s doing something with his life. Where my brother… I mean my sister, my mum and my dad are just sitting indoors like not doing nothing. So for my brother to go… go away and not talk to… like, ‘cause I choose not to talk to him, just the way he disrespected my mum, um… I don’t care what anyone’s done, they’re still your mother. Like you don’t disrespect her. Like, um… so… when he went to Germany, like it gave, like made me feel much more like separated, because like who do I… who would I go to… for anything. For like, to keep me on the right path, to like help me out, to… make sure that I don’t follow my mum, my sister, my dad. So yeah. So it was hard when he went.

Interviewer: When you said you idolise your brother, because of career and things, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: He does um… so he got me into like art, ‘cause I used to draw in school. Um… and he does like filming, like camera and lighting work on some films. And apparently he’s doing the um… new James Bond film for um… I think he works for Panavision… so, yeah. And then like he’s… he’s showing me that there’s something out there, but if you work towards it, and you do something, and there is gonna be like things that are gonna turn you off track, but you just gotta keep working on it and you’ll get there. ‘Cause he has been through like… a lot with work. Like, he’s had to, when he moved back to Germany, he didn’t go into straight what he wanted to do. He had to work in a kitchen and then find people to like get the career started. So yeah, he has shown me that there is things out there, and if you want to work for it, you can do it. So yeah. But I’ve kind of left the art, because I… personally I didn’t see a career out of it for myself. But I definitely wanted to um help people, so that’s why I um… I’m joining a course next year called public services. I want to be a fire fighter. So I definitely want to help people.

Interviewer: Mm. And… how does it make you feel, seeing your brother there and… and you’re here, um… how do you feel about that? You obviously see your brother working through his career and doing everything that he wants to [interviewee: yeah] and you… you’re here… how do you feel about that?

Interviewee: Um… I feel like happy for him that he’s in his chosen career, like, he’s worked so hard for it. So I feel like glad and happy, but at the same time it’s like… when he comes back to visit sometimes, he forgets like… I think he’s just used to being on his own, and like, used to being out there. So when he comes back to my house… it’s like um… it’s like it makes him feel upset. And it’s the same for me. Because where we… where we’re not living there anymore, and we come back and visit, it’s like so depressing and like down and it’s not right. But yeah, I’m glad that he’s got away. ‘Cause it shows you like what things should be, how family should be, how the world is and get out of just Barking and Dagenham. Yeah so it helps to know that there is things out there.

Interviewer: Thanks. You mentioned that you felt… you felt that art wasn’t for you and you didn’t see a career in art. [Interviewee: mhm] Can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: Um… there’s not really much to say. I just got… because I did go into college for art as well. My first year of leaving school, I went to college and done… and done um… and done art, um but, er… ‘cause I was getting told like what to draw and what’s right and what’s wrong and I was like that’s not art though, like I didn’t want to sit there at a desk and keep drawing and painting, it just weren’t for me. Like I wanted to do something active, because I was just tired of keep doing the same thing, getting told that this is wrong, but it’s my perception of art. That’s what I want to do. You can’t tell someone that something’s wrong or right in art. So I just got really frustrated with it and just like gave up with it. But yeah. It just wasn’t… it wasn’t what I wanted to do… anymore.

Interviewer: Mm. And you said you wanted to pursue becoming a fire fighter…

Interviewee: Mhm, yeah. Because um, like I said in art, like I was just so bored, wanted to do something active. So when um… and I used to do army cadets, as well, which helped um… it helped me see that there’s other things out there, like some things active. But then I didn’t want to join the army, because I didn’t want… I don’t think it would be right for me to do that. And my mum, I don’t think my mum and dad would let me join the army anyway. Um… so I thought what’s the next thing, like to help people and to help communities and to be active, to be not in an office all day, but every… every day is different in the fire service. So I would love to become a fire fighter and help people and see… see how, like see something different, like know something different, other than… I don’t want an office job. I’ve always said I don’t want an office job. I don’t want to sit there or in Tescos going beep beep, like it’s just not for me. So I do want to do something active. And I’ve like tried my hardest to um.. get on the course, because er… like people, tutors said that I wasn’t ready for, for the course. And I’ve proved them wrong. So that makes me like… very happy that I’ve… I’ve proved people wrong. That’s kind of showed me that I am… because throughout school I was always put down like no you cannot, you can’t be on the team, or… you can’t do this, you can’t do that and I was always getting in trouble. Because how do you expect me to go through school, not being able to do any activates and expecting me to like like school? Like, I got really bored and everything so… I just got in trouble all the time. Um so… going to college and doing all my work, getting it in, this year, and proving them wrong that I can do something made me feel really like… really happy. And emotional. I’ve actually done it. I feel like I’m at.. I’m a, I’m an emotional person… and it comes to proving people wrong. ‘Cause I know I can do it and I just need a chance to do it. And that’s all I asked for. But yeah, and they didn’t want to give me the chance, and I had to fight for it and go to the higher person and say like I can do it, and I did it this year, and I’m… yeah, I’m going on to the next level of the course… so I’m really happy.

Interviewer: Congratulations

Interviewee: Thank you.

Interviewer: Um when you said like when you were in school for example, people wouldn’t give you the chance [interviewee: mhm] and things and put you down, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: So like, just simple things. So I’d like try out for the… rounders team and they’d be like oh no, like we’ve already got our team, like you’re not allowed. I was in like year seven, so you… you can’t have the team already. Um… and it was the same for netball and… the only thing that I was really allowed to do was um… shotput, because everyone was like oh yeah Michaela can do it, she’s the strongest girl, like let her do it. And I was like yeah but I wanna do other things, like I wanna be able to do… things that I want to do, not because I’m the strongest girl or because you think I’ll be good at it, because I wasn’t good at shotput, I was terrible, but yeah so I wanted to do something that I can practice at and do it and win something… because I never won anything in school as well, because they didn’t give me the chance to. And, um… they’d say er, oh, but you have like attitude, but then that has nothing to do with what I would bring to that team. Because I’m big on teamwork. But because they’re teachers and they didn’t give me a chance, I’m obviously gonna like not be… not gonna be nice to them. Not gonna give them the respect that they didn’t give me, they’ll give me a chance. So yeah. So um… it was hard in school. Because as well I have um, learning disability, dyslexia, um… so it’s kind of hard. So um they wouldn’t let me do fitness, like sports and stuff, like really, and then going into a classroom, sitting there and thinking oh, I can’t do this, like, I keep putting myself down. Like, I can’t read it, I can’t read it, and you’re not letting me do something physical that I wouldn’t have to read, and then you’re sitting me in a class where I have to struggle to read stuff, and not really get any help. So it was really frustrating to go to school.

Interviewer: So it sounds like what you’re saying is, you felt like it wasn’t fair on you [interviewee: yeah no] and they weren’t accommodating your learning disability. How did that make you feel?

Interviewee: It wasn’t fair. It was um… made me really angry. And I feel like that’s where I get my anger from as well. Not being able to read properly. So that triggers it kind of… um… um… so yeah. It wasn’t nice being in school. Towards the end, because I think I proved myself to them as well, I was like oh, yeah I can do, I’m like… my attitude isn’t bad, like I’m not a bad person, not a bad like… student. But um… like, they wasn’t giving me the… a chance through school, and that’s why I got so angry and so upset and so… like I didn’t wanna go. And when I was there, I was just gonna be bad, there was no point of me being there. But towards the end I kind of that like let me show them that I can do it. Let me show them that I can be like a nice person and not go into isolation every day or have detention every day, which I did and… yeah.

Interviewer: Mm. When you said… so it sounds like what you’re saying is, people didn’t give you chances when you were in school…

Interviewee: Yeah definitely… definitely. But then I tried to like, towards the end of school, I know I should have tried ages ago, but I tried my best to like, get my grades up as well. Erm… so when my… when my results come in, considering I have dyslexia, even though I didn’t pass, I got a… I got a D in maths and English, and I was like… I broke down crying in school, but I was upset but so happy with myself, ‘cause I didn’t think that I would come that close to passing. I thought I would get Es and Fs and whatever, so I was happy with myself that um… I got that close.

Interviewer: Um, how… when you… when you felt like people weren’t giving you the chance or considering you [interviewee: mhm], how did that make you feel?

Interviewee: Alone, I guess. Yeah. Because, couldn’t go to anyone. Like there was one teacher that I got along… got along with, and like, when I would try improve myself, it would be like, a teacher would… I don’t know what it is but teachers feel like they have so much power over students, and like they try to use that power, and I’m someone that’s gonna stand up for what I think’s right and how I think they’re doing their job wrong like… because you shouldn’t be like that, you should be there, getting payed to… you chose this career path to like help children to… learn stuff, like not to use your power against them and give them detentions or send them out all the time. And I’d tired my hardest to um… to not have attitude, to not get in trouble, and it just... they kept putting me in situations where I would get in trouble. So I feel like they… they um… wanted me to stay in detention, to stay in isolation. And they would just keep pushing me and pushing me and pushing me. And it weren’t just me that they’d done this to, it was other students as well. So yeah, it wasn’t… it wasn’t fair at all. Yeah.

Interviewer: Sounds like what you’re saying is, the teachers kind of purposefully try to put you away and other students as well [interviewee: yeah] and not let you progress.

Interviewee: And like they had their golden… because even though my school was for… I.T. and science… it’s like they had their golden kids that were on the sports teams and it… it really didn’t make sense to me, and I was like, well I’m trying to… trying my best to get onto the team of something, and you’re just pushing me away, like turning me away, not letting me do it, and it’s like, why does… like it made me feel so crappy about myself as well, ‘cause, I mean, ‘cause I’m a big… big girl, so um… it made me feel like, oh, is it ‘cause of my weight like they’re not letting me on the team, but I was thinking yeah I’m like, I’m good at the sport, like, it shouldn’t be like that. But then I looked at the girls and they’re all like skinny and um… fit, but just because they’re them things doesn’t mean that I can’t play that sport. So it made me feel really crappy and like… nothing to do, other than… art, and art is very like on your own and boring and it’s not very active. Like I want to be with other people and do stuff, and it was just like I’m getting pushed to this one thing. And it’s like yeah I like it, but it’s not what I want to do. So… yeah. [Interviewer: mm] And it also made me like waste a year of college as well. ‘Cause where they’ve pushed me and pushed me and pushed me to art, I thought yeah, I should do art in college then. But if I’d done… if I’d done sports in school, it would have helped me out with the public services course that I’m on now. So… yeah, it kind of made me waste a year of what I’m doing. So yeah.

Interviewer: So, what you’re saying is… um, you felt like… you felt like maybe it’s because of your weight or that people are not putting you into that sport, so then you start to question yourself, [interviewee: mhm] you start to have doubts about yourself, [interviewee: yeah] and so on.

Interviewee: Yeah, that’s exactly how I felt. Because… um… like I said, they wouldn’t put me on the team and I would look at myself and doubt myself and… lose confidence, like I was very… even though I was, it’s a weird one, even though I was bad in school, I was also quiet and had like a close, like a closed friendship, so it was… it was weird, ‘cause they like… they broke down my confidence, to be honest. Because, making me doubt myself and the way I look and my fitness abilities and… just other things like that. So it was hard in school. And then like I’d get people… like mostly boys… like calling me like fat and stuff in school. So then um… that would also like… and then I’d get in fights with them. And then that will be a situation where I’d get myself in trouble. [Interviewer: mm] But yeah. But then I feel like if they would have let me on… on sports teams, then my fitness would have got better. Like my, my ability to do stuff would have got better. But they didn’t give me the chance to do that. So yeah, it made me feel really crappy about myself.

Interviewer: Mm… um... I’m sorry to hear that. Um…

Interviewee: It’s fine. It makes me a stronger person today. Like, everything I’ve been through makes me a stronger person. Like I feel like I’m a very strong believer in everything happens for a reason. And yeah, ‘cause you can’t… ‘cause I’m very independent, and I’m thankful for how like my mum and dad have brought me up. And situations that I’ve been in has made me very independent, and I don’t really rely on anyone. So yeah it’s… even though it’s a crap situation to be in with like the drugs and the school and everything, it makes me… like the school has made me learn to push myself and prove people wrong, and like my family has like made me be independent and do things myself, and things ain’t just gonna be handed to you, like you need to work towards it. [Interviewer: mm] Yeah, so.

Interviewer: And how does that make you feel, thinking that you have to work towards things and being independent….

Interviewee: Um… it makes me feel happy ‘cause like… not happy but… makes me feel proud of myself [interviewer: mm] because I look at other people like my age and they’re like very… they rely on their parents so much. Like, go out and get a job. Like, do things yourself. Like, go buy… you’re not gonna have everything in life, so when you’re parents are gone, like you’re gonna feel so… lost, and like don’t know what to do and… you’re gonna have to work things for yourself and not rely on mummy and daddy to give you money and stuff like that so yeah… having that experience has taught me that… I will be alright, like, when my parents go and um… I can do things on my own. Yeah. I don’t need to rely on them for money, or anything. Yeah.

Interviewer: Thank you. [Interviewee: It’s alright] Going back to what you wrote… locked in my mind [interviewee: mhm], can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: So like… um… that’s a weird one that I’ve... I’ll be sitting in my room or… whatever, sitting there and I’m… I just think of one thing, like, not being… not being at home, not being at home and then um… like I feel bad for not being there. ‘Cause they must miss me, because I miss them. And I’m just locked in my mind like oh, am I wasting the time that I should be having with them. Like I’m very… morbid I think but… because… I think of like the worst possible thing of what could happen, like is my mum gonna pass tomorrow, like am I wasting time not being with my family. Am I being like disrespectful for… um, putting all my time with another family. I feel like I’m just locked… locked in there and I have to… like, get emotional to kind of come out of it and talk to someone. Like so the middle of the night last night I called up my mum and I was like oh, I want to have a serious chat with you, like it needs to like stop now, because it’s not nice having to escape from your own family, to try and get away from something like that, it isn’t nice. So yeah. So… I worry and, like I can’t get out of my own mind type thing, so I’m kind of just… I keep thinking and thinking and thinking. I kind of have to distract myself with college and friends and… yeah.

Interviewer: How does that make you feel?

Interviewee: Um… upset,’cause I shouldn’t have to distract myself with things, and I shouldn’t feel that way. I shouldn’t be worrying about my parents, like I shouldn’t be overthinking about my parents. But they make it hard for me, because they don’t change their ways. So it’s like, how do you expect me to stop worrying and stop overthinking and stop everything if you don’t make it easy not to worry about… like my mum and dad, like my family and money issues and everything like that. So it’s… I get very lost in what I’m thinking about. So yeah.

Interviewer: Thank you. Is there anything else you want to say about that?

Interviewee: Um, not really.

Interviewer: Can we start talking about what you put next here?

Interviewee: Mhm.Well, worry.

Interviewer: I know you’ve touched on it, [interviewee: yeah] but can you elaborate a little more on it?

Interviewee: Um…

Interviewer: Before you move on, let me just check the quality of this.

Recording paused

Interviewer: Okay, so can we start by talking about what you put in box three please?

Interviewee: Mhm. So… worry, like I said, they all link together, so… it’s hard to, um… it’s hard to like keep saying stuff but um… yeah, I worry a lot, of like what I future holds and what things are gonna be like, like, are my fam actually gonna be okay, like… just constantly worrying about family and… is my health okay, like am I gonna go down the career path that I want to. Obviously things are going to be hard, but I need to keep working at like fire fighter, for example… I need to keep working on my fitness and stuff. So… I do worry… I do worry about like how long it’s gonna take me and by the time I think this is good enough, like am I gonna be too old to… for them to take me on or stuff like that, so I do worry a lot about everything. So… yeah, I feel like it effects me and other people as well, my worry… my worrying, because then I make other people worry as well, and think and be anxious and… I think oh, crap, are we actually gonna… are things gonna actually happen or, are we gonna get this work done in time or… yeah. So I worry a lot.

Interviewer: So it sounds like you worry a lot, especially about the future, you’re concerned about what’s gonna happen [interviewee: yeah] to you, [interviewee: yeah] where your life is gonna take you…

Interviewee: Yeah, definitely. ‘Cause I feel like life’s always short and like money isn’t like going in the right direction like, everything’s going up, but everyone’s wages are like going down or not high enough to be able to pay for all… a house, and I’m thinking, am I gonna have money to get my own house and… am I gonna have money, like I wanna start driving, like um… do driving lessons and stuff, but I don’t have the money to do that, and then I’ll think… um… and then you’ve got like other things that go along with a car, and it’s just a lot of money. I feel like a lot of my worries are money. And like um… are my mum and dad alright, like… do they have electric, do they have gas. Sometimes they go without eating. That is not… and that’s what I worry about, like I worry about like um… ‘cause when I’m not there, it’s like are they eating, do they have money to go and get something to eat, or do they have electric, and it’s like constant things that I think about as well. And like she tells me not to worry or think about it but I know that when I was living there it was hard, like money and stuff. So… yeah.

Interviewer: So it sounds like you worry about the money quite a bit.

Interviewee: Yeah. ‘Cause money is everything, like… got, you’ve got to essentially live… if you don’t have money you don’t really live, like you can’t do nothing. But yeah. Like I’ve… we’ve nearly been evicted like loads of times, and that’s down to money, because we don’t, we didn’t have the money at the time or we didn’t have family to go to to help us out, and it just all links together really. Yeah.

Interviewer: So it sounds like… not having to go to… for emotional or for, lets say, financial reasons, can contribute to your loneliness.

Interviewee: Mhm. Definitely. Definitely. Because… because also, not having money, um… effects my friendships as well. ‘Cause like sometimes, there’s been a time where I haven’t been invited to something, and it’s like oh, is it because they know that I don’t have money. So then they’ve kind of like gone out and not told me… but then that makes me feel like… like little and, makes me feel like um… oh, Michaela don’t have money, neh neh neh, let’s… let’s just go without her. That makes me feel like sad as well, upsetting, ‘cause I should. Like I said that I don’t want to rely on my mum and dad, but it would be nice to go to my mum and be like oh, do you have some like money I can borrow or something, but it’s… so then I could be like my friends, do you get what I mean, like… so I could go home and be like oh, have you got any money for me… um… but not having that is like upsetting, ‘cause I have no one to go to. I have no grandparents, no… I can’t go, I can’t just go up to my mum and dad and say do you have money. Like I would have to… work and get it myself. But it’s hard when you’re trying to juggle, like education, um working at the same time. With the amount of work load that we get is a lot for me anyway. And it is a learning process for me, ‘cause I’ve had two jobs and I’ve lost them… because, not going in and not having enough time to go in, because I’ve been to busy doing coursework and trying to prove myself to college. So yeah, it is hard. It’s just one, like money is everything, it really is. [Interviewer: mm] It shouldn’t be that way but it… it is. Realistically it is.

Interviewer: It sounds like money can hold you back sometimes.

Interviewee: Yeah, definitely. Definitely.

Interviewer: And how do you feel about that?

Interviewee: Um… angry, upset. Alone, I guess, ‘cause I can’t go out and do things that I wanna do. Held back because I would like to… and um, birthdays as well. Like I can’t give my friends what they give me. So it does make me feel like really disappointed in myself, and like really upset and angry as well. Because I can’t give them what they give me. Or like they’ll have to wait like a long time till I get that money… to give them a good birthday present or a good gift or… I’d love to just go out and buy them something that they like really really want and just go shopping with them and say oh yeah, I’ll get you that, or go out for dinner and be like oh yeah, I’ll pay for that, or just something. And it’s really hard when you don’t have money, and it makes you feel so like… down and like… can’t explain it. Just makes you feel crappy about yourself. ‘Cause you can’t do them certain things… for other people that you really like love, then you wanna show that you do the way that they show they do, by buying…. buying things for people doesn’t show their love, but it shows that you mean that much to them to spend that much for them. [Interviewer: mm] Yeah. So it does make me feel down… a lot of the time. ‘Cause I feel like I can’t go out, I don’t wanna… ‘cause it is my fault that I don’t have money, so I don’t want to make my friends feel like, oh we can’t go out because Michaela ain’t got money. Like I would want them to go out without me. But sometimes, I’d rather them tell me… that they’re going out, rather than just going out and me seeing them on social media. It just… it wasn’t nice, in that situation. But yeah.

Interviewer: When you said seeing them on social media, [interviewee: mhm] can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: Like just um… snapchat, like they put a story up with them having a Nando’s or something. And it’ll be like… I popped up and I was like oh thanks guys for the invite, like you could have at least asked me to come and let me have that decision whether to say yes or no, if I wanted to come. ‘Cause maybe I did have the money. And this shows that they know that I don’t have money. Because they would have invited me to go, they would have said oh yeah Michaela’s got money, let’s go. But they’ve assumed that I didn’t have money, and… it should be my decision whether to say yes or know, that I would go. So yeah. So yeah it did make me feel upset, ‘cause it… like they know that I don’t have money. And it is upsetting ‘cause they’ve… like they’re very family, like they’re very mummy daddy gives me things and… mummy daddy have money and… so yeah. But I feel like they’re realising, as they’re getting older, they’re realising that it’s not mummy and daddy… and when I’ve learnt that so early on… I’m very grateful for it… ‘cause now they’re going through what I went through ages ago. So… it is good to have that experience, but then it is horrible at the same time. So yeah.

Interviewer: How does it make you feel seeing your friends on social media, for example being at Nando’s and having a good time, and you for example not there?

Interviewee: Mainly upset and angry… but I… I’d had an argument with them that day, but then, like I said, it’s not… it’s not their fault that I don’t have money. That is not their fault. So… I kind of… had an argument with them and took the blame straight away after. Because it’s not their fault that I don’t have money. Like I shouldn’t stop them from going out, but I would have liked to know that they was going out. Because it is like, us three… our like… good friendship, us three. But yeah. So I just felt like them two left my out, and I it was just like… yeah, I’d like to know. Even if I couldn’t go I would like to know… that they was going. But yeah.

Interviewer: So you felt left out…

Interviewee: Mhm… yeah. Left out and disappointed that… they didn’t even tell me or ask me or anything. They just assumed that I didn’t have money. So yeah, it made me feel really down. Yeah.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you want to say about that box?

Interviewee: Mm… not really.

Interviewer: Um… okay, can we move onto the final box? Can we talk about what you’ve put there please?

Interviewee: So I’ve put… little. ‘Casue loneliness is like... you’re alone, you’re on you own, like you feel like everything’s bigger than you, you’re just by yourself, alone… little, like… can’t really explain it but that’s what I see when I think of loneliness. So yeah. Um… but then it kind of links back to school and college, like… when they didn’t believe in me and stuff like that, it made me feel little. And when teachers would use their power of being a teacher, made me feel little, because… like you’ve got people that essentially hold… hold the key to your future, like helping you trying to learn to get the qualifications that you need to become what you want to be, and they’re just using their power to like make you feel small and little and… like you’re not worth nothing, you’re not gonna become nothing, you’re… like… ‘cause that’s what I got in school. Like you didn’t, you can’t, you’re not gonna do nothing with your life, like what’re you gonna do. And then in college I’ve actually had someone say to me, oh, what are you gonna be? Like are you just gonna sit at home, be on benefits? And like to say that to a teenager is… isn’t nice at all. To say to someone oh, you’re not gonna become nothing, gonna be on benefits, really made me feel like crappy and angry and little. ‘Cause from a grown adult, to tell a teenager that you… from the age as well, like makes you feel so little. To have that higher person that you should… that should really help you, and teach you, to tell you that you’re not gonna become… you’re not gonna become anything, was really like hurtful and spiteful in a way. Because even though in school I had attitude, it was kind of my… fuel to fight back and not feel so little. But then, obviously, because they’re teachers and they have the power, they would like give me a detention, make me go back and feel little, or put me in isolation and literally in a room on my own, and make me feel so alone and… because I remember in year seven, they didn’t know about my disability, um, so then they told me to write a story, in isolation, because I got sent up there, and I’m like, I can’t spell anything, and I don’t wanna show someone at the end of the day my writing, ‘cause I can’t spell nothing, I don’t know how to spell things, and that made me feel so alone. And then I would get angry with myself because I can’t spell something. And then um… so that made me feel little, ‘cause you’re putting me in a room where… literally you’ve got dividers and you can’t talk to no one, you can’t do nothing except sit there, look at a piece of paper and start writing your story, writing something, or reading a book… like you’ve given me two things that I can’t do, and making me feel so stupid and like… little and… um, disappointed in myself because I can’t do these things. And yeah, then I just kept getting angry, at myself and teachers and… yeah. And they just kept doing, like kept putting me in there. And then, by the time I actually told them… I told them that I had the disability, they didn’t really help me until it was too late, until I was leaving school. ‘Cause they put me in classes… they put me in classes to help me with my reading and writing in like year ten. And by then it was like too late because I had exams round the corner. Like wasn’t… it didn’t really help me that much. So I had to find my own ways, like I had to go to my English teacher and ask her for extra help, and go to my maths teacher and ask them for extra help, which they did… but… it was just too late. And so, for me to get that D in maths and English, that’s why I was so upset and so happy at the same time, because school helped me when it was too late, so then I had to help myself… so I was happy that I got the D in maths and English, ‘cause I had done it myself, like I helped myself. So yeah. In schools I feel like they use their power too much… too much. Um, an dlike kdis in school as well. Like all in the same situation, like you’re all teenagers, you all have um insecurities, and if a… boys even, to come round school and call me at and whatever, and every other name, it was like really belittling, because… even though I fought back, like I actually had fights with them, um… I ‘d still go home and think like oh, maybe I am… I am this and I am that and doubt myself and break my confidence down and… it just made me… in school it did make me feel really crappy. And I did limit myself to certain people, like certain friends, because I knew that they wouldn’t… they’d be there… yeah. So…

Interviewer: Sounds like you internalised some of things that people have said to you in school [interviewee: mhm] and that kind of… made you feel little. How does that… how did it feel like when, for example, the teachers or students or… some people basically made you feel little? How did it make you feel?

Interviewee: Um… upset obviously. And angry. Feel like it’s the same emotion but… um… just disappointed in teachers, because they should have helped me. And then upset with… upset and angry with students. ‘Cause we’re all put in the… we’re all put in the same situation, and we should be like… helping each other to be honest. Everyone’s got their own insecurities… in school, and like everyone’s going through certain things, family, friends, whatever, so we should all be like helping each other. But it weren’t like that, it was just like… you got the popular people, then you’ve got these people then you’ve got… whatever people… and it was like, they made you feel like… you’re lower than them, even though yous all the same. So yeah, it was… it was really annoying in school. Annoying, upsetting, angry… ‘cause yeah.

Interviewer: Mm. Thank you.

Interviewee: It’s okay.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you want to say about that box?

Interviewee: Mm… not really. Not that I can think of, no.

Interviewer: Thank you. [Interviewee: It’s okay] I’m just gonna pause the recording, or stop it actually

Recording paused.

Interviewer: You’re doing really well.

Interviewee: Thank you.

**Part 2 of the study**

Interviewer: I’ll put that here again… and if you feel like you don’t want to talk about anything, just stop it at any time and like it won’t be any pressure. So um… can we start by talking about what you put first in the place where you feel most socially connected.

Interviewee: I put um… army cadets.

Interviewer: Where?

Interviewee: Army cadets. [Interviewer: okay] Yeah. Is that… like… alright?

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. What is that?

Interviewee: Oh, so um [interviewer: I don’t know] er… it’s like… er where youths will go to um… like join, it’s like a youth club, but not, like it gives you… you learn real army situations, like you learn how to… you go to camps and stuff and learn how to lead and shoot a rifle and you learn discipline from army drill and like marching and taking control and… you learn like first aid and… you learn like a lot, like you do navigation and it’s just like… really active and… really good to learn something different, something new. So yeah. But then, going there, ‘cause I’ve put it… most socially, sociable… [interviewer: connected] yeah, connected… I put that because… you’re joining it, everyone has a purpose to join it. [Interviewer: mhm] Everyone’s going there… it’s not like school, like you’re not forced to go there. It’s your own decision to go there and be with each other and have… like connection with people that you wouldn’t know. [Interviewer: mm] But when I went to… I, I’m too old now to go, but when I was there… um, I met people that I wouldn’t meet, like I didn’t know them from Barking, Dagenham, like… um, so it was nice to see like other people that actually enjoyed going to cadets and enjoy this type of stuff. Like we all have an interest, [interviewer: mm], so it kind of helped… where everyone was connected. And I put there there’s um… a rank. And I was there for four years doing army cadets, and I didn’t get a rank and I was like, oh, I might as well just leave, like there’s no point, I’ve been here so long, there’s people that re getting it before me, and like I’ve done everything right, like I was a good cadet… and then, when I finally got my rank, like every… everyone, ‘cause we was at a camp, and then so you had like people from north London, like all over London… uh, in a square, all in our uniform, and they called out my name, and I was like so happy and like everyone was clapping and… like so proud of me, everyone was like yeah, heyza woo, like I finally got my rank and like, something I worked for… and so yeah, it was really happy and… like I um… but one thing I didn’t get in cadets was, how to shoot a rifle properly. So I was good at shooting… just wasn’t good at the weapon handling test and like things that you have to do to shoot safely. [Interviewer: mm] So um… so like I’d get angry with myself and disappointed and be like oh, I can’t do it, like, and then I’d… like everyone would get together and get in a circle and like help me out, until I passed the test. And so yeah, it was very like… very… everyone comes together, everyone supports each other. [Interviewer: mm] It was a very nice atmosphere to be in, definitely. And it was very different, like showed me… like there something else, like out there that you can do, not just sit at home and be bored and talk to one set of people and… like there’s a lot of opportunities that you could do. Where… where would I be able to shoot a rifle? Like it gave me something that I’m actually good at, like ‘cause I am good at shooting… and it showed me that. And um… like navigation as well, ‘cause I need that in what I’m doing now, like public services, so that helped me as well. It kind of showed me that… uniformed public services is what I want to go into. And this… is might not be the army, but it showed me that… there is physical things out there and not just office jobs and stuff like that. So yeah I’m really, really glad that I joined army cadets. ‘Cause obviously at first, you’re going into something completely new. I was really scared to go and I would only go if my friend went. But then she left, and I just kept going, I was like I might as well do something and complete it. And I kept going and it was good. And I kind of forgot that she was even there, because I stayed and I’d done it and I made friends and… yeah. It was definitely a place where you don’t feel alone.

Interviewer: So it sounds like you like a place where um…. you know, that you feel active [interviewee: mm] in a way.

Interviewee: Yeah. And like everyone has… a connection. Like you’re not getting forced to go. So everyone wants to go to this place. So um… so like… everyone has an interest in this, like even when, even if they wanna learn first aid or learn… how to shoot a rifle or learn navigation or other things, like army history, like… you’re not getting forced to go, they’re not ringing you up saying where… where are you? You can miss days if you want, but that’s your own… that’s your own thing and then… that’s your own problem. Like if you’re not gonna go then that’s… that’s you. But, it gives you a goal to work towards as well, because there’s loads of ranks, and I could have got higher, but it just weren’t, I dunno what happened, it just… they weren’t giving it to me. But I was happy with what I got because I tried so hard to get it. Like I’d been there for so long. And even though I didn’t have a rank, my unit was like, ‘cause I went into Barking army cadets and um… my unit would respect me, because where I’ve been there so long, even though I didn’t have a rank. So yeah, it was good to be there, and like everyone… even new kids, like no one’s forcing them to be there so they’d come back, even if they didn’t have friends, they would come back, so we obviously made them feel welcome and wanted and sometimes kids would come there, and they‘d have like problems at home and… to get away, to do something completely different, it is really, really good thing to have. [Interviewe: mm] Really good thing.

Interviewer: Yeah, so it sounds like… having a sense of purpose, people come there because there’s goals involved, [interviewee: mhm] um, there’s a sense of purpose in there and everyone comes because they want to come, [interviewee: yeah] it’s not like school, as you said, where you feel like you have to come.

Interviewee: Yeah, and like… sometimes, ‘cause army cadets is about discipline as well… so for people to want to be disciplined, which is good for like young people as well, ‘cause it shows then that you do have to follow certain rules like, you do have to follow them. And what taught me that was drill, like you have to do things in the right order and make sure that things are uniform and… um… that like, you’re all a team as well. Like if one person does it worng, you all… you’ve all done it wrong, [interviewer: mm] you have to start again. And that’s taught me a lot, and it’s helped me in what I want to do now, which is public services. So yeah, it has really… it is really good. Kind of miss it as well. Really miss it.

Interviewer: So it sounds like you like that sort of group [interviewee: mm] activity, like everyone supporting each other…

Interviewee: Yeah. Because… what’s the point of doing something if everyone’s not included. Like I do try my best, like in college we have these activities and like I try my best to get everyone involved but… you might have that certain person that is too shy or… or they don’t want to do it and you’re like either… help them out and build their confidence or… if they really don’t want to do it and they’re giving attitude then, kind of… you can’t help someone that don’t wanna be helped. So I do try my best, like leadership roles like… I’d get ev… everyone involved… try my best anyway. So in this, like, you’ve got people that are comfortable… so they obviously wanna come back. They obviously feel like everyone’s a team and they can make friends easy and… so that’s why I liked it. ‘Cause even though my friend left, like a week after I made new friends. And obviously ‘cause they’re… we have the same interests, we’re all gonna get along, which we did. And there was no arguments in my unit… dunno about others, but in my unit we was, we was alright. And then when it come to camps, like we wouldn’t see… it was like annual camps… so we wouldn’t see each other for like a year, and then coming back together the next year, it would be like you never left and everyone’s friends and we’re all doing the same activities like… there’s one where we had to go up high and I’m a little bit scared of heights and I wanna be a fire fighter but I’m a little bit scared of heights… I think I’m scared of falling, instead of heights, but um… and I didn’t really wanna do it, and everyone’s like cheering me on, and then there’s other things that… people scared of water, and I was cheering them on, and they actually did it and they overcome things and good, really good atmosphere to have to not see these people in so long and then just get back and like sleep in the same beds, sleep in the same rooms, and… not the same beds but the same rooms, um… and like having that discipline and knowing that, if we don’t do these things like we will get in trouble and we need to do it as a team, so like we had to make our beds up properly every morning, have the rooms cleaned every morning, and… that’s what I mean, certain things, it was like the army. Like there was certain things that we had to learn… um, so yeah and having that, so this one girl didn’t make her bed properly, and we all had to like go outside and run and do um… star jumps and every other thing. So it was like, having that element of team work drilled into my head, it was a really good thing to have. [Interviewer: mm] Yeah.

Interviewer: How did that make you feel?

Interviewee: Um… made me feel like I had a purpose and like… having to do things right so other people don’t have to suffer, and myself don’t have to suffer… so yeah it made me feel like, need it get that done, like now, do it now. Um… but yeah. Having a like, knowing that you’ve got things planned out for the day felt good, yeah.

Interviewer: And how did that make you feel, being in that environment with a lot of team work and support. [Interviewee: yeah] How did you feel?

Interviewee: Good. Really good. Like happy. ‘Cause like I said earlier, in school everyone’s like oh, you’re on your own, or… bullying or calling you names, where in cadets you didn’t have any of that. One because they didn’t tolerate it, and if you did, you was kicked out straight away. Um… but yeah. Didn’t have that because everyone’s there for a reason, like they wanna be there. So they didn’t put theirself in a situation where they’d get kicked out. Where in school if you get… like you don’t wanna be there anyway so if you get kicked out you’re happy about it and you like, you go to another school. But yeah. So… having that element of teamwork is really good to have. And that made everyone feel happy and uplifted and everything.

Interviewer: Mm. Thank you.

Interviewee: It’s okay.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you wanted to say about that box?

Interviewee: No, not really.

Interviewer: Can we talk about what you put next please?

Interviewee: Erm… I put home. For least… like…

Interviewer: For where you feel most lonely [Interviewee: yeah] … least connected…

Interviewee: Yeah, so I put home for most lonely because, like I said before, my home, my house is like a hotel kind of. So like you’ve got my mum and dad downstairs and you’ve got me and my sister… no, you’ve got my mum and dad upstairs, watching telly, and you’ve got me and my sister downstairs, on our phones, watching telly… like there’s no communication, it’s just so boring where… you feel so like alone. Even though you’ve got a house full of three people, everyone’s just glued to a telly or… they’re sleeping or something, like they wanna be on their own. But I’m more… from cadets like I’m more family and team work and everyone be together. And that’s why I find it so good to be at my boyfriend’s house, [interviewer: mm] because everyone’s together, everyone’s downstairs… I think he’s the only one that don’t go downstairs because he’s upstairs playing Xbox. But that’s… a boy for you. But then I feel so welcome at his house because everyone’s downstairs, like I can sit downstairs and talk to people and ask them how their day was and… just like home’s not like that, it just isn’t. Because they have nothing to talk about. They… their routine day is just the same, nothing… like they have nothing to talk about. So it is really boring and lonely there. Like I’m just on my phone scrolling through things that I don’t care about. I’d rather sit there with my family and talk about things. Or watch a film together or… have dinner together. Rather than, rather it be like a hotel where you only meet up in the kitchen. Like it’s not… it’s not right. It is really boring and lonely. So I’d rather separate myself from that and go to a place where I do feel… I do feel wanted there, like I know I’m wanted by my mum and dad, but… they don’t show it type thing. So… [interviewer: mm], yeah so I separate myself to… from that and go to a place… where I do feel… like talk to people.

Interviewer: And um, thank you… and how does that make you feel, being at home and everyone’s kind of doing their own thing or not sort of being in that team [interviewee: mm] style that you like?

Interviewee: It’s just upsetting. It really is, ‘cause how can you live like that? Like it’s just boring, do the same thing every day… personally I’d wanna go out. Even if we don’t have money, like, take the dog for a walk. Like do something together. It don’t have to be something special, like, I feel like when I go home, I’m like oh, yous are boring, like this is boring. I’m talking about go out… going out somewhere like to the pub or something or somewhere expensive, I’m just talking about… take the dog for a walk, sit downstairs with each other like… talk to each other. Not separate. Like it don’t make sense to me.

Interviewer: And when you said like, when you home, you spend time like just on your phone, doing things that you don’t care about. [Interviewee: mhm] Can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: So like just… seeing how other people live, like on Instagram or Facebook and I’m just… scrolling, and I don’t really… care about things like that. Like, I’d rather… sit there and talk to people. ‘Cause I’m not really… I’m not really active on my phone. Like I’ll sit there and scroll through it but I’m not like oh I’ll take pictures, post it, or… type in a way to everyone or… making statuses and stuff like that on Facebook. I’m not really about that, so I’d sit there and get bored of scrolling, seeing the same rubbish over and over again. The only reason I go on my phone is to talk to my friends. Um… but yeah. So I’m sitting there. But my sister’s very like that. Like she cares what celebrities are doing and she cares about… because I guess it’s an escape for her. Because she’s not sitting there doing nothing. But I’d rather not be on my phone, and do something else. So yeah. It’s… it is hard. [Interviewer: mm] ‘Cause I don’t wanna be consumed by phone as well. Like, it’s not… I think, because I can’t read properly as well, like, I think it’s boring, just sitting there, looking at words, trying to read it and then I just get bored. So I just keep scrolling… so yeah, it does feel… does feel like boring. It’s very boring man.

Interviewer: Um… but what… what about Instagram, can you tell me about that?

Interviewee: Um… just… when I go on it I’m just scrolling, not really doing nothing on it. Like I post a picture if I really like it, but other than that… yeah.

Interviewer: Thank you. Is there anything else you wanted to say about that box?

Interviewee: Um… no.

Interviewer: Okay. Thank you. Now I’ll come to the final bit of the study, [interviewer: yeah] the questionnaire. Um, I don’t know if you’re in a rush or… I’ll just pause that, sorry.