

# Age-Related Characteristics Of Loneliness

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**Abstract:** At different ages, a person may feel alienated from society and interpersonal relationships. For some, loneliness becomes a comfort zone. What are the motives behind this, and how can it be explained from a psychological perspective? In this article, we will attempt to answer these questions, at least to some extent.

**Keywords:** Loneliness, socialization, stereotype, adaptation, adolescence.

**Introduction:** As people age, the experience and perception of loneliness can change significantly. This topic is highly relevant today due to the many factors that influence loneliness at different life stages. In adulthood especially, individuals face responsibilities in various areas of life—such as family, career, and personal development—which can contribute to feelings of isolation.

The problem of loneliness has drawn attention from experts across multiple scientific fields. Researchers continue to explore this phenomenon, often associating it with fear, depression, and other negative psychological states.

In our study, we aim to understand how young people perceive loneliness and how their experiences of it develop over time. While we may not answer every question, we hope to shed light on some of the key aspects.

The feeling of loneliness during adolescence is a common and natural part of emotional development. It often becomes an integral part of a teenager's personal growth, especially as they begin to form their identity and navigate social conflicts. In emotionally challenging situations, loneliness can emerge as a response to unresolved inner struggles.

This sense of loneliness may arise because teenagers are constantly seeking connection but often feel misunderstood or isolated. At the same time, they begin to move toward independence, learning to make decisions and act on their own. However, this journey can sometimes feel lonely, especially when they lack supportive relationships or feel unable to share their

thoughts with others. Along with emotional challenges, loneliness often makes communication difficult and becomes an obstacle to building intimate and trusting relationships. It can negatively shape a teenager's self-perception, leading to a distorted or overly critical view of themselves.

Adolescents experiencing loneliness may begin to feel unneeded or unwanted, often struggling with low self-confidence, self-doubt, and a lack of self-respect. These feelings can cause them to withdraw from social interactions and escape into fantasies or daydreams. As a result, they may become more prone to emotional conflicts and find it difficult to cope with real-world challenges. Researchers have identified several personal factors that may contribute to the development of loneliness. These include:

Low self-esteem, shyness, heightened self-consciousness, a tendency to be overly critical in relationships, low levels of sociability, certain character traits, such as selfishness and aggression.

The appearance of loneliness in adolescents can be caused by several key factors, including:

Lack of sufficient communication with peers

- Poor communication skills or low social competence
- Feeling unaccepted or rejected by others
- Not receiving emotional support or validation for their inner thoughts and experiences
- Facing high expectations or pressure from others
- Having unrealistic or distorted views about relationships based on media or personal fantasies

Teenager depression is one of the most complicated problems; its consequences can lead to self-harm, violence, drug addiction, and behavioral deviation. M.B. Keller states that the average age of patients with the onset of depression is 14 years. During adolescence, conflicts may appear between realized needs and the impossibility of satisfying them, because many previous relationships break and are re-established. This brings despair. In adolescents, situations that lead to despair and loneliness arise for several reasons: on one hand, they demand recognition from adults; on the other hand, the social situation remains unchanged — they are no longer children, but not yet fully grown. This conflict can become chronic, possibly leading to spiritual diseases, especially mood disorders. The feeling of loneliness in youth can manifest in various forms and may become a medical concern due to different reasons and situations. During adolescence and youth, loneliness can be experienced more deeply and intensely. The reason for this is that, compared to later stages of life, young people have less life experience and have not yet developed full emotional or social adaptation.

In the general population, the number of elderly people is increasing, and it is necessary to treat them with great respect and attention, considering their experience and needs. Respecting the elderly involves integrating them into society, establishing connections between the older and younger generations, and ensuring that society provides adequate material conditions—such as the amount of pensions, quality of housing, level of medical services, and other forms of support.

Older people experience noticeable changes in their living conditions and environment, their roles in social and family settings, and the nature of their social and friendly connections.

This ultimately leads to the loss of life goals and a sense of meaning. Loneliness becomes a constant characteristic of the elderly as a social group.

It is possible for a person to live in solitude and not feel lonely, just as it is possible to be socially active and surrounded by others yet still feel lonely.

In old age, loneliness is not just a personal issue but has clearly become a social concern. This is primarily due to the absence of close relatives, children and grandchildren, and life partners, as well as the fact that elderly individuals often live separately from their family members. The level and causes of loneliness in old people also depend on how it is understood by younger generations.

Being separated from family is not the only reason elderly people may feel lonely. A person can feel lonely

even while living with their family. Psychologists state that this is one of the main causes of loneliness—loss. The loss of a spouse, friends, or other people who were once valuable to the individual often becomes a deep and heavy burden for older adults, sometimes leading to depression and, in a short time, physical decline.

Even when an elderly person manages to overcome the sadness and pain of losing someone, the space that person occupied in their heart remains. Objects, souvenirs, photos, and other items associated with the person continue to remind them of what was lost. The elderly often reflect on the past and feel that the best moments of their life have already been left behind.

Retirement is one of the most difficult psychological crises in life. It often brings sudden and sharp changes to a person's lifestyle. For many years, people perform important daily tasks, communicate with colleagues, discuss work and personal matters, and feel like an essential part of a team and the larger social system. They become accustomed to being needed and having a structured role.

After retirement, a person may not know how to spend their time or maintain regular communication. As a result, even within the family circle, they may begin to feel like a stranger.

As health worsens, chronic diseases increase, and age-related changes begin to appear, a person is often forced to adjust their lifestyle. After retirement, activity decreases—people go out less and meet with friends and relatives less frequently. Instead, the television often takes on the role of a companion.

Poor health leads to feelings of despair, which in turn strengthen the sense of loneliness.

Loss of life's meaning. An old person may feel that everything has already been experienced. Interest in previous training or long-time favorite activities remains, but they no longer bring positive emotions.

In society, ageism exists—the belief that old people cannot do certain things because of their age is widespread. Some elderly people face restrictions related to age in maintaining health, continuing work, or receiving education

Many old people do not accept loneliness as a normal situation, yet they are afraid or ashamed to seek help from a psychologist. In fact, asking for help is absolutely normal. A specialist does not ask uncomfortable questions or offer criticism. On the contrary, all efforts are made to ensure the client's emotional comfort.

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