Participant number 18 – Male, 18, Hackney

Part 2

Interviewer: So can we talk about what you put first please?

Interviewee: So I’ve got my home. So, my home, as in my actual house and… where I, basically my house that I live in, and then home as in my local area. [Interviewer: mhm] So I guess, to be specific, like… like the mile, or the two miles surrounding my house I’d consider my local area. Yeah… because I guess I put that because… obviously the family home is the best, because it’s where I live, I’ve been there for a very long time, it’s the family, it’s where I feel safe… and… so that one’s quite obvious, I guess. Um… and I put local area because there is… that is where, I guess, it’s the safest, it’s most comfortable, [interviewer: mm] I’m familiar with the most faces and actual people within that area, um… in terms of attending events and… general positivity and doing good things with and around other people, which is why I put the local area, in that way. Um… yeah, ’cause as… as it says here social connectedness or loneliness… so my local area is where I’m most likely to find the opposite of loneliness which is connectedness, so… yeah, it, it’s quite a… it’s quite an obvious one really. Um… obviously connectedness, well maybe not so obviously but anyway, connectedness for me is the… is the ability to come across old people and new people and kind of be connected mostly by being similar as people, or like participating in something that connects you. So… like…. everything form going to the park to like community events, where you come across those other people and then positivity follows that. So… yeah, that’s why I put home and local area. Or should I say actual house and local area. Yeah.

Interviewer: So you like the idea of seeing familiar faces… um, being at events and things like that. [Interviewee: mhm] Okay… and how does it make you feel, being at home for example?

Interviewee: Um… well, home is… I, I describe my home as like, it’s kind of like sanctuary, and kind of, it’s like a headquarters, because it’s where… it’s where you’re based, it’s where… it’s where I’m most comfortable and then it’s kind of where… it’s where I’m most comfortable and then prepare myself, and it’s where I originate from to go and do anything. So I prepare myself and leave my house to go to do something, to go and be around people, to go and do anything starts with me waking up at… what I describe as a headquarters… and… when you cons, when I… when I consider not having one, then I really feel the importance of it. Because, interestingly, I had a, we had a house fire and had to leave, we were away for like close to a year, and at that point when we like officially where like homeless for a brief time, we didn’t know where we was gonna actually sleep, then you realise just how strong you’re connected to your house and the comfort and the peace that comes from being within it and among the people inside. [Interviewer: mm] So… yeah. And local area’s the same. When you’re somewhere completely new, there’s a… then you realise the unease you have… you don’t know… you don’t know the people, like you actually don’t know them, they’re strangers to you, you don’t know that nature of those people, and then you realise how similar your local area is to your actual home. Knowing the people, or what they’re like, the nature of those people, being able to access everything you need to access, the shops, the emergency services… all those kind of things, the memories you have connected to that place, so you... you’ll pass and do things at the same place as you did ten years ago, twenty years ago. So… there’s always… um, positivity. Um what’s that word? Like… nostalgia or something, when it comes to childhood memories? And that all is a good thing… so, yeah. So that’s, that’s why I put my actual house and the local area.

Interviewer: Mm, thank you. Is there anything else you wanted to say about box number one?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Okay, can we move on to box two please?

Interviewee: Yeah, um… the reason I put the wider community and area is because I… I feel like… although I’ve travelled… to a lot of different spots and stuff, my local area’s quite small, because that’s where the most certainty and the most comfort is. So, there’s a, there’s the… there’s a feeling of actual loneliness, like being alone as an actual person, in the wider community and area, and then there’s the opposite of feeling socially connected because you, I… I don’t, I don’t know those people, I’m not as comfortable with those people, they don’t know me, and you just have less certainty of… there, there’s less guarantee of a positive experience the further I am out of that small local area. So… yeah. And then, I would have to mention, generally for me, and I think most people, every time something usually quite major negative happens, it tends to involve outside of the local area, local community. So for example um… last time I… I think I, I had a brother, who had some very serious medical issues… and then we had to keep leaving the area to go to a different hospital, into a new place, so… there’s a lot of spe… special, but a negative kind of special, things that have to on outside the area. Because usually all the positivity is closer to me… so… yeah, that’s why I put the wider community and area. ‘Cause of all the more negative things, the unknowns and the uncertainty and the different people and that kind of thing. And then I’m less connected with my everyday life and routine because it takes more time and effort and everything to travel and to be present and everything in your wider area. So… yeah, so I put that.

Interviewer: When you say the wider area being different…

Interviewee: Well… um… there’s, there’s actually a lot of detail that I missed. I’ll cover it briefly and just mention… in my…. the, the comfort and all the positives that come from my actual house and local area…. like um, for example, everything from like our local town hall and being informed on what’s actually going in… what’s actually going on with the people and the community, I know and can find out. But the wider area, there’s influences and things going on that I have nothing to do with and that I can’t see and find out. Like um… for example… um… like um, like for example you know how you got here, and it’s incredibly likely that services used to travel here you used before. If I sent you, just if I sent, if I sent you twenty miles north of here, exactly twenty miles north, and you’d got to attempt to travel according to the trains and the services they have there, the local people are gonna know what’s going on, because they have a familiarity and thing that you don’t, and you’re not gonna have any idea of the differences of what’s happening there, unless you might have made some attempt to research and ask people about it before you ended up there and it, that will just always be the case, unless you try and recreate what you already have in your home area. Now I’ve been there enough to be used to the people, now I’ve been there enough to… recreate everything about my home area and what I’m used to, so that’s why I put the wider area and community, because… like um… I’m trying to think… like for example, um… gangs… and that kind of thing, exactly where I live and close by, I have a good understanding of it. I live on an estate, and I know who lives on the estate, and I know what’s close by. Me just popping up somewhere else now includes a different bunch of people who are… like that whole situation is different… so it is just not at all the complete level of safety and certainty in that specific way of gangs and groups. ‘Cause like we had a time, they don’t do it anymore, but we had young people going around asking each other where are you from, and if you gave the wrong answer that could lead to some very serious problems. So then me mentioning the wider area and community actually makes a difference in terms of personal safety… you end up in a specifically actually different place, where people are different enough to actually possibly be dangerous. Not that that’s a major concern but… humans just can be similar to animals in that territorial kind of way. People just don’t recognise you, wonder why you’re here, even if you’re just like travelling around on public transport, people will just friendly and better with those that they recognise, and you’d be the same in your core area, where you live, so… that’s why I put wider area and community in box two. ‘Cause it’s kind of like an inside circle and an outside circle that can sometimes be like two different countries almost… at, at times… so, yeah. That’s why they… that’s why they’re kind of the opposite of each other in a lot of ways. Yeah.

Interviewer: So it sounds like, what you’re saying is you like familiarity, and you don’t like uncertainty. [Interviewee: Mhm] And being in an environment where you, where you don’t feel certain… that makes you feel lonely in that environment. [Interviewee: yeah] Tell me more about that.

Interviewee: Well, I’m quite a… socially anxious, and also quite observant person. So I find… one important thing that I guess I have to mention that affects me writing what I’ve written is… for me, I get very aware at times of everything happening around me, so… for example, I find, like the one time, and this... this connects back to when we first started talking, the one time I lived somewhere else in my life, like ever, I’ve always been here in my main area, I noticed that the nature that I describe, of people kind of… especially among guys, having that second nature, didn’t exist at all, when I lived somewhere else for a really short time. People just didn’t really seem to mind each other. They went about their daily lives, and there wasn’t that kind of… there wasn’t that kind of friction that you can just feel in general. And then when I came back, just the… just the way people are with each other, and the way people kind of look at each other… like, it’s like sometimes people have this way of kind of… I didn’t notice this at all when I lived somewhere else for a short time…. like, I’d always been used to so long, that when people look at me and even at each other, they do like this full body scan look, from either their head down or their feet up, and it’s kind of like weird kind of animal way like you’ve seen a documentary of people analysing each other, and that kind of weird, standoffish intensity people have between each other just didn’t really exist when I lived somewhere else for a short time. So for me there’s just…. I don’t just go, oh well I’ve got things to do somewhere I’ll just go and it’s just great, I’m just looking at so much of people’s expressions, people’s body language, the way they move around, the way they interact with each other… um… so yeah, the… the difference between my local area and the wider community can sometimes be very different. And the… the same kind of people can be found everywhere, I’m just more used to them. So for example, we have… we have a higher rate of mental health than other places, so I’ve learnt to recognise these people and how to deal with these people. Whereas, for example… I would recognise erratic behaviour in somebody, or somebody that isn’t actually stable but appears to be… and I’d have no idea who those people are somewhere else. And that would be a big issue for me. So I guess with the kind of local area versus wider area, there’s a lot more… there’s a lot more to take note of, for me… versus maybe… if you picked another guy and asked him how much he minds, and how much difference he sees between his local area very close to his home and other places… so, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. Um, is there anything else you wanted to say?

Interviewee: Mm… yeah, I would mention as well, with local area and wider area, it’s obviously the communities. So I know, for example, there’s a major black community, or should I say in general, I’m comfortable in my local area, because there’s more of us minorities compared to other people, so that’s a difference, because you can instantly end up very lonely when there’s no one like you in the place you are, that you’re in to be the odd one out, it’s just different. Like, I’m not gonna go… I’m not gonna go up to, for example, there’s a mosque, so therefore there’s a Muslim community in Aldgate, and they have their own culture and their own way of doing things, so for me to just pretend that I am the same as them, I am different to them and they’re aware of it, it just doesn’t have the same comfort as my local area where I live. So that… that, that comes into… that’s a factor as well. So I… I know where I am. There’s a high number of people similar to me and that also makes a difference to local area versus wider area. [Interviewer: Mm] Yeah, that’s it.

Interviewer: Thank you. Anything else?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Okay thank you, I’m gonna pause the recording.