Participant 30 – Male, 23, Tower Hamlets

**I**: Can we start by talking about what you’ve put first please?

**R**: First one, I put no one is there to support you and no guidance. The reason why I put that is basically, for example, like while you’re at home there’s nobody there. Like, everyone is doing their own business, everyone’s minding their own business, people are basically… people I’m living with, they all go out, they go see family members, they go to see friends who they go and socialise with, so basically when you’re at home, there’s nobody there to be with you, that’s the way yeah. That’s the reason why I’ve put in the first box what’s written.

**I**: So you’re saying that basically people have things to do?

**R**: People got their own things to do, that’s what it is. So, basically when you come home, everyone is just minding their own business and when you go there to ask for advice and support, they’re like ‘sorry I’m busy, I don’t have time for you’. It’s like, it puts you in a difficult situation where there is no support, there’s no interaction. Yeah, that’s what basically I put in the first box.

**I**: And how does that make me feel?

**R**: It makes me feel sad. Like, at the end of the day, they might be my relatives, but I would be happy if they were there to support me. Obviously, I have to look out for myself as well, as I’m getting older, I’ve got things in my future, but I also want them to support me as well.

**I**: So it sounds like what you’re saying is, you don’t have a lot of people that support you?

**R**: That’s correct.

**I**: Whenever you want guidance it’s not there…

**R**: Yeah, it’s not there. Yeah, I don’t get much guidance.

**I**: And if you say there’s no guidance, can you tell me more?

**R**: So basically, where do I start…So after I finished school I went to college for about two years. Then I went to university, I dropped out of university, because I didn’t like the course that I was doing. I wanted basically guidance, I want someone who is elder, basically from relatives point of view, I’ve got few relatives that have experienced…they graduated. When I asked them for help, they were like ‘I’m busy at work or I’m busy at university’. Like, I basically felt they were more meant to be a family to support me, to give me the guidance…but they wasn’t around during that time. So what happened was, once I dropped out of university, I decided to work part-time, so I can’t really… I’ve been part-time for the NHS for the last four years or so, which I’m happy at the moment, so career-wise I’m looking at myself for probation, I’m not looking at anybody else for support.

**I**: Mmh…

**R**: Yeah, so that’s basically what I mean by no guidance.

**I**: Mmh…so it sounds like you wanted the guidance when you were younger?

**R**: When I was young, yes. Because what they usually chose as career are like accounting, working for the council and all that, it’s not something that I preferred. I want to go more towards the admin sector, but I wanted their support to back me. But because they’ve got their own kids to support, they got their own families to look after, they basically didn’t give me any support, while I was down basically.

**I**: When you said you were down, can you tell me…?

**R**: While I was down, that was about ten years ago. My grandma, granddad passed away from cancer and that didn’t support me while I was at university. And also, while I was in college. You know, first one…basically my grandad passed away while I was in college. Then, my grandma passed away two years after that and basically… obviously it’s understandable that they are also going through emotional stress and all that, but they should have been there while I was down as well. Obviously, we are all family, but the way it was impacting me didn’t impact them badly. Because I used to get along with my grandparents more than my family did.

**I**: So after the death, you felt like you didn’t receive the support?

**R**: I didn’t see the support and I basically backed away from my friends. You know, I basically cut all the contacts with my friends, I said you know what…they didn’t go through what I went through a couple of years back. So, they won’t be able to support me, what I went through. So, I said to myself, you know what let me just cut all contact with them and be left alone for years and years. Let me go through the own grief of what’s happened. Since then, yeah I’m starting to make contact with my friends, but it’s going to take time.

**I**: How did it make you feel…?

**R**: It made me feel sad, it made me feel upset, cutting all contact…communicating no one. But from now, basically I’ve joined social media, like snapchat, facebook and instagram. So what’s happened is that the close friends that I had, I find it guilty to myself that, because I didn’t communicate with them for quite a long time, I just avoided them completely. So, what I’ve been doing now I’m just adding random people on facebook just to have a communication. Communicate with people, just to see how the world is, basically like have a virtual friend, that’s the way I see it. They are not really your close friends, because you haven’t met them face-to-face. When you add random people online, they also give you that support, that’s one thing I’ve seen. Because when I added few friends on facebook, when I explained to them what I went through to feel the death and that, they were there to support me, that’s one thing I’ve seen. So one thing social media did help me, yeah, combat loneliness. Yeah…so that’s what’s happened.

**I**: When you said there were there to support you, your friends on social media that you met…

**R**: Yeah, friends on social media that you met, because I joined like a facebook group where people went through a similar situation, where people, either siblings or their grandparents or their parents that are passed away. So, they all went through the same process. So, there’s like a group where people that are passed away, family, they all talk to each other to get that support and guidance on how we can basically recover, basically get back to the real world. It is taking time, but I’m getting through it.

**I**: And how did it provide that support to you?

**R**: So it’s all communication through facebook messenger. So, you’ll have, how do I say, a news feed…you have different people writing a story, passage about themselves of when it all happened, how did they rectify it, how did they get it resolved. And you know how there’s like facebook comments, a comment section, so other people that have gone through the same grief, they wrote information about their self, how they basically went through the loneliness, how they combated loneliness and how they recovered. Making friends now with randomers.

**I**: So it sounds like joining, you know, that group on facebook really helped you to combat your loneliness?

**R**: Of course, combat loneliness, yes. Not only that, I also like took some support from them, where they said ‘look, go to your local community centres’ or go to like a religious place, like a mosque for example, yeah, so they told me, look, if you can’t go to a community centre, go to a mosque, see what they can provide, see what positive it can do. So I’ve taken that advice, I went to a mosque, I basically found guidance, I met the local community, where I explained to them, yeah this is what I went through, can you support me, that’s what they said, we have loads of people that went through the same phase, we are here to support you, they say just keep on praying, you will get guidance from God and it should be alright from there on. So, for me that’s when I decided I’ll basically go to my local mosque from now on.

**I**: And how did it made you feel like that?

**R**: So my heart is much better now, I feel more happier, so I don’t feel lonely how I used to be few years back. The friends that I used to chill with, I used to hang around with years and years back, they all cutted completely, so I made like new friends, new people in the community now i’m basically interact with them, yeah.

**I**: And do you see them face-to-face too?

**R**: Of course, of course. So basically what happens now is, so I go do my prayers, to my mosque, what happens is, sometimes they finish work and after work, they go to the mosque to do the prayers. So after the prayer is finished, we basically hang around outside the mosque, so we basically catch up with each other to find out how everyone is, how’s work, how’s family life, so we kind of get that support from each other.

**I**: And how does that make you feel, like being involved in that sort of…?

**R**: Being involved with other people, communicating with other people is making me happy, is making me get back to the community, get back to the real world, how it’s meant to be, how it’s meant to become. So it’s made me follow the right path, also changed my career prospects. So, I’m basically transitioning from a part-time to a full-time in the next couple of months, they already spoke to my employer. Yeah, that’s also supported me as well. So yeah, the friends gave me the guidance, told me yeah, all these changes that’s been happening and they were there basically to support me.

**I**: And do you still use social media?

**R**: I still use social media. I think social media has played a big impact in me in a way where whenever I take a picture on like instagram, I look at the likes. For some reason, I don’t know what to say but when I took a picture on instagram, I look at the likes, it gives me that feeling where there’s people outside that actually like my picture, that appreciate my work whatever I post. Same with instagram stories, where you put a picture and it stays for 24 hours and you get to see how many people saw your picture and with snapchat the same thing, where you put a picture and you actually see how many people viewed your picture and what would happen is, the people that you know, they will comment back, so they will privately message you, and say oh that looks nice and all that. So, for example, yesterday was your birthday. After the picture of the cake, I received numerous messages from friends that I did and they basically congratulated me, telling me oh it’s your birthday, happy birthday. And that basically gave me that relief in me, that’s saying oh yes, I do have some friends out there. It’s basically combating my loneliness, it’s basically saying that I’ve got people that, people that communicate with me, I’m not alone in the world, I’ve got people, I’ve got friends that I actually communicate with. So, that’s basically it for me, combatting loneliness.

**I**: So it sounds like knowing that you have friends, knowing that people actually think about you or care about you combats your loneliness.

**R**: Yes, there’s people out there that will support me. When I said it’s my birthday, people actually messages me saying how are you, it’s your birthday we need to catch up, we need to link up one day, we need to go out to eat, that’s basically combatting my loneliness.

**I**: Do you see them face-to-face too?

**R**: That’s the thing man, face to face it’s very very… We’ve got like our own WhatsApp group where we communicate. We constantly say every week let’s go out to eat, let’s go out for bowling, and the thing that puts me down is the response that I get. Some of them will say, oh look I’m busy, I’ve got work, oh look I need to be with my life, oh look I don’t have time for you, let’s reschedule next week. And that’s one thing that I hated, when the response is… it gets delayed, it gets delayed by week, then it gets delayed by two weeks, two months, so the last time I basically met few of my mates, six months ago. And that schedule has been basically one month before that. And they just kept on delaying it. The way I see it, oh I need to go, I need to go shopping, or they’re ill and that’s one thing I didn’t like about that while I was lonely. I wanted them to be there. We needed to go out, let’s catch up with each other as we haven’t seen each other for such a long time. We need to catch up. So we go out and we have some fun. So one way, yeah, we did manage to meet each other, but the time to meet each other is very long at the moment. We need to decrease it, where we can see each other every week or every two weeks, so that’s the only downside with social media, yeah. Plus, some friends that I was talking to which I haven’t seen them face-to-face and when I ask them, let’s meet up, same excuses, they say I’m going out, I’m abroad or I gotta look after the family and all that. While some of the people I’ve added, they don’t live in the country, so they live abroad, so there was a ton of people, who you can’t see face-to-face.

**I**: And how does it make you feel, not being able to see your friends face-to-face?

**R**: It makes me feel sad, it makes me feel very upset, because we have a long conversation with each other through social media, we talk about our personal life and you know, you talk about your persona life to this person, at least you want to have a one on one conversation with this person, go for a drink, and say when we spoke on social media, it would be nice to gather around and see face-to-face. It basically makes me feel sad, I feel upset, gutted that yeah, it just keeps on getting delayed and delayed just to see each other, that one-on-one advice or one-on-one talk.

I: Is there anything else you want to say about that Box?

**R**: No.

**I**: Okay, thank you. Can we start by talking about what you put in the next box please?

**R**: Which one?

**I**: Number 2

**R**: I would say that’s connected to number 1. So yes, as we’ve already spoken,

**I**: What did you write actually?

**R**: No interaction and not connecting to the real world. It’s basically a similar thing to number 1 as we’ve spoken. It’s like, when I say not connecting to the real world, it’s basically you’re speaking to random people on social media, which are not really your friends. But then again, when you speak to them in a personal… they do give you that advice, they give you that support, guidance, they basically dare to help you out. You will have one or two people that you are… that personally … but the reaction you get is very negative and they say go kill yourself and all that, it’s not nice…. You start myself and just keep on carrying on with the people that are currently added.

**I**: So would you say no communication to the real world…

**R**: What I mean by that is basically face-to-face is what is your communication. When I say no communication with the real world, you’re speaking to people through the internet. You are not speaking to someone face-to-face. It could be speaking to someone that it s a robot. Nowadays, technology has increased where what I’ve read is, you’ve got a computer replying back to you, so whenever you ask a certain question to a company, the response you get is basically through a computer. So, on the other hand, you don’t have a real person that’s communicating back to you. They’re basically replying back with generic words, that’s what I mean when I say not connected to the real world and not communicating through it.

**I**: And how does that make you feel?

**R**: I think that it doesn’t make me feel great, because what happens is, you are speaking to someone that you don’t even have a clue who that person is. That person might not be genuine, that person could be communicating negative thoughts or positive thoughts, yeah. It’s just, you know I really… it’s a completely different story. It doesn’t make me feel right inside. Because the best way to combat loneliness is meeting someone face-to-face, having a physical thought with a person than having someone communicating through you through a computer. But then next thing, one day you meet the person face-to-face, you basically set up a meeting with that person in a cafe and then you go meet them in a coffee shop and you’re there for one hour, two hour and that person not there. So, that couple of hours that you just spent in the coffee shop, you were speaking someone who is behind the computer, it’ snot a real person. That’s what I mean when not connecting with the real world. So, you are speaking to someone who is basically a robot, someone who is on the other side, giving all this advice, could be positive or negative but it’s not a real person. That can be very upsetting.

**I**: So it sounds like you obviously prefer, you actually want to meet your friends face-to-face?

**R**: Yes, yes of course. I hate it… One thing I hate about social media it’s making people lazy. You don’t get to…Nowadays when you do shopping online, you prefer to go to a shop and buy yourself fruit and vegetables, you know exactly how ripe a banana is. But when you shop online and you order, for example, banana and it gets delivered, it comes back green. So what I’m trying to say is, when you talk to someone through the internet, it’s not real form, it could be someone who you … when you talk to someone face-to-face, you are speaking to someone who is there, who’s actually a real person and you get to communicate with each other, yeah. It’s a big difference. Yeah, that’s what it is. I prefer someone who is there physically than replying back through social media. Because you know, with social media, what the word that’s been well-known, people use is LOL, laugh out loud, any… you write, people write back with lol, the terminology is laugh out loud. You use laughing out loud yourself, you know, you’re not finding it funny when you’re just writing, because it’s just replying back to a message. You’re not bothered about what’s written, so you’re just writing down lol. It’s better to meet people face-to-face, because you get that psychological impact where you see someone face-to-face. You get to have a proper conversation withs someone.

**I**: So it sounds like on the one hand, social media has been good for you because it has provided you that sort of support platform, but on the other hand, it lacks… you don’t actually get to meet people face to face.

**R**: Yes, that’s correct. You don’t actually meet people face-to-face, that’s the downside. You could have people that support you, but you don’t have people to be there for you face-to-face.

**I**: Is there anything else you want to say?

**R**: No that’s it.

**I**: Thank you. Can we start by talking about what you put in the third Box?

**R**: Third box, I put… so basically in my room, windows closed, all dark and just thinking man, just thinking about myself, whatever I’ve done in my life, who is the friend in my life to guide me, where is the family that I need to support me, that’s what I put. So, it’s basically like a thinking expression. You are in a room, the only thing you got is a chair, it’s dark, it’s night, curtains closed and the room is dark. That’s one way I see as loneliness. Who’s there to support you, who’s there to give you that guidance, no one is there. Completely like… another example is a jail cell. You are in that jail cell by yourself, no contact with no one. You are in that one small confinement space and you are by yourself. That is one loneliness here. That’s one way to experience loneliness. **I**: And when you say it’s dark in your room, can you tell me more about that?

**R**: Dark…so one thing I say is no communication with the world, nobody’s there in that house, nobody is there in your surroundings, that’s the way I see as dark. It makes you feel inside like, what is going on with the world, the world is moving on, but you’re same situation, that same room. Yeah.

**I**: When you say the world is moving on and you’re on your own and still there, can you tell me more about that?

**R**: So the way I will say it is, the world is moving on, everyone is getting jobs, everyone graduated, everyone is getting married, but the way I see it, I’m just still stuck in that same position, that part-time employee. I haven’t gotten married, all my friends are getting married and I’m basically still living with family, whereas friends are … getting their own property and they are succeeding.  **I**: How does that make you feel?

**R**: It is upsetting, it is upsetting. I do feel a bit sad as well. Because there’s nobody there, there’s nobody there around you, the whole world is moving on and you are still stuck in the same place.

**I**: So it sounds like what you’re saying is, you’re sitting in your room, you feel that the world is moving on, your friends are getting jobs, getting married.

**R**: All that is in my conscious yeah.

**I**: And then you feel like you are falling behind?

**R**: Of course, I’m falling behind, that’s correct. Everyone is progressing and I’m still in that same position.

**I**: And what does that sort of space that you have that minds on?

**R**: That’s basically true for the darkness in the room, yeah.

**I**: Mmh… And the darkness represents?

**R**: Darkness represents that you’re basically by yourself. Nobody else in the room. All alone.

**I**: Sounds like what you’re saying is, you feel like you’re not in touch with people as much as you want to and at the same time, people are progressing with your life?

**R**: That’s correct, … have been cared for by their partners

**I**: And how do you feel about that?

**R**: For them, I feel happy that they actually achieved something for themselves. For myself, I’m happy that yeah, I want what my friends are having, but I can’t have it. Because I don’t have that guidance. I feel like for me to progress, I need those people to be there. To give me that support, which I don’t have.

**I**: So it sounds like what you’re saying is, you feel that your friends have the support to get to where they are?

**R**: That’s correct.

**I**: And you don’t have the support or guidance that they have.

**R**: The reason is why is that they didn’t go through a phase where they experienced death. I’ve seen them for years and years, but they haven’t gone through death so they didn’t experience it. That’s the reason why they are basically succeeding in life.

**I**: And how does it make you feel, seeing them having things?

**R**: Jealousy…jealousy is one thing that goes through my mind. They get the flashy cars, they get new clothes, like designer clothes and when I see stuff like that, the way I see it that I can’t afford it, if I was to have that support, I may be able to afford the same thing as they have during this time.

**I**: So seeing them with things you haven’t got makes you feel inadequate?

**R**: Yeah…envious.

**I**: Is there anything else you want to say about that Box?

**R**: No, everything has been clarified.

**I**: Thank you.

**R**: that’s alright.

**I**: Can we start by talking about what you put in the final one?

**R**: Final one is a bit of conversation that was spoken with the third box. So, I’m the one alone, there are two people on the right-hand side, they are basically my mate and his wife and the sun at the top is shining at them. So, I’m more towards the dark side, where I haven’t improved my life, I haven’t gone through what the phases that they have gone through. I haven’t succeeded the way they have succeeded. So, the sun shining at them because they have the flashy cars, they got the designer goods, they are married, they been travelling abroad, they been to a lot of placed, whereas myself, I’m basically by myself. I used to, how do I say, go out with this particular friend quite a lot of times, we used to go abroad, but what happened was, since he got married, his connection with me cut because he want to be, I don’t think it was him, but his wife wanted him to be with her than with me. So, basically his wife either hypnotised him or don’t know what she told him, she said don’t go out and be with this particular friend no more. Stay with me, we’ll go have fun, we’ll go explore the world. And that puts me down, because he was one of my close friends, where I used to go out and I have fun with him. But that’s no longer happening, because he decided … his wife. It made me feel sad, it made me feel upset. Bit of angerness, because he’s following his wife too much, where every guy has that freedom where you get to see his friends. But his wife told him, look if you go to see your friends, we’re going to have to get a divorce, we need to leave it as it is, we need to go our separate ways basically. And he decided to stick by his wife at all sides and he said, look, I can’t stay in contact with you, you’re going to have to live without this. He’s the type of guy where I messaged him over the phone, WhatsApp, I knew he would reply back a few days later, because apparently his wife can read the messages, so yeah. So communication with him has been cutted completely. But how he used to be, it’s no longer. Yeah, that’s what it is basically.

**I**: So it sounds like you’ve lost a good friend.

**R**: Of course.

**I**: And how did that make you feel?

**R**: It made me feel sad, it made me feel angry, why he chose her side than mine. Why couldn’t it be fifty fifty, where he got to see your wife plus get to see your best friend, but it’s that connection which cut completely.

**I**: When you say that they have like a child and designer bag clothes and tremble and stuff, can you tell me more about that?

**R**: So, they succeeded in life. They got a hard paid job, they moved out from their parents house, they made quite a lot of money, so they got themselves a flashy car, they are wearing designer shoes, they don’t even live in the … anymore, so they moved towards the Kensington bit, where the rich people live, so yeah basically he cutted corners, he basically doesn’t contact me no more. Every time I try to contact him, he says he’s busy, yeah, that’s what basically happened.

**I**: And how do you feel about that?

**R**: I feel sad, I feel sad. Friend that I grew up with, used to have a lot of fun, we would go out for holidays, he just changes perception, he’s changing views. He’s starting a new chapter in his life. And basically, … with each other. During that chapter, I could’ve been there. Now the way I see it, he’s probably feeling lonely as well. Because, we were very close but he decided to go separate ways.

**I**: So it sounds like you miss your friend?

**R**: Yeah, I miss my friend.

**I**: And you feel like they’ve progressed in life?

**R**: Of course. Different part of London. We used to talk a lot about our personal life, what we went through. Stuff that nobody else needs to know. And it was nice, it was very nice, but yeah, if he decides to make his own ways.

**I**: Is there anything else you want to say about that?

**R**: I don’t think so. I feel like that’s what I exactly what I said, what needs to be said for this one. **I**: Okay well, thank you very much.

**R**: It’s alright.