



The Silent Struggle: Exploring The Psychological Impact of Loneliness and Overwhelm on Youngsters

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Abstract: Youngsters face a lot of pressure as they are transitioning from adolescence to adulthood from being dependent to independent, respectively. Young minds face a silent struggle in their daily lives, which is impacting both their psychological and behavioral well-being. This paper delves into exploring the psychological impact of loneliness and overwhelm on youngsters. This shows that an intricate web of overwhelmed emotions and loneliness leads to feelings of isolation, anxiety, frustration, and depression overall, impacting the mental health of youngsters. These psychological issues lead to suicide among youngsters, which is becoming the third-largest cause of death. Young minds are facing the invisible pressure from societal dynamics, expectations from both parents, loved ones, and inner selves, and difficulty in finding balance between their personal and professional lives; they are at a crossroads where they need to choose between the various options, leading to feelings. This paper focuses on unveiling the struggle behind the silence of youngsters.

Keywords: *Mental Health, Youngsters, Overwhelmed, Loneliness*

1. Introduction

“Let me be the real me,

Let's just break the silent struggle caging me.
 So that I can be free like I always want to be.
 Ending the inner turmoil hitting me,
 As I am going to embrace the real me.
 Liberating myself from the invisible chains of expectations,
 This lonely feeling is sucking me.
 I will spread my wings to touch the vibrant sky of my dreams.
 As I am going to be the change,
 To become the authentic me, not holding any restrictions,
 I will be free like the spirited bird in the sky.
 Now I will not struggle behind the silence.
 As I become one, whose inner self always wants to be.
 Ending the struggle, cherishing the peace,
 Let me be the real me."

Beyond the Surface: Exploring the Emotional Turmoil of Today's Youth

In this digital era, where every individual is in the rat race of reaching their potential goal, neglecting their overall health leads to increasing mental health issues with each passing day. In this everyday hustle, youngsters are overwhelmed with the societal dynamics and expectations, leading to difficulty in maintaining their authentic selves amidst the chaos of the inner and outer world. As a result, there will be an incongruency between their real and ideal identities. This inner turmoil can manifest as overwhelming emotions, a loss of sense of self, and a feeling of loneliness, which ultimately leads to an impact on their psychological well-being. Loneliness among young people is a significant concern with profound psychological impacts. Research indicates that adolescents experience loneliness as an intense, negative experience affecting their daily lives, often stemming from difficulties in peer relationships and exacerbated by family issues (Verity et al., 2022). Every day, youngsters feel a wide range of complex emotions; they want to experience what is out there, whether it be exhilarating, adventurous, or pleasurable, but also emotionally charged. Their desire to act enigmatically rather than chivalrously causes them to feel a range of conflicting emotions. This article delves into the silent struggle youngsters feel

behind the curtains of their complex, tangled emotions, which is impacting their psychological well-being.

From Suppression to Expression: A Journey Towards Emotional Freedom

These days, mental health issues are on the agenda; everyone is talking about them, acknowledging their importance in one's life. Mental health issues can be due to various reasons, but the important aspect of this is our emotions. As with every particular situation, with every individual, no matter what the thing is, emotions are attached to it. The one thing everyone lacks is embracing and acknowledging those emotions without feeling self-conscious about their expression. Suppression of those emotions leads to the evolution of lava from volcanic eruptions. This inner turmoil of tangled emotions can be overwhelming, making the entangling of emotions difficult. This situation is commonly seen in youngsters when they are already overwhelmed with situations such as career, relationship issues, societal dynamics, and many more in their lives. Not acknowledging the emotions attached to those situations will lead to mental health issues. In situations where youngsters can acknowledge those emotions, the problem comes when they don't find the correct way to channel those emotions, which causes feelings of anger, frustration, restlessness, irritation, etc. As channeling the emotions is as important as embracing those emotions. Behind the enthusiastic, spirited faces of youngsters, there are waves of overwhelmed emotions going on, which most of us fail to understand. Inability to solve the web of emotions leads them to a vicious cycle of tangled emotions.

From Smiles to Silence: Understanding the New Language of Loneliness

The other thing behind the silent struggle of youngsters is loneliness, in earlier times when one was always there for the person in need. But looking at the present day, all thanks to advancements in technology, where everything is available to you on just one swipe, this swipe fails in erasing the loneliness that causes the void in our lives that can't be filled by these vibrant digital things. Due to technology, everybody is engrossed in their video gaming, going through the emails, where nobody has time to ask about the well-being of one another, where reminders remind us about the special events such as birthdays and the anniversary of our loved ones, which ends with just one note. As the gap between us leads to profound loneliness in an individual. As the definition of our emotions is changing with each passing day, it has impacted our lives in a major way. For example, we are just smiling instead of laughing; we are lonely instead of alone; we are just sad instead of crying, as it shows vulnerability. All of these small

gestures of expressing ourselves are changing day by day, which is causing major changes in our lives. Instead of being logical and practical in every situation, understanding yourself and your emotions, as well as emotions, gives logic to the most illogical things. Understanding the depth of ourselves can only be achieved by embracing ourselves, changing our perspective towards the things in our lives. Use your inner self as a mirror so that you can reflect upon your inner chaos, which will play a pivotal role in guiding you through life's obstacles and in fostering meaningful connections with others. Embracing our emotions and reflecting on our responses enables us to gain profound self-awareness and work towards a more fulfilling and harmonious life, most importantly, giving direction to our lives amidst the tangled roads of our lives. In the silent struggle of youngsters, where they are articulating questions in them such as who they are, how they view themselves, or what their lives are all about, it can only be solved through self-awareness, self-reflection of themselves, and their emotions, including giving names to their feelings, finding the root cause of why they are feeling that way, and properly channelizing them, which can result in proper functioning of all aspects of their life.

Young Minds in Crisis: The Alarming Rise of Suicide Among Youngsters

The silent struggle that youngsters are going through leads to a 360-degree change in their lives, impacting their psychological and behavioral well-being. They are trapped in the intricate web of societal dynamics, inner expectations, and career and personal life balance. When young minds are unable to bear these overwhelming emotions and situations, this leads to mental health deterioration and, in most cases, leads to suicide. Here are the statistics on suicide among youngsters. According to WHO, "Suicide is the third leading cause of death among 15-29-year-olds. More than 720000 people die due to suicide every year. The reasons for suicide are multifaceted and influenced by social, cultural, biological, psychological, and environmental factors present across the life course. 12.6 million people between the ages of 18 and 25 experienced a mental, behavioral, or emotional health issue in the past year. This amounts to 1 in 3 (36.2%) young adults, a percentage that is higher than any other adult age range. This rate has increased significantly over the past several years (from 22.1% in 2016). (SAMHSA, 2023) 19.5% of teens aged 12 to 17 had a major depressive episode in the past year. (SAMHSA, 2023) , 42% of high school students reported feelings of sadness or hopelessness in the past year. This percentage is higher for females (57%), Hispanic students (46%), multiracial students (49%), and lesbian, gay, or bisexual students (69%) (CDC, 2023) Among college students, 36% have been

diagnosed with anxiety and 30% have been diagnosed with depression (Healthy Minds Study, 2023).

From Caged to Free: A Journey of Self-Discovery

“A bird does not sing because he has the answer to something; he sings because he has a song.” - Chinese proverb. This proverb shows the idea of self-expression that you always do not need to explain every action or it has to be productive, as sometimes we just need to feel whatever we want to feel and do whatever we want to; you just need to embrace the emotion you are feeling at that moment instead of being tangled in logical thinking. Fully expressing yourself without any restrictions or boundaries helps you ignite your free spirit, which can fuel you to reach your destined goal with full potential. Rather than being a caged bird in the cage of always thinking logically and being productive, be a free bird who is flying high up in the sky, feeling every emotion at that moment and touching the high ends of the painted sky, and who is unstoppable at any cost. You just need to start acknowledging the silent struggle you are going through, as it takes courage as the journey towards a bigger goal begins with a smaller one, so instead of feeling overwhelmed with the things and feeling stuck in the loneliness in oneself, be the one to entangle those overwhelmed things one by one and every day find the reason to make your day productive and feel the solace in the emotion rather than suppressing it.

The Silent Struggle: Understanding Youth Loneliness

According to May Sarton, “Loneliness is the poverty of self; solitude is the richness of self.” While Vivek Murthy said, “Loneliness is different than isolation and solitude. Loneliness is a subjective feeling where the connections we need are greater than the connections we have. In the gap, we experience loneliness. It’s distinct from the objective state of isolation, which is determined by the number of people around you.” Loneliness arises when there is an entangled state of emotional distress or discomfort where there is a discrepancy between what we need and what we desire. It can lead to a sense of isolation, chaos in forming meaningful relationships and interactions with others in societal dynamics, and an inability to comprehend one’s emotions. As youth, where they are transitioning from their adolescence to adulthood phase, at one or another point they face loneliness in their life, where they face a lot of challenges in the societal dynamics, loss of sense of self or identity, incongruency between their reel and real expectations, leading to higher levels of vulnerability. Loneliness in youth has significant impacts on psychological well-being and behavior. Longitudinal studies have identified different trajectories

of loneliness during adolescence, with both high-decreasing and low-increasing patterns associated with increased risk of depression and lower self-esteem in young adulthood (Hutten et al., 2021). Loneliness in middle childhood is linked to suicidal behavior at age 15, heightening its long-term effects (Schinka et al., 2012). A systematic review found that social isolation and loneliness in children and adolescents increase the risk of depression and anxiety, with the duration of loneliness being more strongly correlated with mental health symptoms than intensity (Loades et al., 2020).

Embracing Chaos: Youth, Loneliness, and Connection

Being in the youth stage where youngsters are on the path of finding themselves, their role in society, trying to meet their expectations, where they are trying to verbalize their inner chaotic emotions onto the outside world, time where they are defining what actions of their will lead to desired outcomes, trying to align themselves with the ideal goals and self, which can be overwhelmed ultimately leading to feeling of loneliness, a sense of distinctness from the inner self as well as from the outside world. Unable to define the things in reality, creating a vicious cycle where loneliness leads to depression, anxiety, and isolation, making it difficult to cover their path towards their potential goal. Complex interplay of both: There is a complex interplay between both loneliness and overwhelm in this digital era, where everyone is connected through various social media platforms, but there is less connectivity in person. Youngsters go through varied emotions that can be overwhelming, which ultimately result in a sense of isolation, loneliness, anxiety, frustration, depression, burnout, and, most importantly, impacting the psychological well-being and behavior of the individual as they may start feeling distinct, change in their regular routine patterns, and not feel happy or interested in the things they used to be.

The Unspoken Truth: Mental Health in the 21st Century

Things that we all neglect or are unable to acknowledge are the invisible pressure on young minds. In this 21st century, where everything is happening at such a high speed that it is becoming difficult to cope with such a fast-forwarding life. This chaos in our lives has been neglected by everyone behind the closed doors of settling our futures, to become something in our life, to earn the money, to gain success overnight, trying to align our real life with the reel life, which is impossible to next. But guess what? Nobody is talking about this; everyone wants youngsters to reach and ace our imagined goals while at the same time understanding the societal dynamics, meeting the expectations, and aligning our personal and professional lives. This is the

stage where every young person is going through the turning points in both their personal and professional lives. In a career, everyone is striving to reach their desired positions, while in a personal one, we are finding and meeting different people, working on our relationships, and with our loved ones, which is very much to take on. This leads to so much pressure, which can be overwhelming. This is so frustrating, and youngsters are tangled with the emotions in this chaotic inner world as well as the outer world. Never-ending expectations from our parents, our loved ones, from professional commitments, and most importantly from the oneself while hustling in this never-ending world, which created invisible pressure that came out in the form of burnout, serious anxiety issues, depressive disorder, and sometimes some kind of substance abuse as young people wanted to get rid of these overwhelmed emotions, heightened pressure to get ease for the time being, but this for the time being thing became addiction, which leads to dreadful points in one's life.

Breaking Free from the Chains of Expectations: A Heartfelt Story of Liberation

There was a girl named Mahi; she was extremely sensitive, intuitive, a topper in her studies, creative, and highly passionate about her goals and ambitions. She is also an influencer, as she used to post reels and stories on Instagram where the posts about her happy moments, richness, and luxurious lifestyle gained a lot of views, as many want to live their lives the way she does. Despite being of this name and fame, deep down she is not at peace; she is feeling overwhelmed with her emotions, always being sad and depressed, deep down tangled in her thoughts. One day was standing on the bench near the beautiful lake, windy weather allowing her to completely lose herself in the mesmerizing beauty of nature. Then, an old lady came and sat down with her. The old lady asked, "Are you find, children?" She replied while opening her moist eyes, "Don't know, why are you asking me this thing even when we don't know each other?"

The old lady said, "It is not necessary to know each other to ask this question. Sometimes, we need strangers whom we need to share our story with who don't judge our story. As strangers who have beautiful stories that can turn the messiah into a masterpiece just by sharing the real us with them because we unexpectedly hold answers than our loved ones do."

She replied, "Instead of having every desired thing in my life, I am feeling lonely, anxious, frustrated, overwhelmed with my emotions, unable to entangle the knots of myself as I am not in peace, and when I talk about this thing with others, they say I am just being ungrateful,

as I should not feel like this. I need to stay smiling and happy all the time as I need to focus on meeting my expectations.” The old lady said, “It is okay if you are not feeling happy. Don’t focus on what others are saying, just focus on what your inner self wants. Meet the expectations of your loved ones but not at the stake of yourself; try to do things at your own pace instead of rushing things to do at the same time. It’s okay if you are unable to meet something at one time. It’s okay if you’re going through the overwhelmed feeling; just don’t overburden yourself to feel happy; step by step open the knots of yourself instead of making more knots by not being authentic you.”

She replied, “But if they judge me and start getting away from me by being my authentic self by showing my actual emotions I am feeling.” The old lady smiled and said, “It’s okay to not be okay. You should be what you want to be rather than serving others; serve your inner self. Work on yourself, on your deepest desires, live freely, and allow your emotions to flow freely rather than being a hindrance to them. Be you instead of being you for others. Your loved ones will accept the authentic you stop being for others that are not your part of your life and never going to be.”

The girl started crying and hugged the old lady tightly as if she wanted to hold that moment.

Finally, the old lady said while caressing her hair and wiping her tears, “Just break the cage in which you are holding yourself. Break the chains that are stopping you from being the real you. As the barriers are only in your head, not in the outside world. Just spread your wings and fly so high that even nature showers you with its blessing.”

This story concludes that young minds have so much capability to excel in their lives; they are like spirit animals, but due to societal expectations, judgements, opinions, and pressure, all these things lead to restrictive feelings and overwhelmed emotions where they try to hide their authentic selves and try to conform to society, which creates complex knots of emotions in them, and ultimately they tend to separate themselves from people around them, creating a sense of loneliness and isolation in them. The wings that they need to spread to fly high are now closed due to extreme pressure to serve society, not ourselves, ultimately impacting their psychological well-being and causing mental health issues as the young minds hide themselves behind the silent struggle they are in. In these situations, they need a helping hand, including help from

professional counselors and psychologists via counseling sessions, to get rid of the barriers and hindrances they are facing in reaching their potential goals.

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