Participant number 28 – Male, 22, Tower Hamlets Parts 1 & 2

Part 1:

Interviewer: Um thank you. Can we start by talking about what you’ve put first please?

Interviewee: Okay. Uh so, the four sections- the four things that I put is one, depression, two, overthinking-

Interviewer: Actually um, it’s probably best if we um try to focus on one. I’m gonna be asking questions and asking to elaborate and then we’ll move onto the next one, and then the next one.

Interviewee: Okay that’s [interviewer: is that okay?] fine. Yeah, that’s perfectly fine. So the first one that I’ve put is uh depression. [Interviewer: mhm] Um, the reason I put that with uh m- uh this was the case with me mainly when I was experience lonely- first moved out. I felt very depressed, almost like uh… you know I couldn’t really speak to anyone, you know, I couldn’t reach out to my family, my friends weren’t here, I always felt like oh, it’s just me. And that in a way made me very depressed. Like oh, you know, wh- what would I do, how would I get about, you know, I have no idea on how to take this on. And all of these sort of challenges just made me feel like okay, this is the end. You know, I can’t really do anything. And that made me very very depressed.

Interviewer: Mm. So this is when you left for university?

Interviewee: Yeah, so this is when I first left for university, which was about four years ago or- uh when I first came here.

Interviewer: Mhm. So it sounds like what you’re saying is when you left home [interviewee: yeah] you weren’t with your friends or family and you were kind of on your own and that lead you to feeling depressed.

Interviewee: Yeah so at home it was s- I was- it was kind of like a safe environment, you know. I knew everyone, you know, I had connection. When I first moved out here it was- I- like one of the main challenges for me as a guy was like at home, you know, you’re parents are kind of like cooking, you know, you have your food ready, you have your clothes ready. Here it’s like you have to do all of this things- you know, you don’t know how to do it. You have to start budgeting, you have to find work, you know. Financial issues, this issue, that issue, and that made me feel- you almost- was overwhelming. And it made me feel very depressed.

Interviewer: Mm. So what you’re saying is um… sort of being on your own, kind of having to be independent, was a bit of a big shock for you, a change for you.

Interviewee: Yes, definitely. Yeah.

Interviewer: How did that make you feel?

Interviewee: Um… at- at the beginning it was, like I say, it was very overwhelming. You know, I had no idea- no- no idea of finance- I mean, yes, there’s sort of student finance at university. They supported me with finance but I didn’t know how to budget. You know, I was eating out every day because I didn’t know how to cook, and you know, I was putting on- it was effecting my health. I was getting, you know, uh warnings from my doctor saying, you know, you need to start changing, you know, you need to do this, you need to do that, otherwise, you know, you’re gonna have a problem. And everything was just like going wrong. Whichever direction I went, it was going wrong. Couldn’t focus on my studies because- well I’m having to deal with all of this. I’m having to deal with part time job even though it was taking over my time. Uh so I’m failing university and- but at the same time if I don’t do the job, you know, how am I gonna get by the weeks? So everything was kind of just going wrong and I couldn’t really find a balance and I couldn’t organise things ‘cause it was just- I was just… put into it suddenly, you know, without any sort of training, no- no one really taught me okay, you need to to do this, you need to do that, you know, you make sure you budget, make sure you plan your week and find a good timetable. But because I was just thrown into it, without any of this, I kinda had to learn it slowly. But in that process, I was very depressed, you know, I was having emotional uh swings. You know, one minute I would be really happy, the second- s- couple- literally couple minutes later, you know, I would be sad or- often times I would [unintelligible 3:55] I was crying as if like why was this happening to me? Erm… what did I do to get this? You know, I’m trying to do a good thing but like nothing’s going well. [Interviewer: mm] Stuff like that.

Interviewer: It sounds like it was a difficult period for you.

Interviewee: Yeah, I mean first year of my university was very very difficult.

Interviewer: Mm. Um… so you mentioned that, you know, one moment you were happy and the next moment you were not. [Interviewee: yeah] Can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: So happy in a sense that- okay so s- so let’s say something goes well in my university, so if I do a coursework and often times you know- sometimes I would do my coursework so I would get a ninety out of a hundred, or eighty out of hundred and that would immediately put my mood into a happy- uh happier state. You know like oh, I’m going well in my university. And then it’s like oh, you look at- something else happens and you’re like oh, crap. Or you come to your room and you’re just on your own and it’s like oh, you know, it’s like you have a sad life, almost like oh you know, other people, you know, they have their sort of friends, they have their family, you know, and they leave university, you know they have to- they can go back to their family, you know. They can communicate with other people. Whereas me, you know, I- I go to university, I come here, I’m here alone, I go to work, I come here, I’m here alone, you know. There’s no sort of human communication. It’s just me and that’s it.

Interviewer: Mm. You mentioned a couple of things. Um just to reflect back to you, um that you would come to your room and it was all you alone, [interviewee: yeah] and you also mentioned that you would see friends or other people, you know, being able to go back to their family and having friends and so on. Um, can we start by talking about the first one and then the second one. So the first one you said you would come to your room and then you’d be all alone and- can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: Yeah, so uh [interviewer: thank you] my daily sort of routine was that I- I would have university in the morning, I would have a few classes, come back into the room and I [unintelligible 5:54] I’m alone. It’s literally just me in the room, know I’d try going on the internet, you know maybe uh… do something on the internet like uh I tend to watch a lot of YouTube videos. But at the end of the day, you know, I’m still alone. And, you know, when I go to work- so I used to work in the evening before uh- every evening I would go for work from about five to ten. When I come back it’s literally I come back, I go to sleep. And that routine kind of s- repeats. And the day that I used to have the day off, which was about Saturday Sunday, I would be just sitting here doing nothing. Or maybe revising for exams. I wouldn’t necessarily go out, you know. I wouldn’t really communicate. And the second point, which is about the friends um- ‘cause I just-

Interviewer: Before we move- before we move on to the second point, [interviewee: yeah] I was just gonna ask you and- and when you were alone here and- and… and- and all that, like you mentioned like you’d be on your own, watching videos and kind of coming back from work and- and going to bed straight away [interviewee: yeah] and kind of being alone, how did that make you feel?

Interviewee: It made me feel like I was- [coughs] so this was kind of- uh one of the points is made me feel very isolated. That I’m, you know, almost rejected. It’s just me versus everything else. Like you know, I’m like really not wanted in the society. It- you know, it’s like I’m here suffering but no one really notices it. And in often times, you know I would have to- it’s like I’m forced to hide it ‘cause if someone did, you know, they might take it the wrong way. Or they might- wrong way as in they’ll think of me in a bad way. Like oh you know, maybe we should stay away from him ‘cause you know, he’s not really doing so well and you might- they might have to put in work with me. And… so that just made me feel like a- being left out.

Interviewer: Mm. So sounds like what you’re saying is um… you basically felt like the society has left you out and you’re on your own and- and- and… and um- and- and you feel like you were- as almost rejected you. [Interviewee: yup] Is that right?

Interviewee: Yup.

Interviewer: And you also mentioned that you didn’t want people to notice that. Tell me more about that.

Interviewee: Yeah. I didn’t want people to notice that because I kind of wanted to fit in with the people. You know, like people would be talking about their families like oh, we know, we did this over the weekend, you know, we’re gonna go on holiday. And I would kind of fit in. I would be yeah, you know, I visited my family on the weekend. So I try to visit my family, they live in Essex, so I try to visit- whenever I visit them, even though it was a short stay, you know, I make it seem like it was a big thing. ‘Cause I just wanted to fit in with the people. I didn’t wanna- the people to think oh okay, [unintelligible 8:38] he’s not like us, he’s different, you know maybe we should stay away from him. You know, I didn’t want people to think that- I didn’t want- I didn’t wanna become the centre of attention, I just wanted to be like okay- everyone else, going about my days, living my life.

Interviewer: Mm. So it sounds like you didn’t want people to judge you, in case if they felt like you didn’t fit in or you wouldn’t be- [interviewee: mm] yeah. How did that make you feel?

Interviewee: It almost makes me feel like I was faking everything. Like I was living this fake life. You know, I wasn’t really myself because myself is very different to what I was portraying. I used- it’s like- it made me very sad, the fact that, you know, I have to portray this- someone else just so- so that I can fit in with the society like… you know, I used to- almost like I- yeah I’m living but it- I’m not living my life. I’m living someone else’s life. And that if not often times would result in like extreme depression, you know, it would be like days where like I would- I wouldn’t even do anything, I’m just literally sleeping all day. Because like, you know, I just want sort of- I just want to get out of it, in that sense.

Interviewer: Mm. And then the second point uh you mentioned was about friends. I’m trying to recall- remember what I… what you said and what I wanted to…

Interviewee: I- I said uh there was lack of friends in here. So when we first started- well when I first started university about four years ago, we- we met people. So yeah, we know people in course like oh- you know this person, that person, but we weren’t really close. ‘Cause it was right at the beginning, we weren’t close enough that oh, you know, we’re gonna go hang around after- after uni or we were gonna go places, we’re gonna do this, we’re gonna go gym or so- so and so. Usually it’s like when you go in lectures, you meet them, you say hi, you know, you have like few conversation- very like minimal conversations and then that’s it. And that was friends to me because I didn’t know anyone else in here when I moved in, you know. ‘Cause I moved in new, whereas other people uh- what I noticed is that they studied here and the people that they studies with, they- they’re on the same course. So they were very close and it was- they kind of like had their group [interviewer: mm] before they even went in to uni. And when I came in it was very difficult for me to sort of, you know, get into that group, ‘cause they’ve known each other for a- five, six years and I’m just new. [Interviewer: mm] And that made it very sort of difficult. So I say friends, but that’s the only communication I had. You know, they- after lectures they would kind of go- go about their way, you know, with their- with their close friends, to their family. And me, you know, I would just quietly have to come to my room ‘cause I can’t really join them. That- that [interviewer: mm] was it.

Interviewer: So you couldn’t join your friends because um you didn’t know them, you felt like they already knew each other from before, [interviewee: yeah] or they- they became friends before, and then- and then you were kind of alone and you couldn’t join them. Um and how did that make you feel?

Interviewee: It- it was just- like it made me feel very rejected. Like okay, alright, I understand, you know. You guys know each other, you know, you have your own circle. But like people- it’s like one thing I’ve noticed is like people have two face. You know, in front of you, you know, they’ll talk to you, they’ll be nice to you. But behind your back they kind of sort of do their own thing. Uh- and I always felt like that, you know- I- I just felt like okay, in front of me, you know, they’re- they say hi, they make free conversation, they’ll probably ask for my coursework, you know, they’ll exchange work. But after that, that’s all they want. They’re like- after that, you know, there’s a barrier. You stay in your own lane, we’ll stay in our lane. So you just feel- it made me feel like okay, I’m rejected, you know, okay maybe I shouldn’t join them, [interviewer: mm] and… it was just a very tough time.

Interviewer: Mm. Um, is there anything else you wanted to say about that box?

Interviewee: Um, the last point, ‘cause we kind of covered these- the last point is uh-

Interviewer: Oh, did you actually- so did you actually cover this also?

Interviewee: Um o- we covered these two mainly uh in what we spoke about, ov- [interviewer: oh okay] overthinking and loss of confidence.

Interviewer: You know what- okay, we’ve covered this one, that’s good. Let’s move onto this one. Maybe we can talk a little bit more about this one. [Interviewee: okay] If- if you feel like you want to add more, [interviewee: yeah yeah] if not then we can go right into that one. [Interviewee: okay] So let’s talk about overthinking.

Interviewee: So um overthinking. Th- that was- I- it was just a weird time for me. Uh ‘cause I was in my room [unintelligible 13:26] I used to overthink everything. Like- it’s almost like there was a two conversation going on in my head. I was like talking to myself. ‘Cause I’m always alone. Like you know, be doing my coursework, like I- simple things like okay, answering the question, then it’s like two voices- it’s like oh no, answer this way, but another like answer it that way- uh let’s go get lunch but uh maybe we can wait. It was always kind of like going on- it was like I was having a conversation with myself in um… And the other thing that I used to overthink was whenever I used to go to university, whenever I used to talk to people, uh I always used to overthink everything. Like before I- I say anything, I used to think it twice, three times, you know, like oh I don’t want to say anything wrong ‘cause you know I don’t want them to hate me, I don’t want them to dislike me. You know I don’t want them to think wrong of me. Oh like should I approach this person, should I not? It- it was like a constant sort of like- I was just thinking, I wasn’t doing anything. And it was just like constantly going on in- on my head. And that was just like weird time for me. It was like- like sometimes I would ask myself like why am I thinking like so much of it. Like you know, I should just do it. If it’s wrong, it’s wrong, but like I should just do it. Like why am I so- I mean I can’t make everything perfect. And I would have like st- I would struggle a lot with that, you know. Simple things like- like I said, like going to lunch. Why do I need to sit in a place, think twice, three times? You know, I should just- if I need to go lunch, I should just go lunch, right? And I feel like being lonely, that kind of- sorry- just made it more. You know, I was always lonely so, you know, I was always sort of with myself only. And I was just like talking to myself. I uh- I guess, you know, as a human you kind of need to have communication- interaction with people. But because I wasn’t getting that, my only interaction kind of like became interaction with myself. You know, I would talk to myself.

Interviewer: Mm. So it sounds like what you’re saying is… um… you- you found yourself overthinking a lot about both the simple and the… the more difficult scenarios. And how did that make you feel?

Interviewee: Uh it just m- it made me feel like, you know- like am I going crazy? Like am I- what’s happening? Maybe I have some sort of disability. Maybe I should go to the doctor’s. Um at one point I did go to the doctor’s and, you know, I told them, you know, why is this happening? Like do I have any kind of disability, can you te- do some tests or find out like ‘cause I feel like I’m in danger. And, you know, they were like this is just mainly because, you know, you experienced living on your own just out of nowhere. You know, you’ve been with your family and suddenly on your own. And one thing they told me is like look, you- even though you’re away from family, you can always talk to them on the phone. Like give them a call, you know, like talk to them on the phone. At least that way you’re having some form of communication. Yes, it’s not physical interaction but then, even if you’re calling, it w- it should minimise the effect. And, you know, I started doing that- it did help a little bit, not too much. But it just made me feel like- I was very worried at that time and I was like okay, what’s happening. And then I started reading some stuff on the internet and it- it- you know, internet starts- it wasn’t the type of- like people- I was reading, you know, people would start doing that, they would go crazy, they would commit suicide, and that was just scaring me like all the time. [Interviewer: mm] You know, I started looking into YouTube, you know, people making videos on how to deal with this stuff, you know, I did everything I can to sort of deal with it.

Interviewer: Mm. So it sounds like you tried a lot of things to- to- to see what’s going on and [interviewee: yeah] how to overcome it. [Interviewee: yeah] Um… can you say what you wrote- written here?

Interviewee: It’s pretty much what I um spoke. So I tend to overthink a lot of the daily things. Um it’s almost as if I was having a conversation with myself. Not able to communicate with another being forced me to think a lot more about why or how this was happening.

Interviewer: Mm. Um… and- and- and how did it make you feel when you were at the moment, kind of about to sit with your friends and then you would basically um in your head quickly question, should you- should you say this or should you say- should you not. How did that make you feel in that very moment?

Interviewee: It made me feel a little panicky. So, you know- okay let’s say there’s a group of people sitting around, you know, they’re discussing a topic, you know and I’m listening to them, I’m giving them attention, but my mind- I’m in another place. They see me as if okay, he’s in the conversation, but in my mind I’m in another place. You know, starting to panic like okay I need to say something- what do I say? Wh- what do I say? Uh is- is it gonna affect this person, is it gonna affect that person. You know, I don’t want to insult anyone uh or anything. And I don’t want them to think oh I’m just weird or, you know, saying something that’s just totally nonsense. It was just like very sort of panicky. It was like okay I need to say something, ‘cause obviously, you know, I can’t just sit here quietly. But then I need to say something that’s right, that’s gonna keep everyone happy, that’s gonna make me look good, you know, it’s not gonna make me look bad in a way. But what is that thing, what is that thing, what is that thing? It just keep repeating in my head.

Interviewer: Mm. So it sounds like you had that chatterbox- mental chatterbox [interviewee: yeah] going all the time. [Interviewee: yeah] Is there anything else you wanted to say about that box?

Interviewee: Um no, I think that covers everything.

Interviewer: Thank you. Um… can we start by talking about what you’ve put next?

Interviewee: Um isolation- um I kind of spoke about it earlier. So how I feel like, you know, I was being rejected. Like it was just me against everything else. You know, like I’m on my own, but like ph… I kind of have to pretend that like okay, I have a normal life like everyone [interviewer: mhm] even though I don’t. So I mean that’s about it to be honest.

Interviewer: Mm. So when you said that it’s you against everything else, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: So uh me against everything else, you mean- what I mean is like I’m having to do everything. So you know, I see other people, okay they’re studying, but their other sort of requirements are taken care of by someone else. Meaning [unintelligible 20:46] their parents, brothers, sisters, you know. They don’t have to worry about finance, they don’t have to come home worry about- oh whether you have food or not. They don’t have to worry about am I paying my rent, you know. Am I able to pay my rent? Um what do I do if the place suddenly goes, you know, ‘cause every year you kind of have to get a new place. Um they don’t have to worry about any of that. You know, they’re just here studying, and that’s their main worry. But with me, I just felt like okay, I have to worry about everything, I have to worry about y- you know, whether I can- I can afford something. Whether, you know I can go out and eat with friends, ‘cause is it gonna effect my financial outcome. ‘Cause finance was very tight for me. And uh how am I doing in university? Okay do I need to get any sort of graduate scheme ‘cause I need to get a good job. Y- it just felt like okay, everything was up to me. So if I mess up on one little thing, that’s it. I’m over. I can’t really fall back on people. So th- that’s what I mean by just sort of me against the world, whereas other people have support, but it’s just not me and I have to d- deal with it with every direction.

Interviewer: And how does it feel, being in that situation?

Interviewee: It felt- to be honest it felt kind of scary and it’s like- cause you’re- you’re not sure what the future is. And you know, you could lose your job um sometimes- okay if you’re not performing on your job, you’re getting warnings and then they’ll probably fire you um if you’re coming- what was with me is like I would- often times I would have to go to the job late because I would have late seminars in university, but then, you know, I’d get late to work. But I can’t quit in either one of them so, you know, there’s all this constant worry. You know, you’re always in these sort of- your mind is always active. Uh not in a good way, it’s active in a way- it’s like it’s always like trying to figure things out, you know. Like y- you go to sleep, but you’re not really resting. It’s like you have this heavy burden on your shoulder. Like okay, you can’t relax until you fix everything. You know, you can’t rela- relax because your finances are on a point. You can’t relax ‘cause you have another coursework, your exam’s coming up. Um you need to do this and that for work. So it was- I feel like I was always being active and it was never like I could’ve- I could never relax, you know. I was always stressed out.

Interviewer: Hmm. So it sounds like you… you really fret- felt the pressure- felt the pressure of responsibility [Interviewee: yeah] and being on your own and- and sounds also that- also like you worried a lot about your finances, your school coursework and [interviewee: yeah] also like social kind of connectedness and kind of how [interviewee: yeah, definitely] others perceived you and what you say to them. [Interviewee: yeah] And h- how- how did all of that make you feel?

Interviewee: It-

Interviewer: I’m just gonna close that window, is that okay?

Interviewee: Yeah, that’s fine.

Interviewer: Just ‘cause I’m recording this and I don’t know how to… if it gets too hot, we can always open it.

Interviewee: Yeah. That’s fine.

Interviewer: Thank you.

Interviewee: Um so how it made me- they way it kind of- the ways I felt was like everything kind of added up. And I was just- I just felt isolated and depressed like- you know, like what do I do? Like some days I would just literally sit and just ponder- like okay, where is this going? [Interviewer: mhm] I don’t see this going anywhere. Like I’m doing all this hard work but like where is this going? Should I just quit uni and focus on job? Or should I just quit job and focus on uni? But then I need a good financial income. Should I just take another loan out? Or- I mean yes, it will make my life a little difficult in the future, but then at least I can focus on uni and get a better job in the future. So it was just- I just felt like okay, like what do I do? You know, you see you’re in a state, like you can’t go in any direction. ‘Cause whichever direction you go, you kind of have to give up something. And you have to make your choice and that was very difficult for me [interviewer: mm] ‘cause I didn’t know which was the right choice.

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

Interviewee: No- no, that’s- that’s about it.

Interviewer: Okay thank you very much. Um can we start by talking about what you’ve put in the- the fourth box please?

Interviewee: The fourth box, what I put is- is loss of confidence. [Interviewer: mhm] Uh… what I mean by that is that after a while of- of sort of living- after about a month or two, living in sort of this sort of… on my own, you know, dealing with things, it’s almost like I created my own environment where s- I had more or less control over everything, you know? Yeah even though when I was overthinking, I was being depressed, you know, often times, you know, I wouldn’t know what the right decision was, I had the control over it, you know, ‘cause at the end of the day, you know, I kind of did everything. So when I went outside, when I went to sort of- or when people tried to get in to my life, I sh- I just felt so awkward. I felt like oh…. one of- part of me wants to sort of engage with them, talk to them, go out with them, you know, let them in my life. And part of me was like… uh are you sure you want to do that, ‘cause you know right now you have control. If someone comes in, then… they have s- rights to do things as well, you know. You don’t have full control over yourself. And do you really want to do that? I just felt really awkward with people, you know, sometimes I- you know, um slowly, slowly I started m- meeting new-new people and they were more sort of welcoming. You know, and they would be like oh, you know, like let’s go to your pub and your home and we’ll talk and we’ll do the coursework together or something. And I would be like oh no, no, it’s not a good place, you know it’s messy- I was just making excuses ‘cause I just felt like if they get too close, you know, it might cause a problem. ‘Cause I kind of like being in control, ‘cause this is my life. But I don’t want anyone else to influence it. And I- but- I- I just felt like a- okay, and that kind of reduced my confidence. You know, it didn’t- it’s like I wanted it, but at the same time I didn’t and- and I just felt very awkward in front of people. [Interviewer: mm] Like one thing kind of resulted in um… a lot of people, um they sort of, you know, they obviously take selfie and they sh- share they’re stuff. Even till this day I was never able to take selfie or share my sort of what I do. Because I felt like [unintelligible 27:32] what if I- what if they start judging me? [Interviewer: mm] Should I just keep it to myself where it’s safe and I have- I am in control?

Interviewer: Mm. Thank you. When you said that you didn’t basically allow people to come into your room because they would influence it, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: So influence it, in a way it’s like, you know, they might start judging me. They’ll be like oh, why do you have this or why you have that? You know, are you still a child? Like um… I still have my Harry Potter books, I’m a big Harry Potter fan. But like uh in uni, some people, they’re like oh you’re- you’re an adult, you need to grow out of it. Um I tend to be very passionate about maths so I read extra stuff and people just- well I- I’ve had one case where people were like oh you know, you’re a nerd, bookworm, constantly, you know, doing your work. But what they failed to realise was that the reason I’m constantly doing my work is because I’m- I feel lonely. So you know, I need to keep myself busy some way or another. And I just felt like whenever they sort of came here, they were invading my sort of privacy. The- the place where I feel- I feel the most safe. ‘Cause you know, no one can attack me, no one can judge me. If I’m crying here, well it’s just me at the end of the day. You know if I do something, it’s just me at the end of the day. But when they start coming here it kind of- it’s like I’m restricted now. You know, I can’t do certain things, you know, and… th- that made me feel like okay, maybe I should just step away. You know, I should- I shouldn’t really communicate that sort of closely with them.

Interviewer: Mm. So it sounds like what you’re saying is uh you felt like if you would invite people over or people would get close to you, they might kind of find more things about you and then they might judge you if they didn’t like that thing about you or…

Interviewee: Yeah. [Interviewer: mm] And it’s- it’s like I said. Uh I have a very little social media, so a lot of people are on Snapchat, Instagram, you know, they have multiple social media. I just have WhatsApp. Uh one of the main reason is like ‘cause I kind of like keeping myself to myself. And when people were coming over they were like oh, what’s your Snapchat, what’s your Instagram? You know, what’s your this? And when I told them like oh I don’t have it, they would just look at me like, you don’t have it? Like are you lying? Is this a joke? I’m like no I- I just don’t have it. And they would want an excuse, and often [unintelligible 29:55] uh the real reason that I don’t have it is because um… I just felt like, you know, I don’t want to be judged so it’s best not to have these things. ‘Cause these thing is- it’s gonna make- get me to… uh people to judge me. But what I used to tell them was like oh, you know, I don’t wanna get distracted in my uni. That’s why I don’t have it. And that would kind of like backfire. People would be like, you know, you’re so worried about uni, like you’re not living life. Or you know just enjoy yourself and… and then I would be like yeah okay yeah, but I’ll get it, you know, in a year time. Let me finish my exams. Or- it was always this excuse. And I’ve kind of like used that for four years now. So yeah.

Interviewer: Mm. When you said you didn’t want to be judged by others- you said you don’t wanna open and Instagram because you don’t want people to judge you, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: Uh… the reason I say that is because um I have- I know a few people, uh like in university, you know, they would post something and they would get slightly depressed over the comments that people would make. You know, maybe they post a picture of themselves and other people would turn it into a meme. Um they would comment something and then other people would just like- just attack them. Like, you know, you’re wrong, you know, you can’t do this. And knowing that, I just felt like okay, you know what, my life is already difficult, let me not make it more difficult by sharing sort of my opinion, my- what I enjoy in life, ‘cause- okay maybe some people will like it, but majority of the people will hate it. And people- they tend to be very sort of… they- when they have outbursts, you know, they’ll say whatever they feel like. And- so let’s- let me not put myself in s- in that situation. So I’ll just stay away from it.

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

Interviewee: It- if- in a way, it make me feel like, you know, I’m forced to sort of keep myself to myself. ‘Cause of the way sort of everyone is. It’s like I can’t really sort of show much resolve. You know, if I had a hobby, I can’t really share it, talk to someone ‘cause, you know, other people might think okay, this guy’s an idiot. And it’s like I’m forced to sort of keep myself to myself. [Interviewer: mm] And that kind of sort of made me feel more lonely. And yeah. It was like- I was always like in- in my mind, you know, I always used to tell myself, you know, things will get better. Things will get better. Uh you know, you just moved in, you know, it’s only been couple of months. Like just give it time. And… which kind of like- well the topic that I was talking about earlier, overthinking, you know. I was always talking to myself, I was always telling- I was- my main motivation was myself, you know? Um I had to sort of tell myself like no, you know, keep- keep up with everything, you know. Even though other people have it better, by you doing this you’re gonna become a stronger person. Like you know, keep it up. With everything [unintelligible 32:58] internet, you know, go on YouTube, watch motivational videos, like you know, whatever helps. So I just felt the need then- okay- okay I’m on my own, I need to deal with this period. You know, no one’s gonna come to my help, no one’s gonna support me. So I just need to do this. And if I don’t deal with this, I’m gonna- you know, everything’s just gonna go to waste.

Interviewer: Mm. When you say if you don’t do that, everything is going to go to wa- waste, [interviewee: yeah] can you tell me more about-

Interviewee: So everything’s gonna go to waste as in like okay, I’ve got myself into a good university, I’ve got my loan, you know. I’ve even got into a good subject. You know, I’ve been working past two months, you know, had more or less everything kind of under control. Now if I just give up now, I just wasted all this time. I’ve wasted my future ‘cause if I don’t finish my degree, then you know, I can’t get into the job that I want to. Um I’m gonna have to work in retail or something. And I just felt like that was-, to me, that was a wasteful opportunity. Like I’ve been given this opportunity, and I’m just wasting it. So I- it- it was- I was always telling myself like look, you’ve been given an opportunity. You should be lucky, you know, you’re going to a university, you’re doing a good subject. You need to put all your effort in. Yeah. I think that’s it.

Interviewer: Um is there anything else you wanted to say?

Interviewee: Um no. I think that- that’s all it.

Interviewer: Thank you very much.

Interviewee: You’re welcome.

Participant number 28 – Male, 22, Tower Hamlets - Part 2

Interviewer: This is Part 2, can we start by talking about what you’ve put in box 1, where you, well, places where you feel most socially connected. Thank you.

Interviewee: Okay, um so in box 1, place I feel most socially connected, I would say, East London, that’s mainly because there’s a lot of things to do, there’s a lot of activities to, like, attend, all my current friends are around East London so everything, sort of I can contact them whether it’s cinema, just doing, going out playing football, it’s all the things I can do.

Interviewer: So sounds like, you know, you like this, you like this place because it offers so much to you.

Interviewee: Yes, definitely, there’s a lot of opportunities here.

Interviewer: And how does that make you feel when you’re in this area?

Interviewee: Um, it makes me feel good about myself, I’m always kept busy with things so I’m not really spending time alone, especially in the holidays now, I’ve been on holidays for a month now and almost everyday I was sort of outside with friends or always kept busy and I wasn’t staying home alone procrastinating or anything, so in terms of my social life it’s very good right now.

Interviewer: Uhum, and you wrote here that you always have someone to talk to because the area is so busy, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: Yes, so that is mainly all my friends are around this area so whoever in, that in any day I can speak to any one of them, they live very close by, like a five minute walking distance, you know, sometimes I call them and they told me why don’t you come over or let’s go get lunch so I always have someone to talk to.

Interviewer: Uhum, okay. And when you also said that this community is very supportive, can you tell me more please.

Interviewee: Um community is very supportive in the sense that they look out for young people, like myself, you know, there’s always youth clubs, this and that and there’s also people in university, which which, we have a sort of community university where they look out for graduate students, they try to help them get a job, so there’s a lot of help out there in this area.

Interviewer: You know when you said it’s a very supportive environment, community for young people, can you tell me more?

Interviewee: Yes, young people I mean there are sort of, it’s not just myself, people that are a lot younger than me, I’ve seen them you know, they go to youth clubs, if they’re having problems at home or problems at school, they can approach someone, there’s that opportunity there, they can get help from someone, they can talk to someone about it.

Interviewer: Hmm, so you’re saying that basically, if there’s any issue, any problem, um, for young people, there’s always that support there, to help out.

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: And when you say that, you know, this community helps or tries to help find jobs for young people, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: So this is mainly within university once you’re in a sort of phase of graduating, they tend to sort of help you with your application, with your CV, sometimes there’s online tests that you need to perform, they tend to help you with that, they help you prepare for it so that you can do well. I professionally, got into UCL and Queens’ Marry helped me sort of complete my CV, read over it, checked it, they helped me improve my CV, my personal statement so that I can have a better chance of getting into UCL.

Interviewer: OK, congratulations.

Interviewee: Thank you.

Interviewer: Um, yeah just generally speaking, it sounds like what you’re saying is, there is a lot of support in this community, there’s also a lot of people that you could connect to, places to visit and so on.

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: And when you said that many of the places are walking distance. Can we tell me about that?

Interviewee: So all my friends that live around, they live around here and from where I live it’s not far to their houses, so let’s say I wanna go to the cinema, it’s right next to my house, if I want to go bowling, again it’s right next to my house, it doesn’t take long, it’s a walking distance, 10 minutes, even with a bus, it’s a lot shorter, everything is very convenient. If I want to go to a shop, it’s very close by, it’s nearby that I can just go.

Interviewer: Sounds like this place, or this sort of are, community, it makes things convenient for you and accessible.

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. you also mentioned good transportation. Can you tell me more about that please.

Interviewee: In terms of good transportation, as in the London TFL, any place I need to go, I can go quickly, the buses come in every 5 minutes, the trains they also come in every 2-3 minutes. The price is reasonable especially with the bus, you can just pay once fare and jump two bus, they have that so let’s say I need to go to Stratford, it’s just a minute away from the train with Mile End, in terms of timing and how accessible these areas are, transportation is very sort of, it makes it easy.

Interviewer: Uhum. Is there anything else you want to say about box 1?

Interviewee: No, I would say that’s about it.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you very much.

Interviewee: That’s okay.

Interviewer: Can we talk about box 2 please?

Interviewee: Box 2, so this is where my family lives, it’s almost in a lot of the ways it’s the opposite of where I live right now, so it’s, the area is very sort of, it’s a small area, it’s very quiet you know, if you get to the area, you need to, you have to have a car if you want to have a form of social live so it makes it very difficult for people like myself and younger to just go out and about cause TFL, they don’t sort of operate in that area. They do just one or two buses but it doesn’t take you to where you need to go unlike in here, I can choose almost any area, place and TFL, some form of transportation is there whereas in there that’s not the case. Also, the buses and trains they’re not so repetitive in terms of time, they come in every half an hour or every 20 minutes, that makes it a little more difficult. The other thing is, now that I’ve been living in here for so long, the majority of my friends are in this area so when I go back home it’s, there’s not many people that’s out there that I sort of also communicate with other than my family.

Interviewer: So what you’re saying is back home in Essex, where you put down, because it has a poor transportation system, it’s not as convenient for you to get to different places so that can make you feel lonely.

Interviewee: Um, yeah because my social life is sort of just reduced a lot. One - because of transportation, two - because all my friends are around here now compared to Essex and and the other thing is in Essex there isn’t much that you can do like in here we have a lot of cinemas, clubs, we have you know, bowling clubs, there’s a lot that you can do in here if you wanted, over there, there isn’t many, you know, if you wanted to play football you couldn’t because there’s any fields readily available like in this area we have the Mile End Stadium, we can go to Stepney Green, there’s always a field that you can sort of hang around with your friends, play football, whereas  in Essex you couldn’t do that because the area is small, it’s not catered towards young people.

Interviewer: When you say it’s not tailored towards young people, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: What I mean is there isn’t much activity made to for young people, it’s mainly for people who are more there for sort of independent, they have the working life, or it’s just that they go to work, they come home and that’s about it.

Interviewer: Can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: Um, basically what I’m trying to say is a person like myself or younger, we couldn’t just g out and visit places, there isn’t any places to visit in there and due to the lack of transportation it makes it even harder. Whereas an elder person they have their car, they have their job that keeps them busy and if they want to travel they commute easily whereas a person like me who doesn’t have a car or anything it makes it difficult.

Interviewer: Yeah, so you’re saying that basically not only that the transportation is weak, there’s not many activities for young people like yourself to do, um, yeah, so like let’s say, wanting to go to the cinema, wanting to go to a shop or something for young people, it’s quite limited in these options.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: How does that make you feel?

Interviewee: Um, I feel very restricted when I go there, so whenever I go there, I usually go for a short time so my time is occupied with family and then I come back here but if I let’s say I go there for a month, after a couple of days I just don’t know what else to do, it’s mainly we sit at home doing nothing. And I feel like my time is being wasted you know, sitting at home doing nothing. Whereas, if I’m here, I can sort of keep myself busy with something, there’s also a lot of places to go out and eat and hang out whereas in here, you can go out but places are very expensive and whereas this area is much more sort of, it’s tailored towards the students so with your budget, you have more than enough to sort of go out and enjoy your night out.

Interviewer: Thank you. And you also mentioned at this community, Essex, it’s very harsh towards different race, can you tell me more about that please.

Interviewee: Yes, so in London, East London, the community is very diverse as in we have Asians, we have blacks, we have whites, we have all kinds of people, from all over the world, whereas in Essex, it’s not so diverse, it’s very, there’s a lot of white British people there and there’s hardly so, myself, I’m a Bangoli and there isn’t many Bangolis down there, there’s probably one or two families all together, so some people in the community they’re very racist towards you, they see you as a minority, and they so look down on you.

Interviewer: How does that make you feel?

Interviewee: Um, I feel sort of insulted in some ways like at the end of the day we’re all the same but it’s just how it is, it’ll take time as the area gets more and more busy and more people move in and the area increases in diversity, I guess things will slowly turn around but right now there’s not much we can do other than to make it deal with what we have.

Interviewer: Hmm. is there anything else you want to say about box 2?

Interviewee: No I think that’s about it.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you very much.

Interviewer: And just one thing by the way, for box 2, I’ve just realised that I wanted to find out if there was any specific place within your local neighbourhood, so where you live right now, if there was any specific place that makes you feel most lonely. So not so much in Essex area but in where you live right now.

Interviewee: Um well, I wouldn’t say, I would say the most lonely place would be my apartment just because when I’m in my apartment I’m so on my own but even then you know, it’s not as bad as living in Essex, because even when I’m in my apartment I have some things to do, like whether I’m on the phone with a friend or I’m watching you know, Netflix on the laptop so I’d say the most loneliest would be my apartment.

Interviewer: And what is it about your apartment that makes you feel most lonely?

Interviewee: Mainly because I’m stuck in one tiny room by myself and I don’t have any interactions with other people when I’m here unless obviously a friend is coming by but that’s not, that doesn’t happen often, regularly. Usually what happens is that someone might pop, if I’m in my apartment I tend to be on my own and I feel isolated and I do go out with friends and I usually go out, out and about you know, going to eat or go to their places or Mile End football stadium.

Interviewer: And when you say you’re stuck in one place in your apartment, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: There’s not much to say, it’s a tiny room, you know, I can’t really move about much, I’m just in a room with an on-suite room so everything is within the room, there’s not much I can do.

Interviewer: And how does that make you feel where you’re in your room when you’ve got nothing to do.

Interviewee: Lonely and bored to be honest.

Interviewer: Sounds like you find yourself uncomfortable sometimes in your room.

Interviewee: I wouldn’t say uncomfortable, it’s just bored you know? But time goes by very slowly, that’s all.

Interviewer: And when you say time goes by very slowly, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: Just because I don’t have anything to do when I’m in my room, I find the time goes, when you’re bored, time tends to go very slowly, I mean time has its (fake tate - 17:56?) but in your own it’s going very slowly.

Interviewer: Sounds like because what you’re saying is there’s not much to do in your room, time goes quite slowly.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: And when you said you feel isolated, can you tell me more about that.

Interviewee: I feel isolated because I’m confined in one room and I can’t really do anything, there isn’t any human interaction, that’s why I feel isolated, unless I go outside with mates.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you want to say?

Interviewee: No that’s about it.

Interviewer: Thank you very much, I’m just going to pause the recording.