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Feeling lonely: the experiences of young
people aged 12 to 13 years

Submitted in part fulfilment for MRes (Ed), The Open University

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Abstract

Loneliness is a widely experienced, disagreeable emotion, when prolonged it is potentially detrimental to the current and future well-being of young people. It is principally considered to occur when relationships do not meet the expectations, or needs, of affected individuals. Much research about loneliness in children and adolescents has focused on measuring, as opposed to understanding, loneliness based on evaluations of school-peer relationships, although latterly parental relationships have been considered. Little account of other relationships and contextual factors has been taken. It is suggested that increasing use of a variety of digitally-mediated-communication (DMC) is likely to shape interactions and possibly affect experiences of loneliness.

This project used a semi-structured questionnaire to obtain reports of usage of DMC and experiences of loneliness from 41 (21 boys and 20 girls) young people aged 12–13 years. A constructivist phenomenological framework framed the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. Correlations identified and themes developed were conceptualised as ‘tools’ to aid understanding of the lived-experience of loneliness. One important aim of this project was to consider existing theoretical frameworks, in the light of participants’ reports, with a view to planning future research. These frameworks included consideration of the affordances and limitations of DMC, relationships and the experience of loneliness.

Gender differences were noted in use of DMC and reports of loneliness. Boys tended to use more computer-mediated-communication and fewer voice calls and SMS texting than did girls. Statistical analysis demonstrated significant associations for boys between loneliness, parental relationships and having a 'good' friend. Girls demonstrated none of these; instead, analysis suggested they found social-networks more significant. Both sexes reported experiencing loneliness in all the four domains investigated: at home, at school, alone, and when with people, although girls showed some relationships between these domains and boys did not. Thematic analysis of the written narrative data concluded these gender differences were not as marked as statistical analysis had suggested, and interpreted major themes related to loneliness as being 'personal rejection' and 'physical separation'. Both were related to friendships, parental separation was mentioned but evidence of parental rejection was not found within this small sample. Relationships reported as influencing experiences of loneliness by the young people included: parents, school-friends, friends outside of school, having a good friend, siblings, aunts and cousins.

Tentative associations were made between DMC use and the experience of loneliness namely, having fewer forms of DMC available and increased Internet use were associated with increased reports of loneliness supporting the need for further investigation.

Revisiting the literature, having established a coherent framework encompassing loneliness, relationships and usage of DMC was required,

identified a paper by Gergen (2002) considering the effects of 'absent presence' on relationships. It is suggested that this is more pertinent to understanding DMC and relationships than previous theories based on comparatively limited forms of DMC. The congruence in approach with constructivist phenomenology, especially in terms of the significance of culturally framed discourse was noted. Additionally Gergen's theorising encompasses the two approaches considered most appropriate for understanding loneliness after examination of the data, the social needs approach emphasising different types of relationships and the interactionist approach emphasising the importance of situating research within the appropriate cultural background. It is suggested that discourse analysis of both 'natural' and interview data, perhaps utilising ethnographic procedures designed to consider context will facilitate further examination of the effects of DMC on young people's experiences of loneliness.

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The participants produced work that was truly outstanding; I would never have imagined that such a questionnaire would generate so much data, written so thoughtfully and with such generosity. This group of young people deserve the very greatest respect.

My four 'boys' at home deserve the most thanks, especially Sam (age 13) who patiently entered data into Excel for me, spending hour after hour at the keyboard and never once making a mistake when we checked it through. Nick (age 8) mastered the washing machine and became adept at filing articles. One very special moment was when Joe bought me the best cup of tea ever at 5.30am when he discovered I had not actually gone to bed the night before. As for Andy, he even missed his sport on several occasions, in order to provide everything, all of the time. Thank you.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This project will explore young people's reports of the experience of loneliness using a semi-structured questionnaire and consider the implications of their responses for proposed PhD research. It is anticipated that young people's relationships will be a significant feature within their descriptions of loneliness. Adolescents are recognised as having enthusiastically adopted digitally-mediated-communication (DMC) to conduct their relationships (Gross 2004). DMC, in this context, includes computer-mediated-communication (CMC) and other forms of technology-mediated communication; implicit within this is comparison with face-to-face communication. The first aim of this project is to explore how 'lonely' young people use DMC.

Valkenburg and Peter (in press) outline two longstanding conflicting hypotheses purporting to explain the effects of CMC on adolescents' well-being, including experiences of loneliness. The displacement hypothesis predicts CMC reduces well-being by displacing time spent with existing friends. In addition, it assumes friendships conducted via DMC are compromised because of reduced 'richness' of communication. However, new forms of DMC are increasingly available undermining assumptions based on asynchronous textual interaction. DMC can no longer be considered impoverished in comparison to face-to-face communication.

The second hypothesis described by Valkenburg and Peters (in press), the stimulation hypothesis, suggests CMC has a positive effect on well-being,

affording new, readily available, means of communicating perhaps especially for geographically-limited young people. Valkenburg and Peters describe increasing academic support for the stimulation hypothesis yet the mechanism for improvement in well-being is inadequately understood. One recent contribution, substantiated by research with adults (Joinson 2004), suggests DMC facilitates self-disclosure; this might be pertinent to self-conscious adolescents.

It is possible that lonely young people, who often concurrently suffer low self-esteem with self-perceived poor interpersonal competence (Rotenburg 1999), value the affordances of DMC more than those who are socially confident (Caplan 2007). Accordingly, the first aim of this investigation is to explore whether young people reporting relatively greater levels of loneliness differ in their usage of DMC, in comparison to less lonely peers. Loneliness will be examined in four overlapping domains: at school, at home, when alone and when not alone.

There is abundant published literature concerning the measurement of loneliness in children and adolescents, but little about the subjective experience. Recent experiential literature usually employs Weiss's (1973) typology of social and emotional loneliness. Emotional-loneliness represents the experience resulting from perceived deficits in intimacy, precipitated by the absence of someone with whom one has an intense emotional connection, or attachment. Social-loneliness by contrast is consequential to perceived deficits in peer-networks; a function of the quantity, rather than quality, of relationships.

Weiss's work, and other frameworks for considering loneliness, will be appraised in the literature review. They have in common, especially with regard to research with young people a minimal focus on what 'being lonely' means to young people and how context (e.g. at school, at home, alone, with others and use of DMC) affects such experiences. In exploring the lived-experience of loneliness, a greater understanding of the subjective experience is sought. This will inform the selection, or development, of a theoretical framework to guide proposed PhD research exploring how DMC mediates relationships, and therefore experiences of loneliness, for young people.

Eliciting young peoples' descriptions of loneliness requires a qualitative approach. Phenomenology, a term encompassing varied philosophies and methodologies, is defined as understanding 'lived-experience' (van Manen, 1990). Academics categorise phenomenology differently (leading to confusion and apparent disagreement) but Dowling (2007) suggests there are three main 'branches'. One key difference between these branches concerns the interpretative role accorded to the researcher.

The first, descriptive phenomenology seeks to describe an experience 'as it is' ('bracketing' out the researcher's perspectives). The second, hermeneutic phenomenology includes consideration of some contextual information, including the researcher's perspective. Hermeneutic phenomenologists profess to exert control over their perspectives, permitting inclusion at specific points in the research process. Finally, constructivist phenomenology, which many authors (e.g. van Manen 1990) suggest is a sub-type of hermeneutic

phenomenology, acknowledges the fundamental role of the researcher in identifying and interpreting experience. It suggests construction of interpretations is constrained by available discourses, promoting exploration of discourses shaping interactions and acknowledging that collecting, interpreting and reporting data are context-bound interactions. This approach will explicitly frame interpretation of both qualitative and quantitative data obtained in this project.

Quantitative data will assess DMC available to, and used by, young people. Statistical analysis (correlations) of subjective self-ratings of variables associated with loneliness correlations are conceptualised as one 'tool' (van Manen 1990) to enhance understanding of young people's experiences of loneliness. Specifically, their use in this project will clarify preconceptions about the types of relationships (previous research has focused on school-peer, and recently parental, relationships) that affect loneliness *prior* to interpreting the narrative descriptions. As Spindler and Spindler, 1992 suggest, "instrumentation and quantification are simply procedures employed to extend and reinforce...interpretations" (cited by Denzin and Lincoln 1998:9).

The second aim of this project is to explore young people's descriptions of loneliness and to consider their implications for future research. Guided by the constructivist phenomenological approach, a rigorous thematic analysis of the qualitative data and re-evaluation of theoretical approaches will address this aim.

Following the next chapter, which states aims and outlines the associated research questions, a critical review of relevant literature will elucidate concepts introduced above. The literature selected reflects changes in the focus of research investigating loneliness in young people. Whilst this does not necessarily incorporate the most recent work, studies evaluated provided significant platforms for further research and are pertinent to considering the 'lived-experience' of loneliness. The review will describe loneliness, theoretical approaches to understanding loneliness, characteristics of young people, and adolescent use of DMC (where possible with reference to research about lonely adolescents and DMC). Next, a short chapter describing the implementation of the selected methodological framework will precede an outline of particular issues attended to when designing and implementing data collection and analysis procedures. Finally, this chapter will explain some of the ethical issues considered. The succeeding 'interpretation of responses' chapter will blend quantitative and qualitative data in addressing the research questions. The discussion will frame interpretations within the available literature, focusing on implications for future research. A short chapter will then summarise procedural implications for future investigations. The concluding chapter will briefly summarise findings suggesting how theoretical frameworks might shape future exploration of the effects of DMC on the lived-experiences of loneliness for young people.

Chapter Two: Aims and Research Questions

Having introduced the assumption that young people's experiences of loneliness might be affected by use of DMC in the preceding chapter, this chapter will list specific aims and questions addressed by this project.

Aim One

To explore whether self-reports of loneliness, from young people aged 12-13 years, demonstrate any associations with the forms of DMC utilised and the frequency and duration of use.

- Do participants who report they are lonely 'all' or 'most' of the time in one, or more, of the four domains, (at home, at school, alone or with people), differ in their usage of DMC relative to those who do not report these levels of loneliness?

Aim Two

To explore descriptions of experiences of loneliness written by young people aged 12–13 years and consider firstly, the implications of these for existing theoretical frameworks and secondly, the implications for future research.

- Are there significant correlations between, participants' self-ratings of loneliness, peer and familial relationships, and confidence, when asked to assess these using a Likert-scale?
- What does a thematic analysis of written descriptions of loneliness, from participants aged 12-13 years (elicited using photographs providing a third-person vehicle in addition to invitations to describe their own experiences), reveal about the 'lived-experience' of loneliness for young people?
- What are the implications of the young people's responses to the semi-structured questionnaire and also the literature reviewed, for future research exploring how DMC affects experiences of loneliness for young people?

Chapter Three: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter will examine literature pertaining to loneliness in young people. It will suggest that the predominating focus on school social-networks, with the recent addition of parental relationships, should be replaced with a broader examination of factors influencing loneliness. Contextual information regarding the fast-changing patterns of communication available to young people in the UK, and how these might affect relationships, will be described. First, the significance of loneliness for young people will be highlighted providing an overarching justification for seeking greater understanding of this experience.

Significance of Loneliness in Young People

Loneliness is a universal, melancholy experience (Rotenburg 1999) but possibly also beneficial. Baumeister and Leary propose loneliness warns of deficits in those interpersonal relationships that fulfil a fundamental “*need to belong*” (1995:497). Furthermore, existentialists suggest exploration of loneliness is an essential component in understanding ‘humanness’ (Heinrich and Gullone 2006). Nevertheless, considerable research demonstrates the adverse consequences of prolonged loneliness for both current and future well-being. Heinrich and Gullone (2006) provide a comprehensive review of potential sequelae including depression, low self-esteem and deleterious

physical effects. When describing the vicious circle arising when lonely (possibly isolated) adolescents fail to practise social skills, Berguno et al (2004) comment on strong associations between adolescent loneliness, drug abuse and depression. Reports of up to 66% of adolescents describing loneliness as a significant problem have been noted (McWhirter et al 2002). Loneliness is both widespread and potentially detrimental to young people's well-being and worthy of exploration. Following the description of some approaches to understanding loneliness, the role of DMC in the lives of adolescents will be outlined. As mentioned in Chapter One, it is no longer viable to consider DMC as an impoverished form of communication and DMC may be beneficial to some lonely young people. Finally, different methods for exploring loneliness in young people will be evaluated.

What is Loneliness?

Most definitions of loneliness acknowledge it as both a negative, subjective experience and one possible outcome of an individual's evaluation of the match between desired and actual relationships (Crick et al. 1999).

Loneliness might be fleeting or persistent. *Fleeting* loneliness is most likely to offer advantages by alerting individuals to deficiencies in social relationships thus motivating change (Larson 1999). Nevertheless, as Parkhurst and Hopmeyer (1999) argue, loneliness can, if *prolonged*, hinder social interaction (see also Berguno et al 2004). Any definition of loneliness, designed to increase understanding of effects, positive and/or negative, should therefore encompass duration.

Rook suggests loneliness is:

an enduring condition of emotional distress that arises when a person feels estranged from, misunderstood, or rejected by others and/or lacks appropriate social partners for desired activities, particularly activities that provide a sense of social integration and opportunities for emotional intimacy.
(1984:1391).

This definition encompasses both cognitive (evaluative) and affective (subjective) dimensions, in addition to duration, emphasising loneliness is an internal mechanism involving individual's desires and motivations.

Heinrich and Gullone (2006) provide a useful summary of theoretical approaches to understanding loneliness, grouping them into three clusters; social needs, cognitive discrepancy, and interactionist; these will be outlined next.

Social Needs Approach

Since Weiss's (1973) seminal work about loneliness increased emphasis has been placed on exploring the experience. Weiss's work influenced social-psychology (e.g. Moody, 2001, McWhirter et al., 2002) following identification of two qualitatively different dimensions; social and emotional loneliness.

Social-loneliness results from perceived deficits in social integration, subsequently followed by feeling marginalised and restless.

Emotional-loneliness is more complex and primarily derives from attachment theory. Weiss cites both Bowlby and Murray-Parkes (two attachment theorists) and builds on their definition of 'attachment' as exclusively a parent-

infant bond promoting security and confidence, by including other close relationships where separation results in profound distress. It is noted that adolescents are perceived as moving from primary parental attachments towards romantic attachments with peers (Cassidy and Berlin 1999). Weiss suggested it is only during adolescence that loneliness can be experienced, but this view has since been undermined as loneliness has been identified in younger children (Qualter and Munn, 2002).

More contemporaneous theorists have continued to augment Bowlby's initial focus on parent-infant relationships by applying attachment theory to others, especially during adolescence (Cassidy and Berlin 1999). Within this framework 'learned-attachment-style' is considered significant; whilst an 'attachment-style' (e.g. secure, insecure, anxious) develops in infancy this is moderated by further childhood experiences, culminating in a style that is, whilst not fixed, consistent (Shaver and Mikulincer, 2005). Attachment theory has thus been re-framed; increased focus on other relationships influencing attachment styles and separation anxiety which is suggested to affect loneliness.

The social needs approach suggests loneliness originates from the *absence* of a needed relationship or set of relationships. This approach does not exclude cognitive evaluation of relationships, but does not focus on this to the same extent as the second.

Cognitive Discrepancy Approach

Heinrich and Gullone (2006) state cognitive processes are central to the cognitive discrepancy approach in focusing on the perception of discrepancies between actual and desired relationships. It also draws on attribution theory, which explores how people attribute causes to events (and experiences) and how these affect motivation for change. Solano (1987) found that chronically-lonely people blamed their own behaviour or characteristics in preference to making external attributions. The resulting detrimental effects on self-confidence further exacerbate relationship difficulties, compounding loneliness. Shaver et al (1985) noted that lonely people have higher expectations of relationships, further increasing the perceived discordance between actual and desired relationships (from Heinrich and Gullone, 2006). Like the social needs approach, the cognitive discrepancy approach focuses on the individual; little attention is paid to societal or cultural factors.

Interactionist Approach

The interactionist approach emphasises social, cultural and other situational factors. Personal factors remain significant (e.g. Heinrich and Gullone, 2006 mention introversion and poor social skills) but in interaction with cultural and situational forces. One example is how cultural influences determine attitudes towards not being part of a couple on a weekend night, a significant source of loneliness during adolescence (Larson 1999). Debates centre on the relative importance of personal and situational factors but interactionists consider loneliness as a product of both to some degree.

Adolescence

Adolescence has been conceptualised as a time of upheaval, and whilst convincing evidence refutes this generalisation (Schaffer, 1996); it remains socially-situated as a time of change, with young people balancing continued dependence on adults with increasing desire for independence. Adolescent loneliness has been consistently explored as a function of peer-relationships (excluding family relationships or demographic variables, Uruk and Demir, 2003). Friendship experiences in adolescence are widely recognised as meaningful (extensively linked with well-being and social adjustment, Hartup and Stevens 1997) however this project will additionally explore other factors that could enhance understanding of loneliness. As discussed earlier, adolescent friendship experiences are increasingly mediated by technology.

DMC and Adolescence

Adolescents are technologically adept (Buckingham, 2002) and demonstrate an increased need for peer-interactions (Schaffer, 1996). Friendship is inevitably embedded in context and it is not known if DMC strengthens existing friendships, allows formation of new friendships or enables transient relationships (Chen and Miller, 2004). Considerable evidence (Holloway and Valentine, 2003) suggests adolescents primarily use DMC with existing friends, however little is known about how this affects friendships, and therefore experiences of loneliness. This is the focus of the first aim of this study; exploring the effect of DMC on loneliness.

There have been valuable studies of CMC and mobile telephone use e.g. Madell and Muncer (2007) reported that young people, aged 18-20 years, particularly appreciated the control over interactions DMC afforded. However, increased availability of Broadband (Dutton et al, 2005), technological developments including mixed-media communication, and increasingly widespread use of webcams and online games consoles, renders much research based on single media communication inadequate. Furthermore, many adolescent relationships rely on interactions utilising a variety of media (Livingstone and Bober, 2005).

Concerns regarding CMC interactions have focused upon the 'narrow bandwidth' permitted by textual exchanges (Chan and Cheng, 2004), with concurrent potential for misunderstanding. However, the enthusiasm with which young people have adopted DMC suggests that they find it satisfactory, at least to some degree.

DMC and Loneliness

Gross (2004) collected data from 261, 7th and 10th grade American children (aged 12 and 15 years respectively) when investigating relationships between CMC and well-being. A structured four-day journal supplemented quantitative information about Internet usage, and initial measures of well-being (including social support, depression, social anxiety and loneliness). The highly-structured journals included time spent in various after school activities and shortened measures of loneliness and social anxiety (based on the school day).

Gross found no associations between Internet use and measures of well-being but noted some participants (5%) spent relatively extensive time online game-playing. These, two girls and twelve boys, exerted a strong statistical bias, until when excluded from analysis; overall patterns of Internet use were determined not to be gender-differentiated. Unfortunately, there are no details of consideration of measures of well-being for this group of heavy-users although it has been suggested elsewhere that lonely adolescents who use avoidant coping strategies offline use similar strategies online, including gaming (Seepersand, 2004).

Gross's meticulously reported study had significant limitations when considering social interaction and CMC. There were no reported attempts to seek information such as 'did participants meet friends in online games?' There was also no indication of restrictions on Internet activities but, from the perspective of this project, the most significant limitation was that, as in many investigations of loneliness, Gross's measures assessed loneliness at school, despite Internet use taking place at home.

Finally, whilst Gross acknowledges the relevance of qualitative data, there was no qualitative dimension addressing young people experiences of well-being. Gross relied, as do many researchers, on self-reported but highly-structured, quantitative data.

Quantitative Research Regarding Loneliness in Young People

The investigation of loneliness in young people has principally used measurement tools dominated by school-peer-relationships. Given the

theoretical frameworks regarding loneliness described previously (focusing attention on a multiplicity of relationships) this approach, whilst informative, has serious limitations.

Marcoen and Brumagne (1985) designed a loneliness assessment tool (tested with 393 Belgian participants aged 10-14 years) that innovatively considered parental relationships in addition to school-based social-networks. It sought highly-structured data; 28 items (16 related to peer-loneliness) using a Likert-scale. Items were designed to obtain subjective perspectives, e.g. *'I feel that nobody cares about me'*. Additionally, Marcoen and Brumagne utilised a Dutch adaptation of the Syracuse Scales of Social Relations, determining participants' first comfort-figures and perceived social-sensitivity.

Significant gender differences were apparent; boys (50.3%) identified mothers as first-choice comfort-figures more frequently than did girls (29.4%). Girls (30.8%), more often than boys (9.5%), explicitly referred to both parents, while friends were identified as first comfort-figures by 20.7% of boys and 28.1% of girls. Comfort-figures other than parents and school-friends were excluded from consideration. Marcoen and Brumagne concluded boys felt lonelier than did girls with respect to parental relationships. This is noteworthy: given that girls have reported higher levels of loneliness using peer-related scales (Koenig and Abrams, 1999), boys' experiences of loneliness may have been inadvertently neglected.

Neither age nor sex differences were found in the peer-loneliness measurements however, parent-related-loneliness reduced in seventh-grade

participants (in Belgium this represents the first year of senior school). This supports the assertion that young people become less dependent on parental relationships after starting senior school, or reaching early adolescence. It should be noted that whilst this literature review argues for a multidimensional approach to understanding loneliness, there is substantial evidence (e.g. Kupersmidt et al. 1999) supporting Marcoen and Brumagne's findings that for adolescents, peer-relationships are the most significant in determining loneliness.

Marcoen and Brumagne's methodology addresses some criticisms made of other measurement tools by including parental relationships and subjective self-reports, but many criticisms associated with quantitative research in social-psychology remain. As Asher and Paquette (2003) comment, quantitative rating scales have limited value for understanding loneliness, where beliefs and expectations about friendships must inevitably affect experiences.

Interview Research into Loneliness in Young People

Chipuer (2004) conducted a 61 participant study combining the Loneliness and Social Dissatisfaction Scale (a 24-item Likert-scored scale assessing loneliness developed by Asher, Hymel, and Renshaw, 1984) and interviews, asking '*what does being lonely mean to you?*' with 9-11 year olds. The interviews are described as unstructured but unfortunately reported details are sparse.

Coding of interview transcripts resulted in identification and description of three mutually exclusive domains relating to loneliness; deficits in social relationships, distressing emotions, and references to self. Most participants (92%) provided explanations in the social domain, 61% in the emotional domain and 23% in the references to self domain; 67% referred to all three. Only 18% described loneliness as 'being alone', demonstrating these young children usually distinguished loneliness from aloneness.

A critical finding was that participants assigned causes for loneliness including self-perceived weaknesses. This is important as, in adults, internal stable attributions characterise lonely-depressives (Qualter and Munn, 2002). Furthermore, in the context of considering multi-dimensional approaches, almost 10% of participants did not refer to social relationships, indicating loneliness is perceived by young people as not necessarily consequential to poor social relationships. Chipuer did not report whether parental relationships were included within social relationships.

Hymel et al. (1999) allege that one significant limitation of childhood loneliness scales is that development has been guided by the presuppositions of researchers (often based on research with adults). In semi-structured interviews, (recorded and transcribed) with 132 children aged 8–13 years in Canada they asked '*what does loneliness mean?*', '*what kinds of things make a person feel lonely?*' and '*what kinds of things have made you feel lonely?*' to elicit descriptions of loneliness (citing their own study, Hayden et al. 1988).

These questions obtained narrative responses, based on real and hypothetical experiences. Thematic analysis supported the hypothesis that children's loneliness is a multi-dimensional phenomenon and identified three distinct dimensions; affective (the emotional character of loneliness), cognitive (incorporating participants' appraisals of relationships), and interpersonal situations giving rise to loneliness. These are similar to the domains later identified by Chipuer (2004).

In contrast to other studies, Hymel et al's writing contains many quotations from participants, including extraordinarily evocative metaphors (e.g., '*they feel like they're in a corner*' and '*like you're the only one on the moon*') supporting Qualter and Munn's (2002) claim that young people can both recognise, and describe, loneliness. This claim is noteworthy and underpins the project described in the following chapters.

Summary

Evidence has been presented suggesting that understanding the experience of loneliness in young people is critical. It is suggested rapidly changing contexts, particularly regarding DMC, might have a significant impact on young people's relationships, subsequently affecting loneliness. Possible theoretical contributions to understanding loneliness in young people have been briefly described and this project will re-consider these in the light of young people's descriptions of loneliness. The next chapter will discuss the phenomenological approach guiding this project before the procedures used to collect and analyse data are outlined.

Chapter Four: Methodological Considerations

The previous chapter traced changes in approaches to studying loneliness in young people by examining some studies that have informed this project both methodologically and theoretically. It is suggested understanding of the lived-experience of loneliness would be enhanced by asking young people to describe these using a qualitative approach. This chapter will develop the constructivist phenomenological approach introduced in Chapter One, but first it should be noted that although the previous chapter discussed adolescents as an homogenous group, it is acknowledged that eliciting young people's experiential tales infers that all young people are not the same (Greene and Hill 2005). Despite the terminology (e.g. adolescents) used to structure the literature review this project focuses on individual experiences and respect for these underpins the investigation.

Constructivist phenomenology

Phenomenological research is ideally suited to exploring lived-experiences; van Manen suggests hermeneutic phenomenologies:

"...discover aspects of or qualities that make a phenomenon what it is and without which the phenomenon could not be what it is" (van Manen 1990:107).

This project will explore the qualities of the lived-experience of loneliness as described by young people responding to a semi-structured questionnaire.

Laverty (2003) traces the philosophical (primarily from the Frankfurt school) origins of phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology.

Phenomenology (descriptive phenomenology), draws on Husserl, seeking to articulate an experience from the perspective of participants. Heidegger, a hermeneutic phenomenologist, rejected Husserl's focus on 'understanding beings or phenomena' instead concentrating on what Lavery encapsulates as "*the situated meaning of the human in the world*" (2003:7). Ergo, the hermeneutic phenomenologist considers context, deliberately situating him or herself within the research. Both positions indicate that there is a reality to comprehend.

Gadamer, usually described as an hermeneutic phenomenologist (Lavery 2003) but also as constructivist (Dowling, 2007), develops Heidegger's philosophy. He is explicit about how collection and analysis of data is affected by contextual factors, arguing that reports (both from participants and later the researcher) are constructed by culturally framed discourses. Lavery quotes Gadamer, "*language is the universal medium in which understanding occurs. Understanding occurs in interpreting*" (2003:10). Whilst endorsing the responsibility of the researcher to make him or herself visible, he suggests the researcher is not autonomous: discourses (e.g. the academic discourse required for successful completion of MRes projects) constrain autonomy. However, Gadamer, unlike hard-line constructionists (e.g. Potter and Hepburn 2005), does not deny any representative value in self-reported data. Instead he emphasises the importance of considering how representations are constructed, rejecting any goal of portraying reality, and aiming for increasing understanding. By judicious examination and construction of discourse, it is possible, he suggests, to obtain understandings of which we can be reasonably confident, phronesis (practical wisdom) offering insight and

understanding as part of a dialogic activity

[<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/gadamer/> accessed 15/08/2007]. These 'understandings' are perceived as an ongoing process of enlightenment not an end-product of deliberation. This is a powerful argument for reflexivity as an integral feature of constructivist phenomenology, and helps explain why prior commitment and involvement can facilitate, rather than hinder, understanding.

Gadamer rejects both positivist and humanistic (such as expounded by Heidegger) methodologies, rejecting the possibility of uncovering 'truths'. He suggests that representations are "*the creation of the conceptual scheme of the interpreter*" (from Hekman, 1983:101). This conceptual scheme is affected integrally by the 'prejudices' of the interpreter, prejudices guide exploration and enlighten understandings. According to Gadamer, understandings are a '*fusion of horizons*', the historical horizon brought to the research and a new horizon of understanding constructed by reflection throughout the research process. Some of the prejudices, or historical horizons, that have guided this research will be alluded to in the concluding chapters when how to explicate new horizons attained by consideration of participants' reported experiences gleaned from future research will be considered.

Self-reports are themselves interpretations (perhaps unconscious), phenomenological research is inevitably interpretation of interpretations (Levering 2006). It is difficult to distinguish the extent to which discourses shape interactions and vice versa questioning traditional perspectives on

reliability and validity. Whilst reliability is not sought for the data obtained by this project, validity, i.e. trustworthy reporting of interpretations, is an aspiration. Gadamer suggests (from Lavery, 2003) research is only complete when the researcher has returned to participants with interpretations, adding another level of co-construction. This is impossible within the timetable for this project but is something to consider when planning future research.

It is appropriate to comment on the quantitative data included in this project, which superficially appears at odds with the paradigm described here.

However, the post-positivist paradigm (Phillips and Burbules, 2000) uses statistical data, not to represent immutable fact, or 'truth', but to represent something which is 'known', at that time, in that context (note the similarity with Gadamer's position). The assumption that statistics have representative value is rejected; instead, they are considered to offer interpretations assisting construction of understandings. Statistical data regarding availability and usage of DMC, and relationships between variables potentially associated with loneliness, will offer some insight into young people's experiences. The 'numbers' derived are accorded little status in terms of explanatory power, instead associations suggested statistically are merely one 'tool' (van Manen, 1990) informing a constructivist phenomenological understanding of young people's lived-experiences of loneliness.

Data Collection

Description of data collection and analysis are typically part of the procedural chapter, but choices are discussed here ensuring congruence with

constructivist phenomenology. Weiss (1973) emphasised the importance of focusing on individual experiences of loneliness advocating unstructured interviews. He recommended presenting participants with pictures to elicit descriptions, a technique noted to be effective in obtaining narratives from research participants (Harper, 2002).

Drawbacks of interview methods include; the young person might feel intimidated (Hood et al., 1996), or in contrast, wish to help the interviewer by reporting what they *think* the researcher wants (Mahon et al., 1996). Additionally, one-off interviews present minimal opportunity to form mutually responsive relationships facilitating work with young people (Hardup, 2004). Written descriptions might offer an easier route for some young people to describe their experiences.

A semi-structured questionnaire is a pragmatic choice for data collection, enabling the collection of quantitative data assessing usage of DMC and permitting elicitation (some using photographs) of written descriptions of lived-experiences. van Manen (1990) describes the use of written self-reports from young people suggesting these are amenable to phenomenological analysis.

Thematic Analysis

There are, as van Manen (1990) comments, as many different phenomenological procedures as there are phenomenologists, but many utilise some form of thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) provide a detailed guide suitable for novice researchers, delineated in the following

chapter, but here one central aspect of their approach is described. They criticise terminology frequently used in qualitative reports, e.g. themes being 'found' or 'emerging' from the data. They argue vehemently that thematic analysis is not a passive process, the researcher's role in developing (not identifying) themes is pivotal to discussion. They urge explicitness about the influence of the literature on the development of themes, stressing analysis is not a single stage, but occurs throughout the research process. As van Manen (1990) suggests, themes developed are not products, but *tools* for understanding loneliness.

Conclusion

The use of a semi-structured questionnaire, providing both quantitative and qualitative data, is congruent with a constructivist phenomenological approach, when Gadamer's suggestion of assisting phronesis, rather than 'producing' accurate representations, of loneliness is accepted. Thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke, is rigorous and congruent with the constructivist phenomenological approach.

Chapter Five – Design and Procedure

Design

A semi-structured questionnaire (see Appendix 1), containing seven sections (A-G) was designed to obtain descriptions from young people of the experience of being lonely and quantitative data about usage of DMC. Design was underpinned by the assumptions that loneliness is universal and that young people can describe it.

Two major methodological considerations framed development, namely consideration of the potential for questions to distress participants and the time required for completion. In conjunction with the teacher (who administered the questionnaire), a maximum time of twenty minutes was set. Theoretical considerations focused on fulfilling the research aims by encouraging 'rich' descriptions of the experience of loneliness. Close attention was paid to the phrasing of questions in recognition of the constructivist phenomenological approach dictating examination of the construction of self-reports.

Questions about DMC Usage

Questions in Section A, requiring yes/no answers, were based on those previously used in large-scale studies (e.g. the Oxford Internet Survey (Dutton et al., 2005 and Livingstone and Bober's (2005) survey of DMC usage amongst 9-19 year olds). Adaptation was required on two counts. Both

surveys were administered before widespread adoption of the current variety of forms of DMC necessitating additions. The Oxford questions (used with people over 14 years) were used in face-to-face interviews; use of these in their entirety would be impossible. Section B focused on duration and frequency of Internet access in recognition of the persuasiveness of the stimulation and displacement hypotheses, as outlined in Chapter One.

Section C addressed the first aim, exploring the relationship between reported levels of loneliness (see also Section G) and forms of DMC preferred. It asked participants to indicate forms of DMC used and rank preferences.

Section D sought contextual information to frame interpretation of experiences, by assessing out-of-school activities, using a Likert-scale based on information obtained by Gross, 2004.

The yes/no and tick box questions were completed thoroughly by most participants. Using the Internet was assessed twice (Sections B and D) and few discrepancies were noted within individual responses. Unfortunately, a significant minority of participants (some participants not attempting it at all whilst others provided muddled responses) poorly completed the ranking in Section C. In future, an alternative to ranking, or clarified explanation, should be sought.

Questions About Loneliness

Sections E and F were designed to generate narratives of the lived-experience of loneliness for thematic analysis. Different elements of the experience were sought using prompts to elicit causative factors and coping strategies. Questions reported in the experiential research available were consulted (Hymel et al., 1999, Chipuer, 2004). Prompts also served as encouragement to explore the experience in writing, in the absence of an interviewer's cues.

Following Weiss's (1973) suggestion regarding the use of pictures, Section E provided photographs with instructions designed to enable participants to describe the experience of loneliness in the third-person. This appeared to facilitate responses from participants, who might have felt uncomfortable sharing personal emotional experiences with a stranger. Two photographs were used, one of a girl in a crowded playground and one of a boy alone, ensuring that both sexes and that 'being alone' and feeling lonely when not alone, were represented.

In Section F, participants were asked to write a short story about a time when they felt lonely. Some structure was suggested, e.g. '*what happened?*', and '*how did you feel?*' Further questions invited participants to explain why they feel lonely, and what subsequently makes them feel better. The aim was to produce concrete questions about essentially abstract and/or difficult to describe experiences. It was clearly explained that spelling, grammar and

handwriting were unimportant. Many responses were brief, the boys' more so than the girls', nonetheless they generated a wealth of data.

Finally, Section G elicited subjective assessment of concepts considered relevant to loneliness, including relationships and confidence using a Likert-scale. Analysis provided correlations between variables, but these were qualitative questions, providing a vehicle for subjective self-assessment of variables.

The questions in Section G included four domains of loneliness: at home, at school, when with other people, and when alone. Relationships considered included parents (and siblings although this question was later rejected as ambiguous and excluded from the reported analysis), friendships within and outside school, and having a 'good friend'. Self-confidence was assessed by asking how good participants were at making new friends, and how confident they felt with people they know and strangers. Participants were also asked if they had friends of the opposite sex, on reflection, the wording was not suitable for the Likert-scale. Again, these results have not been discussed in the next chapter although all correlations were calculated (see Appendix 2).

Some questions require reworking for follow-up study, e.g., the 'parents' question included qualitative and quantitative dimensions. In future, it would be informative to split these, in this questionnaire physically absent parents (e.g. working full-time), would generate similar responses as emotionally absent parents.

This data was not sufficiently rigorous to be subjected to factor analysis. In future designing questions with a view to using factor analysis might facilitate assessment of how crucial certain variables are to understanding loneliness.

The questionnaire was piloted with a single 13-year-old boy, and discussed at length with the class teacher, resulting in slight amendments to clarify questions and to control the time required for completion. Finally, it was administered following consultation with my supervisor.

Participants

A secondary school in Cambridgeshire provided the environment for recruiting 41 young people (21 boys, 20 girls) aged 12-13 years from two mixed-ability forms. They were predominantly white, and from an urban catchment area which is relatively affluent in comparison with other South Midland areas. The questionnaires were completed on the last day of the school term.

Data Collection

The teacher, having been fully briefed, explained to potential participants that they sometimes hear about research findings about young people in News programmes and they were being asked to be some of the young people contributing to such research. It was explained that this researcher wanted to find out how young people use different types of media for communicating because they might use them in different ways to adults. The researcher was also interested in finding out about young peoples' friendships; stress was

placed on the importance of hearing from young people themselves, not adults erroneously assuming that they know about young people. The aim of this introduction was dual fold; to emphasise the respect accorded to participants' responses and not to predicate loneliness at the expense of relationships. The teacher was asked to use 'relationship' in preference to 'friendship' to prevent convergence of responses but actually used 'friendships'; however there was still extensive acknowledgment of other relationships within participants' narratives.

The twenty minutes available for completion of the questionnaires was sufficient for most participants; four did not finish on time and three (voluntarily) remained in the classroom to complete. Others may have found it difficult to write as much as they wanted although most finished within 15 minutes. Participants were not instructed to complete the questionnaire in silence but did so, presumably because of the classroom environment. The teacher reported minimal communication during completion suggesting that answers genuinely represent individual views.

Analysis

The quantitative data was initially analysed to produce percentage frequencies of responses, facilitating comparison between 'lonely' and 'less lonely' participants.

For analysis of Section G the Likert-scale was converted to numerical ranking, ('all of the time' = 5, 'most of the time' = 4, 'sometimes' = 3, 'rarely' = 2, 'never'

= 1). Spearman's Rho was used to calculate correlations between variables (reported frequency and duration of Internet use). This non-parametric test of correlation was selected because data was ranked and potentially not normally distributed. Two-tailed levels of significance were used throughout, as the direction of potential relationships was not predicted. Only correlations at the $p < 0.05$ or $p < 0.01$ level of significance are reported. All correlations are reported in Appendix 2.

Qualitative Analysis

Individual questionnaires were written up as case studies (see Appendix 3) including the quantitative data (depicted in words), and all narrative responses (in red). This provided the first stage of the qualitative analysis, akin to transcribing interview tapes. It also provided an overview of individuals that proved invaluable in later interpretation of responses.

Painstaking thematic analysis of the qualitative data proceeded using Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines (see Table 1).

Table 1: Phases of Thematic Analysis

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

(Reproduced from Braun and Clarke, 2006:87)

The early stages of the thematic analysis, equating to initial coding, can be seen (unedited) in blue type in the case studies. This was followed by the development (and re-development) of themes, with a tally kept of incidence, separated according to sex (see Appendix 4). Some participants mentioned a theme several times, others not at all. These frequencies did not assess significance but centrality and universality. As characterised by Braun and Clarke (2006) themes were not mutually exclusive; it was deemed

unnecessary (and undesirable) to eradicate inconsistencies and tensions between different aspects of loneliness within the responses.

Ethical considerations

Ethical guidelines consulted throughout the research process included British Psychological Society's (2006) 'Ethical Principles for Research Involving Human Participants' [accessed via Intranet 15/02/07], National Children's Bureau (2003) and the O.U.'s 'Code of Practice for Research and those Conducting Research' [accessed via Intranet 15/02/07]. Principles including protection from harm, openness and integrity, respect, confidentiality and informed consent underpinned design and process. Consent and confidentiality concerns required especial consideration.

Consent was negotiated with the Headteacher; he asserted that securing written parental consent was not appropriate in following procedure required by his school. Gaining informed consent from the young people themselves was a requisite, in accordance with guidelines cited above.

The participants were Year 8 (ages 12–13) and informed as described earlier. They were invited to withdraw from the whole, or part, of the study at any point. This was apparently effective, as some participants declined to answer some questions, and one ensured that his data was unusable. I am not convinced they would have felt able in a classroom (public) situation to withdraw from participation at all, but am reasonably certain from the responses that participants only answered the questions they wished. The

participants were assured of anonymity and projected use of the data as a foundation for future research was discussed

Participants were asked if they would like to be informed of results in September. An overwhelming majority requested this, reinforcing the impression of cooperative participation gleaned from the excellent responses from these young people.

The teacher is currently negotiating a reward for all participants, probably credit points. One of the early form times at the start of the next school year will include some treats (soft drinks and biscuits) by way of a personal thank-you to the two classes involved. This recompense will, I hope, reinforce the respect accorded to the young people's time and effort.

An additional ethical consideration arose: 5 of the 21 boys and 1 of the 20 girls, suggested 'self-harm' as a consequence of loneliness (responding to the photograph of the boy), and a further boy mentioned 'slitting wrists'. This was an unexpected, disturbing, association to find in such a significant minority of respondents. Ethical guidelines indicate that such disclosures must be revealed to a responsible adult. Therefore, I have discussed this with the teacher. She was aware that one student self-harms, but believed none of the other students knew about this. She dismissed the possibility of collaboration and will bear this issue in mind next term. Principles of confidentiality were thus broken, as per the guidelines with reference to the protection of minors, but anonymity was not breached.

Ethics approval from the University HPME Committee was granted by Chair's action, retrospectively.

Chapter Six – Interpretation of Responses

In keeping with a constructivist phenomenological approach and the assumption that associations might exist between usage of DMC and experiences of loneliness for young people, interpretations from different sections of the questionnaire are blended in this chapter. All quantitative data was carefully examined but only that pertinent to stated aims and questions will be reported.

The discussion chapter will frame interpretations in the literature and address the final research question. Early analysis indicated considerable divergence between boys and girls, in terms of usage of DMC and variables associated with loneliness. Presenting results from the whole group would disguise differences so responses are usually discussed for boys and girls separately. However calculations were completed for the whole group, facilitating later comparison with other research.

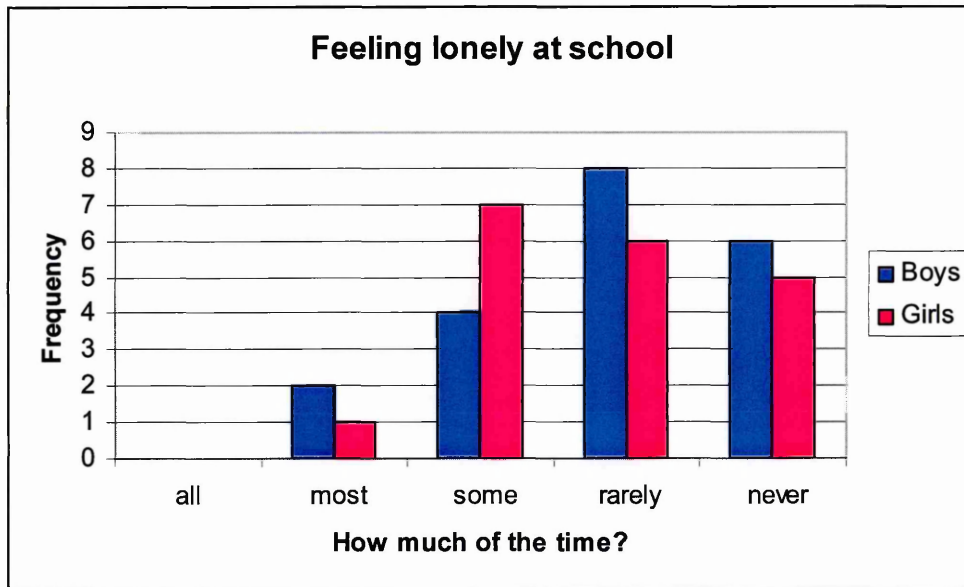
The first portion of this chapter is focused on the four domains of loneliness investigated in Section G: 'feeling lonely at school', 'feeling lonely at home', 'feeling lonely when alone' and 'feeling lonely when with other people'. Other information is organised within these, friendships are discussed within the 'lonely at school' section and DMC usage in the 'lonely at home'. Secondly, thematic analysis of narrative responses from Sections E and F will be described. Finally, consideration of research questions will conclude this chapter.

Five (from 21) boys and five (from 20) girls reported feeling lonely in one or more domains, either 'all' or 'most of the time' (24% overall). When young people throughout this report are referred to as 'lonely' this is the criteria that identifies them. Four boys and two girls reported low levels of loneliness, indicated by responding 'rarely' or 'never' in each of the four domains. Mean responses varied little between boys and girls however; the girls demonstrated larger standard deviations within variables indicating a wider spread of responses. All information obtained are self-reports, it is essential to bear this in mind when considering interpretations outlined here.

Feeling Lonely at School

Only 5% of participants feel lonely at school 'all' or 'most' of the time, boys being slightly more likely to report 'rarely' or 'never' feeling lonely at school (see Figure 1). Overall, responses were very similar between boys and girls but correlations relating loneliness at school to other variables revealed different patterns of associations.

Figure 1: Feeling Lonely at School



For boys, feeling lonely at school was not significantly correlated with any other variable. For girls, decreased loneliness at school was associated with feeling that they had plenty of friends, both at school ($r_s=-0.724, p<0.01$) and outside school ($r_s=-0.621; p<0.01$), feeling confident with people they know ($r_s=-0.661; p<0.01$), and being good at making new friends ($r_s=-0.457; p<0.05$). Likewise, only the girls reported significant associations between feeling lonely at school, when with other people ($r_s=0.742; p<0.01$) and at home ($r_s=0.553; p<0.05$). It is worth emphasizing that the girls reporting increased loneliness at school did not report having fewer friends, they reported feeling as though they had plenty of friends, less of the time. These are subjective responses, reflecting qualities not quantities, and this applies throughout this chapter.

Feeling lonely at school for boys is not related to other variables; girls' responses demonstrated clear associations between friendships, confidence

and, loneliness with others and at home. Mindful that many 'measures' of loneliness for young people have concentrated on school-friend relationships responses to the questions about friendships are examined in more detail next.

Friendship Data

Frequencies of responses were very similar, two boys reported 'sometimes' having friends in school, and one 'rarely' having friends in school; of the girls, three reported 'sometimes' having friends in school and one 'rarely' having friends at school. The question asked "*Do you feel as though you have plenty of friends at school?*", it is possible to suggest boys and girls are similarly happy with the number of school-friends but not that they have similar school-friend networks.

For girls, having networks of friends (in or out of school) demonstrated correlations with 11 others variables, for boys only five such relationships were identified. In contrast for boys having a 'good friend' was correlated with three variables: friends in school ($r_s=0.458;p<0.05$), out of school ($r_s=0.610;p<0.01$) and feeling lonely at home ($r_s=0.521;p<0.05$), whilst for girls having a 'good friend' was not associated with any other variable.

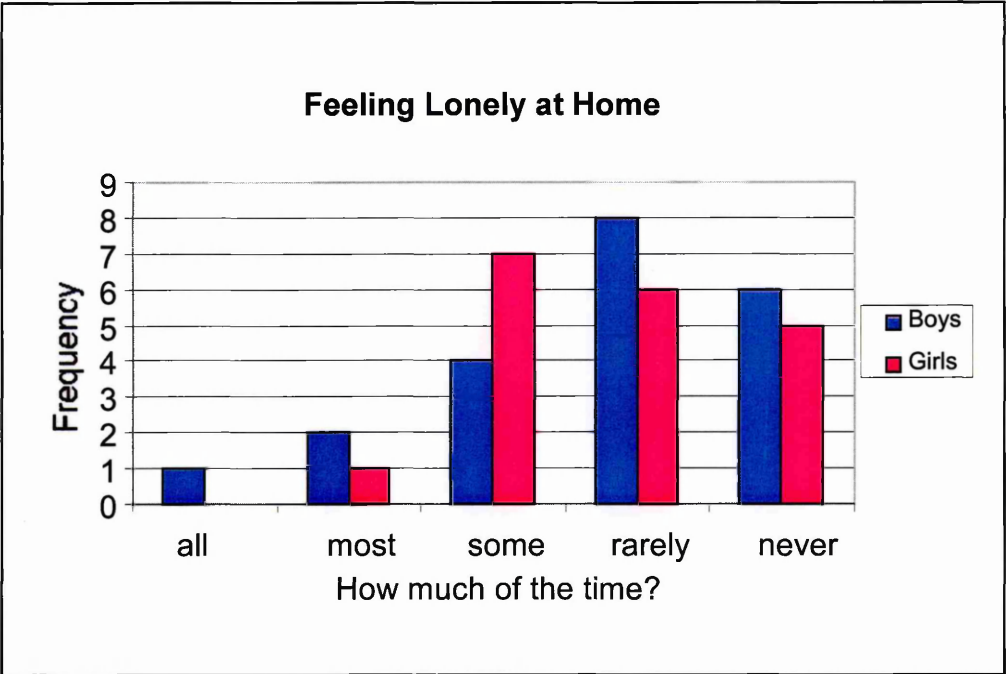
Individual, dyadic peer relationships appear more consequential for boys rather than girls but it is possible that there are gender differences in the perception rather than significance of friendships. The label 'good friend' may

not mean the same thing to boys and girls, the qualitative data shows that boys refer to 'a good mate', girls refer to best friends'.

Feeling Lonely at Home

14% of boys and 4% of girls feel lonely at home 'all' or 'most' of the time, 10% overall (see Figure 2). Again, the relationships identified between this variable and others differed markedly between boys and girls.

Figure 2: Feeling Lonely at Home

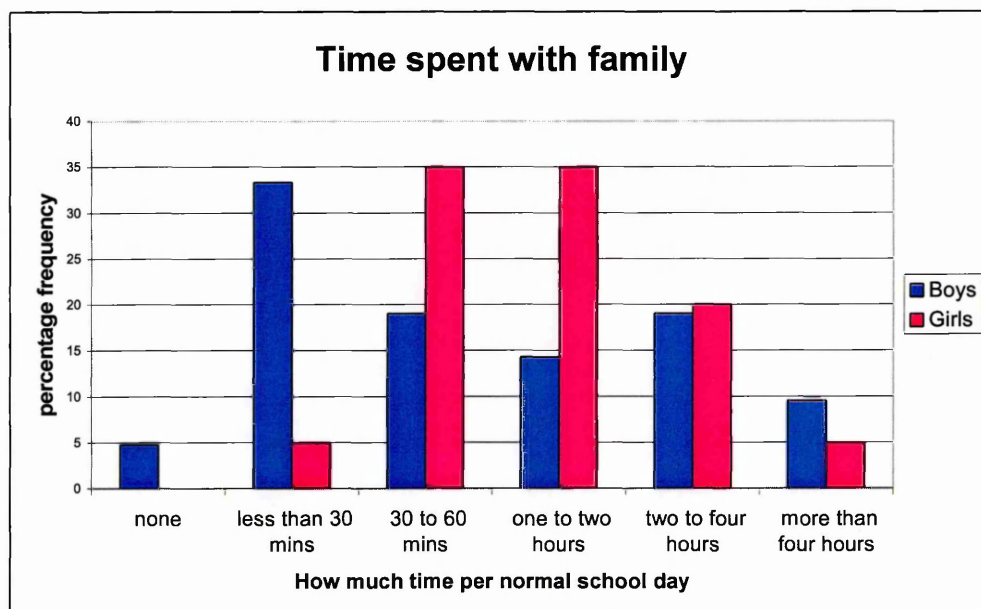


For boys, feeling lonely at home was associated with poorer parental relationships ($r_s=-0.568;p<0.01$). Girls reported no such association between loneliness at home and parental relationships. Being lonely at home is associated, again for just for boys, with having a good friend ($r_s=0.521;p<0.05$)

and increased loneliness when alone ($r_s=0.458;p<0.01$). In contrast, girls reported two correlations with feeling lonely at home, namely increased loneliness at school ($r_s=0.553;p<0.01$) and reduced confidence with people they know ($r_s=-0.475;p<0.01$).

Boys feel lonely at home slightly more than girls and spend less time with their families on a normal school day (see figure 3)

Figure 3: Time Spent with Family

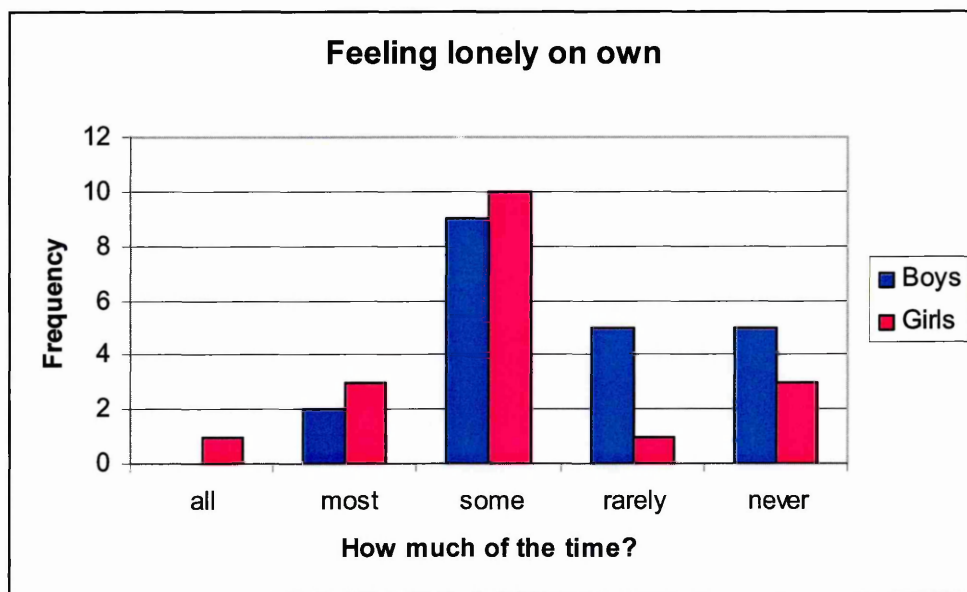


Boys reporting poor parental relationships and not having a good friend are more likely to feel lonely at home. If they feel lonely at home, they are likely to feel lonely when alone. No significant association was identified between having a 'good friend' and good parental relationships; whilst dyadic relationships appear important to boys there may be different mechanisms involved.

Feeling Lonely When Alone

Responses are similar between boys and girls, with boys slightly less likely to feel lonely when alone (see Figure 4). Overall, 15% of participants feel lonely when alone 'all' or 'most' of the time.

Figure 4: Feeling Lonely When Alone



Girls reporting better relationships with their parents were more likely to feel lonely when on their own ($r_s=0.487;p<0.01$). This was not the case for boys, who did however demonstrate a correlation between feeling lonely on their own and loneliness at home ($r_s=0.458;p<0.05$). It could be suggested that differing usage of DMC affects boys' and girls' experiences of feeling lonely at home and this will be examined next.

Internet Usage and Loneliness

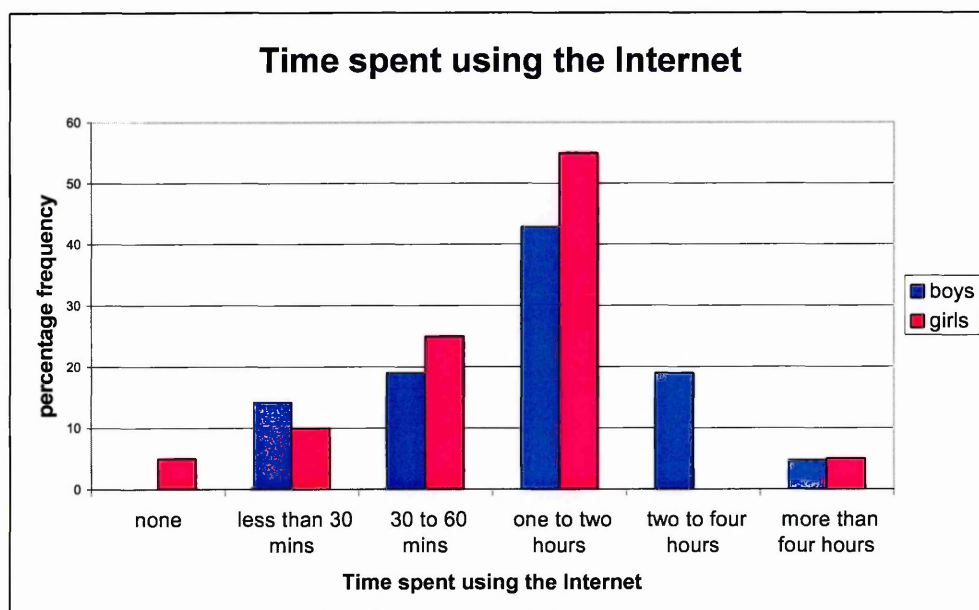
Participant B1, when asked what relieves loneliness replied, "*what makes me feel better is playing on the Internet/PlayStation or IM with my friends*". This was the only direct evidence from this project about how DMC affects loneliness but some evidence was obtained about relationships between Internet use and loneliness.

Participants were asked (Section A) if they had Internet access at home, and all boys responded 'yes'. Examining responses to other questions (using case studies) ascertained that two of the three girls who replied 'no' to this question, did report having Internet access (via a games-console and a mobile telephone). Considering this, 98% reported having Internet access at home and 67% of boys reported having access in their bedrooms, compared with only 25% of girls. More girls (40%) than boys (29%) reported parental limitations of Internet access. No information about these restrictions (e.g. duration of use or filtering controls) was obtained. It is acknowledged that participants might not be aware of certain software restrictions being in place.

The girl without Internet access (G5) and the girl with limited access via a mobile telephone (G20) were among the five girls identified as being 'lonely'. The only boy who reported not having a mobile telephone (B21) was one of the five 'lonely' boys. Clearly, the sample size is too small to draw conclusions but the 'lonely' young people included those few with relatively limited access to DMC.

From the responses obtained to Section B, boys accessed the Internet more often than girls did (13 boys and 5 girls reporting three or more days per week). Duration of use (see Figure 5) revealed a similar pattern with more boys spending longer periods online.

Figure 5: Time Spent using the Internet



The one girl (G12) reporting using Internet for more than four hours daily (from section D which was more comprehensively completed than B) was one of the 5 'lonely' girls, but the one boy (B18) reporting this high usage was not one of the five 'lonely' boys. No girls reported using the Internet for between 2-4 hours, of the four boys in this category, two were among the 'lonely' group (B1, B19). However, one of these boys (B14) was one of four boys who never felt lonely and in the qualitative section he declared, "*I have never felt lonely*". There is some indication of an association between Internet use and loneliness but also some conflicting data. All participants using the Internet

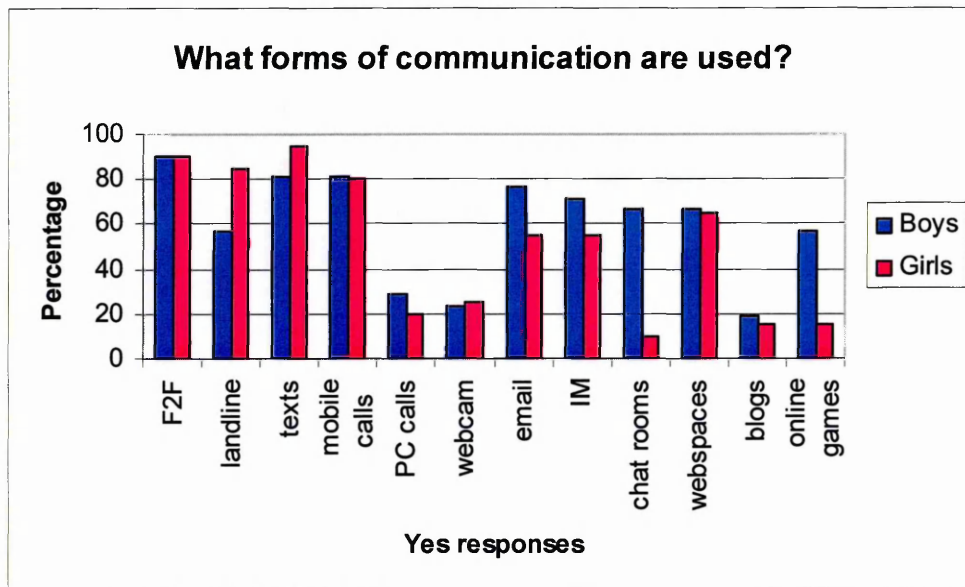
for more than two hours per school-day, also reported no parental limitations on usage, and all but one of the boys reported Internet access in their bedroom.

Whilst some 'lonely' young people spend longer online than those not identified as lonely, this does not manifest a casual relationship; lonely young people could use the Internet for social contact, alternatively Internet use (perhaps especially in bedrooms) might predispose towards loneliness. Furthermore, Internet use does not equate to communication.

Favoured Forms of DMC

Significant differences between boys and girls included greater use of chatrooms and online games by boys (see Figure 6), note; some online games include chatroom facilities. Boys use CMC more frequently than girls whilst girls reported texting more often than boys did but these differences are small.

Figure 6: Forms of DMC Used

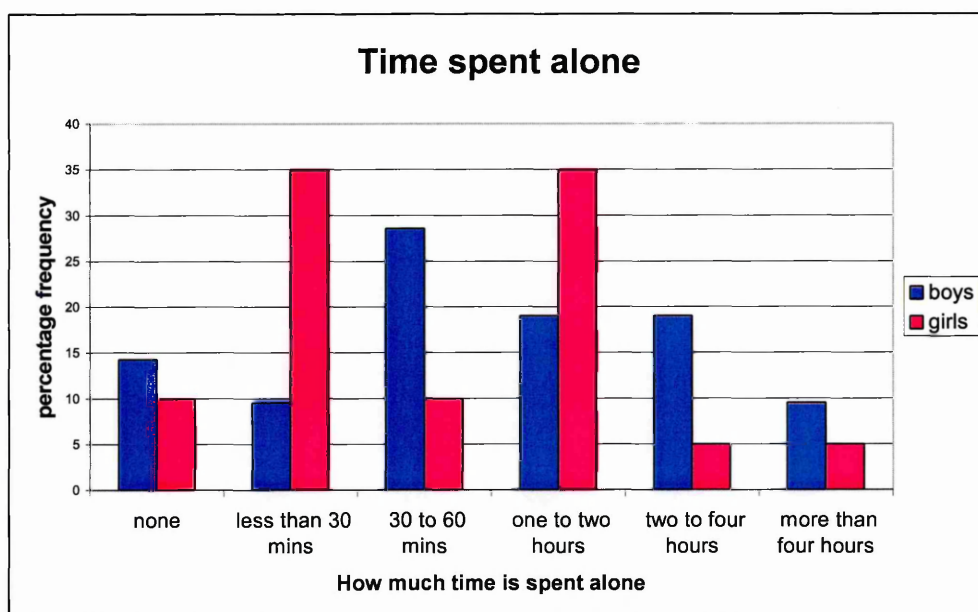


This sample contains few lonely participants, and the ranked data expressing preferences for different types of communication (Section C) was poorly completed (seven boys and four girls did not rank responses at all and many other responses were muddled) preventing identification of relationships between loneliness and DMC. Additionally, no significant relationships between loneliness and DMC were identified from the case studies. Clearer identification of online activities, with particular regard to CMC, would be an essential component of future research. Exploring which forms of DMC are used within different relationships would also enhance future understanding of the effects of DMC on the experience of loneliness.

Internet Use, Being Alone and Feeling Lonely

The amount of time spent alone, see Figure 7, (no evidence indicated whether this was imposed or chosen solitude) might be expected to be associated with young people feeling lonely when alone.

Figure 7: Time Spent Alone on a Normal School Day

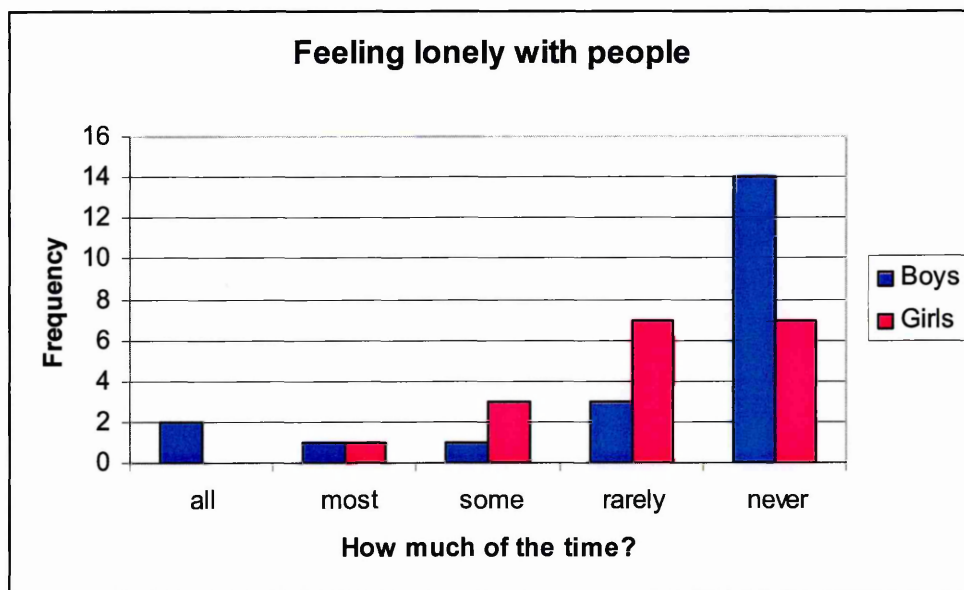


Boys reported spending longer periods alone, of the six boys who spent more than two hours alone on a normal school day; five of these had Internet access in their bedroom (in comparison with six of the 15 who spent less than two hours alone). One of the five girls with Internet access in their bedroom reported spent more than two hours alone (G12); she also used the Internet for more than four hours per day. Of the six boys who spent more than two hours alone, three were 'lonely'; as was one of the two girls who spent more than 2 hours alone. Responses suggest a relationship between spending time alone and having Internet access in their bedrooms.

Feeling Lonely When With People

Boys feel lonely when with people more of the time, than did girls (see Figure 8) although numbers, are again, small.

Figure 8: Feeling Lonely with People



One of the two boys, who reported feeling lonely when with other people 'all' of the time, also felt lonely at school 'most' of the time (B1). The boy who felt lonely with other people 'sometimes', felt lonely at school 'sometimes' and at home 'always' (B2). It can be seen that examination of the case studies presents a different picture from the correlational data, by suggesting that boys may experience associations between feeling lonely in one domain, and another. B16, who reported feeling lonely when with people, 'all of the time', reported 'never' feeling lonely at school, 'rarely' at home or when on his own. When he was asked why he feels lonely he replies "I don't I've got good friends", and this anomalous response would have contributed (given this

small sample) to the lack of correlations noted between the four domains of loneliness for boys.

For boys no significant correlations linked being 'lonely with people' and any other variable. Whereas, girls who felt lonely with people more often were also less likely to feel as though they have plenty of friends at school ($r_s = -0.716; p < 0.01$), outside school ($r_s = -0.480; p < 0.05$) and feel less confident with people they know ($r_s = -0.628; p < 0.01$). Girls who felt lonely when with people were also more likely to feel lonely at school ($r_s = 0.742; p < 0.01$).

Boys felt lonely with other people more often than girls did, but for them this was not statistically associated with other factors, for girls it was significantly associated with having fewer friends at school, less confidence with people they know and experiencing loneliness at school. Examining individual case studies suggests some boys who feel lonely when with other people also feel lonely at other times, endorsing a need for a qualitative approach to uncover individual stories and experiences.

Loneliness, Parents, Friendships and Confidence

Variables from Section G were summed providing overall measures of loneliness (questions 6,7,8 and 9) satisfaction with friendships (questions 1,2 and 3) and parental relationships (question 4) and confidence (questions 10,11 and 12). Neither the 'sibling' nor the 'friends of the opposite sex' question was included in this analysis. Neither question was considered sufficiently precisely asked to include within these amalgamated variables.

The boys demonstrated only one significant correlation when aggregate scores were examined. They were less likely to feel lonely if they had a good relationship with their parents ($r_s=-0.609;p<0.01$).

No significant relationship was noted for the girls between reports of loneliness and parental relationships. But girls demonstrated three significant associations; decreased loneliness and having plenty of friends ($r_s=-0.564;p<0.01$), having plenty of friends was, in turn, associated with feeling confident ($r_s=0.512;p<0.01$). Similarly, increased loneliness was related to decreased confidence ($r_s =-0.552;p<0.01$) for girls.

For the girls there were clear associations between feeling as though they had friends, feeling lonely and being confident with other people. For boys, good parental relationships were associated with reporting less loneliness.

Summary of Four Domains

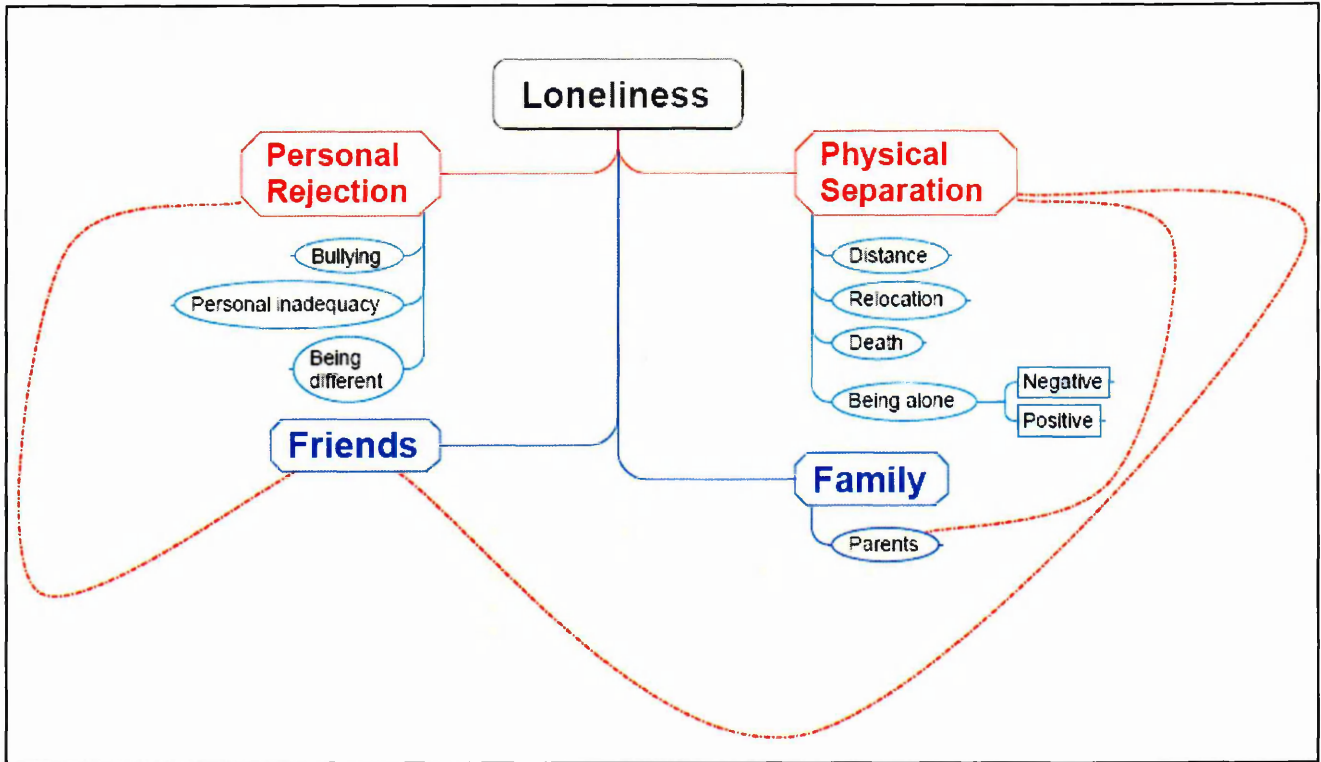
Boys demonstrated significant associations between decreased loneliness and a good relationship with their parents. In contrast, girls' reports of loneliness, friendships and confidence were associated. For girls, networks of social relationships were significant, whilst having a good friend was important for boys. For girls, reporting loneliness was related across domains, there was little evidence to suggest this was the case for boys. Limited evidence suggests that increased loneliness is associated with increased Internet use and decreased availability of different forms of DMC

Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Data

Unlike the analysis above, which considered the boys and girls as separate groups (with some reference to individual case studies), this stage of the analysis focused on individuals. The strong differences between the boys and girls described above were less apparent in the narrative data.

A summary of the themes developed is presented as a concept map (see Figure 9, followed by detailed descriptions of themes using quotations from participants. Themes developed, in keeping with the aim of understanding what loneliness 'is' for young people, encapsulate reported causes. Some interpretation of the palliative strategies outlined supplemented analysis. In the context of the theories described in the literature review, little use has been made of the emotions associated with loneliness within this schema. Nonetheless, the overwhelmingly negative connotations have been considered, and the few positive descriptions of 'being alone' were noted as offering additional means of considering the circumstances in which young people do feel lonely. Very few participants confused 'being alone' with 'feeling lonely'. All themes developed from many responses.

Figure 9: Concept Map of Themes Identified in Participants' Reports



Friends and Family

Friends and family were extensively described as preventing and alleviating loneliness. Friends were expressly implicated in actively rejecting participants. The relationships between friends and family (mostly parents but also siblings, cousins, aunts etc.) and themes identified as contributing to personal rejection and physical separation were not fully explored within the questionnaires (interview techniques would facilitate this in future studies).

Personal Rejection

The most powerful theme throughout was the feeling of personal rejection. This referred to being rejected by friends (no examples of parental rejection were described). Participants explained this using three sub-themes; whether it was the lonely person's fault, (personal inadequacy), e.g. *"I think she feels left out...because she doesn't socialise very well"* (B1), or due to being different e.g. *"I think I feel lonely because all of my friends are sporty at school but I'm not."* (B13). A powerful sub-theme identified as significantly contributing to personal rejection was bullying e.g., *"I felt lonely in years 4 and 5 when I was bullied for a short period of time I felt all alone"* (B12). Whilst this was sometimes related to both 'personal inadequacy' and 'being different' (usually associated with externally attributed causes), e.g., *"people may not play with her because she used thought of as weird"* (B10) this was not always the case, hence it has been accorded a separate heading in the concept map. This is an example of the themes not being mutually exclusive as is sometimes suggested to be a goal of thematic analysis; for these participants bullying was so strong a notion that not including it at this level would have negated their experience.

More girls than boys explicitly described being rejected by peers (reflecting the gender differences identified above), but it was present across both boys and girls. Rejection was always described in relation to peer-groups, but separation (the other major theme identified) was described in relation to both peer-groups and family, and was evenly spread between boys and girls.

Physical Separation

Many participants mentioned separation from parents e.g., B19 described feeling lonely *"because I don't spend much time with my parents"*. In many cases, it was difficult to determine whether it was separation from parents, or being home alone, that precipitated loneliness, but there was clear evidence of the parents being the comfort-figure of choice for a substantial minority of participants, including girls. In one case parental separation coincided with geographical relocation; *"I didn't want my parents too leave me in a place where I didn't know anyone."* (G13). Geographical relocation, primarily changing school, but also moving house, was a commonly identified antecedent (all participants started a new school within the past two years) for loneliness e.g. *"she may be new at the school and have no friends"* (B18). Here it appeared that both separation from existing friends (and family) and anxiety regarding the process and outcome of trying to make new friends were factors. Confidence was not a strong enough constituent to be developed as a separate theme although it was referred to, usually as part of the 'personal inadequacy' theme but also, as described, in relation to relocation.

Separation also included more permanent physical separation, including, on several occasions, death; *"I feel lonely sometimes because people have moved away or died so I can't fault them"* (G14) and geographical location, or distance, *"I sometimes feel lonely because my village is small my friends live far away from me"* (B10).

Whilst dimensions of rejection and separation form the basis of the thematic analysis there were other issues of note identified in the narratives.

Bidirectional Influences.

There was some evidence of loneliness resulting in a loss of confidence (and consequentially shyness) diminishing ability to make friends; confirming a bi-directional route of influence to and from loneliness; "*she feels sad, lonely, depressed. She hates herself. She wishes she was more popular and more confident. Right now she is really unconfident.*" (G17). This girl later describes being bullied herself, relating this to reduced confidence. Several other participants gave descriptions that indicated they drew on personal experiences in responding to the photographs, suggesting this is a successful procedure for accessing personal experience. Many participants stated that they did not feel lonely because they had friends, in several cases explicitly related to their ability to make these friends. For both boys and girls correlations (from Section G) were identified between making friends and being confident with people they know (boys $r_s=0.679;p<0.00$, girls $r_s=0.611;p<0.01$), perhaps supporting a suggestion that ability to make friends is related to security within friendships.

Self-harm

Whilst this research does not expressly consider the potential consequences of loneliness there was one unexpected finding (as described in the preceding chapter). Six boys and one girl suggested the boy in the photograph might

self-harm because of loneliness/sadness e.g., “*he may ...resort to self harm*” (B10). There are various possible explanations for this; having directly asked a teacher at the school it appears that a boy, in this year group, self-harms. Alternatively (or perhaps contributing to the previous explanation), I am aware that a popular subculture among young people is ‘emo’. This refers to a type of music, is associated with expressions of depression, and valorises self-harming and suicide. This suggestion both highlights the importance of contextualising data and emphasizes the role of personal knowledge not derived from the data.

Strategies for managing loneliness

There was, as expected from the literature, evidence of the young people ‘blaming’ internal personal characteristics and external influences on loneliness. In accordance with attribution theory, participants tended to identify the characters in the photographs as possessing personal ‘deficits’ whilst stories about themselves focused on the role of external influences.

In terms of dealing with loneliness many participants explained that the presence of parents (and other family) or friends was essential; “*it makes me fill much better when I’m with my friends especially my best friend and. They all make me happy*” (G9). More boys than girls explicitly referred to parents as a source of comfort confirming interpretations developed using the correlational analysis. Some described ways of dealing with loneliness independently, including using music and going outside e.g., “*when I feel sad I like going outside in the fresh air (e.g. on my bike)*” (B14). As previously

noted, one mention was made of digital media for managing the pain of loneliness; *"what makes me feel better is playing on the Internet/PlayStation or IM with my friends"* (B1). It is observed that the presence of family and friends was described as relieving (or preventing) loneliness, not communicating with anyone.

Being alone

Loneliness was described as an overwhelmingly negative feeling, associated emotions included feeling sad, depressed and scared; *"might feel the whole world is against him. He feels sad and is probably confused"* (G1). Few participants confused 'being alone' and feeling 'lonely' although many described being alone as contributing to loneliness. Some responses referred to positive aspects of being alone e.g., *"In fact you could say I preferred it because it wasn't as hectic and I could hear myself think"* (B21). This quotation is from a boy who is, 'sometimes' lonely at school, lonely at home 'most of the time', but never feels lonely when he is on his own.

Summary of findings

Considerable evidence points to differences between boys and girls of this age when considering the pathway of loneliness, with boys focusing on parental and dyadic relationships, whilst girls report social-networks to be of primary importance. Whilst the emphasis was different, there were nevertheless, themes developed encompassing the whole group's narratives. Personal rejection and physical separation were very strong themes arising

from the qualitative data, personal rejection being the most powerful. Most participants considered both family and friends within responses.

Addressing the research questions

It was impossible to answer the question about loneliness and use of DMC directly from responses to this questionnaire; however, 'lonely' participants did report greater Internet use (which was not identified as communicative use). Additionally, a tentative association between having fewer forms of DMC available and loneliness was made.

The boys' self-ratings indicated that feeling lonely in one domain had little relationship with feeling lonely in another, whilst for the girls significant associations between domains were identified. For boys, good parental relationships were associated with decreased loneliness, as was, to a lesser degree, having a good friend. Social networks were far more significant for girls.

Personal rejection was a very strong theme developed from both boys' and girls' narratives about loneliness. Physical separation, whilst significant, featured less in the stories. Personal rejection was linked with bullying, personal inadequacy and 'being different'. Most participants turned to people for comfort when lonely, although use of DMC and physical activity was also indicated.

The next chapter, the discussion, will consider the implications for future research and this will entail revisiting the theoretical frameworks concerning loneliness described in the literature review.

Chapter Seven - Discussion

This chapter will principally address the second aim of exploring young people's descriptions of loneliness with reference to theoretical frameworks, feeding forward to future research rather than recapitulating this study. Examining and re-examining data and literature have not been discrete stages; neither has writing these final chapters. One consequence of this iterative approach being that some new literature will be introduced within this discussion. A significant inclusion is the work by Gergen (2002) which whilst not guiding design, has strongly influenced interpretation of data and evaluation of other theoretical frameworks. Other issues, e.g. gender-differentiation, were identified as relevant after interpretation of responses, however subsequent examination of the literature supports their significance for future investigation. These points substantiate Gadamer's assertion that conclusions cannot be comprehended *a priori* (Hekman, 1983).

This chapter will argue for the development of a coherent framework suited to considering DMC, and relationships, and loneliness, for future research. This is not exactly the aim (to explore theoretical frameworks for understanding loneliness) described at the start of the report, and reflects how 'prejudices' (from Hekman 1983) have changed; I am now certain that the dialogue between DMC and relationships must be considered as a coherent whole, not as two separate constructs or processes.

As stated, it was not possible to evaluate how DMC affects experiences of loneliness for young people using responses obtained within this investigation.

Two associations were cautiously identified. Reporting decreased availability of DMC (relative to peers) was associated with increased loneliness, inferring agreement with the stimulation hypothesis, and extended Internet usage was also associated with reporting increased loneliness, tentatively supporting the displacement hypothesis (Valkenburg and Peters, in press).

Regarding the stimulation hypothesis, Gross (2004) observed that most adolescents used DMC within existing friendships (see also Holloway and Valentine 2003). Identified affordances of CMC include facilitating self-disclosure (Joinson, 2004) and perceived increased control over interactions (Madell and Muncer, 2007). Lack of such benefits might explain why participants with relatively limited access to DMC reported increased loneliness. An additional explanation is proposed for consideration; young people with limited access to DMC at home might not engage in the gossip, social planning etc. that occurs using DMC after school (Lewis 2005, unpublished), consequently finding it difficult to participate in conversations at school the following day. This might reinforce loneliness (though diminished social interaction), or create it, as the young person feels excluded from their peer group.

An effective way of exploring such suppositions would be to examine 'natural data', obtained from both digitally-mediated and face-to-face interactions, combining this with asking young people about how interactions affect relationships and experiences of loneliness. Valkenburg and Peters suggested that the well-supported stimulation hypothesis works because social behaviours replaced unsocial ones. Given the use of computers and

mobile telephones when physically alone, (partly because increasing domestic wireless Internet connections facilitate Internet access in bedrooms) the stimulation hypothesis might explain some effects of DMC on social networks. The affordances of DMC mentioned appear to suggest that intimate relationships might also be supported by DMC. It is possible that the stimulation hypothesis has some predictive value when considering both social and emotional loneliness although value and mechanisms are not clear.

Whilst not reported in the previous chapter the question (section G) regarding friends of the opposite sex sought a potential link between DMC and loneliness. The question was included because anecdotal evidence suggests some boys might find it easier to attain and maintain relationships (both platonic and romantic) with girls in the private, informal, space afforded by DMC, especially CMC. Consideration of DMC as a tool (as does the stimulation hypothesis) neglects consideration of the affordances of this 'space' (Holloway and Valentine, 2003) constraining the explanatory power of the stimulation hypothesis. Perhaps the construction and usage of this 'space' might facilitate less confident young males to form intimate ties with more relationally-orientated young adolescent girls (Gilligan, 1982) potentially alleviating emotional loneliness. This hypothesis suggests DMC is more than a 'tool' (Holloway and Valentine, 2003) and consideration of the 'structure' of the spaces constructed by DMC and affordances generated by 'privacy' will inform future research.

The study reported here suggests that Internet use (not necessarily communicative use) was related to increased physical isolation. No

information about why some young people had Internet access in their bedrooms was obtained. It could be hypothesized that a miserable, lonely gamer is less welcome in the family areas of the home than a gregarious sociable young man is. The dangers of making causal attributions to associations are clear. However, this finding superficially supports the displacement hypothesis, based on replacing face-to-face interaction with the reduced communicative power of textual communication. In future research, it might be advantageous to compare solitary offline gaming with collaborative online gaming as one means of isolating effects of communication. Even so, the displacement hypothesis is unlikely to be either substantiated or disproved, given the variety of CMC and DMC used, the variety of individuals using it, and the variety of emotions any individual might be experiencing at the time; proper understanding of contextual factors is vital for future exploration. Additionally, clearer identification of the different affordances offered by different forms of DMC is required.

A search for more comprehensive theories about how DMC affects relationships reveals that few researchers have directly considered relationships and DMC (as opposed to CMC or mobile telephony alone) one notable exception being Gergen (2002). Gergen's theorising about 'absent presence' was driven by a concern with discourse and society as a whole. He identifies relationships as having two dimensions, not degrees of closeness as conventionally applied by social psychologists, but 'vertical' and 'horizontal', focusing on the function rather than form of relationships. Vertical relationships include intimate close relationships, whilst horizontal relationships signify wider acquaintanceships.

Gergen suggests attaining and maintaining good vertical relationships requires “*dedicated attention, effort, commitment and sacrifice*” (p.233) whereas engaging in horizontal relationships requires time and effort expended in ‘networking’ to maintain popularity. He suggests that vertical and horizontal relationships require different discourses and relates these to the affordances of different forms of DMC. He observes a cultural shift from valuing vertical to horizontal relationships, arguing that what he designates “*the technologies of absent presence*” (p.233), specifically CMC, favour horizontal networking as many people interact, albeit briefly, perhaps superficially, with many others.

In contrast, he describes the mobile telephone (widely used by participants) as facilitating vertical relationships, this always on, always available, media favouring intimate connections. He acknowledges its use for mass texting whilst asserting that its primary use is in revitalising face-to-face relationships within society. Part of this hypothesis relies on people only giving mobile telephone numbers to close friends (vertical relationships) but it is possible young people might expand mobile telephones contact lists in seeking increased social status (as noted with IM contacts lists, Lewis 2005 unpublished). Nevertheless, merely accepting a mobile telephone call in the presence of others shuts out the physically present from the inside space of the call, endorsing the intimacy of the relationship being conducted by telephone. Again, consideration of DMC as a ‘space’ rather than just a ‘tool’ is indicated, especially as the exclusion of others, or conversely use of the

mobile telephone call to inform an audience of something (perhaps the recipient's importance), extends the dialogue beyond the mobile telephone.

Gergen predicts technological developments in mobile telephony, hoping that the persuasive horizontal effects of 'absent presence' on society propagated by CMC might be evened out with further innovation. His account emerged before the development of voice-calls using a computer and the increasing use by young people of webcams. Both are innovations that could fulfil his hope by providing media for the meaningful discourse he advises is required to sustain vertical relationships.

Gergen's work offers a more sophisticated analysis of the varying affordances of DMC for relationships than that framed by the stimulation and displacement hypotheses. Moreover, his categorising of relationships bears a strong resemblance to social and emotional loneliness as differentiated by Weiss, 1973. Moody (2001) found evidence supporting an association between increased Internet use and low levels of social-loneliness and high levels of emotional-loneliness. I suggest that social isolation equates with perceived deficits in horizontal relationships, those Gergen advised were readily achievable using CMC. Conversely, emotional isolation suggests deficits in vertical relationships, which Gergen suggested were inadequately supported by CMC. It can be suggested therefore, that CMC might be used effectively by socially-lonely individuals, whilst emotionally-lonely people recognise the futility of this as a coping strategy. This supports the contention that loneliness (social loneliness) drives Internet use, rather than vice versa, in an attempt to relieve distress. It contradicts the supposition that emotional-

loneliness might be alleviated by opposite sex relationships facilitated by CMC, possibly because Gergen's division between intimate telephony and superficial CMC is too simple given the mixed media available, and the affinity for DMC among young people in the 21st Century. Additionally starting friendships might require different forms of communication than sustaining intimate relationships. Relationships vary, as do affordances of DMC.

A further significant consideration, Gergen's theorising emphasises the importance of discourse, its role in shaping, as well as being shaped by, interactions is implicit throughout his work (as it is within Gadamer's). This can be illustrated by considering the qualitative data discussed in the previous chapter which noted several young people mentioned self-harm as a direct consequence of loneliness. Reference was made to the 'emo' culture, valorising self-destructive behaviour in the last chapter. It could be suggested the 'emo' culture represents a danger for adolescents, talking about self-harming enhances normality, conceivably increasing the probability of young people self-harming. Whilst, as discussed earlier the inclusion of self-harm might be an artefact within this sample unrelated to loneliness in a wider context, it provides support for the assertion that evaluation of contextual factors is a vital component of experiential research with young people. Utilising both Gergen's work and Gadamer's focus on dialogic interpretation suggests that discourse analysis (of some form) might provide a useful adjunct, or alternative, to thematic analysis, especially if it includes consideration of available cultural discourses.

Gergen's paper offers a framework that might assist the planning and execution of future research investigating the effects of DMC on relationships but first the link between loneliness and relationships requires scrutiny.

Selection of confidence and relationships as variables pertinent to understanding loneliness were grounded in the literature. The inclusion of familial relationships acknowledges the still important presence of family in young people's lives and recognizes links between emotional loneliness and attachment theory. Adolescent friendships have been extensively researched and sound empirical evidence substantiated considering confidence as a related issue, especially given Berguno et al.'s (2004) claim that loneliness might result in increased isolation, diminished confidence, increased loneliness and so on. Loneliness was considered in four domains: at home, at school, when with people and when alone. Three of these are derived from the literature. The fourth, feeling lonely when with people, derived from anecdotal evidence but is supported by the participants' responses. Analysis of reported incidence in the four domains within this investigation revealed only 'being alone' generated greater incidences of self-reported loneliness, confirming the value of considering being 'lonely in a crowd'.

Regarding the correlational data produced, the most salient findings were the differences detected between girls' and boys' self-reports of loneliness and other variables. The frequencies of responses were similar between boys and girls; only the correlations demonstrated differences thus providing valuable tools for increasing understanding of differing perceptions of loneliness by

boys and girls. Future exploration should explicitly consider gender-differentiated interpretations of loneliness and relationships.

It is plausible the questions about parents and good friends also produced responses based on gender-differentiated interpretations. Further research would be required to assess this suggestion and again, discourse analysis provides one credible means. Identification of any gender differences based on the cognitive discrepancy approach may also be useful, but it is probable that in ignoring cultural factors understandings developed would be incomplete.

Explanations provided by Weiss (1973) do not explicitly include feeling lonely 'when not alone' but it could be suggested it reflects emotional loneliness. Whilst people may be present they might not be the people (or attachment figures) required to fulfil a particular need at that time. Neither does the social needs approach consider attachment figures being physically absent but emotionally present as a consequence of availability via DMC, something described as significant by Gergen. Weiss's descriptions based on 'absence' appear too simple to explain the complex experience of loneliness as described by young people in this study

Of fundamental significance when considering the theoretical frameworks proposed for understanding loneliness in young people is identification of gender differences. For boys, dyadic (vertical) relationships were significantly correlated with loneliness; whilst for girls, networks of peer-relationships (horizontal) were significant. This might suggest that the affordances of CMC

have more value for girls, although data obtained suggests otherwise. Girls were noted to use a mobile telephone more than did boys, which Gergen argues facilitates vertical relationships by its very presence. On the other hand, girls primarily used their telephones for texting, which it could be suggested, facilitates horizontal networking due to the terse nature. In this study, boys reported using a greater variety of DMC, some forms of which might promote close connections whilst others might hinder intimacy. Affordances of DMC should be considered, with respect to gender, as well as types of relationships mediated.

Some variables identified in this project are associated with either social or emotional-loneliness to some degree, but many remain open to interpretation. Explanations of emotional loneliness in the literature suggest that, for boys, with their apparent emphasis on dyadic relationships, emotional-loneliness and attachment issues are an important consideration (see Marcoen and Brumagne, 1985, Cassidy and Berlin, 1999). Conversely, for girls, the emphasis on networks of friends, especially school-friends, suggests that social-loneliness might be significant. These are generalizations, not validated by interpretation of the qualitative data obtained in this project but nonetheless indicate that multi-dimensional approaches are of value. Just as the differentiation between different forms of communication might be considered too simplistic so might the differentiation between social and emotional loneliness. These are after all types of loneliness developed following research with adults (Weiss, 1973), and young people might have different needs consequently experiencing different forms of loneliness.

Themes outlined in the preceding chapter included family and friends, and also physical separation and personal rejection, relationships of these with theoretical frameworks are unclear. In this small study, family was associated with both separation and rejection, whilst only friends were associated with personal rejection. It is likely that should families reject young people consequences would be severe in terms of well-being and loneliness. This project does not suffice to justify excluding this element from future research.

Thematic analysis of narratives identified personal rejection by friends as a consistent finding, with many participants mentioning bullying. Due to lack of contextualising information, it is impossible to ascertain if it, like self-harm, has a plausible explanation other than loneliness following experiencing bullying. However, given that schools frequently address bullying a link made in class recently may have affected responses. A plausible situational explanation was offered for the high incidence of relocation in the narratives, nevertheless, the feelings of loneliness and uncertainty at that time demonstrated a profound impact upon the young people's reported experiences of loneliness. Existence of situational explanations does not preclude relevance to understanding loneliness; they merely provide another tool in constructing understandings.

In underlining the significance of situational knowledge, the thematic analysis supports the use of interactionist approaches to understanding loneliness in future research with young people. Nevertheless, there is also compelling support for considering social needs approaches. Acknowledging that adolescence might be when young people start relinquishing parental

relationships generates potential explanations for the gender differences identified. Perhaps girls are more mature than boys during early adolescence, leading them to be further down the developmental trajectory of valuing intimacy with peers more than that with parents (if indeed both sexes follow this pathway). Alternatively, gender-differentiated pathways of attachment might be informative. This discussion suggests a broad theoretical approach is appropriate for future research to address the many questions posed by exploring experiential descriptions of loneliness and burgeoning published literature regarding DMC.

Theoretically, the interactionist approach appears suitable, especially when considering this particular age group, whose culture is fundamentally changing as they acquire increased independence. Empirically this approach permits close examination of situational factors in addition to individual characteristics. Consideration of individual factors means that theories of attachment need not be excluded; however, they are firmly placed within the context of the totality of young peoples' lives. Current thinking about how attachment representations are modified by experience would suggest this is a reasonable attitude to adopt.

It could be said that theoretical frameworks, perhaps attachment theories, in particular, are shaped by available academic discourses. Bowlby proposed the importance of the mother-infant bond when the Government was, post War, asking women to leave the workforce and return to domestic settings. Gadamer and Gergen, in their approaches to discourse and dialogic

interpretation, placed cultural and societal influences as central to their concerns.

Additionally, not yet considered in this discussion is the exercise of autonomy by young people in their use of DMC (boys reported fewer restrictions than did girls). Discourses frame the 'acceptable' levels of DMC permitted by parents and the expectations of utilising DMC framed by peer groups. Examining the effect of DMC on the experience of loneliness must acknowledge that these young people are in a curious position as regards exerting autonomy or having actions (and perhaps thoughts) determined. Examination of discourses as a means of understanding how young people experience loneliness in a culture that uses a variety of DMC necessitates a wider perspective than that facilitated by interviews alone.

Future research, hopefully as part of PhD study, will blend both Gergen and Gadamer's work, framing a discourse analysis designed to consider loneliness and the use of DMC from the widest practicable perspective. The use of both 'natural' and self-reported data will be considered, building upon previous research and aiming to enhance understanding of how DMC affects the lived-experience of loneliness in young people.

Chapter Eight - Implications for Future Research

This study failed to elucidate relationships between loneliness and DMC, but interpretations supported an assertion that some association between Internet usage and loneliness exists. Further examination of the literature suggests this association is worthy of further exploration but within a broader framework than hitherto considered.

Despite the acknowledged procedural limitations, many of the interpretations developed were congruent with findings from previous research and available theoretical frameworks. This suggests that semi-structured questionnaires might be a valuable tool in further investigations; additionally the benefits of correlational data for understanding the experience are noted. However, the length of time required for completion precludes asking many more questions, and some characteristics were too complex to be successfully presented in a questionnaire format. As already stated, Gadamer suggests returning to participants with interpretations; this would be one method of addressing some issues raised. If a large-scale study was planned it would clearly be impossible to conduct interviews with each participant, the possibility of using focus groups with selected respondents could be explored, but a pilot would be required to ascertain how young people feel about revealing their experiences in the presence of peers and researchers.

A different approach might include ethnographic methods; potential for obtaining contextual knowledge endorses this suggestion. Virtual ethnography is a fast developing research technique and may offer unique

opportunities to observe 'natural data' in the form of exchanges between young people. As loneliness is a function of attitudes, feelings and motivations it would be appropriate to combine observational data with interview data, again possible in virtual contexts. This would have the added benefit of examining the affordances of DMC.

Consideration of frameworks for considering loneliness and DMC usage in young people, by evaluating the literature but also in comparison with the results obtained within this project, suggests an interactionist framework to be most appropriate. This would supplement a framework, such as Gergen's, that expressly links use of DMC and relationships. The constructivist phenomenological framework and Gergen's suggestions point towards considering discourse analysis as part of the research process. This would be achievable using observational and/or interview data and compatible with Gadamer's philosophizing.

Consideration needs to be given to the presentation of a report. Having to use a traditional-style presentation with concurrent avoidance of value judgments, anecdotal evidence and research questions framing analysis has hindered the explicit inclusion of the reflective component required to evaluate constructivist phenomenological research. It might be that the presentation of a PhD project is less constrained by scientific convention than the MRes, but the report writing style requires further exploration and deliberation. Two examples are provided here of specific issues warranting further exploration.

One is the use of 'anecdotes'. I have a 13-year-old son, who uses a variety of DMC and has at times been lonely. This obviously influences my interest but also facilitates systematically considering potential affordances and limitations of DMC on a daily basis. Many incidents could be included to illustrate, substantiate and elaborate points made within this report, and the inclusion of some would authenticate hypothesising (it was my son's comments that prompted the interest in considering opposite sex friendships attained via DMC). The use made of such material would require careful examination of ethical issues and mindful reflection on the roles of concerned parent and reflective researcher. I am not convinced these roles are incompatible but the inclusion within an academic framework requires considerable writing and analytical skills. Additionally inclusion of one boy's experiences places a value on individual experience that appears to sit uncomfortably with the prevailing view of rigorous research. As it stands this report has drawn upon personal experiences, not including these explicitly, in my opinion, this hinders accurate evaluation of the credibility of claims made.

A second constraint has been the non-negotiable requirement to frame research questions and address these systematically. This is not a format suited to a constructivist phenomenological stance (and would be still less suited to other forms of phenomenology). It would have been more 'comfortable' and possibly resulted in a more coherent report had it been possible to outline concerns and interests, perhaps even objectives, before analysing the data whilst retaining the ability of the data to direct interpretations (to some extent). The rewriting of the research questions after completing some analysis has addressed this to some extent but has also

resulted in a report that does not truly reflect the thoughts (the prejudices) guiding the work.

Additionally, I am interested in exploring a less conventional format by utilising the affordances of DMC. The use of these might facilitate a concise easily read report with easy access to quotations, numerical data and/or external influences e.g. literature and websites, for the interested reader to explore. It would have a profound effect on presentation of data analysis, especially if combined with an analytical package such as ATLAS.ti. This would capitalise on the dialogical function of research reports and might be worth exploring in a pilot study.

Finally, should it be proposed that three years be devoted to studying loneliness and DMC, consideration should be given to the final value of such research. Loneliness is a ubiquitous experience, for some young people there are grounds for suggesting it has a deleterious effect on social development. The affordances of DMC are endlessly debated, not least in households with adolescent children. Given the diversity of experiences possible, it is unlikely that definitive answers will be obtained but enhanced understanding appears an achievable goal. I believe further research is essential, for knowledge's own sake, and the well-being of children and parents and other adults worried about the stereotype of the lonely isolated adolescent, shut in their bedroom, on their own, and withdrawing from 'normal' society.

Chapter Nine - Conclusion

This study has identified that there are likely to be associations between DMC usage and loneliness as relationships are increasingly conducted via DMC. Loneliness has been explored both in the literature and with a small sample of 12-13 year old young people, and relationships are indubitably significant in constructing the experience of loneliness, which can be felt when with other people, as well as, at school, at home and when alone. These relationships need to be considered from a wider perspective than previous research by considering both peer (including the presence of a 'good friend') and familial relationships. The influences of virtual and perhaps adult-child friendships might also be worth exploration. Gender differences suggest that girls and boys should not be treated as an homogenous group. Frameworks for considering the experience of loneliness have considered loneliness as an 'absence' of social networks or significant attachment figures. Given Gergen's (2002) observations regarding the 'presence of absent others' via digital media possibilities are opened for re-conceptualizing loneliness in young people who use DMC.

Early adolescents, in the UK, appear to both use and value DMC, adopting it not just as a second-best alternative when face-to-face communication is impossible, but deliberately choosing to manage relationships via these formats. Accordingly they offer a fertile population for investigating the affordances (and limitations) of the many different forms of DMC available. Such research might assist understanding of the use of DMC for other age

groups, just as research with children and adults has facilitated understanding loneliness in young people.

Further study is justified given the widespread experience, and detrimental effects, of prolonged loneliness, various means of conducting such research have been mentioned. Virtual ethnography is proposed as one viable method for use within a constructivist phenomenological framework, but it is suggested that given the subjective nature of the experience interviews (or similar means of obtaining self-reports) are essential. The use of a semi-structured questionnaire was successful in obtaining interpretations from this group of participants and a version of the questionnaire used in this study could be adopted for future work alongside more in-depth investigation.

Exploring the potential for discourse analysis to uncover elements of the lived-experience of loneliness in young people is suggested, as is consideration of the format selected to communicate understandings gained from such research.

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16 819 words

Appendix 1 - Questionnaire

Please note the section headings have been added to this copy to facilitate the discussion within the report. They were not present on the copies given to the participants.

This questionnaire is part of a project at the Open University. Please respond to the following questions. You will find instructions by each one but your teacher will be able to help if they are not clear. It would be helpful if you would complete all the questions. However you may miss out any you prefer not to answer. If you would prefer not to hand in the questionnaire please tell your teacher. Your name is not needed.

Are you male or female?

How old are you?

Section A

The first set of questions is about how you use technology to communicate from home. Please circle yes or no.

1. Do you have Internet access at home? Yes No

If you answer no to this question please move on to question 11

2. Do you have Broadband access to the Internet at home? Yes No

3. Do you use a computer to access the Internet? Yes No

If you answer no to this question please move on to question 6

4. Do you use a webcam at home? Yes No

5. Do you make voice calls using the computer? Yes No

6. Do you use a games console to access the Internet? Yes No

7. Do you use a television to access the Internet? Yes No

8. Do you use a mobile telephone to access the Internet? Yes No

9. Do you access the Internet from your bedroom? Yes No

10. Do your parents limit Internet use? Yes No

11. Do you have a mobile telephone? Yes No

If you answered no to this question please move on to question 15

12. Do you mainly use your mobile telephone for voice calls? Yes No

13. Do you mainly use it for texting? Yes No

14. Do your parents limit your use of your mobile telephone? Yes No

15. Do you have a landline telephone at home? Yes No

16. Do your parents limit landline telephone use? Yes No

17. Do you use a telephone (mobile or landline) in your bedroom? Yes No

Section B

If you use the Internet at home please tell me how often you use it. Think about a usual school week (holidays might be different).

I use the Internet from home Never
One or two days a week most weeks
Three or four days a week most weeks
Five to seven days a week most weeks

How long you use it for probably varies between school days, weekends, holidays etc., please think about an average amount for a school day.

I am online for No time at all
Less than ten minutes
Ten to thirty minutes
Thirty minutes to one hour
One to two hours
Two or more hours

Section C

The next question asks about how you communicate with your friends when you are not at school. Tick the first column to say if you use this type of communication. The second column is for you to rank the different forms you use, with 1 being your favourite.

	Tick the box if you use this to communicate with friends.	Put in order with number 1 being your favourite.
Face to face		
Telephone - landline		
Mobile telephone – texts		
Mobile telephone – calls		
Computer – voice calls		
Web cam		
E-mail		
Instant messaging		
Chat rooms		
Webspaces, (e.g. Bebo, Facebox, MySpace)		
Blogs (e.g. Blogger, LiveJournal)		
Online games (e.g. Runescape, Habbohotel)		

Section D

Next, I would like to know how you spend your time out of school. Please tell me how much time you spend in each activity by ticking the right box on a **normal school day**. There is one empty row at the bottom of the chart that you can use to write in if this table does not include something you usually do out of school.

	none	Less than half an hour	30 minutes to one hour	One to two hours	Two to four hours	More than four hours
Organised activity (e.g. sports or clubs)						
With friends						
Talking to friends using telephone or computer						
Texting friends using a telephone						
Watching television						
Using the Internet						
Playing on a games console						
With family (including mealtimes etc.)						
Alone (e.g. in bedroom, house or outside)						
Helping with chores						
Playing or listening to music						

Section E

Here you will see two pictures, please write a short story that answers the questions beside the pictures. Use the space below as well as beside the pictures for your writing.



This girl is not playing with anyone at break time. How do you think she feels? Why do you think she might be alone?



This boy is alone, how do you think he feels? What do you think he might do next?

Section F

The next three questions require you do some thinking and writing. Don't worry about your spelling, grammar and handwriting!

Please write a short story about a time when you have felt lonely. When was it? What happened? How did you feel?

Why do you think you feel lonely sometimes? Please explain as clearly as you can.

What makes you feel better when you feel lonely? This might be something or someone. Why does this work for you?

Section G

Finally, tick the boxes that best answer the questions.

	all the time	most of the time	sometimes	rarely	never
Do you feel as though you have plenty of friends at school?					
Do you feel as though you have plenty of friends outside school?					
Do you feel as though you have a good friend?					
Do you have parents at home who talk (and listen) to you?					
Do you have brothers and/or sisters at home?					
Do you feel lonely at school?					
Do you feel lonely at home?					
Do you feel lonely when you are on your own?					
Do you feel lonely when you are with people?					
Would you describe yourself as confident with people you know?					
Would you describe yourself as confident with new people?					
Would you describe yourself as good at making new friends?					
Do you have friends of the opposite sex?					

Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire.

Would you like to be told about the results in September?

Yes No

Appendix 2: Correlations within Relationships Data

The following pages contain the output documents from SPSS that were used to obtain the correlations identified in the 'interpretations of results' chapter.

Relationship Data.

Descriptive Statistics output from SPSS,

Boys

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Friends school	1.9500	.75915	20
Friends outside	1.7000	.86450	20
Good friend	1.3500	.58714	20
Parents	1.4286	.81064	21
Siblings	2.5238	1.74983	21
Lonely school	3.9500	.82558	20
Lonely home	3.8095	1.07792	21
Lonely own	3.6190	.97346	21
Lonely with	4.2381	1.33809	21
Confident know	1.8571	1.01419	21
Confident new	2.4286	.87014	21
Making friends	2.5238	.81358	21
Opposite sex	1.8000	1.10501	20

Girls

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Friends school	1.8421	.89834	19
Friends outside	1.8947	.87526	19
Good friend	1.4118	.87026	17
Parents	1.3684	.89508	19
Siblings	1.8947	1.48678	19
Lonely school	3.8421	.83421	19
Lonely home	3.7895	.91766	19
Lonely own	3.1111	1.07861	18
Lonely with	4.1111	.90025	18
Confident know	1.8889	1.02262	18
Confident new	3.0526	1.35293	19
Making friends	2.4211	1.21636	19
Opposite sex	1.9474	1.31122	19

Relationship Data - continued

Whole group

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Friends school	1.8974	.82062	39
Friends outside	1.7949	.86388	39
Good friend	1.3784	.72078	37
Parents	1.4000	.84124	40
Siblings	2.2250	1.64063	40
Lonely school	3.8974	.82062	39
Lonely home	3.8000	.99228	40
Lonely own	3.3846	1.04164	39
Lonely with	4.1795	1.14413	39
Confident know	1.8718	1.00471	39
Confident new	2.7250	1.15442	40
Making friends	2.4750	1.01242	40
Opposite sex	1.8718	1.19603	39

SPSS Output, Spearman's Rho, Correlations Relationship data

Girls only

	Friends school	Friends outside	Good friend	Parents	Siblings	Lonely school	Lonely home	Lonely own	Lonely with	Confident know	Confident new	Making friends	Opposite sex
Friends school	Correlation Coefficient	.632(**)	.347	-.075	.137	-.724(**)	-.318	-.167	-.716(**)	.776(**)	.228	.576(**)	.322
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.173	.759	.575	.000	.185	.509	.001	.000	.347	.010	.179
N	19	19	17	19	19	19	19	18	18	18	19	19	19
Friends outside	Correlation Coefficient	.632(**)	.228	.082	.355	-.621(**)	-.189	-.210	-.480(*)	.651(**)	.331	.721(**)	.477(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.378	.739	.135	.005	.438	.402	.044	.003	.167	.000	.039
N	19	19	17	19	19	19	19	18	18	18	19	19	19
Good friend	Correlation Coefficient	.347	1.000	-.201	-.029	-.288	-.070	.057	-.496	.131	-.133	.176	.087
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.173	.378	.440	.912	.261	.789	.833	.051	.628	.610	.498	.738
N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	16	16	17	17	17	17
Parents	Correlation Coefficient	-.075	-.201	1.000	.067	.214	.092	.487(*)	-.105	-.029	.019	.182	.310
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.759	.739	.440	.784	.380	.709	.040	.678	.908	.937	.456	.197
N	19	19	17	19	19	19	19	18	18	18	19	19	19
Siblings	Correlation Coefficient	.137	-.029	.067	1.000	-.145	-.302	-.059	.029	.254	.499(*)	.268	.385
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.575	.135	.912	.784	.553	.209	.817	.909	.310	.030	.267	.104
N	19	19	17	19	19	19	19	18	18	18	19	19	19
Lonely school	Correlation Coefficient	-.724(**)	-.288	.214	-.145	1.000	.553(*)	.120	.742(**)	-.661(**)	-.034	.457(*)	-.115
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.378	.440	.784	.553	.014	.637	.000	.003	.891	.049	.638
N	19	19	17	19	19	19	19	18	18	18	19	19	19
Lonely home	Correlation Coefficient	-.318	-.070	.092	-.302	1.000	.553(*)	.152	.312	-.475(*)	-.134	-.115	-.143
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.185	.438	.789	.209	.014	.637	.546	.208	.046	.585	.640	.558
N	19	19	17	19	19	19	19	18	18	18	19	19	19

	Friends school	Friends outside	Good friend	Parents	Siblings	Lonely school	Lonely home	Lonely own	Lonely with	Confident know	Confident new	Making friends	Opposite sex
Lonely own	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.167 .509 18	-.210 .402 18	.057 .833 16	.437(*) .040 18	-.059 .817 18	.152 .546 18	1.000 .392 18	-.222 .392 17	-.080 .761 18	.028 .912 18	-.337 .171 18	-.113 .656 18
Lonely with	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.716(**) .001 18	-.480(*) .044 18	-.496 .051 16	-.105 .678 18	.029 .909 18	.312 .208 18	-.222 .392 17	1.000 .007 18	-.628(**) .007 17	-.005 .986 18	-.416 .086 18	-.192 .446 18
Confident know	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	.776(**) .000 18	.651(**) .003 18	.131 .628 16	-.029 .908 18	.254 .310 18	.475(*) .046 18	-.080 .761 17	-.628(**) .007 18	1.000 .007 18	.304 .220 18	.611(**) .007 18	.399 .101 18
Confident new	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	.228 .347 19	.331 .167 19	-.133 .610 17	.019 .937 19	-.034 .891 19	-.134 .585 19	.028 .912 18	-.005 .986 18	.304 .220 18	1.000 .014 19	.327 .172 19	.552(*) .014 19
Making friends	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	.576(**) .010 19	.721(**) .000 19	.176 .498 17	.182 .456 19	.268 .310 19	-.115 .640 19	-.337 .171 18	-.416 .086 18	.611(**) .007 18	.327 .172 19	1.000 .032 19	.493(*) 1.000 19
Opposite sex	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	.322 .179 19	.477(*) .039 19	.087 .738 17	.310 .197 19	-.115 .104 19	-.143 .558 19	-.113 .656 18	-.192 .446 18	.399 .101 18	.562(*) .014 19	.493(*) .032 19	1.000 .000 19

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

SPSS Output, Spearman's Rho, Correlations Relationship data

Boys only

	Friends school	Friends outside	Good friend	Parents	Siblings	Lonely school	Lonely home	Lonely own	Lonely with	Confident know	Confident new	Making friends	Opposite sex
Friends school													
Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.504*	.453*	-.035	.259	-.283	-.071	-.117	-.141	.460*	.348	.395	.203
Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.024	.042	.883	.271	.241	.766	.623	.553	.041	.132	.085	.392
N	20	20	20	20	20	19	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Friends outside													
Correlation Coefficient	.504*	1.000	.610(**)	-.225	.248	-.154	.170	.095	-.402	.023	.024	.244	.225
Sig. (2-tailed)	.024	.	.004	.340	.291	.530	.475	.691	.079	.923	.919	.301	.339
N	20	20	20	20	20	19	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Good friend													
Correlation Coefficient	.538*	.610(**)	1.000	-.220	.214	-.098	.521*	.241	.086	.001	.111	.221	.388
Sig. (2-tailed)	.042	.004	.	.352	.365	.690	.018	.306	.718	.998	.641	.349	.091
N	20	20	20	20	20	19	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Parents													
Correlation Coefficient	-.035	-.225	-.220	1.000	.298	-.290	-.568(**)	-.307	-.154	-.344	.488*	-.356	-.417
Sig. (2-tailed)	.883	.340	.352	.	.190	.215	.007	.175	.504	.127	.025	.113	.067
N	20	20	20	21	21	20	21	21	21	21	21	21	20
Siblings													
Correlation Coefficient	.259	.248	.214	.298	1.000	.108	.065	-.308	-.308	-.009	-.126	.156	.384
Sig. (2-tailed)	.271	.291	.365	.190	.	.649	.780	.174	.175	.971	.586	.498	.094
N	20	20	20	21	21	20	21	21	21	21	21	21	20
Lonely school													
Correlation Coefficient	-.283	-.154	-.098	-.290	.108	1.000	.145	-.430	.196	.106	.038	-.097	.330
Sig. (2-tailed)	.241	.530	.690	.649	.649	.	.541	.059	.407	.657	.873	.685	.168
N	19	19	19	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	19
Lonely home													
Correlation Coefficient	-.071	.170	.521*	.568(**)	.065	.145	1.000	.458*	.309	.056	.391	.266	.581*
Sig. (2-tailed)	.766	.475	.018	.007	.780	.541	.	.037	.174	.808	.079	.244	.016
N	20	20	20	21	21	20	21	21	21	21	21	21	20

	Friends school	Friends outside	Good friend	Parents	Siblings	Lonely school	Lonely home	Lonely own	Lonely with	Confident know	Confident new	Making friends	Opposite sex
Lonely own	Correlation Coefficient	.095	.241	-.307	-.308	-.430	.458†	1.000	-.039	.083	-.160	.225	.250
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.623	.306	.175	.174	.059	.037	.	.867	.719	.487	.327	.289
Lonely with	N	20	20	21	21	20	21	21	21	21	21	21	20
	Correlation Coefficient	-.141	-.402	-.154	-.308	.196	.309	-.039	1.000	-.044	.316	-.033	-.027
Confident know	Sig. (2-tailed)	.553	.079	.504	.175	.407	.174	.867	.	.851	.163	.886	.910
	N	20	20	21	21	20	21	21	21	21	21	21	20
Confident new	Correlation Coefficient	.460†	.023	-.344	-.009	.106	.056	.083	-.044	1.000	.399	.679(**)	.465†
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.041	.923	.127	.971	.657	.808	.719	.851	.	.073	.001	.039
Making friends	N	20	20	21	21	20	21	21	21	21	21	21	20
	Correlation Coefficient	.348	.024	.111	-.126	.038	.391	-.160	.316	.399	1.000	.257	.324
Opposite sex	Sig. (2-tailed)	.132	.919	.641	.586	.873	.079	.487	.163	.073	.	.262	.164
	N	20	20	20	21	20	21	21	21	21	21	21	20
Making friends	Correlation Coefficient	.395	.244	.221	.156	-.097	.266	.225	-.033	.679(**)	.257	1.000	.257
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.085	.301	.349	.498	.685	.244	.327	.886	.001	.262	.	.274
Opposite sex	N	20	20	21	21	20	21	21	21	21	21	21	20
	Correlation Coefficient	.203	.225	.388	-.417	.330	.681†	.250	-.027	.465†	.324	.257	1.000
Opposite sex	Sig. (2-tailed)	.392	.339	.091	.094	.168	.016	.289	.910	.039	.164	.274	.
	N	20	20	20	20	19	20	20	20	20	20	20	20

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

† Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Output. Spearman's Rho, Correlations Relationship data

Whole group

	Friends school	Friends outside	Good friend	Parents	Siblings	Lonely school	Lonely home	Lonely own	Lonely with	Confident know	Confident new	Making friends	Opposite sex
Friends school													
Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.543(**)	.404(✓)	-.037	.211	-.517(**)	-.213	-.103	-.376(✓)	.609(**)	.243	.495(**)	.256
Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.013	.821	.197	.001	.193	.537	.020	.000	.136	.001	.115
N	39	39	37	39	39	38	39	38	38	38	39	39	39
Friends outside													
Correlation Coefficient	.543(**)	1.000	.436(**)	-.106	.259	-.389(✓)	-.001	-.082	-.437(**)	-.323(✓)	.210	.500(**)	-.353(✓)
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.007	.521	.112	.016	.994	.626	.006	.048	.200	.001	.027
N	39	39	37	39	39	38	39	38	38	38	39	39	39
Good friend													
Correlation Coefficient	.404(✓)	.436(**)	1.000	-.195	.124	-.193	.237	.157	-.136	.060	-.011	.188	.250
Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.007	.	.248	.465	.260	.158	.361	.430	.730	.948	.266	.135
N	37	37	37	37	37	36	37	36	36	36	37	37	37
Parents													
Correlation Coefficient	-.037	-.106	-.195	1.000	.228	-.029	-.248	.075	-.092	-.216	-.253	-.064	-.079
Sig. (2-tailed)	.821	.521	.248	.	.158	.862	.123	.651	.576	.187	.115	.693	.634
N	39	39	37	40	40	39	40	39	39	39	40	40	39
Siblings													
Correlation Coefficient	.211	.259	.124	.228	1.000	.002	-.106	-.143	-.133	.103	.122	.195	-.368(✓)
Sig. (2-tailed)	.197	.112	.465	.158	.	.991	.516	.386	.420	.532	.453	.228	.021
N	39	39	37	40	40	39	40	39	39	39	40	40	39
Lonely school													
Correlation Coefficient	-.517(**)	-.389(✓)	-.193	-.029	.002	1.000	-.131	-.131	.448(**)	-.260	-.015	-.288	.093
Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.016	.260	.862	.991	.	.024	.434	.005	.115	.928	.075	.580
N	38	38	36	39	39	39	39	38	38	38	39	39	38
Lonely home													
Correlation Coefficient	-.213	-.001	.237	-.248	-.106	.361(*)	1.000	.049	-.329(✓)	-.183	.102	.062	.199
Sig. (2-tailed)	.193	.994	.158	.123	.516	.024	.	.049	.041	.264	.530	.702	.225
N	39	39	37	40	40	39	40	39	39	39	40	40	39

	Friends school	Friends outside	Good friend	Parents	Siblings	Lonely school	Lonely home	Lonely own	Lonely with	Confident know	Confident new	Making friends	Opposite sex
Lonely own	-.103	-.082	.157	.075	-.143	-.131	.317(*)	1.000	-.051	.033	-.105	-.034	.055
	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed)												
	.537	.626	.361	.651	.386	.434	.049	.	.763	.844	.526	.839	.744
N	38	38	36	39	39	38	39	39	38	38	39	39	38
Lonely with	.376(*)	-.437(**)	-.136	-.092	-.133	.448(**)	.329(*)	-.051	1.000	-.297	.092	-.191	-.108
	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed)												
	.020	.006	.430	.576	.420	.005	.041	.763	.	.070	.577	.243	.520
N	38	38	36	39	39	38	39	38	39	38	39	39	38
Confident know	.609(**)	.323(*)	.060	-.216	.103	-.260	-.183	.033	-.297	1.000	.337(*)	.630(**)	.426(**)
	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed)												
	.000	.048	.730	.187	.532	.115	.264	.844	.070	.	.036	.000	.008
N	38	38	36	39	39	38	39	38	38	39	39	39	38
Confident new	.243	.210	-.011	-.253	.122	-.015	.102	-.105	.092	.337(*)	1.000	.284	.443(**)
	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed)												
	.136	.200	.948	.115	.453	.928	.530	.526	.577	.036	.	.075	.005
N	39	39	37	40	40	39	40	39	39	39	40	40	39
Making friends	.495(**)	.500(**)	.188	-.064	.195	-.288	.062	-.034	-.191	.630(**)	.284	1.000	.386(*)
	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed)												
	.001	.001	.266	.693	.228	.075	.702	.839	.243	.000	.075	.	.017
N	39	39	37	40	40	39	40	39	39	39	40	40	39
Opposite sex	.256	.353(*)	.250	-.079	.368(*)	.093	.199	.055	-.108	.426(**)	.443(**)	.380(*)	1.000
	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed)												
	.115	.027	.135	.634	.021	.580	.225	.744	.520	.008	.005	.017	.
N	39	39	37	39	39	38	39	38	38	38	39	39	39

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

SPSS Output Data – Amalgamated variables - Relationship data - Boys

Correlations

		Friends	Parents	Lonely	Confidence
Spearman's rho	Friends	1.000	-.070	-.099	.161
			.768	.679	.497
			20	20	20
Parents	Correlation Coefficient	-.070	1.000	-.609(**)	-.246
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.768	.	.003	.283
	N	20	21	21	21
Lonely	Correlation Coefficient	-.099	-.609(**)	1.000	.205
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.679	.003	.	.372
	N	20	21	21	21
Confidence	Correlation Coefficient	.161	-.246	.205	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.497	.283	.372	.
	N	20	21	21	21

Friends = sum of scores for friends in school, friends outside of school and a good friend (variables 1, 2 + 3)
 Parents = variable 4

Lonely = sum of scores for lonely at school, at home, on own and with people (variables 6 + 7 + 8 + 9)

Confidence = sum of scores for confident with people they know, and new people, and making friends (variables 10 + 11 + 12)

**** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

SPSS Output Data – Amalgamated variables - Relationship data - Girls

Correlations

	Friends	Parents	Lonely	Confidence
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	-.049	.564(*)	.512(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.843	.012	.025
	N	19	19	19
Parents	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.248	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.306	1.000
	N	19	19	19
Lonely	Correlation Coefficient	.248	1.000	.552(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.	.014
	N	19	19	19
Confidence	Correlation Coefficient	.000	.552(*)	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000	.014	.
	N	19	19	19

Friends = sum of scores for friends in school, friends outside of school and a good friend (variables 1, 2 + 3)
 Parents = variable 4

Lonely = sum of scores for lonely at school, at home, on own and with people (variables 6 + 7 + 8 + 9)

Confidence = sum of scores for confident with people they know, and new people, and making friends (variables 10 + 11 + 12)

- Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

SPSS Output Data – Amalgamated variables - Relationship data – WHOLE GROUP

Correlations

	Friends	Parents	Lonely	Confidence
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	-.102	.351(*)	.385(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.536	.029	.016
Parents	N	39	39	39
	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.175	-.159
Lonely	Sig. (2-tailed)	.536	.279	.328
	N	39	40	40
Confidence	Correlation Coefficient	-.175	1.000	-.222
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.279	.	.169
Confidence	N	40	40	40
	Correlation Coefficient	-.159	-.222	1.000
Confidence	Sig. (2-tailed)	.328	.169	.
	N	39	40	40

Friends = sum of scores for friends in school, friends outside of school and a good friend (variables 1, 2 + 3)
 Parents = variable 4

Lonely = sum of scores for lonely at school, at home, on own and with people (variables 6 + 7 + 8 + 9)

Confidence = sum of scores for confident with people they know, and new people, and making friends (variables 10 + 11 + 12)

- Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Appendix 3 - Case Studies

Participant B1

Aged 13 has broadband and Internet access from home via a computer, a mobile phone used mainly for both voice and texts with unlimited Internet and mobile use. He uses the Internet five to seven days a week most weeks, usually for one to two hours at a time.

His favourite form of communication is instant messaging (followed by face-to-face) he also uses the mobile telephone for calls and texts, e-mail webspaces and online games. He spends 30 to 60 minutes in organised activity, one to two hours with friends, one to two hours talking to friends using telephone or computer, less than half an hour texting, one to two hours watching television, two to four hours using the Internet, one to two hours playing on a games console (not linked to the Internet), more than four hours with his family, two to four hours alone, less than half an hour helping with chores and 30 minutes to 60 minutes playing and listening to music.

He rarely feels as though he has plenty of friends at school, sometimes as though he has plenty of friends outside of school, always feels as though he has a good friend, and parents at home who talk and listen to him, and brothers or sisters at home. He feels lonely at school most of the time; at home some of the time, when he is on his own all of the time, but never when he is with people. He describes himself as confident with people he knows most of the time, sometimes confident with new people, and most of the time as good at making new friends. He has friends of the opposite sex all of the time.

He wrote little in terms of his descriptions. With reference to the girl alone in a playground he wrote, "I think she feels left out, and she might be alone because she doesn't socialise very well." With reference to the boy on his own he wrote, "I think he feels upset, and I think he might get up and find something to do". His short story about a time when he felt lonely, "it was in art and design lesson when some people from my class were calling me names and saying offensive things. I felt angry, sad and upset." He feels lonely because, "you feel lonely because it is an emotion everyone expresses certain reasons". In response to what makes him feel better, "what makes me feel better is playing on the Internet/PlayStation or IM with my friends"

Themes

Bullying, normal, friends, activity, attribution theory (positive self, negative third party, their responsibility to do something about it what attribution theory actually says).

Universality. Lonely and being alone.

Rejected – fault of individual emotion playstation IM internet

Notes

Friends outside school, lonely in school.

Likes synchronous DMC

Participant B2

This boy has Internet but not broadband access at home, he uses both a computer and a games console to access the Internet, accesses the Internet from his bedroom and has a WebCam. He has a mobile phone that which uses mainly for voice calls, but no landline at home. He has unlimited use of Internet and mobile. He uses the Internet five to seven days a week, for two or more hours per day. He did not rank his favourite forms of communication clearly but uses face-to-face, telephone (landline despite saying he didn't have one), mobile telephone for both text and calls, a computer for voice calls, WebCam, instant messaging and blogs. On the page before he said that he did not have the ability to make voice calls using a computer.

He spends one to two hours in organise activity, with friends, and using the Internet. He spends two to four hours talking to friends using telephone or computer, and alone in his bedroom or house. He spends 30 to 60 minutes per day watching television, playing on a games console and playing listening to music. He spends less than 30 minutes per day with his family and help with chores and no time at all text and friends.

He describes himself as having plenty of friends at school most of the time, plenty of friends outside of school all of the time, and a good friend all of the time. He sometimes has parents at home who talk to and listen to him and most of the time he has brothers or sisters at home. He sometimes feels lonely at school, always feels lonely at home, rarely feels lonely when he is on he is own and most of the time feels lonely when he is with people. He describes himself as confident with people he knows most of the time but with new people all of the time. Most of the time he is good at making friends and all of the time he has friends of the opposite sex.

In response to the picture of the girl, "I think she is lonely and sad. She might be alone because she doesn't have any friends to speak too or she might have been bullied by someone older than her." In response to the picture of the boy alone, "I think he's lonely and scared. He might be seared because of bullies." When asked to write a short story about a time when he felt lonely he merely wrote, "No!!!". When asked why he feels lonely sometimes he wrote, "Not many people to speak too." When asked what makes him feel better he wrote "The peace." (note he rarely feels lonely when he's on his own).

Bullies, friends, scared, feels lonely when with people sad peace

Wonder if lack of people to speak to refers to physically being alone or having no one who listens

Always feels lonely at home, but parents who listen sometimes, and has brothers and sisters home most of the time and plenty of friends outside of school.

Participant B3

This 13-year-old boy has Internet broadband access at home by a computer. He does not have a WebCam or use a games console to access the Internet, he can access the Internet from his bedroom and has unlimited usage. He owns a mobile phone that he uses mainly for texting, again unlimited. He uses a telephone in his bedroom. He uses the Internet at five to seven days a week, the two or more hours per day.

He uses a wide variety of means of communication, face-to-face mobile telephone for text and calls, e-mail, instant messaging, and webspaces and online games and ranks them all clearly. His favourite means of communication is texting then face-to-face followed by telephone calls, e-mail, instant messaging, webspaces and finally online games.

He spends two to four hours in organise activity per day, two to four hours with friends and playing listening to music. He does not play with a games console, spends between 30 and 60 minutes talking to friends using a telephone or computer, texting, watching television and helping with chores. He spent one to two hours using the Internet, with his family and alone. (Although he ticked spending more two or more hours online on the previous page).

He describes himself as having plenty of friends outside of school all of the time, and in school most of the time, with a good friend all of the time. All of the time he has parents at home who talk and listen to him, most of the time he has brothers or sisters at home. He never feels lonely at school sometimes feels lonely home, sometimes feels lonely when it of its own and never feels lonely when he is with people. He

describes himself as confident with people he knows sometimes and sometimes confident with new people, and making new friends. He sometimes has friends of the opposite sex.

In response to the picture of the girl he writes, "sad and lonely new to shcool no friends". In response to the second picture of a boy alone he writes, "upupeet runaway". When asked to write a short story about a time when he felt lonely he writes, "primary School w. new boy comeing to school I fafe upeet my friends laft meuh my one". When asked why do you think you feel lonely, "wene my friends lfet me". Finally when asked what makes him feel better, "mum and dad toikg to me".

Friends, parents, being alone relocation upset rejection

Examples in school – although never feels lonely at school, sometimes at home

Participant B4

This 13-year-old boy has Internet broadband access at home using a computer and mobile phone to access the Internet. He has access from his bedroom and a WebCam. His use of the Internet is limited by his parents. He has a mobile telephone that he uses mainly for texting, unlimited by his parents. The landline telephone use is also limited by his parents. He uses the Internet through four days a week, usually for between 30 and 60 minutes.

He became muddled when ranking his favourite but indicates that he uses a mobile telephone text calls, WebCam, e-mail, web spaces, blogs and online games. Note he did not say that he uses face-to-face to communicate with his friends out of school.

After school he spent between 30 and 60 minutes in organised activity, watching television, using the Internet, and alone. He spent one to two hours with friends, playing on the games console, with family, helping with chores and listening to music. He spends less than half an hour talking to friends using a telephone or computer and texting friends using a telephone. Note he spends considerable time with friends but not using face-to-face communication, perhaps as part of an organised activity.

Most of the time he feels as though he has plenty of friends at school, he feels as though he has plenty of friends outside school and a good friend all of the time. Most of the time, he has parents at home who talk and listen to him and he never has brothers or sisters at home. He rarely feels lonely at school or at home, sometimes feels lonely when he is on his own and rarely feels lonely when he is with people. He describes himself as confident with people he knows most of the time and sometimes

confident with new people and good at making new friends. Most of the time he had friends of the opposite sex

Response to the picture of the girl he writes, "Because she has no freinds or people don't want to play with her". In response to the picture of the boy alone he writes, "I think he feels alone/upset because of family problems or his freinds have ditched him. He might run away".

His short story about a time when he felt lonely, "when my friends wouldent let me play the ball, and started pushing me out of the way it was at home at a park near my house I felt sad and unhappy". In response to why he feels lonely sometimes, "because frends can't be bothered to play with me" and in response to what makes him feel better when he feels lonely, "gives me time to relax and get away from the world for abit". (He didn't actually answer what makes him feel better).

Friends, family, rejection, other people cause loneliness, being alone is not necessarily bad family problems sad unhappy

He said what he gains from being alone – not what makes him feel better when lonely

Participant B5

This young man has broadband Internet access at home, which is limited by his parents and does not have a WebCam or use games consoles or televisions to access the Internet. He has a mobile phone but does not use this to access the Internet, he indicates that parents do not limit his use of mobile telephone but does not use its mainly for either voice calls or texting. He has a telephone mobile or landline in his bedroom. He uses the Internet at home three or four days a week most weeks, usually for between one and two hours.

He ticks that he only uses face-to-face communication with his friends when not at school and ranks this as his favourite.

When describing how he spent his time out of school he reports not using the computer or a telephone to talk to friends (neither does he text), less than half an hour playing listening to music, 30 to 60 minutes playing on a games console and one to two hours watching television and using the Internet. He enters no responses at all as regards organised activity with friends, with family, being alone and helping with chores.

This participant did not tick any of the boxes as regards friendship. He indicates that he has parents at home who talk and listen to him all the time, but he sometimes feels lonely when he's on his own, never feels lonely at school and never feels lonely home or with other people. He never has brothers and sisters at home. He is sometimes confident with people he knows and with new people, but rarely good at making new friends.

He did not write anything at all in response to the qualitative questions.

Participant B6

This boy has Internet access using a broadband via a computer at home. He uses a games console and mobile telephone to access the Internet, his Internet use is limited and he does not access from his bedroom. He does not have a WebCam home, neither does he make voice calls using the computer. He uses his mobile telephone mainly for voice calls and texting, and use of this is unlimited. He has a landline telephone at home, and use is limited by his parents. He did not complete the section regarding how frequently and for how long he uses the Internet.

He completed the ranking incompletely. There are several crossings out suggesting that he thought carefully about his responses. His favourite method of communicating with his friends is face-to-face, followed by mobile telephone calls, texts, landline calls, chat rooms, instant messaging, e-mail, online games, and finally web spaces.

He does no organised activities after school and spent less than half an hour talking to friends using telephone or computer, texting and with his family. He spends 30 to 60 minutes watching television, using the Internet, playing on a games console, helping with chores and playing or listening to music. He spent one to two hours alone, but more than four hours on a normal school day with his friends. I wonder if it was clear that I was asking how he spent his time out of school.

He sometimes feels as though he has plenty of friends at school, outside of school and a good friend. He has parents at home who talk and listen to him all the time, likewise brothers and sisters are at home all the time. He rarely feels lonely at school and never feels lonely home, on his own, or when with people. He describes himself as

sometimes confident with people he knows, with new people, as good at making new friends and having friends of the opposite sex.

In response to the photo of the girl he writes, "she feels sad, Probably because she has no friends or she has fell out with them." in response to the boy alone he writes, "very sad, because a family member might have died or someone he knows, so he might run away." when asked to relate the short story about feeling lonely he writes, "sad when I fell out with my friend at primary school." In response to why he thinks he feels lonely sometimes, "because sometimes my friends disown me". In response to what makes him feel better, "music or having fun with my family."

External events called loneliness, friends, family or music make him feel better, sad rejection separation – death sad

Participant B7

He has broadband Internet access at home by a computer, also accesses the Internet via a games console, from his bedroom and use is not limited by his parents. He does not have a WebCam nor make voice calls using a computer. He has unlimited use of a mobile telephone but does not use this to access the Internet, using it mainly for texting. He did not complete the section regarding the use of Internet from home (I suspect that the different presentation of this question in between two boxes has contributed to some participants missing this out).

As regards communicating with friends outside of school uses face-to-face, landline and mobile telephone (for both text and calls), e-mail, instant messaging and web spaces. He did not rank any of his favourites instead he ticked in the boxes which did not correspond to the means of communication he used.

He spent one to two hours in organised activity, watching the television and using the Internet on a normal school day. He spends more than four hours with friends, alone in his bedroom (my son thought this might include sleeping) and playing or listening to music. He spent 30 to 60 minutes talking to his friends at using computer or telephone, and playing on a games console. He spends less than half an hour texting friends using a telephone and with his family including mealtimes.

He feels as though he has plenty of friends at school, outside of school and a good friend all the time. His parents talk and listen to him and he has brothers and sisters at home all the time. He sometimes feels lonely at school but never at home, on his own or with people. He is always confident with people that he knows sometimes with new

people and sometimes good at making new friends. He has friends of the opposite sex all the time.

In response to the picture of the girl, "because she might be getting bullied for her colour or birthmark. Sad, lonely, not normal". In response to the photo of the boy alone, "sad, lonely because he gets called a long-haired yettie get a haircut, take drugs". In response to the story about a time when he felt lonely, "at Army cadets when I did not know anyone in naffi I just sat on my own". He feels lonely sometimes because, "because no one is there with you". (Note on the back sheet he said he never feels lonely on his own or indeed when he is with people). It makes him feel better to "having someone or something there with me".

Bullied for external reason, lonely being alone, ok if not alone not normal sad different new place

Participant B8

This boy has broadband Internet access at home via a computer, uses a WebCam, makes voice calls using a computer and also uses a games console to access the Internet in addition to using his mobile telephone for this. He accesses the Internet from his bedroom and reports that his parents do not limit Internet use. He uses the mobile telephone voice calls and texting, again unlimited, as is his use of the landline. He accesses the Internet five to seven days a week, usually for two or more hours per day.

He ranked accurately preferring to use his mobile telephone for calls, followed by texts, instant messaging, e-mail, web spaces, and finally online games.

He does not do organised activities after school, neither is he alone in his bedroom or house. He spends less than half an hour talking to friends using the telephone or computer, texting, using the Internet and helping with chores. He spends 30 to 60 minutes with friends, with family and playing or listening to music, and spends one to two hours watching television. He plays on a games console for two to four hours on a normal school day.

Most of the time he feels as though he has plenty of friends at school and a good friend, and sometimes feels as though he has plenty of friends outside school. All the time he feels as though he has parents at home to talk and listen to him, and he never has brothers and sisters at home. He rarely feels lonely at school never feels lonely at home, never feels lonely when he's on his own and rarely feels lonely when he is with people. He describes himself as confident with people he knows and with new people

all the time. He is sometimes good at making new friends and most of the time he has friends of the opposite sex.

In response to the photograph of the girl, "I think she feels lonely but upset about something family related. Personally I think she's alone out of choice remorsing of a lost family member." in response to the photo of the boy alone "I think this guy is angry at something, his shoulders are hunched indicating anger, and he leans his weight against something but his feet are inward meaning he is pushing against the wall -- so hes angry." He did not complete any of the other qualitative questions.

External cause, second picture anger family ?death

Participant B9

This young man has broadband Internet access at home via computer, and also uses his mobile telephone and games console to access the net. He does not have a WebCam nor make voice calls using a computer. He accesses the Internet from his bedroom but its use is limited by his parents. He has a mobile telephone, which he uses mainly for texting, and the use of this is unlimited. Likewise, his use of the landline is limited. He uses the Internet from home one or two days a week, for between 30 and 60 minutes.

He completed the ranking accurately, preferring to use his mobile telephone for texts, followed by face-to-face, then using a mobile telephone for calls, followed by e-mail and instant messaging.

He does not do organised activity after school and neither did he watch the television. He spends less than half an hour with his friends and playing with a games console per day. He spent 30 to 60 minutes with his family and alone. He spends one to two hours talking to friends using a telephone or computer, using the Internet, helping with chores. He spends two to four hours playing or listening to music and more than four hours texting his friends using a computer or telephone. Note the discrepancy between the time online and the time he spends using the Internet on a normal school day, perhaps he interprets online as using the computer, whilst using the Internet includes his use of a games console.

He always feels as though he has a good friend and most of the time he feels as though it has plenty of friends packed and outside of school. He rarely feels as though

he has parents home who talk and listen to him, and never has brothers or sisters at home. He rarely feels lonely at school sometimes feels lonely home, most of the time he feels lonely when he's on his own but he never feels lonely when he is with people. He describes himself as always confident with people he knows, and most of the time he is confident with new people and good at making new friends. He always has friends of the opposite sex.

His response to the photo of the girl "upset no friends." His response to the picture of the boy, "upset and feels like he's got no friends He might Run away". The request for a story about him feeling lonely lead to "last year my friend ignored me upset and felt angry". He did not explain why he feels lonely sometimes. What makes him feel better, "my friends come over (others) and they talk".

Friends, upset, sad, anger, feels better talking to friends, lonely when on own ignoring rejection

Participant B10

This boy has broadband Internet access from home via a computer and games console and his mobile telephone. He uses a WebCam, makes voice calls using a computer and has access to the Internet from his bedroom, his use is not limited by his parents. He uses his mobile telephone for both voice and text course, and this is not limited, neither is his use of the landline. He accesses the Internet from home five or seven days a week, usually online for one to two hours.

He ranked the means of communication accurately, his favourite means of being instant messaging, followed by texts, mobile telephone calls, chat rooms, web spaces, face-to-face, using his computer for voice calls, WebCam, and finally e-mail.

He spends 30 to 60 minutes on a normal school day in organised activities, with friends, talking to friends using telephone or computer, watching television and helping with chores. He spends less than half an hour alone, and spends two to four hours with his family. He spends one to two hours texting friends using a telephone, using the Internet, and playing on a games console.

He feels as though he has plenty of friends at school most of the time and plenty of friends outside of school and a good friend all the time. He has parents at home to talk and listen to him all the time, and brothers and sisters at home all the time. He never feels lonely at school but sometimes feels lonely at home and when he is on his own, never feeling lonely when he is with people. He is confident with people he knows and new people most of the time and is sometimes good at making new friends. He has friends for of the opposite sex all the time.

In response to the photo of the girl, "I think she feels lonely and people may not play with her because she used thought of as weird or she may have something wrong with her." in response to the picture of the boy alone, "he may try to see if he can get some friends, resort to selfharm or just go home." his story about a time when he felt loudly, "I wasn't able to play out, and my friends didnt want to come over, so I did something that passed the time, though I felt lonely." he feels lonely sometimes, "I sometimes feel lonely because my village is small my friends live far away from me." he feels better when he is "talking to someone or going out with friends for a bit".

Someone else is lonely up to them to do something about it, if he feels lonely no fault of own self harm (check occurances ? school ?emo) geographical distance never lonely with people – because not alone or because has people he can talk to? Weird different rejected

Participant B11

This young man has Internet access at home using broadband via his computer, and uses his mobile telephone to access the Internet. He does not use a WebCam, make voice calls using a computer, use a games console to access the Internet nor does he access the Internet from his bedroom and his parents do limit his Internet use. He uses the mobile telephone call mainly for voice calls and texting, use of this is unlimited. His use of the landline is limited; he is able to use a mobile landline telephone in his bedroom. He uses the Internet from home one or two days a week most weeks, usually for one to two hours.

He ranked accurately, preferring face-to-face, followed by texting followed by the landline telephone, mobile telephone calls, online games and e-mail.

He does not do organised activities after school, and neither does he talk to friends using telephone or computer, text telephone friends using a telephone or play on a games console. (Note texting was his second favourite form of communication). He spends less than half an hour alone and helping with chores, spending 30 to 60 minutes with his family and playing or listening to music. He spends one to two hours with friends and using the Internet, spending two to four hours watching television.

He describes himself as having plenty of friends at school most of the time and most of the time feels as though he has a good friend. He sometimes feels as though he has plenty of friends outside school. He does not have brothers and sisters at home but has parents who talk and listen to him. He did not answer in the category about whether he felt lonely at school, but rarely feels home lonely at home, sometimes feels

lonely when he is on his own and with other people. Most of the time he is confident with people he knows, although only sometimes with new people. He is sometimes good at making new friends and has friends of the opposite sex.

In response to the photograph of the girl, "she might feel upset, alone, scared. She might be alone because she is being bullied in school, have no friends, fell out with her friends or just joined the school." In response to the photograph of the boy, "he might go home and sit in his room, phone friends, or talk to his parents." His short story about feeling lonely reads, "In primary school when I was bullied by someone. I felt really upset." as for why he feels lonely sometimes, "when I don't play out with my friends." His brief answer to what makes him feel better, "my parents".

Bullied, upset, scared. Friends, parents making better Wonder why he did not respond to question about feeling lonely at school – perhaps missed question? Suggest phoning friend, talking to parents, as management techniques relocation rejection upset

Participant B12

This young man has Internet access at home but not broadband via his computer, and his Internet use is restricted by his parents. He does not have a WebCam, make voice calls, use a games console to access the Internet, or his mobile phone to access the Internet. He did not respond about the use of a mobile phone, likewise whilst he has a landline telephone he did not respond to questions about this either. He uses the Internet from home one or two days a week, for between 30 and 60 minutes each day.

He ticks to say that he uses face-to-face and landline telephone to communicate with friends, he did not rank any of the answers instead ticking all the other boxes in the rankings section as though he thought this was a 'no' box.

He does not do organised activities after school or texting his friends neither is he alone in his bedroom or house. He spends less than half an hour talking to friends using telephone or computer, using the Internet, helping with chores and with his family. He spent 30 to 60 minutes watching television and one to two hours with friends and playing on a games console.

He sometimes feels as though he has plenty of friends at school and most of the time he feels as he has plenty of friends outside of school and a good friend. He has parents at home who talk and listen to him all the time, and never has brothers and sisters at home. He sometimes feels lonely at school, but never feels lonely at home, on his own or when he is with people. Most of the time he is confident with people he knows, and sometimes he is confident with new people and good at making new friends. He never has friends of the opposite sex.

In response to the photograph of the girl, "I think she is sad because she does not have any friends or people bully her so she might not have friends". In response to the photo of her poorly, "I think he has probably had an argument so he feels sad so he might go home and stay in his room". His story about feeling lonely reads, "I felt lonely in years 4 and 5 when I was bullied for a short period of time I felt all alone." as for why he feels lonely sometimes, "we could I don't like telling people". And what makes him feel better, " playing games for a period of time".

bullies, friends, sad, private, gameplaying argument

Participant B13

This boy has Internet access at home using broadband via his computer. He does not have a WebCam but does make voice calls using a computer. He does not access the Internet via a games console or television but does via mobile telephone. He uses the Internet from his bedroom and is not limited by his parents. He mainly uses his mobile telephone for texting, and his use is unlimited. He has a landline telephone, and use is unrestricted. He accesses the Internet from home five to seven days a week, usually for between one and two hours.

He accurately ranked his favourite means of communication. His favourite was face-to-face, followed by computer using the voice calls, then online games, workspaces, instant messaging, landline telephone calls, mobile telephone text, mobile telephone calls, and e-mail.

On a normal school day, he spends less than half an hour in organised activity, playing on a games console, and playing listening to music. He spent 30 to 60 minutes with his family and helping with chores. He spends one to two hours with friends, texting friends, and alone. He spends two to four hours talking to friends using a telephone or computer and using the Internet. He spent more than four hours on a normal school day watching television.

Most of the time he feels as though he has plenty of friends at school, he has plenty of friends outside of school, and a good friend all the time. His parents talk and listen to him and he has brothers and sisters at home all the time. He rarely feels lonely at school or at home, sometimes feels lonely on his own and never feels lonely with

people. He describes himself as confident with people he knows all of the time but rarely confident with new people. However, he describes himself as good all the time at making new friends and has friends of the opposite sex all the time.

In response to the photograph of the girl, "I think she feels unhappy but on the other hand maybe happy she might like to be on her own. either she wants to be alone or she has no friends". About a picture of the boy he wrote, "this boy looked sad and lonely, he might just stay their next?". His story about being lonely reads, "I've felt lonely at sports day in year seven because I didn't do anything and I had to do lessons and all my friends did sports day." as for why he feels lonely sometimes, "I think I feel lonely because all of my friends are sporty at school but I'm not." And as for what makes him feel better, "thinking of my family makes me feel better. It Just makes me feel my family is with me."

Clear – being alone need not mean being unhappy, friends being different, sad, being different, family make him feel better, different

Participant B14

This young man has broadband Internet access at home via a computer, it uses a WebCam but does not make voice calls using the computer. He does not use a games console to access the Internet but does use a mobile phone. He has access to the Internet from his bedroom and this is unlimited by his parents. He mainly uses his mobile telephone for texting, again unlimited, as is his use of a landline telephone. He uses the Internet five to seven days a week most weeks, usually for between 30 and 60 minutes.

He ranked his ways of communicating accurately with his first choice being making calls by his mobile telephone. Second was texting, then that using the telephone landline, face-to-face, instant messaging and finally webspaces.

He spends one to two hours per day in organised activity, 30 to 60 minutes with friends and watching television and alone. He does not play on a games console, spends up to half an hour helping with chores and two to four hours on a normal school day texting friends, using the Internet and playing or listening to music. He spends more than four hours per day with his family.

He feels as though he has plenty of friends at school, outside of school and a good friend all of the time. He has parents at home who talk and listen to him and brothers or sisters at home all the time. He never feels lonely at school, or at home, or with people but rarely feels lonely when he is on his own. He is sometimes confident with new people but most of the time he is confident with people he knows. Most of the time he is good at making new friends. In response to do you have friends of the

opposite sex? he wrote some in the sometimes box, suggesting that this question was actually quite difficult to answer as posed.

In response to the photograph of the girl he writes, "I think she's alone because she doesn't attempt to be friends with anyone." In response to the photograph of the boy alone he writes, "I think he feels upset and he might try to make friends". In response to writing a short story about a time when he felt lonely, he first wrote I felt lonely, then crossed it out. He then wrote, "I have never felt lonely." as for why he feels lonely sometimes, "I don't because I have some good friends". And for what makes him feel better, "when I feel sad I like going outside in the fresh air (e.g. on my bike).

My impression is that he thinks the onus is on the lonely person to make friends.

Would love to know why he thinks he has never been a lonely. The lonely because of social deficits in the sufferer – but anymore. Friends. Fresh air bike sad

Participant B15

He has broadband Internet access at home using a computer, but does not use a WebCam, make voice calls or a games console and television to access the Internet. He does access the Internet on his mobile telephone that he uses for both voice calls and texting. He has Internet access from his bedroom unlimited by his parents. Neither do his parents limit mobile telephone use or landline use. He did not complete the questions about how often and for how long he uses the Internet.

He did not rank his favourite ways of communicating accurately, in fact he put eight number ones, one two and one three. He communicates via face-to-face, telephone landline, texts, mobile telephone calls, e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms, web spaces, and online games.

He reports spending more than four hours per day in organised activity, and more than four hours per day playing or listening to music. He spends two to four hours with friends and alone in the house. He spends less than half an hour with his family, between 30 and 60 minutes playing on a games console, helping with chores and texting friend using a telephone. He spends one to two hours talking to friends using a telephone or computer, watching television, and using the Internet.

He feels as though he has plenty of friends at school and outside of school and a good friend all of the time. He has parents at home who talk and listen to him, and brothers and sisters at home all the time. He rarely feels lonely at school, at home, on his own and never feels lonely when he is with people. Most of the time he describes himself

as confident with people he knows, and with new people, and sometimes as good at making friends. He has friends of the opposite sex all the time.

Besides the photo of the girl, "sad, dosen't want to play". About the photograph of the boy he writes, "sad, self harm". His short story reads, "never, apart from when my mum and dad split up." As for why he feels lonely sometimes, "when my mum and dad split. But apart from that no, I have great mates." And what makes him feel better, "going on my bike + having friends."

Self harm, the girls thought she is sound, loneliness as a result of parents splitting up.

Change – parental separation bike friends

Participant B16

This young man's answer to the first question were difficult to read he appears to have crossed out the answers that **do** apply, leading to one and only one which he says he does not have a mobile telephone that uses it for its course and texting. Otherwise his responses make sense he has Internet access via broadband computer does not a WebCam makes voice calls using a computer and uses a games console to access the Internet. His use of the Internet is unlimited whereas use of the mobile telephone and his landline at home are limited.

On the other hand he then seems to indicate (again difficult to tell) that he never uses the Internet from home and is online for no time at all. In terms of means of communication he ticks that he uses face-to-face telephone landline mobile telephone texts and calls, computer voice calls, e-mail, instant messaging, chat and, web spaces, blogs, and online games. It is difficult to draw any conclusions about his Internet access.

He spends two to four hours per day in organised activity, one to two hours with friends and alone and playing or listening to music. He spends less than half an hour texting friends, watching television, using the Internet (note suggesting he does have Internet access), and with his family. He spent between 30 and 60 minutes talking to friends using telephone or computer, playing on a games console and help with chores.

He feels as though he has plenty of friends at school and a good friend all of the time, and plenty of friends outside school most of the time. All of the time he has parents at

home who talk and listen to him, and most of the time as brothers and sisters at home. He never feels lonely at school rarely feels lonely home, rarely feels lonely when he is on his own, but always feels lonely when he is with people. (???). He describes himself as confident with people he knows, and with new people all the time, and likewise is good at making new friends all the time. He has friends of the opposite sex most of the time.

About a picture of the girl in the playground, "she feels upset and shy and feels that she can't interact with other people I would join in with them and asked them if I can play." About the picture of the boy he writes, " cut his wrists because he feels his life is not worth living." Before writing this he wrote something else which has been crossed out vigorously and I am unable to read. His short story, "I haven't felt lonely". Why he feels lonely sometimes, "I dont lve got good friends", as for what makes him feel better "same again like top"-presumably referring to his statement that he hasn't felt lonely.

This form is difficult to read, looks as though it was completed in a hurry and it is interesting that instead of merely seeking a response to whether he would like to be told the results of September he has actually written in quite large letters NO! I suspect that this questionnaire might not be an accurate reflection, on the other hand it might be what he wants me to know it is however very inconsistent.

Again girls fault (can't), cut wrists (typical 'emo' response) he doesn't feel lonely because he'd do something about it. Upset shy confidence

Participant B17

This young man has Internet access at home, broadband via a computer a games console and a mobile telephone. He does not use a WebCam nor does he make voice calls using a computer. His Internet use is from his bedroom and unlimited, his mobile telephone use is also unlimited and he uses it mainly for texting. His use of the landline telephone is limited by his parents. He uses the Internet three or four days a week, for between 30 and 60 minutes.

He ranked his means of communication accurately, with his favourite being webspaces followed by face-to-face, texting, e-mail, landline telephone calls, mobile telephone calls, instant messaging, and online games.

He spends one to two hours per day in organised activity, two to four hours with his friends, does not talk to friends using a telephone or computer texting or watching television, he spends half to one hour using the Internet, less than half an hour playing on a games console, two to four hours with his family and 30 to 60 minutes alone. He also spends less than half an hour helping with chores and one to two hours playing listening to music.

He feels as though he has plenty of friends at school most of the time, and friends outside of school sometimes, he feels as though he has a good friend most of the time. He has parents at home who talk and listen to him, and brothers and sisters at home all the time. He rarely feels lonely at school and at home but sometimes feels lonely when he is on his own. He never feels lonely when he is with people. He describes himself as confident with people he knows all of the time, and sometimes as

confident with new people, he is good at making new friends most of the time. He has friends of the opposite sex all of the time.

Beside the photograph of the girl in the playground, "this girl might feel lonely-bored-scared. She probably had a fallout and want time on her own." besides the picture of a young boy he writes, "he feels sad and he might stay there run away go someone on his own." his description of feeling lonely, "I was lonely when my parents went out and said they would be back at 9.00 but they weren't I was on my own in the house I wondered if there was an accident I was scared-worried". He describes why he feels lonely sometimes, "because your alone or youve done something and your upset". What makes him feel better is, "sitting with them and comforting them in a calm and sottle way".

Bored, scared, sad, worried, upset, friends, lonely because of something.

Wants to be alone parents

Participant B18

This boy has broadband Internet access at home via a computer a games console and uses a mobile telephone to access the Internet. He uses WebCam but does not make voice calls using a computer. He has Internet access from his bedroom, which is unlimited. He mainly uses his mobile telephone for voice calls and it is unlimited, his use of the landline is limited. He uses the Internet 5-7 days a week, for about 10 to 30 minutes each day.

After some crossing out and changing his mind, he has successfully used the ranking. His preferred means of communication was webspaces followed by instant messaging and then mobile telephone calls, mobile telephone texting, landline calls, blogs, online games and finally the WebCam.

He spends 30 to 60 minutes per day in organised activity, and more than four hours each school day with his friends. One to two hours talking to friends using computer or telephone, and less than half an hour texting, 30 to 60 minutes watching television and one to two hours using the Internet. He spends less than half an hour playing a games console and two to four hours with his family, whilst he has 30 to 60 minutes on his own. He spends less than half an hour helping with chores and 30 to 60 minutes playing listening to music.

He describes himself as having plenty of friends at school and a good friend most of the time, whilst he has plenty of friends outside of school all the time. His parents are home and talk and listen to him most of the time, he has brothers and sisters at school most of the time. He is rarely lonely at home or at school, sometimes lonely on his own

and never lonely when he is with people. He describes himself as confident with people that he knows all of the time and confident with new people and good at making new friends most of the time. He has friends of the opposite sex all of the time.

Beside a picture of the girl he writes, "she may be new at the school and have no friends, or had a fallout with her friends." Beside the picture of the boy he writes, "he must feel very upset and alone in the world and he may go on to a very far thing of self harm." a story about a time when he felt lonely, "I felt lonely a few days ago when all my friend were out together + not me. I felt alone and bored with nothing to do." he explains why he thinks he feels lonely sometimes, "when there is no one about to talk to all share thoughts with." what makes you feel better when he feels lonely, "when I'm with people I automatically feel better because I have someone to talk to."

Friends, bored, alone, self harm, equate alone and lonely. Relocation change upset rejected?

Participant B19

This boy has broadband Internet access at home via the computer, he also accesses the Internet via a games console television and his mobile phone. He uses WebCam but does not make voice calls using a computer. His parents do not limit Internet use and he can access from his bedroom. He has a mobile phone that he uses mainly for texting, again unlimited. He does not have a landline telephone at home. He uses the Internet five to seven days a week, usually for two or more hours.

He ranked four means of communication, the first being face to face. He then prefers mobile telephone texting, mobile telephone calls, and then e-mail. Despite spending so long on the Internet, it appears that he does not use instant messaging chat rooms etc.

He spends 30 to 60 minutes in organised activity, more than four hours with his friends. He spends less than half an hour using the computer or telephone to talk to friends, and 30 to 60 minutes texting. He spends one to two hours watching television and two to four hours using the Internet, and two to four hours playing on a games console. He spent less than half an hour with his family and 30 to 60 minutes alone. Spends less than half an hour helping with chores and more than four hours listening to music. It would appear that he multitasks perhaps playing online games with his friends?

He feels as though he has plenty of friends at school and outside of the school most of the time, and a good friend all of the time. He has parents at home who talk and listen to him sometimes, and rarely has brothers and sisters at home. He rarely feels lonely at school but most of the time he feels lonely at home and on his own, again he rarely

feels lonely when he is with people. He describes himself as confident with people he knows all the time and confident with new people most of the time. He did not tick the box that making new friends that has friends of the opposite sex.

Beside the photograph of the girl, "I think she feels sad and alone. I think she is alone because no one likes her or wants to be friends with her or she may not be very nice."

Beside the photograph of the boy, "I think he feels distressed and unhappy maybe someone is hurt him or something. I..." his short story reads, "I have felt lonely when my parents have to work at night and I'm upstairs alone." He feels lonely sometimes "because I don't spend much time with my parents" and what makes him feel better when he feels lonely, "if my brother comes over to see me".

Sad, friends, mixture of she may not be nice and the other is not wanting to be friends with her, external events, being alone, parents, feels better with brother, rejection different - not nice distressed unhappy parents brother

Participant B20

This boy has broadband Internet access at home via a computer and uses a WebCam. He does not make voice calls using a computer, use a games console to access the Internet, television or mobile telephone neither does he access the Internet from his bedroom. His parents do not limit Internet use but limit his use of a mobile telephone and a landline. He mainly uses his mobile telephone for texting. He accesses the Internet in three to four days of week, for 30 to 60 minutes each day.

He clearly got muddled with the chart and it is difficult to read but it looks as though face-to-face is his favourite form of communication, with e-mail his second.

He spent one to two hours in organised activity per evening and two to four hours with his friends. He does not talk to friends using telephone or computer or texting. He spent 30 to 60 minutes watching the television and playing on a games console, and one to two hours using the Internet. He spent two to four hours with his family and less than half an hour alone. 30 to 60 minutes playing or listening to music and helping with chores.

He feels as though he has plenty of friends at school most of the time, plenty of friends outside of school and a good friend all of the time. All of the time, he has parents at home who talk and listen to him and most of the time he has brothers and/or sisters at home. He rarely feels lonely at school or at home, sometimes feeling lonely when he is on his own never feeling lonely when he is with people. He describes himself as confident with people he knows most of the time, and confident with new people

sometimes. He is good at making new friends most of the time and has friends of the opposite sex most of the time.

Regarding the photograph of the girl, "she feels I think unhappy because shes alone but she may be shy or no one wants to be her freind." beside the photograph of the boy he writes, "he looks unhappy as well and he might go into depression next." His story about feeling lonely, "I felt lonely when a person was teasing me. I went home and went to bed and I felt horrible". He feels lonely sometimes, "while when your parents go out its very lonely and I don't know what to do", what makes you feel better, "I go out with my freinds and it does work for me".

Unhappy, could be sufferers fault, consequent depression, teasing (bullying), being alone missing parents, friends shy rejected horrible parents

Participant B21

This boy has Internet access at home using the poor broadband by the computer. He uses WebCam and makes voice calls using computer but does not use a games console, mobile telephone or television to access the Internet. He had unlimited access to the Internet from his bedroom. He does not own a mobile telephone. He has a landline at home with unlimited telephone use. He uses the Internet 5-7 days a week, for two more hours at a time.

He ranked accurately with face-to-face being his favourite means of communication. This was followed by instant messaging, WebCam, computer voice calls, webspaces, online games, e-mail, and finally telephone landline.

He spent one to two hours per evening in organised activity and more than four hours each day with his friends. He does not talk to friends using a telephone or computer neither does he text. He spends less than half an hour watching television but more than four hours using the Internet, he also has spends less than half an hour using a games console. He spent two to four hours with his family but more than four hours alone. He spends one to two hours helping with chores and more than four hours playing or listening to music. Again suggesting multitasking.

He feels as though he has plenty of friends at school, outside of school and a good friend all of the time. He has parents at home who talk and listen to him most of the time and brothers and sisters at home all the time. He sometimes feels lonely at school and feels lonely home most of the time. However, he then says he never feels lonely on his own and e never feels lonely when he is with people. He describes

himself as confident all of the time with people he knows and with new people. Most of the time he is good at making new friends, and all of the time he has friends of the opposite sex.

He writes about the photograph with the girl, "I think she feels alone and hurt. On the other hand she may want to be on her own." about a photograph of the boy alone, "I think this boy is very upset. What he might do next is unknown, but if it gets really bad he may inflict self harm.". His short story about a time when he felt lonely, "I felt very sad and never spent any time outside. In fact you could say I preferred it because it wasn't as hectic and I could hear myself think." As for why he feels lonely sometimes, "sometimes I feel lonely because I have friends but they are so far away and my mum is worried if I bike up I could be hurt." when he feels lonely he feels better when, "when my mum trusts me to go to my friends."

Hurt, self harm, sad, being alone could have an upside, friends. want to be on her own
hear self think

Participant G1

This girl has broadband Internet access at home and uses a computer to access it. She does not use WebCam nor a games console to access the Internet, television or mobile telephone. She has no Internet access from her bedroom but parents do did not limit use. She has a mobile telephone which she uses mainly for voice calls, again unlimited. She does not have a landline telephone at home. She accesses the Internet one or two days a week, usually for 10 to 30 minutes.

She ranked effectively with her favourite form of communication being face-to-face, then mobile telephone calls, followed by mobile telephone texts, followed by telephone landline. (Although she had said she had no landline).

She spends less than half an hour in organised activity and with friends on a normal school day. She spends less than half an hour talking to friends using the computer or texting. She spends two to four hours watching television and one to two hours using the Internet. She does not play on a games console and she is not alone (perhaps does not have her own bedroom). She spends two to four hours with family, and one to two hours helping with chores and playing or listening to music.

She feels as though she has plenty of friends at school most of the time but only sometimes has plenty of friends outside of school, she feels as though she has a good friend all of the time. Her parents are home, and talk and listen to her, all of the time and most of the time she has brothers and sisters at home. She sometimes feels lonely at school but rarely feels lonely home. She sometimes feels lonely on her own but rarely when she is with people. She describes herself as sometimes confident with

people she knows and never confident with new people. She never has friends of the opposite sex.

Beside the photograph of the girl she writes, "This girl feels lonely, an outsider to the rest of the children she must feel sad too and maybe neglected. She might be alone because she is different and may be getting bullied. Or maybe she just doesn't want to join in." beside the photograph of the boys she writes, "from this image he seems to be crying or upset about something. He might feel the whole world is against him. He feels sad and is probably confused. I think anything can happen next, he may just stay there for a long period of time to think about what has happened."

Her short story about feeling lonely, "it was on a school day when my sister was ill and I had to go to school by myself. I wasn't used to not being with her at school. I think you don't realize that when someone isn't there you think much about it. The next day she was back to school and I didn't feel as lonely." she feels lonely sometimes because, "I think I feel lonely because when someone is there I miss talking to them." And what makes her feel better, "I listen to music it makes me feel calm and relaxed. It also makes me feel better when the person is back that I've missed."

Family, talking, music, not being alone (but perhaps the right person) rejection sad upset might choose not to join in

Participant G2

This girl has Internet access at home (broadband) a computer and games console. She does not use a WebCam neither does she use the television to access the Internet. She has a mobile phone that she uses to make voice calls and for texting but not to access the Internet. Her Internet access is unlimited as is the use of a mobile phone however, the use of the landline is limited. She accesses the Internet five to seven days a week, for one or two hours per day.

There is a lot of crossing out but she has managed to rank successfully. Her favourite means of communication is instant messaging, followed by e-mail, telephone landline, mobile telephone text, mobile telephone calls, computer voice calls, face-to-face was last (least favourite) of the ones that she ticked.

She spends 30 to 60 minutes in organised activity but no time at all with her friends on a normal school day. She spends less than half an hour talking to friends using a telephone or computer and texting using the telephone. She spent more than four hours watching television, and one to two hours using the Internet. She plays a games console 30 to 60 minutes and spends less than half an hour with family, and also spends less than half an hour alone. She spends no time helping with chores but 30 to 60 minutes listening to music.

She rarely feels as though she has plenty of friends at school, but sometimes has plenty of friends out of school. She rarely feels as though she has a good friend. She has parents at home, who talk and listen to her, and brothers and sisters around, all of the time. She feels lonely at school most of the time but rarely at home. She did not

answer whether she feels lonely when she is on her own but said she feels lonely most of the time when she is with people. She is confident with people she knows most of the time, and sometimes with new people. She is rarely good at making new friends but has friends of the opposite sex all of the time.

She writes about the girl in the photo, "I think this girl feels alone left out and she is probably alone because she is new to school or she is being bullied and no one likes her or wants to play with her." about a photograph with the poorly she writes, "I think this boy might feel the same as the girl above. He might stay there the next or go tell someone something or go to a teacher." this girl did not complete a short story about herself, or talk about why she feels lonely or what might make her feel better.

Left out, friends, bullied relocation rejection

Participant G3

This girl has broadband Internet access at home via a computer. She does not have a WebCam, make voice calls via a computer or use a games console or television to access the Internet. She does not access the Internet from her bedroom and her parents limit her Internet use. She has a mobile telephone, which she does not use to access the Internet, using mainly for texting although its use is limited by her parents. Her landline use is unlimited by her parents. She uses the Internet one or two days a week for between 10 and 30 minutes each time.

Her means of communication were face-to-face, telephone landline and mobile telephone text. She does not use any computer-mediated communication. Her favourite means of communicating with her friend is face-to-face.

She spent at one to two hours in organised activity and one to two hours with friends. She spends less than half an hour a day talking to her friends using telephone or computer or texting. She spends 30 to 60 minutes watching the television and less than half an hour using the Internet, she does not use a games console. She spends two to four hours with her family and less than half an hour alone each day. She spends one to two hours helping with chores and does not listen to or play any music.

She feels as though she has plenty of friends at school, and outside school, and a good friend all the time. She has parents at home who talk and listen to her, and brothers and sisters at home all the time. She rarely feels lonely at school but sometimes feels lonely home. She rarely feels lonely when she is on her own or with people. She describes herself as confident with people she knows most of the time

and with new people sometimes. She is good at making new friends all of the time and has friends of the opposite sex all the time.

She writes about the girl in the photo, "I think she feels very sad/nervous I think that she may be alone because she is picked on/or has no friend/family". About the boy she writes, "I think this boy is very sad and hurt. I think he might take his anger out on someone because that is what some people do (when they are sad!)"

Her story about when she felt lonely, "I have felt very lonely once before I had just started at the school. Every lunchtime my friends and I went out to play. One lunchtime, as a joke they all ran away from me, this carried on until I felt like I had no friends!". She feels lonely sometimes because, "because I can sometimes be a bit mardy and go off and then get angry and upset." and for what makes her feel better when she feels lonely, "when I felt lonely Jane and Emma make me feel better. This works because they always smile and make jokes to make me feel better." (Names changed).

Friends, or rejected, her fault, friends make her feel better. rejection

Participant G4

This young woman has Internet access at home via a computer using broadband. She does not have a WebCam, make voice calls using a computer or use a games console or television to access the Internet. She has a mobile telephone that she does not use to access the Internet. Her parents do not limit the use of her mobile telephone or the Internet but do limit her use of the landline. She uses her mobile telephone mainly for texting. She accesses the Internet three to four days a week, for one to two hours each day.

She accurately ranked four types of communication, the favourite being face-to-face, followed by texting, telephone calls via landline, and webspaces.

She spends 30 to 60 minutes in organised activity, and more than four hours with friends. She spends one to two hours talking to friends using a telephone or computer and texting them. She spent 30 to 60 minutes watching television, one to two hours use the Internet and again in 30 to 60 minutes playing on a games console. She spends one to two hours with her family, alone, helping with chores and playing listening to music.

She feels as though she has plenty of friends at school and outside of school and a good friend all of the time. She feels that she has parents at home who talk and listen to her, and brothers and sisters at home all the time. She rarely feels lonely at school but sometimes at home. She sometimes feels lonely when she is on her own and never feels lonely when she is with people. She describes herself as confident with

people that she knows all the time, and with new people most of the time. All the time she is good at making good new friends and has friends of the opposite sex.

About the photograph of the girl she writes, "she might feel left out she might be alone if she is really quiet or looks different she might feel lonely upset". About the boy she writes, "I think he feels sad lonely he might run away from home." when asked to write a short story about a time when she felt lonely, "when all my friends were doing something different to me at lunchtime." about why she feels lonely sometimes, "you might feel lonely if bad things are happening at home or if your friends are doing something different". About what makes her feel better she writes, "my music because you can just sit down and listen to it".

External cause, sad, friends, music, rejected,

Participant G5

This young woman does not have Internet access at home, she said she did use a computer to access the Internet (perhaps at school?). She does not use a WebCam or games console to access the Internet, she doesn't use a mobile telephone to access the Internet which she mainly uses for texting and has unlimited use. She has unlimited use of the landline at home. She never uses the Internet from home, but uses it for one to two hours per day!

Forms of communication: her favourite is web spaces, followed by texts, landline telephone calls, mobile phone calls, and e-mail.

She has organised activity for 30 to 60 minutes per day, but spends more than four hours per day with her friends. She spends one to two hours per day talking to friends using a telephone or computer, and 30 to 60 minutes texting. She spends two to four hours watching television, wanted to hours using the Internet, and less than half an hour playing on a games console. She spends to one to two hours with family, and one to two hours alone. She spent 30 to 60 minutes helped with chores and wanted to hours playing or listening to music.

She feels as though she has plenty of friends at school, outside of school and a good friend all of the time. She has parents at home who talk and listen to her all the time, and brothers or sisters at home, most of the time. She rarely feels her lonely at school but sometimes feels lonely at home. She feels lonely when she is on her own most of the time and has not completed the box about feeling lonely when with people. She describes herself as confident with people that she knows all of the time and never

(having ticked both boxes). She is rarely confident with new people but sometimes good at making new friends. She has friends of the opposite sex all the time.

About its photograph of the girl she writes, "I think she is being bullied which is why I think she's not playing with anyone, she would feel quite lonely and upset". About the boy she writes, "I think he will run away from home because he is so upset". For her short story she writes, "once I had an argument with my friends I can't remember what it was about but it was a long time ago, and i was left on my own for the whole day and i felt rejected". She feels lonely sometimes because, "I feel lonely if im at home one on my own because there is no-one to talk to or to play with." as for what makes her feel better, "putting the TV on because its as if there talking to you."

Upset run away rejected tv as company bullied

Participant G6

This girl has Internet broadband access at home but she does not have a WebCam nor does she make voice calls using a computer. She does not use a games console or television or her mobile phone to access the Internet. She cannot access the Internet from her bedroom and her parents limit Internet use. She has a mobile phone that she uses mainly for voice calls; this is unlimited as is landline phone use. She uses the Internet from home five to seven days a week, for one to two hours each time.

She ranked four successfully; her favourite means of communication is face-to-face, followed by instant messaging, Web spaces, and telephone calls via a landline.

She spends no time in organised activity on a normal school day but one to two hours with friends. She spends one to two hours talking to friends using a telephone or computer but does not text them. She spent one to two hours watching the television and one to two hours using the Internet. She spends less than half an hour playing on a games console, and 30 to 60 minutes with her family. She spent one to two hours alone and less than half an hour helping with chores while she spends 30 to 60 minutes playing or listening to music.

Most of the time she feels as though she has plenty of friends at school and outside of school, she feels as though she has a good friend all of the time. She has parents who listen and talk to her at home all the time but never has brothers or sisters at home. She rarely feels lonely at home or at school, sometimes feeling lonely when on her own but rarely when with people. She describes herself as confident with people she

knows most of the time, but rarely with new people. Sometimes she is good at making new friends, and most of the time she has friends of the opposite sex.

Beside the photograph of the girl she writes, "she feels alone maybe she's been bullied". Beside the photo of the boy she writes, "he feels sad". When asked to write a short story, she writes, "I don't know". When asked why she think she feels lonely sometimes, "maybe because if something bad happened in the day and nothing good." when asked what makes her feel better she replies, "music".

Bullied sad bad event music

Participant G7

This participant says that she does not have Internet access at home or broadband she does however use a computer to access the Internet and a games console. She does not use a mobile telephone to access the Internet, but uses it for texting and use is unlimited. Her Internet access is limited and she is unable to access the Internet from a bedroom. Her use of her landline telephone is limited. She accesses the Internet three to four days a week, for one or two hours each time.

She did not rank successfully; she uses all ways of communicating with her friends except for computer voice calls, chat rooms and blogs. She has designated number one favourite as face-to-face, telephone landline, texts, and Webspaces. In second place were mobile telephone calls, e-mail and instant messaging. She ranks WebCam in third place (although on the first page she said she did not use a WebCam at home.)

She spent no time in organised activity but more than four hours each normal school day with her friends. She spends 30 to 60 minutes talking to friends using a telephone or computer, and two to four hours texting. She spent one to two hours watching television, using the Internet, and playing on a games console. She spends two to four hours with her family and less than half an hour alone. She spends 30 to 60 minutes helping with chores and listening to music.

She feels as though she has plenty of friends at school and a good friend all of the time, she feels as though she has plenty of friends outside school most of the time. All of the time she has parents at home who talk and listen to her, and sometimes she

has brothers and sisters at home. She rarely feels lonely at school and never feels lonely at home. She sometimes feels lonely when she is on her own but never when she is with people. She describes herself as confident with people she knows all of the time and confident with new people and is good at making new friends most of the time. She has friends of the opposite sex all the time.

About the photograph with the girl she writes, "she must feel lonely and upset that no one wants to play with her. This may be because she is a special needs child and they find her different or they just don't like her in person." about the photograph up with the boy she writes, "he must feel lonely and upset. If he isn't prepared to try and make new friends he might just be alone every lunch break time". She left a space declining to write a story. When asked why she feels lonely, "maybe if all of my friends are involved in an activity and I'm not had no want to be with my tried to join other groups". About what makes her feel better, "when a person comes out plays with me or with a group let me join them. This works because I'm no longer alone."

Upset rejection lonely person needs to make friends alone/loneliness

Participant G8

This girl has broadband access to the Internet at home via a computer only. She also has a mobile telephone that she uses for both voice calls and texting. She does not have Internet access in her bedroom, neither is the use of a mobile phone or Internet limited by her parents. She accesses the Internet three to four days a week for 30 to 60 minutes each time.

She ticks three means of communication face-to-face, mobile telephone texting, and Web spaces. She ranked both face-to-face and Webspaces as being her favourite, followed by mobile texting.

On a normal school day she spends one to two hours in organised activity and with friends. She spent 30 to 60 minutes talking to friends using a telephone or computer, using the Internet and with her family. She does not text friends using a mobile telephone on a normal school day neither does she watch television, play on a games console, spend time alone, help with chores, or play or listen to music.

She reports that she has plenty of friends at school, outside of school and a good friend sometimes. She has parents at home who talk and listen to her, and brothers or sisters at home, all of the time. She sometimes feels lonely at school and rarely feels lonely at home. Sometimes she feels lonely when she is on her own and with people. Most of the time she describes herself as confident with people she knows, and sometimes with new people. She sometimes good at making new friends and sometimes has friends of the opposite sex.

Besides the photograph of the girl she writes, "because she hasn't got any friends to play with or maybe she's upset about something and doesn't want to join in even if she could. She might a bit sad watching everybody else having fun." besides the photograph of the boy, "he probably feels sad and I think next, or maybe he is already, start crying. You cannot see the expression on his face because it's hidden it away from everyone." Her story about a time when she felt lonely, "when my friends are subtly changed and started being a bit mean to me and I felt really left out." As for why she feels lonely sometimes, "maybe it's because I have fallen out with my friends because they make me feel left out and are sometimes mean to me so sometimes I feel like I'm by myself."

She did not write in a section about what makes her feel better.

Upset sad friends rejection

Participant G9

This 13-year-old girl has broadband Internet access via a computer at home, she does not access the Internet from her bedroom and her Internet use is limited by her parents. She has a mobile phone, which she does not use mainly for telephone calls or texting, use is not limited by her parents. She does not have a landline telephone at home. She accesses the Internet from home one or two days a week, for 10 to 30 minutes at a time.

She ranked accurately her favourite means of communication being face-to-face, followed by telephone landline, (although she had said she did not have a landline telephone) mobile telephone calls, texts, e-mail, and instant messaging.

She spends one to two hours on a normal school day in organised activity, watching television and alone. She spends two to four hours with friends. She spends less than half an hour talking to friends using telephone or computer, texting, playing on a games console and helping with chores. She spent 30 to 60 minutes (different answer from before) using the Internet and with her family.

She feels as though she has plenty of friends at school, outside of school, and a good friend, all of the time. All of the time she has parents at home who talk and listen to her and brothers or sisters at home. She never feels lonely at school, at home, when she is on her own, and when she is with people. She describes herself as confident with people she knows all of the time but never confident with new people. She is good at making friends all of the time and has friends of the opposite sex all the time.

About the photograph of the girl she writes, " I think she is sad and lonely. She is maybe sitting by herself because she gets bullied or she has no friends." besides the photograph of the boy she writes, "I think he feels sad because he maybe got bullied or picked on by someone." her story about feeling lonely, "I was lonely when I started this school (inserted the name here) I did not know any one and not alot of people came from my primary school. and I did not know what the school will be like and if I would make any friends. But in the end I made a lot of friends and best friends." she feels lonely sometimes because, "sometime I get upset and feel left out." As for what makes her feel better, "it makes me feel much better when I'm with my friends espically my best friend and. They all make me happy".

Sad bullied friends relocation upset

Participant G10

This girl has Internet access at home via a computer, but has not answered whether she has broadband or not. She does not use WebCam, make voice calls using a computer, use a games console or television to access the Internet but does use mobile telephone to access the Internet. She does not access the Internet from her bedroom, her parents do not limit Internet use. She mainly uses her mobile telephone for texting and has unlimited use of the landline telephone. She accesses the Internet from home three or four days a week, usually for one to two hours.

She has not ranked means of communication accurately but lists those that she uses as: face-to-face, telephone landline, mobile telephone texting, mobile telephone calls, e-mail, instant messaging, and web spaces. She has ranked two as her favourite instant messaging and mobile telephone texting. She identified three as her second favourite; web spaces, mobile telephone calls, and telephone landline.

She spends one to two hours in organised activity, and 30 to 60 minutes with friends on a normal school day. She does not play on a games console and spend less than half an hour talking to friends using telephone or computer and playing or listening to music. She spent 30 to 60 minutes texting friends, watching television, alone and helping with chores. She spends one to two hours per day using the Internet and with her family. She added dance lessons as a separate activity at the bottom of the chart and said she spends 1 1/2 hours on a normal school day dancing.

She feels as though she has plenty of friends at school and outside of school, all of the time, and a good friend, most of the time. All of the time she has parents at home, who

talk and listen to her, and brothers and sisters at home. She rarely feels lonely at school or at home, sometimes feels lonely when she is on her own, and rarely feels lonely when she is with people. She is confident with people she knows and with new people and good at making new friends all of the time. She has friends of the opposite sex all the time.

Besides the photograph of the girl in the playground she writes, "I think this girl feels alone, unwanted, disliked, sad and worthless I think this because; no-one will play with her. No-one will talk to her and no-one will go near her. I think she feels like an outsider to all of the other children because of the reasons above." besides the photograph of the boy on his own she writes, "I think this boy feels sad, lonely and I think he could be being bullied or his parent(s) might be hurting him all upsetting him in some way." Her story about being lonely reads, "It was in the summer holidays I wanted to play out with my friends but I had to finish my homework. everyone was playing and having fun but I couldn't finish my Homework because I didn't understand the question so I stayed inside all day." she writes of when she feels lonely, "when my sister is ill and I have to go on the school bus on my own and my friends that go on the bus walk to school and I sit on my own with no one to talk to." As for what makes her feel better, "a big hug from my mum or dad". Before she wrote "or dad " she wrote "or a friend." but she crossed this out.

Alone worthless disliked sad unwanted outsider rejected bullied parental rejection not her fault if lonely parents sister

Participant G11

This girl accesses the Internet at home using broadband via a computer. She has a mobile telephone that she uses mainly for texting. She does not access the Internet from her bedroom and her Internet access and use of mobile phone is not limited, neither is her use of the landline telephone limited. She accesses the Internet three to four days a week most weeks, for one to two hours at a time.

She ranked accurately, her favourite means of communication being face-to-face. This was followed by telephone landline, mobile telephone calls, mobile telephone text, instant messaging, and webspaces.

She spends 30 to 60 minutes in organised activity, and alone, helping with chores, and playing or listening to music. She spends one to two hours with friends, talking to friends using a telephone or computer, watching television, using the Internet and with her family. She spends less than half an hour texting, and no time at all playing on a games console.

She did not complete the chart on the back page.

Besides the photograph of the girl, "here, I am again sitting by myself. I wonder to myself why I can't be one of them running around and having fun. People tell me to go away or hurl nasty abuse at me when I try to join in. It will always be like this because they all know about my home life. I sit here every day, thinking about the same thing." besides the photograph of the boy she writes, "Why? Why? Why? Why is it always

me? I have done nothing! Well, why can I not do it to them? I could get my cousin on them, to seek revenge! That's what I'll do! Revenge!"

She does not write a story about a time when she has felt lonely but describes why she feels lonely sometimes, "when I am not included in things, when my friends or family leave me out." About what makes her feel better, "I have an auntie, which I can always talk to, no matter what and my friends."

Rejection because of home life – not child's control rejected family friends auntie

Participant G12

This girl has broadband access to the Internet at home via a computer, she also uses a games console, television and mobile telephone to access the Internet. She does not use a WebCam and neither did she make voice calls using the computer. She has Internet access in her bedroom, it is not limited by her parents. She mainly uses her mobile telephone for voice calls, again like her landline telephone use this is not limited by her parents. She uses the Internet from home five to seven days a week, for one or two hours per day.

She has ticked that she uses all of the different means of communication identifying three as first favourites, face-to-face, webspaces and online games. Her second favourite was instant messaging, followed by mobile telephone calls and landline telephone calls. She gave all the other forms of communication a five.

She spent 30 to 60 minutes per day in organised activity, with friends and helping with chores. She spends less than half an hour talking to friends using a telephone or computer, and does not generally text or watch television on a normal school day. She spends one to two hours with her family, and two to four hours playing on a games console. She spends more than four hours (different answer) using the Internet, and alone, and playing or listening to music.

She wrote a little beside the photos, beside the photograph of the girl she writes, "maybe she is ill". Beside the photograph of the poorly she writes, "sad cry? he might be stoned" (her underlining). She did not write anything about herself feeling lonely.

Sad

Participant G13

This girl has broadband access to the Internet at home via computer, and uses a mobile telephone to access the Internet. She does not access the Internet from her bedroom and her parents limit her Internet use but not her use of a mobile telephone. She mainly uses the mobile telephone for texting and has unlimited use of the landline. She did not complete the part of the questionnaire about how often and for how long she uses the Internet.

She ranked accurately putting instant messaging as her favourite means of communicating with her friends. This was followed by mobile telephone text, web spaces, mobile telephone calls, face-to-face, telephone landline, e-mail and finally blogs.

She spends one to two hours in organised activity, talking to friends using a telephone or a computer, using the Internet and playing on a games console on a normal school day. She spends two to four hours with her friends, and alone, and helping with chores. She spent more than four hours with her family. She spent 30 to 60 minutes watching television and playing or listening to music, and less than half an hour texting her friends.

She feels as though she has plenty of friends at school most of the time and plenty of friends outside of school sometimes. She has a good friend all of the time. She has parents at home who talk and listen to her, all of the time, and brothers or sisters at home, most of the time. She rarely feels lonely at school but sometimes feels lonely at home. She feels lonely when she is on her own all of the time, never feeling lonely

when with people. She describes herself as confident with people she knows sometimes but never confident with new people. She is good at making new friends most of the time and has friends of the opposite sex most of the time.

Beside the photograph of the girl she writes, "I think she feels quite lonely. She might be alone because she might be new too the school or have no friends". Besides the photograph of the boy alone that she writes, "he probably feels sad and alone, maybe hes being bullied or had been shouted at he will probably run home!"

Her short story about a time when she felt lonely, "I felt lonely when I started (the name of school) for the first time this was in year 2. I cried then as I didn't want my parents to leave me in a place where I didn't know anyone." asked why she thinks she feels lonely sometimes, "I think its because im sad and don't know what to do with myself." she feels better when, "it's when people come up too me and asked if im okay thats what makes me feel better. It makes me feel comforted".

Relocation friends sad bullied parental separation sympathy concern

Participant G14

This girl has broadband Internet access at home via a computer. Her use of the Internet is limited by her parents, she has a mobile telephone that she uses mainly for texts and her use of this is unlimited. Her use of the landline is unlimited. She accesses the Internet three or four days a week, usually for 10 to 30 minutes.

She ranked for what means of communication accurately, her favourite means of communication with her friends after school being face-to-face, followed by e-mail, mobile telephone texts, and mobile telephone calls.

She spends one to two hours in organised activity, but no time with friends outside of school on a normal school day. She spends less than half an hour talking to friends using a telephone or computer, and less than half an hour texting friends. She spends one to two hours watching television and less than half an hour using the Internet, she does not use a games console. She spends one to two hours with her family and alone. She spends less than half an hour helping with chores and she does not play or listen to music.

She feels as though she has plenty of friends at school and a good friend, all of the time, and as though she has plenty of friends outside of school, most of the time. She has parents at home who talk and listen to her sometimes, and brothers or sisters at home all the time. She reports never feeling lonely at school or at home, she sometimes feels lonely on her own and rarely feels lonely when she is with people. She describes herself as confident with people she knows, all the time and with new

people sometimes. She is sometimes good at making new friends and sometimes has friends of the opposite sex.

Beside the photograph of the girl she writes, "I think she has fallen out with a friend and just wants to be alone to think." Beside the photograph of a boy she writes, "I think he is angry about something at home maybe. He may go and see and talk to someone." She was clearly about to write something else "I think" is crossed out. Her short story about feeling lonely, "I felt lonely when I moved house and came to a different school but people soon made me feel welcome." About why she feels lonely sometimes, "I feel lonely sometimes because people have moved away or died so I can't fault them. I feel lonely when I know I can't talk to people." And about what makes her feel better, "I think of Bisley my cat who died and all the good times we had together."

Alone to think relocation separation – death can't talk to others memories pet

Participant G15

This girl has broadband Internet access at home via a computer, and also uses a games console to access the Internet. She uses a WebCam and makes voice calls using the computer. She does not access the Internet from her bedroom and her parents do not limit her Internet use. She has a mobile telephone that she uses primarily for texting, again unlimited. She is not limited in her use of the landline telephone. She accesses the Internet five to seven days a week most weeks, being online for one to two hours.

She uses all the means of communication mentioned except chatrooms, and ranked accurately. Her favourite was face-to-face, followed by mobile telephone texts, calls, landline calls, WebCam, e-mail, computer voice calls, with spaces, online games, blogs, and finally instant messaging.

She did not complete the box about organised activity. She spends more than four hours with friends outside of school on a normal school day. She spends one to two hours talking to friends using a telephone or computer and two to four hours texting friends using a mobile telephone. She spends 30 to 60 minutes watching television, one to two hours using the Internet, and one to two hours playing on a games console. She spends 30 to 60 minutes with her family, one to two hours alone and 30 to 60 minutes helping with chores. She spends two to four hours listening to music.

She feels as though she has plenty of friends at school, outside of school and has a good friend, all of the time. She has parents at home who talk and listen to her, sometimes and has brothers and sisters at home all the time. She never feels lonely at

school, at home, on her own, or with people. She describes herself as confident with people she knows, new people, and good at making new friends all the time. She has friends of the opposite sex all the time.

She writes of the photograph of girl, "This girl feels lonely she has no friends, this may be because she is being bullied or she is too different for people to like her. She wants someone to come up to her and ask her to join in with them and is too shy to ask herself. The girl doesn't have much confidence and is more interested in a good education rather than socializing. She wants some friends." Beside the photograph of the boy she writes, "This boy feels upset and angry, shy, scared and worried. Next he will try to hide all of his emotions but after a while he will get to upset and have an urge to tell someone all ask them for help after he had asked for help he will then be fine to be normal and has friends."

Her story about being lonely reads, "I was bullied at not being normal i felt really bad, like there was no one i could talk to. I told someone after about a year after i felt so much better." When asked why she feels lonely sometimes, "i feel lonely sometimes because people ditch me for other more popular people." when asked what makes her feel better, "what makes me feel better is talking to my 7 best friends they help me out try to find a way to make it better."

Bullied different friends shy – attributing cause to sufferer needs to be normal to have friends

Participant G16

This girl has broadband Internet access at home via a computer and she uses a web cam. She has a mobile phone that she uses mainly for texting. She does not have access to the Internet from her bedroom but her Internet use and use of her mobile phone is unlimited. Her use of the landline is limited by her parents. She accesses the Internet from home one or two days a week, and is usually online for one to two hours.

She has accurately ranked her favourite means of communication, her favourite form of being instant messaging, followed by webspaces, face-to-face, mobile telephone texts, mobile telephone calls, e-mail, and finally telephone landline.

She spends two to four hours with her friends outside of school, and 30 to 60 minutes in organised activity. She spends one to two hours talking to friends using a telephone or computer, and 30 to 60 minutes texting. She spends two to four hours watching television, one to two hours using the Internet, and less than half an hour playing on the games console. She spent 30 to 60 minutes with her family and less than half an hour alone. She spends less than half an hour helping with chores and does not play or listen to music.

She feels as though she has plenty of friends at school and outside of school, most of the time, and sometimes, feels as though she has a good friend. She has parents at home who talk and listen to her all of the time and never has brothers or sisters at home. She rarely feels lonely at school but sometimes feels lonely at home. She sometimes feels lonely when she is on her own, and rarely feels lonely when she is with people. Most of the time she describes herself as confident with people that she

knows, and good at making new friends, she is sometimes confident with new people. She sometimes has friends of the opposite sex.

The photograph of the girl she writes, "She might be alone because she has a different personality to the other children. She also might be alone because she is smaller or is younger than the other children. She might feel neglected and upset." Beside the photograph of the boy she writes, "He will feel neglected, upset and angry as he is alone. He might just go to his bedroom and cry or if he is brave enough he might go and tell someone."

Her story about when she felt lonely, "I was lonely ones when I first started school in reception. I didn't know anyone and I had to make friends quickly and I did." About why she feels lonely sometimes, "You feel lonely sometimes because you have fallen out with someone and you don't know who to talk to." she did not write anything about what makes her feel better when she's lonely.

Different, personality and physical appearance. neglected upset angry as consequence of being alone, brave to tell – privacy sharing relocation – new people fallen out required to make friends – something she does.

Participant G17

This girl uses a computer to access the Internet at home but does not have broadband access. Her access to the Internet is limited. She has a mobile telephone that she uses mainly for texting; her use of this is not limited. Her use of the landline telephone at home is not limited. She accesses the Internet from home one or two days a week, for 30 to 60 minutes each time.

She ranked accurately with mobile telephone texts being her favourite means of communication. This is followed by telephone landline, web spaces, face-to-face and then mobile telephone calls.

She spends less than half an hour with friends, and one to two hours in organised activity after school on a normal school day. She talks to friends using a telephone or a computer for 30 to 60 minutes, and texts for less than half an hour per day. She spends 30 to 60 minutes watching television and using the Internet, and less than half an hour playing on a games console. She spent 30 to 60 minutes with her family, and less than half an hour alone. She does not help with chores and spends two to four hours listening to music.

She sometimes feels as though she has plenty of friends at school, although always feels that she has plenty of friends outside of school and a good friend. She has parents at home, all the time who talk and listen to her, and brothers and sisters at home. She sometimes feels lonely at school and at home. She feels lonely when she is on her own and lonely when with people sometimes. Most of the time, she describes herself as confident with people she knows, and with new people. She describes

herself as good at making new friends all of the time and always has friends of the opposite sex.

When asked to write about the photograph of the girl, "I think she feels sad, lonely, depressed. She hates herself. She wishes she was more popular and more confident. Right now she is really unconfident. She also feels left out, she might be alone because she's being bullied which is horribal - I've been there." beside the photograph of the boy she writes, "the same as the girl I think he might walk home, Alone very alone".

Her story about a time when she felt lonely, "I used to feel lonely quite a lot. When my friends ditched me and I was being bullied, I was depressed, sad, lonely, upset, confused, unconfident, I hated myself. I told my mum who told a teacher and it got sorted out - I then made new friends." when asked why she feels lonely sometimes, "because I don't have very many friends, and I have been bullied ". When asked what makes her feel better she simply replies, "friends".

Sad lonely depressed bullied rejected unconfident hate self upset confused depressed friends

Participant G18

This young woman has broadband Internet access at home via a computer, and uses a WebCam. She has Internet access from her mobile telephone and can access the Internet from her bedroom; her parents do not limit Internet use. She has a mobile telephone that she uses mainly for texting, again unlimited. Her use of the landline is not limited. She uses the Internet three to four days a week, for 10 to 30 minutes at a time.

She ranked accurately, her first choice of communication mode being mobile telephone texts. This is followed by WebCam, e-mail, chat rooms, landline and calls via mobile telephone.

She spends two to four hours in organised activity, and one to two hours with her friends. She spends less than half an hour texting her friends, and 30 to 60 minutes talking to friends using a telephone or computer. She spent one to two hours watching the television, 30 to 60 minutes using the Internet and less than half an hour playing on a games console. She spent one to two hours with her family and one to two hours alone. She does not help with chores and she spent 30 to 60 minutes playing or listening to music.

She feels as though she has plenty of friends at school and outside of school and has a good friend, most of the time. She always has parents at home who talk to listen to her and brothers or sisters at home. She rarely feels lonely at home or at school. She sometimes feels lonely when she is on her own and has not completed the box about whether she feels lonely when she is with people. (Maybe she does not recognize that

you can feel lonely but not alone). Most of the time she describes herself as confident with people she knows, and she is sometimes confident with new people and sometimes good at making new friends. Most of the time, she has friends of the opposite sex.

Beside the photograph of the girl she writes, "she probably feels lonely because everyone around her is happy and playing with friends however she is sat alone. She may be alone because she wants to be alone with her thoughts or maybe she has no friends." About the photograph of the boy on his own she writes, "he probably feels upset and alone. he may go home next."

She has not written at all at any time when she has felt lonely instead writing across the top of the sheet "I can't remember!" Her writing is clear and the questionnaire is well completed and she would like to know about the results in September.

Rejection or choose to be alone upset

Participant G19

This girl has Internet broadband access via a computer from home, and uses a WebCam and makes voice calls using her computer. She also accesses the Internet from her mobile telephone, which she uses for both voice calls and texting. She has Internet access in her bedroom and her use of the Internet and mobile telephone is unlimited. Her use of the landline telephone is limited. She accesses the Internet three to four days a week, for 30 to 60 minutes each time.

She ranks her means of communicating with friends accurately with her favourite being face-to-face. Her second favourite is using the computer to make voice calls, followed by landline telephone calls, mobile telephone calls, mobile telephone text, instant messaging, and webspaces.

She spends two to four hours on a normal school day in organised activity, and more than four hours with her friends. She spends less than half an hour texting, and 30 to 60 minutes talking to friends using a telephone or computer. She spends 30 to 60 minutes watching television and using the Internet and less than half an hour playing on a games console. She spends two to four hours with her family, and less than half an hour alone. She spends less than half an hour helping with chores and playing or listening to music.

Most of the time she feels as though she has plenty of friends at school, she feels as though she has plenty of friends outside of school and a good friend all of the time. All of the time she has parents at home who talk and listen to her and brothers or sisters at home. She never feels lonely at school or at home, but reports that she feels lonely

when she is on her own, most of the time. She never feels lonely when she is with other people. Most of the time she is confident with people that she knows, and she is sometimes confident with new people. Sometimes she is good at making new friends and most of the time she has friends of the opposite sex.

Beside the photograph of the girl she writes, "She might feel hurt, sad, lonely, tormented. She might have been bullied or hurt/injured in the play-ground, something might have happened at home." About the photograph of the boy alone she writes, "I think he is sad because it looks like he is crying. It also looks as if he is protecting him from bullies." for her story about feeling lonely she writes, "I felt lonely when I was left out with my friends because I didn't want to play football so they went off and left me on my own. I felt left out and hurt." she did not write anything about why she feels lonely sometimes, but when asked what makes her feel better, "when my family and friends cheer me up."

Hurt sad tormented bullied home or playground rejected family friends

Participant G20

This girl does not have Internet access at home. She has a mobile telephone that she uses for voice calls and texting. She has unlimited use of her mobile and unlimited use of the landline telephone. She never accesses the Internet from home at all.

She accurately ranks saying that she uses face-to-face in preference, followed by mobile telephone calls and then mobile telephone texts.

She does not spend any time in organised activity and she has left the section about friends blank. She spends less than half an hour talking to friends using telephone or computer and the same length of time texting. She spends 30 to 60 minutes watching television and does not use the Internet. She spends less than half an hour playing on a games console. She spent 30 to 60 minutes with her family and less than half an hour alone. She spent 30 to 60 minutes doing chores and less than half an hour playing or listening to music.

She feels as though she has plenty of friends at school most of the time, and sometimes has plenty of friends outside of school. She feels as though she has a good friend all of the time, and parents at home in talk and listen to her all the time, she has brothers and all sisters at home all the time. She sometimes feels lonely at school and sometimes feels lonely at home. Most of the time she feels lonely when she is on her own, and she rarely feels lonely when with people. She would describe herself as sometimes confident with people that she knows, but always confident with new people. She describes herself as rarely good at making new friends, but always has

friends of the opposite sex. (There are pen marks in the empty boxes of some of these questions suggesting that she thought carefully about which ones to check).

Beside a photograph of the girl she writes, "this girl is called Sarah and SARAh feels bullied, scared to make friends in case she is left out. Some people worry About SARAh, but we know thAt she hAs something wrong but she won't tell Anyone about it MAYbe if she had friends then she will be more confidence in herself." about a photograph of the boy alone she writes, "this boy is called Jordan, now JordAn hAs friends but they take him for grAnted, they take his money from him mAke him lie to his teAchers and pArents he knows he is doing wrong but he knows he can't tell Anyone or ELSe!!".

When asked to write a short story, "when I wAs upset lonely, it wAs when I wAs being bullied, it mAde me not wnt to eAt, or even come to school. I wAs told to hit this girl but I don't hAve the guts to so I got moved forms. I'm hAppier now. And I'm glAd thAt she wAs told to leAve me alone." when asked why she feels lonely sometimes, "sometimes becAuse my friends are ill or when we fAll out over something silly." When asked what makes her feel better, "hAving someone to confide in or Just mAinly my friends."

Bullied scared confidence follows having friends taken for granted – not true friends?
Alone rejected someone to confide in

Appendix 4: Tally Chart

Numbers of case studies from which the themes identified were derived:

	Boys	Girls
Rejection (<u>not</u> bullying)	1111111	111111111111
Personal inadequacy	11111	111111
Being different	1111	11111111
Relocation school	111	111111
Friends	111111111111111111	111111111111111
Bullied	111111	1111111111
Being alone	11	
Positive being alone	111111	11111
Separation inc geographical location and death	111	1
'normal'	1	
family	111111111	11111111
Parents comfort	1111	11
Sep parents	11111	
Self harm	11111	
Run away	111	