Participant 30 – Male, 23, Tower Hamlets

**I**: Can we move onto the next section, so this is Task 2. Can we start by talking about what you put in the first box.

**R**: The place you feel most socially connected is the mosque. I get to meet my friends and the local community. So, when I go for my prayers, I’m basically there. So, I get to meet a lot of, my local mosque, we do get new and new people coming to the mosque that reverse, there are people that just move to the local neighbourhood and it’s so easy to communicate with them. You know, we greet each other and we just say about our lives. What we be doing, during the day, what we be doing during the weekend, how is life and all that. Yeah, that’s one place I basically find most socially connected.

**I**: So it sounds like you basically like getting together with people at mosques.

**R**: Yeah, we have gatherings. We had a barbecue last year, the summer barbecue where we all contribute some money, where we basically put the… we borrow the barbecue machine from my neighbours, we would even have a bouncy castle for the community to come and visit. It was a nice vibe, a lot of people came. Yeah, it was one of the happiest days ever.

**I**: So it sounds like the gatherings were fun for you and a joy for you?

**R**: Yeah, joy, happiness, connected with others.

**I**: What did you actually write on the box?

**R**: I get to meet my friends and the local community.

**I**: Okay. So when you say meet your friends and local community…

**R**: So, friends would be people that I feel my friends that I’ve seen from university days that live local. They come to the mosque, so I get to talk to them about life, what we’ve been doing and what you’ve caught up to. And the community would be the people, not really my friends, but people I pray with, I basically yeah, same thing I discussed with them as well, like what we be doing today, what we be doing last few days, what’s … next week and to give me that support and bit of guidance as well, like for example, I’m planning to go abroad, to Turkey, so one of the brothers from the community was like ‘yeah, I’ve been to certain part of Turkey, they loved it’ they told me advice about where to go to eat, so that I know exactly where to go, if you’re looking for a cheaper taxi ride, I could take you to this person, who’s there, meets you there, that gives you cheaper deals, cheaper discounts.

**I**: So it sounds like having people to talk to, to provide support or guidance in whatever way.

**R**: It’s there, it’s there. You get that in your local mosque.

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

**R**: I feel happy man, it feels so great that I’ve actually got a mosque nearby, that I’ve actually got people there to support me, basically there for my needs, yeah.

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

**R**: Probably not, now I’ve said exactly what I wanted to say for the socially connected.

**I**: Okay, thank you. Can we move on to the next section?

**R**: Box number 2, place you feel most lonely. I would say home. No one is there at home. And the gym, everyone is doing their own thing, no support, everyone minding their own business. Home I will say, I’ve already clarified it before. Basically, there’s nobody there at home, everyone is doing their own thing, cousins always out with their friends, they will be at work, while you are at home, basically in my own room, uncle, aunt, they are going out to see the neighbours, the cousins, so it is very lonely, because every time I finish work and come home, nobody is there. You do your own cooking, cleaning, you do your own cleaning. The only way of your method of communication is social media or watch TV. That’s the only option you get. Yeah. And it feels lonely, I mean communicating with social media is like the worst. Because you don’t have nobody there, face-to-face. It plays a psychology method, where you just speaking to people that, they’re not there face-to-face, it’s not nice. Yeah, that’s what it basically is for home.

**I**: So basically what you’re saying is, it sounds like not having, not having people to talk to at home makes it quite lonely for you, everyone is out doing their own thing?

**R**: Yeah. Sometimes I’m at home talking to yourself, just to build a conversation with someone. While I’m watching a film, I’m talking to a TV, why hasn’t this person gone over there, this person should have gone to that place. I’m like talking to the TV to myself. It does get very lonely, there’s nobody there.

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

**R**: Upsetting. And in a house where you got cousins around and it’s meant to be all around.

**I**: And when you say with social media, it’s the worst communicating with people, but not face-to-face. I’m just trying to understand. Do you think from your experience, because you mentioned that social media has been helpful to you in terms of those groups that you kind of, but also not being able to see friends face-to-face, you think it’s better altogether or worse altogether in your opinion.

**R**: It’s a bit of both I would say. Because there are groups out there to support you. Plus, you are speaking to friends that own the social media. But then again, those people might be not real. They could have put a fake profile, biography, information and for example, I go to a coffee shop waiting there for a couple of hours and there’s nobody there on the other side, so the person that you’ve been talking to is probably a robot and when you went to the coffee shop, there’s nobody there. That’s the only downside I see. And what another thing I could say is, one thing up here is a lot of profiles are hacked, so you hear of a facebook profile that got hacked, so the person that you communicate with, it might not be that person, it might be a person that’s hacked, so they are basically just using you for their own benefit. So one day, they could ask you can I borrow some money. And you think, oh this person is a nice guy, you’ve been having a very good relationship through social media and you transfer them money and next thing you find out, he was just basically using you.

**I**: So it sounds like you want to meet with these people face-to-face and even though you might actually see people at home face-to-face, you don’t communicate with them, everyone’s busy…

**R**: Yeah, everyone’s busy with their own things.

**I**: That makes you feel lonely.

**R**: Of course, that’s correct.

**I**: And you mentioned gym also…

**R**: So, everyone doing their own things, no support, people minding their own business. So I’ve been going to the gym regularly, generally I’m going there to workout, lose some weight, because I’m very nice looking people with physical body, got muscles, people…you know, people got muscles. You go there to ask for support, you go there to ask them oh excuse me, how did you lose the weight, can you give me some support, I would like to lose some weight as well. And, the few times that I’ve asked, the response I get is, no I’m busy, can you go away, not thinking this is London. At the end of the day, have a bit of respect, or at least have some support, help each other and we all want the same goal of the same weight, we want to gain some muscles and whenever I ask them, it’s the same response of I don’t have time, go online, research yourself, it’s unacceptable. Then, when you go to ask the gym staff members that work at the gym, can you give me some guidance, can you give me some support, what do I need to do to lose some weight, or what do I do to get my goal, they go straight to give me business class… Hold on, I’m already paying a membership to the gym to lose weight, why should I pay you thirty pounds an hour, like oh that’s how the policy is for this gym. If you wanna lose weight, you have to pay money, you know how it is. So, what I’ve been doing lately is checking it online, seeing how other people have transformed their body and I basically done my own research and following few Youtubers, how they have been transforming themselves, seeing their fitness plan, that’s basically helping me to lose weight. But the thing is, whenever I ask my friends, it’s really upsetting, no I’ve got work, I’ve got a family coming and issues, all things to do. One way it does motivate me, but it also makes me feel lonely, so when I go there, what I do… I just go there to workout. At the end of the day, I need to see changes in my body, even if I have to be alone and feel lonely while working out. The only motivation I’m getting is putting my head forward. I’ve basically downloaded some youtube and motivation videos, where I listen to people like … speaking basically giving guidance, advice, telling you, look listen to your heart, listen to what I’m saying, I’m there to support you, just work out. Sometimes, you’re gonna have to be alone to succeed in life and sometimes, your friends might not be there. And the day you start seeing it, your friends will come up to you, saying how did you do it, how did you make that transformation. Yeah, gym is one place, it’s very lonely but you gotta do what you gotta do to succeed.

**I**: When you said that you get to success and…

**R**: What I say is that the day I transform by body… because at the moment, I do have a lot of friends that are unhealthy, their body is not great, so the day I get the transformation, they will look at my physique, and think hold on, look at this guy suceeded. So the day I get my transformation goal, so the one I’m following at the moment is 12 weeks. Once my body goes through the changes and the shape changes of my body, those friends that I’ve told to come to the gym with me, which haven’t come with me. When I see the changes in my body and when they see it, that’s when they will see it ‘this guy has done it, I need to join the gym’ that’s when they will come and ask me for support. Yeah, so at the moment, it might be lonely, but there’s gonna be a day when my body changes and they will come…

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

**R**: At the moment, I feel sad, because when I ask them, there were not there to support me. I told them to come let’s go workout together, but they are not there, they’re like we’re busy and all that. But once I hit my transformation, I will be happy, I will be grateful, I will basically be the person that’s leading them on making changes for their body as well.

**I**: Mmh… And how does that feel when you think that they will come to you when your body is transformed?

**R**: It’s going to make me feel great… It’s going to put their words, put them away, yeah. Then they will start asking for my help, that’s where I can say ‘no, get lost’ but as I got a good heart, I will tell them ‘yeah, I’m here to support you’.

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

**R**: No, that’s probably the two places where I feel very lonely.

**I**: Thank you very much.

**R**: That’s alright.