Participant 43 – Male, 23, Tower Hamlets

**PART 2**

**I: Um, can we start talking about what you put in box one please?**

So, box one is place you socially connected. I feel like, when you out with friends, you are, you're being with friends is like you're taking away from all the other stuff away from you. So you know, just having a good time, you will have that common theme cause you might have grown up together, you can just talk about your day or you just talk about stuff like past holidays you went to or talking about upcoming holidays or talking about football or any other thing. I feel like that helps where you feel, after you feel connected cause you’re in a group of friends, you just have a good time, laugh, just takes your mind away from the negative stuff. Saying playing football as well socially connected – cause I play every Tuesday nights and you're, you're with a group of people that have the same theme as you, you enjoy football, you play football together, and you start talking together talking with one another. You just build that new friendship, because when I started playing on Tuesday I never knew these people before. I knew one person but I knew him from friends. Now, they’re like my friends now if we go meet up on Tuesday to go to Liverpool, we can just talk normally and that's how you feel connected because you got that common goal: playing football. Um, going to mosque is the third one specially during the month of Ramadan. I feel like the month Ramadan, everyone's, the religious level is kind of high because it’s the most holiest month for Muslims and going to mosque you just see everyone, you might see your neighbors, you might see your friends, your family and you are just together praying and for the month of just gaining rewards and you feel that connection of like, it's a strong connection like all of us praying together, it feels really nice. And the forth one is family as well. Family is the main, it’s a very important thing in life as well cause no, there will always be there for you no matter how much you done bad or how much you’re good, they will always be with you and having that connection with your family makes you feel good. And the last point I wrote was “football team”. Quite simple to the second point but in terms of football team it’s like, that's just a set of players you will play with for the next six months every Sunday, and every Wednesday you might go training on Wednesdays and Sunday is your league game, so that twice a week can build that connection and you all have a common to win the league and during that time, you go also, go for the harsh route, you might lose one game, you might have arguments but you’re still together because you’re a team and you look out for one another and that's how you can be connected. Should I go to box two?

**I: Just some questions about box one. So, it sounds like what you're saying is you like that you know, common um, common goal that you have with other people. So, for example, when you're out with your friends or when you're in you know the football field or playing football or when you're in the mosque, you know, you're doing things for um, you're doing something that's common among you. And that kind of helps with regards to be connected.**

Yeah, I feel like because when you meet someone new, the first thing I’d say that's another thing that um, topic of conversation topic is football that's another one, that’s it. When you start at a new place, for example, you met someone, “Oh, what team do you support?”. They might say “United” “Arsenal” and that’s when you start making a connection that, you know, “oh, I support that team” or you support another team and you just thought, you just talk naturally because if you have one connection you can just talk about endless, you know, not even football like video games, films, series you watch on Netflix and what not. So I feel like connection, if you have a common goal that makes your connection stronger and it can lead you into something greater that you might become much more good friends than you first thought because of that one common goal then it opens up so many routes so it might have started off with the football conversation, then it might become TV series, might come to about dating, “who are you dating?”, education. So, it just opens up so many routes if you have that one connection with that person, even though it doesn’t have to be with a partner, it could be with friends, colleagues, family.

**I: So, having that sort of common goal can be a kick off start.**

It can kick off to something greater potentially. And that can fill that loneliness void. Because sometimes you might watch a Netflix series and no one watches it. Sometimes you feel lonely in the sense of like you have no one to talk to because when you watch a really good episode you kind of want to get it out because you want to hear that another person's opinion and you start seeing the person that watches the same series, you can talk with each other and it kind of fills that loneliness.

I: It sounds like, yeah, having that sort of um, something that both parties, all parties do, then, because you can talk about it, you know, because you can share, you know, your thoughts can make you feel more socially connected.

Yeah

**I: Thank you. Is there anything else you want to say about box one?**

No, that that's covered.

**I: Sure. Um, we can move to box two, if you like.**

So, the box two is place where you most feel lonely so the first one or the first day at work. So when I started my career, and then it just, It's a very different environment to retail, whereas in retail, you started with the people in similar ages, you have similar background because working in retail most of them are studying, an at that time I was studying so you kinda had that common goal already were both studying “oh, what you studying?” “what uni?”, “When is your graduation?”, “what year you’re in?” So, you build that common goal, in it? Whereas in an office environment, It's much more different. You got people, it might be grown up with kids or there might be a higher in the in the department in terms of the job level. It's quite daunting at first, because you never experienced that environment. And you’re just sitting on the desk and they’re like showing you here and then, and just look around and just see people working. Who do I talk to? What do I really, how to approach them? Because I don't know how they are, and whereas in the retail it’s simple cause you all had that common goal of students, whereas here I'm a fresh graduate and where there is another person that's been there for ten years, for example. So, it's quite hard to integrate at first. But that's where you feel lonely. That first day at work. And when you're sitting at a break, for example, uh, that you just go in the canteen or the staff room and just sit and feel like “who do I like talk to you?” or just feel that loneliness, because there's no one there around. Uh, and then the second one is university.

**I: Just before we go onto the second, I just wanted to ask um, so, um, so what you're saying is, you know, uh, because you suddenly had that shift where you previously, you know you have people who came from similar, um, educational background as you, you would be able to talk to them have similar conversations, and because suddenly there was a shift, um, and then you basically had colleagues who are quite different to you, like some were working, some um, have been here for a long time, some had children because of that, you know, difference of dynamic relationship, then that kind of made you to kind of be more lonely.**

Yeah, in that sense, because um, like, like retail when there's a guy who’s the same age as me, and if there’s a pretty girl walking about we’re like “oh, check out that girl”, for example, and both, like that common, whereas if I was in an office environment and a nice girl walked by and this guy's married or older, much more older, I wouldn’t really say that because I don’t feel comfortable because I don't just don't see that. So, it’s the small stuff that kind of drive you to loneliness but I feel like as your days go by, months go by, then it feels a bit more better. But in terms of the way you feel most meaning that that first day at work, first week or first week or two that’s when you feel loneliness but slowly that loneliness disappears. So, it's just the dynamics of how it is at a workplace. But, sometimes, you might not even be comfortable because you never really had experience of doing it in that profession and you feel like you might have been stuck, so you might have, I had that in my age where I’m working. We had different software that we used and now completely puzzled by it. They give an induction but I feel like that induction is all bullshit because they just completely go through everything very quick and fast. And then when it comes to me doing them, “shit, what do I do?” I just start thinking that, I don't wanna ask anyone because I just feel a bit nervous and that's when you feel lonely and you’re given this pile of work, but you don't know what to do, you feel lonely but you don't have anyone to talk to and say “excuse me, can I have help, can you help me with this?”, and you do ask but you don't know who to ask because you don't know the person how they are. Sometimes the person is alright with helping sometimes they can be a bit of a prick. Let's be real they can be a bit a prick and don't wanna help you. So that's why you can feel loneliness as well.

**I: And how did that make you feel being in that sort of first week, first month, or the..**

First week or two I didn’t enjoy it to be honest. I kind of hated it, you know, not hated it but this is bullshit but “I'm new here. You don't have the understanding. This is my first time working here in the office environment. And yet you didn't really adjust to me.” So, they kind of expect you to do things which you should all be known doing. I’m thinking like “hang on a minute, that's impossible. How can I work this? I just worked here a week and you’re expecting me to do this stuff that I never learned. So, at first I felt lonely, I feel like “uufff”. Well, luckily, I had colleagues that started at the same time as me so it’s kind of filling that void. But in terms of the workload, that's when you feel the loneliness of not being able to do. And who do I ask for help? Because managers might be busy. You don't know the college really like that.

**I: Who and would you have as a second option**

Uh, “university”. So I went to University of Greenwich and my campus was Eltham. Um, so that's proper southeast deep in England. And I’ll say one thing about that area is it’s predominantly British white people and I felt like in terms of there was racism in that campus cause Karachi site was nice because it was mixed and then you got Avery Hill, that's where I was. And that was in Eltham. And to get to Eltham with public transport is one of the hardest routes ever. You got the shuttle bus to go from uni, but sometimes if you miss it you have to take that route. And I feel like that's the place where you feel the most lonely, especially going to uni in Eltham cause it’s predominantly British White people and me and my mates were the only, there was four Asian boys that started that was doing the same course as me. And we were all altogether like we came from college and went straight, applied there. And, and in that class, say there was 60 students I’d say three black people, boys, one black girl, five Asians, Bengalis, one Moroccan and the rest were British White and socially wise, I didn't, we didn't get along with, we didn't get along with any of them. You just more or less. You're right. That's it. And that’s very small talk. You know how people say, “oh, you’re a student mate, your uni mates will be your mates for life”. That didn't happen with us, with me because they never really got, they never would understand, they are like “ah, where are you from?” I’m like “oh, Stratford”, “where is that?”. I’m like “really?”, “Stratford, Westfield”, like they don’t know that stuff, they saw us as aliens cause they never saw brown people in their lives. And they first thought we was Indians. “No, we’re actually Bengalis”. Bengalis, they thought we were Indians. And that’s where I felt very lonely like three years being in a place where it’s predominantly White, that area was known for racism attacks Eltham, especially when you got on the bus, people just looked at you like you’re aliens from another planet or something. “Wow, we’re just the same people but we’re just brown skin.” I feel like that's why, where you feel lonely and the fact that we stood with those students to be able to get along them socially, you have to adapt to their lifestyle, which is going out as students clubbing and drinking. And that's not that's not what I do. That's not my thing, so I was not gonna, peer, being peer pressured just to be accepted by the by going to the student union nights or going to the bar after uni, um like “nah”, I'm sticking my ways. No, that's how you feel lonely, cause sometimes your other mates might not come, it might just be you alone. And you don't have someone to talk about that because I just felt like there were just white color racism in the area. It was just predominantly, I’d say ninety nine percent white British people. Um, and then I didn't really like it in that campus. Yeah. So that's where you experience loneliness a lot, because you're basically in another environment and your homes, God knows how far away and if I was in Queen Marry, for example, I know I’d fit in right way, because everyone is mixed. You got so many students from different race but whereas my campus, it was just white people who pure British white people. And that's why I experienced loneliness.

**I: How did that make you feel?**

Annoyed at the same time, it’s like It’s funny how media says “oh these people don't integrate with the British, but yet it’s funny how they don’t know certain stuff like where is East London, where Stratford is, where is all of this areas but I still knew some of their stuff, but they didn't know some of our stuff so I felt like “how is that fair?” Does that make sense? You expect me to know their stuff, be cultured, but they don't even know our own culture. So, the bit I, I didn't really it didn't really affect me that much. I still got on with my education. I still do. I just stuck to my course. Well, friends, four of us Asians, we were just stuck together, and yeah, it’s lonely at first, but then you just accept it and just do my thing and just go.

**I: And what is your next one?**

Uh, so “failed test exams”. So that can be a big lonely, person can experience loneliness, it’s the failing exam especially during like GCSE times, if you have a test in the hall, then you collect, for example, your results paper, and you just see everyone smiling, cheering, and you're just there looking at like, that's where you feel loneliness there, like there's no one there. Even if another person's failed, you don't really care about it, because that's what your life even that's “oh you failed?”, “I failed too.” I don't care. This is my life that’s when you feel loneliness. So if you fail a test, driving exams, any other forms of methods of exams -you feel loneliness because it's just you're just by yourself because that's your life, that’s your education. That's your qualification. They won’t understand that because they’ve already got their qualifications so that’s where you can feel loneliness like you’re just by yourself - what do you do? How do I get past this loneliness? It's tough.

**I: Is there any place in your neighborhood that you feel the most socially lonely?**

In this area? I don’t know, this area is very diverse. I used to live in Brick Lane first. Then when I was about fifteen, I moved to Bow - at first you felt socially lonely because I’m moved to completely new environment where all my friends used to live in that Brick Lane area and for me to go meet them I had to take the bus. And sometimes I didn't feel comfortable at first cause I didn't really know the area.

And when we first moved in here, um, it was quite lonely because I just stayed at home most of the time being because I didn't have anyone there. So you felt socially lonely. In fact that that's another point I could write “moving to a new area”.

**I: Yeah. So, there's is there a place here, right in this neighborhood that you live, um, anywhere, like in particular, that you feel you feel isolated, you feel…**

Not really. No, because in, I feel like going back to our previous point about the city and the views, in this areas, there's people around you constantly, to experience that loneliness looking at the view you have to be isolated by yourself but in this area, no I haven't experienced it.

**I: Okay, well, thank you very much. Is there anything else you want to say?**

No, that's it.

**I: Okay, thank you very much. I'm gonna pause the recording now.**