Participant number 22 – Female, 18, Barking

Part 1:

Interviewer: Okay. Thank you. Um, can we start by talking about what you’ve put in the first box please.

Interviewee: Um, when I was living at my mum’s with her boyfriend, like it felt kind of lonely because obviously my mum was always with her boyfriends and they was always fighting and arguing, I just like- I just always wanted to be with myself in my room.

Interviewer: Mm. So it sounds like what you’re saying is you- well you’re mum and her boyfriend made you feel lonely, and you wanted to be in your room.

Interviewee: Yeah, basically like I didn’t wanna be around them.

Interviewer: And how did that make you feel, being around them?

Interviewee: Angry, to be honest. Obviously I- I moved out of my mum’s, I’ve been living by myself for like eight months now. And um, I do like- it’s better where I’m living now ‘cause they were just constantly arguing and fighting. And because of my mum’s boyfriend, like basically like my two sisters stopped talking to my mum, my brother still does, but um… yeah, so they stopped talking. But they broke up when they was always fighting, but they’ve recently got back together. And I talk to my mum now and then but I don’t really like that fact that she’s still with him. So…

Interviewer: When you say that you don’t like that he’s with her, tell me more about that.

Interviewee: ‘Cause, when I was at my mum’s, he- or even now, [interviewer: mhm] like recently, he like used to just threaten me and my sisters and my brother and like… um my mum. Like they used to always be in- they were always getting into fights. Like I was always getting woke up to them arguing, going to sleep to them arguing, and it was just like- it just got really annoying to the point where I didn’t want to deal with it anymore. [Interviewer: mm] So…mm… nothing else to say about that.

Interviewer: Um, just a quick question…. um, okay thank you. So… and- and… so just basically when you ever- when you go back and- when you go t- and speak to your mum, you would always see them fighting and kind of arguing-

Interviewee: No, when I- when I was living there. Obviously I don’t live there anymore and I don’t see him anymore because I wouldn’t- like I don’t go to my mum’s house anymore. But I used to, like when I first moved out [interviewer: mm] and um… like they weren’t really arguing after I moved out, because the day I moved out my mum said she kicked her boyfriend out, but then obviously they got straight back together. So even though she said they’d broken up, they’ve never really been broken up. [Interviewer: mm] They’ve just been like… just saying it, but they’ve always actually got back together. And um… like, when I was living there, they were just constantly arguing and constantly fighting and I was always the one to try and stop the fighting, but it was just… it just got really annoying, to the fact that I was getting fed up [interviewer: mm] with it.

Interviewer: How did you feel about that?

Interviewee: Angry at my mum for not putting her kids first. ‘Cause obviously I got two sisters and they’re not- like one is kinda talking to my mum now after like a year and a half. And my other sister is not talking to my mum at all. [Interviewer: mm] And my brother just… he just goes to my mum’s whenever he needs- or he wants something, or he just uses my mum to stay there.

Interviewer: Um… how do you feel when you see that your mum didn’t prioritise you?

Interviewee: It- it did hurt because I thought like… you’re- I’m her daughter. I live [unintelligible 3:48] her kids, like you should put you kids first so that- it did kind of feel like she didn’t really care, when she chose him and drink over her own daughter. Or kids. So… yeah, it did hurt.

Interviewer: So what you’re saying is… um… your mum seems to have spent- or at least seems to have preferred to spend more time with him than her children.

Interviewee: Yeah basically. [Interviewer: hmm] Like, she says like- with my one- my one sister that’s twenty-one, she always wanted my- my mum to come see her son who’s like two years old. But my mum would always make up excuses. I dunno- at first, um like she wanted to see him, but my sister didn’t want her to see him. But now she’s letting her see him, like she makes up excuses, oh she’s busy, she can’t come, but then she blames my sister when she doesn’t see him. So it’s like she’s always got something better to do than see her kids. And like, when I moved out, she’s only come to my house like three times. And most of them times, whenever she comes to mine, her boyfriend- like he doesn’t live there anymore, he’s moved out of the country, but he used to live a few rides away from me. So she has to come to mine only to see him. So like it’s- she wasn’t only coming to mine for me, she was coming there for five minutes just to spend some time with her boyfriend.

Interviewer: How did- how did that make you feel?

Interviewee: Honestly, after so many years of it, I wasn’t surprised. But like it annoyed me a little bit, but then I just got over it, ‘cause it’s like I know she’s never gonna change.

Interviewer: When you say she’s never gonna change, tell me more about that.

Interviewee: She’s always been like that. She always puts him first. She always… like- she said- she told me that she’s stopped drinking for like two weeks, but I don’t really- I find that hard to believe. ‘Cause I like… wait what’s the- what was the question again? [Interviewer: um…] Oh yeah, like how- I- I don’t believe it basically.

Interviewer: No um… what did I say? I said when you see your mum…

Interviewee: When she’s just- I don’t see her changing.

Interviewer: Yeah yeah yeah. [Interviewee: yeah] Tell me more.

Interviewee: Like- yeah, so she’s always been like that and she’s acted the same way to my other two sisters. So when I’m telling my sisters the stuff that she’s saying to me, it’s like they’ve already heard it. So she’s done it from that many years already. I don’t see her changing to act like- to keep her promises or like just… act like a normal mum.

Interviewer: Mm. [Interviewee: mm] So it sounds like you want to spend more time with your mum, or at least before-

Interviewee: Now, [interviewer: -you did] honestly, I don’t. Yeah I don’t. Like I haven’t been to my mum’s in ages. I talk to her but I don’t really wanna go spend time with her, ‘cause I don’t wanna bump into my brother or her boyfriend. [Interviewer: mm] So… so now- I spend time with my sisters, but I’m kinda like… given up but then not given up on my mum. Because it’s like I’ll still talk to her, but I don’t see her changing so I don’t see any point in like getting annoyed with when she’s telling me stuff, or when she’s still seeing her boyfriend.

Interviewer: Mm… and how are you feeling- like… tell me more about how- how- how has it been after you left?

Interviewee: It’s been alright. I just like… it’s more calm. ‘Cause obviously don’t have to listen to them arguing all the time. And like… yeah, it’s- I feel like more organised where I am now as well, because like I never know what’s gonna happen in the house, ‘cause the police always gonna get called and they’re always fighting and that. So I do- I feel more calm and organised, yeah.

Interviewer: Mm… and um, and how did that impact your loneliness, being in that environment?

Interviewee: Well… I- I didn’t feel like I could talk to my mum. And my sisters had already moved out by then. So like I just felt like I was alone being at my mum’s. Didn’t like- I wouldn’t talk to her boyfriend, I didn’t really feel like- feel like I could talk to my mum ‘cause she wouldn’t really listen to me, like especially when she’s drunk, she didn’t wanna hear anything else apart from her own voice.

Interviewer: So it sounds like what you’re saying is you wanted to talk to you mum, you wanted to speak to her-

Interviewee: In the past, yeah.

Interviewer: In the past, but- but you felt like, because you weren’t able to actually communicate with her and- and speak to her, that made you feel lonely.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Thank you. [Interviewee: yeah] How does that- and- and how do you feel about that?

Interviewee: I dunno. Like… I don’t really know how it makes me feel, to be honest. Just… I’ve had to deal with it for so long, it’s just like I’m used to it. From someone else’s point of view, they might see it as like- have a different opinion, but… I don’t really know.

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

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Okay. Um… can we talk about- can we start talking about what you’ve put next please?

Interviewee: Can I do a different one? [Unintelligible: 9:15]

Interviewer: Hmm?

Interviewee: Can I do a different order?

Interviewer: What do you mean?

Interviewee: Like not do that, just start a different one.

Interviewer: Um… I think ideally we would prefer to go chron- uh- one, two, three, four. [Interviewee: oh] Is that okay or would you prefer to go-

Interviewee: Yeah, I’m not really sure about the one I put down, that’s why.

Interviewer: Okay. Um… do you wanna talk about that like at some point after?

Interviewee: Yeah [unintelligible: 9:36].

Interviewer: Okay, no problem. Which one did you want to talk about? Okay, no problem.

Interviewee: Not really having a relationship with my dad, like not really talking to him. Um… well when my dad got with his girlfriend, basically I got pushed out of the pict- well I felt like I got pushed out of the picture. And like my dad only really cared about her and not me. And like… I went to my dad like a good few months- like seven, eight months ago, and I f- like whenever I go there I feel like a stranger in my dad’s house. ‘Cause like I feel like he cares more about his girlfriend that he does about his only daughter.

Interviewer: So… so you feel like you don’t have that father-daughter relationship when you’re with your father.

Interviewee: Not really. Because of his girlfriend.

Interviewer: So you leas- the- the added person kinda gets in the way.

Interviewee: Yeah. Basically. Like she always tries and makes arguments between me and my dad. Or like just… makes me da- they don’t argue, like my dad and his girlfriend don’t really argue but… on occasion, like very rarely, when they do, she’ll just make my dad annoyed and he’ll just wanna like- just chill by himself. Or like when he goes to work, just come home and chill by himself. So even when I was going round I was just [unintelligible 11:03] by myself.

Interviewer: Mm. And how do you feel about your, you know, the whole situation?

Interviewee: Like, I wanna have a relationship with my dad, but it’s just like- it kinda gets hard now because I don’t really know how to act around my dad sometimes. ‘Cause like, I don’t really feel like he’s my dad, I just feel he’s just a random person.

Interruption

Interviewee: Yeah so I don’t really know how to get that relationship back with my dad.

Interviewer: Sorry can we just rewind back how you feel about that? [Interviewee: Um…] How do you feel about the whole situation? We can-

Interruption

Interviewee: Sorry what was the question again?

Interviewer: How do you feel about being in that situation?

Interviewee: Like… I’m not really sure how to but it in words but obviously I do wanna have a relationship with my dad, but it’s just I don’t know how, because of like… I don’t really feel like I’m part of his family.

Interviewer: So it sounds like what you’re saying is your dad, also just like your mum, prioritises his partner [interviewee: yeah] and you feel left out.

Interviewee: Yeah but obviously like they don’t fight. So like… mm.

Interviewer: When you say um… they don’t fight, [interviewee: mm] can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: [Unintelligible 12:52] they- they don’t argue, they don’t fight. They just like… they’re just a normal couple to be honest. Mm.

Interviewer: And- and do you f- if you- do you and your father fight?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Oh so what you’re saying that- you and you’re- they’re- that- your dad and his girlfriend are not like your mum and his boyfriend. [Interviewee: no… no] Your mum and his boyfriend fight- [interviewee: yeah] your mum and her boyfriend fight but your dad and his girlfriend don’t.

Interviewee: No. But- or with my dad and his girlfriend, I just got pushed out. Because of- it’s like he prioritises his girlfriend. And not his daughter.

Interviewer: Mm. And- so it sounds like… so it sounds like what you’re saying is… your father is not giving you enough attention.

Interviewee: None. Basically. Yeah. But I don’t really care about that anymore to be honest. I’m like past caring.

Interviewer: Mm. How do you feel about that now?

Interviewee: Don’t really have any feelings towards it. It’s like… my dad thinks by not like- ‘cause me and my dad didn’t speak for a while, and he thinks by not contacting me, he’s just letting me live my life. To be honest, I am, but he didn’t really make an effort with me so… he thinks that’s better but I don’t really care to be honest. Like he’s living his life with his girlfriend and I’ve got my own life.

Interviewer: Mm… um… and at the time, for example when you did… when you would go and see your father and- and when he would basically spend more time with his girlfriend and be with her-

Interviewee: And believe her over me. That was- stupid things. Yeah.

Interviewer: When you said believed her over you, tell me more-

Interviewee: Like, I can’t really talk about it ‘cause I can’t really remember, but I mean like there’d like be situations where I’d say something, she said something, but he would never believe me, he would just believe his girlfriend. And just say I was lying or something.

Interviewer: And how did that make you feel?

Interviewee: Annoyed. Annoyed at my dad. And I started to hate his girlfriend. Mm.

Interviewer: Mm… is there anything else you wanted to say about that box?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Okay. Can we start talking about the next one please?

Interviewee: Uh… it’s another one to do with family. All of my family are not talking to each other. So… I don’t talk to my brother. My two sister- one of my sisters doesn’t talk to my mum. As well- yeah- I don’t talk to my brother, one of my sisters don’t talk to my mum, one of my sisters don’t talk to my brother or my sister, and like- obviously my relationship with mum- with my mum and my dad is a bit weird as well. So yeah. Feel like all my family don’t really talk to each other all at the same time. Like, just feels like I can’t actually chill with all my family- like be in a room with all my family because they don’t like each other. Mm.

Interviewer: So you talked about your mum and your relationship with you mum, your relationship with your dad, and… can you tell me more about your relationship with your siblings?

Interviewee: Well my two sisters-

Interviewer: And how that impacts your loneliness. Sorry.

Interviewee: Yeah. No. With my two sisters, like I’m- I’ve got a good relationship with my sisters. It’s just when my family don’t talk to each other [interviewer: mhm] that- like, me and my sisters are alright, but with my brother, I don’t really have a relationship with my brother because like… I dunno, like it’s- his personality changes. Like, he doesn’t have anything like bipolar or anything, it’s just like how he is. Like he always prioritises friends instead of like his family and like he and- him and my mum argue all the time as well. But like… the fact that I can’t just chill with all my family does make me feel a bit lonely. Like I don’t feel comfortable to go to my mum’s and chill there. But obviously I can go to my sister’s.

Interviewer: You mentioned your brother prioritising his friends.

Interviewee: Yeah like he’ll… um… he’ll show more respect to his friends than his own family, like his sister and his mum. Yeah… so… yeah…

Interviewer: How does that make you feel?

Interviewee: Mm… annoyed. ‘Cause like me and my brother used to have a good relationship before he started going prison [laughs]. He’s like twenty-seven now. And like we used to be really close when we was younger, but then I saw like he changed. So um yeah. We just don’t really talk anymore. [Interviewer: mm] I don’t really want to talk to my brother because he’s just… rude. [Laughs] Annoying.

Interviewer: So it sounds like your family basically they don’t chill together, [interviewee: yeah] they don’t spend time as a family and that impacts your loneliness.

Interviewee: Yeah, a bit.

Interviewer: You’d rather have like- you’d prefer to have a family reunion, with your mum and with your dad, your brother-

Interviewee: If they all got along and talked, yeah. And wanted to actually be in the same room as each other.

Interviewer: Mm… and how does that make you feel, not having that?

Interviewee: Mm… before, it did make me actually feel sad. But to be honest now, it’s just I’ve gotten on with it for so long I just… it doesn’t really bother me as much, ‘cause I’ve still got my sisters, my nieces and my nephews. So… yeah, it doesn’t actually bother me anymore.

Interviewer: Mm. [Interviewee: mm] So it sounds like you value- at least you used to value rela- your [interviewee: no] relationship with your family.

Interviewee: No, it’s just my sisters… my sister’s kids… that’s it really.

Interviewer: I guess what I meant by that was that, it seems that you- you cared-

Interviewee: They did- they did impact my life, but now that don’t. Like I did- - II did care a lot about my family but now it’s just like it doesn’t seem like they care about me so what’s the point in me putting in the effort if they don’t want to.

Interviewer: Mm. And how do you feel about you kind of putting the effort and not returning- getting anything in return?

Interviewee: Honestly, I feel like a mug. [Laughs]

Interviewer: You feel like a monk?

Interviewee: A mug.

Interviewer: A mug.

Interviewee: Yeah, like… they just use you. Like you- you put all the effort in and then they don’t do nothing in return. So, feel like and idiot, but I don’t care anymore.

Interviewer: How did that make you feel, kinda putting all the effort and not getting in return?

Interviewee: Yeah, just like an idiot, to be honest. Just made me feel like an idiot. Just ‘cause you could see they didn’t care, but yet I was still- I was- because I’m the youngest, then I was still putting in the effort. But my mum- well my other two sisters just ignored her.

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

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Okay. Well thank you.

Interviewee: Right.

Interviewer: Can we move onto to the final box please.

Interviewee: Well, the other one’s about my dog. [Laughs] Um, obviously I used to have a dog when I was eleven, and I had him for a year, but because of- like it’s a long story, but he basically got taken and put down, but he wasn’t meant to. Like… do you want the story? Or- like why he got taken?

Interviewer: Sure, um-

Interviewee: Okay, basically-

Interviewer: Did you say he got taken away from you?

Interviewee: Yeah. So basically, my cousin had a dog, um like around the same time I got my dog, so like they sort of like grew up together, and like my cousin um… they never used to clean out their garden, so then the dog used to obviously poo around the garden. And they- one of their neighbours didn’t like them, so they called the RSPCA and basically said that their dog’s going around biting people. So then they showed up at the door to obv- to get in to take their dog. And then they called my dad to basically help them. But my dog- my dad went um, bringing my dog, ‘cause I’m leaving him at home. So he left him in the van, like when he got to my cousin’s, so they took my cousin’s dog, saw my dog and thought that both dogs were in that home. So then they took my dog and my dad fought for like a year to get my dog back, going to court and that, and um they basically said that they done a test on a dog and they said no he’s not a dangerous dog, but they still filed him as a dangerous dog. But obviously I didn’t know all of this until after my dog got taken. And like, it actually did make me really sad. And I feel like- I was like twelve, so I cried for like a year [interviewer: mm] for my dog. But that actually made me feel lonely, ‘cause obviously my dog was a big part of my life ‘cause that- I had him since he was seven weeks old… till he was two. [Interviewer: mm] And like the week he got taken, I was- ‘cause I was meant to be at my dad’s that week, ‘cause I spent every other week at my dad’s. So then when I wasn’t at my mum’s- like when I wasn’t at my dad’s, I sort of blamed myself. ‘Cause obviously if I was there, no way they would have taken my dog [laughs]. So…

Interviewer: So it sounds like you basically… you had a really good time with you dog, and that dog prevented you from being lonely and- [interviewee: yeah] and being there for you as a kind of a- a… as a life in a way. [Interviewee: yeah] Um… and how- h- how did that make you feel, after losing that?

Interviewee: Terrible. I still miss my dog to this day. [Interviewer: mm] Like… for- with dogs they just make you feel happy. Like even now, like if I see a dog on the street, it just makes me like just happy just to see a dog. Like some of my mates have dogs, and whenever I see them, I just play with them constantly. ‘Cause like I miss having a dog in my life. [Interviewer: mm] Mm. My mates say I’m obsessed with dogs but I can’t help it I just love them. [Both laugh] Yeah.

Interviewer: Um, so it sounds like… I know you said you blamed yourself, had you had- had you have been there at your father’s, you wouldn’t have- the dog wouldn’t have been taken, in a way.

Interviewee: Yeah. I did [unintelligible 24:10] ‘cause I would have even been at my dad’s with my dog or I would have stayed in the van with my dog, and they wouldn’t have taken it. I- I didn’t care if there were police there, no one would have taken my dog. So…

Interviewer: Mm. So it sounds like you like dogs a lot.

Interviewee: I love them [laughs].

Interviewer: Tell me about what it is about dogs that you really like.

Interviewee: The fact that, if you raise a dog right, and you just show it a lot of love, that dog has nothing but love towards you, nothing but loyalty towards you. And… they just make me happy. Like… like when I was um… like when I was in school, my old nursery’s right near my school, and um… the old janitor there- not janitor, but like the guy who used to look after the school knows my mum. And he had two-

Interviewer: The guy who what sorry?

Interviewee: Like the janitor, kind of. [Interviewer: Uh-hu] And like he knows my mum, and he used to have two- two little dogs, I think they were bulldogs, and like any time I was upset and I’d walk past my primary school and just see the dogs and play with them, it just instantly made me happy. Like, if I was in a bad mood, I see a dog, it just instantly makes me be happy. Like I just forget about everything and just play with the dogs. [Laughs]

Interviewer: You mentioned that the dogs have s- have so much love and they would give you love. [Interviewee: yeah] It sounds like you… you like to receive love.

Interviewee: Yeah. [Laughing] Probably like my dog gave me more love than my family did. Probably why I’m obsessed with dogs. ‘Cause like you know you can treat a dog with respect and not get mugged off like your family. Yeah.

Interviewer: When you say that your family mugged you off…

Interviewee: Well, in a way yeah. Because like my mum chose her boyfriend over me, my dad chose his girlfriend over me, my brother was an idiot and chose his friends over his family. It’s just my two sisters that are there for me. Yeah.

Interviewer: Tell me about your relationship with your sisters.

Interviewee: Well, one of my sisters- like we argue every now and then, but what sisters don’t. Like our relationship is really good, and like obviously she’s got a uh two-year-old son, and like because I’ve got a good relationship with her son, rather than the rest of my family, like even if we argue, our relationship’s always strong. And like, I am really close with my sister. And like even my other sister, she’s got a uh… daughter who’s nearly ten months. And I’m close with her as well. See I love kids and like they’ve got kids. [Interviewer: mm] So… and like our relationship’s always been good because obviously they’ve gone through stuff with my mum that I’ve gone through. And like they understand how it is to live at my mum’s. So… that’s why I’ve got a good relationship with them.

Interviewer: So it sounds like you like to associate yourself with people who understand you, [interviewee: yeah] who have gone through the same hurdles as you.

Interviewee: Yeah, basically.

Interviewer: Tell me about that.

Interviewee: Mm… there’s not really much- well, like whenever my mum and her boyfriend used to argue, the two people that- like if I was annoyed I’d be on the phone to one of my two sisters. So like they have always like been there for me, so it’s just… they’re the two people that I can really count on, to be honest. Yeah.

Interviewer: Seems like you value that support that they provide to you.

Interviewee: Yeah. Obviously they’re older than me, like twenty-nine and twenty-one. So it’s like- at least I’ve got someone in my family that actually [interviewer: mm] cares. Yeah.

Interviewer: How does it make you feel having the two sisters that care about you?

Interviewee: It’s nice to have that relationship with them. ‘Cause like… like I feel like I still have a part of my family, even though my- obviously my brother and my mum don’t really talk to them and that. [Interviewer: mm] Yeah.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you wanted to say?

Interviewee: No not really.

Interviewer: Well thank you very much for this. I’m gonna cancel this-