Participant 27 - Female, 22, Newham

Part 1:

Interviewer: Can you bring the um… ah perfect, that’s it. Yeah. Thank you. So can we start by talking about what you’ve put first, please? In the first box.

Interviewee: Uh, I don’t know, I feel like I just put a black hole ‘cause that’s just like what everyone thinks of when they think of loneliness. No? Like that’s a common one. [Interviewer: mm] No? I don’t know. Maybe not. [Interviewer: no, no… yeah…] [Laughs] Uh… yeah no, there’s literally like no actual reason for that.

Interruption

Interviewee: Yeah, there’s literally no actual reason why I put that one, like a personal reason. I just literally thought like black holes signified emptiness and like loneliness. Yeah, that’s prob- that’s it. That’s what I can think of for that one really.

Interviewer: When you say emptiness, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: Mm… I don’t know. Just like having nothing, I suppose. Like… having no feelings and no emotions. Just empty. [Interviewer: mm] Don’t even know what that would feel like.

Interviewer: So when you- when you think of a black hole, what comes to your head?

Interviewee: Well space straight away, obviously. [Laughs] Uh… destruction. [Interviewer: mhm] Like loss. Loss of like everything- I don’t know. See like it sucks everything in, doesn’t it? Hm. Think that’s why it’s lonely. [Interviewer: mm] ‘Cause it just sucks everything in. [Laughs]

Interviewer: When you say lost, can you tell me more?

Interviewee: Like… ‘cause obviously if it’s destroying everything, it’s gonna… like obviously there’s gonne be some sort of loss. Like if there was a black hole to come here right now, there’d be a lot of loss. A lot of people.

Interviewer: Mm. And when you say destruction, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: I literally- I mean that like literal. Like… like if a black hole was to come here, there would be chaos and destruction [interviewer: mm] and… literally like houses all over the place and [interviewer: mm] [laughs] it would be crazy. I don’t know why I put that for loneliness actually. I’m not sure now.

Interviewer: And how does that make you feel?

Interviewee: Mm… insecure in myself? I feel like if I’m over-questioned then I’ll change my mind on something. [Interviewer: mm] Maybe that’s not good. I should probably work on that. [Laughs]

Interviewer: Mm. When you say you’re being over-questioned, you might change your mind…

Interviewee: I feel like if I have an answer for something, and maybe someone tries to make me dig deeper into that answer, I might think oh, is that right or is that wrong? Maybe it’s wrong.

Interviewer: Just to let you know, there’s no right or wrong answer in this-

Interviewee: No, no, no, I know. But now I’m thinking, does that even go with loneliness now? Does that even-

Interviewer: Don’t worry, there’s no right or wrong answer. I’m just trying to understand what you associate with the [interviewee: yeah, no] experience of loneliness. Um…

Interviewee: I think I- I could probably like say more about the other ones. I feel like that one was literally just more of a generic answer I feel like.

Interviewer: Mm. Um… when you think of a black hole, wh- what- what- how do you feel about it? How does it make you feel?

Interviewee: Mm… I don’t know. Sad. Hmm… a bit envious. That would be nice to literally- if a black hole was a person, and they didn’t have like any emotions, that would be nice. To just like not feel literally anything. I’d like to see what that felt like, just for a day. [Interviewer: mm] [Laughs]

Interviewer: When you say not feeling anything, it would be nice not to feel anything for the day- for a day, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: Well I don’t know if it’s like everybody but I feel like I’m always overthinking. It’d be nice to not overthink stuff all the time. Like it’s literally everything I’m overthinking. Be nice to not feel that.

Interviewer: When you say you overthink, right, how does it make you feel when you’re overthinking?

Interviewee: Mm probably tired, I’d say. Very tiring. ‘Cause then it stops me from like sleeping a lot as well. [Interviewer: mm] Feel like I’m overthinking into the night. There’s not like a switch off button [interviewer: mm] like when there’s actually… [phone buzzing] stop.

Interviewer: No, it’s okay. When you say you’re overthinking, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: It’s literally everything, I feel like. Like from walking- I feel like I’ve- I walk funny. Or like… I dunno. Just literally everything. Like sometimes if like me and my boyfriend are like lying together I’m like making sure I’m like breathing in the correct like pattern. Just like small things. Not like… massive- but it’s small things on a daily basis, and I’d say like bigger things maybe every so often. [Interviewer: mm] If that makes any sense.

Interviewer: And um… and how does that make you feel, when you’re for example lying down with your partner and um- and you’re thinking- you’re being conscious of how you’re breathing. How does that make you feel when you’re in that moment? And then you’re being conscious of if you’re breathing okay or if you’re not kind of… yeah…

Interviewee: It’s annoying. ‘Cause sometimes I feel like it’s not normal and I just would prefer… to just have like a easy going mind. Like one that was just like whatever… kind of thing. [Interviewer: mm] I don’t really know how to explain I to be honest. I don’t… tend not to like try to think too much about... I don’t know, like how I’m feeling and stuff. Hmm. [Interviewer: mm] Don’t like feeling sorry for myself.

Interviewer: Mm. And um… how do you think that impacts your sense of loneliness?

Interviewee: I think sometimes it’s not a problem. And then sometimes I can be quite bitter about it, I feel. Like I’ve noticed there’s certain things that can make me feel quite bitter. And it’s not… well I know that’s not good. But sometimes you can’t help how you feel.

Interviewer: Hmm. And when you say sometimes it makes you feel quite bitter… can you tell me more about that? And I think I might um put this here… is that okay? Just ‘cause-

Interviewee: Sorry, am I talking really quiet? [Laughs]

Interviewer: Um it’s alright. If I leave it here it might just uh be okay.

Interviewee: What was the question? How-

Interviewer: Yeah. ‘Cause you mentioned that sometimes it makes you feel quite bitter, right? [Interviewee: yeah] I wondered if you could tell me more about that?

Interviewee: I think like… maybe like certain family situations maybe… I can be quite bitter about. Like maybe… not that I’m bitter towards my siblings but the fact that maybe my parents are one way towards them than they are towards me. So it’s difficult sometimes to let go of that. So I can be quite bitter towards family members and stuff. But it’s difficult to get out of the mind frame that it’s like… maybe they deserve it rather than maybe I should just let it go. But I’m more of like a- not a revenge type person but… if you have made me feel a type of way then you should feel a type of way as well. Not in like a- a physical type of way but maybe like I won’t talk to you and you won’t hear from me for a while and stuff like that. But sometimes I feel like it’s better that way. ‘Cause then it- I’ve noticed there’s like no problems when there’s no con- like communication.

Interviewer: And how does that make you feel?

Interviewee: I think it makes me feel better but I’m not sure. I’m not entirely sure. Just think it does. But you’re not always right so… [interviewer: mm] I could be wrong. I could just be saying it makes me feel better but it probably doesn’t.

Interviewer: So it sounds like what you’re saying is um… um… if one- someone let’s say bothers you, or bothered you- a family membered bothered you, did something that made you upset, you want them to feel that way too.

Interviewee: Yeah but I hope that doesn’t come across [interviewer: no, no, not at all] like malicious or-

Interviewer: Not at all. Um… am I- did I understand that correctly? [Interviewee: yeah] I’m just trying to reflect back what you’ve said to me.

Interviewee: Yeah, it’s just hearing it in- come out from somebody else makes it sound a bit [interviewer: no, not at all] like I’m a mean person.

Interviewer: No, no. Um and- and- and you mentioned that um you would sort of stop communicating with that person just ‘cause it might make it less sort of- it might make it better. It might make it um less harsh or kind of… yeah. It might make it easier. [Interviewee: yeah] Can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: I feel like in that sense I’m thinking of everybody. So it would be easier for everyone to just get on with like our own lives, rather than arguing and… just problems really. I like to avoid problems. Even if that means… missing out on stuff and not seeing certain people.

Interviewer: When you say missing out on stuff, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: Mm… I mean my- a couple of my siblings have had their like sports days and stuff which I didn’t go to ‘cause I just didn’t want- really want to be around parents and stuff like that. Not- they’re not together, it’s all separate but, I just don’t wanna be around either of them to be honest. Just quite a few things just- it’s mainly- it’s all really to do with my siblings really. Like it’s just mostly stuff I’ve missed out on with them. I just can’t be bothered to deal with either of the people they come with.

Interviewer: And how does that make you feel, missing out on these?

Interviewee: I feel bad, ‘casue I know if I had a older sibling and stuff, I’d want them to be there. But then I feel like sometimes you do have to just think about your own… like state of mind and stuff. And if being around certain people isn’t good for your state of mind then maybe you just shouldn’t be around them. Even if it does mean… losing out on other things.

Interviewer: So it sounds like what you’re saying is if, you know, some family members upset you or make you feel bad or negative, you would avoid them um just so that it doesn’t negatively impact you.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: And um how does that impact your sense of loneliness?

Interviewee: I think it would impact it quite a lot, to be honest. I think… I think like if I- I dunno, maybe if I did- had a different mind frame and I could just be bothered to put up with it, then I could possibly say that I have… like a bigger family and stuff. But I feel like ‘cause I can’t be bothered to, I kind of stop myself from being able to… to say that. But I feel like in my head it’s justified. Like I feel like it’s not small wrongs, it’s… big things that they’ve done to upset me. So I feel like it’s all justified really.

Interviewer: Hmm. And how do you feel about that?

Interviewee: Not entirely sure to be honest. [Interviewer: mm] I’d definitely say… maybe if things were like slightly different, then maybe… like if my mentality was slightly different I mean. Then maybe… it could just possibly be better for everybody. Like just my siblings as well and maybe if I just bite my own tongue, then maybe it would just be… a better scenario for everyone. But I feel like except for me. If that makes any sense. [Interviewer: mm] So I feel like what is the point of that? But then I feel like is that selfish because then what about them? [Interviewer: mm] But then what about me? So it’s like a circle kind of thing. [Interviewer: mm] [Laughs]

Interviewer: So it sounds like you’ve battled to see how- h- how this lack of connec- communication would make- would- would be for you- would make you feel- and may also… would think the way that- how that would make others feel. Like your siblings for example.

Interviewee: Yeah, ‘cause they’re all quite young as well. And just ‘cause I know how I felt being like an only child and stuff, and wanting to… have siblings and… do stuff with them and stuff like that. So I know… I- like in my head I feel like I should make more of an effort, ‘casue I know how it feels. But then… at the same time I just- I don’t want to. [Interviewer: mm] Is that bad?

Interviewer: Is what?

Interviewee: Is that bad? [Laughs]

Interviewer: No. And how does that make you feel, that- having to think that you should… do that?

Interviewee: A bit annoyed really. ‘Cause I feel like I’m constantly thinking about other people. I’m thinking oh what would be the best scenario for this person or what would be the best scenario for that person. So a bit annoying really. It’s like a- it’s an annoying feeling. [Unintelligible 19:21] I don’t really know how else to say it would make me feel really.

Interviewer: So it sounds like what you’re saying is… you tend to think a lot about… other people.

Interviewee: Mm… not so much in though like a- well no, obviously I- I care about people. But no so much in a way of like I wonder what this person’s up to and I wonder what that person’s up to. It’s literally more of a thing of like… I don’t know. It always just ends up to be the same thing, really. Just thinking just staying away would be the best thing. [Interviewer: mm] So it’s not necessarily thinking about people… it’s literally just… so it’s thinking about them to not think about them. Kind of.

Interviewer: And then it seems that- it seems to me that you sort of end up withdrawing yourself just to make the situation easier [interviewee: yeah] for both parties.

Interviewee: Yeah exactly. I do kind of wish it was a little bit different. Just ‘cause obviously it would be nice to see everybody. Obviously, it wouldn’t all be at the same time, but it would be nice to see everyone. Even if it was like… different times and stuff. Just to be able to see everybody grow and stuff. ‘Cause I know my siblings have- would have definitely gotten bigger by now.

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

Interviewee: I don’t think so.

Interviewer: ‘Kay. Um can we start by talking about what you’ve put in the second box please?

Interviewee: Yeah, that’s fine. Uh…

Interruption

Interviewee: I feel like- you know like in the movies when they say like you can be in a room full of people and feel like there’s- no, you can be alone and not feel lonely, but be in a room full of people and feel lonely. Did I get that- [interviewer: uhu] I think I got that [interviewer: yeah] the right way ‘round. So that’s kind of what that was. Like it was a- that’s- I couldn’t draw- I didn’t wanna draw like loads of people in a box. I was just drawing- I drew a few and put friends. [Interviewer: mm] And then the one underneath was kind of like no friends. You’re just in this room but you’re kind of by yourself kind of thing. I mean it’s not so much like a… actually no I could say I- I experience that. ‘Cause even if you are with people, you can still feel like you don’t wanna be there. Yeah, I’d definitely say that’s a personal experience. For sure.

Interviewer: So it sounds like what you’re saying is you could be around a lot of people but still feel lonely.

Interviewee: Yeah. I don’t think it’s so much like um… feeling overly like- not so much as if like nobody’s kind of with me. Like it’s def- obviously I know people are there, ‘cause I’ve co- I’ve come with people. It’s literally more of like just thinking oh I don’t actually wanna… wanna actually be… here. So then you kind of like distance yourself from the event that you’re kind of at… [unintelligible 23:26] Like even if it’s something small like just going out for like food and stuff. Can kind of just distance yourself from actually being in that room. [Interviewer: mm]

Interruption

Interviewer: And when you say that sometimes you feel like you don’t wanna be there… can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: Uh I’d say like sometimes going out is just… incredibly like difficult. Like I find it incredibly h- like I rarely go out. So when- even when I am out… even when I am out it’s literally- it’s literally a case of like it’s a- it’s been a work- a hard work-out to even get myself like to go out. Most of the I end up saying I’m like- come up with loads of excuses as to why I can’t go out. I just don’t really like it. I don’t actually like being around people. Like even when my friends come to see me, I try and make it as short as possible. I don’t like being like touched by other people. Like not nec- like obviously not necessarily like sexual but literally just like… like literally yesterday, my friend like put her hand on my leg, and I was literally like wiping the feeling off. I just don’t like it. Doesn’t mean I don’t like them. I just don’t like… that feeling. I dunno. I- I just don’t like it. [Laughs] If you didn’t get that. [Interviewer: mm] [Laughs] I feel like if you find yourself difficult to put up with, why would you put up with other people? You obviously need to learn to be around yourself before you can like be around a large group. And that’s why I end up not really getting myself involved when I am out and stuff. I just tend to be quite… quiet and… I dunno, just… quite relaxed really. Feel like a lot of my friends are quite outgoing and loud- not loud but just out there. Like they’re willing to do stuff and try new things and stuff. I’m willing to try new things, I’m just- I’d rather do it myself. Without other people. I don’t find loneliness a massive problem. I mean sometimes it can be… a bit daunting but… I feel like those are my best times really. When I’m without people. ‘Cause no one can um get on my nerves. [Laughs] I feel like I can be quite easily irritated. Like small things irritate me. Like the smallest. [Laughs] Am I going on and on? Sorry.

Interviewer: No, no. No… um when you said that… if you don’t- I’m not sure if I understood correctly but you said something along the lines of if you don’t like yourself, how are- how would you want others to like you? Or something like that. Did I hear that correctly or…?

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah. What, do you want me to like explain-

Interviewer: Can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: I feel like…. I feel like in order to be around even just like one other person, you need to be able to- be able to sit with yourself. Like literally you need to be able to find yourself entertaining. I feel like if…

Interruption

Interviewee: There’s like a lot of like… I’d say there’s like a lot of like difficulties that I have myself. But it’s not like… I don’t know, it’s not like… I don’t know. Sometimes I feel like it’s like easy to talk about some stuff but then I f- I don’t wanna start getting all emotional and stuff. [Laughs]

Interviewer: Don’t worry. You can- you can keep comfortable here. [Interviewee: laughs]

Interruption

Interviewee: Sorry, what was the actual question?

Interviewer: Um… you mentioned that if you don’t like yourself, how are you expect others to like you. Or something- [interviewee: yeah] [unintelligible 29:24] you- it’s- I’m just trying to reflect back what you said. Is that something [interviewee: yeah] like what you said?

Interviewee: Yeah, it’s like… I f- so I’m definitely comfortable to be around myself. But then I feel like… at the same time I’d obviously- I don’t think I’m perfect. So I- maybe that’s wrong, maybe you don’t have to… like think overly amazing thoughts of yourself in order to be around other people. But I definitely think it helps. ‘Cause then you wouldn’t feel insecurities. ‘Cause I feel like people that think good thoughts about- like people that have high egos, they probably don’t- like genuine egos, not like fake egos, like not like fake egos, like people that have actual high egos of themself probably don’t feel insecurities. ‘Cause it’s literally- why would they? They think they’re amazing. But I feel like then, if you don’t, like if you don’t think good of yourself, that’s when you find it difficult to be around other people. Maybe that’s why I like being- I don’t think terrible of myself. I don’t think that’s what I’m trying to say either. But… I just find it a lot easier to just be away from people. And then I don’t feel any type of way about myself. And I don’t have to worry about how I’m walking if I’m literally in my room. Or how I’m eating or- ‘cause no one’s watching me. Or how I’m talking. ‘Cause it’s literally just me. Do you like being on your own? I feel like- is it weird, me saying I just like [interviewer: there’s nothing weird about anything] to not be around people? [Laughs]

Interviewer: Um there’s nothing weird about anything. Um yeah, sometimes I like to be alone too. Um… but um- so when you say that- when you say that- again, I’m trying to reflect back what you said, that you like to be alone because then there- there’s not- other people are not there to watch you, to- to- to… to make sense of you or- it seems that you- you- it seems that you… um… care about how you’re viewed by others. Is that right?

Interviewee: I like to think not. But I- I feel like deep down I know I do. [Laughs] I’d- obviously if someone was to ask me, I’d say I don’t. But I feel like I probably do. I feel like ev- like it’s life. You say you don’t, even if it’s… like strangers, friends, family, you care about what someone thinks about you. There’s always somebody that you have- that you care about their opinion of you. [Interviewer: mm] If I said that right. But I feel like me- it’s… just like everybody. [Interviewer: mm] Which is a bit annoying but… I don’t know.

Interviewer: Um… and when you said that you find it difficult to like something about yourself, again I’m trying to reflect back what you said- can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: Mm I feel like whenever- I dunno, on like questionnaires and stuff, when it asks you to like tell me five things about yourself or… what do you like about yourself, I- I always struggle with those. Like I can never think of anything. Like whether it’s on the spot or not on the spot, I don’t- I can’t- like I can’t think of anything. [Laughs] So that’s- that’s literally it really. I just can’t sit there and think of like high thoughts about myself. I don’t know how people do that. It’d be nice.

Interviewer: How does that make you feel?

Interviewee: Mm… I mean- I don’t know how it makes me feel but I mean, I suppose I wish I just had a different… I dunno, like a different look on things. Just like a different look on life and people. Maybe not so like negative. I feel like sometimes I can be quite negative. I wish I was just more of a bubbly person. Like with- not just with people that I’ve known for years. Like I wish I could just be bubbly towards everybody.

Recording stopped

Interviewer: Um… so just going back to um this picture here, [interviewee: yeah] you’ve got basically a few- you’ve got basically um a group of friends, and then you’ve got one person not having friends.

Interviewee: Yeah it was supposed to- I’m not very good at drawing, [interviewer: don’t worry] but it was supposed to basically be the- in a room- the- it was meant to just be- it was meant to be like a pe- like loads of people and then kind of- that person just kind of feeling… like they’re kind of by themselves kind of thing. I don’t know why I put friends, no friends. It was just kind of meant to signify that they were by themself and that group of people had people by them. But they weren’t- it’s not actually like so much being by themselves, it’s just mainly feeling like, when you’re out somewhere, you’re not actually there. Like your head’s not actually there. Like, you know, you’re… I- like daydreaming- like very easily. Like… I feel like I’m… whenever I’m out, I’d much rather be somewhere else. So I try and just go off somewhere else in my head really [interviewer: mm] when I’m out. But then I feel like I end up with people like s-… calling my name for like a good like two minutes and I’m literally… not there. [Interviewer: mm] But I am. Hmm.

Interviewer: When you say that you would rather be somewhere else, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: I can’t- I mean on the spot, I can’t think of like actual places where… my- my head will go to. But it’s lit-- sometimes it’s not even like actual thinking stuff, it’s literally like sometimes I’ll… I’ll- I can just be like so focused on like an object in the room, and it just completely zones everything else out.

Interviewer: Mm. Sounds like what you’re saying is you don’t necessarily enjoy going out clubbing and… things like that with friends. Is that-

Interviewee: Yeah, just like the usual stuff that young people like to do I suppose. Like going out to bars and getting drinks and stuff and… a lot- a lot of my friends are into like Topgolf now and stuff and…I can’t- I don’t really like it but [interviewer: mm] I try- I do try to make an effort but then… it’s like before it gets to it- so maybe like a week before the event that we’re planning is coming up, I’m like oh yeah this is gonna be great. Like it’s gonna be way different than last time and you’re gonna have a good time, don’t worry about it. And then it will get closer and closer and closer, I start thinking like this is gonna be terrible, like do not go out. Just stay inside. You’re not gonna have a good time. It will be boring. And you’ll just end up- you know you won’t wanna be there when you- as soon as you get there. You’ll probably wanna leave [Interviewer: mm] So I kind of like psych myself up and then end up… de-psyching myself.

Interviewer: Mm. And how does that make you feel?

Interviewee: It’s a bit frustrating. ‘Cause I wish I’d just… could keep one mentality, either I don’t wanna go at all or I just keep the wanting to go mentality. But it’s like I just waver between the two. My brain just can’t pick one or the other. I wouldn’t even mind if it was one or the other, I just much prefer to just pick one. ‘Cause it’s not nice to like… kind of… psych yourself up for something to then not feel that same way. So you’ve been doing it for like- I dunno, maybe like f-… I feel like with me, ‘casue I have to go overboard in order to make myself feel like I wanna go somewhere, I feel like I have to put so much effort into telling myself it’s gonna be good and stuff, so it feels like it’s just wasted energy. I just feel like I’ve wasted my own time by the end of it. [Interviewer: mm] So it just- it’s all a bit frustrating. That’s why I’d just much prefer it to just be one or the other.

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

Interviewee: Um no.

Interviewer: Okay. Thank you. Can we start by talking about what you’ve put in the third box please.

Interviewee: Mm I feel like the first two was like m- me thinking of maybe like what everybody thinks loneliness is. I think the other two, I kind of like struggled to think more of those, so I kind of thought of like more personal experiences of loneliness. So that one was literally- ‘cause I have a son so we um… we lived in a mother and baby unit for quite a while. And I remember like at night I would feel sometimes lonely. And it would usually be sitting on my sofa. So I think maybe that’s- it rung some bells for me [interviewer: mm] so that’s maybe why I thought sofa and a person… maybe. ‘Cause I mean- yeah, night time would be a bit… boring and… lonely and stuff.

Interviewer: When you say boring and lonely, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: I feel like once my son was gone to bed, it’s like what else am I really supposed to do. ‘Cause I can’t leave, what am I supposed to do here? Like how am I supposed to like now entertain myself for like the next four-five hours? And when I was there I used to stay up till like quite a long time- [noise, interviewee laughs] sorry. I used to say up for a very long time, like literally till about three-four a.m. It would take- I think my son would go to bed at like- I dunno, like eight o’clock, eight thirty, something like that. It’s the flies, sorry. Um… and then yeah, after that it would literally just be… just me by myself watch TV and stuff. And I think I’d get so over-tired that I wouldn’t be able to fall asleep. So past the point of tiredness. And I’d literally just be like… I dunno like s- sleep-waking… like I’m awake but asleep at the same ti- I mean sleeping at the same time. So yeah, I’d literally just be up till like thre-four, just flicking through TV channels and stuff. And I remember that being incredibly boring [interviewer: mm] and not very fun.

Interviewer: And how did that make you feel?

Interviewee: I suppose it made me feel… I suppose it made me feel sad in a way, but not sad ‘cause I- I feel like… if I felt sad about it then, you know, maybe that’s me thinking that I- I don’t appreciate or think it’s worth it being a mum or something. I don’t appreciate all of the stuff that comes with that, you know, you can’t be out with your friends all the time and there are gonna be times when you’re on your own and you do have to sit alone in the house and stuff. ‘Cause that’s just what being a mum is. You have to be around them. But it- it does get quite… [interviewer: mm] it does get quite lonely at times. Definitely. [Interviewer: mm]

Interruption

Interviewer: Um… sorry, can you repeat what you just said last?

Interviewee: Um, yeah I’ve- I’ve… I mean I don’t really… know what other feelings to say. I mean other than- so yeah, so sometimes I could just feel a bit sad in the night and stuff. But yeah, like I said, I wouldn’t really… wanna overly feel sad because then I feel a bit guilty like I said, [interviewer: mm] like maybe as if I don’t appreciate being a mum and stuff. So then I try and maybe not be sad. Like try and force myself to be a bit more like… aw he’s gone to bed now, like let’s get everything ready for the night- that’s so boring [laughs]. I don’t find the stuff that comes along with being a mum like overly fun. I find the mum part fun, but then like the other stuff that comes with it, like me… [interviewer: mm] having to like, you know, sometimes be alone and… not be alone as in like- obviously like, you know, like have a massive party, but I literally mean like… it’s difficult to like meet anybody. ‘Cause you feel like they don’t wanna be with somebody that has a baby or something or… so it puts you off putting yourself out for like those type of scenarios as well.

Interviewer: Mm. And how does that make you feel?

Interviewee: Mm…

Interviewer: You think that people can’t be with you because of your circumstances?

Interviewee: Yeah I feel like maybe people will like… only be around me ‘cause maybe they sympathise for me or… they feel like oh, she’s probably just like a young mum and alone so maybe we should just give her some time and make her feel better kind of thing. I’m not sure.

Interviewer: So it sounds like what you’re saying is um… you found it lonely at times when- you found it lonely when you’ve put your son into bed and then you had all this time but you couldn’t leave home and you felt bored and alone at home.

Interviewee: Yeah. Yeah, literally that.

Interviewer: Mm. And… sounds like… you felt that other people don’t necessarily wanna be with you because of you having a child. And if they did wanna be with you it’s because they wanted to sympathise with you.

Interviewee: Yeah, like they just maybe feel sorry for me. Like they just pity me or something. I’m not- I’m not sure [interviewer: mm] what I think people think.

Interviewer: And how does that make you feel, thinking that other people feel sorry for you and wanna be with you because of being sorry?

Interviewee: I dunno, I feel like it makes me feel… a bit angry in a way. Like a little bit like don’t even bother, if that’s how you feel. ‘Cause then it’s not like genuine and stuff if that’s how you feel. Like if you are only talking to me ‘cause you sympathise for me then it’s not a very genuine connection and stuff.

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

Interviewee: Uh… no. I think we’re good for that one.

Interviewer: Okay. Can we start by talking about uh what you put next please?

Interviewee: Mm I think this one could probably be more like when I was a bit younger, maybe when I was like sixteen and stuff. Not- fifteen actually. ‘Cause I didn’t have any siblings up until then. [Interviewer: mhm] Well actually I- there was another one that I ddin’t like necessarily know about, but um… yeah I didn’t have siblings up until not too long ago. And I remember always looking at other people and thinking yeah, that must be nice, to have like a house and a garden and a dog and siblings and a mum and dad and stuff. ‘Cause it was just me and my mum in a- in a flat and I just remember always thinking must be nice just to have that like TV picture family. [Interviewer: mm] And those were definitely like some like lonely times. I mean I definitely remember feeling lonely of- like thinking… like I remember thinking like… how comes I don’t have brothers and sisters? And I remember everyone else telling me like stories about all the fun they used to have with… their siblings and their cousins and all like the sleepovers they would have. And I just don’t like have any of those memories. I remember it just being just me pretty much most of the time. But then I think when it got to fifteen, it’s like… in a way it was a bit too late. It’s a very old age to start doing like childish sibling things. I feel- I’ve passed that point now. I think in a way what makes me feel a bit like sad in a way, and like maybe a bit sorry for myself, so then I end up feeling a bit guilty ‘cause like… it’s not a good trait to feel sorry for yourself I don’t think. I mean don’t get me wrong, it’s always okay to feel sad. It’s always o- I just don’t think maybe pitying yourself and… feeling that way is overly healthy. But sometimes like, for myself really, ‘cause I can’t always help it. Sometimes I do end up feeling sorry for myself. ‘Cause I feel like I… if that person deserved a better start then why didn’t I kind of thing.

Interviewer: And how does that make you feel, when you see, for example, like your friends or others having things that you haven’t got? Like siblings and cousins and sleepovers and so on.

Interviewee: I feel like now- I mean I’m slowly like getting over that. ‘Cause it’s literally like I’m… you know passed that point now anyway. But when I was a bit younger, it definitely made me feel sad. ‘Cause I felt like why don’t I get to go to my cousins’ this weekend or why don’t I get to do something with my mum and dad this weekend and stuff like that. Just like the basic things. Like nothing even like massive. Like just like… dunno just like normal stuff, like just going trips, but as a whole family. I feel like everything was either me or with my mum. That was literally it. There was nobody else. And she is quite a draining person to be around so it would be nice to sometimes be able to go to like different members of the family. But I feel like nobody was like really there when I was younger. I see may- a few of them more now. But yeah it was wh- quite a bit more lonelier when I was younger.

Interviewer: So it sounds like what you’re saying is your childhood um… felt alone for you. [Interviewee: yeah] Just not having siblings in the timings that you wanted them and… you also put- oh, so no family or siblings. Um… yeah, just not having family, or enough family when you were younger. And that contributed to your loneliness.

Interviewee: Yeah I’d- I would definitely say it would. It- it has, yeah.

Interviewer: And seeing other people kind of having family members and siblings and things-

Interviewee: Yeha- yeah, like it did used to make feel a bit envious. Like a bit like why isn’t that me or… [interviewer: mm] that should be me kind of thing. [Interviewer: mm]

Interviewer: So it sounds like seeing other people having things that you didn’t have made you feel envious or jealous or…

Interviewee: Yeah. Just to be blunt.

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

Interviewee: Uh no.

Interviewer: Okay. Thank you so much.

Part 2:

Interviewer: Um so this is part two. [Interivewee: mhm] Um can we start by talking about what you’ve put in box one, where you felt most socially connected. Thank you.

Interviewee: I put down East London. Just ‘cause I mean it wasn’t a specific area in East London. I say it as just in general. ‘Cause I feel like that’s where… most of my friends and most of my family are… are here. And I feel like I- there’s always been something that’s trying to make me come out of that. Like whether it be like school or… having a baby and stuff. But I feel like here is where I’ve always felt most at ease. Like not… not like as if I don’t have anyone around here. I feel like East London is definitely one of like the only places where I could say where… like, you know, I feel comfortable- I couldn’t really get lost or… you know, there’d most likely be somebody for me. At least one day of the week. But I feel like anywhere outside of that I don’t feel that way. Like I mean I have friends outside of East London but I mean being in that area I don’t feel as comfortable as I do. I just- do you know what it is, I mean it’s like I said before with like the going out with friends and stuff, I don’t really like having to travel and… go very far and know that I’m, you know, like an hour away from home or forty-five minutes away. I like just knowing I’m like ten minutes away or- I- I like knowing that if I was to leave, ‘casue I don’t like being out for very long, I know it’s a short journey home. So I feel like anywhere outside of that is just like… one it’s just gonna take me long, two I just probably didn’t even want to be there in the first place, and three I don’t really have like any memories outside of East London, I don’t feel like. ‘Cause me and my mum, like she- we didn’t really go on holidays much, so I couldn’t say like… any countries I had fond memories of being in, any countries and stuff. We didn’t really go anywhere outside of London. I feel like East London was where we was mostly… was w- yeah, where we was mostly at for most of the time. That’s probably why I’d definitely say that’s where I feel most like connected and like comfortable and stuff.

Interviewer: Mm. Um when you said that this- East no- East London part was where you- I’m trying to reflect back what you said earlier that um school and your child- you mentioned your son and school. [Interviewee: yeah] Did you say that these were not there, so you didn’t have the responsibility and you could just do that you wanted? Or- I don’t know if I understood it correctly.

Interviewee: No I mean like those were the only two situations I could think of that were trying to bring me away from East London. So like my mum sent me to school in Essex. And I don’t- I mean I- I still have some friends from there but it’s literally like… I remember that just being such a hassle. Like just being that far away from home and my mum was quite strict so she wanted me home at a certain time and sometimes it’s impossible to get home from Essex in forty-five minutes. Like sometimes it’s just- it’s not gonna happen. So I- I don’t remember like ever leaving East London and having like the bestest of memories. Like even… like my having a baby and stuff, like me and his dad had like a- not a very good… experience together. I don’t really know what to call it. Like it was a very difficult time so… that was another situation where I could think of being outside East- of East London brought me nothing but aggravation. Not saying- not my son being the aggravation but the… person I decided to have him with being the aggravation. ‘Cause he comes with me wherever I am anyway so if I’m in East London, he’s in East London. But his um… his- his dad for instance is… caused me nothing but grief. So I definitely think like being in East London has just been a kind of like safe haven kind of thing.

Interviewer: Mm. How does that make you feel, being in that environment of East London?

Interviewee: I mean in a way it’s like- it’s alright ‘cause, you know, if that’s where you feel comfortable, that’s where you feel comfortable. I feel like I could do so much better than East London. I feel like I could broaden my horizons. If I just learnt how to be… more open towards things, I could probably move somewhere new and feel just as good. Feel like East London doesn’t have to be it for me.

Interviewer: Mm. Seems like East London is a place where you feel socially connected because your friends are here, um… your school is not there, um… you feel like it’s close to you, you can come back, you can go back and forth easily, [interviewee: yeah] um… yeah. [Interviewee: mhm] Is there anything else you want to say?

Interviewee: Uh no.

Interviewer: Okay. Um can we move on to the next [interviewee: mhm] one. Can we start by talking about what you put-

Interviewee: I think I kind of said a little bit in- when we was talking about where I feel most comfortable, ‘cause th- the other one was literally South London was where I felt most isolated. ‘Cause once I had like my son and stuff, I was straight up there. Like… like before he was born, I was straight up there. Like- I think maybe like… two months into me being pregnant, and… there’s like nobody up there for me. And I literally felt like that was a way for… his dad- my son’s dad to make me f… feel like I only had him, kind of thing. ‘Cause he had all his family out there and all his friends up there and… that’s where he grew up. But it had no c- connection for me. So I always had to travel like an hour and a half to see people. And then I could never be really bothered to do that anyway so it kind of just ended up ha- waiting for people to come and see me and then them thinking, you know, it is a two-way street. Like you- I come to see you and you come to see me so then it being long for everybody and then I just end up kind of just being just me and my son. So I do remember that just being a place where… I felt most isolated.

Interviewer: And how did that make you feel?

Interviewee: I mean at times it could get quite depressing. ‘Cause I was always trying to find ways to come back to East London. Like try and find like ways that I could get a flat to come back here and stuff, but it always didn’t seem to like work out. It took a very long time for it to work out for me. So yeah at times it could just seem quite… I dunno, like diminishing. Like I’d tired and then it just didn’t work out and I’d try again and it didn’t work out and I just always was stuck there.

Interviewer: Mm. And is that the same place that um… you drew the picture earlier, on the sofa?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Being on the sofa, watching telly and-

Interviewee: Yeah. [Interviewer: mm] Yeah I don’t remember like South London being like an overly joyful place for me. I mean I did make some friends like when I was in like a couple of the mother and baby units that I was in. But yeah that was pretty much as exciting as it got. And like sometimes we like put our kids togeth- um in bed together and stuff and then we’d like sit and watch TV and stuff and that would literally be as good as it got when I was up there.

Interviewer: Is that where it- you mean South London or-

Interviewee: Yeah, South Lon- like when I was in my mother and baby unit, sometimes we like- the girls would like put all their kids to bed and stuff and then we’d like just chill and watch TV together. But yeah. That was as like… communicative as it got for me.

Interviewer: Mm. And how did you feel when you had like the girls there with you and…

Interviewee: I mean that wasn’t so bad, ‘cause I felt like… sometimes I find it easier to be able to be around people that maybe I can relate to. So I felt like ‘cause I could relate to like quite a few of the people there… it wasn’t so difficult to be around them. ‘Cause it was like… you could all talk about like your situation and stuff. And just see it as a s- like a situation rather as it come across as a problem. I feel like if you’re not going through it, sometimes the other person just sees what you’re talking about as a bit of like a… a bore and like a drag as like… maybe to them it might seem like you’re getting on their nerves? I dunno. But if some- like when I would talk to them or they’d talk to me about their problems, it just seemed a lot easier for us ‘cause it was like… we just kind of… knew what was going on maybe, like we could give better advice, ‘cause we’d already been through it kind of thing. Yeah, I mean I suppose it’s always easier to speak to people that you can relate to. [Interviewer: mm] That you have things in- like- that you have things with common- common with.

Interviewer: So it sounds like you enjoyed the aspect of having a shared purpose. [Interviewee: yeah] Having something in common with those other ladies. [Interviewee: yeah] Because you could get advice from each other and understand each other and-

Interviewee: Yeah. Exactly.

Interviewer: Hmm. And how does that make you feel when… you had- you had people around you that makes you- that- that understand you?

Interviewee: It makes me feel a lot better, ‘cause then I feel like I’m not… crazy. And like certain situations that I have been through are genuinely not my fault and… it’s just nice to be able to… talk about like situations that, you know, the other girls have gone through with- with their own um kids’ dads and stuff and… just to maybe know that, you know, it’s not literally… just you in this situation. Like… there are… other people as well that are going through literally the exact same thing in the exact same building. Like it’d be funny as well ‘cause like, when me and his- my son’s dad were still together, like… at least once a week you could hear everybody having argument in there. So it- it was like oh okay, everyone’s arguing. It’s not a problem. Everybody does it. It’s not something that’s crazy. [Laughs]

Interviewer: Mm. And how did that make you feel?

Interviewee: Slightly better in a way, but then not that great ‘cause I knew ours was always the worst.

Interviewer: Mm. When you say yours’s was the worst, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: He was quite physical. So… yeah. That wasn’t always the funnest of times. [Interviewer: mm] And yeah like we’d obviously like talk about it sometimes as girls and stuff and the other girls didn’t seem to be going through that aspect. Like a couple of them had like really spiteful boyfriends that maybe like would try and make them feel bad about themselves but… more of like a verbal thing and- maybe the other one had like a boyfriend that was like staying out really late and not coming back but I just seemed to have the only one that was like this fucking psychopath. [Laughs] So yeah, that was quite… difficult I- South London is just a difficult time for- that whole period was just difficult for me. Definitely.

Interviewer: Mm. Is there anything else you wanted to say?

Interviewee: Uh, no.

Interviewer: Okay. Thank you.

Interviewee: No problem.