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SANE Peer Group Chat

Date: 09/06/2022

Title: Trying to Connect in a Sometimes Lonely World

Description: Despite living in an ever more connected world, loneliness and isolation still seem to be ever present. Loneliness and isolation can take many different forms – it could be emotional, social and/or collective. Let's come together to share experiences of loneliness and isolation, and explore ways of connecting.

LittleSteps (PSW)	Hello there @Best24! :)
Best24	Hello,
Otter (Moderator)	Hi Best24!
Best24	Hi Otter,
Best24	How are all have been?

LittleSteps (PSW)	I'm going well thanks, Best24! :) We will be starting the group soon!
Best24	What are we might chat about? Can you please tell me a bit more? I am new here.
LittleSteps (PSW)	Sure! This group is called Trying to Connect in a Sometimes Lonely World. We will be talking about our experiences of isolation and loneliness, as well as talking about connection. Welcome! :D
Best24	Thank you.
TideisTurning (PSW)	Hi everyone. First, we'd like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the various lands we are all joining this event from. We pay deep respect to the Elders of those Countries, past and present, and we further extend that respect to any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people joining this group tonight. Welcome everyone to today's Peer Group Chat talking about Trying to Connect in a Sometimes Lonely World. We really value your thoughts on how these groups go, so we will send a link to a short survey at the end of this event for you to complete. While this survey is optional, it is a chance to provide feedback for us to improve our services. In case you might need to leave part way through the event, you can find the survey here now: https://sane.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5uUF0sHJRKQ6wyW
TideisTurning (PSW)	Tonight, Peer Support Workers @LittleSteps and @TideisTurning will be facilitating a discussion around the topic of Trying to Connect in a Sometimes Lonely World. Whether you have lived experience of complex mental health issues, you care for someone who does, or both, human connection can be important for all. We'll be moving through a number of discussion questions tonight, and it's entirely up to you how much or how little you are comfortable with sharing. Some of the conversation may be heavy in nature as we talk about loneliness and isolation @Otter who moderates on the SANE Forums, is working behind the scenes to ensure our safety. If you're having any technical difficulties, please see our FAQ (https://www.sane.org/peer-support/peer-group-chat/chat-faq#what-if-i-am-having-a-tough-time-and-need-immediate-support) or message @Otter We're looking forward to creating a space where we can reflect and learn together and expand our ideas of Trying to Connect in a Sometimes Lonely World.
TideisTurning (PSW)	Hi @Best24 Pleased to have you with us this evening :)

TideisTurning (PSW)	We will be starting the discussion shortly, and will just allow a bit more time for people to log on and join 😊
Best24	May I please ask? How many people will be join this Peer Group Chat? LittleSteps (PSW:hushed:
TideisTurning (PSW)	Welcome everyone! Feel free to introduce yourselves. I'm @TideisTurning
LittleSteps (PSW)	Good question Best24! :) We will have to wait and see – we're not entirely sure but hopefully we get quite a few people in the group so we can talk about loneliness and isolation – as well as connection!
Best24	Thank you, TideisTurning (PSW)
LittleSteps (PSW)	I'm @LittleSteps! :)
Best24	Hi all, my nickname is Best, I am from Thailand and I have been to Melbourne since 2011. I am also new here. Please feel free to tell me a bit more about Trying to Connect in a Sometimes Lonely World.
TideisTurning (PSW)	Often, loneliness and isolation can be thought of as two sides of the same coin. But, what's the difference between loneliness and isolation?
Best24	I think loneliness is someone who has been lonely by one individual which can cause homesick, but an isolation is like someone withdrawn from routines and every day tasks.
LittleSteps (PSW)	I suppose it comes down to how you look at it, I believe. I think loneliness has to do with how you feel as an individual, in your heart and spirit. Isolation is how you might describe this phenomenon more if you are on the outside looking in – say, to describe the quantity or quality of someone's relationships. For me, I have gone through periods and stages where both terms could be used to describe my experiences, and also times where I haven't felt these so strongly.
TideisTurning (PSW)	Loneliness and isolation come in many forms. How do you experience loneliness and isolation?
Best24	I think loneliness is experiencing by family and others people are not have enough time to be with them and does not support much as a carer.

Best24	Isolation is experiencing by spend less time with others in the community and friends.
LittleSteps (PSW)	I don't consider myself lonely today – but there have been times in the past where I have felt a lot of loneliness and isolation. I was, in the past, working very long days and didn't actually have the time for connection with people outside of work. I had a very small network and not a lot of balance. Things have changed now, but I still sometimes deal with loneliness, and have found a few ways to manage and form new connections.
Best24	I am also gets isolation as well sometime.
TideisTurning (PSW)	It sounds like loneliness might come in when there is a difference between the kind or level of connection you want or need, and the actual level of connection you have at a given time.
Best24	My isolation are when I have withdrawn my activities of daily livings, I lack self of controls, I loose confidence and do not want to participate in any outdoor activities.
TideisTurning (PSW)	That's a really great description of how isolation can look and feel @Best24 . Thanks so much for sharing! :)
LittleSteps (PSW)	Hello @chibam! :) Welcome!
TideisTurning (PSW)	Hi @chibam
Chibam	Hi all! :) Hi @LittleSteps (PSW) !
Best24	Likes I have risk all the way through get to big steps of my completement.
Otter (Moderator)	Hi there @chibam
Best24	Hi chibam, I am new today.

TideisTurning (PSW)	Where might isolation and loneliness come from for you?
Chibam	That's a complicated question. Short answer is: "Isolation is the version that is observable by others, but loneliness is the personal experience, which might not outwardly appear to be lonely – although it often does.
Chibam	* That was an answer to the previous question. :neutral_face:
Best24	For me isolation is come from my self- esteem. and loneliness is come from emotional thoughts.
LittleSteps (PSW)	I agree @Best24. I think for me, loneliness may be linked, in a way, to my mental wellbeing, I used to find it really difficult to be alone with my thoughts and feelings. I have since found ways to cope with spending time alone (whilst reaching out to others for connection when needed). Now, I like to fill my time alone creating art works! :)
Chibam	It's strange to talk about loneliness "coming from" somewhere, as it's not a substance in and of itself; it's an absence. It's like if a river dries up, asking "where did the drought come from?" When the real question is: "Where did the water come from, and why isn't it coming from there anymore?" Likewise with loneliness, the real question is, why isn't there any good company in my life?
LittleSteps (PSW)	@the magician! Welcome! :D
Chibam	So the real question is: Where does good company come from?
the magician	hi i had a few problems navigating the new webpage hi everyone
LittleSteps (PSW)	That's a really insightful take, @chibam
LittleSteps (PSW)	Glad you made it @the magician :)
TideisTurning (PSW)	Sorry to hear @the magician. Glad you found us in the end! :)

Chibam	Hi @Best24 ! Welcome! (Sorry I didn't sport your message until now.
the magician	group activities and reaching out to the people in them finding you have relatable stuff then share and bond
Best24	Now everyday I do not create my own hobbies yet and I still don't want to participate in my course where I have studied. LittleSteps (PSW)
the magician	opening eyes to different people
LittleSteps (PSW)	That sounds difficult @Best24. I hope that tonight you are able to find a sense of connection :)
Best24	That would help me a lot, thank you. LittleSteps (PSW)
the magician	there's a difference to being alone and being lonely
TideisTurning (PSW)	How do you think COVID-19 has impacted on your sense of loneliness and isolation, if at all?
Best24	I think COVID 19 has impacted my sense of loneliness and isolation when I have no one to identify themselves of a formal relationship and do not get into the beneficial from a status of greaffulness.
TideisTurning (PSW)	Definitely @the Magician. I feel like you can be lonely when surrounded by people or when you're technically on your own (there's no one present with you)
Chibam	Very minimally, @TideisTurning (PSW) . I used to get invited to things maybe once or twice a year in the years immediately preceding the outbreak. Now I don't get invited out at all. That's more a blessing then a curse, because the things I used to have to go to before were not enjoyable situations. Same old people I've known for years; nobody interesting; completely uneventful, and worst of all: no new faces with who I might've potentially kindled a meaningful relationship.
Otter (Moderator)	COVID-19, like many I'm sure, was definitely the loneliest period of my life, it allowed for more alone time than I'd ever experienced, which really taught me a lot about myself and how it is to be alone with me, extremely challenging at

	times but showed how much growth, reflection, introspection and shifting of values can happen when you are with yourself for a long time
Chibam	That's the essence of my crisis: no opportunities to meet good people. And I've never had any decent opportunities, no matter how often I was summoned to social occasions, because my type of people were never there.
the magician	lack of F2F peer groups. and not wanting to date inn case of catching COVID
LittleSteps (PSW)	COVID-19 did impact, for a period of time, on my sense of loneliness and connection(s). I had to physically distance myself, like many other people. However, COVID-19, from another perspective, taught me a lot about the value of connection.
TideisTurning (PSW)	I feel like it can be hard to find good people we gel with @chibam . For that reason, I really appreciate and treasure the diamonds when I find them! :)
the magician	apart from that it didn't make me lonely just about survival. i did a lot of writing on my novel.
Chibam	You've found some, @TideisTurning (PSW) ? Lucky. :blush:
TideisTurning (PSW)	It took me a long time @chibam, but it does happen!
TideisTurning (PSW)	Why I also call my good friends 'my miracles' sometimes :)
the magician	i have a good family circle, neighbour circle and am expanding mental health circle.
Chibam	For some, @TideisTurning (PSW) , for some. But I know for many others it doesn't.
the magician	future circles might be work or sport-karate
Best24	Do you all have any ideas about pros and cons for both loneliness and isolation?

TideisTurning (PSW)	I understand @chibam. I'll hold that hope it may also happen for you one day :)
the magician	i felt like having more friends and someone said to me to do something so i did
TideisTurning (PSW)	On the other hand, how has COVID-19 impacted your sense of connection with others?
Chibam	@Best24 The only pro I can think of is that no company is often preferable to bad company. But IMHO, "bad company" is still loneliness, albeit devoid of the "isolation"
LittleSteps (PSW)	Like I said a moment ago, COVID-19 taught me about the value of connection, in some ways. When I wasn't able to physically see my friends and family, I felt a sense of missing them a bit. I tried to be resourceful and find ways to connect, whether that be through a phone call, a message or a video call. I have learnt to cherish the relationships I have – and they now form a huge part of my recovery journey.
the magician	when friends are absent there's always books
TideisTurning (PSW)	Books can be amazing friends @the magician!
Best24	COVID 19 has impacted my sense of connection with others from distancing and nature around us pride.
LittleSteps (PSW)	Welcome @The Hams ! :) Glad to see you here tonight!
the magician	i broke up with someone who believed the pandemic wasn't real. he needed quite a mental health first aider conversation.
TideisTurning (PSW)	Hi @The Hams :)
The Hams	good evening forumites – i am also watching an info night online atm so will be in and out. But on the topic – i will read what people have said so far

Chibam	Not a lot, @TideisTurning (PSW) , although it, and certain other concurrant political 'waves' has done a lot to undermine my sense of connection to the world - and my desire to be connected to the world.
the magician	now is the best time to get out and about the snow and gr8 ocean road. no ones out there. I've heard there's some decent cocktail roof top bars too.
Chibam	@the magician outdoors in Victorian coastal winds in this weather? Brrr! :sneezing_face: I'll stay huddled up in front of my heater, thank you very much! :stuck_out_tongue_winking_eye:
TideisTurning (PSW)	How might we be able to navigate barriers which may arise to connecting with others?
the magician	outdoors in snow gear its the best!:P
The Hams	What do we mean by "connecting" ?
the magician	not judging a book by its cover. getting over the looking different if that's the case factor.
Best24	We might be able to navigate barriers by search compliment from others feedback and get along with others again after COVID 19 end.
LittleSteps (PSW)	Hmmmm good question @The Hams. I suppose connection can mean something different to different people. It could be digital, social or emotional. So, it's up to you how you interpret the term :)
TideisTurning (PSW)	I'm curious- how would you define connecting or connection @The Hams? :)
LittleSteps (PSW)	@DoggyLover123 Welcome to tonight's Online Peer Group Chat! :)

The Hams	I define it as a meaningful interaction that goes beyond the humdrum of the everyday. For example, I never ask people how their weekend was in workplaces. I hate it. It's fake. I would rather ask people how they are or hows things or hows tricks or similar
Chibam	@TideisTurning (PSW) , Look, in theory it should be so simple. You tell people who you are and what you are looking for, and they do their best to introduce you to people who fit that profile, if they know any. If our society was genuinely compassionate and interested in fixing loneliness we could probably cure about 80%+ of it that simply! But their not. They want to bully the lonely into servitude, and use promises of uniting us with fulfilling companions as the "carrot" to lull us into obedience.
the magician	same thought same place same time- finding your people.
Otter (Moderator)	Learning to be a generous listener and being genuinely curious about others and who they are!
TideisTurning (PSW)	I get the sense you've had some really invalidating experiences with seeking support to alleviate loneliness and I'm so sorry to hear.
the magician	well said otter
TideisTurning (PSW)	How might you be able to increase your sense of connection in future?
The Hams	BE your true self
Chibam	@TideisTurning (PSW) I had an aunt once basically admit right to my face that she knew a whole bunch of my people; but she hated them (and by extension, must hate me), and all she wanted to do was bully them into fitting into her ideology. There's no way that she would've ever done anything so compassionate for us as to unite us so that we could be a proper family/community. That's just one example of how people seem to be determined to keep people like me lonely.
Best24	I might be able to increase my sense of connection in future from being spoke out what are my barriers are and how it can be filled with sensitivity.

Otter (Moderator)	Excellent one @The Hams
the magician	power of positivity and its effect on those around you. having no tolerable space for un understanding and insincerity.
Chibam	@TideisTurning (PSW) "How might you be able to increase your sense of connection in future?" I really have no idea. I've done it all. I've sought professional help, I've "made a big effort" to be sociable. I have no cards left to play. My one and only hope is that a cessner drops out of the sky and crashes through the roof with my bride on board. Miracles are all I have to lean on.
LittleSteps (PSW)	I think reflecting on my relationships and their value has been a huge thing for me. In my view, it has been helpful to spend time thinking about how far my relationships and friendships have come since that time of loneliness I went through. I have come to a place of being really grateful for those in my life, no matter how big or small that number may be, and I carry that gratitude into the future.
TideisTurning (PSW)	I'm so sorry to hear that @chibam
LittleSteps (PSW)	@Clawde hello! Welcome! :)
TideisTurning (PSW)	I wonder if the SANE Forums might be another space to connect with others @chibam?
the magician	i had a lot of problems growing up with people not understanding when i was unwell. im a lot more assertive about that these days.
LittleSteps (PSW)	@the magician I have learnt the value of assertiveness in recent years as well :)
Chibam	@TideisTurning (PSW) Yeah, I'm fairly present on there, but it's a bit hit and miss in terms of the level of connection I'm looking for, to be honest. Sometimes it feels like the "friendship" between Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt on there: the only thing that sustains it is our common problem(s).

the magician	im also a lot more not giving so much of a da### about stigma or negatives in where im at.
TideisTurning (PSW)	Have you learned anything helpful from others' experiences here tonight that you might be able to apply in your own life? If yes, what did you learn?
LittleSteps (PSW)	I have learnt that in some way, loneliness has connected us. Despite that fact that we have all expressed experiencing loneliness and isolation – we can connect and relate through that. I have seen many people remark this in previous Peer Group Chats and I would like to echo this sentiment – I have learnt that I am not alone.
the magician	I've learnt that connecting takes getting out into the world. even if you have to wear a baby blanky so to speak.
The Hams	gonna have some dinner
The Hams	thanks again forumites and see you online
Best24	For me, yes, I have learned anything helpful from other's experience here tonight. I learned that loneliness and isolation have help me gain benefit from spending time with others and creates my own way of the biggest deal for self-allowance and self-comparability.
LittleSteps (PSW)	enjoy, @The Hams!
Otter (Moderator)	Be your true self, be vulnerable, be positive and curious – and getting out there in the world (sometimes the digital world will do!) and this will give you your best shots at connecting
TideisTurning (PSW)	Love this @LittleSteps (PSW)- we are not alone, and connected through these shared experiences and feelings
the magician	we can be connected in creative realms too. even to rock stars. the unconscious creativity. whatever fulfills you.

TideisTurning (PSW)	Yes. Fandoms can be a huge point of connection for people @the magician
Chibam	@the magician I have wrestled with that concept deeply. It's a very complicated and deceptive factor in the issue of loneliness.
the magician	its always nice here too when people like what you have to say.
Chibam	@the magician Can't argue with that. :blush:
TideisTurning (PSW)	Tonight's topic may have brought up some heavy feelings as we talked about loneliness and isolation. Would some self-care be helpful for you after we finish? If so, what might you do? 😊
Chibam	The mad Mrs. Bucket is on TV right now. I'm recording her, and I'll be playing it back as soon as we're done. She's a hoot!
the magician	finish artwork. new song on guitar. episode of Shannara chronicles
LittleSteps (PSW)	Like I mentioned earlier, I really enjoy making art works! I think I will maybe squeeze in some time for a quick charcoal drawing or something like that :) Then, a good night's rest.
Best24	Yes, self-care are helpful because there are develop further of self-delicateness and self-facts.
TideisTurning (PSW)	Being a little creative sounds like a great idea @LittleSteps (PSW) :)
the magician	good night people enjoyable chatting as always and see you next week.:innocent:

TideisTurning (PSW)	We'd like to invite you to complete a survey reflecting on your experience in this Peer Group Chat. We'd love to hear any feedback you may have. It will only take a few minutes to complete. Please click this link: https://sane.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5uUFOsHJRKQ6wyW
Best24	I might practice my creatives writing and encourage others that if they willing to learn something they deserves it.
LittleSteps (PSW)	that sounds interesting @Best24 :)
TideisTurning (PSW)	<p>Here are some further resources we recommend having a look at:</p> <p>1 On what loneliness is and how it may impact, as well as ideas to combat it https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/news/what-is-loneliness-and-how-can-we-overcome-it-during-these-times/</p> <p>2 A conversation about how there can be different kinds of loneliness, and the impacts loneliness, isolation and connection can have https://brenebrown.com/podcast/dr-vivek-murthy-and-brene-on-loneliness-and-connection/</p> <p>3 A document outlining some differences between loneliness and isolation – with a lot of interesting resources at the end https://www.va.gov/PREVENTS/docs/PRE013_FactSheets_IsolationLoneliness_508.pdf</p>
TideisTurning (PSW)	Thank you for joining, and we hope you enjoyed the discussion ☺ If you're interested in keeping the conversation going, you might like to add to this thread on the SANE Forums- https://saneforums.org/t5/Our-stories/Living-with-Loneliness/td-p/1121631 If you'd like to be informed when our next Peer Group Chat will be taking place, you can sign up to our mailing list here https://www.sane.org/peer-support/online-mental-health-meet-up . You can also ask questions for us to discuss in future peer chats!
LittleSteps (PSW)	Thanks everyone! :D
Otter (Moderator)	Thanks heaps everybody!
Best24	Thank you all. I am glad that I had attend to this peer group chat.

TideisTurning (PSW)	Thank you so much everyone for joining and sharing your experiences and perspectives with us here :)
the magician	ditto
TideisTurning (PSW)	We'll close the room soon everyone. Feel free to continue the discussion over on the SANE Forums if you would like :)