**You are not a-lone parent: 9 in 10 mums admit feeling lonely and anxious, says study**

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**UK mums are suffering a crippling epidemic of loneliness - leading them to be dubbed ‘the most isolated generation ever’.**Despite 24-hour social media contact, a shocking 92 per cent of mums admit that they feel lonely - with 54 per cent feeling more friendless than before they had children.

The new study found 70 per cent of current mums with dependent children say their generation is the loneliest ever, compared to 14 per cent who believe it was their own mothers and 16 per cent who feel it was their grandmothers who were most alone.

Of mums who do feel disconnected and abandoned, a huge 61 per cent try to hide their feelings from friends and family, and only 38 per cent have ever told their partner how they feel.

Even going to baby groups where other new mums bring their kids to make friends, the vast majority are still likely to be feeling secretly lonely on a day-to-day basis.

Now The Mum Village is bringing these common hidden problems to the surface in a refreshingly honest video.

Mums interviewed admit to secretly crying or feeling jealous when they see groups of mums socialising easily in public.

One said: "I am of course honoured to be a mum, but it doesn't stop sometimes craving conversation."

"Being a mum can be amazing. It can also be a big pile of sh\*\*" is the main message which brave parents should no longer feel ashamed to admit, according to the Mum Channel.

Worryingly, 55 per cent of lonely mums say being isolated has left them suffering anxiety, while 47 per cent feel ‘very stressed’.

Loneliness has also led mums to crying regularly, many have struggled to leave the house and one in 20 admit drinking to cope.

Sixteen per cent of mums have got angry with their children due to their unhappiness.

The ChannelMum.com poll of 2,025 mothers found the biggest source of isolation comes from ‘cliquey and bitchy’ groups at the school gates or baby and toddler groups, with 51 per cent of mothers revealing they feel excluded.

A quarter feel alone as they live far from their own families while a third feel other mums are coping better or they don’t know how to meet more "mummy mates".

YOUTUBE

PILE: A very honest video from the Mum Channel encourages mums to open up about feeling alone

Even in an age of constant social media, scrolling on a smartphone can actually make the problems worse. Two in five mums admit seeing other mums' "perfect lives" gets them down, while a third compare their bodies to these women online.

And it is rich mums who are most likely to be isolated with 70 per cent of mothers polled saying they wouldn’t approach a wealthy or upper class mum to be a friend.

Over half of Muslim mums admit they feel lonely as other mothers are hesitant about approaching them - with just over a third (35 per cent) of non-Muslim mothers admitting they are nervous about speaking with a mum who wore a Hijab.

One in five also said they are worried about making friends with a mum who has children with special needs, along with seven per cent who are frightened about befriending single mums.

Meanwhile older mums are slightly more likely to feel isolated (17 per cent) compared to younger mums (11 per cent).

The study showed the main reasons mums are scared to approach other mothers is being judged, with four in 10 fearing they "will be looked down on".

Overall, the report also revealed 80 per cent of mothers want more mum friends - but 30 per cent have never started a conversation with another mother which led to them being friends.

Solutions suggested by the mums were slowing down their busy lives to talk, and being less judgemental.

To support lonely mums, ChannelMum.com has launched the #CMYANA (You Are Not Alone) Challenge, to help connect mums online and offline. Mums are being challenged to carry out one of five daily activities to widen their friendship group, meet new mums and feel supported.

YOUTUBE

CONNECTED: A range of apps aim to match up mums who live nearby to form new friendships

Siobhan Freegard, founder of ChannelMum.com, admits she suffered crippling loneliness after the birth of her first child.

She said: “We all know having a child takes a physical toll on your body, but it can take a mental toll too.

“Being a mum can be tough but we need to remember there is more that unites us than divides us.

"So today, take the time to smile at another mum - it maybe the only smile she gets all day, and could lead to the start of a new friendship.”