



The Perception of Loneliness and Its Causes Among College Students

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Literature Review

- Loneliness as a subjective experience
- Related to negative health outcomes (ie. depression, anxiety, high risk of mortality) (Park et al., 2020)
- Most common treatments: psychotherapy, mindfulness, and social skills training
- Individuals are particularly at risk during young adulthood (Groosby et al., 2013)
- High prevalence due to forced quarantining during COVID-19 (Koelen et al., 2022)
- 18 potential causal variables identified

Current Study

- Explore students' perceptions of loneliness
 - *Definition of loneliness*
 - *Causal variables most associated with loneliness*
- Goals
 - *Establish an operational definition of loneliness*
 - *Identify the top contributing variables based on participant feedback*
 - *Continue to refine the SSCI*
 - *Develop interventions that can be used to prevent and mediate loneliness*

Research Questions

- How do college students define loneliness? (i.e., what themes are associated with their definitions of loneliness?)
- What is the rank-order of the top causal/contributing variables?
- Is there a difference in the top causal/contributing variables to loneliness for different groups of participants?
- What are the top causal/contributing variables to loneliness not mentioned on the list that was shown to the participants?
- What is the best predictive model of loneliness?

Participants

- 94 undergraduate students enrolled at Liberty University
- 18 years of age or older
- Residential students enrolled in an undergraduate psychology course

Demographics

- 52% Live on campus and 48% live off campus
- 94% Between the ages of 18-24
- 82% Caucasian, 2% African American, 5% Asian, 5% Hispanic or Latino, 4% biracial or multiracial, and 1% American Indian
- 76% Female and 24% male
- 93% Identified as never married

Methods

- Study design
 - *Mixed-methods*
 - *Cross-sectional*
- Demographic questionnaire
- Social connectedness instrument
- Semi-structured interviews
 - *Definition of loneliness*
 - *Evaluation of causal variables*
 - *Comparison of the SSCI and R-UCLA Loneliness Scale*

Analysis

- Analysis is currently ongoing and results (tables, charts etc.) will be included once finalized

Results

- Pending completion of analysis

Conclusions



Discussion



References

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Questions?

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