Part 2 – Participant 29, Female, 22, Tower Hamlets

Interviewer: Okay so um can we start by talking about what you’ve put in box one for task two.

Interviewee: So [interviewer: thank you] box one um it says place- a place where you feel socially connected. I put the neighbourhood ‘cause there there’s a lot of neighbours in our lot that’s Muslims and they’re always popping around and asking us how we are. We recently had um a non-Muslim neighbour move in couple of doors down um last Ramadan- I think it was the last- the Ramadan before that. And they came around to our da- doors with dates and stuff, welcoming themselves, which you normally never happens. Whenever neighbours move in, they don’t really tend to care. And since then it’s- it’s actually been really nice. We used to- we feel more connected to- to anyone else than we usually do. Um one time they had a- a fair outside our house, a little party with all- all the neighbours getting together, giving out food. And that’s made me realise, you know, people are so quick to judge these days with the way people look or the way they speak or what the media’s portraying. But they don’t tend to look at what’s in someone’s heart. Like the fact that the neighbour came around and gave dates to us and said Ramadan Mubarak, which was the most recent thing anyone else wouldn’t possibly think of, was actually really nice. Until this day, you know, whenever we walk past her or whenever we see her, we’re always exchanging everything, we’re always giving her dishes or- she realises that what they put on social media and what they put on the news and stuff is not what is actually being portrayed by Muslims in direct… [interviewer: mm] yeah. And then number two, I said place where you feel lonely-

Interviewer: Sorry, sorry. Before I move on to number two- is that okay if I ask you a couple more questions-

Interviewee: Yeah, that’s fine.

Interviewer: Um, so it sounds like what you’re saying is um you like your neighbourhood because um-

Interviewee: It’s connected.

Interviewer: It’s very connected.

Interviewee: Yeah. If you were to fall ill or something happened, like one of our neighbours um had a kidney dis- kidney failure and a lung failure or something like that. Like word spreads very fast and, you know, the community will just get together and try to figure out something that could be done, if nothing like medical assistance being done to help him. You know, everyone tries to, you know, support them. If one of the parents are not very happy with what’s going or she feels upset, you know, all the parents would- not all the parents but all the mums would get together and try sort some things out. Like uh a mothers’ meeting. You know, the men will usually go to the mo- mosque um close to our house and they usually discuss anything that’s going wrong. And things kind of spread quickly. Like when someone passes away in the neighbourhood, it’s- it’s something that word spreads very quickly and it’s- it’s not in a way that it’s a negative, it’s more of a positive. Like, you know, the person lived for this long and they did so much things with the community and for us. You know, you should always think open and you should always do what you can to support that family or- and anyone around them. Because once you leave this world, people will know you for what good you’ve done instead of what bad you’ve done. Yeah.

Interviewer: Mm. So you like the connectedness that your neighbours- everyone is connected, they know each other, [interviewee: yeah] they – they- they are aware of each other’s lives, they make the effort to do things for each other, [interviewee: definitely] support each other.

Interviewee: Yeah, like [interviewer: yeah] the other day, my brother’s car- um well someone down the road knows my brother all the time, always getting into his car, and they ask him to like, you know, turn his car on or something or, you know, connect the wires together to turn it on. ‘Cause his car wasn’t working. And just noticing that person every day, whenever they leave the house they get into their car, you know, just makes you realise that the person actually approached him and asked him, you know, can you help me start my engine ‘cause it’s not working. ‘Cause h- he even said to him I notice you every morning, you know, always cleaning your car and stuff. Would you be able to help me turn my car on? And it was just kind of a thoughtful thing where my brother noticed that someone actually stares out the window or comes outside their house and notices me every morning. You know, just that little thing of telling him to, you know, help me with his car ‘cause he’d noticed him every morning actually makes you feel like people in this community that do actually care about each other. Where if you actually dropped on the- on the road, people would approach you and, you know, think- support you or actually try call an ambulance for help. Whereas others in other communities would just walk past and think, you know, the person’s drunk or on drugs or something. Whereas this community’s very connected. They an always- they’re always helping each other. And, you know, they’re making sure that if you’re ill, they’re always there for you or have something to give you or pray- praying for you. [Interviewer: mm] Yeah.

Interviewer: And how does that make you feel?

Interviewee: It makes you feel loved and connected. It doesn’t usually happen in ever- other places or other areas where I’ve heard of, you know, family and friends living in. But it makes you, you know, wonder do yourself that you’re actually in a good environment. You know it can be quite loud and stuff but if you think of all the benefits and stuff where people are connected, that’s the main thing you need. And, you know, you just realise this community doesn’t really care about the way you look or the way you speak, it’s the way you, you know, portray yourself and the way you show yourself to others. That’s what they look at. So the media can always put you down and, you know, the news can always say negative things, but people will always look at you because of the way your heart is and, you know, the way you show yourself to everyone. [Interviewer: mm] Yeah.

Interviewer: And how does that make you feel, when people judge you by your appearance and how you [unintelligible 4:24]-

Interviewee: It’s a- it’s a very sad ‘cause it- it’s- the fact that they don’t even know what’s going on. Um, you know, you have your education in primary school and secondary school where you know more about people’s faith but currently these days and age, people are brain-washing the younger children or even adults with basic things, making it seem we’re- we’re the wrong ones. When in reality it’s just a part of the group or a part of a community that’s not really us that’s making us look wrong. So it’s- it’s uh very sad as well. Because people don’t realise that we’re not bad people. It’s just some people are bad. Yeah.

Interviewer: Mm.

Interviewee: Shall I talk about number two? Box two?

Interviewer: Yeah- yeah- if- do you have anything else to say about box one?

Interviewee: Nope that’s everything for box one. [Interviewer: okay] Box two I said that the work place normally makes you feel lonely, just like discussed from the boxes earlier. Um when working all say and not having the company of your close friends or family, and noticing something is uh missing or wrong, you don’t have time to see them often or you- or like you once did. For example when you’re a student, you have more flexibility and more time because you’re only working about two, three days in college or university. And then other days you’re pretty much taking your assignments with you to someone’s house or your friend’s or family’s house. And you’re sitting there even for two hours talking to them and then you know heading back to do your assignments, it makes you realise you- you’re with someone. You know, you may have a busy life doing your assignments but at least- the fact that you get to see someone’s face with family reunions. Whereas currently now, working, you just don’t have that time. ‘Cause you’re with so many people that are not actually there for you at the end of the day. They’re just there to do their job and leave. [Interviewer: mhm] And that can tend to lead to loneliness ‘cause… that’s what usually happens. No one really seems to care about mental health when you’re actually working. They just want you to do your job and leave. They don’t tend to ask how you are. They just tend to ask you, you know, how’s the day going with the children? Or, you know, could you manage to do this before you go? It’s just a simple question of, you know, how are you or how’s your day going? Personal- personal questions makes you realise, you know, people actually care but no one asks those personal questions at work anymore. It’s just, you know, get your job done and go. [Interviewer: mm] And it’s very sad as well ‘cause you don’t- you don’t expect that but I guess that’s what- what this- what’s this world come to. [Interviewer: mm] Yeah. That’s about it.

Interviewer: How do you- how does that make you feel?

Interviewee: It’s sad but you don’t expect this in this world. But it’s- I guess that’s what everyone’s come to do now. I mean I guess there’s a lot of pressure from management and senior leadership team and everyone else in the higher department, you know, making sure that you have to do this or else you could lose your job or, you know, you can easily replace you. ‘Cause that’s what it’s come to now. If you don’t do what you’re supposed to do, they can easily replace you and the last thing you want is that sort of stress where you have to look for a new job or, you know, it’s just job hunting as it is is just very hard. So [interviewer: mm] that’s a lot of pressure that puts on someone and that could easily lead to loneliness. Yeah.

Interviewer: So it sounds like your work o- your- your place of work is a place where um people just- people are there to get the job done, [interviewee: yeah] there’s no sort of genuine interaction or-

Interviewee: No interactions at all, no. Unless it’s like- it’s literally a five or ten minutes conversation in the day throughout the eight or nine hours that you’re there for. Which is literally how are you, how was your weekend, you know, what’s your plans for the next weekend. That’s it. And the next thing you know, everyone’s gone back to their [unintelligible 49:40] self. Like it’s usually lunch time where people tend to have a conversation with you or ask you what’s your plans for the day. But after that, after your lunch break, everyone’s back to themselves. After school, everyone’s gone back to themselves, or after their shift they’re just- they’re just rushing to get home. [Interviewer: mm] Yeah. That’s both of the boxes.

Interviewer: Mm.

Interviewee: Is there anything else on those two?

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

Interviewee: Nope, that’s all of it. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. I’m gonna pause the- thank you very much.

Interviewee: That’s alright, thank you.

Interviewer: Thank you