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Chapter 1: Introduction

In the present study I aim to contribute to the current understanding of the phenomenon of loneliness as it is experienced in the psychiatric context. In this chapter the background to the study will be given followed by a description of the research aims. Thereafter the focus will turn to the phenomenon of loneliness, looking at definitions of loneliness, the universality and pervasiveness of the experience of loneliness and loneliness in the psychiatric context. This will be followed by a brief description of the methodology employed by this study. Thereafter I will give an outline of the dissertation.

1.1. Background of the study

The experience of loneliness is a familiar experience to most people. Perese and Wolf (2005) found that more than half of people suffering from mental illness are lonely. They defined loneliness as the subjective state associated with social isolation and lack of desired relationships. My interest in the study of loneliness came about through my experience in working as a clinical psychologist in a psychiatric hospital. In my psychotherapeutic work with patients at the hospital I have come to realize how central the experience of loneliness is in the lives of psychiatric patients. It was often a theme in psychotherapy sessions with patients. During some of these sessions the experience of loneliness would be described in great detail and appeared to be an experience with which some patients are very familiar. This first-hand experience of loneliness as presented by the patients inspired me to read further on the phenomenon of loneliness. Through these experiences I became interested in investigating the experience of loneliness by psychiatric patients further through qualitative research methods. I became particularly interested in the meanings present in the experiences of loneliness as experienced by psychiatric patients.

According to Nilsson et al. (2006) there is a surprising lack of theme-focused discussions of loneliness within the field of developmental psychology and psychiatric professional literature. Although research has been done on the phenomenon of loneliness (Peplau & Perlman 1982) very little research has focused on the psychiatric patient's experience of loneliness and the meanings they attach to it, especially from an existential phenomenological perspective (Lee et al. 1994; Rokach 1988a). Following the literature review it also became apparent that the phenomenon of loneliness and the meanings thereof has not adequately been addressed up to the present.

The main goal of the study was to uncover the complexities and diversities in the experiences of loneliness by psychiatric patients. These findings can contribute to the existing understanding of loneliness and may provide a framework to the way loneliness can be understood. In addition this study hopes to stimulate more research into the phenomenon of loneliness specifically in the psychiatric context. The value of such research is supported by Heinrich and Gullone (2006), who calls for more focused research and clinical attention to loneliness.

This study turns the focus to the subjective lived experience of loneliness by psychiatric patients and will hopefully create increased awareness among treating professionals of the value of a focus on the personal lived world experience of psychiatric patients. More over this study also hopes to stimulate further research into the phenomenological qualities of loneliness as well as how the meanings in the experience of loneliness can be viewed through various existential phenomenological lenses.

1.2. The research aims

The present study's main aim was to investigate the meanings in the experience of loneliness by some psychiatric patients. The main aim branched into two research questions. These questions are discussed below.

1.2.1. The first research question

The first research aim was stated as the question: "*What are the experiences of loneliness in a psychiatric context about?*" The focus here was on discovering the bracketed meaning units present in the experience of loneliness by some psychiatric patients. The aim here was to uncover the richness and diversity of the experience of loneliness by some psychiatric patients.

1.2.2. The second research question

The second aim turned the focus to explore an existential phenomenological understanding of the meanings in the experiences of loneliness in the psychiatric context. The question here was: "*How can the meanings in the experiences of loneliness in a psychiatric context be understood if viewed through existential phenomenological lenses?*" The second research question thus took an interpretative stance towards the findings from the first research question.

The above mentioned research aims are linked through the hermeneutic process where the part, in this case the bracketed meaning units of some psychiatric patient's experience of loneliness, is interpreted in relation to the whole, in this case the existential phenomenological lenses on loneliness.

1.3. The phenomenon of loneliness

We will now turn our attention to the relevant literature on the phenomenon of loneliness. Considering that all the available literature on the phenomenon is a vast field, the focus here will be on literature that relates to the research questions from the fields of psychiatry and psychology.

1.3.1. Defining loneliness

Literature on the topic covers a vast number of disciplines, from philosophy to theology; psychiatry and psychology (Mijuskovic 1979). Though an extensive body of literature exists on the topic of loneliness a limited number of studies focused specifically on the experiences of loneliness as viewed through existential phenomenological lenses.

Defining loneliness is a challenging task. The Oxford online dictionary (2014) defines being lonely as a state of having no friends or companions but also refers to isolation. This however seems to be a very limited definition and does not quite capture the essence of loneliness, as this study will also reveal.

In taking a more existential stance towards loneliness, Yalom (1980) stated that the clinician, in their psychotherapeutic work with patients often encounter three types of loneliness: interpersonal, intrapersonal and existential. He continues to define these various types of isolation. Interpersonal isolation is generally experienced as loneliness and refers to isolation from other individuals. Intrapersonal isolation he referred to as a process whereby one partitions off parts of oneself. In essence this means excluding experiences in parts of one's conscious awareness and makes parts of the psyche inaccessible to the self. Existential isolation refers to an unbridgeable gap between oneself and any other being. It also refers to being separate from one's world. This third type of loneliness can be described as a separation from the world, where the person is confronted with anxiety in the face of nothingness, but also his own freedom (Yalom 1980).

Grotsky (1965) differentiates between four forms of loneliness. The first is physical solitude that he describes as a physical cutting off from others. The second form is the feeling of loneliness that occurs when one is excluded by others. This he calls estrangement. The third form of loneliness is that of isolation. This he describes as resulting from the person's experience of himself as an outsider. The fourth form, that of solitude he refers to as a person's own desire for loneliness. Solitude is seen as a positive experience and is not linked to pain because the person actively seeks this type of loneliness. Examples of solitude are contemplation, artistic endeavours or spiritual retreats. Here the reference to spiritual retreats or the relation between solitude as a form of loneliness and spiritual life is significant for the later argument of this study in which spirituality as a life world existential and its possible relation to loneliness will be considered.

Some author's make a distinction between loneliness and isolation. Weiss (1973) here identified various forms of loneliness. He divided the construct of loneliness into two types namely: social loneliness and emotional loneliness. Emotional isolation is a result of the loss of intimately close persons such as parents, loved ones or children, and social isolation as a consequence of a loss of friends, neighbours, colleagues etc. The definition of social loneliness is lacking a network of friends; this differs from emotional loneliness, which means the lack of a close, intimate attachment figures. In addition qualitative differences also exist in various cultures' experience of loneliness (Russell, Peplau & Cutrona 1984).

Webster's dictionary defines the word alone as:

“solitary...with nothing further added...apart from all others. Quite by one's self; apart from, or exclusive of, others; single; solitary; - applied to a person or thing. Of or by itself; by themselves; without anything more or anyone else; without a sharer; only.”

(Webster 2014).

Also according to Webster, words like, lonely and lonesome convey “a sense of isolation felt as a result of a lack of companionship.” The current author argues that in everyday language these terms are often used interchangeably emphasizing various aspects of a core experience of loneliness.

Loneliness has also been defined as a subjective experience that is not dependent on the number of relationships or immediacy of others (Cutrona 1982). It can be a response to the absence of an important relationship or result from the perceived absence of a relational provision (Rokach & Brock, 1995).

Peplau and Perlman (1982) define loneliness as comprising of three elements:

- Loneliness is a subjective and distressing negative experience
- and manifests in a person's social relations
- out of a withdrawal from human contact based on a need for psychological security. Here the three elements are subjective negative experience, social relations and a withdrawal response.

However it will be argued that in this study that the experience of loneliness exists in various ways and has various meanings as experienced by different people, in this case psychiatric patients. Because of the focus on the subjective experience of loneliness it can also be argued the loneliness is subjectively defined by the one experiencing it, putting less emphasis on overt definitions. It is my experience that the words isolation and loneliness is often used synonymously by patients in psychotherapy to describe their experience.

In keeping with the phenomenological tradition this study took an open minded approach to the definition of loneliness and allowed the research participants to express their thoughts regarding loneliness without constraints made by rigid definitions. This is in keeping with the phenomenological attitude of seeing things as they are.

1.3.2. Universality and pervasiveness of loneliness

In a review of literature on the phenomenon of loneliness it was found that reference to loneliness and the impact of society was made in 1911 in a publication that appeared in the journal *The Academy and Literature* (1911, p.281) where it was stated that 'perhaps one of the worst tragedies of loneliness are being suffered at this hour, for it is an age of rapid transition...'

Thus more than a century ago the presence of loneliness was an area of concern for the people in society. It was seen then as a central concern of the times and it seems even now in the present time it is still a contemporary concern. This is illustrated by an online publication by De Paulo that appeared in June 2013 in *Psychology Today* where it reads:

'No amount of corrective science, though, is going to fully calm the loneliness panic that is gripping contemporary media. Real loneliness is a problem and should be taken seriously.'

From a philosophical view point loneliness is seen as both a subjective and shared common phenomenon among humans (Nilsson, Lindstrom & Naden 2006). The experience of loneliness is also shared among various cultures. Cultural meanings shape the experience of loneliness in that

they create expectations of the nature and the extent of closeness in relationships as well as social connectedness. The extent and nature of loneliness in a culture may be described as a property of that very culture, allowing one to speak of 'a culture of loneliness'. Accordingly, a culture of loneliness is found in both individualist and communal cultures, but of different kinds. A third conceptual relation may be described as a cultural loneliness, whereby someone is lonely while being in a foreign culture that leaves one feeling not understood and not able to reciprocate understanding about cultural meanings (Van Staden & Coetzee 2010).

Existential philosophers such as Kierkegaard argue that we as human beings are inherently alone. We are thrown into this world alone and we leave this world alone, and in the time in between we are confronted with the experience of being alone. Thus loneliness is not a state we can negotiate but is rather inherent in our existence. This condition can be described as existential loneliness (Yalom 1980).

Rogers (1965) refers to loneliness as a barrier that prevents one from uniting with the inner self. He also states that

'...modern man deserts his own experiencing to take on the way of being that will bring love... he experiences his loneliness, his cut-off-ness, his isolation both from his own deeper being and from others.' (p.158).

This emphasises the fact that man not only experiences loneliness interpersonally but he becomes estranged from himself or stated differently he becomes alone within himself, not in touch with his own being. This statement will become clear when I refer to Heidegger's (2010) dimensions of existence in the chapter on phenomenological lenses for meanings of loneliness.

May (1994) state that every existing person has the character of self-affirmation. This means that he has the need to preserve his centeredness. Human beings can also lose this centeredness by exercising certain choices, thereby losing themselves in the process. This can lead the person to become isolated or estranged from their own being. May also pointed out that anxiety is in essence the state of the human being in the struggle against what which would destroy his being and therefore leads to a sense of non-being or nothingness here linking to Sartre's (1984) discussion of anxiety. Therefore this inner estrangement from one's self will bring about a sense of anxiety. Yalom regarded existential loneliness as the deepest source of normal anxiety (Yalom 1980).

1.3.3.Loneliness in the psychiatric context

The present study was conducted in a psychiatric hospital setting. The participants in the study were all psychiatric patients. Psychiatric patients are often exposed to labelling and stigmatization. Lee et al. (1994) stated that adults with mental illness are at risk for experiencing loneliness, which impacts their quality of life and that the experience of stigmatization compounds their experience of loneliness. This point is again highlighted by Perese and Wolf (2005) who found that more than half of people

suffering from mental illness are lonely. Although many patients have interpersonal relationships they often feel alone and misunderstood by society. Thus stigmatization of psychiatric patients can be seen as a significant contributor to feelings of loneliness among these patients.

Bogaerts (2006) found that people who suffer from feelings of emotional loneliness can be characterized by insecure adult attachment styles and the inability to form and maintain close relations to others here linking loneliness as arising from a psychopathological condition.

Corsano, Majorano, and Champretavy (2006) found that adolescents could distinguish between different states of loneliness. On the one hand they could recognize the pain of isolation and social refusal and on the other hand they could also recognize the pleasant dimensions of loneliness. They linked the meanings loneliness has for adolescents to whether it places the adolescent's wellbeing at risk or not. Rokach (1988a) on the other hand presents the experience of loneliness as a model comprising of four elements namely self-alienation, interpersonal isolation, distressed reactions and agony.

In a study of young adults living with mental illness Mostafanejad (2006) found that isolation was brought about by society excluding these young adults because of their mental illness. The isolation was further increased by the general population's lack of understanding of what it is like to live with a mental illness. Nilsson et al. (2006) supports the view that the phenomenon of loneliness is not a psychological dysfunction but rather views it as a complex dimension in the lives of people and that it can be experienced at many levels. Thus the phenomenon of loneliness can be viewed from various perspectives which can lead to various meanings in the experience of loneliness.

In going beyond the psychiatric context Moustakas (1989) and Rolheiser (1979) stated that loneliness is at the core of every person's ordinary life experience, and thus not necessarily a pathological condition.

On the other hand Van den Berg in his text *A Different Existence* refers to psychopathology as the science of loneliness (Van den Berg 1972, p. 90). He states that:

"He (the psychiatric patient) is alone. He is a lonely man. Loneliness is the central core of his illness, no matter what his illness may be. Thus, loneliness is the nucleus of psychiatry. If loneliness did not exist, we could reasonably assume that psychiatric illness could not occur either, with the exception of a few disturbances caused by anatomical or physiological disorders of the brain."

Van den Berg takes an interesting stance towards psychiatric illnesses and its relation to loneliness. He states that not only is loneliness at the core of the illness of the psychiatric patient, but that indeed being a psychiatric patient also causes one to be alone in that the patient becomes isolated interpersonally and tends to distance themselves from others (Van den Berg 1972). There seems to

be a cause and effect component to loneliness in the psychiatric context. Jackson supports this notion by stating that many conditions that are really the product of loneliness are thought of in terms of emotional illness, depression or human failure (Jackson 1980).

From the above discussion one may deduce that a more thorough understanding of the experiences of loneliness in the psychiatric context is needed.

1.4. Methodological prelude

In order to explore the essences of the experiences of loneliness by psychiatric patients a particular research attitude and approach was required. The qualities of such attitude and approach were that it had to focus on the subjective world of experience of the participant. It should also allow for a descriptive uncovering of the experiences. These qualities were found within the existential phenomenological approach. This approach is descriptive in nature and qualitative with the focus on the participants' subjective experiences instead of their covert actions and behaviour (Valle & Halling 1989). In the phenomenological approach a specific research methodology was found to have the necessary qualities in Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). IPA follows a hermeneutic approach where the focus is not only on describing how a phenomenon appears to conscious experience but also for the researcher to interpret such phenomenon.

In addressing the second research question I first explored what existential phenomenology says about how people find meaning in their experiences and which existential themes relate to the experience of loneliness. Here an overview was done of key contributions by existential and phenomenological thinkers followed by a focus on the life world existentials and the existential dimensions of existence as lenses to view the experience of loneliness through. The hermeneutic circle was employed here by situating the examined bracketed meaning units within the life world existentials and the existential dimensions of existence.

1.5. Outline of the dissertation

The dissertation outline is as follows:

Chapter 1: Chapter one introduces the study.

Chapter 2: Chapter two covers the methodology applied in the study with a specific focus on IPA as research method.

Chapter 3: Chapter three will focus on the development of existential phenomenological lenses through which to view the experiences of loneliness. Here a guided overview will be given of the key contributions by existential and phenomenological thinkers with a specific focus on meaning in the lived world experiences as well as relevant contributions regarding the experience of loneliness. This will be followed by a focus on the life world existentials and the four existential dimensions of

existence. An additional focus will also be on spirituality as a life world existential as supported by the contributions of some of the existential and phenomenological thinkers.

Chapter 4: Chapter four presents the meaning units identified from each participant's interview. These meanings represent the first stage of interpretative phenomenological analysis.

Chapter 5: Chapter five presents the empirical findings as bracketed meaning units. Here specific themes will be highlighted from the meaning units in the participant's experience of loneliness.

Chapter 6: In chapter six the existential phenomenological lenses will be applied to the bracketed meanings of loneliness described in chapter four. These lenses will be the life world existentials and the existential dimensions of existence.

Chapter 7: Chapter seven will give an appraisal and implications of the study. This includes a reflection on the findings, the trustworthiness of the study, implications for practice and future research as well as some final remarks.

Chapter 2: Methodology

In this chapter, I will discuss phenomenology as research method followed by a focus on existential phenomenology. Thereafter I will discuss the process through which the existential phenomenological lenses were developed. It is important here to emphasize again that the present study had a dual focus on the experiences of loneliness. Firstly I focussed on the question “*What are the experiences of loneliness in a psychiatric context about?*” To address this question Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used as research methods. The aim here was to get to the bracketed meaning units of the experience of loneliness by some psychiatric patients.

Secondly I focused on the question “*How can the meanings in the experiences of loneliness in a psychiatric context be understood if viewed through existential phenomenological lenses?*” Here a phenomenological exploration of the nature of experience and meaning of loneliness from an existential phenomenological perspective was needed. Here the aim was to develop existential phenomenological lenses through which the experiences of loneliness can be viewed.

2.1. Phenomenology as research method

When aiming to study mental phenomena like loneliness one needs to critically think of an appropriate and suitable research method to study such phenomena. Many qualitative methods exist through which human experience can be researched. These include but are not limited to grounded theory, content analysis and thematic analysis. The overarching aim however of the current study is to capture the essence of the participants’ lived world experience. The appropriate research method should have as aim the study of human experience; that is experiences of psychological phenomena as experienced in the lived world of the individual. The approach should also be descriptive in nature and not merely gather perceptions of participants but also allow for the intersubjective interpretation of the data. There also needs to be an emphasis on the subjective nature of such experiences of mental phenomena. Here the focus should be on first person experiences as described by the participants themselves. The aim of this research method should be to encourage participants to access their subjective world of experience and to avoid objectifying experience or distancing themselves from the experience. A rich descriptive undertone in this particular research methodology is needed in order to allow one to understand the phenomenon under investigation. An important part of the quest of this particular study is the search for meanings in experiences (Giorgi 1985).

In taking the above criteria into account the search for an appropriate research approach led me to the discipline of phenomenology. Phenomenology has as main aim the understanding of subjective human experience. In accordance with phenomenological principles, scientific investigation is valid when the knowledge sought is derived from descriptions that make possible an understanding of the meanings and essence of experience (Valle & Halling 1989; Langdrige 2007). Phenomenological research concerns itself with uncovering meanings from experiences to arrive at essences through

intuition and reflection on conscious acts of experience, leading to ideas, concepts, judgments, and understandings (Moustakas 1994).

This approach is also beneficial to the field of psychiatry as supported by Bradfield (2007) who claims that phenomenology as research method has enabled an enrichment of psychiatry through deepening the way in which we can come to know the experience of the other. Aho (2008) suggests that through this avenue of hermeneutic phenomenology psychiatry can begin to understand the patient not as a static, material body with a clearly defined brain dysfunction but rather as an unfolding, situated existence involved in a complex social world, an involvement that allows the patient to experience, feel, and make sense of their emotional suffering. It is through this more genuine approach that the experience of loneliness by psychiatric patients is approached.

In accordance with phenomenological principles, scientific investigation is valid when the knowledge sought is derived from descriptions that make possible an understanding of the meanings and essence of experience (Smith et al. 2009).

Several different approaches in phenomenology have developed since Husserl's introduction. The following is a brief description of different branches of phenomenology from the Encyclopedia of phenomenology (1997).

(1) Transcendental constitutive phenomenology studies how objects are constituted in pure or transcendental consciousness, setting aside questions of any relation to the natural world around us.

(2) Naturalistic constitutive phenomenology studies how consciousness constitutes or takes things in the world of nature, assuming with the natural attitude that consciousness is part of nature.

(3) Realistic phenomenology studies the structure of consciousness and intentionality, assuming it occurs in a real world that is largely external to consciousness and not somehow brought into being by consciousness.

(4) Generative historicist phenomenology studies how meaning, as found in our experience, is generated in historical processes of collective experience over time.

(5) Genetic phenomenology studies the genesis of meanings of things within one's own stream of experience.

(6) Hermeneutical phenomenology studies interpretive structures of experience, how we understand and engage things around us in our human world, including ourselves and others.

(7) Existential phenomenology studies concrete human existence, including our experience of free choice or action in concrete situations. It is concerned with the subjective experience of phenomenon with a specific focus on meaning and the life world of the person. Here the focus falls on the life world

existentials of temporality, corporeality, spatiality and relationality to understand experience. It is this branch of phenomenology that the present study will focus on. (Encyclopedia of Phenomenology 1997)

Phenomenology in essence is the study of phenomena, of things or events, in the everyday world. Phenomenologists study situations in the everyday world from the viewpoint of the experiencing person. This experiential view helps phenomenologists understand people from their lived world (Becker 1992).

Existential phenomenology arose from a philosophical tradition where the focus was shifted from objective observable phenomenon to the subjective experience of human beings and how they relate to the world in which they live. Here existential phenomenology refers to a person's lived world. Emphasis is put on first person reports of experience and meanings. A phenomenological approach then emphasizes the individual's lived world and the importance of the structural unity among experiences. This lived world experience includes the dimensions of body, time, space, and relation to others (Van Manen 1997), and it is through these dimensions that beings relate to the world in which they find themselves. Existential phenomenology also assumes that individuals exercise choice and agency and a dialectical relationship exists between beings and their world in the constitution of experience.

Existential philosophy is a movement that concerns itself with the analysis of human existence. It is built upon those philosophies whose main aim is to describe and understand human existence. The primary aim of the existential philosophies is the clarification of the questions "What does it mean to be human?" and "What does it mean to exist?" In both these questions we can already get a sense of the importance that meaning plays in the existential tradition. Existentialists reject both simple subjectivity as well as simple objectivity as inadequate to understand human experience (Van Deurzen & Kenward 2005). Instead the existential tradition makes use of phenomenology to understand human experience and here refers to inter-subjectivity.

As a research method existential phenomenology goes from the concrete description of a given subject or research participant to the interpretation of his/her experience, instead of making abstract explanations about the experience of the subject without following and understanding the description of his/her experience as it is given in his/her consciousness (De Castro 2003).

As a distinctly descriptive approach existential phenomenology allows for the exploration of loneliness as it appears to the consciousness of the participants. Here all the dimensions of the phenomenon can be explored in depth, as opposed to understanding the experience of loneliness from preconceived theoretical paradigms. Rather than an application of various theories to the experience of loneliness, this descriptive approach inquires about what the experience entailed. Or what the experience was about or like. The phenomenological approach places the meaning, the lived experiential and subjective experiences at the forefront and provides lenses for gaining insight into the nature of the experience of loneliness.

Broadly speaking existential phenomenology has five principal characteristics: Firstly it is descriptive in nature and secondly it uses reduction in its method. Existential phenomenology also searches for the essences of experience, and it is focussed on intentionality. A hermeneutical stance is also taking in the exposition of findings. The first characteristic refers to the idea that the analysis and interpretation has to follow the concrete and naïve description given by research participant instead of giving an explanation from the theoretical standpoint of the researcher. The phenomenological method should be descriptive because the phenomenological researcher wants to avoid any kind of premature analysis or explanatory constructs. In describing first person accounts of experience also calls on the co-researcher to bracket his own preconceived ideas and notions of the experience of loneliness both theoretical and personal (Langdrige 2007).

The second characteristic, the reduction, aims at taking the meaning of any experience exactly as it appears or is presented in consciousness to the participants. The third characteristic, the search for essences, calls on the researcher to look for the invariant and unique characteristics of the particular phenomenon under study. The fourth characteristic is the notion of intentionality. The term "intentionality" indicates the inseparable connectedness of the human being to the world. Brentano, and later Husserl, argued that the fundamental structure of consciousness is intentional (Spiegelberg 1972). This means that all thinking (imagining, perceiving, remembering, etc.) is always thinking about something or then a being conscious of something. All human activity is always oriented or directed activity, directed by that which orients it. It is in this way that a human being's lived world is shaped. We are not reflexively or instinctually conscious of our intentional relation to the world. Intentionality is only retrospectively available to consciousness. Therefore the focus on the subjective account of a participant's experience of loneliness as it is reflected on by the participant provides a rich source of information about their lived world.

The fifth characteristic is that of existential phenomenology's hermeneutic stance. Hermeneutics is concerned both with the understanding as well as the interpretation of that which is studied; it is concerned with the dynamic relationship between the part and the whole at a series of levels. The principle here is that if you want to understand any given part you look to the whole and to understand the whole you look to the parts. As such the meaning of a word only becomes clear as we see it in the context of the whole sentence. At the same time the meaning of the sentence depends upon the cumulative meanings of the individual words (Langdrige 2007). This approach is circular in nature and can be compared to the zooming in and out of a camera to capture a picture of the landscape but also to zoom into specific features of that landscape in order to appreciate its richness. Here the analogy of lenses can be useful where certain lenses can focus on different views of the same experience. This study drew on this hermeneutic or interpretative tradition within phenomenology. Here the aim was the discovering of meanings. In the analysis phase an interpretative stance was taken in relation to the psychiatric patients experiences of loneliness.

Von Eckartsberg (1998) points to four required steps to do Existential Phenomenological research, which include firstly the formulation of a question in which the researcher delineates a focus of investigation. The second is the generation of data in which research participants' give a description

of their experience of a particular event or phenomenon. The third step involves the analysis of the data in which the researcher reads the data given by the research participants' and reveals the meaning of their experience. The last step involves the presentation of findings where the researcher presents the research results in public or the academic community.

As briefly referred to earlier in the introduction chapter this particular study made use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as a research method within the field of phenomenology. This specific methodological approach will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

2.2. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

IPA is a specific research methodology within the hermeneutic field of phenomenology. IPA is one of the most widely applied approaches in phenomenological psychology in recent years (Langdrige 2007). In employing this method the aim is to get to the bracketed meaning units of the experience of loneliness by some psychiatric patients.

i. Aim

The aim of IPA is to explore in detail the processes through which participants make sense of their experiences. IPA is a phenomenological method in that it is concerned with participants' subjective reports of their first person experience of a phenomenon. It also strongly emphasizes the dynamic nature of the research process (Brocki & Wearden 2006). It is strongly connected to the hermeneutic tradition in that it recognises the central role the researcher plays during the research process. Interpretations are bounded by the research participant's abilities to articulate their thoughts and experiences adequately and by the researcher's ability to reflect on and analyse these accounts.

IPA studies are inductive or grounded in the present rather than pre-existing theory. IPA has its origins in the fields of inquiry such as phenomenology and interactionism, which hold that human beings are not passive perceivers of an objective reality, but rather that they come to interpret and understand their world by formulating their own biographical stories into a form that makes sense to them (Brocki & Wearden 2006).

The focus of interpretive phenomenological analysis is on what a particular experience means to the person experiencing it. IPA is greatly influenced by existential phenomenology where the attention is drawn to a person's lived world experience. The lived world refers to the world as concretely lived and experienced by a person, the everyday lived experience in which meaning stands central. It presupposes that a person can only be truly found, referring to their lived experience, in their lived world. Thus IPA studies how a person perceives an experience from their lived world (Smith et al. 2009).

IPA differs from content analysis in the importance of the narrative analysis that remains central with the final analysis providing a detailed interpretative analysis of themes. IPA aims to go beyond standard thematic analysis and steers clear of temptations to generalize experience to reach

conclusions. The emphasis is rather on uniqueness and a rich diversity in experience than generalizations.

In IPA the role of the researcher is also recognized by the way the researcher interprets a participant's understanding of a particular experience. Thus the relationship between the researcher and the research participant is one of collaboration. It is seen then that data is uncovered in an interaction between researcher and research participant as well as by the researcher himself in the interpretation of the research. The process of bracketing plays an important role in this collaboration and will be discussed next (Smith et al. 2009).

ii. Bracketing

In IPA bracketing is necessary when an inquiry is performed from the perspective of the researcher. Moustakas (1994) points out that Husserl called the freedom from suppositions the epoché, a Greek word meaning to stay away from or "abstain" Husserl's phenomenological method is characterized by "epoché." The term "epoché" refers to the suspension of decision or "bracketing" of the "natural attitude" so that one can attend to a phenomenon as it shows itself. Bracketing describes the act of suspending one's various beliefs in the reality of the natural world in order to study the essential structures of the world. Once the "natural attitude" is "bracketed," one can then attend to what, according to Husserl is "the things themselves" (Bentz & Shapiro 1998).

This is one form of bracketing. There is also a second form of bracketing, which, according to Miller and Crabtree (1992) is about the researcher that "must 'bracket' her/his own preconceptions and enter into the individual's life world and use the self as an experiencing interpreter". This requires of the researcher to reflect on their own experience of the phenomenon under investigation (Groenewald 2004). A suspension or 'bracketing out' is required that takes no position either for or against the researcher's own presuppositions and not allowing the researcher's meanings and interpretations or theoretical concepts to enter and contaminate the unique world of the participant (Creswell 1998; Moustakas 1994; Sadala & Adorno 2001). This is a different conception of the term bracketing used when interviewing to bracket the phenomenon researched for the research participant. Here it refers to the bracketing of the researcher's personal views or preconceptions (Miller & Crabtree 1992).

The term reduction, coined by Husserl, is regarded by Hycner (1999) as unfortunate, because it has nothing to do with the reductionist natural science methodology. It would do a great injustice to human phenomena through over analysis, removal from the lived contexts of the phenomena and worse possibly reducing phenomena to cause and effect. Phenomenological reduction "to pure subjectivity" (Lauer, 1958), instead, is a deliberate and purposeful opening by the researcher to the phenomenon "in its own right with its own meaning" (Fouche 1993; Hycner 1999). Partial phenomenological psychological reduction is the bracketing of theories and hypotheses, which are otherwise used to explain the phenomenon in question. Bracketing facilitates an open stance towards inquiry and a phenomenological attitude (Van Manen 1997). Kendler (2005) here gives a word of caution stating that a frequent confusion arises when psychologists mistake phenomenal convictions for empirical truths. He continues to state that once it is fully appreciated that the moral judgements are

independent of factual truths, it become possible to isolate the value judgments from the empirical findings. The process of bracketing helps to prevent such pitfalls.

How much of what the researcher can truly bracket off of his preconceptions is debated. But it is argued that an awareness of these preconceptions can at the very least be used to not allow the researchers point of view to fully contaminate the research findings. Existential phenomenologists believe that one should always strive to achieve epoché but that you can never truly bracket off all presuppositions (Langdrige 2007).

In following this principle of bracketing I reflected on my own presuppositions regarding the phenomenon of loneliness and how it is experienced in the psychiatric context. Here stigmatization, lack of social skills, institutionalization and debilitating psychiatric symptoms often caused these patients to experience loneliness.

Reflexivity in the context of this study refers to a circular relationship between the researcher and the data. This reflexive relationship is bidirectional in that both the researcher and the data influenced one another. Special attention was given to this reflexivity in the present study. I reflected on the way in which the questions asked during the interviews, the methodology used and my own subjective position might have impacted on the psychological knowledge produced in the study (Langdrige 2007). The reflexive process was repeated throughout the research process. This reflexive process also informed the bracketing process in that it made the researcher aware of his own presuppositions regarding the experience of loneliness.

iii. The participants

In the phenomenological tradition the people are seen as participants in the research project rather than research subjects who are being investigated. This stems from the belief in phenomenology that the research participant plays an active role in the discovery of knowledge and is thus not viewed as a subject under study but rather a participant in the research process.

IPA studies tend to be idiographic and use small samples and do not intend to make generalizations. The aim is to gather detailed information about an experience of a specific group on a specific topic (Smith et al. 2009). I therefore made use of purposive sampling focusing on recruiting participants who share the experience of loneliness (Langdrige 2007). There were no gender, cultural or language biases in the selection process. The selected participants were male, Afrikaans speaking and at the time of the interviews were treated as psychiatric patients at a psychiatric clinic or hospital. Participants were both in- and out patients during the time during which the interviews were conducted. It is important here to emphasize the fact that the participants were not selected because they are male of Afrikaans speaking but rather because of their identification with the experience of loneliness. No attention was paid to their respective psychiatric diagnosis as it was not the main concern of this study and as part of the bracketing process required the exclusion of diagnosis to avoid it influencing the researcher's view on the quality or extent of the participants' experience of loneliness. The fact that all the participants were Afrikaans speaking put me in a favorable position to

better understand what they meant when expressing themselves as that is also my mother tongue. This however required the translation of key fragments of the interviews for the purpose of this thesis.

A reminder to the reader is necessary here in that the aim is not to generalize the research findings but rather to illustrate the nature and richness of subjective experiences and to gain a deeper understanding of the possible meanings attached to it (Moustakas 1994). Therefore a small number of research participants were selected and were found to be adequate for the purpose of this study. A total number of six participants were interviewed.

iv. Data collection and storing

I made use of in depth open ended interviews to collect data. The interviews were aimed at capturing the research participants' first person reports of their experience of loneliness. The interviews made use of explorative questions that developed as the interviews progressed. The main question was: What is the experience of loneliness like for you? The emphasis here was on participants describing their experience of loneliness. This is in line with the phenomenological method. Other questions emerged spontaneously out of the first question. This process of conversations on loneliness also fits with intersubjective engagement particular to the study where both the researcher as well as the participant plays a role in how the data is developed. The aim of these questions was to get to a rich descriptive understanding of the participants experience of loneliness.

The phenomenological interview involves an informal, interactive, process and utilizes open-ended comments and questions (Valle & Halling 1989). Consistency was maintained through the use of open ended questions and prompts designed to elicit the maximum possible information and aid the participants in accessing their subjective experience of loneliness. Much flexibility was necessary during the interview to ensure the expression of the personal experiences of the participants. This required me to create a space in which the participants could elaborate on their experiences without unnecessary interruptions. Their awareness was also directed to deeper levels of experiences.

The participants were initially just asked to describe their experience of loneliness. Further questions exploring their experience of loneliness were directed to their experiences, feelings, beliefs and associations regarding loneliness experience. At first I aimed at establishing a good rapport with the participants to facilitate open and genuine conversation. The interviews were conversational in style to allow the meanings in the experiences of loneliness to emerge intersubjectively.

The interviews were digitally recorded on a dictaphone. They were then transcribed including the interviewer's questions along with the participants' responses. The transcripts were verbatim. The interviews were reciprocal in nature where both researcher and the participant were engaged in the dialogue. Kvale (1996) describe the interview as literally an interview, an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest. Here I attempted to understand the world from the participants' point of view and to understand the meaning in experience as part of their lived world.

The interviews were digitally-recorded, with the permission of the research participants. A number was assigned to each participant. This number was used to name the interview for data storage purposes as well as later reference in this dissertation. Both the digital files as well as the transcribed interviews were saved on an external data storage device. Data were securely stored according to the policies of the University of Pretoria.

A file was opened with divisions for the various interviews. The following hard copy documentation was filed:

1. The informed consent agreement.
2. My notes made during the interview
3. The transcribed interview
4. Some notes that participants have given me
5. The data analysis table of each participant
6. The draft transcriptions and analysis of the interview that I presented to the participants for validation.

v. Data analysis

The transcribed interviews were analysed according to the principles of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis. Thematic analysis is the principal analytic approach used in IPA. Essentially the researcher here is concerned with making sense of the participant's world, while working through the transcripts identifying major themes. The focus is on grasping the whole meaning of the experience instead of dividing it into parts without understanding the basic meaning structure which gives sense to the whole experience. De Castro (2003) raises an important point stating that researchers should always keep in mind that they should not separate a given experience from the concrete meaning structure of the person, because in this way we would lose the meaning that the person is trying to affirm in his daily life.

Holloway (1997) and Hycner (1999) recommend that the researcher listens repeatedly to the audio recordings of each interview to become familiar with the words of the research participant in order to develop a holistic sense, the 'gestalt'. The term "phenomenological" implies a process, which emphasises the unique own experiences of research participants. The here and now dimensions of those personal experiences gives phenomena an existential immediacy.

Within IPA there is not a single 'method' for working with data. It rather proposes a healthy flexibility in the analysis of the data. (Smith et al. 2009). The following stages guided the analytic process of this study:

Stage1: During this initial stage I listened to the audio recordings of each interview a few times in order to grasp the experiences of the particular participant as a whole. I then carefully read the transcript. The first reading is called familiarization. The goal was here to grasp a sense of the whole of the research participant's experience as it appears in the transcriptions. Thereafter each transcript

was read and re-read. This process is referred to as emersion, and its goal is to grasp a sense of the whole of the transcript, trying to understand the meaning of the experience in terms of the standpoint of the research participant. Comments were added in the margin where the meaning of particular sections of the transcript stood out. Here my aim was to state what emerges from the text, staying as close to the original meaning inherent in the text as possible. This stage was repeated to maximize the capturing of the meaning in the text.

Another aim was to examine the semantic content and language use of the participant. This is an exploratory stage where the researcher noted anything of interest within the transcript. More specific ways are identified by which the participant talks about, understands and thinks about loneliness. Here a detailed set of notes and comments on the data was produced. During the exploratory commenting the transcripts was analysed to describe the content. Key words, phrases or explanations that the participants used were noted. These descriptive comments were taking descriptions at face value. It pointed out the objects which structure the participants' experience. I looked at the important aspects which gave me an indication of what makes up the participant's life world. The use of certain words to express experience as well as elements such as laughter, pauses, even swear words are important ways a participant makes use of language to express their experiences. The use of metaphors and symbolic language was also noted during this stage.

Stage 2: During the second stage meaning units were identified. My task here was to discriminate the various meaning units that express a self-contained meaning by each participant. These meaning units had to be understood in terms of the whole meaning of the experience. Units were divided by looking at the different key terms, aspects, attitudes or values that the research participant expressed in the description. Each meaning unit were linked to the originating text through reference to specific quotes in the transcribed interviews.

This was a critical phase of explicating the data, in that those statements that are seen to illuminate the researched phenomenon are extracted or 'isolated' (Creswell 1998; Holloway 1997; Hycner 1999). I was required to make a substantial amount of judgement calls while consciously bracketing my own presuppositions in order to avoid inappropriate subjective judgements. The meaning units were transformed into more psychological language. Here I had to state in my own words what the meanings were that dominated each meaning unit. I had to relate each meaning unit to the participant's experience of loneliness. I then extracted relevant meaning units from each interview and carefully scrutinised them. Here I eliminated the clearly redundant units (Moustakas 1994). During this stage of the analytic process I considered the literal content, the number of times a meaning was mentioned and also how it was stated. The actual meaning of two seemingly similar units of meaning might be different in terms of weight or chronology of events (Hycner 1999). Here I engaged in a reflective way with the participant's account of their experience.

Stage 3: During the third stage phenomenological exploratory comments were made. Here the analytic process moved towards a more interpretative level. Here my own academic and personal

knowledge played a role in the interpretation. Phenomenological overarching concepts were identified. This was seen as a conversation between my own pre-understandings and new emerging understandings of the participants' life world. The idea here was to add some depth and sophistication to the analytic proses. This more questioning and abstract style of thinking was critical in moving the analysis beyond the superficial and purely descriptive level. IPA is in essence an interpretative process. Interpretations moved away from the original text keeping in mind that it was inspired and arose from the participants' own words. By decontextualizing a participant's descriptions I got a sense of what the actual meanings are and avoided just reading through the text and focus on simplistic readings. One way of decontextualizing a text is to read a paragraph backwards one sentence at a time. This helped to get a feel for the particular words. De-contextualization helped in the end to see the inter relationship between one experience and another. During the analytic process in IPA the researcher tends to move from the particular to the shared and from the descriptive to the interpretative (Smith et al. 2009). My focus was on the participant's personal meaning-making within a particular context. The phenomenological exploratory comments were listed on the data analysis table in a separate column.

Stage 4: In the fourth stage emergent themes were developed taking into account the meaning units identified during stage two as well as the phenomenological exploratory comments made during stage three. I produced a table of emergent themes and appropriately named them. Here the initial notes were transformed into more meaningful statements, reflecting a broader meaning in a particular section of the text. These themes are expressed as phrases which speak to the psychological essence of the piece and contain enough particularity to be grounded and enough abstraction to be phenomenological. Here the hermeneutic circle, where the part is interpreted in relation to the whole, and the whole is interpreted in relation to the part was followed. These themes also reflected my interpretations and understanding of the meaning units identified in the second stage. These themes were listed separately in a column on the data analysis table.

Stage 5: During stage five I attempted to identify common links between themes and reordered and categorized them in a more analytical and theoretical way. Some themes were clustered together while others needed to be broken up further. My aim here was not to generalize common themes but rather look at common links within each transcript. The original data set have now grown, from the initial commenting to exploratory commenting to meaning units and emergent themes. In this part of the analytic process I attempted to reduce the volume of detail in the data whilst maintaining complexity. Stages one to five of the analytic process were repeated for each participant. These stages are cyclical and repetitive, returning to the data to check meaning and confirm interpretations (Langdrige 2007).

Stage 6: During this stage the themes were grouped under overarching "umbrella" categories across all the interviews. My aim here was not to generalize common themes but rather to look at appropriately descriptive overarching themes across all the interviews. Here again the hermeneutic principle to work from the whole to the parts and back to the whole were followed. Here the bracketing

of my own presuppositions was again necessary in order to remain true to the participant's experiences of loneliness.

Stage 7: During the final stage I listed umbrella categories in a table with their respective meaning units across all the interviews. This represented both the parts and the whole of the data generated during the analytic process. This list constituted the empirical findings on the bracketed meaning units of loneliness.

The primary concern of IPA is the lived experience of the participant and the meaning which the participant makes of that lived experience, though the end result is always an account of how the analyst thinks the participant is thinking. Thus it is my interpretation of the participants' experience of a phenomenon, the so called double hermeneutic that was employed (Smith et al. 2009).

2.3. Ethical considerations

It is of utmost importance that research is conducted to ethical standards. Research participant's agreed to take part in the study. They were informed of the potential risks, discomfort or harm involved in partaking in the research. No harm was anticipated. The purpose of the research as well as the procedures that was followed was made clear to them by the participant information and consent document. The voluntary nature of their participation and the fact that they may discontinue their participation in the research at any time were discussed with them. The procedures used to protect the confidentiality of the data were also discussed with all the participants. This included informing them of how the data will be stored. Sensitivity to the participants' right to privacy and right not to answer certain questions was also conveyed to them. The following ethical considerations arising from the study was dealt with.

i. Informed consent

Research participant's gave consent to take part in the study (See Appendix A). Before they gave their informed consent the following information was shared with them:

- The nature of their participation in the research
- The purpose of the research
- The procedures of the research
- The voluntary nature of research participation
- The participant's right to their participation in the study at any time
- The procedures used to protect confidentiality (Groenewald 2004)

ii. Confidentiality

Any information that may lead to the identification of the participant was omitted or changed to factitious information in the study to protect the participant's confidentiality. The identity of each participant was protected during the discussion of the findings.

iii. Discomfort and harm

All efforts were made to minimize the risk of psychological harm for participants in this study. Because the topic of loneliness is a sensitive issue to some participants great care was taken to deal with patient's disclosure of feelings and information in a sensitive way. The initial opening questions in the interview were disclosed to participants before they give consent in order for them to decide whether they find the questions too sensitive or if they were willing to take part in the research.

Openness and honesty between researcher and participants were maintained throughout the research. Participants were given the choice to opt out of the research at any time they felt too discomforted or at risk for psychological harm.

iv. Invasion of privacy

The researcher was sensitive when participants did not want to answer certain questions and to maintain privacy around particular aspects of their life.

2.4. Existential phenomenological lenses

In addressing the second research question: *"How can the meanings in the experiences of loneliness in a psychiatric context be understood if viewed through existential phenomenological lenses?"* a more interpretative stance was taken towards the bracketed meaning units of loneliness. This entailed the identification of existential phenomenological frameworks for the examination of the experience of loneliness.

A guided overview of the key contributions by existential and phenomenological thinkers was done, the details of which are expanded on in the next chapter. A specific focus was placed on these thinkers' understanding of how meaning is found in experience as well as their relevant contributions related to loneliness. From this guided overview existential phenomenological lenses were developed. In particular the four existential dimensions of existence were identified as suitable for this purpose. The dimensions of existence are the *eigenwelt*, *mitwelt*, *umwelt* and *überwelt*. In addition to these dimensions of existence the life-world existentials were identified as ways of experiencing one's lived world. The life-world existentials are corporeality, spatiality, temporality and relationality. An additional way of experiencing the world, spirituality was here formulated as a fifth life-world existential. The details of these phenomenological lenses will be described in the next chapter. These lenses will be applied in chapter five to the bracketed meaning units of loneliness that was identified through the IPA method discussed in chapter two.

2.4. Summary

The present study employed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis as research method to address the first research question: *"What are the experiences of loneliness in a psychiatric context about?"* The focus here was on discovering the bracketed meaning units present in the experience of loneliness by some psychiatric patients.

The second aim was to apply existential phenomenological lenses to the meanings in the experiences of loneliness in the psychiatric context. The question here was: “*How can the meanings in the experiences of loneliness in a psychiatric context be understood if viewed through existential phenomenological lenses?*” The second research question took an interpretative stance towards the findings from the first research question. Here a guided overview of the key contributions by existential and phenomenological thinkers was done.

A guided overview and the development of existential phenomenological lenses will be described in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Existential Phenomenological lenses

In this chapter I will discuss the key contributions of existential and phenomenological thinkers. This will form part of the development of existential phenomenological lenses through which to view the experiences of loneliness. In the first part of this chapter the focus will be on the key contributions by some thinkers in existentialism and phenomenology. In the subsequent section existential phenomenological lenses will be described, drawing on the key contributions discussed earlier. The existential phenomenological lenses are described as the life-world existentials of spatiality, temporality, corporeality and relationality. A case will also be made for a fifth life-world existential; that of spirituality. Moreover, the existential phenomenological lenses will also be described in terms of the four existential dimensions of existence; *eigenwelt*, *mitwelt*, *umwelt* and *überwelt*.

3.1. Key contributions by some thinkers in existentialism and phenomenology

In the present study I chose to adopt existential phenomenological lenses to view the experience of loneliness through. Although there are numerous studies related to the study of the phenomenon of loneliness, few approach the experience of loneliness from an existential phenomenological perspective (Peplau & Perlman 1982). Even fewer studies deal specifically with the meanings people couple to their experience of loneliness within the psychiatric context (Lee et al. 1994; Rokach 1988b).

The fields of existentialism and phenomenology are vast. Contributions to these fields were made among others from philosophy, psychology, psychiatry and theology. To cover its development over the past few centuries and give rightful credit to all who have contributed is not the aim of this study. Rather here a specific focus will be on those contributions that relate to the ideas from phenomenology and existentialism that can be applied in this study.

Next follows an outline of some contributions relevant to this study. The aim is to develop existential phenomenological lenses to view the experiences of loneliness through. At first the specific

contributions' relations with the experience of loneliness may not immediately be apparent but following the key contributions I will discuss how these contributions relate to this study.

3.1.1. Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831)

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was a German philosopher. At the age of eighteen Hegel entered a Protestant seminary coupled to the University of Tübingen. Here he studied philosophy and classics for two years and graduated in 1790. Although he studied theology as his main course, he devoted himself more rigorously to the study of philosophy. Hegel died on November the 14th 1831 in Berlin, Germany aged 61 (Knox 2014).

Hegel's major works include *Phenomenology of Spirit*, also translated as *Phenomenology of Mind* that was published in 1807. Here Hegel describes the three-stage dialectical life of Spirit. He uses the word phenomenology for his lengthy exposition of the many manifestations of mind or spirit as it unfolds itself dialectically from naïve sense awareness at the simplest level through perception, understanding, and the many forms of consciousness up to the highest intellectual and spiritual activities (Hegel 1807/1977; Macquarrie 1972).

According to Hegel "Being" comes alive in the human spirit that exists subjectively in the human mind. This human spirit is aware of its finiteness. Hegel also referred to objective spirit, which manifests itself in human institutions such as the state. Both of these are finite spirits. Absolute spirit, Hegel thought, is that which rises above its finitude, and knows itself as "Being" (Van Deurzen & Kenward 2005). Thus Hegel equated absolute spirit to that which goes beyond or transcends the finite.

Hegel also referred to a 'master-slave' dialectic. Hegel claims that human beings seek conquest and public recognition as conquerors and the self desires to annihilate another self to assert its own existence. But if the conqueror here kills the conquered there will be no witness to attest for this victory. Therefore the conquered needs to be kept alive but will be forever in servitood to the master. In the idleness and consumption of the master his life leaves no mark and is merely destructive but in the work and labour of the slave he becomes a creator. Here Hegel points to creativity that emerges from the struggle, a theme that we will come back to later in this study. By denying the recognition of the slave's selfhood the master denies himself a self as a captive and so loses human recognition of his own humanity. The dialectic of the situation is that the master thus loses his mastery over the slave whilst the slave, through creative labour, objectifies himself and again becomes a human self. This leads to the slave becoming master and the master enslaved (Van Deurzen & Kenward 2005).

Hegel thought that human beings are a product of culture and incapable of transcending but some philosophers like Søren Kierkegaard opposed this view.

3.1.2. Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855)

Søren Aabye Kierkegaard was a Danish philosopher. He was born on the 5th of May 1813 in Copenhagen, Denmark. During his education he read theology and studied the liberal arts and science. He went on to study theology at the University of Copenhagen. Towards the end of his university career he started to criticize Christianity as it was upheld by his father. He continued his

search for a new set of values to live by. Kierkegaard criticized the church and blamed it for being detrimental to the individual. He sought to truly understand the human dilemma not by simplifying matters but rather to make them as complicated as possible. He thought that in facing rather than eliminating or avoiding difficulties in life we are truly living (Kierkegaard 1849/2004).

Kierkegaard emphasized the existing individual. He believed that it is vital for each human being to claim the right to become a true individual and stand out from the crowd. He was critical of people losing themselves in the masses and having a “herd mentality”. In his view the church promoted such a “herd mentality”. According to Kierkegaard the true individual is constituted by choice. He proposed three stages of human existence: the aesthetic stage, the ethical stage, and the religious stage. Kierkegaard believed in the dualistic separateness of body and mind. He thought that the synthesis of body and psyche leads to spirit. At first we discover the gratification of the bodily urges (aesthetic), then we discover the mind’s ability to overrule these urges (ethics). But this tension brings insight into the limitations of both aesthetics and ethics. It is this struggle between the limitations of the physical being and the psychological being that brings into existence the spiritual being. Kierkegaard strongly felt that it is only by a leap of faith that we discover our ability to overcome this struggle and the inherent paradoxes of human nature and enter into the spiritual dimension. Here also pointing to how the spirit comes into existence through the struggle. Thus faith gives us the route to the spiritual dimension. This leap of faith however calls on us to take risks, abandon rationality and enter into the unknown. This often calls for an abandon of all preconceived ideas or notions (Kierkegaard 1843/1992).

Kierkegaard thought that as part of this struggle we need to overcome the opposition of the temporal life and the eternal life. According to Kierkegaard human beings are always caught up between the reality of the experience of everyday life and the demands of the eternal. He quotes the apostle Paul in talking about the law and sin from Romans 7:21 “The good that I want to do and the bad I don’t want to do I do.” Kierkegaard hereby illustrates that our only rescue from this struggle is life through the spirit. Through spirit the temporal is overcome by ceasing to be mere present and becoming the possibility of a continuous past, present and future. It is our very knowledge of our own sinfulness that draws and connects us to the spiritual. Kierkegaard went in to claim that the highest demand that can be made of man is to be spirit (Kierkegaard 1849/2004).

Kierkegaard equated anxiety with nothingness. He saw anxiety as the tension between the eternal and nothingness. He thought that anxiety is a necessary condition of our sinful being. It can both encourage growth and be detrimental to our being if we don’t develop a sense of spirit. One of the qualities of anxiety is infinite possibility. Anxiety also calls us to be self-reflective in the process of overcoming the opposition between nothing and the eternal. By facing the nothing or allowing yourself to experience anxiety, the anxiety becomes more a something. Thus anxiety can be transformed through the spiritual. In this sense anxiety fills the inner void and makes us relate to the outside world also being a driving force. Kierkegaard felt that we need to learn to be anxious and that anxiety is an inevitable and necessary part of life. Thus it cannot be avoided, if we do we will either be overwhelmed by it or be insensitive to existence and unable to truly live. He saw anxiety as crucial to

the spiritual life and that it is a sign that the struggles with the human paradox is taken seriously. Therefore he saw anxiety as the departure point of the meaningful life (Kierkegaard 1943/1844/2009).

For Kierkegaard the true self or authentic self comes into existence as a result of a tension between the finite and the infinite, the two ultimate extremes of existence. He felt that we should neither hide in religion nor in the world. Hiding in any of these will bring about an inauthentic self. It is only in standing alone and facing up to our personal challenges that we can be true to the self that we are. Here he refers to standing alone, a theme we will return to later in how it relates to loneliness. Here Kierkegaard implies that we inevitably face the world alone. Thus being alone lies at the core of our personal struggle, in this sense loneliness is not the struggle itself but rather a position, that of being alone, in the world. Being content and in touch with this state of loneliness can help one to be more authentic. The theme of authenticity will also present itself later in this study.

Kierkegaard also saw the self as a process of becoming, forever moving away from itself (eternal – infinite) and towards itself (temporal – finite), these representing the ultimate poles of existence. He thought that if the self ceases to search for itself it is doomed to despair. He however thought that we cannot avoid being in despair. In its essence there is no cure for this illness of being caught up between the finite and the infinite. It is however through suffering this very illness that we discover our true capabilities and come to truly appreciate life. If we however get lost on the finite pursuits of and absorbed by the temporal goals of this world we will fall into emptiness and in the process become empty in ourselves (Kierkegaard 1849/2004).

For Kierkegaard suffering is a requirement in life in order to have a meaningful existence. He saw human beings as starting off in a state of passive living, focussed on survival but later become conscious of ourselves and self-knowing and finally aware of the fact that it is the self that is knowing. It is at this stage of self-knowing that autonomy is reached and the person can be said to have spirit (Kierkegaard 1849/2004). Therefore Kierkegaard closely links self-knowing with the spiritual being and here also points to the fact that a certain kind of introspective and self-reflective attitude is necessary to become spirit or be in touch with the spiritual dimension of one's life.

Kierkegaard thought that distancing oneself sufficiently from oneself as well as distancing ourselves from the beliefs we aspire to gives us a healthy perspective on our being. In this view he already emphasized a kind of bracketing of the self in order to truly know the self. Here presuppositions, beliefs and values need to be suspended for a while to discover the true self or being. The task is to be objective towards oneself and subjective towards others. Objectivity towards oneself brings perspective and subjectivity towards others brings understanding and empathy. The importance of empathic understanding will be discussed later as it relates to loneliness. In this sense one needs to become transparent to oneself. This process of self knowing involves courage according to Kierkegaard (Kierkegaard 1849/ 2004). Here Kierkegaard emphasizes the importance of subjective experience in relation to others. He feels that truly understanding and having empathy with the other can only come about through such a subjective relationship.

For Kierkegaard the dialectical movement of overcoming was not a gradual, historical and cultural one as Hegel described it. The transcending of the dilemma of *either/or* would happen suddenly and through hard individual work and development and it would ultimately lead to the subjective experience of faith and an rich and rewarding spiritual life (Van Deurzen 2010).

3.1.3. Franz Brentano (1838-1917)

Franz Brentano was a German philosopher and at one point in his life a catholic priest. Brentano attempted to answer the question of how the human subjective experience was to be understood. Franz Brentano believed that philosophy should be done with methods that are as rigorous and as exact as those of the natural sciences. He aimed here to put philosophy on par in validity of its findings with those of the natural sciences. He described phenomena as occurring in the mind and referred to mental phenomena as acts of consciousness and physical phenomena as objects of external perception. For Brentano, physical phenomena exist “intentionally” in acts of consciousness (Brentano 1874/1973).

Brentano distinguished descriptive psychology from genetic psychology. Where genetic psychology seeks the causes of various types of mental phenomena, descriptive psychology defines and classifies the various types of mental phenomena, including perception, judgment, emotion, etc. According to Brentano, every mental phenomenon, or act of consciousness, is directed toward some object, and only mental phenomena are so directed. In 1889 Brentano used the term “phenomenology” for descriptive psychology (Brentano 1982).

Brentano argued that intentionality is the defining characteristic of human consciousness. While often simplistically summarised as “*aboutness*” or the relationship between mental acts and the external world. Here it may be appropriate to remind the reader of the first research question of this study: “What are the experiences of loneliness *about*?” Here we seek the *aboutness* of the experience of loneliness. Brentano defined this *aboutness* as the main characteristic of mental phenomena, by which they could be distinguished from physical phenomena. The property of being intentional, of having an intentional object, was the most important feature to distinguish psychological phenomena and physical phenomena. Brentano felt that physical phenomena lacked the ability to generate original intentionality, and could only facilitate an intentional relationship in a second-hand manner, which he labelled derived intentionality (Van Deurzen 2010).

The notion of intentionality is vital in understanding subjective experiences of phenomenon. Edmund Husserl further developed the idea of intentionality.

3.1.4. Edmund Husserl (1859-1938)

Edmund Husserl was a German philosopher who is credited with establishing the school of phenomenology. He studied mathematics and later philosophy. He also studied with Franz Brentano. Husserl challenged the positivist orientation of the science and philosophy of his day. He worked on a method of phenomenological reduction by which the essence of experience can become known.

Husserl introduced Phenomenology as a new science from within philosophy. He thought that objective science has failed to take into account subjectivity and intentionality. For Husserl intentionality is what indicates the way in which we are in the world. We create meaning out of our connections to the world and apply these meanings to other parts of the world. Husserl pointed to the importance to articulate and systematize the fundamental principles underlying human experience. Later he focused on the *lebenswelt* or 'lived-world' (Macann 1993).

Husserl thought that consciousness is never directed toward itself, but, rather, is always directed toward phenomena in the world. In phenomenology, consciousness is thus understood as fundamentally intentional. Therefore, any abstraction is ultimately based on phenomena in the world, and, thus, are secondary to the primary lived experience of phenomena as they "show themselves" or "appear" (Overgaard 2004).

Husserl based his work initially on that of Franz Brentano, he especially retained Brentano's idea of intentionality, but he applied it in a different way (van Deurzen, 2010). In his *Logical Investigations* Husserl outlined a complex system of philosophy, moving from logic to philosophy of language, to ontology to a phenomenological theory of intentionality, and finally to a phenomenological theory of knowledge (Husserl 1900/1970). He argued that we are conscious through our intentionality. Through our intentionality we reach out to the world (Van Deurzen & Kenward 2005).

In his major work *Ideas* Husserl focused on phenomenology itself. Husserl defined phenomenology as the science of the essence of consciousness, with intentionality at its centre. Husserl also introduced the method of epoché. Here he proposed that to practice phenomenology one should "bracket" the question of the existence of the natural world. We thereby turn our attention, in reflection, to the structure of our own conscious experience. I will elaborate further on the concept of epoché later in the study. Husserl's phenomenological method is characterized by "epoché." The term "epoché" refers to the suspension of decision or "bracketing" of the "natural attitude" so that one can attend to a phenomenon as it shows itself. Bracketing describes the act of suspending one's various beliefs in the reality of the natural world in order to study the essential structures of the world. Once the "natural attitude" is "bracketed," one can then attend to what, according to Husserl, are the two poles of experience, noema and noesis. Noesis is the act of perceiving, while noema is that which is perceived. Through this method one can perform an "eidetic reduction." Noema can be reduced to their essential form or "essence." Thus phenomenological philosophy is a reflection on the meaning or essence of the experience of consciousness (Husserl 1913; Lawrence & O'Connor 1967).

The intentional process of consciousness is called noesis, while its ideal content is called noema. The noema of an act of consciousness Husserl characterized both as an ideal meaning and as "the object as intended". Thus the phenomenon, or object-as-it-appears, becomes the noema, or object-as-it-is-intended. The interpretations of Husserl's theory of noema have been several and amount to different developments of Husserl's basic theory of intentionality (Langdrige 2007).

Next we will turn our attention to the contributions of Friedrich Nietzsche.

3.1.5. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)

Friedrich Nietzsche was a German philosopher who proposed as goal for human kind the *übermensch*. The *übermensch* or superhuman is the one who has achieved true freedom, by overcoming all the usual moral prejudices and repressions and who is capable of transvaluing all values to establish a personal and autonomous mode of functioning. The *übermensch* according to Nietzsche is a person who has become eminently reflective and intelligent, where the body, soul and self are truly integrated.

Nietzsche thought of man as an in-between, a bridge he called man, forever reaching out, stretching out. He saw that people who lived in blind obedience to the norms of society as lacking courage. Thus emphasizing the fact that it takes courage to be not like others or authentic to yourself. He also emphasized the unity of body and soul, stating that the soul is only a word for something in the body. Nietzsche saw the soul or the self is a function of the body. Nietzsche saw that one of man's core problems were a lack of self-knowledge. He thought that our task should be to rediscover the power and strength that can be gained from our inner source in order to become capable of living deeply and passionately. Nietzsche was adamant about the idea to find yourself first before you can truly be with others. This also called upon a self-reflective stance towards one's self. He thought that people often put the joy of the herd above the joy of the individual. He felt that we should face the difficulties and realities of life and the human condition. Through this we can rediscover values more true to ourselves and based in reality (Flynn 2011; Nietzsche 2008).

Nietzsche spoke of courage in relation to the will to power. It is courage that gives us the ability to face up to the struggles of life and that takes us through the struggles. He also challenged humankind to reconsider what they already know (Van Deurzen 2010).

According to Nietzsche man is estranged from his own being. His thoughts is estranged from his own being, he is disconnected from himself. Therefore man can then also be seen as lonely in relation to himself (Nietzsche 2008).

3.1.6. Karl Jaspers (1883- 1969)

Karl Theodor Jaspers was a German psychiatrist, psychologist and philosopher. He was often viewed as a major exponent of existentialism in Germany, though he did not accept this label. Jaspers coined the term "Existenzphilosophie" that described philosophy not as a rational investigation of the world, but as an individual, private and lived-out struggle. He viewed his philosophy as active, forever changing.

For Jaspers understanding was the way to access other people's mental states. It gives the investigator the ability to discover their motives and subjective meanings from their actions and speech. Jasper distinguished between two main categories of understanding. The first is the understanding of someone's mental states considered individually. He referred to this as static understanding. The second is the understanding of how one state may follow on from another, this he called genetic understanding. Jaspers saw psychic phenomenon as in essence subjective

phenomenon. He proposed that one can only access these subjective phenomena through empathy. Jaspers also emphasized the importance of a person's worldview. This worldview can provide structure and mental stability but it can also in the same breath restrict our view and lead to despair (Fulford 2006).

Jaspers described four dimensions of existence, of realising human potential, and of their accompanying modes of communication. The first is naïve vitality. This mode points to our emotions and self-interested behaviour. This is in essence an unreflective mode and its mode of communication is through instinct. The second is consciousness. This involves rationality and reflection. Communication in this mode happens through intellectual, methodical and scientific ways. The third is spirit. This is the mode of ideals, and its corresponding mode of communication is communal. The fourth is existence. He refers here to the genuine, non-objective self, which is not fixed and comprises of possibilities and extends in communication with others. Existence cannot be communicated through objective language. This is revealed in so called boundary situations which are situations of inescapable suffering (Van Deurzen & Kenward 2005). Jaspers approached psychopathology through phenomenology in his seminal work *General Psychopathology* (Jaspers 1913/1997).

3.1.7. Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)

Martin Heidegger was a German philosopher most well-known for his major work *Being and Time*. In this work he extensively addressed the question of "Being". Heidegger also coined the term "thrownness" to describe the idea that human beings are "thrown" into existence without having chosen it (Heidegger 2005). This "thrownness" is considered to be a precondition to existence. He put ontology first and thought that phenomenology would have to be based on an observation and analysis of *Dasein* ("being-there"). Heidegger turned his focus toward the lived world of a person and argued that a person is inseparable from their world (Heidegger, 2010). Heidegger's existential phenomenology is also often referred to as ontological phenomenology. Heidegger (2005) then also referred to phenomenology as the doctrine about the avoidance of illusion.

For Heidegger, a human being and their activities are always "in the world". A Being exists as a being-in-the-world. Rather than bracketing the world, human beings interpret their activities and the meaning of things by looking to their relations to things in the world. Thus being is always meaningfully connected to their world. Here he emphasizes the relational quality or the relationality of our being-in-the-world (Heidegger 2010). This way of understanding the meaning of experience will be elaborated on later in this chapter under the dimensions of existence as well as the life-world existential of relationality.

Heidegger aimed to understand the essence of "Being". Heidegger used the concept of *Dasein* to refer to a quality of *Dasein* as "being-there". Another quality of *Dasein* is to be in a state of being-in-the-world. Heidegger felt that *Dasein* cannot be in isolation or separated from its world and cannot help but care about its world. Heidegger also saw "being" as ever changing. "Being" also never arrives

but is always in a state of becoming. He introduces temporality, and sets time as the backdrop against which “Being” exists. Thus *Dasein* also has a temporal quality. We can also then say that “being” relates through temporality. Heidegger thought that when human beings lack awareness of their own “Being” they do so because they do not reflect on their “Being” or direct their attention towards it. He also supported the idea that intentionality, the way in which consciousness is directed in the world, determines how the world is constituted (Heidegger 2010).

Heidegger also emphasized that we are not just in a world of things but also in a world with other people. Here he referred to a with-world or *mitwelt* dimension of our existence. Thus to be-there means also to be-there with other people. One of man’s essentials challenges is then also to learn to be with others in a caring capacity. *Dasein* always needs to be careful to not allow itself to be absorbed by the other and thus lose itself in the process. Thus a healthy self-other relationship needs to exist.

Heidegger puts a great emphasis on being authentic. Becoming authentic happens through an understanding of what the challenge of being with others is really about. An understanding of our inevitable connections to the world of things and people underlies true authenticity. We become inauthentic when we relate to ourselves as an object as well as reducing the other and the things of this world to mere objects. We can become mediocre and average when we live our lives according to other people. We need to reclaim our authentic being by becoming transparent to our Being-towards-Death. Heidegger saw our temporality and thus our mortality is the ultimate truth of our being. Death presents us with the ultimate limitation to our existence. All the rest of our existence plays out against this reality. This being-from-birth to being-towards death then also gives us the temporal sense with which we live life. Being authentic then also means being loyal to existence, through increasing transparency and openness to different dimensions of existence. Therefore *Dasein*’s true existential medium is not actuality but possibility (Heidegger 2010).

Heidegger thought that human beings have certain given capacities. These capacities entails that we always find ourselves in a particular state of mind. Our ability to understand the world is the second essential characteristic of our being in the world. We always understand the world in a particular way and so take position in the world. Our third existential capability is to grasp situations by speech, or discourse, which allows us to make sense of the world and of ourselves in a direct and concrete manner.

At the core of what Heidegger addresses in *Being and Time* is an existential interpretation of our dimensions of being-in-the-world. Heidegger speaks about the worldliness of the world in which we exist. He points towards four worlds in which we exist as beings-in-the-world. They are the *eigenwelt*, the *mitwelt*, the *umwelt*. He also hints towards an *überwelt* as an added dimension (Heidegger 2005). For Heidegger *Dasein* has certain qualities. These are the “how” or body (the corporeal), the “where” (the spatial) the “when” (the temporal) and the “with whom” (the relational) qualities of *Dasein*. Van

Manen (1997) called these qualities of Dasein the four existentials. These dimensions of existence as well as the life world existential will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

3.1.8. Martin Buber (1878-1965)

Martin Buber was a Jewish Philosopher. He studied philosophy, art history, German and philology. Buber is best known for his philosophy of dialogue, a form of existentialism centred on the distinction between the I–Thou (*Ich-Du*) relationship and the I–It (*Ich-Es*) relationship. In 1923, Buber wrote his well-known essay on existence, *Ich und Du*. Here he proposed a thesis of dialogical existence. Buber described existence as an encounter. He explained this philosophy using the word pairs of I-Thou (*Ich-Du*) and I-It (*Ich-Es*). By using these word pairs he categorized modes of consciousness, interaction, and being through which an individual engages with other individuals, inanimate objects, and reality. Buber argued that one is engaged with the world at all times in one of these two dimensions of existence. Either in an I-Thou or an I-It relationship. The particular way in which we relate has bearing on the quality of our experience. These modes can be seen as dialogue I-Thou (*Ich-Du*) and monologue I-It (*Ich-Es*) (Buber 1923/1970).

The I-Thou (*Ich-Du*) mode refers to relationship that stresses the mutual, holistic existence of two beings. It is a concrete encounter, because these beings meet one another in their authentic existence, without any qualification or objectification of one another. This can be seen as a real authentic relatedness. In an I–Thou encounter, infinity and universality are actualized. Buber stressed that an I-Thou relationship lacks any composition and communicates no content. Buber stressed although the I-thou mode of relating cannot be measured it is real and can only be perceived. The I-thou relationship can be described as an encounter, meeting, dialogue, mutuality, and exchange. Buber felt that the secret of the I-Thou relationship is to give oneself fully over to the experience of encounter with a preparedness to encounter the other in a real meaningful encounter (Buber 1923/1970).

The I-It (*Ich-Es*) relationship stands opposite of the I-Thou mode of relating. Whereas in the I-Thou mode of relating two beings encounter one another in a real non-judgemental nor objectiviing way, in an I-it relationship the beings do not actually meet. Here the “I” treats that being as an object, thus objectiviing that being. These objects are considered as mental representations, created and sustained by the individual mind. Essentially, this form of objectivity relates to how an object can serve the individual’s interest. Therefore, the I-It relationship is in fact a relationship with oneself; it is not a dialogue, but a monologue. The I in an I-It relationship becomes isolated and objective whereas the I in an I-Thou relationship becomes a person and subjective (Buber 1923/1970; Van Deurzen 2010).

A particular I-thou relationship Buber described was that which exists between a human being and God or the spiritual aspects of existence. Buber saw that the only way to interact and connect with God is through the I-Thou mode of relating. In the same way the I-Thou mode of relating with anything or anyone also connects in some way with the eternal relation to God. For Buber to create this I–Thou relationship with God requires a person to firstly be open to the idea of such a relationship, but

secondly to not actively pursue it. The active pursuit of such a relation can result in an I-It relatedness. Buber argues that by being open to the I-Thou mode of relating to God, God eventually shows himself in response to this open attitude. When I approach the other I approach the other with my whole being and I search for the other's whole being. When I approach the other as an It, I approach with only part of myself and I relate to only one aspect of the other and therefore only one aspect of myself. In the I-It mode I observe and analyse the other and myself. In an I-Thou mode I encounter the other, and with it I also open up the possibility of encountering myself (Van Deurzen & Kenward 2005).

Buber argued that human existence consists of an oscillation between I-Thou and I-It modes of relating. He thought that I-Thou experiences are less often experienced than I-It experiences. Buber also thought that human experiences such as isolation and dehumanization is a result of the predominance of I-It experiences and that to truly relate meaningfully to others one should aspire to an I-Thou mode of relating. An I-Thou relating is the only way to truly value existence and bring forth the meaning of all existence (Buber 1923/1970).

3.1.9. Max Scheler (1878-1965)

Max Ferdinand Scheler was a German philosopher and phenomenologist. He borrowed Husserl's idea of the capacity of intuition to directly grasp essences. He also viewed all things as connected through human consciousness. Scheler took the emotional nature of all human experience seriously. He felt that love and reason has to be brought together in order to make sense of the world. He felt that human beings can live in harmony with nature by focusing on what brings us together and makes us all belong to the same framework of reality to which we all contribute. He proposed that we learn again to connect through our living intuition arguing that this is an act of de-spiritualization. Our living intuition can make the world meaningful again. He felt that Husserl's idea of intuition was too cognitive and that human intuition in its essence is based in the felt sense, our feeling and our sense of the spiritual. He also argued that we should go beyond understanding the human mind in an abstract way and address the whole person instead. In his exposition of values Scheler referred to holy values. These values are about our spiritual awakening and awareness and tells us intuitively what it is that ultimately matters and what is to be considered as good and evil in our lives. He felt that we should re-engage with the cosmos and our intrinsic part in it to find our way forward (van Deurzen 2010).

3.1.10. Paul Tillich (1886-1965)

Paul Johannes Tillich was a German-American Christian existentialist philosopher and theologian. Tillich is widely regarded as one of the most influential theologians of the 20th century. Tillich thought that religious questions arose from the human situation and that it is through human awareness that answers about being can be found. He saw the human condition as the way to spirituality and the concepts of anxiety, courage and faith feature strongly in his work.

On anxiety Tillich stated that anxiety is the state in which a being is aware of its possible non-being. He also thought of anxiety as the fear of fear. He viewed death as the very essence of life. Tillich thought that courage is not only needed to overcome anxiety but that anxiety also generates courage.

He highlighted three main anxieties of man: anxiety of death; anxiety of meaninglessness and anxiety of guilt or condemnation. He sees all three as in essence the fear of non-being (Tillich 2000).

Tillich continues that in the face of inevitable death man's ontic sense of self-affirmation is threatened. Fate will bring this threat to reality and it threatens the foundation of the fact that I am. Secondly I have to face the possibility of condemnation, which I encounter as the experience of guilt in myself and which threatens my moral self-affirmation, destroying the sense that I exist as a good person. In the last place, I have to face the possibility of meaninglessness, which I experience as the emptiness of my life, which threatens my spiritual self-affirmation and questions the fact that I exist as a person.

Tillich commented that the only way of overcoming these threats is to face their inevitability. This acceptance and active extension towards the ultimate is a form of faith. It is through the small everyday concerns and anxieties that we stretch out to the fullness of the human and existential concern that leads to faith in the ultimate. Tillich thought that neurotic anxiety only served as a cover up for what is in actual fact existential anxiety. He had similar thoughts for guilt. Tillich stated that power is the possibility of self-affirmation, in spite of internal and external negation (Tillich 2000).

3.1.11. Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973)

Gabriel Marcel was born in Paris, France in 1889 he also died there in 1973 at the age of 83. Apart from being a philosopher Marcel also was an award winning playwright, and a music and drama critic, a pianist and composer. Marcel regarded all these activities as perfectly integral in his highly concrete philosophical reflection. Marcel made a significant contribution to the French existential movement. Marcel strongly felt that we cannot separate the self from that which it participates in because it's only the participation which allows there to be a self. Thus through participation the self comes into being. Participation therefore is the only foundation of a person's experience of existence. He put the emphasis strongly on the lived experience. Marcel discerned three levels of participation: the level of incarnation, which is actualized through sensation and the experience of the body as "mine"; second the level of communion, which is actualized through love, hope, and the level of fidelity; the level of transcendence, which is actualized through the ontological exigence, primitive assurance, and "blind intuition of being. When looking at the work of Marcel the central interpretive insight is the notion of "creation". Marcel feels that being is only revealed through creative experience. Put another way being's role in thought is a creative intuition similar to that of the artist (Gallagher & Marcel 1962).

Marcel had a clear spiritual approach to his existential philosophy. He however rejected the idea that he was an existentialist and rather referred to his approach as neo-Socratic. He took a strong stance regarding our ability to understand being. He thought that being can only be understood through the experience of human relationships.

Marcel distinguished between primary and secondary reflection. Primary reflection is a process of studying the objects in the world through rationality, verification and proof. Marcel notes that although primary reflection has its place but it tends to abstract and estrange us from the world. It is also of little

use in attempting to understand human beings in relation to each other. He viewed this approach as dehumanizing (Marcel 2001/1950-1951).

Marcel saw secondary reflection as a spiritual activity based in faith. It requires tuning into the mystery of existence and calls on us to relate with love. Marcel emphasised the mysteriousness and immeasurability of existence, and the importance of fidelity and openness to others as well as the primacy of hope. Marcel thought that we understand our being through secondary reflection. It is also through secondary reflection that we seek out others, and it relates the real body to the ego, thus bringing the dualism between mind and body (Marcel 2001/1950-1951).

The themes in Marcel's philosophy are all interconnected. Marcel's important philosophical contributions for the purpose of this study is the themes of freedom, creative fidelity, and presence. These will now be discussed briefly.

Marcel thought that human beings recognize that they are an existing thing, but they somehow feel compelled to prove that their life is more significant than simply existing. They then surround themselves with things that they believe can make their life more meaningful or valuable. According to Marcel this belief has placed man in a predicament caused by a desire to possess rather than to be. All people become a master of defining their individual selves by either their possessions or by their professions. Marcel thought that meaning was forced into people's life through these venues. People believe that their lives have worth because they are tied to things or objects. This results in people experiencing themselves as objects in turn. In this state existence is valued as "having" instead of "being". Marcel saw that the objectification of the self through one's "having" possessions actually took away his freedom, and separates him from the experiences of his own participation in being. Thus in a way man can be possessed by his possessions and thereby lose his freedom. Marcel also thought that people often make the mistake to think that freedom is rooted in independence. For Marcel true freedom, is always about the possibilities of the self, understood within the confines of relationships with others. Here Marcel emphasizes the importance of the relational aspect of existence (Gallagher & Marcel 1962).

Marcel thought that the body does not have instrumental value, nor is it simply a part or extension of the self. It is impossible for the self to conceive of the body in any way at all except for it as a distinct entity identified with the self. Marcel thought that people who resort to seeing the self and the world in terms of functionality are ontologically deficient because not only can they not properly respond to the needs of others, but they have become isolated and independent from others (Gallagher & Marcel 1962).

Marcel states that, "A really alive person is not merely someone who has a taste for life, but somebody who spreads that taste, showering it, as it were, around him; and a person who is really alive in this way has, quite apart from any tangible achievements of his, something essentially creative about him," (Marcel 2001/1950-1951 Vol I, p. 139).

Creative fidelity, according to Marcel entails a commitment to acts which draw the person closer to others. Here he also emphasized proper respect for the self. Self-love, self-satisfaction, complacency, or even self-anger are attitudes which can interfere in one's existential progress and work against the creative impulse according to Marcel. In addition he thought that to be tenacious in the creative pursuit is the most crucial part of the creative impulse, since creation is a natural outflow of being embodied. One can create constructively, and create destructively. Creative fidelity then is a fidelity towards being free, it is being dedicated to express the self without constraint but this involves making decisions about what is important (Marcel 2001/1950-1951).

According to Marcel there is mystery in presence. He thought that presence can transcend the objective physical fact of being-with each other. Presence is concerned with recognizing the self as a being-among-beings, and acknowledging the relevance of others' experiences to the self, as a being. The notion of presence for Marcel is comprised of two other parallel notions, communion and availability. Together, communion and availability enable an individual to come into a complete participation with another being. The mark of presence is the mutual tie to the other. For Marcel, it means that the self is "given" to the other, and that givenness is responsively received or reciprocated (Marcel 2001/1950-1951).

According to Marcel the existential life is largely one of hope, but not mere optimism. Being embodied in the world allows one to seek out new opportunities for the self to engage with the world and others. But the picture is not rosy. Hope for Marcel is not faith that things will go well. Marcel felt that even if we are in despair we are always moving towards something more. If there is always movement, and always more to reach for, the existential self is never complete. The existential self, upon recognizing that the self is not something that is possessed, can then shift his thought from questioning the significance of his own existence as a matter of fact, to questioning how he is related to his body. Hope then is based in the fact that the embodied nature of being cannot be separated from the spiritual, since the spiritual is conditioned on the body. Thus the mystery of being for the existential self is unsolvable, because it is not a problem to be solved according to Marcel (Marcel 2001/1950-1951).

Marcel became known for his very public disagreements with Jean-Paul Sartre. Perhaps the most fundamental ideological disagreement between the two was over the notion of autonomy. For Marcel, autonomy is a discovery of the self as a being receptive to others, rather than as a power to be exerted. Marcel's autonomy is rooted in a commitment to participation with others and is unique in that the participative subject is committed by being encountered, or approached by, another individual's need. Yet, Marcel took commitment to be primarily the response to the appeal directed to the self as an individual so that the self is free to respond to another on account of their mutual needs (Marcel 2001/1950-1951).

3.1.12. Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980)

Jean-Paul Sartre was a French philosopher who studied under Husserl and Heidegger. His most notable philosophical work is *Being and Nothingness*, first published in 1945. Sartre's philosophy can

be described as a 'dualist ontology' (Macann, 1993). The fundamental assumption that Sartre makes is that human beings are essentially "emptiness". He sees that people have no essence; they exist first and in the process become who they are. At the core of human beings will always be nothingness. So in essence human beings are a nothing pretending to be something. He saw as fundamental to human nature the matter of choice. We are a nothing but in choosing so we can make ourselves a something (Sartre 1984).

Sartre saw that humans define themselves through their actions. But the possibility of choice always remains until one's death. It is only then that somebody's life can be described and is fixed. Sartre also saw that we are condemned to freedom. The freedom to choose opens up the possibilities of life but also leaves us anxious and uncertain on how to proceed. Thus the fact that we are conscious beings introduces the human paradox. We are in essence nothing but on the other hand we are able of becoming many different things. Sartre also argued that the only choice human beings don't have is the choice not to choose, for even that would be a choice in itself. This reality confronts us with freedom and responsibility and calls for a life lived in awareness and sober reflection (Sartre, 2007).

Sartre described the basic human ability to self-deception as bad faith. To be in bad faith is to pretend that we are other than we are and to reduce all of our many possibilities to one reality, which we pretend to be all there, is to live at that moment. Sartre saw it almost impossible for human beings to be open to the enormous complexity of reality. We are thus condemned to betray truth in this way. So even if we believe something in good faith we are still in bad faith because when we fail to remember our ability for being in bad faith and we forcefully ignore that we are capable of lying (Sartre 1956).

Sartre refuses the notion that anything to do with consciousness can ever be unconscious. He does however acknowledge that there are aspects of our existence that we are not conscious of because it is for the moment outside of our scope of experience. He rather saw these aspects as part of non-self-reflective consciousness. Here he rather thought of consciousness as a matter of awareness and unawareness. Sartre referred to the idea of prereflexive consciousness. With this he meant that consciousness has no content but is always directed towards objects. In this way it is transcendent. He saw the existence of subject and object of self and the world of things as the only relationship that human beings can have and this nature by which human beings are connected to the world can potentially lead to the alienation of the self from the world (Sartre 1956).

Sartre saw human beings as always being in a situation. Here he emphasized the importance of context. We are always in relation to a given world. The changes that occur in the self must also occur in the world around the self. These two dimensions are intertwined and the one impacts on the other. Sartre also put great emphasis on the existence of the other. We gain a sense of selfhood both from a confirmation of our existence by the other as well as our confirmation of the existence of the other. He also proposed that our fear of the human condition makes us need others as well as reject them. The other also makes us aware of our vulnerabilities (Barret 1990).

In essence Sartre feels that human existence is a search for truth in which we need each other to find out about reality and to constantly correct our own understanding. For Sartre there is no logical necessity to how things are, for him the world is in essence an absurdity, and there is no fixed or objective meaning to life. Sartre also felt that people in general choose to ignore this fact of life. Sartre saw meaning in life as a rather personal affair (Van Deurzen 2010).

3.1.13. Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961)

Maurice Merleau-Ponty was born in 1908 in France. Merleau-Ponty was a French phenomenological philosopher, strongly influenced by Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. The constitution of meaning in human experience was his main interest and he wrote on human perception, art and politics.

Merleau-Ponty's most notable text is *The Phenomenology of Perception*. Merleau-Ponty divided this text into three parts. The first part is devoted to the Body, the second to the World as Perceived and the third to Being For Itself and Being-in-the-world (Merleau-Ponty 2004).

Merleau-Ponty described phenomenology as both a philosophy of essences and a philosophy of existence. In his introduction he continues then to focus on four main themes he saw as fundamental in phenomenology. These are description, the reduction, essences and intentionality. Merleau-Ponty saw phenomenology firstly as a descriptive science. Phenomenology has to return to the world that precedes knowledge. He felt that phenomenology by taking a reflective stance in essence reflects on the unreflected. Here the world is not seen as in man but rather man as being in the world. For Merleau-Ponty it is through reduction that one becomes fully aware of one's relation to the world and the others that one finds in the world. He saw the reduction as part of an existential rather than transcendental phenomenology (Macann 1993).

On essences he felt that it is through the expression of experiences through language that which in the first place makes it possible to separate essences from the experience in which they are situated. A sort of pre-linguistic and pre-objective approach is needed to separate essences from experience and resituate them in their original context.

Merleau-Ponty distinguishes between act intentionality and operative intentionality. Act intentionality is the intentionality involved in judgments. Here the departure point is an already constructed world of objects. Operative intentionality is the intentionality by which such a world is brought into existence in the first place. Operative intentionality not only captures the meaning of experience but does it in such a way that the life world becomes the center of such meaning (Merleau-Ponty 2004).

Merleau-Ponty saw perception as perception of the world, not the self. We perceive first the world we live in before we perceive ourselves. He developed a rich variety of phenomenology emphasizing the role of the body in human experience. Merleau-Ponty sees that it is through our bodies that we have a world. Merleau-Ponty focused on rational construction of the world in the mind. Instead, Merleau-Ponty focused on the "body image", our experience of our own body and its significance in our

activities. Merleau-Ponty felt that the subject is inseparable from its body and its world. In short, consciousness is embodied and equally body is infused with consciousness (Merleau-Ponty 2004).

Merleau-Ponty emphasized the body as the primary site of knowing the world, a corrective to the long philosophical tradition of placing consciousness as the source of knowledge, and maintained that the body and that which it perceived could not be disentangled from each other. The articulation of the primacy of embodiment led him away from phenomenology towards what he was to call “indirect ontology” or the ontology of “the flesh of the world” (Merleau-Ponty 2004).

Merleau-Ponty provides an existential interpretation of Husserl’s program in his ‘Preface’ to the *Phenomenology of Perception*. Instead of Husserl’s description of a disembodied consciousness that constitutes the meaning of things at the ideal level of the transcendental ego, Merleau-Ponty describes consciousness as embodied awareness of primordial experience. Consciousness is existence in and toward the world through the body.

Merleau-Ponty believed that our freedom is gained by how we act. Actions are commitments and freedom can only be created out of such commitments, in the same way one can only create reflection out of perception. Creation finds expression in and through the person. He also felt that it is our perception of the world that creates truth (Macann 1993).

3.1.14. Viktor Frankl (1905-1997)

Viktor Frankl was born in Vienna, Austria to a Jewish family. He worked as a psychiatrist and formulated a form of existential analysis he called logotherapy also referred to as therapy by meaning.

During the Second World War Frankl was detained for a period of time in a concentration camp. Frankl’s experience in the concentration camps had a profound impact on him. After being liberated from the concentration camps he wrote his most well-known work called *Man’s Search for Meaning* first published in German in 1946. During his experience in the concentration camps he discovered the importance of finding meaning in all forms of existence and situations.

Frankl distinguished between two different forms of meaning. They are ultimate meaning and the meaning of the moment. Ultimate meaning presupposes an order in which we as individuals have a part, even if it is very small. This order can be called God, life, spirit, nature or the ecosystem, it points to something greater than ourselves. This point to natural laws that goes beyond human laws. We can never hope to find the ultimate meaning in its totality or with clarity. Its quality is that it always escapes us and its mysterious nature leaves us in awe, we will forever be in pursuit of it. The pursuit of the ultimate meaning requires a constant search in which it does make a difference what we decide to do and refuse to do (Fabry 2013).

The second form of meaning is the meaning of the moment. Here the belief is that life consists of an infinite number of moments and experiences. Every unrepeatable moment, offers a specific meaning potential. To respond to these meaning offerings of the moment is to live a meaningful life. The

meaning of the moment differs from moment to moment and from person to person. Each decision made regarding the meaning of the moment has far reaching consequences although it is not always realized. Some moments require tremendous decisions; the demand may be experienced as overwhelming and all our spiritual resources are required to respond to them. Each one of the moments we experienced in life has a certain meaning for us and us alone. It is our task to find the unique meaning of each moment. Frankl saw three areas where meaning can be found. Firstly through creative activities, secondly through experiences and thirdly through the attitude we adopt in a certain situation. According to Frankl our values and conscience can help us find meaning. For Frankl this will to meaning is our primary motivation in life (Fabry 2013).

Frankl postulated that much of the despair suffered by the neurotic person relates to the failure to find meaning and a sense of responsibility in their existence. This frustration Frankl proposed lies in the lack of a “will-to-meaning”. The challenge to those who suffer is to make sense out of apparent senseless suffering. Frankl saw suffering as inherently part of existence. But that the suffering also calls on the discovery of meaning in the suffering. It is through the discovery of meaning that one survives the suffering. Frankl stated that no one person can tell another what the purpose and meaning of his or her life should be. Each person must discover this for themselves and must accept the responsibility that comes with it. Frankl liked to quote Nietzsche in this regard, “He who has a *why* to live can bear with almost any *how*” (Frankl 2004).

3.2. The Existential phenomenological lenses

This study took an existential phenomenological approach to the meanings in the experience of loneliness. The fields of existentialism and phenomenology are closely related philosophical traditions. Phenomenology is often seen as the preferred method of inquiry within the existential tradition. Existential thought concerns itself with the dichotomy between human existence as lived and the world as observed and systematized (Lawrence & O’Connor 1967).

From the key contributions discussed above I would like to highlight some concepts important in the development of the existential phenomenological lenses that will be applied later to the bracketed meaning units of loneliness.

Consciousness is subjective and existential in the sense that the participant co-constitutes understanding in their world, and the subject-object is linked through intentionality or being-in-the-world (Heidegger 1962). There is no separation between the person and the world. Therefore all experiences are experiences in the lived world of the participant. In other words, experience is situated in the world. For Heidegger, a human being and their activities are always “in the world”. Being exists as a being-in-the-world. Here the world is not seen as in man but rather man as being in the world. For Merleau-Ponty it is through reduction that one becomes fully aware of one’s relation to the world and the others that one finds in the world (Macann 1993).

Heidegger saw that human beings are always meaningfully connected to their world. This meaningful connections happens against the backdrop of time. The temporal quality of being implies that being experiences in the dimension of time.

For Husserl it is through intentionality that we create meaning out of our connections to the world and apply these meanings to other parts of the world (Van Deurzen & Kenward 2005). Thus intentionality also plays a central part in how we find meaning in experience and it is through intentionality that we overcome the subject-object dichotomy. Husserl (2002) also distinguishes between Noema (what is experienced) and Noesis (how it is experienced). For Husserl experience is always experience of something. The correlation between what is experienced (noema) and the way it is experienced (noesis) is termed intentionality. This is by no means a causal relationship but rather simply a relationship. Thus we understand the person through the act of experiencing (Langdridge 2007). For Heidegger (2010) being is intentionally related to its lived world. There is also inherent meaning, attributed meaning, perceived meaning, discovered meaning and relational meaning like the meaning between two concepts or things. As well as associations and distinctions Meaning can also differ in different contexts such as cultural meaning, personal meaning etc. Symbolic meaning or abstract meaning as found in the arts, painting and sculpture.

Bugental (1987) defines the subjective experience as the inner, separate, and private realm in which a patient lives most genuinely. The subjective experience is then also an experience which stems from the persons lived world. This lived world can be defined as the structure of meaningful relationships in which a person exists and in the design, of which he participates (May 1994). This can also be referred to as the ontological context within which people exist and illustrates the inter relationship between experiencing and finding meaning. It can be said that experiences belong to those who live them; experienced is in its essence unique to the individual.

The dictionary of existential psychotherapy and counselling (Van Deurzen & Kenward 2005) defines meaning as an attempt to place an experience into the perspective of an explanatory system. According to Heidegger (2010) meaning resides in being and because of the fact that as human beings we are thrown into this world with no prior reference or sets of meaning we can say that meaning is part made and part given. In some instances we create meaning and in others we give meaning. One can also argue here that at times we discover inherent or hidden meanings in life, relationships and the world. Frankl) believes that meaning is to be found in experiential, creative and attitudinal values. He distinguishes between two types of meaning. Firstly ultimate meaning presupposes an order in which we as individuals have a part. The second type he termed "the meaning of the moment." Here he brings meaning into the sphere of immediate experience and also points towards the temporal quality of experience and meaning. Frankl argues that the meaning of the moment differs from moment to moment and person to person. For Frankl our will to meaning is our primary motivation in life. Meaning has a temporal as well as situational or contextual dimension it is in its very nature ever changing and never static. Thus meaning is infinite and dynamic in nature (Fabry 2013).

Human beings are always in a state of becoming or transformation. As we change the meanings we discover or create also change. Thus one cannot help but escape the infinite and dynamic qualities of meaning. Just as Heidegger pointed out that the fundamental constitution of *dasein* is being-in-the-world so to the fundamental constitution of being-in-the-world relates to how we create meaning, we thus find meaning-in-the-world. Husserl (2012) concluded the all realities are “unities of meaning” thus the nature of consciousness is one of sense-giving and that reality exists through “the dispensing of meaning”. Meaning is something that always stands in relation to the world. It is not meaning that I find in the world but rather a singular concept of meaning-in-the-world. It should be understood as a whole similar to what is meant by being-in-the-world. Where being and world meet is where meaning is found.

According to Moustakas (1994) the self and world are inseparable components of meaning. Meaning in perception is always intentional and constitutive of experience itself. Therefore people can experience the ‘same’ environment or event in very different ways. Meaning can also be constructed and deconstructed. Defining the nature of meaning is a challenge because it involves the very phenomenon we wish to define. Meaning can also be viewed from many different perspectives, like the meaning of words or language in linguistic science, the meaning, how meaning is given in cognitive learning theory to name but a few. Meaning can also be viewed as the way we make sense of the world through connections, relationships, mental representations. Thus meaning is a way to connect things (Baumeister 1991). Meaning can also as function bring about understanding, empathic relatedness and emotional responses.

Buber emphasized the way we relate to others. He argued that human existence consists of an oscillation between I-Thou and I-It modes of relating. Buber also thought that human experiences such as isolation and dehumanization is a result of the predominance of I-It experiences and that to truly relate meaningfully to others one should aspire to an I-Thou mode of relating. An I-Thou relating is the only way to truly value existence and bring forth the meaning of all existence (Buber 2013). Sartre also put great emphasis on the existence of the other. We gain a sense of selfhood both from a confirmation of our existence by the other as well as our confirmation of the existence of the other. He also proposed that our fear of the human condition makes us need others as well as reject them. The other also makes us aware of our vulnerabilities (Barret 1990).

For Jaspers understanding was the way to access other people’s mental states. It gives the investigator the ability to discover their motives and subjective meanings from their actions and speech. He proposed that one can only access subjective phenomenon through empathy. He referred to meaning as the content of mental states and viewed it as central to understanding psychiatric patients. Thornton (2007) states that meaning is central to mental health care.

Merleau-Ponty (2004) emphasized the significance of the body, describing how we reach out to things through our bodies and thereby connect to the world. He underscores the corporeal quality of experience where we experience the world around us through our bodies.

In looking back at the key contributions by existential and phenomenological thinkers we can see that if we are to understand people and the meanings they find in their experiences we should give attention to the fact that people are defined by their relation, to a physical world, to other people, to themselves and to a network of meaning. Another important deduction here is that the experience of the lived world has certain qualities. Those are the lived body (corporeal quality), the lived-space (spatial quality), lived time (temporal quality), and lived human relation (relationality or communal quality). In addition we can also see that a lived spirituality (spiritual quality) exists in the lived world experience. Thus the meaning of experiences are inter related in these different dimensions and qualities of experience. These will be discussed next.

3.2.1. The life-world existentials

Four fundamental life-world existentials has been identified for reflecting on human experiences: lived space (spatiality), lived body (corporeality), lived time (temporality), and lived human relation (relationality or communality) (Van Manen 2002). These dimensions of the human experience impact one another and all play a part in the way meaning is coupled to experience. It is not the scope of this thesis to give a detailed layout of these life-world existentials but rather to use them as lense to view the experience of loneliness through. Each individual has his own way of experiencing temporality, spatiality, materiality, but each of these coordinates must be understood in relation to the others and to the total inner 'world' (Hycner 1999). These life world existentials are used for both reflection and interpretation in phenomenology. I will argue that a fifth dimension of experience, that of the lived spirit or lived meaning (spirituality) also plays an important part in how we experience the lived world.

3.2.1.1. Spatiality

Lived space is felt space. It is closely related to our everyday existence, where we go and where we feel safe. The atmosphere of a certain space can evoke different senses and feelings, and distance can be felt differently from the objective measure of space. Spatiality refers to the experience and meaning of place and space (Van Manen 1997).

Heidegger describes Dasein as being in place because a Being is always being in a place. Place, as discussed in phenomenology, does not refer to measurements or a mere description of the objects in a place. Rather, it is the relation of a Being and its environment. Beings and their characteristics are or exist in a place or where they are. Thus, phenomenological description and hermeneutic interpretation happen in relation to the place where an experience occurs, and when the interpretation is made. How a Being feels in a place is part of the description.

Being is described in relation to the place. A physical space can make a Being feel comfortable or displaced as in out of place, although, both experiences can happen at the same time. For instance, certain places can make a Being feel uncomfortable, like traveling in a foreign country; being in a different space in a different country can make a Being feel out of place.

Rather, it is the relation of a Being and its environment. Beings and their characteristics are or exist in a place or where they are. Thus, phenomenological description and hermeneutic interpretation happen in relation to the place where an experience occurs, and when the interpretation is made. How a Being feels in a place is part of the description.

3.2.1.2. Temporality

Kierkegaard thought that as part of this struggle we need to overcome the opposition of the temporal life and the eternal life. According to Kierkegaard human beings are always caught up between the reality of the experience of everyday life and the demands of the eternal.

For Heidegger's our being-from-birth to being-towards death then also gives us the temporal sense with which we live life. Being authentic then also means being loyal to existence through increasing transparency and openness to different dimensions of existence. Therefore Dasein's true existential medium is not actuality but possibility. Lived time is subjective time and refers to the individual temporality of existence. We are temporarily situated in the world, and the past, present and anticipated future are part of how we perceive our being in the present. Temporality, or lived time, is experienced as a sense of time passing. The effect of time is rarely considered, other than when measuring it. Nonetheless, Heidegger states that time is most influential in how an experience is lived (Heidegger 2010).

Time is an important part of a human experience. Heidegger describes *Dasein* as being at a particular time. When a lived experience happens, the notion of time affects the meaning of an experience. Heidegger clarifies that it is not the chronological sequence of events that matters the most, but rather how the events lived by a Being are perceived, or how the influence of time affects the experience. Thus, time has to be taken into account to make sense of an experience because Beings exist in time, and their time to live something makes them unique. Perhaps, an experience lived at another time, may not be the same, or the Being does not feel, understand or makes sense of the experience in the same way. For Heidegger to be is to be in time. Time can change what a Being is. What matters most for a Being is the meaning of an event. We become inauthentic when we relate to ourselves as an object as well as reducing the other and the things of this world to mere objects. We can become mediocre and average when we live our lives according to other people. We need to reclaim our authentic being by becoming transparent to our Being-towards-Death. Heidegger saw our temporality and thus our mortality is the ultimate truth of our being (Heidegger 2010).

3.2.1.3. Corporeality

The existential of the Lived body is linked to the fact that we are always in the world through our bodies. We meet people first and foremost through our bodies, and being looked at often causes a reaction. We sense the world through the bodily senses, movement, and through bodily awareness. The body mediates our communication in the world and, as embodied beings, we experience space in relation to our bodies, standing in a living, dynamic relationship with time, and we see others as embodied and lived others (Dahlberg et al. 2001; Heidegger 2010).

Merleau-Ponty (2004) describes consciousness as embodied awareness of primordial experience. Consciousness is existence in and toward the world through the body. He emphasized the significance of the body, describing how we reach out to things through our bodies and thereby connect to the world. The body in which a Being is becomes part of the experience a Being lives. He focused on the “body image”, our experience of our own body and its significance in our activities. Merleau-Ponty also felt that the subject is inseparable from its body and its world. In short, consciousness is embodied and equally body is infused with consciousness.

Through body sensations, experiences can be obtained, and it is how they are understood. Through the senses and the perception created between one’s body and other people’s bodies and objects, one lives in the world, makes sense of the world, understands the world, etc. Furthermore, any Being can be identified through the body of the Being.

3.2.1.4. Relationality

Lived other is the lived relation, occurring as we meet other people. We meet the other through our bodies and form our impression of the other through their appearance. The relation can be of different character, depending on the situation in which we meet (Van Manen 1990), and for a person with loneliness, bodily awareness and bodily restrictions may alter relations with other people. This also implies that by being with other people there is a relational quality to experiencing each other.

Heidegger also emphasized that we are not just in a world of things but also in a world with other people. Thus ‘to be there’ means also ‘to be there’ with other people. One of man’s essentials challenges is then also to learn to be with others in a caring capacity. *Dasein* needs to be aware not to be absorbed by the others and thus lose itself in the process. Heidegger puts a great price on being authentic. Becoming authentic happens through an understanding of what the challenge of being with others is really about. An understanding of our inevitable connections to the world of things and people underlies true authenticity.

3.2.1.5. Spirituality

The author would like to make an argument for a fifth life-world existential, that of the lived spirit. In reviewing existential literature it was found that significant attention has been given to the spiritual dimension of human beings, though it has not been fully acknowledged as a life-world existential. Tillich noted that spiritual affirmation occurs in every moment that one lives creatively in the various spheres of meaning. He proposed that the spiritual life should be taken seriously as a matter of ultimate concern. Therefore any given human experience also touches one spiritually. Here spirituality is not referred to in the religious dogmatic sense but rather in the experiential intuitive sense where spirit and personal meaning are intertwined and spirit is seen as that ultimate relatedness of ourselves to the universe as a whole and our participation in all that is in existence. This is the metaphysical and transcendental nature of spirit.

Marcel described secondary reflection as a spiritual activity based in faith. It requires tuning in into the mystery of existence and calls on us to relate with love. Tillich thought that courage is not only needed

to overcome anxiety but that anxiety also generates courage. He highlighted three main anxieties of man: anxiety of death; anxiety of meaninglessness and anxiety of guilt or condemnation. Also relates to the life world existentials. He continues that in the face of inevitable death man's ontic sense of self-affirmation is threatened. Fate will bring this threat to reality and it threatens the foundation of the fact that I am. Secondly I have to face the possibility of condemnation, which I encounter as the experience of guilt in myself and which threatens my moral self-affirmation, destroying the sense that I exist as a good person. In the last place, I have to face the possibility of meaninglessness, which I experience as the emptiness of my life, which threatens my spiritual self-affirmation and questions the fact that I exist as a person. Tillich thought that religious questions arose from the human situation and that it is through human awareness that answers about being can be found. He saw the human condition as the way to spirituality and the concepts of anxiety, courage and faith feature strongly in his work.

Kierkegaard argued that through spirit the temporal is overcome by ceasing to be mere present and becoming the possibility of a continuous past, present and future. It is our very knowledge of our own sinfulness that draws and connects us to the spiritual. Kierkegaard went in to claim that the highest demand that can be made of man is to be spirit. He thought that the synthesis of body and psyche leads to spirit. This leap of faith however calls on us to take risks, abandon rationality and enter into the unknown. This often calls for an abandon of all preconceived ideas or notions (Kierkegaard 1843/1992). Kierkegaard went in to claim that the highest demand that can be made of man is to be spirit. (Kierkegaard 1849/2004). He saw anxiety as crucial to the spiritual life and that it is a sign that the struggles with the human paradox is taken seriously. Therefore he saw anxiety as the departure point if the meaningful life (Kierkegaard 1943/1844/2009).

Hegel uses the word phenomenology for his lengthy exposition of the many manifestations of mind or spirit as it unfolds itself dialectically from a naïve sense awareness at the simplest level through perception, understanding, and the many forms of consciousness up to the highest intellectual and spiritual activities (Hegel 1807; Macquarrie 1972). Absolute spirit, Hegel thought, is that which rises above its finitude, and knows itself as Being (Van Deurzen & Kenward 2005).

Spirituality requires a form of bracketing as Husserl pointed out that to practice phenomenology one should "bracket" the question of the existence of the natural world. We thereby turn our attention, in reflection, to the structure of our own conscious experience. The *übermensch* according to Nietzsche is a person who has become eminently reflective and intelligent, where the body, soul and self are truly integrated. Nietzsche thought of man as an in-between, a bridge he calls man, forever reaching out. He saw that people who live in blind obedience to the norms of society as lacking courage. He also emphasized the unity of body and soul, stating that the soul is only a word for something in the body. The soul or the self is a function of the body

Jaspers described four dimensions of existence. The third is spirit. This is the mode of ideals, and its corresponding mode of communication is communal.

Buber argues that by being open to the I–Thou mode of relating to God, God eventually shows himself in response to this open attitude. When I approach the other I approach the other with my whole being and I search for the other’s whole being. When I approach the other as an It, I approach with only part of myself and I relate to only one aspect of the other and therefore only one aspect of myself. In the I-It mode I observe and analyse the other and myself. In an I-Thou mode I encounter the other and with it I also open up the possibility of encountering myself (Van Deurzen & Kenward 2005).

Scheler proposed that we learn again to connect through our living intuition. Our living intuition can make the world meaningful again. He felt that human intuition in its essence is based in the felt sense, our feeling and our sense of the spiritual. In his exposition of values Scheler referred to holy values. These values are about our spiritual awakening and awareness and tells us intuitively what it is that ultimately matters and what is to be considered as good and evil in our lives. He felt that we should re-engaged with the cosmos and our intrinsic part in it to find our way forward (van Deurzen 2010).

In order to experience things spiritually a certain bracketing is required of ones preconceptions and presuppositions of what a phenomenon or experience is about. Here especially the intellectual or knowledge base of experience needs to be bracketed. Also a bracketing of the meanings of certain past experiences. The lived-world and the spiritual world is in essence the same world because it is the world in which I find myself. Spirituality is not another worldly experience. It is my spiritual experience in my lived world. Thus we can talk of spirit-in-the-world where spirit is inseparable from its world. Through the spiritual one can open oneself up to the vast horizon of possible experiences. This links with Heidegger’s phenomenology as the seeing of possibility. Applying phenomenology here is a move between new insights and the re-interpretation of old insights. The quest here is for the spiritual truth. Marcel also saw that creativity is a form of spiritual expression. Spirituality also requires a pre-reflective self-awareness.

In addition Kierkegaard thought that despair is a sickness of the spirit, of the self, and so can have three forms: being conscious in despair of having a self also referred to as inauthentic despair, not wanting in despair to be oneself, and wanting in despair to be oneself (Kierkegaard 2004).

The argument for a fifth life-world existential is however a tentative one and the author acknowledges that this proposed life-world existential has not yet been referred to as such an independent life-world existential.

3.2.2. The four existential dimensions of existence

When we then say that meaning in experience is situated in the lived world we must look at the different dimensions of the lived world. In the chapter 5 I will examine the experience of loneliness as manifesting in these dimensions of existence as highlighted by Heidegger and others.

According to Heidegger (2010) human beings exist in these dimensions or modes simultaneously.

3.2.2.1. *Eigenwelt* (Self-experience)

This dimension is one of a person in relation to the “I”, or themselves. Her one world of being aware of the fate one alone at this moment is struggling with. This is the experience of being alone in the private world or in relation to the self.

The *eigenwelt* is the psychological, personal or private dimension. It involves the person’s relationship with him or herself and to intimate others. Here a person connects through the “I” or “self” to the internal world that we construct out of experiences on the other two levels. The task is to create the very centeredness that gives us a sense of stability, integration and selfhood. This dimension is regulated by thinking, verbal and nonverbal. The outlet is the creating of an inner sense of individuality. Meaning is created through a sense of self-worth (Van Deurzen 2010).

Nietzsche saw that one of man’s core problems is a lack of self-knowledge. He thought that our task should be to rediscover the power and strength that can be gained from our inner source in order to become capable of living deeply and passionately. Nietzsche was adamant about the idea to find yourself first before you can truly be with others.

3.2.2.2. *Mitwelt* (Experience of others)

The *mitwelt* or “with world” is the world of interpersonal relations. The *mitwelt* is the social or public dimension of our existence. It is our everyday encounters with others. Within this dimension we also react to our culture and sense of community. The self here interacts with the world of other people. This dimension is regulated by feelings. Communication is the medium through which our feelings are expressed. Here the social self is the point of contact between a person’s centre and the world of others. Meaning is achieved in this dimension by striving with others for establishing values. A negative outcome in this dimension may be the experience of being interpersonally alone, isolated or disconnected from others.

3.2.2.3. *Umwelt* (Experience of world)

And the *umwelt* is the world of instincts, drives, the world of people in their biological environment, or the givens of existence. The *umwelt* is the physical dimension. It involves the senses and the body. Through our bodies we relate to the physical world. Our bodies interact with the physical environment in this dimension. We interact with the world through our basic sensory and motor systems. Action is our outlet in this dimension. The basic motivating principle here is survival and reproduction. The point of reference in this dimension is that of the objects in the material world. Our body is the point of contact with the world. In this dimension we find meaning through a sense of efficacy, through the satisfactory interaction between our body and the physical world, when we know that what we do makes a difference and has concrete results.

3.2.2.4. *Überwelt* (Meaning, values and ideas)

The *überwelt* is the spiritual dimension of our existence. This is the world of meaningfulness, of ideas, religious beliefs, ethical values, faith and hope. The *überwelt* is the attitude one takes to life. In this dimension we connect through our soul, through the absolute world of ideas and their concrete

significance in our everyday existence. The task is here is to find meaning. This dimension is regulated by our intuition. The outlet in this dimension is our connection to a wider network and the point of reference is that of the existence of truth in the world. The point of contact is embodied consciousness. Meaning is achieved through establishing a sense of purpose. This dimension comes into existence through the tension that exists between being caught between two aspects of the same world, the spiritual and the natural also described as the unconditioned and the conditioned as referred to by Kierkegaard. We live both horizontally as well as vertically. And being aware of one's divided state is the highest step in consciousness (May 1989). The spirit is proof of our great possibility and destiny. Spirituality is concerned with lived meaning, belief, faith and hope in the unseen.

Chapter 4: Empirical findings I: Bracketed meaning units of experiences of loneliness

The primary research question in this study was *“What is the nature of the experience of loneliness by some psychiatric patients?”* This study aimed to uncover meanings of experience of loneliness. The findings are presented in this chapter as they were uncovered through the extensive IPA data analysis process. This process consisted of seven stages of data analysis, categorization and interpretation. This process was discussed in more detail in chapter two.

Due to the fact that all the interviews were conducted in the participant's language of choice, Afrikaans, the excerpts are followed by a translation into English. The meaning units are presented according to the specific research participants.

The participant's experiences were often conveyed in a raw and unfiltered manner. The richness of the experience of loneliness revealed by the participants' stroke with the phenomenological mission, the mission of revealing what had already been there. According to this view the participants already had had a sense of their experience of loneliness prior to the commencement of the research. Therefore it was readily accessible to them during the interview process.

The following section presents the meaning units according to participants.

4.1. Participant 1

Loneliness and depression: a link with creativity.

Participant 1 noted that there existed a relationship between his experience of loneliness and episodes of depression. He stated that he often experienced these times as particularly creative times. Therefore episodes of major depression were also episodes of particular creative output. This is illustrated in the following extract:

Onderhoudvoerder: "So is daar vir jou 'n verband tussen jou eensaamheid ervaring en kreatiwiteit?"

Interviewer: "Do you perceive a relationship between your loneliness experience and creativity?"

Deelnemer 1: "Ja"

Participant 1: "Yes"

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe verstaan jy daai verband?"

Interviewer: "How do you understand that relationship?"

Deelnemer 1: "... van my kunswerke wat ek gedoen het, van die bestes was gewees op die tydstip wat ek in 'n baie baie diep depressie, major depression time was, jy weet. En dan doen ek van my beste kunswerke."

Participant 1: "...some of the art works I created, the best of them was at a time when I was in a very very deep depression, a major depression time, you know. And then I do my best art works."

Here the association between depressive states and creativity brings up the question of what are the forces driving creativity. From the darkness of depression, the nothingness of existence come the wonder of creation. At one point there was nothing and at another point something. It seems that the desolate landscape of loneliness somehow brings forth life. Occupying the mind with these creative thoughts can change one's perspective on loneliness. It seems that a clarity of mind exists in the face of loneliness and the experience of depression.

Tough times are often creative times.

For participant 1 creativity also brought relief from feelings of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar sekere goed wat jy doen as jy eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "Are there specific things you do when you feel lonely?"

Deelnemer 1: "Creative artwork... dit gee my 'n relief, dat ek van my beste kunswerke wat ek gedoen het by die Departement van Kuns, Vereeniging van Kuns daar in Magnolia Dal uitgestal het, dit was op daai tydstip gewees toe die dinge verkeerd geloop het en by my werk, nie verkeerd geloop het, toe ek my werk verloor het."

Participant 1: " Creative artwork... that gives me relief, that I displayed some of my best art works at the Department of Art, Association of Art in Magnolia Dal, it was at that point in time when everything went wrong, wrong at my work, when I lost my job."

He expresses that he keeps himself busy with creative work when he feels lonely. This brings some form of relief to his experience of loneliness. He also reports that his best creative work was done during a particularly bad (lonely) period of his life. The idea of creativity-in-suffering presents itself here. Our darkest hour may be our finest hour.

Creative expression: loneliness as a space for creativity.

Participant 1 expressed how he tries to keep himself busy with creative artwork when he feels lonely. The experience of loneliness moves him to engage in creative activity. This activity keeps him busy but also seems to add some meaning to his experience.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar sekere goed wat jy doen as jy eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "Are there specific things you do when you feel lonely?"

Deelnemer 1: "... ek hou my besig, ek het die gawe dat ek kunswerk kan doen. Creative artwork en dan hou ek my besig..."

Participant 1: "... I keep busy, I have the gift to do artwork. Creative artwork and then I keep myself busy..."

Thus a dimension of creativity in the face of loneliness may be a meaning making activity. Being creative and creating meaning may be part of a similar process. In a way loneliness can also assist to "think out of the box" or express oneself more authentically because of a lessened sensitivity to critique from others. Being alone can also lead being disconnected from the restrictions of this world thus leading to more creative expression and unique ideas.

Being alone in one's thoughts can be a creative space.

Participant 1 refers here to an interesting dimension of his experience of loneliness. He states that he often intentionally creates times where he can be alone. He enjoys these times and uses it to do some planning.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So vind jy dat jy baie alleen is ook? Tye wat jy alleen is en nie eensaam is nie?"

Interviewer: "So do you find that you are also often alone? Times that you are alone but not lonely?"

Deelnemer 1: "Ek, wat ek doen is ek bewerkstellig dit so dat ek liewers alleen is. Dis vir my lekker om dan te sit en te dink en beplanning te doen..."

Interviewer 1: "I... what I do is I arrange that I am rather alone. It is enjoyable for me then to sit and think and do planning..."

This extract also illustrates the difference in experience between being alone and feeling lonely. He seems to prefer times of being alone and arranges such times. He explains why he prefers being

alone at times. It seems to give him “mind space” to do planning and be alone in his thoughts. Having people around him doesn’t necessarily make him feel less alone but can even irritate him.

Creative expression counters feelings of loneliness.

The Participant prefers being by himself doing creative art work. He states it as follows:

Onderhoudvoerder: “Is daai tye wat jy weer minder eensaam voel?”

Interviewer: “Are those times that you feel less lonely?”

Deelnemer 1: “Ja. Maar soos ek sê dit worry my nie... ek sal liewerste by die huis sit of maar net sit en ek doen creative artwork en ek hou my besig met my kunswerke wat ek wel baie groot uitgebrei het en met my kunswerke hou ek my besig daarmee dan bly ek weg van daai tipe van uitganery.”

Participant 1: “Yes. But as I say the ... that does not worry me... I will rather just sit at home or just sit and then I do creative artwork and keep myself busy with my artwork that I have expanded greatly and with my artwork I keep myself busy with it then I stay away from that type of gallivanting.”

He often prefers to be alone and do creative work rather than spending time with people. It seems that being alone is familiar territory for him and not something that distresses him. He may also have become a recluse (loner) because of his experiences in interpersonal relationships.

Sadness as emotion associated with loneliness.

In reaction to loneliness he withdraws himself and isolates himself.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Dit gaan maar oor die emosies, partykeer kan ‘n ou eensaam voel dan voel jy hartseer saam met dit, ander keer is mens eensaam dan voel jy kwaad saam met dit, ‘n ander keer voel jy eensaam dan voel jy depressief saam met dit. So watse emosies voel jy saam met die eensaamheid?”

Interviewer: “It revolves around emotions, sometimes one feels lonely combined with sadness, at other times lonely with anger, another time lonely with depression accompanying it. So what emotions accompany your loneliness?”

Deelnemer 1: “My emosies is ek raak baie hartseer en dan vergeet ek, jy weet, so asof ek baie eensaam ervaring het en dan sal ek alleen, ek het ‘n trok, dan sal ek alleen in die trok in die park sit. Dan wil ek niemand hê nie, dan bly ek weg. Jy weet dan sal ek nie moeite doen om my broers of met my kinders in aanraking te kom nie, dan bly ek weg.”

Participant 1: “My emotions are I become very sad and then I forget, you know, as if I have a very lonely experience and then I will, I have a truck, I will sit all by myself in the truck in the park. Then I want nobody. Then I stay away, you know then I will not go to any trouble to make contact with my brothers or my children, I stay away.”

He experience great sadness in reaction to loneliness and then tends to isolate himself more and withdraw from relationships with others. In states of psychological hurt there is a tendency to withdraw.

Loneliness manifests itself in a time continuum.

The participant expressed that loneliness is a theme throughout his life.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As jy so terugdink oor jou lewe kan jy tye onthou of 'n tyd onthou waar jy spesifiek baie eensaam gevoel het en kan jy my dalk bietjie meer vertel van so 'n tyd?"

Interviewer: "If you look back over your life can you remember times or a time that you were you specifically felt really lonely and can you perhaps tell me a bit more about such a time?"

Deelnemer 1: "Daar die tye van eensaamheid is aanhoudend, daar is nie 'n spesifieke tyd wat ek kan uitsonder nie."

Participant 1: "Those times of loneliness are continues, there is no specific time that I can point out."

The participant expresses the time dimension of loneliness as continues.

Loneliness increased with age.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy eensaam gevoel as 'n kind?"

Interviewer: "Did you feel lonely as a child?"

Deelnemer 1: "Ja. Nie in die laerskool nie maar op hoërskool het ek wel eensaam gevoel."

Participant 1: "Yes. Not at primary school but at high school I felt lonely."

The participant expressess that he felt loneliness more during adolescence. During early childhood he did not feel lonely. In high school he was lonely. Early childhood development and personality development can contribute to adult feelings of loneliness. Adolesence is also a time where peer group relations and identity formation is a developmental task. Thus loneliness may be experienced in an intense way during this life stage.

Circumstances outside of one's control can lead to loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy dat eensaamheid het iets te doen met jou psigiatriese toestand? Dink jy eensaamheid het 'n rol gespeel?"

Interviewer: "Do you think that loneliness has anything to do with your psychiatric condition? Do you think that loneliness played a role?"

Deelnemer 1: "Ja."

Participant 1: "Yes."

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe so?"

Interviewer: "How so?"

Deelnemer 1: "Ek dink as ek nie eensaam was nie en as my geaardheid dalk anders was en het ek dalk 'n vaste verhouding gehad en dalk was ek nou nog 'n getroude gelukkige getroude gesin gewees. Maar as gevolg van die omstandighede is ek dit nie en dit laat dit nie toe nie"

Participant: "I think that if I was not lonely and if my personality was different purely I might have had a fixed relationship and maybe I might have been happily married with a family. But because of circumstances I am not that and it is not allowed."

He experiences that his past has predisposed him to loneliness. He also makes reference to his personality and its contribution to loneliness. He also refers to circumstances which did not allow for him to be happy. A theme here of fate and circumstances.

Loneliness is ever present but at times conscious awareness of it increases.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Was jy getroud voorheen?"

Interviewer: "Have you been married before?"

Deelnemer 1: "Ja, maar sy het saam met 'n ander man weggeloop."

Participant 1: "Yes, but she left with another man."

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe het dit jou eensaamheid belewenis geaffekteer?"

Interviewer: "How did it affect your loneliness experience?"

Deelnemer 1: "Maar daar kom aande en dae dan dink 'n ou daaraan veral as jy kersfees en wanneer die die fees seisoen raak en jy is in 'n winkel sentrum en jy loop alleen daar rond, en jy sien 'n man en 'n vrou en 'n gesin gelukkig saam en hulle hou hande vas en hulle lag en gesels en jy is alleen en jy loop alleen daar rond, jy dwaal maar net daar rond, dit maak 'n ou seer."

Participant 1: "But there are evenings and days that one thinks of it especially at Christmas and festive times when you are in a shopping centre and you are walking on your own, and you see a man and woman and a family happy together and they are holding hands and they are laughing and talking and you are wandering around alone, you are wandering around aimless, that hurts one."

At certain times the feelings of loneliness are more on the fore ground, especially when he is reminded of other peoples interpersonal connections. Being made aware visually of other people's close relationship with family he becomes more aware of his own loneliness.

Sometimes childhood behaviour is repeated in reaction to loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Laat dit jou dan beter voel of?"

Interviewer: "Does it make you feel better then?"

Deelnemer 1: "Ja. Ek het dit hierso al twee keer gedoen, terwyl ek hierso nou vir behandeling is. Toe het ek dit gister met die sielkundige gebespreek. Maar dit is nie net as gevolg nou kort nie dit loop al van kleins af."

Participant 1: "Yes. I have done it here twice, while I was here now for treatment. Yesterday I have discussed it with the psychiatrist. But it is not only from recently it is from birth."

The experience of loneliness is brought into the present in psychotherapy. This type of behaviour seems to come from childhood.

Being involved does not allow time to feel lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar 'n verskil in jou gevoel van eensaamheid as jy binne die hospitaal is teenoor as jy buite die hospitaal is? Of hoe ervaar jy eensaamheid in die hospitaal?"

Interviewer: "Is there a difference in your feelings of loneliness when you are in hospital compared to being outside the hospital? Or how do you experience loneliness in the hospital?"

Deelnemer 1: "Nee, nie hier in die hospitaal nie, hier is ek te betrokke om eensaam te wees."

Participant 1: "No, not here in the hospital, here I am too involved to be lonely."

His involvement in hospital activities seems to alleviate feelings of loneliness. The participant somehow finds connectedness through his involvement in the hospital. The hospital then also becomes a place where he feels less lonely.

Interesting division of his life into phases.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dit gaan maar oor die emosies, partykeer kan 'n ou eensaam voel dan voel jy hartseer saam met dit, ander keer is mens eensaam dan voel jy kwaad saam met dit, 'n ander keer voel jy eensaam dan voel jy depressief saam met dit, so watse emosies voel jy saam met die eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "It revolves around the emotions, sometimes one can feel lonely then you feel sad as well, other times you feel lonely as well as depressed, so what emotions do you experience together with the loneliness?"

Deelnemer 1: "My emosies is ek raak baie hartseer en dan vergeet ek, jy weet, so asof ek baie eensaam ervaar het en dan dan sal ek alleen in, ek het 'n trok, dan sal ek alleen in die trok in die park sit, en my gedagtes gaan sal dwaal oor my kinderdae, my fases, my sê maar nou ek het nou al so dit uitgewerk dat ek het nou al 5 fases in my lewe gehad, hierdie hierdie

is nou my 6de fase, dan sit ek nou so en dink dan raak ek al hoe meer emosioneel en hartseer en so.”

Participant 1: “My emotions are I become very sad and then I forget, you know, as if I have a very lonely experience and then I will sit alone in, I have a truck, then I will sit alone in the truck in the park, and my thoughts will wander over my youth, my phases, my just say I have calculated it as such that I have already had 5 phases during my life, this is now my 6th phase, then I sit like this and think, then I become more emotional and sad.”

The participant experiences great sadness in reaction to loneliness when he reflects on his life. He then tends to isolate himself more and withdraw from relationships with others.

Temporary nature of relief of feelings of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Is daar spesifieke goed wat jy doen met jou liggaam as jy eensaam voel?”

Interviewer: “Are there certain things that you do to your body when you feel lonely?”

Deelnemer 1: “Ek bevredig myself.”

Participant 1: “I please (masturbate) myself.”

Onderhoudvoerder: “Maak dit ‘n verskil aan jou eensaamheid gevoel?”

Interviewer: “Does it make a difference to your feeling of loneliness?”

Deelnemer 1: “Ja, net vir ‘n ruk”

Participant 1: “Yes, just for a while.”

Masturbation brings about temporary relief to the feelings of loneliness. Here auto erotic behaviour brings about the comfort that is lacking in real interpersonal relationships.

Loneliness is compared to lying on cold cement.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Is dit in tye wat jy baie eensaam voel?”

Interviewer: “Is it in times that you feel very lonely?”

Deelnemer: “Ja. As ek hartseer is of so dan wil ek my nie seermaak met sê nou maar my seermaak met ‘n mes of iets nie, ek wil ek wil swaar kry, ek wil op ‘n stuk sement gaan lê en kyk of ek so aan die slaap kan raak, of net daarso sit.”

Participant: “Yes. When I am sad or such then I want to hurt myself, hurt myself with a knife or something, I want to suffer, I want to lay on a piece of cement and see if I can fall asleep or so, or just sit there.”

Laying on a piece of cement, which is cold, can be a metaphor for the experience loneliness. Seeing if one can fall asleep this way can be a way to test one's ability to cope with loneliness or to have an "external" experience of an internal state.

Loneliness can be experienced as physical pain

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe het dit (getroud wees en vervreemd raak) jou eensaamheid geaffekteer?"

Interviewer: "How did it (being married and divorcing) influence your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Jy loop alleen daar rond, jy dwaal maar net daar rond, dit maak 'n ou seer."

Participant: "You walk alone there, you wander around there, and it hurts one."

Reference to loneliness as a painful experience.

The perspective of the lonely person as the outsider can be an interesting phenomenon to explore. It may give the lonely person some licence to comment on societal issues.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar enige iets wat jy voel jy nog wil bydra?"

Interviewer: "Is there anything else that you feel you still want to contribute?"

Deelnemer: "Omdat ek 'n alleen loper is sien ek dinge hierso gebeur by die hospitaal, dit is dat van hierdie jong ouens wat hier is, is hier for no reason at all, hulle hoort nie hier nie, hulle gebruik nog steeds drugs."

Participant: "Because I am a loner I see things happening here in the hospital, that is that some of the young guys that are here are here for no reason at all, they don't belong here, they still use drugs."

Because he is a loner he sees various things. This is an interesting statement because it brings into the analysis the question of different views or the insider outsider perspective. Often being alone or being a loner can give one a certain perspective on a situation or reality that you would not have had if you were part of the group. The so called participant observer or just observer and being the outcast.

The insider – outsider perspective.

Onderhoudvoerder: Refer to above quote

Interviewer: Refer to above quote.

This outsider perspective compels him to point out injustices and other problems he sees in the hospital.

Fate & Loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Was dit spesifiek in die afrigting of was dit meer in die hardloop self?"

Interviewer: "Was it specifically in the training or was it more in the running itself?"

Deelnemer: "In die hardloop self het ek die eensaamheid het ek wel mense ontmoet en ek het groot vriendskap kring gebou, maar toe kom die noodlot in toe kan ek nou nie meer aan dit deelneem nie."

Participant: "In the running itself I experience loneliness but I have met people and I built a big ring of friends, but then the fate stepped in then I could no longer participate in it."

Fate brought about injury, injury stopped the running and not running meant not engaging with people which ultimately leads to loneliness.

Self-harm in reaction to loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sê vir my, as jy die alleenheid moet beskryf, hoe sal jy alleenheid beskryf of eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Tell me, if you have to describe the aloneness, how will you describe aloneness or loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "en 'n dogter en ek is baie lief vir hulle en hulle ondersteun my baie maar terhalwe van dit raak dit vir my partykeer so dat ek in 'n hoek gaan sit of ek voel dat ek nie vanaand op die bed wil slaap nie, jy weet dat ek ek wil ongemaklik wees."

Participant: "and a daughter and I love them very much and they support me a lot but in spite of it sometimes it becomes so to me that I go and sit in a corner or I feel that I don't want to sleep on the bed tonight, you know, that I want to be uncomfortable."

Something pointing to "self harm" or possibly denying himself anything good. It's like the loneliness hurts him. (interesting idea to be explored.)

Sport, especially running and connecting with people eased feelings of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe het dit jou eensaamheid geaffekteer?"

Interviewer: "How did it influence your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "die hardloopry dit is maar al waarmee ek die eensaamheid weggevat."

Participant: "the running that is all with which I removed the loneliness."

Involvement in running activities took away the loneliness.

Fate brings loneliness on.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy op daai stadium baie eensaam gevoel? Na sy jou verlaat het?"

Interviewer: "Did you at that stage feel very lonely? After she has left you?"

Deelnemer: “’n meisie ontmoet in die kerk en maar die verhouding het nie vir lank seker so 5 maande lank aangehou ek het gedink dit gaan ’n goeie verhouding wees ek moet goed aan dit werk, en als het goed toe verloop maar toe kom die noodlot en na haar 22 jaar se diens wat ek by die firma het moet ek maar motor maatskappy wat motors vervaardig in Silverton toe kom die regstellende aksie, toe gee hulle my ’n pakket, toe dank hulle my af.”

Participant: “met a girl in the church and but the relationship did not last long may be lasted 5 months long I thought it was going to be a good relationship I must work hard on it, and everything went well but then fate stepped in and after her 22 years of service that I had with the firm with a car manufacturer in Silverton then came the BEE, then they gave me a package, then they fired me.”

Fate and loneliness.

A possible difference in the view of technology might be noted between participants of different ages.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Dink jy in vandag se tyd van tegnologie, as jy dink aan selfone die internet en telefone, TVs en al daai tipe goed, dink jy in die wêreld van tegnologie is daar iets wat ’n verskil aan jou eensaamheid maak?”

Interviewer: “Do you think in today’s time of technology, if you think about cell phones the internet and telephones, TV’s and all that type of things, do you think in the world of technology is there something that makes a difference to your loneliness?”

Deelnemer: “Nee, ek stel nie in dit belang nie. In tegnologie sal nie aan my eensaamheid iets doen nie. Dit maak ’n mens dit maak die jong klomp lui waar die jong klomp waar ’n jong outjie liewerster op sy laptop sal games speel, verkies om dit te doen, waar hy kan na ’n debat toe gaan waar hy kan mense ontmoet gaan hy op sy laptop speel, en ek dink dit kan op ’n latere stadium miskien waar groepe mense hy is ’n laptop freak.”

Participant: “No, I am not interested in it. Technology will not make a difference to my loneliness. That makes one that makes the young people lazy where the young people where a youngster would rather play games on his laptop, choose to do it, when he could go to a debate where he can meet people, he plays on his laptop, and I think that it can at a later stage maybe where groups of people he is a laptop freak.”

He does not make use of technology to address feelings of loneliness. He also views it as making the youth lazy and instead of them venturing out to meet people they spend time in front of the pc. A possible difference in the view of technology might be noted between Deelnemers of different ages.

He identifies strongly with the advocacy role, maybe an attempt to connect and deal with his own loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: “So vind jy dat jy baie alleen is ook? Tye wat jy alleen is en nie eensaam is nie?”

Interviewer: "So do you find that you are also very lonesome? Times when you are alone but not lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Vanoggend weer vir my bedank want ek het dinge reggestel wat die nag staf nie reg doen nie."

Participant: "Thanked me again this morning because I rectified things that the night staff do not do correctly."

Taking up the advocacy role.

No associations with environments that make him feel lonelier.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ja waar jy jouself bevind in jou omgewing? Hier of by die huis? Dinge wat jy dink jou meer of minder eensaam maak?"

Interviewer: "Yes where do find yourself in your environment? Here or at home? Things that you think make you more or less lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Ja as ek alleen is, nee ek kan nie aan iets dink nie."

Participant: "Yes when I am alone, no I cannot think about anything."

He does not identify things in his environment that makes him feel more lonely.

No relief of loneliness in relation to pets or animals.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy die feit dat mense troeteldiere het, ek weet nie of jy self troeteldiere het nie, dink jy daai tipe ding kan iets."

Interviewer: "Do you think the fact that people have pets, I do not know if you yourself have pets, do you think that type of thing can do something."

Deelnemer: "Nie aan my nie."

Participant: "Not to me."

Nie aan jou nie

Not to you

Deelnemer: "Ek is nie dis nie dat ek troeteldier so half verafgod nie of omdat ek nog nooit 'n troeteldier te na kom nie, ek is baie lief vir katte sal ek nie die kat gaan optel nie en se kom hier so kat ek is huilerig en eensaam kom jy nou hiernatoe gaan niks aan my doen nie."

Participant: "I am not it is not that I or because I have never harmed a pet, I am very fond of cats I will not go and pick up a cat and say come to me cat I am crying and lonely come to me is not going to do anything to me."

He does not feel that his connection to any pets or animals changes his feelings of loneliness.

This statement points to different dimensions of loneliness. Firstly the interpersonal - *mitwelt* and secondly the intrapersonal – *eigenwelt*. These dimensions needs further exploration.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Wat dink jy kan ander mense doen om minder alleen te voel? Minder eensaam te voel?”

Interviewer: “What do you think other people could do to be less alone. To be less lonely?”

Deelnemer: “As ‘n jy moet jy moet aan verenigings deelneem, jy moet jy moet aansluit by maak nie saak van jou ouderdom nie, jy kan watter ouderdom is, daar is soveel verenigings, sport byeenkomste waarby jy kan aansluit, en in in deelneem aan dit om van jou eensaamheid ontslae te raak, maar dan is daar ‘n vraagteken al doen jy dit en jy kom die aand by die huis dan is jy alleen en eensaam.”

Participant: “If you can you should participate in associations, you should you should join does not matter what your age, you can whatever your age there are so many associations, sport competitions that you can join and in participate in it to discard your loneliness, but then there is a question mark, even if you do it and you arrive at home that evening then you are alone and lonely.”

A very important reflection on how to deal with loneliness. He states that getting involved in associations or sports activities may be a way to get rid of feelings of loneliness. But!!!! At the end of the day you get home and you are still lonely.

No specific physical places associated with loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Is daar sekere plekke wat jy koppel aan jou gevoel van eensaamheid?”

Interviewer: “Are there certain places that you associate with your feeling of loneliness?”

Deelnemer: “Nee daar is nie plekke nie mense. Daar is nie spesifieke plekke wat ek kan koppel aan my eensaamheid nie.”

Participant: “No there are not places – people. There are not specific places that I can link to my loneliness.”

He has no specific associations of places he connects with feelings of loneliness.

The body and its relation to loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Wonder of ons so bietjie kan gesels oor jou liggaam liggaambelewenis, voel jy soms eensaamheid aan jou liggaam, op ‘n fisiese manier?”

Interviewer: “Wonder whether we may converse/discuss a little your body experiencing of your body, do you sometimes feel loneliness on your body, in a physical way?”

Deelnemer: "Ja ek voel dat as ek as alles as alles reg geloop het sou ek sou ek sou van die eensaamheid sou weg weg weggegaan het want my liggaam wat gebeur het met alles in my liggaam dra toe tot die eensaamheid, die kanker in die dikderm wat verwyder is, die twee kraakbeen operasies, my arm wat 2 keer gebreek was in gimnastiek, as daar nou niks van dit verkeerd was nie sou ek nog 'n perdfris en ek sal baie sportief gewees het en ek dink dit sou my eensaamheid van die eensaamheid weggevat het en my meer selfvertroue gegee het."

Participant: "Yes I feel that if I if everything if everything ran fine I would I would have gone away away from the loneliness because my body what happened with everything in my body add to the loneliness, the cancer in the duodenum that was removed, the two soft bone operations, my arm that broke twice in gymnastics, if there was nothing wrong of all this then I would still have been strong/powerful and would have been very sporting and I think that would have taken my loneliness away from the loneliness and given me more self confidence."

He lists a number of bodily experiences he had which impaired him in taking part in sports activities and in generally being healthy. He also associates his bodily limitations to the lack of self-confidence. This illuminates the idea that the body is the vessel through which interpersonal contact is made, with an impaired body one may have impaired relationships.

The issue of auto erotic behaviour features here. In masturbating he comforts himself. This behaviour substitutes the venturing out to meet sexual partners and may lead to increased feelings of loneliness. (Author's hypothesis.)

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar spesifieke goed wat jy doen met jou liggaam as jy eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "Are there specific things that you do to your body when you are lonely."

Deelnemer: "Ek bevredig myself. Nou nie so baie nie maar eerder wat ek sal se ek sal na na gaan jag by 'n klub en kyk of ek 'n iemand kan optel of so en van my frustrasies ontslae te raak so sal ek my self eerder bevredig."

Participant: "I satisfy myself. Now not all that often but rather what I would say I would hunt at a club and see if I can't find somebody or so and get rid of my frustrations so I will rather satisfy myself."

Onderhoudvoerder: "Maak dit 'n verskil aan jou eensaamheid gevoel?"

Interviewer: "Does it make a difference to your feeling of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ja net vir 'n ruk."

Participant: "Yes just for a while."

Masturbation seems to alleviate feelings of loneliness. He chooses self-gratification as opposed to venturing out to find sexual partners.

Masturbation brings about temporary relief to the feelings of loneliness.

Loneliness always a negative experience.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is eensaamheid altyd vir jou 'n negatiewe ervaring?"

Interviewer: "Is loneliness always a negative experience to you?"

Deelnemer: "Ja ek sal so sê ja."

Participant: "Yes I would say so yes."

He experiences loneliness as a negative experience.

Loneliness as internal, *eigenwelt* experience. Within himself.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Voel jy ooit eensaam binne jouself of verwyderd of eensaam in verhouding tot jouself? Amper vervreemd van jouself?"

Interviewer: "Do you ever feel lonely within yourself or divorced or lonely in relation to yourself? Almost divorced from yourself?"

Deelnemer: "Ja ek voel eensaam binne myself. As jy dit nou meer kan verduidelik, die definisie vir my kan gee van die eensaamheid wat jy se verwyder van myself."

Participant: "Yes I feel lonely within myself. If you could explain it better, give the definition to me of the loneliness that you say divorce from myself."

He experiences loneliness within himself. But struggles to understand the meaning.

Abandonment and rejection in the past leads to feelings of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Was jy getroud voorheen?"

Interviewer: "Were you previously married?"

Deelnemer: "Maar my tweede vrou waarby ek die seuns het het die seuns met my gelos sy is saam met 'n ander man weggegaan."

Participant: "But my second wife with whom I have the sons, the sons left me, she went away with another guy"

He refers to his previous marriage and the fact that his wife left him for another man. The issue of abandonment and its connection to loneliness should be explored.

Breakdown of marriage significantly increased feelings of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe het dit jou eensaamheid geaffekteer?"

Interviewer: "How did it affect your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ja dit het baie baie geaffekteer. Die, dit was dit was dit was moeilike tye gewees. Ek het nie ek het nie die selfvertroue gehad om te meng met jy weet om in 'n groep soos in 'n kerk groep te gaan behoort maar met die hardloopry dit is maar al waarmee ek die eensaamheid weggevat het ek het nie regtig moeite gedoen nie ek sal nie se of ek nou dit het seker so dit werk seker so dat 'n ou jou jy raak op 'n stadium so dat jy worry nie meer daaroor nie."

Participant: Yes it affected it a lot, a lot. The, it was. It was. It was difficult times. I did not have...I did not have the confidence to mingle with... you know to become part of a group such as in the church but with the running. That is the only thing that I took the loneliness away... I did not really go to any trouble...I will not say if I had...so it had...so it works that you a guy...you get to a stage that you don't worry about it anymore

Emphasizes the degree to which his wife leaving him affected his experience of loneliness.

Rejection of sexual advances can lead to loneliness. Hypothesis is that many peoples seeking of sexual partners are attempts at alleviating feelings of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n verband tussen eensaamheid en seksuele verhoudings? Of seksualiteit?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is a relation between loneliness and sexual relationships? Or sexuality."

Deelnemer: "Ja daar is 'n verband daaroor."

Participant: "Yes there is a relationship."

He acknowledges a link between sexual relationships and loneliness experience.

Link between psychiatric condition and loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy dat eensaamheid iets te doen het met jou psigiatriese toestand? Dink jy eensaamheid het 'n rol gespeel?"

Interviewer: "Do you think loneliness has something to do with your psychiatric condition? Do you think loneliness played a role?"

Deelnemer: Ja

Participant: Yes

He does see a link between his psychiatric condition and his experience of loneliness.

Extreme Loneliness can lead to suicide.

Onderhoudvoerder: "En as jy dagdroom, as jy so sit en dink en jou gedagtes dryf weg, dink jy ooit aan eensaamheid dan?"

Interviewer: "And if you daydream, if you sit and think and your thoughts drift away, do you ever think of loneliness then?"

Deelnemer: "Die eensaamheid het my al, met my tweede vrou waarby ek die seuns het het ek selfmoord probeer pleeg."

Participant: "The loneliness had already with my second wife, with whom I have had the two sons, I have tried to commit suicide."

Loneliness leads him to attempt suicide. Maybe feelings of loneliness can become so intense that one is tempted to physically remove oneself from this world, as the ultimate escape from loneliness.

Abandonment by significant others can lead to suicide.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy probeer?"

Interviewer: "Have you tried?"

Deelnemer: "Ja, het ek selfmoord probeer pleeg terwyl die seuns daar by my gebly het. Was ek ek was so bly gewees wat gebeur het is die sy ek het ouditeurs werk gedoen en ek was in Wolmarans stad en toe bel hulle my een van my kollegas my my ex vrou het gebel en ek moet haar dringend kontak. En toe kom ek terug, ek sou oorgeslaap het daar maar toe kom ek terug toe bel ek haar toe se sy vir my asseblief ek moet haar kom haal, toe bly sy by in Bapsfontein by 'n ingenieur, ek moet haar kom haal, sy wil terug kom na my toe, toe is ek verskriklik baie bly dat sy dit gedoen het, toe het ek 'n huis daar in Silverton. Dit was nie 'n maand gewees nie toe trek sy in daar by my saam met haar buite egtelike kind want sy is toe weer getroud met n man maar die man is weg en sy het toe 'n kind by 'n ander ou, 'n buite egtelike kind, 'n dogtertjie toe trek sy in by my en ek weet nie wat het toe gebeur nie, sy het net 'n maand daar gebly toe die een aand toe sê sy vir my sy gaan uittrek toe het sy 'n ander man ontmoet toe trek sy Esselenpark toe so ek is toe baie seergemaak daardeur. Dis toe bly ek en die seuns maar nog verder daar in Meyerspark."

Participant: "Yes I tried to commit suicide while my sons lived with me. I was so glad what happened that time. I did auditors work and I was in Wolmaransstad and then they phoned, one of my colleagues, he said my ex wife has phoned and I must contact her urgently. And then I came back, I would have slept over but then I came back. I then phoned her. She then told me to please come fetch her, at that time she was staying with an engineer in Bapsfontein, I must fetch her, she wants to come back to me. Then I was very happy that she did it. At that time I had a house in Silverton, it was not a month and then she and her extramarital child moved in with me, because then she was married again to a man but the man left and then she had a child with another man, an extramarital child, a daughter, then

she moved in with me. I don't know what happened then, but she just stayed for one month and then the one night she told me she is going to move out. She met another man and then she moved to Esselenpark. I was very hurt by it. My sons and I stayed on there in Meyerspark."

He tells the story of how he got his hopes up of having a meaningful relationship only to be disappointed at the end. This feeling of abandonment then drove him to attempt suicide.

Sadness associated with loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Die medikasie wat jy drink, het dit enigsins 'n impak op jou eensaamheid ervaring? Dink jy dit maak 'n verskil?"

Interviewer: "The medicine that you use, has it got any effect on your loneliness experience? Do you think it makes a difference?"

Deelnemer: "Ek is baie emosioneel, ek huil gou, jy weet, ek weet nie of die dokter iets voorgeskryf het vir dit, dat ek nie met sommer net so gou gou as ek moet vertel van my ervaringe en so dat ek nie sterk wees en nie huil en hartseer wees nie en so nie, maar dit lyk my nie dit is van die medikasie, dis net die eensaamheid."

Participant: "I am very emotional, I cry quickly, you know, I don't know whether the doctor prescribed anything for that, if I have to tell about my experiences and I have to be strong and not cry and not sad and so forth, but it seems to me it is not because of the medication, it is the loneliness."

He points towards the loneliness as the cause of his emotional reactions.

Loneliness to suicide. Not living. Here the existential theme of terminating one's own existence as the ultimate act of loneliness can be explored.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat maak dit so negatiewe ervaring?"

Interviewer: "What makes it such a negative experience?"

Deelnemer: "Dis nie so negatief; as jy so negatief raak jy weet eensaamheid dat jy onverantwoordelike dinge wil doen."

Participant: "It is not that negative, if you become that negative because of loneliness that you want to do irresponsible things."

Loneliness makes him negative which leads to him contemplating irresponsible behaviours. Possibly the participant refers to suicide here.

Being alone is at times a positive experience.

Onderhoudvoerder: "OK. Dink jy daar is 'n verskil tussen om alleen te wees en eensaam te voel?"

Interviewer: "OK. Do you think there is a difference between being lonely and feeling lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Om alleen te wees is vir my is lekkerder as om eensaam te wees."

Participant: "To be alone is nicer to me than to be lonely."

A difference in the quality of experience between being alone and feeling of lonely.

Being lonely is a negative experience.

Onderhoudvoerder: "OK. Dink jy daar is 'n verskil tussen om alleen te wees en eensaam te voel?"

Interviewer: "OK. Do you think there is a difference between being lonely and feeling lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Ek sal dit liewerster alleen wil wees as om die ervaring van eensaamheid aanhoudend te hê, jy weet."

Participant: "I will rather be alone than to have the experience of loneliness all the time, you know."

Being alone is better than experiencing loneliness constantly.

Times alone can be pleasant.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So vind jy dat jy baie alleen is ook? Tye wat jy alleen is en nie eensaam is nie?"

Interviewer: "So do you find that you are also often very alone? Times that you are alone but not lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Ja. Ek wat ek doen is ek bewerkstellig dit so dat ek liewerster alleen is."

Participant: "Yes. And what I do is I see to it that I am rather alone."

He seems to prefer times of being alone and arranges such times.

Responding to loneliness by taking action.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Fantaseer jy ooit om eensaam te wees of alleen te wees?"

Interviewer: "Do you ever fantasize to be lonely or to be alone?"

Deelnemer: "Nee, ek fantaseer nie daaroor nie, ek maak ek maak 'n effort dat ek so dat as ek voel ek wil eensaam wees dan sal ek 'n effort maak en 'n verskoning uit dink om 'n plan van aksie te doen om eensaam te wees of alleen en nie gesteur te wees nie"

Participant: "No, I never fantasize about that, I make an effort so that if I feel I want to be lonely then I will make an effort and think of an excuse to get a plan of action to be lonely or to be alone, not to be bothered."

Rather than relating to loneliness in fantasy he acts on the feelings and adjusts his behaviour to address the feelings of loneliness.

Rather than emotion he resorts to action.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Watse gevoel emosie volg partykeer die ervaring van eensaamheid vir jou?"

Interviewer: "What emotional feeling in you sometimes follows the experience of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek raak nie aggressief of emosioneel nie. Ek sal maar by myself maar net soos ek netnou ook gesê het iets uitdink om iets te doen."

Participant: "I do not become aggressive or emotional. I will be on my own, but just as I have said just now I will think of something to do."

Again he refers to acting on emotions by resorting to certain behaviours to lessen the emotional intensity.

A strong theme of "doing something" when one feels lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe voel dit vir jou om eensaam te wees? As jy daai gevoel moet beskryf?"

Interviewer: "What does it feel like for you to be lonely? If you have to describe that feeling?"

Deelnemer: "Ek probeer 'n ander aktiwiteit te doen, soos ek het aan sport deel geneem, ek het 8 comrades maratonne gehardloop, 7 two oceans maratonne."

Participant: "I try to do other activities, like I have participated in sport, I have run 8 Comrades marathons, 7 Two Oceans."

Existentially life happens through the doing or engaging with life. Some activities can alleviate the feelings of loneliness.

The concept of courage within existential thinking is significant as it is often seen as the driving force behind finding one's being or in being authentic. The lack of the courage to be often leads to conformity which in the end leads to a restricted and inevitable lonely existence.

Onderhoudvoerder: "OK. As jy kyk na jou toekoms, het jy enige gedagtes oor eensaamheid in die toekoms? Of voel jy dat jy in jou toekoms eensaam gaan wees?"

Interviewer: "Ok. If you look at your future, have you got any ideas about loneliness in your future? Or do you feel that you are going to be lonely in your future?"

Deelnemer: "Toe skree ek vir haar 'Cathy wat maak jy, gaan jy weg hierdie naweek?' toe sê sy nee sy gaan nie toe sê ek ons moet bymekaar kom Saterdag dan gesels ons bietjie toe se

sy ok, so ek het darem moeite gedoen, maar ek weet nie of ek die vrymoedigheid het om na haar saal toe te gaan nie.”

Participant: “Then I shouted at her ‘Cathy what are you doing, are you not going away for the weekend?’ then she said no she is not going, then I said we must get together Saturday then we can chat a bit. Then she said OK, so I put in some effort, but I don’t know whether I have the guts to go to her ward.”

When he feels lonely he wants to be alone. This is an important reaction to loneliness which might indicate the working through or dealing with loneliness feelings. Positive or negative?

Onderhoudvoerder: “Is daar spesifieke plekke waar jy gaan as jy alleen voel?”

Interviewer: “Are there specific places where you go when you are lonely?”

Deelnemer: “Ja daar is gewoonlik gaan ek maar na ‘n na ‘n krieket veld of ‘n skool se rugby veld net ‘n oop stuk grond. Waar niemand kan kom nie, waar jy alleen is niemand kan jou pla nie, ek gaan sit baie kere hierso waar daar niemand van die pasiënte verby loop nie. Ek sal nie in ‘n shopping centre gaan sit nie alleen nie, sit en dink en eensaam wees nie, dis te bedrywig.”

Participant: “Yes, there is. Normally I go to a cricket field or a rugby field at a school...just an open piece of ground....where nobody can come, where you are alone, nobody can bother you, I often go and sit here where nobody of the patients walk past. I will not go and sit in a shopping centre all on my own, sit and think and be lonely, that is too much activity.

Again he tends to prefer isolating himself when he feels lonely.

Sadness as emotion associated with loneliness. In reaction he withdraws himself/isolates himself.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Is dit in tye wat jy baie eensaam voel?”

Interviewer: “Is that in times that you feel very lonely?”

Deelnemer: “Ja. As ek hartseer is of so dan wil behav wil my nie seermaak met sê nou maar my seermaak met ‘n mes of iets nie, ek wil ek wil swaar kry.”

Participant: “Yes. If I feel sad or so then I want...I don’t want to hurt myself with just say... hurt myself with a knife or something similar, I want...I want to suffer.”

A theme repeating is that in experiencing loneliness one may also choose to be alone.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Wanneer jy eensaam voel wat verwag jy van mense om jou, wat sal jy graag wil hê ander moet doen?”

Interviewer: “When you feel lonely what do you expect of the people around you, what would you like other people to do?”

Deelnemer: "Ek as ek een as 69ehav kan nie sê eensaam is ek hartseer is en emosioneel dan dan dan voel ek dat dan dink 69ehav wil liewers alleen wees, en ek weet nie of ek dit kan klassifiseer dat daai drie eensaamheid self dieselfde is nie, maar as ek eensaamheid as ek eensaam is is dit vanselfsprekend dan is ek hartseer en dan is dit vir my 'n teleurstelling in wat sal 'n mens sê, ek is skaam daaroor, ek wil nie hê mense moet my sien nie."

Participant: "I. If I lone...if I ...I can not say lonely if I am sad/heartbroken. And emotional then...then...then I feel that.. then I think I would rather be alone, and I don't know whether I can classify that the three lonelinesses are the same, but if I loneliness...if I am lonely it goes unsaid that I am heartbroken/sad and then it is a disappointment in what will one say, I am ashamed thereof, I do not want people to see me."

A hypothesis might be that loneliness can be like a vortex sucking you in because initial loneliness leads to isolation which leads to more loneliness which leads to more withdrawal.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wanneer jy eensaam voel wat verwag jy van mense om jou, wat sal jy graag wil hê ander moet doen?"

Interviewer: "When you feel lonely what do you expect of the people around you, what would you like other people to do?"

Deelnemer: "Ek kan nie sê eensaam is ek hartseer is en emosioneel dan dan dan voel ek dat dan dink dat ek wil liewers alleen wees, en ek weet nie of ek dit kan klassifiseer dat daai drie eensaamheid self dieselfde is nie, maar as ek eensaamheid as ek eensaam is is dit vanselfsprekend dan is ek hartseer en dan is dit vir my 'n teleurstelling in wat sal 'n mens sê, ek is skaam daaroor, ek wil nie hê mense moet my sien nie."

Participant: "I cannot say lonely, I am sad and emotional...then...then...then I feel that... then I think I would rather be alone, and I don't know whether I can classify that the three lonelinesses are the same, but if I loneliness...if I am lonely it goes unsaid that I am heartbroken/sad and then it is a disappointment in what will one say, I am ashamed there of, I do not want people to see me."

An interesting phenomenon presents itself here. It seems that when he experiences loneliness equalled to sadness, he has the need to be alone. He does not want to be seen.

Withdrawing himself from others.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dit gaan maar oor die emosies, partykeer kan 'n ou eensaam voel dan voel jy hartseer saam met dit, ander keer is mens eensaam dan voel jy kwaad saam met dit, 'n ander keer voel jy eensaam dan voel jy depressief saam met dit, so 69ehav emosies voel jy saam met die eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "It revolves around the emotions, sometimes one can feel lonely then you feel sad simultaneously, other times one feels lonely then you are angry simultaneously, another

time you feel lonely then you feel depressed with it, so what emotions do you feel simultaneously/together with the loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "My emosies is ek raak baie hartseer en dan vergeet ek, jy weet, so asof ek baie eensaam ervaring het en dan wil ek alleen in, ek het 'n trok, dan sal ek alleen in die trok in die park sit, en my gedagtes gaan sal dwaal oor my kinderdae, my fases, my sê maar nou ek het nou al so dit uitgewerk dat ek het nou al 5 fases in my lewe gehad, hierdie hierdie is nou my 6de fase, dan sit ek nou so en dink dan raak ek al hoe meer emosioneel en hartseer en so. Dan dan wil ek niemand dan bly ek weg, jy weet dan sal ek nie moeite doen om my broer my broers of met my kinders in aanraking te kom nie, dan bly ek weg."

Participant: "My emotions are, I become very sad and then I forget, you know, so as if I have got a lot experience of loneliness and then .. then I will alone, I have a lorry, then I will sit alone in the lorry in the park, and my thoughts go... will wander over my childhood days, my phases, my saying just now...I have now calculated it as such that I have now already had 5 phases of my life, this...this is now the 6th phase, then I now sit and think and then I become all the more emotional and sad and so. Then..then I want nobody...then I stay away, you know then I will not go to any trouble to ..to..to make contact with my brother my brothers or my children, then I stay away."

He experience great sadness in reaction to loneliness and then tends to isolate himself more and withdraw from relationships with others.

Withdrawal in reaction to loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "En was daar toe 'n verandering in jou belewenis van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "And was there then a change in your experience of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ja as, ek is teruggetrokke, ek maak nie gou vriende nie, ek is soos wat ek nou hierso sit, ek is nou 58 years old en kan ek nie eens op my 5 vingers tel, met een hand tel dat ek 'n vriend het nie. 'n Boesemvriend. Nie een nie"

Participant: "Yes if I...I am reserved. I do not make friends easily, I am as I am sitting here, I am now 58 years old and I cannot even count on my 5 fingers, count on one hand that I have got a friend. A close friend. Not one."

Became withdrawn, struggled to make friends.

Lack of effective communication linked to loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy eensaam gevoel as 'n kind?"

Interviewer: "Have you felt lonely as a child?"

Deelnemer: "Dit was vir my moeilik gewees om te kommunikeer, en vriende te maak, jy weet dis, ek het nie die selfvertroue nie."

Participant: "It was difficult for me to communicate, to...to...to...to make friends, you know it's, I have not got the selfconfidence."

Communication, making friends and lack of self-confidence is linked.

Self-confidence is needed to connect to others. Lack thereof can lead to loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy eensaam gevoel as 'n kind?"

Interviewer: "Did you feel lonely as a child?"

Deelnemer: "Waar ek sê hey daai lyk Na 'n goeie pel of daai lyk na 'n goeie girl, wat moet ek doen, ek wil graag met haar in verbinding tree, maar ek het nie die selfvertroue nie, ek is te stupid daar, ja of so iets."

Participant: "Where I say hey that looks like a good friend or that looks like a good girl, what must I do, I would very much like to make contact with her, but I haven't got the self-confidence, I am too stupid there, yes or something like that."

He sees opportunities to make friends but lacks the self-confidence, thinks he is stupid.

A lonely parent. Family relationships alleviate loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy eensaam gevoel as 'n kind?"

Interviewer: "Did you feel lonely as a child?"

Deelnemer: "Want ek het die eensaamheid het so gegaan want ek was seker maar te behep met my kinders want ek het hulle van kleinsaf alleen groot gemaak."

Participant: "Because I have.... The loneliness went like this because I was apparently too involved with the kids/children, because I brought them up alone since they were small."

The matter of being a single parent or "alone parent" comes up. Feelings of loneliness are alleviated by relationship with his children.

Attempts to connect where consciously discontinued.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy eensaam gevoel as 'n kind?"

Interviewer: "Did you feel lonely as a child?"

Deelnemer: "Alleen, het nie moeite gedoen om 'n partner te soek om saam met my te gaan nie."

Participant: "Alone, did not go to any trouble to find a partner to go with me."

At some stage he did not put in effort to find somebody to be with him.

Lack of self-confidence = no group connection = loneliness

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe het dit jou eensaamheid geaffekteer?"

Interviewer: "How did it affect your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ja dit het baie baie geaffekteer. Die, dit was dit was dit was moeilike tye gewees. Ek het nie ek het nie die selfvertroue gehad om te meng met jy weet in 'n groep soos in 'n kerk groep te gaan behoort."

Participant: "Yes it did affect tremendously. The, it was...it was...it was very difficult times. I did not have...I did not have the self-confidence to mix with you know....to join a group like a church group."

The connection between the lack of self-confidence and the ability to belong to a group reappears.

Significant relationships can help ease loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So daar is spesifieke tye wat jy meer bewus raak van jou eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "So there are specific times that you become more aware of your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Dis hy ja. Veral daai tye. Maar dit het nou lank laas gebeur want ek is betrokke by my by my oudste seun se se se besigheid."

Participant: "That's it yes. Especially those times. But it has now happened long ago because I am involved with my..with my eldest son's business."

Involvement with son helps to deal with loneliness.

Meaning finding in important relationships.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So daar is spesifieke tye wat jy meer bewus raak van jou eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "So there are specific times that you become more aware of your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Dit ondersteun want hy is 'n sport paramedikus vir die skole en events, en dan Saterdag gaan ek saam met hom na hierdie events toe en dan hokkie byeenkoms of rugby byeenkoms by 'n skool dan is hy daar met sy ambulans dan ondersteun ek hom en so."

Participant: "That I support him because he is a sport paramedical for schools and events, and then Saturdays I go with him to these events and then hockey gathering/meeting/get-together or rugby event at a school ... then he is there with his ambulance. Then I support him and so."

Finds meaning in supporting his son.

More aware of his own loneliness in confrontation with other's connectedness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "En as jy dagdroom, as jy so sit en dink en jou gedagtes dryf weg, dink jy ooit aan eensaamheid dan of?"

Interviewer: "And if you daydream, if you sit and think like that and your thoughts drift, do you then ever think of loneliness or?"

Deelnemer: "Nee, soos ek nou nou gese het, vir my is dit mooi om te sien gelukkige ou, getroude paartjie of bymekaar en dan is ek beter as ek sien dan ontstel dit my. Maar dan staan dan loop ek en gaan probeer ek iets anders doen wat my nie so ontsteld raak nie."

Participant: "No, as I have just said, for me it is nice to see a happy, old, married couple or together and then I am better... when I see then it upsets/startles/worries me."

He gets upset by seeing others in meaningful relationships.

Connecting to others who are lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy op daai stadium baie eensaam gevoel? Na sy jou verlaat het?"

Interviewer: "Did you feel very lonely at that stage? After she left you?"

Deelnemer: "Ek het maar ek het eensaamheid gedeel met met my sports vriende."

Participant: "I have, but I shared my loneliness with my sport friends."

Sharing of the experience off loneliness.

Interpersonal disappointment = loneliness

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy op daai stadium baie eensaam gevoel? Na sy jou verlaat het?"

Interviewer: "Did you feel very lonely at that stage? After she left you?"

Deelnemer: "Silverton toe kom die regstellende aksie, toe gee hulle my 'n pakket, toe dank hulle my af. Dit is toe die toe dit gebeur toe die meisie ook toe is sy ook weg."

Participant: "Silverton, then came the correcting action, then they gave a package, then they retrenched me. That is when...it's when that happened..when the girl also...then she also left."

He recounts another experience of interpersonal disappointment.

Being among people does not necessarily alleviate loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So vind jy dat jy baie alleen is ook? Tye wat jy alleen is en nie eensaam is nie?"

Interviewer: "So do you find that you are also very lonely? Times that you are alone but not lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Om dis vir my lekker om dan te sit en te dink en in beplannings te doen en as 'n ou so alleen sit, en ek wil nie ek verkies dit meer want ek hou nie daarvan ek dit mense moet my nie irriteer nie jy weet dan, iemand moenie my irriteer heeltyd agter my aanloop, jy weet dit krap my, dis hoekom ek verkies om liewerster alleen te wees."

Participant: "To...it is enjoyable for me to...to sit then and think and to do in planning and when a guy sits alone like that, and I don't want to say that I prefer it because I don't like that...I..That...people must not irritate me you know then, somebody must not irritate me...follow me the whole time, you know it bothers me, that is why I prefer to rather be alone."

He explains why he prefers being alone at times. It seems to give him "mind space" to do planning and be alone in his thoughts. Having people around him doesn't necessarily make him feel less alone but can even irritate him.

Use of humour to connect to others.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So vind jy dat jy baie alleen is ook? Tye wat jy alleen is en nie eensaam is nie?"

Interviewer: "So do you find that you are also very lonely? Times that you are alone but not lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Maar ek is 'n baie spontane en 'n grap maker en 'n uitgesproke persoon wat in die saal het hulle vanoggend weer vir my bedank."

Participant: "But I am a very spontaneous and joking and outspoken person because in the hall/ward this morning they have thanked me again."

Connects through humour and appreciates the feedback on settings things right. Taking an advocacy role.

It seems that being a substitute father figure brings connectedness and meaning into his life and as a result it eases the feelings of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Watse verskil het dit op jou eensaamheid gemaak? Die gebeure nou?"

Interviewer: "What difference did it make to your loneliness? The occurrences now?"

Deelnemer: "Wat dit? Nee dis net ek het gevoel dat ek en daai suster het 'n verhouding nie opgebou wat sy vir my se daddy, jy weet, sy is jonk sy se ek is haar pa, ek en elke oggend as sy inkom dan groet sy vir my en sy steek haar hand uit dan na my toe en sy groet my ordentlik en sê hallo daddy jy weet, dit het bietjie van die eensaamheid van my weggevat."

Participant: "What that? No it is just I felt that I and that sister had ...had developed a relationship in which she will say to me.... Daddy, you know, she is young she says I am her dad, I...and every morning when she enters then she greets me and puts her hand then

forward to me and greets me properly and say hello daddy you know, that took a bit of the loneliness away.”

Here it becomes clear that the relationship between him and the sister actually carries the meaning and helps to alleviate feelings of loneliness.

Hypothesis than in facing others his loneliness gets worse.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Dit gaan maar oor die emosies, partykeer kan ‘n ou eensaam voel dan voel jy hartseer saam met dit, ander keer is mens eensaam dan voel jy kwaad saam met dit, ‘n ander keer voel jy eensaam dan voel jy depressief saam met dit, so watter emosies voel jy saam met die eensaamheid?”

Interviewer: “It revolves around the emotions, sometimes one can feel lonely then you feel sad simultaneously, other times one feels lonely then you are angry simultaneously, another time you feel lonely then you feel depressed with it, so what emotions do you feel simultaneously/together with the loneliness?”

Deelnemer: “My emosies is ek raak baie hartseer en dan vergeet ek, jy weet, so asof ek baie eensaam ervaring het en dan dan sal ek alleen in, ek het ‘n trok, dan sal ek alleen in die trok in die park sit, en my gedagtes gaan sal dwaal oor my kinderdae, my fases, my sê maar nou ek het nou al so dit uitgewerk. Ek het nou al 5 fases in my lewe gehad, hierdie hierdie is nou my 6de fase, dan sit ek nou so en dink dan raak ek al hoe meer emosioneel en hartseer en so. Dan dan wil ek niemand dan bly ek weg, jy weet dan sal ek nie moeite doe nom my broer my broers of met my kinders in aanraking te kom nie, dan bly ek weg, totdat ek weet ek voel.”

Participant: “My emotions are, I become very sad and then I forget, you know, so as if I have got a lot experience of loneliness and then .. then I will alone, I have a lorry, then I will sit alone in the lorry in the park, and my thoughts go... will wander over my childhood days, my phases, my saying just now...I have now calculated it as such that I have now already had 5 phases of my life, this...this is now the 6th phase, then I now sit and think and then I become all the more emotional and sad and so. Then. Then I want nobody....then I stay away, you know then I will not go to any trouble to ..to..to make contact with my brother my brothers or my children, then I stay away, until I know I feel.”

He experience great sadness in reaction to loneliness and then tends to isolate himself more and withdraw from relationships with others.

Emphasis is placed on how others can rescue him from loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Het jy al ooit ‘n positiewe ervaring gehad van eensaamheid?”

Interviewer: “Have you ever had a positive experience from loneliness?”

Deelnemer: "Daar is nie een groot insident of 'n insident wat ek regtig kan uitsonder en kan sê hey ek was darm heavy eensaamgewees, Jan of Piet of Koos het opgedaag en my gered uit dit uit nie, daar is nie iets wat ek daar kan uitsonder nie, uitsonder nie."

Participant: "There is not one big incident or incident that I could really exempt/except and can say hey I was really extremely lonely, Jan or Piet or Koos pitched up and saved me out of this or that, there is not something that I can highlight."

In misunderstanding the question he does connect interpersonal relationships with a "rescue" from loneliness. This may present a significant theme in his understanding of loneliness and the expectation on others to rescue him from such experiences.

Personality or the "person one is" or "nature of one's being" can have an impact on how one experiences interpersonal relationships and loneliness. Some people are less in need of group interactions to feel less lonely.

Deelnemer: "nie ek gaan nie saam die ouens sokker speel of baseball of iets board speletjies speel nie, ek hou nie daarvan om saam met groepe sulke dinge te doen nie."

Participant: "not.... I am not going to play soccer with the guys or baseball or something.. board games. I do not like to do such things with groups."

He is not a group person.

A theme of not being authentic presents itself here. Sometimes people need to be inauthentic to be accepted by certain groups.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ek verstaan. Sê my bietjie dink jy daar is 'n verband tussen geestelikheid of spiritualiteit en eensaamheid? Miskien ook Godsdienst?"

Interviewer: "I understand.. Tell me do you think there is a relationship between psychology or spirituality or loneliness? May be even religion?"

Deelnemer: "Dis 'n moeilike vraag ek is. Jy meen as ek 'n meer 'n godsdienstige persoon is? Dat ek minder eensaam gaan wees? Ek dink 'n ou sal nie 'n ou sal nie sal minder eensaam en jy sal gouer 'n vriendskapkring opbou, dit kan 'n gimmic tipe van 'n vriendskap kring wees, jy weet. Ek het al so so groep bygewoon dit is dit is jy doen jy doen jou voor as 'n persoon wat jy nie is nie, veral in die godsdienstige kringe, sal is ek as ek daar is dan sal ek my voordoen as 'n persoon wat ek nie regtig is nie."

Participant: "That is a difficult question...I am. You mean if I am more of a religious person? That I am going to be less lonely? I think one will not...one will not be ..Will be less lonely because you will develop a friendship circle faster, it can be a gimmick type of a friendship circle, you know. I have already attended such a group it is...it is..you present...you present yourself as a person that you are not, especially in the religious circles, will...am I if I am there, will I present myself as a person that I am really not."

He believes that in religious circles he will build up a friendship circle quicker but that there will be a fake quality to it. Religion or spirituality does not necessarily change his loneliness state.

Thus one can hypothesize that authenticity can lead to rejection and loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ek verstaan. Sê my bietjie dink jy daar is 'n verband tussen geestelikheid of spiritualiteit en eensaamheid? Miskien ook Godsdien?"

Interviewer: "I understand/follow. Tell me do you think there is a relationship between psychology or spirituality or loneliness? May be even religion?"

Deelnemer: "Veral in die godsdienstige kringe, sal is ek as ek daar is 77ehavi my voordoen in 'n persoon wat ek nie regtig is nie."

Participant: "Especially in the religious circles, will...am I if I am there, will I present myself as a person that I am really not."

Loneliness can be experienced regardless of the presence of Intimate relationships.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As jy bietjie dink aan jou verhoudings wat jy in jou lewe gehad het met Ander mense, was daar ooit 'n tyd wat jy eensaam gevoel het alhoewel jy in 'n verhouding was?"

Interviewer: "If you think a bit about your relationships that you have had in your life with other people, was there ever a time that you felt lonely although you were in a relationship?"

Deelnemer: "In die in die verhoudings wat ek met die vroulike geslag die verhoudings wat ek gehad het ek het nie in met die huwelik en die wat jy nou as net 'n gewone verhouding gebruik dan sal ek sê in die huwelik het ek het ek eensaamheid beleef."

Participant: "In the...in the relationships that I had with the female sex...the relationships that I have had...I have not in...with marriage and those that you now just use as the normal relationship will I say in marriage did I ...did I experience loneliness."

Although he was in a marital relationship he still experienced feelings of loneliness. However in more friendship relationships he did not experience loneliness.

No relationship brings relief of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Was daar al ooit 'n spesifieke verhouding wat jou eensaamheid verlig het? Wat jou minder eensaam laat voel het?"

Interviewer: "Has there ever been a specific relationship that has. Relieved your loneliness? That made you feel less lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Nee."

Participant: "No."

No specific relationship has changed his experience of loneliness.

Not everyone experience loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy alle mense voel alleen? Of eensaam? Interviewer: Do you think all people feel alone? Or lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Nee nie alle, nee, alle mense Kan nie eensaam wees nie."

Participant: "No not all, no, all people can't be lonely."

He does not feel that all people experience loneliness.

Physical attributes can make one less attractive to others and can lead to not be accepted in groups. Self-confidence is necessary to be part of groups.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Waarom dink jy voel Ander mense soms eensaam?"

Interviewer: "Why do you think other people feel lonely sometimes?"

Deelnemer: "As die persoon dalk fisies gebrek het en hy is nie self hy is nie selfversekerd nie, hy is nie good looking nie, hy hy het 'n disleksie en so dan dink ek dis die grootste waarom ander mense eensaam eensaam is."

Participant: "If the person may have physical short comings and he is not self... he is not self-confident, he is not good looking, he..he is dislectic and so, then I think that is the biggest (reason) why other people are lonely...lonely."

In his understanding of other people's experience of loneliness he makes reference to physical and psychological qualities that causes people to not be accepted in a group.

A theme of association presents itself here. In dealing with feelings of loneliness and connecting to others there seems to be a strong link between how one sees yourself and the type of people you associate with.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Waarom dink jy voel ander mense soms eensaam?"

Interviewer: "Why do you think other people feel lonely sometimes?"

Deelnemer: "Ek self is het meer ek maak gouer vriende met met mans persone en met se maar met vrou persone wat 'n disleksie het wat hakkell of in 'n rystoel is wat kruppel loop of so dit is vir my baie baie gemakliker en vinniger om vriende te maak met die tipe persoon as wat ek sal high society girl hier buite sien en haar maar liewerster ignore. Ek gaan eerder lekkerder gesels met die tipe persone uit te vind, te gesels, as wat dit met 'n ander high society persoon eerste klas person."

Participant: "I myself am. Have more..I make friends quicker with..with men and with just say with women that have a dislection that stutter/stammer or is in a wheelchair that walk cripple or something...it is much much more convenient and faster for me to befriend with this type of

person than when I see high society girl standing here outside and rather ignore her. I will rather enjoy talking to this type of person, enquiring, chatting, as with another high class society person, first class person.”

In forming relationships he tends to be more comfortable with other people who have disabilities. He seems to feel more confident in approaching them and starting a conversation. He does not feel that comfortable with people of a higher standing.

Hospital provides a context where loneliness can be countered by meaningful involvement.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Is daar ‘n verskil in jou gevoel van eensaamheid as jy binne die hospitaal is teenoor as jy buite die hospitaal is? Of hoe ervaar jy eensaamheid in die hospitaal?”

Interviewer: “Is there a difference in your feeling of loneliness when you are inside the hospital versus when you are outside the hospital? Or how do you experience the loneliness in the hospital?”

Deelnemer: “Nee, hier in die hospitaal is ek te betrokke om eensaam te wees. Ek weet nie of ek dit nou reg stel nie. Maar buitekant is daar nie tye wat ek voel ja ek gaan nou hierso sit en tjank en tjank en huil en omdat ek nou eensaam is nie, wag waar is my pelle, hoekom het ek nie iemand om fliiek toe te vat nie, jy weet, wat het verkeerd geloop in my lewe, buitekant sal ek dit nie doen nie.”

Participant: “No, not here in the hospital, I am too involved to be lonely. I don’t know whether I am saying it correctly. But outside there are not times that I feel yes I am going to sit here and cry and cry and cry and because I am not lonely now, wait where are my friends, why haven’t I got somebody to take to the movies, you know, what went wrong in my life, outside I will not do that.”

His involvement in hospital activities seems to alleviate feelings of loneliness. There is a difference between in-hospital and out-of-hospital experiences of loneliness.

In a positive relationship to staff he finds connectedness.

Onderhoudvoerder: “In jou behandeling by die hospitaal is daar sekere multidissiplinêre spanlede, sielkundige, maatskaplike werker, arbeids terapeut, enige iemand, die susters hier by die hospitaal wat ‘n verskil maak aan jou ervaring van eensaam?”

Interviewer: “In your treatment at the hospital are there certain multidisciplinary team members, psychologists, social workers, occupational therapist, anyone, sisters here at the hospital that made a difference to your experience of loneliness?”

Deelnemer: “Ja daar is. Dis snaaks dat jy my so ‘n vraag vra. Daar is ‘n suster daar in die saal wat ek ‘n merite vorm geskryf het en ek wil dit inhandig by die Superintendente, ek het haar ‘n kompliment gegee want sy stel ‘n goeie voorbeeld.”

Participant: "Yes there is, it's funny that you ask me such a question. There is a sister in the ward that I wrote a merit form for and I want to hand it in with the Superintendents, I have given her a compliment because she sets a good example."

He reflects on his relationship with staff members and how he looks up to some staff members and feels the need to compliment them on the way they present themselves.

Not understanding role of medication.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Die medikasie wat jy drink, het dit enigsins 'n impak op jou eensaamheid ervaring? Dink jy dit maak 'n verskil?"

Interviewer: "The medication that you drink, has it got any impact on your loneliness experience? Do you think it makes a difference?"

Deelnemer: "Ek drink die medikasie. Nee ek verstaan nou nog nie ek wil nog met my dokter praat in verband met die medikasie wat behels die medikasie, want dit is maar net 'n kalmeer, askies dit is lyk my die medikasie wat ek drink is maar meer om my te kalmeer, en ek weet nie of die, van die medikasie wat ek drink nie, ek ken nie die name van die medikasie nie."

Participant: "I drink the medication, no I still do not understand, I still want to talk to my doctor in connection with the medication. What does the medication entail, because it is just a calming effect. It looks to me like the medication that I drink is just to calm me, and I don't know if the medication that I drink, I don't know the names of the medication."

He does not understand the role of the medication in his treatment.

Loneliness has come up in the context of psychotherapy.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy al ooit met iemand gepraat oor jou ervaring van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Have you ever discussed your experience of loneliness with anybody?"

Deelnemer: "Nee, wel ja, met ek dink die sielkundiges, toe ek die eerste maal hierso by Weskoppies was in 1998 toe het ek gepraat, ek kan so iets onthou, dat ek oor die eensaamheid met die sielkundiges gepraat het."

Participant: "No, yes well, with I think the psychologists, when I was here at Weskoppies the first time in 1998...then I talked, I can remember something like that, that I have talked about the loneliness with the psychologists."

He did share his experience of loneliness with psychologists in the past.

Talking about loneliness does not necessarily bring relief.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het dit jou minder alleen laat voel as jy praat oor jou eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Did it make you feel less lonely when you talk about your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Dit het my nie minder laat voel nie, dit het niks aan my gedoen nie, ek bly net dieselfde. Ek dink ek kan nou net met jou praat en nou met die persoon praat en se jiss ek is so eensaam en ja dit bly net dieselfde, dit gaan my nie verlig en happy maak en se kom ons gaan ysskaats nie."

Participant: "It did not make me feel less, it did not do anything to me, I stay just the same. I think I can now just talk to you and now talk to the person and say...jeez, I am so lonely and yes it just stays the same, it is not going to relieve me and make me happy and say come let us go ice-skating."

He did not experience any change in his feelings of loneliness after having shared it with others.

4.2. Participant 2

Creativity in the face of loneliness.

Participant 2 described how he resorts to creative activities such as arts and crafts in the face of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy ooit eensaam of vervreemd van jou self gevoel binne jouself?"

Interviewer: "Have you ever felt lonely or estranged from yourself within yourself?"

Deelnemer 2: "...dae wat ek voel ek weet nie eens wat om met myself aan te vang nie of ek begin 'n ding, ek is baie lief vir arts en crafts..."

Participant 2: "...days that I feel I don't even know what to do with myself or I start with something, I find arts and crafts very enjoyable..."

Participant 2 described times that he finds himself in a state where he does not know what to do with himself, as if disconnected from himself. He then resorts to creative activities as an escape from feelings of loneliness.

Creativity can be a blessing and a way to cope with loneliness.

Participant 2 relates his experiences of creativity and loneliness as follows:

Onderhoudvoerder: "So is daar kontekste of situasies waar jy meer of minder eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "So are there contexts or situations in which you feel more or less lonely?"

Deelnemer 2: "...as ek allendig is by die huis, dit klink simpel om te sê maar baie keer as ek allendig is by die huis en ek raak besig met my aktiwiteite, die stokperdjies en goed en my gedagtes is heeltyd besig dan stop ek, my gedagtes is heeltyd besig ek probeer heeltyd 'n ding uitsorteer, by mekaar pas, hy gaan nie mooi lyk so nie, gaan beter lyk so, beter lyk so, my gedagtes begin heeltemal wegdwaal, jy konsentreer heeltyd op dit, dan vergeet jy van die eensaamheid en aleenheid. Ek is dankbaar vir die gawe wat ek gekry het om so kreatief te wees, om blomme te kan rangskik en daai tipe goeters, en nie net tevrede te wees met 'n

ding nie en te verander en hier te verander en daar te verander tot jy tevrede is en dit ly regtig my aandag af.”

Participant 2: “... if I am alone at home, it sounds stupid to say but many times when I am alone at home and I become busy with my activities, the hobbies and stuff and my thoughts are busy the whole time then I stop, my thoughts are continuously busy are continuously busy sorting things out, fit them together, it is not going to look beautiful this way, it is going to look better that way, look better this way, my thoughts start to dwell completely, you concentrate on it continuously, then you forget about loneliness and being alone. I am thankful for the gift I have received to be so creative, to be able to arrange flowers and that type of thing and not just be satisfied with it but to alter here and there until you are satisfied and that really distracts my attention.”

Being alone at home and being busy creatively occupies his thoughts and makes him less lonely. He uses creative art work to distract his attention and help him focus on something other than his loneliness. This is another example of how creative expression can somehow alleviate feelings of loneliness and in a way contribute meaning to one's existence.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Wat doen jy gewoonlik as jy eensaam voel? Is daar spesifieke dinge wat jy doen?”

Interviewer: “What do you normally do when you feel lonely? Are there specific things that you do?”

Deelnemer 2: “...ek doen baie scrap booking en découpage en ek het nou begin mosaik werk doen.”

Participant 2: “... I do a lot of scrap booking and decoupage and I have also started doing mosaic work.”

The participant mentions some activities of creative expression that he engages in when he feels lonely. This may also tie in with a later theme of *Loneliness as call to action*. The experience of loneliness can act as a driving force to bring people to action to deal or attempt to numb the experience of loneliness. Creative engagement seems to be one of the outcomes of a move from loneliness.

Loneliness can also impair creative thinking.

Participant 2 describes his experiences:

Onderhoudvoerder: “Dink jy daar is ‘n verband tussen kreatiwiteit en eensaamheid?”

Interviewer: “Do you think there is a link between creativity and loneliness?”

Deelnemer 2: “Daar is. Ek het al agtergekom as ek baie eensaam is kan ek nie kreatief dink nie. My kop staan stil op ‘n punt en dit vat lank vir my om te besluit hoe ek ‘n ding wil doen.”

Participant 2: "There is. I have realised that when I am very lonely I can't think creatively. My thoughts stagnate and it takes me long to decide how I want to do something."

At certain times his attempts to be creative fail because his mind is not focussed. Here the link between body and mind is explored and it seems that the inner experience of loneliness can express itself through the body. It also distorts his sense of time thus affecting the temporal dimension of loneliness experience. This aspect of loneliness experience will be explored further later when the theme of *Loneliness and time* is discussed.

Creating a presence to decrease feelings of loneliness.

In response to feeling lonely the participant attempts to ease the loneliness feelings. He states that:

Onderhoudvoerder: "Was daar al spesifieke tye of oomblikke in jou lewe wat jy bewus was van eensaamheid of wat jy eensaam gevoel het?"

Interviewer: "Were there specific times or moments in your life that you were aware of loneliness or that you felt lonely."

Deelnemer 2: "En baie aande sal ek die TV aansit of radio aansit dat daar net nog 'n geluid in die huis is."

Participant 2: "And many evenings I will switch the TV or radio on just to have another sound in the house."

The sound from radio or TV creates a presence in the house which alleviates feelings of loneliness. Here the participant touches on the desire of people to create a presence to feel less lonely. Technological advances such as radio and television seems to play a role in people's loneliness experience.

Creation in dreams

The creativity theme also appears in relation to dream content.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As jy partykeer drome het; het jy al ooit gedroom oor temas van eensaamheid? Waar jy eensaam voel in jou drome?"

Interviewer: "If you sometimes have dreams, have you ever dreamt of themes of loneliness? Where you feel lonely in your dreams?"

Deelnemer 2: "... wanneer jy deur jou drome gegaan het en dink jy daai persoon is daar maar dan is die persoon nie daar nie."

Participant 2: "...when you went through your dreams and thought that person is there but then the person is not there."

In his dreams the participant creates the feeling that he is not alone. He brings back people from his past. The feeling of the presence of others presents itself in his dreams. However when he awakes

the sudden reality hits that he is still alone. Often one can awake in a searching or longing state as if one is looking for someone or is missing someone. Thus the can mind create the idea of the presence of another in dreams, in order to ease feelings of loneliness.

Fantasies of being alone.

The participant here expresses fantasies he has at times of being alone.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar tye waar jy fantasië het rondom om eensaam te wees of eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Are there times that you fantasize about being lonely or loneliness"

Deelnemer 1: "Nie so seer om eensaamheid te wees nie maar ek het fantasie om alleinig te wees ... net spasie om self my gedagtes uit te sorteer."

Participant 1: "Not so much about being lonely but I fantasize about being alone... just space to sort my own thoughts."

The participant here makes the distinction between loneliness and being alone. He needs this alone space to sort out his thoughts. It would seem then that being among a crowd can also crowd the mind. Thus time alone quiets the mind and can help in finding perspective. This also introduces the idea of being alone with one's thoughts.

An empty mind and loneliness.

The participant here expresses a dimension of his loneliness experience in that he feels lonely with himself.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy ooit eensaam of vervreemd van jou self gevoel binne jouself?"

Interviewer: "Have you ever felt lonely or estranged from yourself within yourself?"

Deelnemer 2: "Ja, ek het eensaam gevoel met myself en opgeskeep met myself."

Participant 2: "Yes, I felt lonely with myself and stuck with myself."

Again the feeling of not knowing what to do as if the mind is emptied by feelings of loneliness appears here.

Living one into stories can be a way to make one feel less lonely.

When asked if there are specific things that the participant does when he feels lonely he responded that he loves reading.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat doen jy gewoonlik as jy eensaam voel? Is daar spesifieke dinge wat jy doen?"

Interviewer: "What do you normally do when you are lonely? Are there specific things that you do?"

Deelnemer 2: "Wel ek is lief vir lees."

Participant 2: "Well I like reading."

Reading when lonely and immersing himself into stories seems to help the participant feel less lonely.

Time is experienced as longer in times of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe voel tyd vir jou wanneer jy eensaam voel? Jou belewenis van tyd? Is daar 'n verskil?"

Interviewer: "How do you experience time when you feel lonely? Your perception of time? Is there a difference?"

Deelnemer: "Die dag is vir my verskriklik, die tyd is vir my verskriklik lank die tyd draal, wil nie verby gaan nie. Jy voel partykeer jy wil net iets doen dat die tyd moet verby gaan jy wil die horlosie aandraai dat jy darem net kan gaan slaap of iets in daai aard. Die tyd raak baie lank as jy eensaam en alleen is raak die tyd baie lank maak nie saak wat jy doen nie jy kry nie die tyd om nie."

Participant: "The day is horrible the time is tremendously long, the time lingers and does not go past. Sometimes you just feel that you want to do something to get time to pass you want to fast forward the clock just to enable you to go to bed or something similar. Time is slow when you are lonely and alone the time becomes very lengthy, does not matter what you do to pass the time."

Time is experienced as longer in times of loneliness.

He feels that his mother's loneliness originated in her childhood. Highlighting the developmental perspective on loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat dink jy maak haar (mother) so eensaam?"

Interviewer: "What do you think makes her (mother) so lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Dit is maar van haar kinderlewe af. Haar kinder dae soos ek maar afgelei het en dan het sy al gepraat van haar kinder dae wat sy maar altyd allenig was."

Participant: "It originates from her life as a child. Her days as a child as I have derived and then she has mentioned that she was always lonely during her childhood."

He feels that his mother's loneliness originated in her childhood. Highlighting the developmental perspective on loneliness.

During times at work he experienced intense feelings of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar spesifieke tye wat jy meer of minder alleen voel as ander tye?"

Interviewer: "Are there specific times that you feel more or less lonely than other times?"

Deelnemer: "Hier kan ek nie se nee of ja nie. Toe ek nou werk deur die dag terwyl ek werk het ek bitter eensaam gevoel het."

Participant: "Here I can't say no or yes. While I worked during the day I felt pretty lonely."

During times of work he experienced intense feelings of loneliness.

In thought one can return to times or places where one felt lonely.

Loneliness is present throughout life.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat doen jy gewoonlik as jy eensaam voel? Is daar spesifieke dinge wat jy doen?"

Interviewer: "What do you normally do when you feel lonely? Are there specific things that you do?"

Deelnemer: "Ek bly terug dink aan dinge wat my eensaam laat voel of iets nie"

Participant: "I think back about things that made me feel lonely or something."

Thinking back of things that makes him feel lonely increases his present loneliness.

Trapped in loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Waar pas eensaamheid in jou toekoms in? Sien jy dit as deel van jou toekoms en hoe?"

Interviewer: "Where does loneliness fit into your future? Do you see it as part of your future and how?"

Deelnemer: "Wel tot dusver het ek; dink ek; soos ek sê is ek so vasgevang in my eensaamheid en alleenheid"

Participant: "Well, up to now I have, I think, as I say am I so caught up in my loneliness and aloneness."

The participant mentions loneliness and being alone together...there must be a link...he also refers to a feeling of being trapped.

The emptiness of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ok kom ons begin. Was daar al spesifieke tye of oomblikke in jou lewe wat jy bewus was van eensaamheid of wat jy eensaam gevoel het?"

Interviewer: "Ok, let's start. Have there ever been specific times or moments in your life that you were aware of loneliness or that you felt lonely?"

Deelnemer: "En baie aande sal ek die TV aansit of radio aansit dat daar net nog 'n geluid in die huis is."

Participant: "And many evenings I will switch on the TV or radio just to have another sound in the house"

Loneliness as a quality of a certain atmosphere.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat het jou laat eensaam voel in daai tyd?"

Interviewer: "What made you feel lonely in that time?"

Deelnemer: "Baie kere naweke het ek my suster voor 'n naweek gebel en gesê of ek nie kan kom kuier vir die naweek net kan uitkom wegkom van die atmosfeer af."

Participant: "Many times weekends I phoned my sister before a weekend and asked whether I could not visit the weekend just to get out get away from the atmosphere."

Hiding in the face of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe sal jy die gevoel van eensaamheid beskryf? Hoe voel dit om eensaam te wees?"

Interviewer: "How will you describe the feeling of loneliness? What does it feel like to be lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Soos ek sê dit draai net om werk toe en huis toe ,werk toe en huis toe en met rukke sal jy by die huis kom en party aande sê jy, ag weet jy ek het nie lus vir die aand nie ek maak nie eens kos nie ek kruip in die bed en gaan slaap. Net om te probeer om van daai alleenheid ontslae te raak."

Participant: "As I say it just revolves around work and then home, work and to home and at times you will arrive at home and some nights you say ah I don't feel like the evening and then you don't make supper, I crawl into bed and go to sleep. Just to try to escape the loneliness."

He sees himself as an outsider. The insider-outsider is an interesting view.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat het jy al in jou lewe gedoen om met eensaamheid te cope?"

Interviewer: "What have you done in your life to cope with loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Want hulle kan dit nie aldag verstaan nie want hulle is sosiale klomp mense hulle gaan nie deur hoe kan ek sê dieselfde probleme as wat ek gaan nie maar hulle ervaar nie daai gevoel van eensaamheid nie want hulle is groot gesinne wat mekaar ondersteun en bymekaar staan en goed en dan kom jy as 'n buitestaander daar aan, dan voel jy net maar ek voel nie deel van die gesin of behoort deel van die gesprek of iets van daai aard nie."

Participant: "Because they can't always understand it because they are a lot of social people, they are not what can I say experiencing the same problems as me but their experiences don't include those feelings of loneliness because they are big families that support one another and stick together and stuff and then you arrive there as a bystander. Then you just feel I don't feel like part of the family or should be part of the conversation or something similar."

He sees himself as an outsider. The insider-outsider is an interesting view.

He associates feelings of anger somehow with loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat verwag jy van ander mense hoe moet hulle jou hanteer wanneer jy eensaam is?"

Interviewer: "What do you expect of other people how must they treat you when you are lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Dis vir my 'n moeilike vraag om te antwoord. Ek kan nie vir jou sê hoe kan ek hoe moet mense my hanteer nie ek voel partykeer ek moet my wakker klap, skud dat ek bykom. En as, as hulle te kras begin optree dan het ek in die verlede baie kwaad geword."

Participant: "That is a difficult question for me to answer. I cannot tell you how I can how people must treat me I sometimes feel I have to slap myself awake shove that I focus. And if, if they become too rude then I have become very angry in the past."

At times he prefers being alone. Again choosing to be alone at times is seen as a place where he can be himself.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat is dit wat jy mis van mense as jy eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "What is it that you miss in people when you are lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Ek mis partykeer die geselskap, die samehorigheid, en ander kere pla dit my glad nie. Ander kere wil ek net alleen wees en op my eie aangaan, my eie ding doen."

Participant: "I sometimes miss the conversation, the togetherness, and at other times it does not bother me at all. Other times I just want to be alone and want to carry on on my own, do my own thing."

He seems to reflect here on how one can lose meaning in the face of loneliness. It sounds like life can lose its purpose.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n verband tussen kreatiwiteit en eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is a relationship between creativity and loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Asof jy net so gaan terug klim in die bed en ja ek weet ek moet eet, waarvoor maak ek kos? Net vir myself waarvoor vir wie anders maak ek kos, dan vat ek net 'n sny

brood of 2 en eet dit drink 'n beker tee drink my pille en gaan klim in my bed en slaap. Dan kom daar party dae vir wat moet ek huis skoonmaak? Vir wie maak ek huis skoon? Vir wie en vir wat? Dis tog net ek daar, ek kry nie baie besoekers nie so vir wie doen ek dit? Vroeër met rukke verloor jy heeltemal belangstelling.”

Participant: “As if you are just going to get back in bed and yes I know I must eat, why must I make food/cook? Just for myself what for who else do I cook, then I take a slice of bread or 2 and eat it drink a mug of tea drink my pills and go to bed and sleep. Then some days why must I clean the house? For who am I cleaning the house? For who and for what? It is only me there I do not receive many visitors so why am I doing it? Earlier with times you lose interest completely.”

Loneliness may evolve from an experience to a state of being. That one is lonely in one's very nature. Thus a lonely being.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Het die verhouding waarna jy nou verwys 'n verskil gemaak in jou belewenis van eensaamheid?”

Interviewer: “Did the relationship you have just referred to influence your perception of loneliness?”

Deelnemer: “Nee, glad nie.”

Participant: “No not at all.”

Onderhoudvoerder: “Hoe so?”

Interviewer: “How so?”

Deelnemer: “Daar het nog tye gekom wat ek gevoel het hy irriteer my en hy moet net sy goed vat en loop, los my net alleny, uhhh en hy het my nou die ander dag gesê ek is grumpy, ek is mislik, ja ek weet ek moet jou alleny los, ek kan sien jy voel nie lekker nie of iets in daai aard, dit is tye wat ek myself onttrek het en ek dink ek is te gewoon gewees; te gewoon geraak aan eensaamheid, na 3 en 'n half jaar.”

Participant: “There were still times that I felt he irritates me and he must take his stuff and leave, just leave me alone, uhhh and he told me the other day I am grumpy, I am horrible, yes I know I must leave you alone, I can see you do not feel well or something to that effect, those were times that I withdrew myself and I think I was too used to, got too used to loneliness, after 3 and a half years.”

One can get used to a state of loneliness if being lonely for long enough.

He associates loneliness with a loss of interest.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Dink jy daar is 'n sekere dimensie aan jou geestelikheid of spiritualiteit wat 'n verband hou met eensaamheid en jou belewenis van eensaamheid?”

Interviewer: "Do you think there is a certain dimension to your spirituality and.....that has a relation with loneliness and your perception of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek het die tyd toe ek uit Denmar uit gekom het uit die kerk uit bedank; ek het bedreig gevoel; bedruk gevoel; uhhmm ek lees nog gereeld my Bybel en goed maar op die oomblik behoort ek nie aan 'n kerk nie en ek kan eerlik sê dinge het my begin irriteer op 'n stadium; en ek het net nie meer belanggestel om deel te hê aan enige iets nie."

Participant: "I did at the time when I got out of Denmar resign from the church, I felt threatened, felt depressed, Humm I still read my Bible regularly and stuff but at the moment I do not belong to a church and I can honestly say things got to irritate me at a stage and I just was not interested to be part of anything."

Loneliness can put one in a vulnerable state.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar vir jou 'n verband tussen seksuele verhoudings en eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Is there as far as you are concerned a relation between sexual relationships and loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Jy uhhm na my vrou se dood al wat ek kan sê; ek was vir die afgelope paar maande in 'n seksuele verhouding met Kobus gewees, hy't ook maar baie ingedring het op my eensaamheid en hy het homself kom af; sal nie hoe kan ek sê nie afdwing nie maar kom afpak het daar en hy weet wat is die beste en dit en dat en my kop vol nonsens gepraat het en daar het ongelukkig 'n seksuele verhouding ontstaan wat teen my grein is en selfs nou probeer hy nog my lewe beheer."

Participant: "You Humm after my wife's death all I can say, I was for the recent few months in a sexual relationship with Kobus, he zoomed in a lot on my loneliness and he himself came down, will not how can I say not coerced/forced but offloaded with me and he knows what is the best and this and that and filled my head with a lot of nonsense and unfortunately a sexual relationship developed that is against my way of life and even now he still tries to control my life."

In a vulnerable state of loneliness someone took advantage of him and he ended up in a sexual relationship

Keeps his loneliness for himself. Inner experiences of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Praat jy ooit met ander mense oor jou ervaringe oor eensaam?"

Interviewer: "Do you ever discuss your experiences about loneliness with other people?"

Deelnemer: "Eerlik nee, ek het geleer om dinge vir myself te hou."

Participant: "Honestly no, I have learnt to keep things to myself."

Alone in public

Onderhoudvoerder: "Waar pas eensaamheid in jou toekoms in? Sien jy dit as deel van jou toekoms en hoe?"

Interviewer: "Where does loneliness fit into your future? Do you see it as part of your future and how?"

Deelnemer: "Om dit alleny te doen is vir my 'n groot issue; ek kan nie. Ek kan nie eers by Wimpy instap en 'n koppie koffie te gaan drink sonder om ongemaklik te voel nie."

Participant: "To do it alone is a big issue to me, I cannot. I cannot even walk into a Wimpy for a cup of coffee without feeling uneasy."

Being alone in public spaces is unbearable and makes him feel uncomfortable.

Again the theme of reading

Onderhoudvoerder: "Jou belewenisse hier in die hospitaal, het jy 'n belewenis van eensaamheid hier gehad?"

Interviewer: "Your experiences here in the hospital, have you had an experience of loneliness here?"

Deelnemer: "Daar het tye gekom wat ek myself onttrek het en besig gehou het met lees."

Participant: Times came when I withdrew myself and kept busy with reading."

Keeps himself busy with reading.

He uses positive thinking and trying things to make him more involved.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe werk jy daaraan?"

Interviewer: "How do you enhance it?"

Deelnemer: "Ek probeer baie meer positief dink en probeer dinge dink om myself meer betrokke te maak."

Participant: "I try do think much more positively and try to think about things to involve myself more."

He experiences anxiety in relation to his situation and feels that he may mess things up.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe werk jy daaraan?"

Interviewer: "How do you enhance it?"

Deelnemer: "Angsbevange; gaan ek die regte ding doen of gaan ek weer alles opmors soos wat ek dit in die verlede opgemors het? So dis 'n baie, 'n moeilike situasie vir my. Ek weet nie aldag hoe om dit te hanteer nie."

Participant: "Anxious, am I going to do the right thing or am I going to mess everything up again as I have messed up in the past? So it is a very, a difficult situation for me. I do not always know how to handle it."

He feels that to not withdraw yourself, getting more involved with your family and circle of friends and allowing others to support you can all counter the possibility of feeling lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "He feels that to not withdraw yourself, getting more involved with your family and circle of friends and allowing others to support you can all counter the possibility of feeling lonely."

Interviewer: "He feels that to not withdraw yourself, getting more involved with your family and circle of friends and allowing others to support you can all counter the possibility of feeling lonely."

Deelnemer: "Ek sou sê dis 'n tragedie as dit wat in my lewe met jou gebeur het moet jy nie jouself ontrek nie, raak meer betrokke met die res van jou familie, en jou vriende kring, laat hulle jou meer ondersteun."

Participant: "I would say it is a tragedy that if what happened in my life with you you must not withdraw yourself, become more involved with the rest of your family, and your circle of friends let them support you more."

An interesting dimension surfaces here in that it seems that one can actively push others away and thus contribute to one's own loneliness but one can also actively allow others closer, to support you and thus feel less lonely.

He felt exhausted by the loneliness experience.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ek wonder of eensaamheid ooit vir jou 'n liggaamlike belewenis was? Dat jy dit aan jou lyf gevoel het? Hoe dink jy daaraan?"

Interviewer: "I wonder whether loneliness was ever a physical experience to you. That you felt it on your body? How do you think about it?"

Deelnemer: "Jy sou sê dit het my baie keer liggaamlik uitgeput, dat ek hoe sal ek se ek het nie die wilskrag gehad nie ek wil dinge gaan doen maar ek kan net nie op kom en so ver kom om dit te doen nie. My liggaam is heeltemal totaal geheel en al uitgeput."

Participant: "You would say that it has many times physically exhausted me, that I how will I say I did not have will power I want to do things but I just can't raise and get so far to do it. My body is totally and completely exhausted."

Loneliness also diminished his will power.

Places associated with loved ones and times where he was happy often reminds him of his loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar spesifieke plekke wat jy assosieer met eensaamheid waar jy al was of waar jy soms heen gaan?"

Interviewer: "Are there specific places that you associate with loneliness where you have been or that you visit sometimes."

Deelnemer: "Dis vir my baie keer en baie keer 90% van die tyd vir my moeilik om my ouers of susters iewers heen te gaan waar my vrou altyd saam was."

Participant: "It is often for me and many times 90% of the time difficult for me to join my parents or sisters to somewhere where my and I frequented."

Attempts to move to different homes did not make a difference to his loneliness experience.

The recreation of home spaces to feel less lonely and recreating spaces where one felt less lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar spesifieke plekke wat jy assosieer met eensaamheid waar jy al was of waar jy soms heen gaan?"

Interviewer: "Are there specific places that you associate with loneliness where you have been or that you visit sometimes."

Deelnemer: "Die hele tyd die plek inrig en probeer iets doen soos sy daarvan gehou het, sou sy nou daarmee tevrede gewees het. Sou sy tevrede gewees het met die plek waar ek bly, sulke tipe goed."

Participant: "The whole time the place organise and try to do something as she liked it, would she now have been happy with it. Would she have been satisfied with the place where I live, that type of thing?"

At night before bed is a particularly difficult time because at these times he becomes more aware of the fact that he is lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar spesifieke tye wat jy meer of minder alleen voel as ander tye?"

Interviewer: "Are there specific times that you feel more or less lonely as at other times?"

Deelnemer: "Hier kan ek nie se nee of ja nie. Dis baie keer vir my selfs deur die toe ek nou werk deur die dag terwyl ek werk het ek bitter eensaam gevoel het. Wat ek myself ontrek het van almal en net op my eie wou wees en ja met my verlange saamgeleef het. Baie keer sal dit in die nag gebeur baie keer sou dit eers as ek gaan slaap is ek eensaam en dan kan ek nie aan die slaap raak nie en of ek sal 'n paar uur slaap."

Participant: "Here I cannot no or yes. It is often for me even since I now work during the day, while I worked I felt pretty lonely. When I have withdrawn from all and just wanted to be on my own and yes lived together with my longing. Often it will happen in the night, often only when I have already gone to bed I am lonely and then I can't fall asleep and or I will sleep for a few hours."

Time in nature is initially experienced as positive but later becomes irritating because of his awareness of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar dinge wat jy in jou omgewing sien wat jou laat eensaam voel? Of wat jou belewenis van eensaamheid beïnvloed?"

Interviewer: "Are there things that you detect in your environment that makes you lonely? Or that influence your perception of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Weet jy ek sal baie buite in die tuin gaan sit en dis vir my lekker wees bietjie in die natuur te wees. En ek sal so 5 of 10 minute buite wees dan begin dit my irriteer. Want jy is alleng en met wie gesels jy? Wat doen jy? En ja, werk bietjie in die tuin, spuit die tuin nat, jy doen dit jy doen dan, en as jy klaar is wat doen jy verder."

Participant: "Do you know I will often go and sit outside in the garden and it is enjoyable to be outside in nature for a while. And I will be 5 or 10 minutes outside then it starts irritating me. Because you are alone and who do you talk to? What do you do? And yes, work a little bit in the garden, hose/wet the garden, you do this you do that, and when you are finished what do you do there after?"

The physical presence of a cat brings some comfort when he feels down.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar dinge in jou omgewing wat jou minder alleen laat voel? Wat die eensaamheid verlig?"

Interviewer: "Are there things in your environment that makes you less lonely? That lightens the loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Weet jy ek het 'n kat ek sou baie down voel of whatever, die kat sien ek gaan lê sommer in die middel van die dag op die bed gaan hy teen my kom lê en is asof hy my wil beskerm en as hy party aande by die huis kom en sien ek is nie lekker nie sal hy die heelyd om my draai by my voete lê dis iets om jou mee besig te hou maar later raak ek geïrriteerd."

Participant: "Do you know that I have a cat, I will feel very depressed or whatever, the cat sees I go and lie down in the middle of the day on the bed it will come and lie against me and it is as if he wants to protect me and if he arrives some evenings at the house and detects that I am not fine then he will circle me the whole time lie at my feet it is something to keep busy with but later I get irritated."

He feels that pets can play a role in relieving loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe dink jy kan troeteldiere 'n verskil maak aan eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "How do you think pets can make a difference to loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek dink hulle kan. Ek dink hulle kan as jy weet soos meer geduld aan die dag lê of iets. Weet ek nie baie meer goed is nie ek het nie ek is geduldig tot op 'n punt en tog troeteldiere kan eensaamheid baie verlig."

Participant: "I think they can. I think they can if you know how to show more patience or something. Don't I know much more goodness I have not I am patient up to a point and yet pets can relieve loneliness a lot."

Watching movies can make him feel more lonely than before.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n met deesdae se tegnologie, die eeu wat ons leef tegnologiese dinge wat eensaamheid beïnvloed? Meer of minder maak of sou dink aan rekenaars, selfone, internet, telefoon al die tipe dinge. TV, media."

Interviewer: "Do you think there is with today's technology, the century that we live, technological things that influence loneliness? Make more or less or will think of computers, cell phones, internet, telephone all these type of things, TV media."

Deelnemer: "Ek het dit al baie beleef as ek dink dis hier gaan nou vanaand 'n goeie fliëk wees of iets, en jy begin die fliëk te kyk, dit het my al meer laat eensaam voel as wat voor ek begin die ding te kyk. Meer eensaam en alleen voel, ek sal sommer die TV afsit. Rekenaars sonder werk het ek baie gebruik met my werk."

Participant: "I have experienced it often if I think there is going to be a beautiful movie tonight or something, and you start to watch the film, it has left me lonelier than I was before starting to watch it. More lonely and alone feel, I will put the TV off. Computers without work have I often used in my work."

The presence of technology devices in his life irritates him more than it is seen as ways of addressing the loneliness feelings.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n met deesdae se tegnologie, die eeu wat ons leef tegnologiese dinge wat eensaamheid beïnvloed? Meer of minder maak of sou dink aan rekenaars, selfone, internet, telefoon al die tipe dinge. TV, media."

Interviewer: "Do you think there are with the technology these days, the century that we live in technological things that influence loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Die tegnologie is nie altyd daar vir my om dinge vir my makliker te maak nie dit maak my partykeer meer hartseer."

Participant: "The technology is not always available to me to make things easier and that sometimes sadden me."

Being alone as a preferred state.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n verskil tussen om eensaam te wees en om alleen te wees?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is a difference between being lonely and alone?"

Deelnemer: "Daar kom tye wat jy alleny wil wees, daar was tye wat ek, just around the room was ons mekaar spasie moet gee, elkeen sy eie tyd om alleen te wees en deur sy dinge te werk en as jy na die tyd daaroor gaan sit en praat het, maar om absoluut niemand te hê om mee te praat nie."

Participant: "There are times that you want to be alone, there were times that I, was just around the room we had to give each other space, each needed time to be alone and to work through his things and if you later sit and discuss it, but to have absolutely nobody to talk to."

Being alone as a preferred space.

Working through issues when alone.

Loneliness as difficult emotion to describe.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe sal jy die gevoel van eensaamheid beskryf? Hoe voel dit om eensaam te wees?"

Interviewer: "How will you describe the feeling of loneliness? What does it feel like to be lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Laat ek so sê dit is moeilik om te beskryf soos ek weet hoe om dit te beskryf, maar dit is; jy voel naderhand niks werd nie; jou lewe maak nie meer vir jou sin nie; dit... Soos ek sê dit draai net om werk en toe huis toe werk toe en huis toe en met rukke sal jy by die huis kom en party aande sê jy ag weet jy ek het nie lus vir die aand nie ek maak nie eens kos nie ek kruip in die bed en gaan slaap."

Participant: "Let me put it this way, it is difficult to describe as I know how to describe it, but it is, later you feel invaluable, your life does not make sense; it....As I say it just revolves around work and then to home to work and to home and with times you will arrive at home and some evenings you will just say I don't feel like having a evening and you will not even make food just go to bed and sleep."

Self esteem

Dreams bring the presence of others into one's life, but when you wake up you realize that you are alone.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As jy partykeer drome het; het jy al ooit gedroom waar daar temas van eensaamheid is? Waar jy eensaam voel in jou drome?"

Interviewer: "When you sometimes have dreams, have you ever dreamt where there are themes of loneliness? Where you feel lonely in your dreams?"

Deelnemer: "Ja ek het al baie gevoel ek is eensaam. Jy droom jy word wakker en jy soek die volgende persoon en daar is niemand nie. En dit gebeur, maar nou gebeur dit nie meer nie, maar in die verlede baie gebeur dat basies jy staan op; jy is gewoon jy maak vir die ander persoon koffie of tee en jy vat dit kamer toe en as jy in die kamer kom besef jy hoor hier so maar ek is eintlik alleng? Wat is ek besig om aan te vang? En dan is dit nou soos wanneer jy deur jou drome gegaan het en dink jy daai persoon is daar maar dan dan is die persoon is nie daar nie."

Participant: "Yes I have often felt I am lonely. You dream you wake up and you are looking for the next person but he is not there. And it happens, but now it does not happen anymore, but in the past it has often happened that basically you get up, you are normal/straight forward you make coffee or tea for the other person and you take it to the room and when you arrive in the room you register hey I am actually alone? What am I busy doing? And then it is as if you have gone through your dreams and you thought that that person is there but then the person is not there."

After a dream one awakes in a state of looking for someone. The emptiness of reality versus the presence of others in dreams.

A sort of initial denial in the face of loneliness.

In one's dreams one can create the feeling that one is not alone. The presence of others. But when one awakes there is the sudden reality of still being alone. Often one can awake in a searching or longing state as if one is looking for someone or missis someone. – Authors own ideas.

Fear following loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar tye wat jy 'n positiewe gevoel het rondom alleen wees?"

Interviewer: "Are there times that you have a positive feeling about being alone?"

Deelnemer: "En dan kom party dae wat hoe sal ek nou sê wat ek eensaam is wat jy heeltemal voel alles is te veel vir en jou jy wil tussen daai 4 mure uitkom maar jy is tog bang om iewers heen te gaan."

Participant: "And then some days arrive that , how will I put/say it that I am lonely and that you feel completely everything is too much for you and you want to get out of the room and yet you feel scared to go anywhere."

Captured nature of the loneliness experience. When loneliness gets too much it drives you to get out...but fear (anxiety) to go out is present.

Loneliness a common experience.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As jy partykeer drome het; het jy al ooit gedroom waar daar temas van eensaamheid is? Waar jy eensaam voel in jou drome?"

Interviewer: "If you sometimes have dreams, have you ever dreamt where there are themes of of loneliness? Where you feel lonely in your dreams?"

Deelnemer: "Ja ek het al baie gevoel ek is eensaam. Jy droom jy word wakker en jy soek die volgende persoon en daar is niemand nie."

Participant: "Yes I have often felt I am lonely. You dream you wake up and you are looking for the next person and there is nobody."

Loneliness as familiar experience.

Often one can awake in a searching or longing state as if one is looking for someone or missis someone

Onderhoudvoerder: "Word jy gewoonlik wakker?"

Interviewer: "Do you normally wake up?"

Deelnemer: "Ja ek het baie keer in die middel van die nag wakker geword en dan staan ek op en gaan maak koffie en tee en sê ok nou gaan ons 'n bietjie chat of net 'n bietjie rustige tyd saamwees en dan as jy terugkom in die kamer dan besef jy maar daar is niemand nie jy is allendig."

Participant: "Yes I have often woken up in the middle of the night and then I get up and make coffee and tea and say ok now we can chat a bit or just be content together and then when you get back to the room you register there is nobody you are alone."

In one's dreams one can create the feeling that one is not alone. The presence of others. But when one awakes there is the sudden reality of still being alone. Often one can awake in a searching or longing state as if one is looking for someone or missis someone.

Disconnected from one self.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy ooit eensaam of vervreemd van jou self gevoel binne jouself?"

Interviewer: "Have you ever felt lonely or divorced from yourself within yourself?"

Deelnemer: "Ek het baie dae nie geweet dit gebeur nou nog baie dae wat ek voel ek weet nie eens wat om met myself aan te vang nie of ek begin 'n ding, ek is baie lief vir."

Participant: "I have many days not known that it still happens often today that I feel I don't even know what to do with myself or I start a thing, I am very fond of."

At times he finds himself in a state where he does not know what to do with himself...as if disconnected from himself.

Being alone helps to sort one self out.

Onderhoudvoerder: Is daar tye waar jy fantasie het rondom om eensaam te wees of eensaamheid?

Interviewer: Are there times that you fantasise around being lonely or loneliness?

Deelnemer: "Nie soseer om eensaamheid nie maar ek het fantasie om alleng te wees. En ek sal nie sê dat ek my terug trek van almal nie maar gee my net spasie om self my gedagtes uit te sorteer en my ding te doen tot ek."

Participant: "Not so much around loneliness but I have a fantasy to be alone. And I will not say that I withdraw from everybody but just give me space to sort my own thoughts and to do my thing until I."

Needs the space to sort himself out.

Loneliness is an emotional experience.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Watse gevoelens assosieer jy met eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "What feelings do you associate with loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek sou sê dis baie emosioneel. Uhhmm ek voel partykeer ek raak van my kop af."

Participant: "I would say it is very emotional. ...Humm I sometimes feel I am losing it."

Experiences loneliness as very emotional.

Not knowing how to cope with loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is eensaamheid iets wat jy as negatief of sleg ervaar?"

Interviewer: "Is loneliness something that you experience as negative or bad?"

Deelnemer: "Ek ervaar dit baie negatief. Baie negatief en sleg vir my want jy weet nie aldag hoe om daarmee te cope nie en probeer jy daarvoor praat dan sê die mense sommer ons raak nou moeg vir jou stories, ons raak moeg vir jou stories. Ek het nou al geleer hou dinge vir jouself, werk dit maar self uit, en dis nie almal wat verstaan waardeur mens gaan nie."

Participant: "I experience it as very negative. Very negative and bad to me because you do not always know how to cope with it and if you try to talk about it then the people will just say we are tiring of your stories, we are tiring of your stories. I have now learnt keep things for yourself, solve it yourself, and it is not everybody that understands what a person is going through."

A feeling of not knowing how to cope with loneliness.

Feeling understood in relationship- empathic understanding

Onderhoudvoerder: "Was daar al 'n spesifieke verhouding in jou lewe wat jou eensaamheid verlig het?"

Interviewer: "Has there ever been a specific relationship in your life that alleviated the loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "En dit is hoe, dis regtig bitter min dit is net met my een vriendin met wie ek so openlik kan wees en kan praat, ek voel sy verstaan my omrede sy net self net voor die tyd deur 'n egskeiding is en dis ook maar trauma en goed so ons is maar saam mekaar se verliese te verwerk en daaroor gepraat en aan gegaan."

Participant: "And that is how, it is really very seldom, it is just with the one girlfriend with who I can be so open and talk, I feel she understands me because she herself went through a divorce just before and that is also trauma and stuff, therefore we shared each other's losses and talked about it and carried on."

The issue of understanding is highlighted again. Empathic understanding

Onderhoudvoerder: "Weet jy van spesifieke mense wat eensaamheid belewe in jou lewe?"

Interviewer: "Do you know about specific people in your life that experience loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "My pa nog daar is maar sy sal dit nie met hom bespreek of praat nie want hy is nie 'n persoon wat verstaan nie."

Participant: "My dad was still there, but she will not discuss it with him or talk about it because he is not a person that understands."

He experiences his sisters as not being able to understand.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat dink jy maak haar so eensaam?"

Interviewer: "What do you think makes her so lonely?"

Deelnemer: "My 2 susters, hulle is altwee geskei en altwee vinnig weer getroud en weet hulle kan nie verstaan van eensaamheid en alleen wees of iets in daai aard nie."

Participant: "My 2 sisters, both of them were divorced and both got married quickly again and know they can't understand loneliness and be alone of something of that sort."

Being able to understand the differences in experience is necessary to be empathic.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat dink jy maak haar so eensaam?"

Interviewer: "What do you think makes her so lonely?"

Deelnemer: "My 2 susters, hulle is altwee geskei en altwee vinnig weer getroud en weet hulle kan nie verstaan van eensaamheid en alleen wees of iets in daai aard nie. Jy weet hulle het my baie al baie kwalik geneem omdat ek nie oor my vrou se dood kan kom nie, gaan aan met jou lewe, ons is daardeur, maar dis vir my iets heeltemal anders om iemand te skei en iemand aan die dood af te staan."

Participant: "My 2 sisters, both of them were divorced and both got married quickly again and know they can't understand loneliness and be alone of something of that sort. You know they have already often been upset with me because I cannot get over my wife's death, carry on with your life, we went through it, but it is something completely different to me to divorce a person and to lose somebody to death."

His mother's understanding was experienced as positive but his father's lack of empathy just made it worse. An important hypothesis here is that loneliness can be understood as the lack of empathic understanding of the one by the other.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is eensaamheid iets wat jy as negatief of sleg ervaar?"

Interviewer: "Is loneliness something that you experience as negative or bad?"

Deelnemer: "Ek het nou al geleer hou dinge vir jouself, werk dit maar self uit, en dis nie almal wat verstaan waardeur mens gaan nie."

Participant: "I have now learnt keep things to yourself, work it out yourself, and it is not everybody that understands what one goes through."

Loneliness is experienced in the face of loss.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ok kom ons begin. Was daar al spesifieke tye of oomblikke in jou lewe wat jy bewus was van eensaamheid of wat jy eensaam gevoel het?"

Interviewer: "OK let us start. Have there been specific times or moments in your life that you were aware of loneliness or that you felt lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Baie sulke tye gebeur veral na my vrou se dood ook. Dis die rekenaar aan te sit deur die verloop van gaan werk toe gaan huis toe gaan werk toe gaan huis toe gaan werk toe jy stel in niks belang nie."

Participant: "Many such times... happen also especially after the death of my wife. It is starting the computer during the...going to work...go home...go to work go home...go to work go home...you are not interested in anything."

He experienced loneliness in the face of the loss of a loved one.

One can be lonely whilst being in relationship as well.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het die verhouding waarna jy nou verwys 'n verskil gemaak in jou belewenis van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Has the relationship you referred to now make a difference in your experience of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Nee, glad nie."

Participant: "No not at all."

This relationship did not change his loneliness feelings.

He valued emotional support after the loss of his wife.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Was daar al 'n spesifieke verhouding in jou lewe wat jou eensaamheid verlig het of?"

Interviewer: "Has there ever been a specific relationship in your life that alleviated your loneliness or..?"

Deelnemer: "Ek het 'n goeie vriendin met wie ek baie kan praat. Ek ken haar al 6 jaar van dat ek in Bronkhorstspuit gekom het en na my vrou se dood het sy my baie ondersteun."

Participant: "I have a nice woman friend with who I can talk a lot. I have known her for 6 years, since I came to Bronkhorstspuit and after my wife's death she has supported me a lot."

A longing for lost love ones.

Loneliness can affect mood which leads to depression and withdrawal.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Maak die medikasie 'n verskil in jou belewenis van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Does the medication have an influence on your experience of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Hoe kan ek sê. Ek het saam met 'n klomp vreemdelinge gesit en gesels en grappe maak. Ek sal nie sê ons deel gevoelens nie maar jy weet ons praat onder mekaar positiewe dinge waar ek nie altyd in die verlede so ervaar het nie of gedoen het nie."

Participant: "How can I say. Isat with a lot of strangers and talked and made jokes. I won't say we share feelings but you know we discuss positive things among us, something that I have not experienced or done in the past."

He now relates better to others and feels he can talk to them.

Feels there is a relation between his psychiatric condition and loneliness experience.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy eensaamheid speel 'n rol in jou psigiatriese toestand?"

Interviewer: "Do you think loneliness plays a role in your psychiatric condition?"

Deelnemer: "Jy kan tog so dink ja. Daar kom party dae wat ek heeltemal soos die Engelse se rock bottom is ek voel die medikasie help nie eers nie. Soos Sondag oggend wat ek jou gesms het ek was die hele dag in 'n toestand gewees, ek het die heel dag gehuil en ten spyte van die medikasie het ek niks beter gevoel nie."

Participant: "You can surely think so yes. There are days that I am like the English say rock bottom, I feel the medication does not even help. Like the Sunday morning that I SMS'e you...I was in a state the whole day, I cried the whole day and in spite of the medication I did not feel any better."

Touching here on his experience of the difference between feeling alone and being alone.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy mense oor die algemeen ervaar eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you think people in general experience loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek sal sê nie eensaam nie baie mense voel tog op 'n stadium allendig."

Participant: "I will not say lonely, many people do feel alone at some stage."

Touching here on his experience of the difference between feeling alone and being alone.

He experiences that people feel different towards loneliness, some people desire to be alone and others cannot stand being alone.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy mense oor die algemeen ervaar eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you think people in general experience loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "En baie kan dit nie hanteer om allendig of eensaam te wees nie, hulle wil gedurig mense om hulle hê."

Participant: "And many can't handle to be alone or lonely, they always want to have people around them."

He reflects on the being a part of rather than feeling a part of which is emotion bound. He experiences that people feel different towards loneliness, some people desire to be alone and others cannot stand being alone.

Some people feel lonely but not all people experience loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy almal ervaar eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you think everybody experiences loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Sal nie kan sê almal ervaar eensaamheid nie. Ek weet van 'n paar mense wat baie kere eensaam voel, maar hoe sal ek sê, dis nie almal nie."

Participant: "Won't be able to say everybody experiences loneliness. I know of a few people that often feel lonely, but how will I say, it is not everybody."

Some people feel lonely but not all people experience loneliness.

A tension exists between the need to connect and the need to be alone.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Maak dit 'n verskil in jou belewenis van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Does it make a difference in your experience of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek sal sê dit doen. Dit, ek meen as ek vat toe ek ingekom het; die eerste 3 dae."

Participant: "I would say it does. It, I mean if I take when I arrived, the first 3 days."

Initial reaction of withdrawal but later he connected fellow patients and staff.

Attempts to address his feelings of loneliness he include trying to distract his thoughts from feelings of loneliness by keeping busy with other things.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar fisiese dinge wat jy doen wanneer jy eensaam voel wat jou eensaamheid verlig?"

Interviewer: "Are there physical things that you do when you feel lonely that relieves your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek probeer baie keer dan met ek sal baie keer sommer net 'n inkleurboek vat en inkleur om my gedagtes af te lei en my liggaam besig te hou."

Participant: "I often try ...I will often just take a colouring book and colour in just to divert my thoughts and to keep my body busy."

Being alone at home and being busy creatively occupies his thoughts and makes him less lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So is daar kontekste of situasies waar jy meer of minder eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "So are there contexts or situations where you feel more or less lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Baie keer as ek alleny is by die huis, dit klink simpel om te sê maar baie keer as ek alleny is by die huis en ek raak besig met my aktiwiteite, die stokperdjies en goed en my gedagtes is heeltyd besig dan stop ek my gedagtes. Ek probeer heeltyd 'n ding uitsorteer, by mekaar pas, hy gaan nie mooi lyk so nie, gaan beter lyk so, beter lyk so, my gedagtes begin heeltemal wegdwaal, jy konsentreer heeltyd op dit, dan vergeet jy van die eensaamheid."

Participant: "Many times when I am alone at home, it sounds stupid to say, but often when I am alone at home and I get busy with my activities, the hobbies and stuff and my thoughts

are busy then I stop my thoughts. I always try to sort things out, to fit them together, it is not going to look good this way, will look better that way, better like this, my thoughts start to wander completely, you concentrate on it the whole time, then you forget about the loneliness.”

Being busy with household activities also distracts him from the loneliness feelings.

Onderhoudvoerder: “So is daar kontekste of situasies waar jy meer of minder eensaam voel?”

Interviewer: “So there are contexts or situations where you feel more or less lonely?”

Deelnemer: “Maar nou kom ek by gewone werk goed, wasgoed was, huis skoonmaak, kos maak, dit lei baie keer nie my aandag af nie want jy sit nog steeds en dink. Baie keer dan maak ek kos en so vir hoeveel mense het ek nou eintlik kos gemaak dis mos nou eintlik te veel kos dan maak ek sommer vir 4 of 5 mense kos sonder jy dink nie eens daaraan as jy begin nie jy haal net uit en begin kos maak.”

Participant: “But now I get to doing normal work, doing the washing, tidy the house, cook food, it often do not divert my thoughts because you still sit and think. Often I cook the food and so for how many people did you cook, it is way too much food, then I cook for 4 or 5 people without thinking when you start, you just take the food out and start cooking.”

He tried venturing out, making friends and getting involved.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Wat het jy al in jou lewe gedoen om met eensaamheid te cope?”

Interviewer: “What have you already done in your life to cope with loneliness?”

Deelnemer: “Ek het probeer om vriende te maak en uit te gaan en meer betrokke te raak by dinge.”

Participant: “I tried to make friends and to go out and to become more involved in things.”

He takes an active approach to his loneliness experience and puts in effort to ensure that he does not end up lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Dink jy daar is ‘n tyd in jou toekoms wat jy minder alleen gaan voel?”

Interviewer: “Do you think there is a time in your future that you will feel less lonely.”

Deelnemer: “Ek werk hard daaraan. Probeer regtig hard werk daaraan om dit nie te laat gebeur of toe te laat nie.”

Participant: “I am working hard on it. Really try to work hard on it to make sure it does not happen or not to allow it to happen.”

A reoccurring theme of withdrawal in the face of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Ok kom ons begin. Was daar al spesifieke tye of oomblikke in jou lewe wat jy bewus was van eensaamheid of wat jy eensaam gevoel het?”

Interviewer: "Ok let us start. Have there been specific times or moments in your life that you were aware of loneliness or that you felt lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Baie sulke tye gebeur veral na my vrou se dood ook. Dis die rekenaar aan te sit deur die verloop van gaan werk toe gaan huis toe gaan werk toe gaan huis toe gaan werk toe jy stel in niks belang nie. Ek het my op 'n stadium heeltemal onttrek van almal, en toe maar weer so stadig maar seker in die ding ingekom om weer met mense te kommunikeer en goed."

Participant: "Many such times happened especially also after my wife's death. Its starting the computer. Through the passage/progress of going to work...going home...going to work...going home ...going to workyou are not interested in anything. I have at some stage withdrawn myself completely from everybody, and then I came back surely but slowly into the procedure to communicate again with the people and stuff."

He experienced loneliness in the face of the loss of a loved one.

Wants to disconnect from others.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ok kom ons begin. Was daar al spesifieke tye of oomblikke in jou lewe wat jy bewus was van eensaamheid of wat jy eensaam gevoel het?"

Interviewer: "Ok let us start. Have there been specific times or moments in your life that you were aware of loneliness or that you felt lonely?"

Deelnemer: "En party dae irriteer dit my dan sit ek dit af. Dan wil ek niks van niemand weet of niks hoor of iets nie."

Participant: "And some days it irritates me and then I put it off. Then I don't want to know anything from anybody or hear anything or something."

Can also be irritating...withdrawal.

He expresses his feelings towards others as approaching them but if he feels rejected he withdraws himself completely. Isolating himself.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Jy al ooit eensaam gevoel in 'n verhouding met mense wat jy nie rêrig baie naby aan is nie?"

Interviewer: "You ever felt lonely in a relationship with people that are not that close to you?"

Deelnemer: "Jy weet ek sal eerlik vir jou sê ek sal een of twee keer na hulle toe gaan as ek nie gelukkig is nie onttrek ek heeltemal van hulle. En ek maak glad nie meer kontak nie en behou my afstand. Dis my 106ehavio antwoord en opinie, dis hoe ek voel, want dis wat ek gedoen het in die verlede."

Participant: "You know, I will. I will honestly say to you ..I will go once or twice to them.... When I am not happy I withdraw totally/completely from them. And I don't make contact anymore and keep my distance. That is my honest answer and opinion that is how I feel, because that is what I did in the past."

He expresses his feelings towards others as approaching them but if he feels rejected he withdraws himself completely. Isolating himself.

One can be lonely in relationship as well.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So jy het steeds eensaam gevoel te midde van die verhouding?"

Interviewer: "So you have still felt lonely in the midst of the relationship?"

Deelnemer: "Ek het nog steeds eensaam gevoel."

Participant: "I still felt lonely."

Important question as to exploring the nature of interpersonal relatedness and its relation to loneliness. The conversations and togetherness of people seems to bring relief at some points in time.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat is dit wat jy mis van mense as jy eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "What is it that you miss from people when you feel lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Ek mis partykeer die geselskap, die samehorigheid, en ander kere pla dit my glad nie."

Participant: "I sometimes miss the conversation, the comradery/togetherness, and sometimes nothing bothers me."

The conversations and togetherness of people seems to bring relief at some points in time.

He is not sure what to expect from others when he feels lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat verwag jy van ander mense hoe moet hulle jou hanteer wanneer jy eensaam is?"

Interviewer: "What do you expect of other people, how should they treat you when you are lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Dis vir my 'n moeilike vraag om te antwoord."

Participant: "That is a difficult question for me to answer."

Hypothesis may be that clinging on to her may ease feelings of loneliness where letting go may confront him with the loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar enige iets spesifiek in jou behandeling wat 107ehav op eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Is there anything specific in your treatment that focuses on loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Dis is nog maar net waarom ons gepraat het; is oor my vrou se dood wat ek probeer verwerk en nie verwerk kan kry nie."

Participant: "That is still only what we have discussed so far, is about my wife's death that I try to digest and cannot digest."

He relates the question of relief of loneliness directly to his experience of talking to a friend.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Was daar al 'n spesifieke verhouding in jou lewe wat jou eensaamheid verlig het of?"

Interviewer: "Has there ever been a specific relationship in your life that relieved you of the loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek het 'n goeie vriendin met wie ek baie kan praat."

Participant: "I have a close girl friend with whom I can talk a lot."

His relationship with the friend was experienced as a brother-sister relationship, thus reflecting the closeness he experienced.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Was daar al 'n spesifieke verhouding in jou lewe wat jou eensaamheid verlig het of?"

Interviewer: "Has there ever been a specific relationship in your life that relieved you of the loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Baie 'n broer suster verhouding baie het gedink daar gaan 'n permanente vaste verhouding tussen ons wees maar ons het 'n broer suster verhouding."

Participant: "Many...a brother sister relationship...many thought there is going to be a permanent fixed relationship between us but we have a brother sister relationship."

Relates that his mother experiences loneliness. She also withdraws herself when she feels lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Weet jy van spesifieke mense wat eensaamheid belewe in jou lewe?"

Interviewer: "Do you know about specific people in your life that experience loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek weet my ma is baie keer eensaam. Sy ontrek haar ook baie en probeer met haar eie gevoelens deel."

Participant: "I know my mother is often lonely. She withdraws herself often and try to cope with her own feelings."

Again not being able to talk to someone is related to experiences of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Weet jy van spesifieke mense wat eensaamheid belewe in jou lewe?"

Interviewer: "Do you know about specific people in your life that experience loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Rede daar niemand is met wie sy kan praat nie."

Participant: "Reason being that there is nobody with whom she can discuss it."

The need for relationship in conflict with loneliness feelings.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Waar pas eensaamheid in jou toekoms in? Sien jy dit as deel van jou toekoms en hoe?"

Interviewer: "Where does loneliness fit into your future? Do you see it as part of your future and how?"

Deelnemer: "...toekoms verder aangaan, alleny en om eerlik te wees om alleny verder deur die toekoms te gaan sonder dat dit my lewe werklik gaan beïnvloed nie."

Participant: "...future regard/concern further, alone and to be honest to go alone further through the future without it really influencing/affecting my life."

He can see himself going through life alone as he does not have the need for a relationship or intimate friendship.

He feels that he would have felt better if he could have talked to someone.

Onderhoudvoerder: Dink jy jy sal minder eensaam voel as jy praat oor jou ervaring van eensaamheid?

Interviewer: "Do you think you will feel less lonely if you talk about your experiencing of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Sal dalk minder, sal dalk beter voel soos ek se in die afgelope paar jare."

Participant: "Will be less may be, Will may be feel better as I say in the last few years."

He feels that he would have felt better if he could have talked to someone

Feels that making friends will make him feel less lonely. But in the same instance he is caution not to make bad friends. This points towards the possible toxic nature of interpersonal relationships and the risk involved to reach out and form relationships. This risk may also cause people not to venture into new relationships.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat dink jy hoe sal jy minder alleen laat voel? Wat moet gebeur?"

Interviewer: "What do you think, how will you feel less lonely? What must happen?"

Deelnemer: "Ek probeer nou meer positiewe uitkyk op die lewe kry. Dis vir my 'n fact wat bitter moeilik is. En meer vriende te maak maar mens is ook weer bang om verkeerde vriende te maak. Soos in die laaste tyd met my gebeur het, dit sit mens heeltemal af."

Participant: "I now try to get a more positive view on life. That is a fact that is pretty difficult for me. And to make more friends but one is also again scared to make the wrong friends. As happened to me in recent times, it puts one off completely."

He withdraws from others if he experiences that people are crowding his space.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat het jy al in jou lewe gedoen om met eensaamheid te cope?"

Interviewer: "What have you already done in your life to cope with loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "As dit vir my te crowded raak, dan onttrek ek my, of as hulle te veel aandring op jy moet nie elke Vrydag aand of elke."

Participant: "If it becomes too crowded for me, then I withdraw myself, of if they press/pursue/urge on you must not every Friday night or each."

He has a strong urge to get away from everybody and everyone. The withdrawal theme here repeats itself.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Laat dit jou dan meer eensaam voel? Daai gevoel van om 'n buitestaander te wees?"

Interviewer: "Does it make you feel lonelier then? That feeling of being an outsider?"

Deelnemer: "As ek net kan wegkom van als en almal en op my eie kan wees."

Participant: "That I can just get away of everything and everybody and can be on my own."

In being alone people reaching out to one can be irritating.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat doen jy gewoonlik as jy eensaam voel? Is daar spesifieke dinge wat jy doen?"

Interviewer: "What do you normally do when you feel lonely? Are there specific things that you do?"

Deelnemer: "Daar moenie kort kort iemand kom en vra hoe vorder jy nie hoe doen jy nie; wat is dit, dit kan ek nie hanteer nie."

Participant: "There must not be somebody continually/frequently come asking how I am progressing, how you do, what is that, that I cannot handle."

Finds it annoying when people disturbs his alone time.

A wish to share his experiences with others and the lack of a somebody to share it with makes him feel more lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So herinner dit jou soms aan die feit dat jy eensaam is?"

Interviewer: "So does that remind you sometimes of the fact that you are lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Baie keer. Herinner my aan die feit ek die feit dat ek eensaam is; veral as jy dis 'n feit as jy sit en TV kyk of dvd en kyk of iets van daai aard dan wens jy daar was iemand wat dit saam met jou kon gedeel het, saam daaroor gepraat het en dinge uitgewerk het. So ek is nie 'n baie groot TV aanhanger of iets nie. Sal eerder sit en musiek luister. En as dit my begin irriteer dan sit ek dit af."

Participant: "Many times. Reminds me of the fact ...I...the fact that I am lonely, especially if you...it is a fact if you sit and watch TV or DVD and watch or something of that kind, then you wish there was somebody that could share it with you, could discuss it with you and solve things. Therefore I am not a very keen TV fan or something. Will rather sit and listen to music. And if that starts irritating me I will put that off as well."

Family disconnectedness associated with loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat het jou laat eensaam voel in daai tyd?"

Interviewer: "What made you feel lonely in that time?"

Deelnemer: "Ek dink dis maar die gemis van my vrou en ja die hele kwessie daarom date ek basies my gesin verloor het met haar dood."

Participant: "I think it is the void left by my wife and yes the whole question about that I basically lost my family with her death."

Loss of his wife made him lonely...he lost more than his wife with her passing. Loss of one may lead to loss of others.

Absolutely no one to talk to as a definition of loneliness. Talking here seems to be the way of relating...meaningfully.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n verskil tussen om eensaam te wees en om alleen te wees?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is difference between being lonely and to be alone?"

Deelnemer: "Maar om absoluut niemand te hê om mee te praat nie, of elke dag dieselfde mense te sien, en hulle wil nie elke keer na jou stories luister nie; maak jou naderhand eensaam."

Participant: "But to have absolutely nobody to talk to, or to see the same people every day, and they don't want to listen to your stories every time, make you lonely in the end."

We can bring the *mitwelt* in here... when feeling lonely the reaction may be that in the With-world one does not want to be with-the-world. Not-being-with.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Watse gevoelens assosieer jy met eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "What feelings do you associate with loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Partykeer gee jy praat met jouself en jy dink jy praat met 'n volgende persoon alhoewel jy met jou self praat daar is geen antwoord terug op nie en dan raak mens nogal gefrustreer en geïrriteer omdat jy nie terugvoering kry nie. Dan besef jy eers jy is alleen en eensaam en as ek eensaam raak wil ek werklik niks met iemand te doen hê nie."

Participant: "Sometimes you give....talk to yourself and think you are talking to the next person, although you are talking to yourself...there is no answer back on it and then you become quite frustrated and irritated because you don't any feedback. Then only do you recognise that you are alone and lonely and when I become lonely I really don't want anything to do with anybody else."

Often rejected when reaching out.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is eensaamheid iets wat jy as negatief of sleg ervaar?"

Interviewer: "Is the loneliness something that you experience as negative or bad?"

Deelnemer: "Probeer jy daaroor praat dan sê die mense sommer ons raak nou moeg vir jou stories, ons raak moeg vir jou stories. Ek het nou al geleer hou dinge vir jouself, werk dit maar self uit, en dis nie almal wat verstaan waardeur mens gaan nie."

Participant: "When you try to discuss that the people just say we are getting tired of your stories now, getting tired of your stories. I have now already learnt .. keep things to yourself, work it out by yourself, and it is not everybody that understands what one is going through."

He experiences rejection when he wants to talk about his feelings of loneliness.

Medication can possibly ease feelings of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Nog op die behandeling is daar 'n verhouding tussen die medikasie en eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Still on the treatment, is there a relationship between the medication and loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek voel al baie beter. Voel al baie beter op die behandeling. Dis net ek het nou gister vir die psigiater gevra om my slaappille aan te pas, want ek het nog baie min geslaap in die nag, en ek voel dit begin te help."

Participant: "I feel much better. Feel much better on the treatment. It is just, I asked the psychiatrist yesterday to adjust my sleeping pills, because I have slept very little during the night, and I feel it is starting to help."

Medication makes a difference in his feeling state.

A possible theme emerges of the hospital context giving the opportunity for interpersonal connectedness different than in the outside world.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Maak dit 'n verskil in jou belewenis van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Does it make a difference to your experiencing of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek sal sê dit doen. Dit het al. Ek meen as ek vat toe ek ingekom het; die eerste 3 dae ek was ek heeltemal op my eie, basies met niemand gekommunikeer nie, net more; eetsaal, nag, daai tipe dinge; waar ek nou actually gaan sit in 'n groep en gesels en self gaan sit en speletjies speel saam met van die pasiënte en personeel wat ek glad nie aan die begin nie gedoen het nie."

Participant: "I would say it does. It has. I mean if I take when I came in, the first 3 days, I was completely on my own, basically communicated with no-one, just saying morning in the dining hall, night, those type of things, where I would now actually go and sit in a group and chat and go and sit and play games with some of the patients and personnel that I did not do at all in the beginning."

Initial reaction of withdrawal but later he connected fellow patients and staff.

Losing interest in life is a reoccurring theme with him.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n sekere dimensie aan jou geestelikheid of spiritualiteit wat 'n verband hou met eensaamheid en jou belewenis van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is a certain dimension to your spirituality that has a relationship with your loneliness and your experiencing of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Goed maar op die oomblik behoort ek nie aan 'n kerk nie en ek kan eerlik sê dinge het my begin irriteer op 'n stadium; en ek het net nie meer belanggestel om deel te hê aan enige iets nie."

Participant: "Good but at the moment I don't belong to a church and I can honestly say things started to irritate me at some stage, and I was just not interested anymore to have a part in anything anything."

He lost interest in religious activities.

Staff at the hospital is experienced as approachable.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar sekere ervaring aangaande eensaamheid wat jy beleef in verhouding tot die multidissiplinêre span; die psigiaters, die sielkundiges, maatskaplike werkers en so aan?"

Interviewer: "Are there certain experiences of loneliness that you experienced in relation to the multidisciplinary team, the psychiatrists, the psychologists, social workers and so forth?"

Deelnemer: "Glad nie. Ek voel werklik openlik teenoor almal; ek voel ek kan met enige iemand gaan praat wanneer ek dit nodig het. Ek meen ek kan na die personeel, my sisters toe gaan en ek kan vra weet ek julle allenig sien en ek kan dinge uitpraat met hulle wat ek nooit voorheen kon doen nie."

Participant: "Not at all. I feel really open to everybody, I feel I can go talk to anybody when it is necessary. I mean I can go to the personnel, my sisters and I can ask to see them alone and I can discuss things with them that I could never do before."

He does not feel lonely in relation to the staff. He feels he can approach them and talk about his feelings.

At times he feels that the medication does not change or help the way he feels.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy eensaamheid speel 'n rol in jou psigiatriese toestand?"

Interviewer: "Do you think the loneliness plays a role in your psychiatric condition?"

Deelnemer: "Jy kan tog so dink ja. Daar kom party dae wat ek heeltemal soos die Engelse se rock bottom is ek voel die medikasie help nie eers nie. Soos Sondag oggend wat ek jou gesms het ek was die hele dag in 'n toestand gewees, ek het die heel dag gehuil en ten spyte van die medikasie het ek niks beter gevoel nie."

Participant: "You can think that yes. There are some days that I am totally like the English say rock bottom, I feel the medication does not even help. Like Sunday morning that I SMS'd you, I was the whole day in a state, I cried the whole day and in spite of the medication I did not feel any better."

Feels there is a relation between his psychiatric condition and loneliness experience. At times he feels that the medication does not change or help the way he feels.

Loneliness-loss of interest-depression.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe sal jy die gevoel van eensaamheid beskryf? Hoe voel dit om eensaam te wees?"

Interviewer: "How will you describe the feeling of loneliness? How does it feel to be lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Soos ek sê dit draai net om werk toe huis toe werk toe en huis toe en met rukke sal jy by die huis kom en party aande sê jy ag weet jy ek het nie lus vir die aand nie ek maak nie eens kos nie."

Participant: "As I say, it just revolves around work and then to home, then to work and to home and with times you will arrive at home and some evenings you say ahh, do you know I don't feel like the evening, I don't even cook food."

Loss of interest in life in reaction to loneliness.

4.3. Participant 3

Creativity and being in your own universe as it relates to loneliness.

The participant responds to a question on positive aspects of loneliness and states that indeed in relation to creativity he experiences it as positive.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy al ooit in jou belewenis van eensaamheid 'n positiewe ervaring van eensaamheid gehad? Spesifiek eensaamheid en nie noodwendig net om alleen te wees nie."

Interviewer: "Have you ever had an experience of loneliness that was a positive experience of loneliness? Specifically loneliness and not just to be alone."

Deelnemer 3: "Ja dis wat ek het met kreatiwiteit, dank an ek doen wat ek wil en dan is ek in my eie universe."

Participant 3: "Yes that is what I have with creativity, then I can do what I want and then I am in my own universe."

He links his experience of loneliness with creativity and being in his own universe. Fantasy is connected to creativity in the way of creating a fantasy world where one can be all omnipotent and in control. A withdrawal into fantasy can also be a way to deal with loneliness or escape from loneliness. Creativity often shows itself in fantasy where one is less bound by ordinary limitations found in reality.

Craving being alone as it relates to creativity.

Participant three expresses that he sometimes craves being alone. The use of the word crave emphasizes the urgency and intensity of his experience of wanting to be alone.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is die eensaamheid 'n gevoel wat jy noodwendig assosieer as 'n slegte gevoel of 'n negatiewe gevoel?"

Interviewer: "Is loneliness a feeling that you specifically associate with a bad or a negative feeling?"

Deelnemer 3: "Soos ek sê daar is pros en cons. So, ja, kreatief wil ek, partykeer crave ek dit, dit raak te veel om tussen crowds te wees ek hou nie daarvan nie, ek dink ek het te gewoon geraak om op my eie te wees"

Participant: "As I say there are pro's and con's. So yes, creatively I want, sometimes I even crave it, it becomes too much to be in a crowd I don't like it, I think I have become too used to being on my own."

Both positive and negative aspects of loneliness, when being creative he often craves being alone. Here being alone can be seen as having a different quality to experiencing loneliness. Being alone, outside of the crowd leaves some room to be creative. The participant also expresses that he has become used to being alone, thus in a way decreasing the need for interpersonal contact.

Creativity and the expression of feelings of loneliness through stories.

Participant three describes how he creatively expresses his own feelings of loneliness through writing stories.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wanneer jy droom, in jou droom wêreld is daar ooit temas van eensaamheid? In jou dagdrome as jy so sit en..."

Interviewer: "When dreaming, is there ever themes of loneliness in your dream world? In your day dreams when you sit and..."

Deelnemer 3: "...ek is 'n skrywer, ek hou daarvan om kreatief te wees so ja ek skryf nogal die lonely hero tipe stories."

Participant 3: "I am a writer, I like to be creative therefore I do write the lonely hero type stories."

This participant associates being a writer with being creative and writing the lonely hero type stories. Myths and stories of lonely heroes abound in many cultures. These stories reflect the quest of the lonely hero, usually on a special quest to somehow gain admiration from someone specific or the community. In these stories the quest is often to find someone to love and thereby conquer loneliness. Thus loneliness can drive the hero, but it can also overcome the hero if he fails in his quest.

Denial in the face of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As jy partykeer drome het; het jy al ooit gedroom waar daar temas van eensaamheid is? Waar jy eensaam voel in jou drome?"

Interviewer: "If you sometimes dream, have you ever dreamt about themes of loneliness? Where you feel lonely in your dreams?"

Deelnemer: "En dit gebeur, maar nou gebeur dit nie meer nie, maar in die verlede het dit baie gebeur dat basies jy staan op; jy is gewoon jy maak vir die ander persoon koffie of tee en jy vat dit kamer toe en as jy in die kamer kom besef jy hoor hierso maar ek is eintlik allendig?"

Participant: "And it happens, but now it does not happen anymore, but in the past it happened often that basically you get up, you are normal, you make coffee for the other person or tea and you take it to the room and when you get into the room you realise, listen here, but actually I am alone?"

The creative dimension of loneliness.

Participant 3 makes associations between liking to be on his own, creativity and space as being creative.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sou jy eerder sê jy het spesifieke tydperk of is dit amper 'n ervaring (loneliness) wat deurlopend is?"

Interviewer: "Would you rather say that you have a specific time or is it almost an experience (loneliness) that was continuous?"

Deelnemer 3: "...ek hou ook baie daarvan om op my eie te wees soos die lone cowboy; en kreatief op 'n kreatiewe manier is; het ek my space nodig en het loneliness nodig as 'n creator."

Participant 3: "... I also enjoy being on my own similar to the lone cowboy, and (to be) creative in a creative manner, I need my space and need loneliness as a creator."

He refers to the need for loneliness as a creator and links it to his creativity. He can be lonely in a creative way. Also loneliness is pointed out as a necessary ingredient for creativity. From the loneliness and nothingness something is created.

Escape into fantasy in the face of loneliness.

Participant 3 describes places he associates with loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar sekere plekke waar jy, ja plekke waar jy gaan in jou gedagtes?"

Interviewer: "Are there certain places where you... yes places where you were you go in your thoughts?"

Deelnemer 3: "Ja, dis maar altyd die lonely planets die islands maar ek hou van islands dis mooi daar, en donkerte ek was baie daar ek hou van die aande eks baie nocturnal, donkerte in sekere opsigte is swimming in the void, jy kan alleen voel maar aan die ander kant you have got nothing to lose you are free. Ek weet nie dis moeilik ek sou se die karoo, dit voel baie lonely daar, dis scary daar."

Participant 3: "Yes, it is always the lonely planets the islands but I love the islands It is beautiful there, and darkness I was there a lot I like the evenings I am very nocturnal, darkness in a certain way is swimming in the void, you can feel lonely but on the other hand you have got nothing to lose you are free. I don't know it is difficult I would say the karoo, it feels very lonely there, it is scary there."

The participant goes to lonely planets in his thoughts. He prefers nights and refers to the darkness as a beautiful place. He sees himself as nocturnal. He states that on the one hand when experiencing loneliness you have nothing to lose so you are free. He also refers to the Karoo as a particularly lonely place, and adds that it is scary. This brings up the duality of the loneliness experience; it is both beautiful and scary.

Entering into fantasy relationships to ease feelings of loneliness.

Fantasies not only include places but also relationships. This serves as an attempt to create another person to ease loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar 'n sekere impak of sekere verhouding in fantasie tydens jou eie belewenis van eensaamheid? Is jy nou in 'n seksuele verhouding of nie?"

Interviewer: "Is there a certain impact or certain relationship in fantasy during your experience of loneliness? Are you in a sexual relationship or not?"

Deelnemer 3: "... porn op die internet, ja dan voel jy maxima dory jy leef jou fantasies uit dis 'n goeie exercise vir jou imagination en sulke goed. Ja jy dink dan jy is maar addicted op 'n sekere manier, jy kan nogals addicted raak daaraan, addicted, maar omdat jy lonely is dan wil jy 'n relationship hê met hierdie fantasy."

Participant 3: "...porn on the internet, yes then you feel maxima dory, you live out your fantasies it is a nice exercise for your imagination and such things. Yes you then think you are addicted in a certain way, you can become addicted to it, addicted, and then you are, but because you are lonely you want a relationship with the fantasy."

The participant longs for a soulmate but the lack of one leads him to view pornography and live out his fantasies in that way. The loneliness drives him to have a relationship with a fantasy person. He employs his imagination to colour in his fantasies. This may point in a way to an underlying driving force behind pornography. The prevalence of pornography may be fuelled by feelings of loneliness and a longing for intimacy unfulfilled in reality but somehow soothed by pornography.

Fantasy role playing can be a way to cope with loneliness, especially when watching movies.

The participant engages in fantasy role playing in movies. He states that:

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar dinge in jou omgewing wat jou meer of minder eensaam laat voel?"

Interviewer: "Are there things in your environment that makes you feel more or less lonely?"

Deelnemer 3: "... en ja movies te kyk ek dink hoekom movies so popular is jy kan jouself in 'n ander wêreld inleef, vergeet wie jy is, vir 'n ruk jouself impartake in 'n ander rol, 'n ander rol te speel, iemand anders te wees wat vriende het of wat jou kan verstaan soos waar jy vandaan kom. So ja, ek dink movies en om musiek te luister dis maar wat ek doen."

Participant 3: "...and yes to watch movies I think the reason why movies are that popular you can let yourself into a different world, forget who you are for a time. You can partake in a different role, play another role, be somebody else that has friends or who can understand you, know where you come from. So yes, I think movies and to listen to music, that is what I do."

The participant watches movies and feels that he can live himself into another part or role in a movie, one in which he feels understood and has friends. He refers to the need to have friends and be

understood. This need becomes apparent when he watches movies, in fantasy he then imagines himself in the movies and thereby, at least for a moment satisfies his needs.

The lack of asocial life makes the participant feel like an outcast and leads to feeling lonely

Participant 3 makes the link between having no social life, being an outcast and loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy al ooit in jou lewe gepraat oor jou ervaring van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Have you ever in your life spoke about your experience of loneliness?"

Deelnemer 3: "...geen sosial interaction nie, en geen social life dan voel ek abnormal, rejection en soos 'n outcast, which makes it worse."

Participant 3: "...no social interaction, and no social life, then I feel abnormal, rejection and like an outcast, which makes it worse."

He experiences himself as having no social life and equates this to being an outcast. This experience illustrates how perceived interpersonal rejection contributes to feelings of loneliness.

Experience of rejection can contribute to feelings of loneliness.

Participant 3 immediately associates loneliness with rejection that he has experienced in his life.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So miskien kan ons afskop met 'n vraag om die gedagtes so bietjie te stimuleer oor eensaamheid. As jy so terugkyk oor jou lewe was daar spesifieke tyd of 'n insident of 'n periode waar jy baie eensaam gevoel het, en indien daar was, kan jy my dalk bietjie meer vertel daarvan: Hoe was jou ervaring gewees"

Interviewer: "So maybe we can kick-off with a question about loneliness to stimulate your thoughts a bit. If you look back on your life; was there a specific time or incident or a period of time in which you felt very lonely and if so can you tell me about it? What was your experience like?"

Deelnemer 3: "Baie rejection en ja kleuterskool rejection, daar ook maar gehad; einde van laerskool het ek niks vriende gehad nie; altyd vat mens dit maar persoonlik as daar iets fout is met jou maar dis omdat jy eintlik van 'n ander agtergrond afkom."

Participant 3: "Lots of rejection and yes, rejection in kindergarden as well, end of primary school I had no friends, one takes all this personally like there is something wrong with you but it is actually because you come from a different background."

The participant experienced rejection from other people from a very young age. The end result was having no friends by the end of primary school. He also refers to being from a different background. Thus being different can lead to rejection and loneliness.

Loneliness springs from non acceptance in relationship

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sal jy omgee om dit dalk vir my te lees? (Excerpt from thoughts on loneliness that the participant wrote down.)"

Interviewer: "Will you mind reading it to me? (Excerpt from thoughts on loneliness that the participant wrote down)."

Deelnemer 3: "There is no sense of belonging if you are not part of something. It makes you think or believe you are not loveable nothing to love about you. Lonely in relationships anyway it's all about them."

Participant 3: "There is no sense of belonging if you are not part of something. It makes you think or believe you are not loveable nothing to love about you. Lonely in relationships anyway it's all about them."

Feeling that he does not belong also makes the participant feels like he is unloveable. He expressess the feeling that ineventably he will be alone in relationship because it is all about the other person at the end of the day.

Being authentic.

Participant 3 expressess that being authentic can often lead to interpersonal rejection that leaves one lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ons moet bietjie gesels oor verhoudings met mense. Hoe ervaar jy eensaamheid in interpersoonlike verhoudings?"

Interviewer: "We have to talk about relationships with people. How do you experience loneliness in interpersonal relationships?"

Deelnemer 3: "I don't want to sell my soul according to a social standard to represent myself according to celebrity status or some kind of a way of being that is not what I am comfortable with, I just want to express myself in the moment freely."

Participant 3: "I don't want to sell my soul according to a social standard to represent myself according to celebrity status or some kind of a way of being that is not what I am comfortable with I just want to express myself in the moment freely."

The theme of being authentic emerges here. Often being authentic can lead to interpersonal rejection that can leave one lonely. He refers here to a tension he experiences between conforming to social expectations and being himself. He wants to express himself in the moment, freely.

Withdrawing himself in reaction to loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sou jy eerder sê jy het spesifieke tydperke van eensaamheid of is dit amper 'n ervaring wat deurlopend is?"

Interviewer: "Would you rather say that you have specific times that you are lonely or is it an ongoing experience?"

Deelnemer 3: "Elke move wat jy maak in 'n interaction met mense is 'n fout op die einde. It turns out to be wrong dan trek jy nog meer terug en jy word nog meer introverted en seclude jousef so ek sien myself basically as a recluse"

Participant 3: "Every move that you make in the interaction with people is a mistake in the end it turns out to be wrong then you withdraw even further and you become more introverted and you seclude yourself more. Therefore I basically see myself as a recluse."

The participant's negative outcome in relationships leads him to withdraw himself from others. He becomes introverted and secludes himself. He then states how he incorporates this feeling into his identity and sees himself as a recluse. It is interesting to note here that the reaction to interpersonal rejection is withdrawal. It seems then that rejection leads to an increased sense of loneliness.

The future does present him with loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As jy dink aan jou toekoms feature eensaamheid enigsins in jou toekoms?"

Interviewer: "If you think about your future does loneliness feature in it at all?"

Deelnemer: "Ja, dit voel partykeer of ek hierdie lonely cowboy gaan wees wat so alleen in die sunset gaan ingaan"

Participant: "Yes, it feels sometimes if I am going to be this lonely cowboy who is going to ride alone into the sunset"

He sees himself being lonely in the future.

Being with people of different generations leaves one feeling alone because of the generation gap.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy ooit in 'n verhouding met mense wat naby jou is soos familie eensaam gevoel?"

Interviewer: "Have you ever in a relationship with people who are close to you for instance family felt lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Ja veral in die tienertydperk toe my pa, hy was baie ouer gewees hy was oorlede op 72 so hy was in sy sestigs of sewentigs, in my tienerjare en ja toe was daai hele generation gap so waar ek sekere norme en waardes gehad het wat nie heeltemal ooreenstem nie ja en dan kan jy nie kommunikeer met hulle nie."

Participant: "Yes especially in my teens since my dad was much older he died when he was 72 therefore he was in his sixties or seventies, during my teens and yes there was a big

generation gap and where I had certain norms and values that did not correlate with theirs, yes and then you could not communicate with them.”

He found it difficult to communicate to his parents because of a generation gap.

Drugs alter the perception of time.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Hoe ervaar jy tyd wanneer jy eensaam voel?”

Interviewer: “How do you experience time when you feel lonely?”

Deelnemer: “Ja ek toe ek LSD gedoen het, dit was weird ek was nogals quite into time travel toe het ek tyd, dit het tyd laat snaaks beweeg baie stretch of time.”

Participant: “Yes when I did LSD it was weird I was quite into time travel, it made time move in a funny way, stretch of time.”

He experienced a disturbance in his experience of time when he used LSD.

Weekends can be particularly lonely times.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Hoe ervaar jy hierdie plekke waar jy eensaam voel? Hoe voel die plek vir jou as jy eensaam raak?”

Interviewer: “How do you experience these places where you feel lonely? How do you experience the place when you feel lonely?”

Deelnemer: “Naweke is baie lonely, ja ek dink as mens wil uitgaan en jy het niemand en jou vriende is te besig of hulle het hulle eie dinge wat hulle besig is om te doen en jy het nie vriende en niemand wat jou bel nie jou foon is daar basically daar om vir my tyd te gee.”

Participant: “Weekends are very very lonely yes I think if one wants to go out and you have nobody and your friends are too busy or they have their own stuff that keeps them busy and you haven't got friends and nobody that phones you your phone is basically there to display the time.”

He experiences weekends as particularly lonely times.

Standing alone as metaphor for loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: “So miskien kan ons afskop met 'n vraag om die gedagtes so bietjie te stimuleer oor eensaamheid. As jy so terugkyk oor jou lewe was daar spesifieke tyd of 'n insident of 'n periode waar jy baie eensaam gevoel het, en indien daar was kan jy my dalk bietjie meer vertel daarvan. Wat jou ervaring was.”

Interviewer: “So maybe we can kick off with a question to stimulate the thoughts a little about loneliness. If you look back on your life was there a specific time or incident or a period of time in which you felt very lonely, and if there was can you tell me a bit more about it?”

Deelnemer: "Dis hoekom ek so lonely is as jy by daai punt wil uitkom. Ja dis maar net, you stand alone ek dink dis hoe ek dit ultimately hoe ek die hele ding sou opsom, you stand alone; feeling dat jy your on your own there is nobody to rely on except the voices in your head."

Participant: "That is why I am so lonely if you want to get to that point. Yes it is just you stand alone, I think that is how I ultimately, how I would summarise the whole thing that you stand alone feeling that you are on your own there is nobody to rely on except the voices in your head."

Loneliness "like winter" a "barren landscape" and like being "left alone on the planet". Three metaphors to describe the feeling of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe voel dit vir jou wanneer jy alleen is? Hoe voel daai eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "How does it feel to you when you are alone? How do you experience that loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek voel soos die winter jy is in 'n barren landscape voel asof jy alleen gelos is op die planeet. They left you here to your own devices."

Participant: "I feel like the winter you are in a barren landscape feels as if you were left alone on the planet. They left you here to your own devices."

Loneliness is "like winter" a "barren landscape" or like being "left alone on the planet" as three metaphors to describe the feeling of loneliness.

Associates loneliness with a prison where you are forced to be alone with your own thoughts.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar spesifieke goed wat jy doen as jy eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "Are there specific things that you do when you are lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Met loneliness you are sort of forced to be with your own thoughts en ek dink dis hoekom tronke daar is om mense daar dieper dink oor wat hulle gedoen het."

Participant: "With loneliness you are sort of forced to be with your own thoughts and I think that is why jails are there because people there think deeper about what they have done."

The participant associates loneliness with a prison where you are forced to be alone with your own thoughts.

Standing Alone

Onderhoudvoerder: "So voel jy dat dit op daai manier bydra tot die misverstand?"

Interviewer: So do you feel that it contributes in that way to the misunderstanding?"

Deelnemer: "Ja dis maar weer eens standing alone maar ek weet nie wat dit eintlik te doen het met die pille nie pille is maar net deel van my kondisie deel van die stigma deel van die hele profile van my kondisie, situasie."

Participant: "Yes it is once again standing alone but I do not know what it has to do with the pills, pills are just part of my condition part of the stigma part of the whole profile of my condition, situation"

He again emphasizes the he is "standing alone".

Feeling cold associated with loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar sekere goed wat jy met jou liggaam doen as jy eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "Are there certain things that you do to your body when you feel lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Nogal weird, maar ja dan is ek bang om op te staan en iets anders te gaan doen ek voel koud dis asof elke action seer maak."

Participant: "Quite weird but yes then I am scared to get up and do to something else I feel cold as if each action hurts."

He associates feeling cold with the feeling of loneliness.

Being an outcast or outsider.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sou jy eerder sê jy het 'n spesifieke tydperk van eensaamheid of is dit amper 'n ervaring wat deurlopend is?"

Interviewer: "Would you rather say you had a specific time span of loneliness or is it almost an experience that is continuous?"

Deelnemer: "Dis 'n ander faktor dat ek nie die geld het daarvoor nie en omdat ek ook nie goed met mense oor die weg kom nie is ek baie bang vir base en vir werksomstandighede. So dit het 'n groot effek, jy is alienated, jy is 'n alien, ek hou van aliens ek hou van science fiction."

Participant: "It is another factor that I did not have money for that and because I did not get on well with people I am very afraid of bosses and work situations. Therefore, it has a huge effect in total, you are alienated, you are an alien, I like aliens I like science fiction."

Because of this he associates himself with aliens and being an outsider.

The participant did engage with the material prior to the interview.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ek dink die belangrike ding is daar is nie reg of verkeerde antwoorde nie. Wat vir my van belang is dat ek jou ervaring van eensaamheid verstaan."

Interviewer: "I think the important thing is that there are not correct or incorrect answers. What is important to me is to understand your experience of loneliness."

Deelnemer: "Is ja. Ek hou daarvan hoe Barry dit ook vir my gestel het "how I experience it."

Participant: "Is true. I like it how Barry has also put it to me "how I experience it."

This participant communicated with other participants in the study.

Loneliness and being the only child.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So miskien kan ons afskop met 'n vraag om die gedagtes so bietjie te stimuleer oor eensaamheid. As jy so terugkyk oor jou lewe was daar spesifieke tyd of 'n insident of 'n periode waar jy baie eensaam gevoel het, en indien daar was kan jy my dalk bietjie meer vertel daarvan. Wat jou ervaring was."

Interviewer: "So maybe we may kick off with a question about loneliness to stimulate the thoughts a bit. If you look back on your life was there a specific time or incident or period when you felt very lonely, and if so will you tell us a bit more about it? What is your experience?"

Deelnemer: "Ek dink omtrent in elke chapter van my lewe is daar die tema van eensaamheid ek bedoel ek is die enige kind, ek het 'n half broer en half suster maar hulle is baie ouer as ek maar ja ek is die enigste kind so ek moes van kleins af al maar myself entertain gewoonnd daaraan om in my eie space te wees."

Participant: "I think in about every chapter of my life the theme of loneliness exists I mean I am the only child, I have a half-brother and half-sister but they are much older than I am but yes I am an only child and since I was small I had to entertain myself used to being in my own space."

Points to the presence of loneliness feelings throughout his life. Interestingly he divides his life into chapters. Loneliness as experienced by the only child.

Alienatio and not feeling apart or being different relates to loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So miskien kan ons afskop met 'n vraag om die gedagtes so bietjie te stimuleer oor eensaamheid. As jy so terugkyk oor jou lewe was daar spesifieke tyd of 'n insident of 'n periode waar jy baie eensaam gevoel het, en indien daar was kan jy my dalk bietjie meer vertel daarvan. Wat jou ervaring was."

Interviewer: So maybe we may kick off with a question to stimulate or thoughts about loneliness a bit. If you look back on your life was there a specific time or incident or period when you felt very lonely, and if so will you tell us a bit more about it? What is your experience?"

Deelnemer: "Ja maar daar was altyd daai alienation gevoel jy jy is weird en dit maar jy weet ek het altyd daarvan gehou om weird te wees ek hou daarvan om different te wees maar omdat ek daai besluit gemaak het word mens maar meer op neergekyk en gereject so daar is maar daai; hoe sal ek sê prejudice teenoor 'n mens en so aan."

Participant: "Yes but there was always that alienation feeling you you are weird and that but you know I have always liked it to be weird I like it to be different but because I took that decision one is looked down upon and rejected therefore there is that, how shall I say prejudiced against one and so forth."

Introduces a new dimension in his experience of loneliness and calls it alienation.

Being lonely as non existence.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sal jy omgee om dit dalk vir my te lees?"

Interviewer: "Will it bother you to read it to me?"

Deelnemer: "Your not being able you dont have access to living your dreams You have nothing to look forward to no girl no motivation It is as if having never existed in the first place your not remebered not parr of hisotry not part of humanity your not able to experience share beautiful moments according to interactions otgher things."

Participant: "You're not being able you don't have access to living your dreams You have nothing to look forward to no girl no motivation It is as if having never existed in the first place you're not remembered not part of history not part of humanity you're not able to experience share beautiful moments according to interactions other things."

Being lonely is like never having existed in the first place.

Loneliness as abandonment.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sal jy omgee om dit dalk vir my te lees?"

Interviewer: "Will you read it to me?"

Deelnemer: "Left alone as the last person on the planet."

Participant: "Left alone as the last person on the planet."

He experiences loneliness as a type of abandonment.

Songs associated with loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sal jy omgee om dit dalk vir my te lees?"

Interviewer: "Will it bother you to read it to me?"

Deelnemer: "Ek het ook 'n CD gehad van placebo ek het die cd my favourite band en sy die cd se naam is dis ook 'n title track dis "Without you I'm nothing." op daai toe ek in std 7 was het ek daai cd gekry 1989 en dis nogal hoe ek gevoel het daai tyd."

Participant: "I have also had a CD from placebo with my favourite band on and the CD's name is also the title track's name namely "Without you I am nothing" on that CD. When I was in standard 7 I got that CD in 1989 and at that stage that is how I felt."

He recalls a song from his favourite band at a time called "Without you I am nothing." This song title seems to suggest that without a certain meaningful interpersonal relationship a person is nothing, thus loneliness can be equalled to non-being.

Loneliness can also be a question of you are afraid to be yourself.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy die troeteldiere kan 'n verskil maak in jou belewenis van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you think pets can make a difference in your experiencing of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Loneliness kan ook ek dink nou daaraan dit kan ook seclusion is van you are afraid to be yourself en daarom vorm dit loneliness want jy you don't open up to interact to connect en daarom sort of dwindle jy jouself into loneliness en dis daai disconnection feeling disconnected from the universe."

Participant: "Loneliness can also, I am thinking about it now, it can also be seclusion like you are afraid to be yourself and therefore it becomes loneliness because you don't open up to interact to connect and therefore you sort of dwindle yourself into loneliness and that is that disconnection feeling, disconnected from the universe."

Loneliness can also be a question of you are afraid to be yourself.

Inauthentic being as it relates to loneliness.

Inauthentic being = Loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy die troeteldiere kan 'n verskil maak in jou belewenis van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you think pets can make a difference in your experiencing of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Van you are afraid to be yourself en daarom vorm dit loneliness."

Participant: "Of you are afraid to be yourself and therefore it becomes loneliness."

Loneliness = disconnectedness in all spheres of existence.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy die troeteldiere kan 'n verskil maak in jou belewenis van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you think pets can make a difference in your experiencing of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "En daarom sort of dwindle jy jousef into loneliness en dis daai disconnection feeling disconnected from the universe, God everybody else disconnected from your lie around you so ja met animals en sulke goed kan jy 'n connection opbou ek weet nie ek sal."

Participant: "And therefore you sort of dwindle yourself into loneliness and that is that disconnection feeling, disconnected from the universe, God everybody else disconnected from your lie around you so yes with animals and that type of thing you can build a connection I don't know I will."

Loneliness is in essence disconnectedness in all spheres of existence.

Lack of openness leads to loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy die troeteldiere kan 'n verskil maak in jou belewenis van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you think pets can make a difference in your experiencing of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Gaan oor geld breeding process of dit gaan nie meer rerig oor die ander persoon nie dis net dis hoekom ek dink loneliness ontstaan want daar is nie daai openness nie en loneiness kan ook ek dink nou daaraan dit kan ook seclusion is van."

Participant: "Is about geld/money breeding process or it is not really about another person, it is just, that is why I think loneliness happens because there is not that openness and loneliness can also , I am thinking about it now, is can also be seclusion."

He believes that loneliness exists because there is a lack of openness.

Seen pets as connections in the past.

Onderhoudvoerder: "En noem nou dat jy hou van die natuur het jy met troteldiere wat n verskil maak in jou eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "I mention now that you like nature and pets that can make a difference in your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Nee ongelukkig nie dit ook dis ook 'n baie sadness date ek al my pets verloor het op die stdium toe ons getrek het van die huis na 'n kompleks het my ma gese ons kan nie ek woul nog altyd vandat ek my laaste hondjie verloor het toe ek in standad 2 was in 12000 1993 laas toe ek my laasste hondjie verloor het wat my vriend was het ek ja het ek nooit werp ets gehad nie so my ma het gese ons kan nie die erf is te klein ons het te veel hartseer beleef met diere so ja ek sou graag dis hoekom ek 'n familie wil he met die nice groot lawn animals ja."

Participant: "No unfortunately not, it is also a big sadness that I lost all my petsat the stage when we moved from the house to a complex my mother said we cannot , I always wanted since I lost my last dog when I was in standerd 2 in 2000.1993 last when I lost my last dog that was my friend I have yes have I never again had anything and my mother said we cannot, the stand is too small, we have had too much heart sore with pets so yes I would have liked to that is why I would like to have a family with the nice big lawn animals yes."

He has sad memories associated with pets. He has had close relations to pets in the past but due to the fact that the moved house he had to give up his pets.

An advantage of this way of being is that it makes you more open to view life differently and gives you the opportunity to ask deeper questions

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sou jy eerder sê jy het spesifieke tydperk is dit amper 'n ervaring wat deurlopend is?"

Interviewer: "Would you rather say that you had in a specific time an experience that was continuous?"

Deelnemer: "So jy weet dis die irony daarvan, jy verstaan dan ander goed baie beter en jy en dit maak jou eintlik baie meer oop vir 'n ander manier na die lewe te kyk dit laat jou eintlik dis eintlik 'n goeie ding in die opsig van jy vra dan dieper vrae dink; ek weens die pyn wat jy deurgaen."

Participant: "So you know that is the irony of it, you then understand other things much better and you and it actually opens you more for looking at life differently... it is actually...it is actually a good thing in this respect because you ask deeper questions because of the pain that you are enduring."

The feeling of being wrong contributes to his feeling of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sou jy eerder sê jy het spesifieke tydperk is dit amper 'n ervaring wat deurlopend is?"

Interviewer: "Would you rather say that you had in a specific time an experience that was continuous?"

Deelnemer: "So jy is altyd verkeerd en niemand luister regtig wat jy se nie dis maar my lonely ervaring in 'n relationship so dis loneliness together and on your own so dis maar net."

Participant: "Therefore you are always wrong and nobody really listens to what you are saying, that is my lonely experience in a relationship so it is loneliness together and on your own so it is just."

He experiences himself as always being wrong and that nobody ever listens to him.

You can discover inner hidden treasures through a process of introspection which results from a place called loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "In jou dagdrome as jy so sit."

Interviewer: "In your daydreams when you just sit."

Deelnemer: "Daar defining treasures within en jy kan nie in my hele journey to understand love and because of rejection you want to know more about love and how can I love better jy moet en die meisie waarvoor ek lief is het ook self eenkeer vir my gese in die begin sy kan my nie happy maak nie you have to make yourself happy first en dit was nogals vir my."

Participant: "There are defining treasures within and you cannot in my whole journey to understand love and because of rejection you want to know more about love and how can I love better... you must and the girl that I love has also once said to me in the beginning she cannot make me happy you have to make yourself happy first and that was for me."

The loneliness forces one to look inside "hidden treasures" to make yourself happy before you can make someone else happy.

Pets give unconditional love, because of their loyalty. This idea may connect to earlier notions of loving one self as starting point to deal with loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy die troeteldiere kan 'n verskil maak in jou belewenis van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you think pets can make a difference in your experiencing of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek dink diere en sulke tipe goed kan jou leer hulle is baie loyal en dit gee vir jou unconditional love wat mense eintlik nie capable."

Participant: "I think pets and things like that can teach you that they are very loyal and that it gives you unconditional love that people are actually not capable."

He feels that pets can give one unconditional love because they are very loyal. He believes that people are not able to give such love.

Drug use is an expression of wanting to be alone.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Of jy al ooit in jou belewenis van eensaamheid 'n positiewe ervaring van eensaamheid gehad? Spesifiek eensaamheid en nie noodwendig net om alleen te wees nie maar."

Interviewer: "Or if you have ever in your experience of loneliness had a positive experience of loneliness? Specifically loneliness and not necessary just to be alone but."

Deelnemer: "Jy weet, ek het ook drugs gedoen en baie en mense wat drugs doen wil eintlik alleen wees."

Participant: "You know, I have also done drugs and a lot and people that do drugs would actually like to be alone."

Refers to his drug use and how he feels that people who use drugs actually want to be alone.

Substances are a substitute for company in a state of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy die gebruik van dwelms het ook bygedra om jou minder alleen te laat voel?"

Interviewer: "Do you think the usage of drugs did also contribute to make you feel less lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Soos Mary Jane, dis die ander naam vir weed so dis jou, dis jou vriend in loneliness is hierdie substitutes for people, die ongelukkigheid is dis wat die meisie dis hoekom sy my ook gereject het, ek is so half, nog obsessed, jy raak obsessed want jy, sy sê ek het net, hierdie is net in love."

Participant: "Like Mary Jane, that is the other name for weed so that is, that is your friend in loneliness, is this substitute for people, the sadness is that is what the girl... that is why she also rejected me, I am still half still obsessed, you become obsessed because you, she says I have only, this is just in love."

Substances are a substitute for company in a state of loneliness.

Loneliness can be a result of self sabotage

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy die gebruik van dwelms het ook bygedra om jou minder alleen te laat voel?"

Interviewer: "Do you think the usage of drugs did also contribute to make you feel less lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Dink is hoekom ek myself weerhou en myself aspris lonely maak so ek is my eie enemy in daai sin dat ek my eie happinss sabotage deur lonely te wees."

Participant: "Think is why I withhold/resist myself and make myself specifically lonely so I am my own enemy in that sense that I sabotage my own happiness by being lonely."

He acknowledges a self sabotaging aspect of loneliness, in making himself lonely and thereby sabotaging his own happiness.

In nature being less lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar dinge in jou omgewing wat jou meer of minder eensaam laat voel."

Interviewer: "Are there things in your environment that make you more or less lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Ja nature ek hou nogals van nature en voel nogals lekker in nature alles is alive maar ek voel in elke geval alles is lewendig alles is eneergy energy is 'n vital living force dinge."

Participant: "Yes nature, I actually like nature and feel quite well in nature everything is alive but I feel in any case everything is lively everything is energy is a vital living force thing."

He associates nature with a space in which he feels less alone.

Keeping himself busy in reaction to loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar dinge in jou omgewing wat jou meer of minder eensaam laat voel."

Interviewer: "Are there things in your environment that make you more or less lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Ek smile altyd en ja movies te kyk ek dink hoekom movies so popular is jy kan jousef in 'n ander wêreld inleef vergeet wie jy is vir 'n ruk jousef impartake in'n ander rol 'n ander rol te speel iemand anders te wees wat vriende het of wat jou kan verstaan soos waar jy vandaan kom so ja ek dink movies musiek te luister dis maar dis maar wat ek doen."

Participant: "I always smile and yes to watch movies. I think why movies are so popular you can live yourself into another world, forget who you are for a time, let yourself partake in a different role play another role, be someone else that have friends or that can understand you like where you came from, so yes I think movies, to listen to music that is what I do."

He watches movies and feels that he can live himself into another part or role in a movie, one in which he feels understood and has friends.

Loneliness needs to be worked through in relation to oneself.

Onderhoudvoerder: "In jou dagdrome as jy so sit."

Interviewer: "In your daydreams when you just sit like that."

Deelnemer: "n Wake up call van toe af wat ek moet leer om dit self te doen dat jy nie kan rely op 'n ander persoon om jou heel te maak nie jy is nie jy is nie complete incomplete nie jy moet jy kan nie as 'n incomplete person na 'n relationship toe gaan nie."

Participant: "A wake up call from then that I had to teach myself to do it on my own that you cannot rely/depend on somebody else to heel you, you are not, you are not complete incomplete, you must you cannot as an incomplete person go into a relationship."

Cannot rely on others to make you happy. Pointing towards a quality of loneliness as an inner experience that needs to be worked through in relation to oneself.

Associates loneliness with rejection, not being part of, not being good enough, being worthless, having no value, being helpless, always being wrong

Onderhoudvoerder: "Watse gevoel is gewoonlik geassosieer met eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "What feeling is normally associated with loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Being rejected; not being part of anything; jy is nie goed genoeg nie; jys worthless; jyt nie value nie; jy weet; jy is hulpeloos; ja; jy ja its like your always wrong and everybody else is always right."

Participant: "Being rejected, not being part of anything; you are not good enough, you are worthless, you have no value, you know, you are helpless; yes, you yes, it's like you are always wrong and everybody else is always right."

Associates loneliness with rejection, not being part of, not being good enough, being worthless, having no value, being helpless, always being wrong

Has become used to being alone

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is die eensaamheid 'n gevoel wat jy noodwendig assosieer as 'n slegte gevoel of 'n negatiewe gevoel?"

Interviewer: "Is loneliness a feeling that you specifically associate as a bad feeling or a negative feeling?"

Deelnemer: "Soos ek se daars pros en cons so ja, kreatief wil ek, partykeer crave ek dit, raak te veel om tussen crowds te wees ek hou nie daarvan nie, ek dink ek het te gewoonnd geraak om op my eie te wees."

Participant: "Like I said, there are pro's and con's so yes, creatively I want, sometimes I crave it, becomes too much to be among crowds, I don't like it, I think I have become too used to be on my own."

He refers to courage an existential concept in terms of the courage to be

Onderhoudvoerder: "Of miskien spesifiek met jou verhouding met die multidisziplinere span die sielkundiges arbeidsterapeute psigiaters."

Interviewer: "Or may be specifically in your relationship with the multi-disciplinary team, the psychologists, occupational therapists, psychiatrists."

Deelnemer: "Ek het baie geleer deur en dis die lekker ding om jousef oop te maak, jy weet party word betaal om te luister en party van hulle sê net hulle laat jou praat en jy kan sê soveel as wat jy wil, dis vir my ook kreatiwiteit, persoonlike kreatiwiteit, baie lekker, want dit leer jou om daai inner voice te hoor, jou narration van hoe jy jousef sien is, vir my nogals lekker, so in daai sence is jy dan nie alleen jy want jy weet ten minste word jy gehoor, dis nogals lekker ja, en jy word jou eie vriend in sin daai behalwe om jou eie enemy te wees, die

villain in jou eie verhaal te wees, word jy ook jou eie vriend want jy word meer encourage, jy het meer courage om jouself te wees en jy voel nie gejudge nie en daar is nie daai negatiewe side effects om jouself bloot te stel nie.”

Participant: “I have learnt a lot by and that is the nice thing about opening yourself, you know some get paid to listen and some just say they let you speak and you can say as much as you like, that is also creativity, personal creativity, very nice, because it teaches you hear that inner voice, your narration of how you see yourself is, quite nice to me, therefore in that sense you are not alone because you know at least that you are being heard, that is quite nice yes, and you become your own friend in a sense is stead of being your own enemy, the villain in your own story, you also become your own friend because you are more encouraged, you have more courage to be yourself and you don't feel judged and there are not all those negative side effects to make yourself vulnerable.”

You can become your own friend by being in touch with yourself.

Loneliness can be a useful experience at times.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Is daar spesifieke goed wat jy doen as jy eensaam voel?”

Interviewer: “Are there specific things you do when you feel/are lonely?”

Deelnemer: “Maar ja, so jy het loneliness nodig vir sekere dinge sou ek glo, jy het daai space nodig, daai platform, daai silence daarin so ja dis positief in daai sence en die goed wat ek sou doen in loneless is skills te develop, to listen to my own thoughts, to listen to the voices within.”

Participant: “But yes, you need loneliness for certain things I would believe, you need that space, that platform, that silence in it so yes it is positive in that sense and the stuff that I would do im loneliness is to develop skills, to listen to my own thoughts, to listen to the voices within.”

Loneliness can ba a useful experience at times.

Different views of spirituality and religion.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Dink jy dat spiritualiteit of miskien geloof of relegie enigsins met eensaamheid geassosieer kan word en jou belewenis?”

Interviewer: “Do you think that spirituality or may be believe or religion could in any way be associated with loneliness and your experience?”

Deelnemer: “Ek is defnitief ek is glad nie religious nie ek is spiritual, not religious. Spirituality is vir my, ja hulle sê religion are for those people who are afraid of hell and spirituality is for those who have already been there.”

Participant: "I am definite, I am not religious, and I am not spiritual, not religious. Spirituality is for me, yes they say religion is for those people who are afraid of hell and spirituality is for those who have already been there."

Makes a clear distinction between being spiritual and being religious. Interesting comment.

Being all alone can still leave one in the presence of God.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe het jou geestesbelewenis of jou spiritual experiences 'n impak gemaak op jou ervaring van eensaam?"

Interviewer: "How have your psychological experiences or your spiritual experiences made an impact on your experience of being lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Ja actually het dit nogals op 'n baie interessante pad gekom met my spiritual seeking ja, ja so dit is baie vervullend vir my dat ek, hulle sê the word alone means all one with God and with the Godhood of whatever so ja dis hoekom ek myself baie kan entertain."

Participant: "Yes actually it has crossed my road in spiritual seeking in a very interesting way yes, yes therefore it is very fulfilling for me that I, they say the word alone means all one with God and with the Godhood of whatever so yes that is why I can entertain myself such a lot."

His definition of alone means all alone with God

Meaning relates to loneliness in the sense that seeing the meaning behind things can cure loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe het jou geestesbelewenis of jou spiritual experiences 'n impak gemaak op jou ervaring van eensaam?"

Interviewer: "How have your psychological experiences or your spiritual experiences made an impact on your experience of being lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Want ek kan the things behind the scens raaksien, van die the hidden meaning behind things dis baie vervullend en dit vat nogals, dit cure nogals loneliness maar volgens desire."

Participant: "Because I can identify the things behind the scenes, from the hidden meaning behind things, it is very fulfilling and it takes quite, it cures loneliness quite well but according to desire."

Being able to see the meanings behind things is seen as a cure for loneliness.

He prefers nights, the lonely night.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ja plekke waar jy was of jou gedagtes."

Interviewer: "Yes places where you have been or your thoughts."

Deelnemer: "Ja dis maar altyd die lonely planets die islands maar ek hou van islands dis mooi daar so donkerte ek was baie daar ek hou van die aande eks baie nocturnal donkerte in sekere opsigte is ja is swimming in the void as jy kan jy alleen voel maar aan die ander kant you have got nothing to lose you are free so ek weet nie dis moeilik ek sou se die karoo voel baie lonely daar dis scary daar."

Participant: "Yes it is always the lonely planets the islands, but I like islands, it is beautiful there, the darkness, I was often there, I like the evenings, I am very nocturnal, darkness in certain aspects is yes is swimming in the void if you can, you feel alone but on the other hand you have got nothing to lose you are free therefore I do not know, it is difficult, I would say the Karoo feels very lonely there that is scary there."

He goes to lonely planets in his thoughts. He prefers nights and sees himself as nocturnal.

Sees the Karoo as a lonely place. Desolate.

Onderhoudvoerder: "O ek weet nie dis moeilik ek sou se die karoo voel baie lonely daar dis scary daar."

Interviewer: "O, I don't know, it is difficult, I would say the karoo feels lonely, it's scary there."

Deelnemer: "He refers to the Karoo as a particularly lonely place."

Participant: "He refers to the Karoo as a particularly lonely place."

Feeling powerless in the face of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe ervaar jy hierdie plekke waar jy eensaam voel? Hoe voel die plek vir jou as jy eensaam raak?"

Interviewer: "How do you experience these places where you feel lonely? How do you experience the place when you become lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Ja jy voel so powerless ek dink jy voel so half of jy geen control het oor jou reality en jy is your unable to bring someone to you unable to summon them when you need the company or support."

Participant: "Yes you feel so powerless, I think you feel as if you have only half control over your reality and you are unable to bring someone to you, unable to summon them, when you need the company or support."

Father as a lonely person. Familial associations with loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe ervaar jy tyd wanneer jy eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "How do you experience the time when you feel lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Wel ek dink my pa was nogals alleen ma hy het ook vir my gese dat hoe slimmer jy is hoe minder mense is daar in jou lewe ek dink dis sort van ja mens word mos maar half."

Participant: "Well I think my dad was quite lonely, mom also told me that the cleverer you are the less people are in your life. I think it is sort of yes, one/man become half."

He saw his father as also being alone.

Loneliness as a journey and this journey can be meaningful.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe het die dinge wat jy aangepak of gedoen het om te met eensaamheid te deal of te cope hoe het dit 'n verskil gemaak in jou belewenis van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "How did the things that you tackled or did to cope with the loneliness, what change did it bring/create in your experience of loneliness."

Deelnemer: "Die imperfect character gaan deur die journey en loneliness is nou hierdie character se storie en sy conflict en dan bereik jy eintlik aan die einde het jy baie vriende of ten minste baie interaccitons gehad met verskillende tipes mense van verskillende walks of life dit maak die storie uniek wat ek geleer het en bereik het en geachieve het."

Participant: "The imperfect character goes through the journey and loneliness is now the story of this character and his conflict and then you actually reach the end and you have lots of friends or at least you have had many interactions with different types of people from different walks of life... it makes the story unique that I have learnt and accomplished and achieved."

He experiences himself as imperfect and going through the journey of loneliness. He does feel that through this journey he has achieved a lot.

Loving yourself as departure point in dealing with loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is spesifieke wat ander mense kan doen om minder eensaam te voel?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there are specific (things) that people can do to feel less lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Ja learn to love yourself first baie belangrik en loving yourself is not being you know egotistical its about loving yourself in a peaceful way en getting to know yourself."

Participant: "Yes, learn to love yourself first...very important. And loving yourself is not being... you know ...egotistical, it's about loving yourself in a peaceful way en getting to know yourself."

He sees that the starting point for dealing with loneliness is in relation to one self. You first need to love yourself and get to know yourself in a peaceful way.

In loneliness one asks questions and in so change into something else or becoming a better person.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar gaan 'n tyd in jou toekoms kom wat jy minder eensaam gaan voel."

Interviewer: "Do you think there will a time in your future that you will feel less lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Of ek so dink is nie per se is meer wat ek hoop ek dink dis besig om stadig mar seker te inprove daaris tye waar ek weer heeltemal downwards kom dit kom met transfision fase nuwe questions oor jouself vra dis waar jy metamorphosizes."

Participant: "Whether I think so is not per se more what I hope for, I think it is slowly but surely improving, there are times the I lapse completely downwards. It comes with transfusion (?) phase.....asking new questions about yourself. That is where you metamorphosizes."

He feels that he is improving on the issue of loneliness in that he is asking more questions about himself and metamorphosizing...becoming??

More questioning can lead to doubting yourself.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar gaan 'n tyd in jou toekoms kom wat jy minder eensaam gaan voel."

Interviewer: "Do you think there will a time in your future that you will feel less lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Dan het jy weer heeltemal nuwe vrae dan wonder jy weer oor als in jou lewe dan weet jy weer nie of dit die beste ding is nie dan gaan dit weer sleg daar is weer nie hoop nie jy weet nie."

Participant: "Then you have completely new questions again... then you wonder again about everything in your life....then again you don't know whether it is the best thing. Then it goes bad again... there is again no hope... you don't know..."

Sometimes this process goes into a negative cycle of self doubt, not knowing who you are.

His bodily experience of loneliness is irritation.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ek wonder waar jy jou liggaam inpas in jou eensaamheid belewenis. Is daar ooit 'n fisiese gevoel wat jy assosieer met eensaamheid of wat jy dit in jou liggaam voel?"

Interviewer: "I wonder where you are fitting your body in in your loneliness experience. Is there ever a physical feeling that you associate with loneliness or that you feel in your body?"

Deelnemer: "Omdat jyu so lank alleen is dan raak jy irritated as mens nie as jy loneliness as jy alleen is dan voel jy ek weet nie ek dink nie regtig baie nie weet nie."

Participant: "Because you are lonely for such a long time you become irritated... if one does not...if loneliness... if you are alone then you feel... I don't know. I don't really think a lot. Don't know..."

Masturbation and mutilation as themes in the bodily experience of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar sekere goed wat jy met jou liggaan doen as jy eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "Are there certain things that you do to your body when you feel lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Ja daar was die masturbation gewees en ja self mutilation 'n bietjie ek krap myself so dis al hoe jy ek weet nie."

Participant: "Yes, there was the masturbation and yes a bit of self-mutilation. I scratch myself...so that is the only... I don't know..."

He associates masturbation and mutilation as things he does when he experiences loneliness.

Both the philosophical and practical dimensions of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sê my bietjie voel jy minder alleen waanneer of minder eensaam as jy praat oor jou ervaring van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Tell me, do you feel less alone/lonely or less lonely when you discuss your experience of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Maar jy soek ook so half give me the tools how can i hande this how can i become a better social interactor."

Participant: "But you also seek so half give me the tools... how can I hande this.... how can I become a better social interactor."

He looking for a space to verbalize his feelings but he also has a need for specific tools on how to have better interpersonal relations.

Loneliness has cyclical and repetitive nature.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n enige manier wat eensaamheid 'n rol speel in jou psigiatriese kondisie?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is any way in which loneliness can play a role in your psychiatric condition?"

Deelnemer: "Ekstra blow a wound which causes more depression and so ek weet nie dis soos n repetitive cycle wat nooit ophou nie feeds on itself and so ja dis iets wat net nie beter raak nie."

Participant: "Extra blow a wound which causes more depression and that way I don't know. It is like a repetitive cycle that never stops... feeds on itself and... So yes it is something that never gets better."

He feels that loneliness is a repetitive cycle that never ends.

One should allow others to be authentic.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Al ooit in jou lewe spesifieke verhoudings wat jou minder eensaam laat voel het jou?"

Interviewer: "Ever had in your life specific relationships that made you feel less lonely?"

Deelnemer: "About letting them to be who they are not the person you want them to be."

Participant: "About letting them to be who they are not the person you want them to be."

Allowing the other to be authentic is of great importance to him.

In response to loneliness one becomes self reliant.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wanneer spesifiek ervaar jy eensaamheid of raak jy meer bewus van jou eie eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "When specifically do you experience loneliness or do you become more aware of your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Sal ek graag meer dan voel jy about letting them to be who they are not the person you want them to be."

Participant: "Will I like to more...then you feel... about letting them to be whom they are not the person you want them to be".

In response to the loneliness he feels that he can only rely on himself and if he cant rely on himself he is really very alone.

He listens to loud music and heavy metal when he feels alone.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wanneer spesifiek ervaar jy eensaamheid of raak jy meer bewus van jou eie eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "When specifically do you experience loneliness or do you become more aware of your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Listen to loud music en heavy metal en stuff."

Participant: "Listen to loud music en heavy metal en stuff."

He listens to loud music and heavy metal when he feels alone.

Having an internal conversation about loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy al ooit in jou lewe gepraat oor jou ervaring van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Have you ever in your life discussed your experience of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ja met my self en daai ander oukie myself myself en myself. Nee ek obviously doen ek dit nou in my sessies hierso sielkunde dis maar eintlik al waar jy vry en genoeg voel om dit te doen."

Participant: "Yes with myself and that other guy myself... myself and myself. No, I obviously do it now in these psychological sessions...it is actually the only time/place where you feel free and good enough to do it."

He talks to himself about loneliness. He also talks in his sessions with the psychologist about his experiences of loneliness. The psychotherapeutic space seems to be a safe one to talk about loneliness. Brings up dimensions in which loneliness is discussed.

Being alone leaves one being with one self. In a sense you are your own company in loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy ooit in 'n verhouding tot met mense wat naby jou is soos familie eensaam gevoel jou ouers of?"

Interviewer: "Have you ever felt lonely in a relationship with people that are near to you like family... your parents or..?"

Deelnemer: "Voel dit asof ek nie altyd, asof ek nie ja ek is maar net alleen Im the only person that has been with me my whole entire life en ja so jy het niemand nie, dis wat rêrig partykeer verstaan jou ma jou nie dan se jy thats it."

Participant: "Feels it... as if I am not always, as if I... yes I am just alone. I'm the only person that has been with me my whole entire life and yes... so you have nobody, that really sometimes understands...your mother... then you say that's it..."

He sees himself as the only person that has been with himself all his life. The being with one self can be seen as a part of the *eigenwelt* in relation to loneliness.

Understanding or being understood plays an important part in the loneliness experience.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar assosiasie wat tussen om verstaan te word en minder eensaam te voel?"

Interviewer: "Is there an association between to be understood and to feel less lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Ja laat daar net 'n gevoel is van jy share jouself meer en dat altwee se points of view is belangrik en om verstaan te word ja jy wil ook 'n mystery wees ek is maar contradiction, op dieselfde en ek hou van verskillende goed ek weet dit gaan oor loneliness"

hoe kan ek se ja dit is te feel that you your presence there that is not just one sided ja; and it is that you are also valued in the circumstance waar jy is waar jy jousef bevind waar jy involved is mee so ja.”

Participant: “Yes just the feeling that you share yourself and both points of view are important and to be understood, yes you want to be a mystery, I am contradictory, in the same and I like different things, I know it revolves around loneliness, how can I say, yes that is the feeling that you... your presence there... that is not just one sided yes; and it is that you are also valued in the circumstance where you are where you find yourself...what you are involved with.. So yes.”

To be understood is a way of sharing yourself. But there are two sides in an intimate relationship.

Not understanding one another brings division

Onderhoudvoerder: “In daai selfde gedagte.”

Interviewer: “In that same thought.”

Deelnemer: “Sou jou clone diverse soos wat hy sy eie experiences het so jy kan nooit regtig 100% relate nie dis boring as almal dieselfde was as jy daai connection het waar jy between you and me there have to be a place where we dcome together where we share our knowledge experiences en dis moeilik as jy heeltmal van ‘n ander planet af kom dis hoekom daar racism is Daar is die heeltyd devision en dit kom omdat almal hulle eie idees het daaris nie ‘n common vision nie Dan sien jy een vision includes all visions ek sal nou praat.”

Participant: “Would your clone divert because of his own experiences, so you can never relate 100%, it is boring if everybody was the same, if you have that connection where between you and me there have to be a place where we do come together where we share our knowledge, experiences and it is difficult if you come from a totally different planet, that is why there is racism. There is division all the time and it is there because everybody has got his own ideas, there is no common vision. Then you see one vision includes all visions, I will talk now.”

He sees there being division among people because they cannot understand each other's differences.

The concept of people understanding you plays an important part in the experience of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Is daar assosiasies met die stigma en eensaamheid?”

Interviewer: “Are there associations between stigma and loneliness?”

Deelnemer: “Uhhh ja want dis you versus the whole world, its how they understand you, how you understand yourself and how you understand them en how you have to have to relate to the world, the expectations of the world, how to fit into society.”

Participant: "Humm yes because it is you versus the whole world, it's how they understand you, how you understand yourself and how you understand them and how you have to have to relate to the world, the expectations of the world, how to fit into society."

Understanding as central theme in the experience of loneliness.

Being misunderstood by people leads him to feel like the outcast.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ek verstaan ek volg Dink jy dat spiritualiteit of miskien geloof of relegie enigsins met eensaamheid geassosieer kan word en jou belewenis?"

Interviewer: "I understand... I follow.... Do you think that spirituality or may be faith or religion could in any way be associated with loneliness or your experience?"

Deelnemer: "Op baie vlakke van my lewe word ek misverstaan, die manier hoe ek liefde gee

Deelnemer: "Op baie vlakke van my lewe word ek misverstaan, die manier hoe ek liefde gee word misverstaan, die manier hoe ek create word misverstaan, die manier hoe ek die lewe sien, ek probeer 'n all inclusive point of view te hê om juis hulle point of view te hê dis nogals partykeer selfreflecting en selfconflingting maar ja, ek word misverstaan op 'n spirituele vlak."

Participant: "On many levels of my life I am misunderstood, the manner in which I give love is being misunderstood, the manner in which I create is being misunderstood, the manner in which I see life, I try to have an all-inclusive point of view, specifically to have their point of view, it is sometimes quite self reflecting and self-conflicting but yes, I am being misunderstood on a spiritual level."

He experiences himself as being misunderstood by people.

Loneliness increases depressive feelings.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is enige manier wat eensaamheid 'n rol speel in jou psigiatriese kondisie?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is any way in which loneliness is playing a role in your psychiatric condition?"

Deelnemer: "Ja dit effect nogals baie dinge in my lewe want jy raak meer depressed omdat jy nie dit kan doen nie jy kan nie achieve nie jy kan nie bereik nie jy word nooit beter daarin nie. Elkeen van daai redes is soos 'n ekstra blow a wound which causes more depression."

Participant: "Yes, it influences quite a number of things in my life, because you become more depressed, because you cannot do things, you cannot achieve' you never become better in something. Each of these reasons is an extra blow, a wound which causes more depression."

Loneliness has both positive and negative aspects.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sou jy eerder sê jy het 'n spesifieke tydperk of is eensaamheid 'n ervaring wat deurlopend is?"

Interviewer: "Would you rather say you have a specific period or is loneliness a continuous experience?"

Deelnemer: "Kreatief op 'n kreatiewe manier is; het ek my space nodig en het eensaamheid nodig as 'n creator. So jy weet, daar is die pro's en con's daarvan."

Participant: "Creative in a creative manner is, I need my space and need loneliness as a creator. So you know, there are pro's and cons of it."

Points towards the positive and negative aspects of loneliness.

Being alone and feeling alone are associated.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n verkil tussen om alleen te wees en alleen te voel?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is a difference between being lonely and feeling lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Daar is 'n verskil en nie 'n verkil nie. Dit gaan gepaard met mekaar jy voel alleen en jy is alleen of jy kan partykeer net alleen voel al is jy nie alleen nie of jy is alleen maar jy voel nie alleen nie. Wat jy voel is at one with everything around you."

Participant: "There is a difference and there is no difference. It goes together, you feel alone and you are alone or you can sometimes just feel alone even if you are not alone, or you are alone but you do not feel alone. What you feel is at one with everything around you."

He states that being alone and feeling lonely are associated with each other. Sometimes one can feel alone without being alone and at other times you can be alone but not feel alone.

One's background has an influence on who one connects with.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As jy so terugkyk oor jou lewe was daar spesifieke tyd of 'n insident of 'n periode waar jy baie eensaam gevoel het, en indien daar was kan jy my dalk bietjie meer vertel daarvan Wat jou ervaring was."

Interviewer: "If you look back over your life was there a specific time or incident or a period where you felt very lonely, and if so can you tell me a bit more about it? What your experience was?"

Deelnemer: "Einde van laerskool het ek niks vriende gehad nie; dis altyd vat mens dit maar persoonlik as daar iets fout is met jou maar dis omdat jy eintlik van 'n ander agtergrond afkom."

Participant: "End of primary school I had no friends, that is always...one takes it personally if there is anything wrong with you, but it is actually because you come from a different back ground."

Later in life he did venture into new relationships.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As jy so terugkyk oor jou lewe was daar spesifieke tyd of 'n insident of 'n periode waar jy baie eensaam gevoel het, en indien daar was kan jy my dalk bietjie meer vertel daarvan. Wat jou ervaring was?"

Interviewer: "If you look back over your life was there a specific time or incident or a period where you felt very lonely, and if so can you tell me a bit more about it? What your experience was?"

Deelnemer: "So. Hoërskool het ek meer begin; het ek besluit om of ek weet nie; ek dink ek het so half myself net I did not think like that but ek het met meer verskillende tipe vriende; verskillende lewensgroep mense het ek vriende mee gemaak."

Participant: "So. At high school I started more, had I decided to or I don't know, I think I have so myself halfway...just I did not think like that but I have more different type of friends, different life group people did I befriend."

Later on in high school he broadened his horizons and made friends with people from various groups.

Loneliness especially relates to the absence of romantic partners.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As jy so terugkyk."

Interviewer: "If you look back."

Deelnemer: "En dan natuurlik met die hele relationship ding; romantic relationships is dit maar altyd maar moeilik ek weet nie ek is net baie skaam."

Participant: "And then of course with the whole relationship thing; romantic relationships, is it always difficult, I don't know, I am just very shy."

Lack of relationships leads to sensitivities in interpersonal relationships.

Deelnemer: "...moet maak maar dit is moeilik om dan nie te weet wat hulle wil hê nie."

Participant: "...must make but it is difficult then not to know what they want."

Lack of relationships causes uncertainty with him regarding what others might expect from him.

Resorts to other sources of information (movies) to gain knowledge on how to approach people Overwhelming others, pushing others away.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As jy so terugkyk."

Interviewer: "If you then look back."

Deelnemer: "Hoeveel movies dan dink jy ja ok jy moet dit en dit doen maar jy weet dis jou enige point of reference."

Participant: "How many movies then do you think, yes OK you must do this and that but you know that is your only point of reference."

A special relationship, paradox exists between the need to be alone and the need to be with others.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sou jy eerder sê jy het spesifieke tydperk of is dit 'n ervaring wat deurlopend is?"

Interviewer: "Would you rather say you have a specific period/time span...is that almost an experience that is continuous?"

Deelnemer: "Anyway want ek verkies om op my eie te wees terwyl ek op die selfde tyd ook 'n relationship wil hê en 'n familie wil hê die classic old style American dream kind of thing."

Participant: "Anyway, because I prefer to be on my own while I want to have a relationship simultaneously and want a family, the classic old style American dream kind of thing."

Sharing your life with somebody else as a way to know that you exist. What an interesting idea. As if an intimate relationship serves as the validation of one's existence.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sou jy eerder sê jy het spesifieke tydperk is of is dit 'n ervaring wat deurlopend is?"

Interviewer: "Would you rather say you have a specific period or is that an experience that is continuous?"

Deelnemer: "Ja dit sal lekker wees om mens se lewe te share met iemand; jy weet dat jy weet jy exist op 'n manier."

Participant: "Yes, it would be nice to share one's life with somebody; you know that you know you exist in some way."

Money as it relates to relationship.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sou jy eerder sê jy het spesifieke tydperk is of is dit 'n ervaring wat deurlopend is?"

Interviewer: "Would you rather say you have a specific period/time span...is that almost an experience that is continuous?"

Deelnemer: "Dis moeilik om en ek en jy weet op 'n geldelike manier het ek net nie die geld om sosiaal te verkeer nie want almal gaan uit en jy het geld nodig om uit te gaan sosiaal te wees en uit te gaan na restaurante toe, clubs toe te gaan en jy weet."

Participant: "It's difficult to and I and you know in a financial way I have not got the money to social because everybody goes out and you need money to go out, to be social and to go out to restaurants, to go to clubs and you know."

This seems to point to a circular nature of the experience in that one is lonely but lacks confidence which leads to fearfulness of people and more loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sou jy eerder sê jy het spesifieke tydperk is of is dit 'n ervaring wat deurlopend is?"

Interviewer: "Would you rather say you have a specific period/time span...is that almost an experience that is continuous?"

Deelnemer: "Dis 'n ander factor dat ek nie die geld het daarvoor nie en omdat ek nie goed met mense oor die weg kom nie is ek baie bang vir base en vir werksomstandighede."

Participant: "It is a factor that I do not have the money for that and because I do not get on well with people, I am scared of bosses and work circumstances."

His lack of ability to get on well with people makes him fearful of people especially bosses.

He relates this to the feeling that other people focus on themselves and that it is never about him.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sou jy eerder sê jy het spesifieke tydperk is of is dit 'n ervaring wat deurlopend is?"

Interviewer: "Would you rather say you have a specific period/time span...is that almost an experience that is continuous?"

Deelnemer: "Dit raak frustrating as dit 'n totally recurrent ding is dat jy net nie kan vorder daarin nie jy kan net nie jouself kry om te interact en jy is altyd; selfs in 'n relationship is jy lonely want dit gaan altyd of oor ander mense dis my ervaring dat it is always about them they I really care about oor hoe jy voel oor dinge nie."

Participant: "It gets frustrating if it is a fully recurrent thing, that you just can't make progress in it, you just can't get yourself to interact and you are always, even in a relationship you are lonely, because it always is about other people...that is my experience that it is always about them they don't really care about how you feel about things"

Loneliness as recurrent experience becomes frustrating because you find yourself being lonely even in relationship.

This may point to the interdependence of human existence as well as the overwhelming nature of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe voel dit vir jou wanneer jy alleen is? Hoe voel daai eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "How does it feel to you when you are alone? What does that loneliness feel like?"

Deelnemer: "Soos of ek dieenigste persoon is wat op 'n eiland uitgespoel het en hoe sou ek alles invented het wat humanity geinvent het, self reliaent is dis hoekom ek nog steeds nie independent is nie."

Participant: "Like I am the only person that washed out on an island and how would I have invented everything that humanity invented, self-reliant it is thus why I am still not independent."

He describes being obsessed with the idee that he is alone on an island and how he would invent everything that humanity has invented.

The theme of being part of the normal people and the normal people freaking him out emerges here.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe voel dit vir jou wanneer jy alleen is? Hoe voel daai eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "How does it feel to you when you are alone? What does that loneliness feel like?"

Deelnemer: "I know; ek weet nie dit raak vir my al hoe harsher in hierdie day and age, dis net mense creep my uit wil actually 'n t-shirt maak wat sê normal people freak me out so ja."

Participant: "I don't know; I don't know, it becomes for me all the more harsh in this day and age, it is just people creep me out...want to actually make a T-shirt that says...normal people freak me out...so yes."

He experiences the world as increasingly becoming more creapy. He expresses this as what seems to be normal people freak him out. Thus differentiating himself from normal people.

Having no allies, having no support. Left to his own devices. All these forms part of his experience of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wanneer jy droom en jou droom wêreld is daar ooit temas van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "When you dream ...in your dream world are there ever themes of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ja dis asof ek altyd moet weghardloop. Partykeer sal ek; ek het vanoggend gedroom ons hardloop weg van skool af ek het altyd hierdie recurring droom van skool, dis 'n incomplete deel van my lewe ja daar is baie kere arguments en fights waar ek basically stand alone, ek word omsingel deur klomp mense wat teen my is I I have any allies; nobody supports me ja so ek weet nie ja your on your own you have to left own our own devices again dan die chase en al daai goed so ja."

Participant: "Yes, it is as if I always have to run away. Sometimes I will, I have this morning dreamt we ran away from school, I have always got this recurring dream of school, that is an incomplete part of my life, yes, there are often arguments and fights where I basically stand

alone, I get surrounded by many people that are against me... I don't have any allies; nobody supports me, yes, so I don't know, yes, you are on your own...you have to be left on your own...our own devices again...then the chase and all that stuff, so yes."

He dreams about running away from school. He associates this with arguments and fights where he stands alone. He is surrounded by people with no allies. He has no support. Left to his own devices. All these forms part of his experience of loneliness.

Being whole and complete are important aspects of relationships.

Onderhoudvoerder: "In jou dagdrome as jy so sit?"

Interviewer: "In your daydreams when you sit?"

Deelnemer: "Obviously gaan julle mekaar influence en dis die beauty daarvan maar jy kan nie dit doen as jy heeltyd gefix moet word nie of so jy weet jy moet daai verantwoordelikheid neem."

Deelnemer: "Dis nie in alle situasies so nie en jy mag mekaar help en ek glo dis daar maar as jy nie self sterk is nie is dit."

Participant: "Obviously you are going to influence each other and that is the beauty of it, but you can't do that if you have to fixed the whole time or so you know you have to take that responsibility."

Participant: "It is not like that in all situations and you are allowed to help each other and I do believe it is there but if you are not strong yourself, it is."

Refers to wholeness and completeness as aspects of intimate relationships.

Playing different roles in relation to others doesn't necessarily bring relief to loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Jou gevoel van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Your feeling on loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "So jy speel eintlik baie rolle in die lewe maar ja en voel alleen."

Participant: "So actually you play many roles in life, but yes and feel alone."

Plays different roles in attempts to connect to others but still feels aslone.

Loneliness = not sharing yourself with others.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Of jy al ooit in jou belewenis van eensaamheid 'n positiewe ervaring van eensaamheid gehad? Spesifiek eensaamheid en nie noodwendig net om alleen te wees nie maar."

Interviewer: "If you have ever had in your experiencing of loneliness a positive feeling of loneliness? Specific loneliness and not really to be alone, but."

Deelnemer: "Ek sal graag 'n variety van ervarings wil hê anyway en dis wat loneliness is dis daar is missing experience van sharing jousef with someone you love, dis nie missing experience nie dis die something lacking."

Participant: "I would like to have a variety of experiences, anyway and that is what loneliness is, it is there...is a missing experience of sharing yourself with someone you love, it is not a missing experience, it is something lacking."

Describes the need to have a variety of experience and points to loneliness as the kind of experience where sharing yourself with others is missing.

Imaginary relationships is a way to deal with loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy die gebruik van dwelms het ook bygedra om jou minder alleen te laat voel?"

Interviewer: "Do you think the usage of drugs has also contributed to make you feel less alone?"

Deelnemer: "Ja dis soos Mary Jane, dis die ander naam vir weed so dis jou, dis jou vriend in loneliness is hierdie substitutes for people, die ongelukkigheid is dis wat die meisie dis hoekom sy my ook gereject het, ek is so half, nog obsessed, jy raak obsessed want jy, ek het net, hierdie is net in love met 'n imaginary person in my kop so jy begin die hele idee skep."

Participant: "Yes it is like Mary Jane, that is the other name for weed, so that is your, that is your friend in loneliness...are these substitutes for people, the unhappiness/problem is... that is what the girl...that is why she rejected me, I am still half, still obsessed, you become obsessed because you, she says I have just..., this is just in love with an imaginary person in my head,...so you start to create the whole idea."

In fantasy loneliness is dealt with by having imaginary relationships with people.

Not having someone as equal to non existing or non being. The idea that the "I" needs the "other" to exist.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sal jy omgee om dit dalk vir my te lees?"

Interviewer: "Would you mind to possibly read it to me?"

Deelnemer: "Ek het ook 'n CD gehad van Placebo ek het die cd my favourite band en sy die cd se naam is dis ook 'n title track dis "Without you I'm nothing." Op daai toe ek in std 7 was het ek daai cd gekry 1989 en dis nogal hoe ek gevoel het daai tyd Anyway so; hierdie is nou ander idees loneliness what it means for me."

Participant: "I have also had a CD of Placebo, I had the CD...my favourite band and she...the Cd's name, and it is also the title track, is "Without you I'm nothing"...on that...when I was in

standard 7, I got that CD.. 1989...and that is pretty much how I felt at that time. Anyway so, these are now other ideas..loneliness, what it means for me."

He recalls a song from his favourite band at a time called "Without you I am nothing." This song title seems to suggest that without a certain meaningful interpersonal relationship a person is nothing, thus loneliness can be equalled to non-being.

Loneliness = not having the opportunity to share oneself.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sal jy omgee om dit dalk vir my te lees?"

Interviewer: "Would you mind to possibly read it to me?"

Deelnemer: "You are unable to share one self cause you I have that opportunity."

Participant: "You are unable to share one self-cause you don't have that opportunity."

A positive aspect of being alone is not being bothered by others.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is die eensaamheid 'n gevoel wat jy noodwendig assosieer as 'n slegte gevoel of 'n negatiewe gevoel?"

Interviewer: "Is the loneliness a feeling that you necessarily associate as a bad feeling or a negative feeling?"

Deelnemer: "Doen nie maar nou raak dit weer moeilik want rely jy weer heeltemal op dit."

Participant: "Don't do, but now it becomes difficult again, because if you again rely entirely on it."

An aspect of being alone is not being bothered by others.

Loneliness can be positive but still leaves one wanting relationship.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy al ooit 'n positiewe ervaring van eensaamheid gehad? Spesifiek eensaamheid en nie noodwendig net om allen te wees nie."

Interviewer: "Have you ever had a positive experience of loneliness? Specifically loneliness and not necessarily to be alone."

Deelnemer: "Ja nee, ek accept dit maar daar is nog steeds daai desire om graag beter relationships te kan hê."

Participant: "Yes no, I accept it but there is still that desire to have better relationships."

Although he may accept his state of loneliness he still has desires for relationships.

You can feel lonely in relationship.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ons moet bietjie gesels oor verhoudings met mense. Hoe ervaar jy eensaamheid in interpersoonlike verhoudings?"

Interviewer: "We must chat a bit about relationships with people. How do you experience loneliness in interpersonal relationships?"

Deelnemer: "Soos ek sê feeling lonely in a relationship."

Participant: "As I have said...feeling lonely in a relationship."

He feels lonely in relationship

When he is alone for a long time he feels that he becomes immune against the loneliness but then he experiences becoming physically ill because of his need to be loved. Love features here in the context of loneliness and interpersonal relationships.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wanneer jy so alleen voel wat is dit wat jy verwag van ander mense?"

Interviewer: "When you feel alone, what is it that you expect from other people?"

Deelnemer: "Hê nie want as jy te lank alleen is en ek het gedink ek is immune daarteen en baie kere dan is ek vir weke alleen en ek het soos in rêrig fisies begin siek geraak waar ek net you need love."

Participant: "Have not, because if you are alone for too long and I have thought I am immune against it and many times then I am alone for weeks and I have as in really physically started becoming ill where I just you need love."

No support and No one who cares contributes to him feeling lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoekom dink jy en voel jy voel ander mense eensaam?"

Interviewer: "Why do you think and feel, do other people feel lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Whoo ja dis moeilik want dis net there is no support theres no help nobody who cares."

Participant: "Woo, yes, that is difficult, because it is just... there is no support there is no help...nobody who cares."

He understands no support and nobody who cares as aspects of loneliness

Failing in sexual relationships.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe verstaan jy seksuele verhoudings en eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "How do you understand sexual relationships and loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Dis 'n totale f-op. Ja nee ek het ek het eers verlede jaar my virginity verloor op 27 so ja ek is maar seksueel is ek nie 'n baie groot pro nie, ongelukkig nie."

Participant: "That is a total f-up. Yes, no, I have...I have only lost my virginity last year at 27 so yes I am just.... Sexually I am not very big pro, unfortunately not."

Sees his sexual relationships as a failure.

Loneliness and lack of an intimate sexual partner leads him to pornography.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy nou 'n seksuele relationship of the lack thereof?"

Interviewer: "Have you now got a sexual relationship or the lack thereof?"

Deelnemer: "Ek sal graag vir my soulmate, my ja ja wil graag my vrou, dis al waar dit mans dit lack, jy kan dit explore, flourish maar ja andersins ja het jy maar die porn op die internet ja dan is jy hoe voel jy maar maximadory maar jou fantasies uit dis 'n goeie exercise vir jou imagination en sulke goed."

Participant: "I would very much like to get a soul mate, my...yes...yes..would like my wife, that is all where it lacks men, you can explore it, flourish but yes otherwise yes...you have only got the porn on the internet, yes, then you are how you feel...but maxima dory, your fantasies out...it is a nice exercise for your imagination and things like that."

He longs for a soulmate but the lack thereof leads him to view pornography and live out his fantasies in that way.

He refers here to a tension he experiences between conforming to social expectations and being himself. He wants to express himself in the moment.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ons moet bietjie gesels oor verhoudings met mense. Hoe ervaar jy eensaamheid in interpersoonlike verhoudings?"

Interviewer: "We must chat a bit about relations with people. How do you experience loneliness in interpersonal relationships?"

Deelnemer: "I want to sell my soul according to a social standard to represent myself according to selebraty status or some kind of a way of being that is not what I am comfortable with I just want to express myself in the moment"

Participant: "I don't want to sell my soul according to a social standard to represent myself according to celebrity status or some kind of a way of being that is not what I am comfortable with I just want to express myself in the moment."

The theme of being authentic. Often being authentic can lead to interpersonal rejection and leave one lonely.

Questioning oneself about the right way to act in relationships.

The question of what people want stands between him and connecting to others.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe ervaar jy hierdie plekke waar jy eensaam voel? Hoe voel die plek vir jou as jy eensaam raak?"

Interviewer: "How do you experience these places where you feel lonely? How does the place feel to you when you become lonely?"

Deelnemer: "So niemand het mens anyway nie so ja ek dink elke keer as jy ding aan mense dan voel jy so half alleen so dis hoekom ek probeer om nie aan mense te dink nie maar dan moet jy aan mense dink vir karakters en sulke goeters moet ek weet nie en dan dink jy aan die slegte goed wat mense vir jou sê hou jou besig dan het jy iets om te doen kan jy uitfigure."

Participant: "So nobody has got one anyway, so yes, I think every time if you think of people then you feel halfway alone, so that's why I try not to think of people, but then you must think of people for characters and such things, but I don't know and then you think about the bad things that people say to you, that keeps you busy, then you have got something to do ...to figure out."

He questions himself a lot when he feels lonely. Especially on what he should have said in interpersonal relationships.

Love = connecting force.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoekom dink jy en voel jy voel ander mense eensaam?"

Interviewer: "Why do you think and feel do other people feel lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Ek weet nie people wants to be loved is a big thing love is a big thing so its bigger than power bigger than anything so I connecting force."

Participant: "I don't know, people want to be loved... is a big thing ...love is a big thing, so... it's bigger than power, bigger than anything so, it's a connecting force."

He sees love as a connecting force.

Society is based on the fact that people need to be together.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy almal voel alleen? Alle mense?"

Interviewer: "Do you think everybody feels alone? All people?"

Deelnemer: "Wel ek dink society wil dis hoekom ons in stede bly ons wil almal saam wees."

Participant: "Well, I think society will...that is why we live in cities. We want to be together."

He views society as needing to be together.

He sees people connecting less in future.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy almal voel alleen? Alle mense?"

Interviewer: "Do you think everybody feels alone? All people?"

Deelnemer: "Maar as ons hulle se in die future gaan mense so in hulle eie realities wees dat hulle nie r rig gaan leer hoe om te communicate met mense nie en ek dink dit raak alhoemeer lacking."

Participant: "But if we tell them...in the future people are going to be so into their own realities that they will not really learn how to communicate with people and I think that becomes more lacking."

He foresees that people will become less able to communicate and connect in future.

Interpersonal connections will look differently in future.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy almal voel alleen? Alle mense?"

Interviewer: "Do you think everybody feels alone? All people?"

Deelnemer: "Daar is so baie info daar buite jy weet sekere beroepsvorms mense they I know how to keep up with it en in daai sence voel jy lonely en dis 'n universal lonellyness en dis hoekom ons heeltyd met verskillende dinge wil connect connection."

Participant: "There is so much info available outside, you know certain professions types...people.. they don't know how to keep up with it and in that sense you feel lonely and that is an universal loneliness and that is why we want to connect all the time with different things, connection."

He sees the abundance of information available to us as making it difficult to keep up and this leads to a sense of loneliness and this explains why people want to connect with different things.

People lost the ability and know how to connect with each other.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy mense se pogings om daai eensaamheid te verlig is suksesvol? Met ander woorde dink jy ons wen? Wen ons eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you think people's efforts to relieve that loneliness is successful? I other words do you think we are winning? Are we winning the loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Wen ons eensaamheid? Ek dink ons gaan in 'n tydperk beweeg waar daar minder marriages gaan wees met al die divorces ek dink nie mense weet hoe om te connect nie so hulleweet nie Daar is 'n willingness towards to lonelyless and daar is 'n willingness towards connection."

Participant: "Are we winning the loneliness? I think we are going to move into a timespan where there are going to be less marriages with all the divorces. I don't think people know how to connect... so they don't know. There is a willingness towards loneliness and there is a willingness towards connection."

He feels that people does not know how to connect anymore.

People try to connect

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy mense se pogings om daai eensaamheid te verlig is suksesvol? Met ander woorde dink jy ons wen? Wen ons eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you think people's efforts to relieve that loneliness is successful? In other words do you think we are winning? Are we winning the loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Vraag dis 'n groot vraag ns actually daar is dinge wat gedoen word om dit te promove en beter te maak, maar daar word ook natuurlik die countereffect is ook weer daar so ja."

Participant: "Question that is a big question and actually there are things that are being done to promote it and to improve it, but there are also beingnaturally the counter effect is also there again.. so yes."

There are attempts by people to connect but the opposite is also true.

Feeling lonely in the presence of people.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wanneer spesifiek ervaar jy eensaamheid of raak jy meer bewus van jou eie eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "When specifically do you experience loneliness or do you become more aware of your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Wanneer ek alleen is. Ja ag soos ek se dit gebeur tussen mense of as ek op my eie is dis nie 'n spesifieke ding nie dis kan enige tyd gebeur."

Participant: "When I am alone. Yes, as I have said , it happens among people or if I am on my own...it is not a specific thing. It can happen anytime."

He feels lonely when with people and when alone.

Bad experiences makes him relate even worse with people.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sê vir my is daar plekke waarheen jy gaan wanneer jy eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "Tell me, are there specific places that you go to when you feel lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Paar jaar terug toe ek geld nog gehad het 'n Yearning of 'n spesifieke. Wat nogals sad was so graag na sulke goed En hoe meer ek sulke experiences het hoe minder kan ek relate met mense."

Participant: "A few years ago when I still had money..a yearning of a specific....what was quite sad...such a yearning to such stuff...and the more I have such experiences, the less I can relate to people."

Relationships impact ones whole existence.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n enige manier wat eensaamheid 'n rol speel in jou psigiatriese kondisie?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is any way that loneliness can play a role in your psychiatric condition?"

Deelnemer: "So half om te se hoe jy in 'n relationship kan vaar ek sal vir die res van my lewe ge-f wees want ek het nie goeie relationships nie dit affekteer ongelooflik baie."

Participant: "So half to say how you should fare in a relationship... I will be for the rest of my life because I have not had good relationships...It affects it tremendously."

He views the fact that he does not have good relationships as something that will affect his whole life.

Support helps with feelings of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy eensaaamheid...?"

Interviewer: "Do you think loneliness...?"

Support helps with feelings of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy eensaaamheid...?"

Interviewer: "Do you think loneliness...?"

Deelnemer: "Ja hoe meer help en support jy kan kry hoe beter en baie mense het dit nie hulle het net die een of twee mednsxe wat hulle hier sien en die ander pasiente wat hulle oor die weg kom."

Participant: "Yes the more help and support you can get the better and many people have not got it and...they have only got the one or two medics that they see here and the other patients that they get along with."

He feels that support helps a lot with his feelings of loneliness.

He learnt through his experience of loneliness and became encouraged to see what it means to be in a relationship.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe het die dinge wat jy aangepak of gedoen het om met eensaamheid te deal of te cope hoe het dit 'n verskil gemaak in jou belewenis van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "How did the things that you tackled or did to cope or deal with your loneliness ... how did it make a difference in your experience of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Wel een ding was om the accept dit actually te enjoy en ja die benefits daarvan te sien die ander ding is wat jy daaruit leer en dat dit jou actually meer encourage om te sien wat beteken om in 'n relationship te wees beteken dit 'n vriend te wees tussen mense te

wees hoe kan jy ek het daai vriend wat so eensaam is gese whoh jy groet sommer my broer so in public jy is nie bang wat die ander mense dink nie jy kan.”

Participant: “Well, one thing was to accept to actually enjoy and yes to see the benefits of it. The other thing is what you learn out of it and that it actually encourages you more to see what it actually means... to be in a relationship... what it means... to be a friend...to be among people..how can you...I have told that friend that is so lonely... whoh you just greet my brother like that in public... you are not scared of what the other people might think, you can.”

He learnt through his experience of loneliness and became encouraged to see what it means to be in a relationship.

Loneliness is strongly related to interpersonal skills.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Sê my bietjie voel jy minder alleen waanneer of minder eensaam as jy praat oor jou ervaring van eensaamheid?”

Interviewer: “Just tell me, do you feel less lonely when you... or less lonely when you discuss your experience of loneliness?”

Deelnemer: “Developing sence of relationship soos Werdie gese het vir my en ek hou nogals van daai stelling so ja.”

Participant: “Developing sense of relationship as Verdi has said to me and I actually like that statement so yes.”

He wants to develop a better sense of relationship.

Other people are lonely too. Some are more lonely than others.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Ken jy ander mense wat eensaam is?”

Interviewer: “Do you know other people that are lonely?”

Deelnemer: “Ja my een vriend is ook nogals ‘n recluse hy speel meestal van die tyd games en so, hy hou ook nie van mense nie hy is baie skamer as wat ek hy het nog steeds nog nooit ‘n meisie gehad nie nog nooit in ‘n verhouding gewees nie self my vehouding was net ‘n week lank.”

Participant: “Yes my one friend is also quite a recluse. He mostly plays the time games and that. He also doesn’t like people... he is much more shy than I...he still has never had a girlfriend...never been involved in a relationship...even my relationship was only one week long.”

He does know other lonely people. In this case he believes his friend is worse off than him in terms of being a recluse.

In reaction to interpersonal hurt he pushes people away

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ken jy ander mense wat eensaam is?"

Interviewer: "Do you know other people that are lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Hy raak nou al hoe meer angry hy raak soos ek jy push mense later weg because you don't trust them en omdat jy so seergenaak is tussen mense dink ek."

Participant: "He is now becoming all the more angry. He is becoming like me...later you push people away because you don't trust them and because you are so hurt among people I think."

In reaction to interpersonal hurt he pushes people away.

Not knowing what to say makes him more alone.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wanneer jy so alleen voel wat is dit wat jy verwag van ander mense?"

Interviewer: "When you feel so alone what is it that you expect from other people?"

Deelnemer: "Gathering en dan sal ek nie weet wat om te sê nie of soos wat ek nou sukkel om goeters uit te kry dis moeilik om te praat en dan voel jy so half stupid."

Participant: "Gathering and then I will not know what to say or the way I am battling to get things out at present...it is difficult to talk and then you feel half stupid."

He feels anxious about being with other people because he may not know what to say.

Loneliness apparent in the in-patient psychiatric population.

Onderhoudvoerder: "In jou behandeling hier by die hospitaal is daar sekere assosiasies wat jy het met eensaamheid."

Interviewer: "In your treatment here at the hospital, are there certain associations that you have with the loneliness."

Deelnemer: "Ja, dit is sad om te sien al die mense hier, daar is nobody who cares for them, vir my behandeling hierso."

Participant: "Yes, it is sad to see, all the people here, there is nobody who cares for them, for my treatment here."

He sees fellow inpatients as lonely and that nobody cares for them.

In relation to the multidisciplinary team at the hospital. He feels that it brings him in touch with himself.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Of miskien spesifiek met jou verhouding met die multidisiplinêre span die sielkundiges, arbeidsterapeute, psigiaters."

Interviewer: "Or maybe specifically with your relationship with the multidisciplinary team, the psychologists, occupational therapists, psychiatrists."

Deelnemer: "O, hoe ek nou na loneliness kyk vandat ek hier was? Ja nee. Ek het baie geleer deur, en dis die lekker ding om jousef oop te maak, jy weet party word betaal om te luister en party van hulle sê net hulle laat jou praat en jy kan sê soveel as wat jy wil, dis vir my ook kreatiwiteit, persoonlike kreatiwiteit, baie lekker, want dit leer jou om daai inner voice te hoor, jou narration van hoe jy jousef sien is, vir my nogals lekker, so in daai sense is jy dan nie alleen nie want jy weet ten minste word jy gehoor."

Participant: "O, how I now look at loneliness since I am here? Yes no. I have learnt a lot there and that is the nice thing, to open yourself, you know some are being paid to listen and some of them just say, they let you talk and you can say as much as you want, that is also creativity to me, personal creativity, very nice, because it teaches you to hear that inner voice, your narration of how you see yourself is, for me quite nice, so in that sense ,you are not alone, because you know at least you are being heard."

He finds it a positive experience to open up to members of the multidisciplinary team. It brings him in touch with his inner voice.

When he feels that people listen to him, being heard he feels less lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Of miskien spesifiek met jou verhouding met die multidisiplinêre span die sielkundiges, arbeidsterapeute, psigiaters?"

Interviewer: "Or may be specifically with your relationship with the multi-disciplinary team, the psychologists, occupational therapists, psychiatrists?"

Deelnemer: "So in daai sense is jy dan nie alleen jy want jy weet ten minste word jy gehoor, dis nogals lekker ja."

Participant: "So in that sense, are you then not alone...you because you know at least you are being heard, that is quite nice, yes."

Therapeutic sessions helped him grow.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar spesifieke ervaringe wat jy gehad het in jou behandeling wat jy dink 'n verskil gemaak het aan jou eie belewenis van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Are there specific experiences that you have had in your treatment that you think made a difference to your own perception of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek sien elke oomblik en elke sessie as 'n step of growth so ek dink elkeen is spesifiek op sy eie 'n step forward ja, so spesifiek."

Participant: "I see every moment and each session as a step of growth so I think each is specific on its own a step forward yes, so specific."

He sees his therapy sessions as a positive step forward in growth.

Stigma of mental disorders contribute to feelings of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar enige assosiasie met die medikasie?"

Interviewer: "Is there any association with the medication?"

Deelnemer: "Nog steeds nie ek het rênig problem, ek het low serotonin, ek is baie depressed vir geen rede partykeer nie, baie mense sê wat is fout met my, ek bluff mense net, dat daar niks eintlik fout is met my nie, hulle kan nie recognise nie, dis soos asof jy nie bene het nie."

Participant: "Still not, just I have really got problems, I have low serotonin, I am often depressed for no particular reason, many people say what is wrong with me, I just bluff people, so with me there is actually nothing wrong, they can't recognise it, it is like you have got no legs."

Self medicating can be a response to loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar spesifieke goed wat jy doen as jy eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "Are there specific things that you do when you feel lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Ja dit is waar die addictive goed in kom. Soos baie drink, of jy weet dit laat jou net meer relax, ek weet nie, ek dink dis in daai space waar ek my imagination gedvelop het, want; om jousef te moet entertain, so dit develop goed, dis goed vir sekere goed waar jy kan, jy kan makliker voel dit is soos medication time waar jy net moet alleen wees."

Participant: "Yes, that is where the addictive stuff comes in, like drinking a lot or you know it just allows you to relax more, I do not know, I think it is that space where I developed my imagination, because, you have to entertain yourself, so it develops well, it is good for certain things where you can, you can easier feel it is like medication time where you just have to be alone."

He self medicates in response to loneliness to relax.

Talking about loneliness can help.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sê my bietjie voel jy minder alleen waannneer of minder eensaam as jy praat oor jou ervaring van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Tell me, do you feel less lonely when or less alone if you talk about your experience of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Kan myself nie genoeg artikuleer nie, so bietjie perfectionistic, anxiety so maar ja dit voel lekker om daaroor te kan praat, letting people know about your own story."

Participant: "Cannot articulate myself enough, a bit perfectionistic, anxiety so but yes, it feels nice to be able to talk about it, letting people know about your own story."

He feels good to talk about his experience of loneliness and telling people about his own story.

Talking about loneliness can change your internal state but not the actual fact that you are alone.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sê my bietjie voel jy minder alleen waanneer of minder eensaam as jy praat oor jou ervaring van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Tell me, do you feel less lonely when or less lonely if you talk about your experience of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "He feels that on the other hand he just goes back to the loneliness after talking about it thus it doesn't change the fact that he is lonely."

Participant: "He feels that on the other hand he just goes back to the loneliness after talking about it thus it doesn't change the fact that he is lonely."

This brings the concepts of an internal state versus just a feeling into the picture.

Talking about loneliness in psychotherapy

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy al ooit in jou lewe gepraat oor jou ervaring van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Have you ever in your life talked about your experience of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ja, met my self en daai ander oukie myself en myself. Nee, ek obviously doen dit nou in my sessies hierso, sielkunde dis maar eintlik al waar jy vry genoeg voel om dit te doen."

Participant: "Yes with myself and that other guy myself and myself. No, I am obviously doing it now in these sessions, psychology, that is actually the only place where you feel free enough to do it."

4.4. Participant 4

No fantasies of being alone.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wel dit is al beskryf dat party mense met tye fantasieë het om byvoorbeeld op 'n eiland alleen te wees. Voel jy soms so?"

Interviewer: "Well it has been described that some people at times have fantasies to be alone on an island for example. Do you sometimes feel like this?"

Deelnemer 4: "Nee. Hoofsaaklik omdat ek die meerdertyd van die tyd vir myself fisies alleen maak dit gebeur nie dat ek wens ek wil alleen wees nie, op 'n eiland weg van alles en almal nie."

Participant 4: "No. Mainly because most of the time I make myself physically lonely it does not happen that I want to be on my own, on an island away from everything and everybody."

The participant does not have fantasies about being alone because he isolates himself in reality.

Destructive fantasies

Participant 4 enters into a fantasy of wiping out the world.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Baie mense beskryf 'n gevoel van hulle behoort nie, a lack of belonging. Hoe voel jy daaroor?"

Interviewer: "A lot of people describe a feeling of not belonging, a lack of belonging. How do you feel about that?"

Deelnemer 4: "As iemand vir my 'n groot rooi knoppie op 'n paneel uitwys en se as jy daai knoppie druk is al die mense insluitende jousef dood, sal ek dit doen."

Participant 4: "If somebody points a big red button out on a panel and says that if to activate it all people including myself will die, I will do it."

He uses an example of having the opportunity to wipe out the human race and states he will do it if he has the ability. The existential idea of non-being surfaces here. Not-being-part-of-the-world points to fantasies of non-being and a desire to cease to exist. Some anger against the world may also manifest here.

Non-existence in fantasy

The participant wants to bring the world to non-existence as a way of solving all problems...Does this maybe relate to underlying suicidal ideation? As an escape from all problems.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat sal jou motivering wees om die rooi knoppie te druk en almal uit te wis?"

Interviewer: "What will be your motivation to press the red button and exterminate everybody?"

Deelnemer 4: "Dis my persoonlike opinie en ek weet dis 'n baie ekstreem opinie maar dis een oplossing vir ons mense se problem, om ontslae te raak van die mense, en nie net spesifiek individue nie maar al die mense en dit kom terug na my wêreld uitkyk waar ek nie voel dat ons, dat ek as mens, ons as homosapiens enig iets spesiaal is nie."

Participant 4: "It is my personal opinion and I know it is an extreme opinion but its is one solution to our peoples' problems, to get rid of all people, and not only specific individuals but all people and that reverts back to my worldview, the fact that I as person, wen as homosapiens are not anything special."

He does not see human beings as something special and sees the extinction of the human race as a way to solve all the problems in the world.

A need to be alone as resulting in a withdrawal into fantasy.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So dink jy dat eensaamheid jou preferred state geword het?"

Interviewer: "So do you believe that loneliness became your preferred state?"

Deelnemer 4: "Ja. Ek het baie me-time nodig soos hulle dit stel, ek hou daarvan om myself in 'n wêreld te verloor wat nie ander mense insluit nie."

Participant 4: "Yes. I need a lot of me-time as they put it, I love it to lose myself in a world that does not include other people."

The participant prefers being alone. He needs to spend time alone and loses himself in a fantasy world without people.

Rejection and loneliness.

Participant 4 feels that rejection and loneliness are related.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Watse gevoel het dit jou mee gelaat?"

Interviewer: "What feeling did it leave you with?"

Deelnemer 4: "Ek het baie baie vrouens en vriendskappe gehad, wat geëindig het die oomblik toe die persoon deur hulle probleme gewerk het. Verwerping natuurlik."

Participant 4: "I had lots and lots of women and friendships, that ended as soon as the person had worked through their problems. Rejected obviously"

For participant 4 rejection surfaces as a strong theme related to his experience of loneliness. In his experience rejection by others preceded feelings of interpersonal loneliness. He also felt that his intimate partners only used him in a way to work through their problem and thereafter left him.

Facing rejection from others in reaction to spiritual questions.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dit klink asof jy in daai woestyn fase meer en meer bewus moes raak van jou eensaamheid met hierdie niks."

Interviewer: "It sounds as if you had to become more and more aware of your loneliness with this nothing during that desert phase."

Deelnemer 4: "Klomp goed uit geloof en nie net uit Christenskap nie, hoekom?, waar kom hierdie vandaan en baie mense het probeer om my te beantwoord, ander mense het probeer om demone uit my te dryf ander mense het probeer om my eenvoudig bombasties te antwoord bla bla bla. Asseblief bly net weg van my. Dis ook miskien in 'n mate eensaamheid want tussen al hierdie mense wat ek gevra het dis net 'n paar van my vriende weereens die vriende wat nie weet dat jy eensaam voel nie, wat die moeite gedoen het om te probeer verstaan wat ek probeer vra."

Participant 4: "Lots of stuff from religion and not only out of Christianity, why?, where does this originate from and lots of people tried to answer me, other people tried to drive out demons from me and others tried to answer me simply bombastic blab la bla. Please just keep away from me. It might also be loneliness to an extent because among all these people I asked it was only a few of my friends once again friends that did not know that you were lonely, that did go to the trouble to try and understand what I'm trying to ask."

In his quest to find answers on his spiritual questions he experienced people rejecting him and that made him feel lonely. This may point to a larger societal dynamic where people are scared to question because they fear rejection and loneliness. Therefore they cannot be authentic but have to keep their questions for themselves.

Loneliness does not exist in the absence of rejection.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sê jy dat lack of kommunikasie bydrae tot 'n pasiënt se belewenis eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Are you saying that a lack of communication contributes to a patient's experience of loneliness?"

Deelnemer 4: "In die hospitaal het ek mense gekry wat kommunikeer met mekaar, inligting uit ruil en so my as 'n geheel aan gesprek en dit laat my waardevol voel. Dit laat natuurlik mense voel asof iemand aktief probeer om te verstaan hoe kompleks die situasies is, waar alles agtermekaar kom, agtermekaar gesit kan word en dis is daar nie 'n gevoel van verwerping nie. Die teenoorgestelde, soos die eensaamheid verdwyn."

Participant 4: "In hospital I found people here that communicate with each other, exchange information and thereby addressed me in total and that made me feel valuable. That of course makes one feel as if somebody is actively trying to understand how complex the situations are, where everything fits in, could be ordered and then no feeling of rejection exists. The opposite like the loneliness disappears."

When he does not experience rejection and he feels that people try to understand him his loneliness disappears.

Rejection as precursor to loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy, en ons het gister vlugtig daaraan geraak, dink jy daar is 'n verband tussen jou belewenis van verwerping en jou eensaamheid ervaring?"

Interviewer: "Do you think, and we have touched on it slightly yesterday, do you think a relationship exists between your experience of rejection and your loneliness experience?"

Deelnemer 4: "Logies maak dit sin die een volg op die ander in 'n sirkel tipe. Ek dink. Ek sou sê in my geval het die eensaamheid gekom na verwerping, of wat ek ervaar het as verwerping as ek nou terug kyk."

Participant 4: "Logically it makes sense the one follows on the other in a circle type. I think. I would say in my case the loneliness came after rejection, or what I perceive to be rejection in hindsight."

He feels that loneliness follows rejection as experience.

The feeling qualities of loneliness are similar to that of anxiety and rejection.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So dis (eensaamheid) 'n slegte ervaring?"

Interviewer: "Therefore (loneliness) is a bad experience?"

Deelnemer 4: "Ja. Alleen wees het 'n baie keer het baie keer vir my positiewe konneksies maar eensaamheid op die manier wat ek dit sien en ervaar en definieer is nie 'n goeie ding nie, dis die as 'n mens die woordjie eensaam noem gee my 'n onmiddellike 'n emosionele konneksie wat gemaak word met verwerping en angs."

Participant 4: "Yes. Being alone has often got positive connections but loneliness in the way that I see and experience and define it is not a good thing, it is therefore if somebody mentions the word loneliness it is as if an immediate emotional connection is made with rejection and anxiety."

For participant 4 the idea of loneliness makes him feel the same way as anxiety and rejection. However being alone often is a positive experience for him.

Withdrawal in reaction to loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As kind of adolescent of volwassene wanneer dink jy is die eerste keer waar jy eensaamheid beleef het?"

Interviewer: "As a child or adolescent or adult when do you think was the first time that you experienced loneliness?"

Deelnemer 4: "Daar was ook tye gewees voor dit waar ek myself in 'n dop ingetrek het soos byvoorbeeld in standerd 2 en standerd 3."

Participant 4: "There were also times before that where I withdrew into myself for example standerd 2 and standerd 3."

The participant immediately associates loneliness with withdrawing into his shell. He recalls earlier periods in his life where he has withdrawn.

Withdrawal in response to hurt as a defensive manoeuvre.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sê jy dat a lack of kommunikasie bydrae tot die pasiënt se eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you say that a lack of communication contributed to the loneliness of the patient?"

Deelnemer 4: "Juis daarmee het ek 'n probleem. Jy is seer, jys is stukkend. Ons as lewende wesens insluitende mense wanneer jy seer is wanneer jy stukkend is trek jy terug, dis beskermend, dis 'n manier om te oorleef."

Participant 4: "Especially with that I have a problem. You are hurt, you are broken. We as living beings including people when you are hurt, when you are broken down, you withdraw, to protect yourself, that is the way to survive."

The participant experiences his withdrawal as a way to survive and protect himself. Withdrawing from people and preferring solitary activities.

Pushing people away before they can leave you.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat dink jy was die gevolge van daai eensaamheid op jou lewe? Het dit gelyk of alle dinge reaksies op 'n sielkunde vlak het?"

Interviewer: "What do you think was the consequences of that loneliness in your life? Did it seem as if all things had reactions on a psychological level?"

Deelnemer 4: "Ek het ook aktief mense weggestoot van my met die idee dat wat is die punt om iemand in jou lewe toe te laat terwyl hulle jou in elke geval net weer op die einde van die dag gaan los?"

Participant 4: "I have also actively distanced people from me with the idea that what is the point to allow somebody into your life if they are in any case going to leave you at the end of the day."

The participant actively pushed people away in reaction to the thought that it is not worth it to allow people into your life if they are going to leave you in the end. He thus anticipates rejection and the subsequent loneliness. We can speculate that anticipatory loneliness may be a driving force behind human behaviour to connect to others or withdraw.

Withdrawal in reaction to not communicating as the start of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar ander spesifieke verhoudings waar jy veral bewus was van die dinamika, dat mense jou nie verstaan nie verstaan nie wat jou eensaam laat voel het?"

Interviewer: "Are there other specific relationships where you were aware of a dynamic of people not understanding you that left you feeling lonely?"

Deelnemer 4: "Ten spyte van hoe ook al ek probeer het het ek agterkom die persoon begin belangstelling verloor, dit is asof ek net sê jy stel nie belang in my nie, en daarna begin die onttrekking, die eensaamheid proses."

Participant 4: "Regardless of how I tried I became aware that the other person is losing interest, it is as if I just say you are not interested in me, and after that the withdrawal starts the loneliness process."

If the participant experiences that people are not interested in him this makes him withdraw and he sees this as the beginning of the loneliness process.

Loneliness can be present from early in life but can be experienced differently through different life stages.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As jy terugkyk oor jou lewe is daar spesifieke tye waar jy meer eensaam was."

Interviewer: "If you look back over your life are there specific times where you were more lonely?"

Deelnemer: "My kinderjare. Van puberteit wat by my vroeg ingeskop het, 'n paar maande nadat ek 12, geword het regdeur tot in die middel van my eerste jaar op universiteit."

Participant: "My childhood. From puberty that kicked in early in my life a few months after I turned 12, right through to the middle of my first year at university."

He experienced loneliness particularly during his childhood years. He sees the onset of this as from puberty lasting until the middle of his first year on university.

Loneliness can be present from early adolescence.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar 'n spesifieke tyd in jou lewe, as jy nou terugdink waar jy die eerste keer bewus geword het van die eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Is there a specific time in your life if you think back that you became aware for the first time of your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek onthou baie duidelik gevalle en insidente in standerd 4, standerd 5 so met ander woorde hier rondom 12; 13; maar daar was ook tye gewees voor dit waar ek myself in 'n dop ingetrek het soos byvoorbeeld in standerd 2 en standerd 3."

Participant: "I remember distinctly cases and incidents in standerd 4, standerd 5 in other words approximately 12, 13, but there were also times before then when I retracted into my skin for example in standerd 2 and standerd 3."

He refers to early adolescence, ages 12/13 as the time he first became aware of feelings of loneliness.

Being cut off – lonely

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het dit 'n verskil gemaak in jou eensaamheid belewenis?"

Interviewer: "Does it make a difference in your experience of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Dit is 'n mate van eensaamheid maar nie eensaamheid soos ek dit tot dusver beskryf het nie, dis 'n afgesnydheid van haar, ek voel afgesny van haar."

Participant: "That is loneliness to a degree but not loneliness as I have described it up to now, it is disconnectedness from her, and I feel cut off from her."

He experiences himself as cut off from her.

Image of loneliness as different colours where black and white is contrasted with colour.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So jy sê te midde van die feit dat jy wel mense om jou gehad het, het jy nog steeds eensaam gevoel? Dat daai samehorigheid nie rêrig die eensaamheid verlig het nie?"

Interviewer: "So you say, in the midst of the fact that you were surrounded by people, that you still felt lonely? That the togetherness did not really relieve the loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Die prentjie wat ek altyd in my kop het, is hierdie skote wat 'n mens somtyds in fliks kry wat hulle op een persoon in 'n groep fokus en hulle gebruik wat ook al om die ander mense so te laat wegfade, die kleure, amper daai persoon staan in kleur, al die mense rondom raak swart en wit. Dis die prentjie wat by my op kom as ek dink aan eensaamheid."

Participant: "The picture that I always have in my head, are these shots that one sees in movies from time to time where they focus on one person in a group and they use whatever to get the other people to fade away, the colours, almost that person stands in colour all the people around fade to black and white. That is the picture that comes up in my mind when I think about loneliness."

His sees a picture in his mind of people fading away in black and white whilst another stands out in colour.

Loneliness as an abstract concept.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ja partykeer vat jy gesprekke na 'n dieper vlak en situasies kom na vore en dinge raak los"

Interviewer: "Yes sometimes you take a conversation to a deeper level and situations arise and things loosen up"

Deelnemer: "Ja, ek het deur my girl se situasie te beskryf het ek vir jou baie kere 'n prentjie gegee in terme van daardie vraag as wat dit deur my eie oogpunt sou gewees het huidiglik, want eensaamheid in my eie lewe huidiglik my eie persoonlike ervaring van eensaamheid is huidiglik 'n abstrakte konsep vir my."

Participant: "Yes, I did by describing my girlfriend's situation I have often given you a picture in terms of that question more so than my own point of view presently, because loneliness in my own life at present my own experience of loneliness is at present an abstract concept to me."

He feels that his current experience of loneliness is an abstract concept.

Lack of knowledge of self – loneliness??

Onderhoudvoerder: “In terme van eensaamheid is daar ooit tye wat jy vervreemd voel van jouself of eensaam voel in verhouding tot jouself?”

Interviewer: “In terms of loneliness have there ever been times that you felt estranged from yourself or felt lonely in relationship to yourself?”

Deelnemer: “In fisika kan jy ‘n stel, ‘n paar bladsye vol vergelykings neerplonk hier is die heelal, verduidelik, dis die heelal. Ek kan nie dit doen met myself nie. So in daai opsig sal ek sê daar is baie eensaamheid maar as ek disconnect tussen eensaamheid en self.”

Participant: “In physics you can put down a set of formulas, a few pages of equations, here is the universe, explain, this is the universe. I cannot do that with myself. Therefore in that manner I will say that there is a lot of loneliness but a disconnect between loneliness and self.”

He compares this self estrangement to physics where there are formulas that structure experience. He experiences a lot of loneliness in relation to himself.

He sees that having a close relationship to one’s pets can make a difference in the experience of loneliness.

Pets can make a difference in how one experiences loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: “So daai teenwoordigheid van die kat... So sy het n aktiewe poging aangewend om by jou uit te kom.”

Interviewer: “So that presense of the cat...So she tried actively to reach you...”

Deelnemer: “Ons het ‘n kat gehad wat half blind was en die vertrek wat ek in geslaap het was in ‘n huur huis net na ons Bloemfontein getrek het het in die winter son gekry, oosterse son gekry. Ja, natuurlik vir die obvious rede om in die son te kom, maar dit was nie net dit gewees nie, sy het ook as ek van die huis gekom het van die skool af sy het altyd geweet wanneer en snaaks genoeg my pa ook sy weet wanneer my pa by die huis kom so wanneer sy die kar hoor en die enjin herken hardloop sy by die voordeur uit om hom te gaan ontmoet. As ons kinders by die huis gekom het ban die skool af het sy na my toe gekom.”

Participant: “We had a cat that was half blind and the room in which I slept. It was a rented house just after we moved to Bloemfontein, got sun in winter, eastern sun. Yes, of course for the obvious reason to get into the sun, but it was not only that, she did also when I arrived home from school....she always knew when and funnily enough my dad as well. Arrived at home... so when she hears the car and recognises the engine, she ran out of the front door to go and meet him. When we kids arrived at home from the school then she came to me.”

He describes his close relationship to a cat he had in the past. This cat was tuned into him and was particularly fond of him and his dad.

He associates certain places with feeling lonely and places where he goes to when he wants to be alone.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ja soos jy vandag voel plekke waar jy positiewe herinneringe het as jy."

Interviewer: "Yes, the way you feel today. Places of which you have positive memories when you..."

Deelnemer: "Daar is 'n paar plekke op skool party van die ja die skool op laerskool op hoërskool die 2 hoerskole is daar spesifieke plekke by die skole fisiese plekke voel ek eensaam dis waar ek gegaan het as ek alleen gelos wou word, as ek voel ek wou nie tussen mense wees nie, en die redes hoekom ek wil weg wees is omdat ek voel ek voel ongelukkig."

Participant: "There are a few places at school... some of the...yes the school...at primary school and high school... the 2 high schools...there are specific places at the schools. Physical places where I felt lonely... that is where I went when I did not want to be bothered, when I felt I did not want to be among people, and the reasons why I wanted to be gone are because I felt... I felt unhappy."

He associates certain places with feeling lonely and places where he goes to when he wants to be alone.

A yearning to just be and just being is seen as a space where he can freely experience his emotions.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So het jy Meer eensaam gevoel by daai spesifieke plek? Of dink jy dit het jou net meer bewus gemaak van die feit dat jy eensaam is?"

Interviewer: "So you felt lonelier at that specific place? Or do you think it just made you more aware of the fact that you are lonely?"

Deelnemer: ek wil toe ek Denmar toe ek wil net wees, hier was plekke gewees waar ek net kon wees, dit beteken die emosies is nie so onderdruk nie, daai gevoel van eensaamheid is nie agter in 'n hoek weggedruk gewees nie.

Participant: "I wanted when I was at Denmar...I just wanted to be, here were places where I could just be, that means the emotions were not much suppressed, that feeling of loneliness was not hidden in a back corner."

He seeks for places where he can just be, where his emotions can be freely experienced.

Associates with places where one can just be such as his home but the nature of such places can change to where one needs to wear a mask.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So op 'n manier kan jy ook veiliger plekke kry wat jou kan toelaat om bewus te word van wat jy eintlik voel?"

Interviewer: "So in a way you could also have safer places that allow you to be more aware of what you really feel?"

Deelnemer: "Kan function. Ek dink daai ding gaan dit gaan verander, die huis is 'n plek gewees waar ek kan ontspan en myself wees dit het dit geword oor die laaste jaar saam met Hilda daar maar ek het nog steeds my filters en my maskers op ek beweeg nie elke dag net met 'n more roaing emosie by die huis."

Participant: "Can function. I think that thing is going...it is going to change, the house is a place where I can relax and be myself... it became that during the last year with Hilda present, but I have still got my filters and my masks on...I don't move every day just with a more roaring/ emotion at home."

He feels that the nature of places can change from one where you can just be to one where you need to wear a mask.

Believing that happiness is what should be achieved denies the fact that life is tough

Onderhoudvoerder: "So op 'n manier kan jy ook veiliger plekke kry wat jou kan toelaat om bewus te word van wat jy eintlik voel?"

Interviewer: "So in a way you could also have safer places that allow you to be more aware of what you really feel?"

Deelnemer: "Wees, dis mos iets wat mos in die laaste 100 150 jaar uitgekome het dat mens moet gelukkig wees terwyl in die geskiedenis het mense geweet dat 80 persent van hulle lewe gaan kak wees, en ek ek het nooit altyd ek het selde gevoel asof ek daai rou emosies teenoor haar kan wys en dis my eie probleem my eie skuld gewees want ek het gevoel sy sal dit nie verstaan nie."

Participant: "Be, that is something that surfaced in the last 100-150 years, that one must be happy, while in the history the people knew that 80% of their life is going to be shit, and I have never...always. I have seldom felt that I could reveal the raw emotions to her and that is my own problem. My own fault because I felt that she will not understand it."

He feels that the pursuit of happiness has become the goal for existence whereby before life was seen as tough.

He sees a relation between the psychological and physical dimensions of living.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar ooit gedagtes het wat jy het rondom jou liggaamlike belewenis en eensaamheid? Voel jy dit aan jou lyf as jy eensaamheid is soms?"

Interviewer: "Are there ever thoughts that you have about your physical experience and loneliness? Do you sometimes feel on your body that you are lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Maar dit sinspeel op die verband tussen 'n sielkundige verband en 'n fisiese reaksie. Ja maar ke probeer baie om dis nie solinieer nie dis diskreet. Ek het 'n baie spesifieke eintlike sulke tipe goeters agv my jy kan nie se dat die eensaamheid 'n fisiese inpak het, want die eensaamheid lei na ander emosionele kondisies wat wel 'n fisiese impak het."

Participant: "But that insinuates on the relation between a psychological and a physical reaction. Yes but I often try to... it is not solinieer? It is discreet. I have a very specific...actually that type of stuff because of me...you cannot say that loneliness has a physical impact, because loneliness leads to other emotional conditions that have got a physical impact."

He sees a relation between the psychological and physical dimensions of living.

Loneliness can manifest physically.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar ooit gedagtes het wat jy het rondom jou liggaamlike belewenis en eensaamheid? Voel jy dit aan jou lyf as jy eensaamheid is soms?"

Interviewer: Are there ever thoughts that you have about your physical experience and loneliness? Do you sometimes feel on your body that you are lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Het 'n baie spesifieke eintlike sulke tipe goeters agv my jy kan nie se dat die eensaamheid 'n fisiese inpak het, want die eensaamheid lei na ander emosionele kondisies wat wel 'n fisiese impak het."

Participant: "Have a very specific...actually that type of stuff because of me...you cannot say that loneliness has a physical impact, because loneliness leads to other emotional conditions that have got a physical impact."

He believes that the loneliness leads to other emotional conditions that causes physical symptoms.

Sex as another way to curb loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat dink jy doen mense ander mense behalwe jy as hulle eensaam is?"

Interviewer: "What do you think people do other people accept you when they are lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Jong, hulle probeer uitreik op 'n verskeidenheid van maniere. Dwelms natuurlik die algemene ene because it works for the record. Iets wat ek opgetel het onder vrouens is dat hulle hulle probeer seksueel uitreik en hulle probeer konneksies vorm dmv seks."

Participant: "Wow, they try to overcome in many different ways. Drugs of course the popular one because it works for the record. Something that I have picked up among the women is that they...they try to connect sexually and to form connections by means of sex."

Women in his opinion often try to reach out through sex to form connections.

Healthy sexual relationship as opposite to loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n verband tussen seksuele verhoudings en eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is a relationship between sexual relationships and loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ja. 'n gesonde intieme seksuele verhouding is die waarskynlik die die ding wat so ver as moontlik teenoorgesteld is van eensaamheid."

Participant: "Yes. A healthy intimate sexual relationship is the probable...the thing that is as far as possible opposite from loneliness."

He sees a healthy sexual relationship as the opposite to loneliness.

Sex as deeper connectedness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n verband tussen seksuele verhoudings en eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is a relation between sexual relationships and loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek bedoel dis dis so naby as wat jy met 'n ander persoon kan kom, soveel as wat jy kan deel met 'n ander persoon, die emosionele en intellektuele konneksie wat jy maak met 'n persoon vir wie jy lief is, waar jy 'n seksuele 'n intieme seks is sekondêr, die fisiese goed is sekondêr, dis wat in jou gedagtes aangaan."

Participant: "I mean it is as close as you can come to another person, as much as you can share with another person, the intellectual and emotional connection you make with somebody you love. The sexual intimate sex is secondary, the physical stuff is secondary. Its what goes on in your head."

He sees sex as a deeper way of connection intimately to another person. There is also the dimension of connecting in one's thoughts sexually.

He experiences sexual relations as both intellectual and emotional.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n verband tussen seksuele verhoudings en eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is a relationship between sexual relationships and loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Vir my persoonlik voel ek dit 'n emosionele en intellektuele konneksie, en as ek so luister na wat my vriendinne my vertel is dit presies wat dit is en my wêreld view is dat vrouens soek daai emosionele intellektuele konneksie wat jy kry dmv seks terwyl ons mans meer geneig is om te kyk na die fisiese aspekte."

Participant: "For me personally...I feel it is an emotional and intellectual connection, and if listen to what my girlfriends tell me it is exactly what it is and my world view is that women are looking for that emosional intellectual connection that you get through/by means of sex while us men are more inclined to look at the physical aspects."

He associates this type of connection as an intellectual and sexual connection. This is the type of connection woman want. While men look more to the physical aspects.

Now also not understanding himself reflects his loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar tye, in jou, in die afgelope ruk waar jy eensaamheid beleef het of waar jy eensaam gevoel het?"

Interviewer: "Are there times, in you, in the recent time that you experienced loneliness or where you felt lonely?"

Deelnemer: "As ek nie kan kommunikeer, myself kan kommunikeer nie, myself verstaan nie begin ek myself terugtrek in myself."

Participant: "If I can't communicate, can't communicate myself, can't understand myself, I start to withdraw myself into myself Not understanding himself leads to withdrawal into himself."

Not understanding himself leads to withdrawal into himself.

Loneliness is a feeling he can get used to.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wanneer iemand jou nou nie verstaan nie en jy kry daai gevoel van eensaamheid of jy wil onttrek hoe sou jy daai gevoel beskryf? In terme van jou belewenis van eensaamheid, wat, hoe voel dit? Hoe is dit?"

Interviewer: "If somebody does not understand you now and you get that impression of loneliness or you want to withdraw, how will you describe that feeling? In terms of your experiencing of loneliness, what, what does it feel like? How is it?"

Deelnemer: "Eensaamheid stel spesifiek, is dit soos water op 'n eend se rug, want ek is gewoon daaraan."

Participant: "Loneliness states specifically, it is like water on a duck's back, because I am used to it."

Over time he has become used to feeling loney.

Loneliness leads to anxiety.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So jy reken jy het half numb geraak of die gevoel, dit het nie meer so 'n impak soos miskien vroeër in jou lewe gehad nie?"

Interviewer: "So you reckon you have become half numb of the feeling, it has not had the same impact as it has had earlier in your life?"

Deelnemer: "Eensaamheid is lekker. Behalwe dat dit lei tot angs."

Participant: "Loneliness is nice. Except that it leads to anxiety."

He has positive experiences of loneliness but feels that it leads to anxiety.

Difference between being alone and loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy wel daar is 'n verskil tussen eensaamheid en alleen wees?"

Interviewer: "Do you really think that there is a difference between loneliness and being alone?"

Deelnemer: "Ja."

Participant: "Yes."

He sees a difference between being alone and loneliness.

You don't need to be alone to be lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe sal jy die verskil verstaan?"

Interviewer: "How will you understand the difference?"

Deelnemer: "Mens het nie nodig om alleen te wees om eensaam te wees nie."

Participant: "One does not need to be alone to be lonely."

Sees that one does not need to be alone to be lonely.

Solitude as positive experience.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So jy praat van partykeer is solitude is vir jou 'n aangename belewenis?"

Interviewer: "So you say that sometimes solitude is an enjoyable experience to you?"

Deelnemer: "Dis altyd 'n aangename belewenis. Wel nie altyd nie maar daar is nie veel goed wat ek geniet meer as solitude nie."

Participant: "It is always an enjoyable experience. Well not always, but there are not many things that I enjoy more than solitude."

He experiences solitude as being a positive experience.

Not aware of others loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is baie van die ander pasiënte wat ook so voel hierso? In terme van hoe hulle."

Interviewer: "Do you think there are a lot of the other patients here that feel the same way? In terms of how."

Deelnemer: "Ek weet nie. Dit wil vir my voorkom asof almal heelyd buitekant sit en nonsens praat en rook."

Participant: "I do not know. I get the impression that all of them are always sitting outside and talking nonsense and smoke."

He is not sure if other patients also feel lonely.

A difference in how he opens up to others and how they open up to him.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n verband tussen eensaamheid en daai tipe gedrag?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is a relationship between loneliness and that type of conduct?"

Deelnemer: "Ontmoet het, is nie meer die meerderheid is nie die tipe persone met wie ek assosieer nie. Ongeag van emosionele en psigiatriese kondisie. Ek het tot dusver nog net nie die tipe persoon regtig waar ontmoet wat ek mee kan assosieer as 'n mens nie. Wat ironies is, want almal kry geassosieer met my op een of ander vlak."

Participant: "... met, is the majority not the type of people that I want to associate with. Notwithstanding emotional and psychiatric condition. I have up to now just not really met the right type of person that I want to associate with what is ironic, because everybody associates with me on some level or another."

He finds it difficult to associate himself with people. But feels that people easily associate themselves with him.

Alone in the work place.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is dit iets wat buite die hospitaal ook so is of is dit net hier?"

Interviewer: "Is that something that is also the same outside the hospital or is it just here?"

Deelnemer: "Ek raak moeg daarvoor om so alleen te werk."

Participant: "I become tired of working all on my own."

He becomes tired at times of working alone.

Loneliness as manifesting in the workplace.

Onderhoudvoerder: "In terme jy sit daar in die kantoor en jy voel alleen?"

Interviewer: "In terms that you sit there in the office and you feel lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Ek sal baie keer alleen voel terwyl ek by 'n kliënt sit."

Participant: "I will often feel lonely while I am with a client."

He experiences feelings of loneliness at work.

Cultural disconnectedness as growth place of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "OK. Jy het aan my genoem dat jy al 'n keer of wat oorsee gewerk het. Was daar vir 'n verskil in jou belewenis van eensaamheid? Sou jy daar wees of hier wees?"

Interviewer: "OK. You mentioned to me that you have worked once or more overseas. Was there a difference in your experiencing of loneliness? Would you rather be there or here?"

Deelnemer: "Oorsee is die eensaamheid en afsondering baie meer natuurlik want dis geheel en al verskillende kultuur, mense wat jy glad nie ken nie plus dis van so aard dat ek nie eens wil uitkom en verken nie al is ek in 'n nuwe plek jy voel ook meer alleen daar."

Participant: "Overseas the loneliness and seclusion are much more natural because it is a totally different culture, people that you don't know at all plus it is of such a nature that I don't even want to go out and explore even though I am in a new place, you also feel more lonely there."

He feels more alone working overseas in the context of different cultures.

The striving to be popular equals fake connectedness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Maar dink jy die feit dat facebook trek al oor die sewe honderd miljoen gebruikers se vir ons iets van mense se behoefte om tog kontak te maak."

Interviewer: "But do you think the fact that Facebook have already got more than seven million users tells us something about people's need to make contact."

Deelnemer: "Ek sal eerder se dit spreek tot ons die mense se behoefte om te lyk of ons gewild is."

Participant: "I would rather say it reprimands/talks to us, the people's need to create an impression that we are popular."

He feels that internet connections such as Facebook points to people's need to be popular rather than their need to connect.

Popularity as a false sense of connectedness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So jy sê daar is 'n tipe fakingness aan daai."

Interviewer: "So you say there is a type of faking in that"

Deelnemer: "Mense wat met my op skool was wat nooit met my gepraat het nie, mense wat my eintlik lelik hanteer het my skielik wil friend op facebook miskien het hulle verander miskien wil hulle kommunikeer miskien het hulle groot geword maar is dit nie die geval gewees van een vrou. Dit gaan persy oor gewildheid."

Participant: "People that were at school with me that never talked to me, people that have actually treated me badly, that all of a sudden want to befriend me on Facebook, may be they have changed, may be they want to communicate, and may be they grew up but is it not a case of one woman. It per se revolves around popularity."

He experiences that people do not connect on Facebook for authentic reasons but that they only want to connect to people that others have connected to. He sees it as all about popularity.

The intellects can numb the feelings of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Jy het netnou genoem jy trek ook baie in tegnologie as jy tot watter mate verlig dit jou eensaamheid tot watter mate."

Interviewer: "You mentioned just now that you indulge a lot in technology, to what extent it relieves the loneliness, to what extent..."

Deelnemer: "Onderdruk my emosies as 'n mens jou jou gedagte proses opbreek in suiwer intellektueel en indien moontlik suiwer emosioneel is dit gewoonlik 'n mengelmoes van die twee wanneer jy dink. Wanneer ek myself onttrek in tegnologie kan ek myself verloor in die iets wat absolute intellektuele konsentrasie verg, die logiese, die voorste gedeelte van my brein moet een honderd persent fokus op wat ek doen, dit beteken die emosies is nie daar nie."

Participant: "Suppress my emotions, if a person breaks up his thought process in pure intellectual and if possible pure emotional it is normally a chaotic mixture of the two when you think. When I withdraw myself into technology I can lose myself in the something that demands absolute intellectual concentration, the logical, the front portion of my brain must focus one hundred percent on what I am doing, that means the emotions are not there."

He finds that if he withdraws into technology he suppresses his emotions because it is an arena where he operates purely intellectually.

Numbness associated with loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So jy klink weer amper soos die numbness wat jy dan beleef in terme van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "So that almost again sounds like the numbness that you experience in terms of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Nee nie 'n geval van ek beleef die numbness nie, ek is op soek daarna."

Participant: "No not a case of I experience the numbness, I am in search of it."

He is in search of the numbness.

Attempts to override emotions with intellect to escape loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Of is dit meer 'n afleiding."

Interviewer: "Or is it more of a distraction."

Deelnemer: "Ek kan dit vir jou baie eenvoudig verduidelik. Dieselfde tipe ding wat mens kry as jy as mens iets soos opiate inspuit. Jy raak mos net af jy raak dan aan die slaap ens maar die gedagtes gaan net skoon die emosionele goeters al daai goeters verdwyn, jy is net rustig. So daai gevoel in die emosionele kant word kan ek kry deur middel van intense intellektuele stimulasie."

Participant: "I can explain it to you very simple. The same type of thing that a person gets when you inject a person with opiates. You just become rotten then you fall asleep etc. but the thoughts become pure the emotional aspects fall away, you are at ease. So that feeling in the emotional side I can get through intense intellectual stimulation."

He equates intense intellectual stimulation with using opiate drugs where the emotions disappear completely.

The experience of loneliness when just waking up.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar ooit tye wat jy wakker word en dan eensaam voel soos in die middel van die nag of spesifieke belewenisse het?"

Interviewer: "Are there ever times that you wake up and then feel lonely like in the middle of the night or have specific experiences?"

Deelnemer: "Ek het slaap probleme in die algemeen maar ek het die trick geleer om wanneer ek wakker word net my gedagtes nie toe te laat om weg te hardloop nie."

Participant: "I have sleeping problems in general, but I have learnt the trick to when I wake up, just to curb my thoughts not to overtake my mind."

He experiences feelings of loneliness when he wakes up in the middle of the night.

Music as a way to cope with loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dit bring my by die volgende vraag, is dit ook die tipe van dinge wat jy sal doen as jy eensaamheid probeer bekamp of beveg? Hoe sal jy reageer op daai eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "That brings me to the next question, is it also the type of things that you will do if you try to curb or fight loneliness? How will you react to that loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Nie actually hier is die punt, ek sal musiek begin luister, ek sal begin luister na ek sal my oorfone in my telefoon plug."

Participant: "Not actually, here is the point, I will start to listen to music, I will start to listen at..., I will plug my earphones into my telephone."

Loneliness leads to anxiety.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So jy reken jy het half numb geraak of die gevoel, dit het nie meer so 'n impak soos miskien vroeër in jou lewe gehad nie?"

Interviewer: "So you reckon you have become half numb of the feeling, it has not anymore got such an impact as may be earlier in your life?"

Deelnemer: "Eensaamheid is lekker. Behalwe dat dit lei tot angs."

Participant: "Loneliness is great. Except that it leads to anxiety."

He has positive experiences of loneliness but feels that it leads to anxiety.

Substance use and loneliness are related.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dit bring my by die volgende vraag, is dit ook die tipe van dinge wat jy sal doen as jy eensaamheid probeer bekamp of beveg? Hoe sal jy reageer op daai eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "That brings me to the next question, is it also the type of things that you will do if you try to curb or fight loneliness? How will you react to that loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Nie gereeld nie my ding wat gewoonlik werk vir daai tipe situasies is baie eenvoudig, alkohol. Drink 'n bottel wyn uit en jy is weg."

Participant: "Not very regularly, my thing that normally works for that type of situation is very simple, alcohol. Drink a bottle of wine and you are gone."

He often makes reference to substances in attempting to describe his feelings of loneliness.

Intoxication takes away his feelings.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe het daai substance gebruik 'n verskil gemaak aan jou eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "How did that substance use make a difference to your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Wel, jy voel goed of jy voel net nie meer nie of miskien gee jy ook net nie om nie wanneer jy onder die invloed is van substance."

Participant: "Well, you feel well or you feel nothing or maybe you just don't care anymore when you are under the influence of the substance."

The substances changes his feeling state and at times takes away his feelings.

Describes the effects of substance use.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Die belangrikste is hoe jy dit ervaar."

Interviewer: "The most important is how you experience it."

Deelnemer: "Dagga gebruik is omdat lei tot my persoonlik tot genot is nie die woord nie maar dit lei tot 'n baie ander seksuele ervaring."

Participant: "Dagga usage is because it leads to my personal joy, not the correct word, but it leads to a very different sexual experience."

He describes how the different substances make him feel with specific reference to dagga and how it changes his sexual experiences.

Sexual arousal increases with substance use.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Die belangrikste is hoe jy dit ervaar."

Interviewer: "The most important is how you experience it."

Deelnemer: "Seksuele konteks vir my maar andersins maak hy jou arose, rustig, het ook 'n rustige impak op my voordat hy my geheel en al jags maak. En ek rook hom nie, tee."

Participant: "Sexual context is for me, but otherwise it makes you arose, relaxed, also has a relaxed impact on me, before it makes me totally randy. And I don't smoke it, tea."

Dagga makes him calm at times before it increases his sexual arousal levels.

Loneliness in relation to self...unstructured experience.

Onderhoudvoerder: "In terme van eensaamheid is daar ooit tye wat jy vervreemd voel van jouself of eensaam voel in verhouding tot jouself?"

Interviewer: "In terms of loneliness are there ever times that you feel divorced from yourself or feel lonely in relation to yourself?"

Deelnemer: "In fisika kan jy 'n stel 'n paar bladsye vol vergelykings neerplonk hier is die heelal, verduidelik, dis die heelal. Ek kan nie dit doen met myself nie. So in daai opsig sal ek se daar is baie eensaamheid maar as ek disconnect tussen eensaamheid en self."

Participant: "In physics you can scribble down a set of equations on a few pages, here is the globe, explain, this is the globe. I can't do that with myself. Therefore in that instance I would say there is a lot of loneliness, but when I disconnect between loneliness and self."

He compares this self estrangement to physics where there are formulas that structure experience. He experiences a lot of loneliness in relation to himself.

Everybody feels lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy ander mense sukkel met eensaamheid? Voel eensaam?"

Interviewer: "Do you think other people battle with loneliness? Feel lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Is dit 'n leidende vraag? Want natuurlik."

Participant: "Is this a leading question? Because of course."

He feels that it is obvious that people feel lonely.

Drug use as an attempt to deal with loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat dink jy doen mense ander mense behalwe jy as hulle eensaam is?"

Interviewer: "What do you think people, other people except you, do when they are lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Jong, hulle probeer uitreik op 'n verskeidenheid van maniere. Dwelms natuurlik die algemene ene because it works for the record."

Participant: Well, they try to reach out in many different ways. Drugs, of course the most popular one because it works for the record."

He feels that people reach out in various ways in reaction to loneliness. Drugs are one of the most common ways in his opinion that people use to deal with loneliness.

A difference in the experience of loneliness between the sexes. With men feeling less lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n verskil tussen die belewenis eensaamheid tussen mans en vrouens?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is a difference between the way men and women experience loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Seker. Ek dink eensaamheid is minder 'n probleem vir ons mans."

Participant: "Certainly. I think loneliness is less of a problem for us men."

He views that loneliness is less of a problem for men.

A lesser need in men for interaction.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n verskil tussen die belewenis eensaamheid tussen mans en vrouens?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is a difference between the way men and women experience loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Hulle self is nie, 'n man en ek veralgemeen geweldig baie hierso, verkies dit om te gaan sit en dink oor wat hom pla, en moontlik 'n oplossing."

Participant: "They themselves are not, a man and I am generalising a lot here, chooses it to go and sit and think about what is bothering him, and possibly a solution."

He sees men as needing less interaction and thinking more about solutions for issues.

Material things as easing loneliness in men and women experiencing feelings more intensely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n verskil tussen die belewenis eensaamheid tussen mans en vrouens?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is a difference between the way men and women experience loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Mans kan eensaamheid wegvat deur materiële konneksies so ek persoonlik voel dat vrouens het 'n baie intenser en 'n baie dis makliker eensaam te voel in sosiale konteks vrae."

Participant: "Men can remove loneliness by materiel connections therefore I personally feel that women have a much more intense and therefore feel much easier lonely in the social context of question."

He sees that men are able to take away feelings of loneliness by material things while woman experience feelings more intensely.

One on one interactions as less threatening.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So as ek jou reg hoor se dat ook een tot een intieme verhoudings 'n belangrike rol speel in eensaamheid belewenis?"

Interviewer: "So if I understand you correctly you say that one on one intimate relationships play an important role in the loneliness experiencing?"

Deelnemer: "Vir my definitief. Ek is ek verkies een tot een interaksies."

Participant: "Definitely for me. I am, I prefer one on one interactions."

He prefers one on one interaction.

No positive associations of loneliness in his own definition.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy positiewe ervarings oor eensaamheid? Dis moeilik met die definisies van eensaamheid en alleen wees maar as jy spesifiek dink aan eensaamheid."

Interviewer: "Have you got positive experiences on loneliness? It's difficult with the definitions of loneliness and to be alone, but if you specifically focus on loneliness."

Deelnemer: "Ek kan nou al vir jou se my persoonlike definisie van eensaamheid het absoluut geen positiewe konneksies van dit nie."

Participant: "I can already tell you now my personal definition of loneliness has absolutely no positive connections of it."

In his own experience of loneliness he has no positive experience.

Self worth connected to feeling cared for.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sê jy daai lack of kommunikasie bydrae tot die pasiënt se eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you say that lack of communication contributed to the patient's loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Inligting uit ruil en so my as 'n geheel aan te spreek en dit laat my dit laat my waardevol voel."

Participant: "To exchange information and to address me in total and that makes me ...that makes me feel valuable."

He experiences people talking about him and caring for him to make him feel worthwhile.

Intense emotional experience in relation to the topic under discussion.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar spesifieke belewenis van eensaamheid in verhouding tot jou psigiatriese diagnose? Dink jy daar is 'n rol wat eensaamheid gespeel het in die presentasie van simptome en die siekte belewenis? Die herstel?"

Interviewer: "Is there a specific experience of loneliness in relation to your psychiatric diagnoses? Do you think there is role that loneliness played in the percentage of symptoms and the sickness experience? The recovering?"

Deelnemer: "Ek is oorweldig op die oomblik. Dit maak seker nie saak as jy dit opneem nie. Ek is net oorweldig op die oomblik."

Participant: "I am overwhelmed at the moment. I suppose it does not matter if you record it. I am just overwhelmed at present."

He becomes overwhelmed during the interview. Most likely due to the intensity of his experience currently.

No relation to the spiritual.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar vir jou 'n verband tussen spiritualiteit en eensaamheid belewenis in jou eie lewe?"

Interviewer: "Is there in your mind a relation between spirituality and your experiencing of loneliness in your own life?"

Deelnemer: "Nee. Wel huidiglik nee. Voordat ek ek weet nie of ek tot die woord besef gekom het of besluit het dat die bonatuurlike net eenvoudig 'n kruk is vir ons nie, hulle praat van die woestyn ervaring ek dink jy is bekend met die neiging met daai die konsep van Christenskap van 'n woestyn ervaring ek het baie."

Participant: "No. Well presently not. Before I.....I don't know whether I came to the conclusion or decided that the spiritual is just a support for us, they refer to the dessert experience....I think you are familiar with the tendency of that concept of Christianity of a dessert experience....I have a lot."

Spiritual disappointment leads to personal decisions and life change.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar vir jou 'n verband tussen spiritualiteit en eensaamheid belewenis in jou eie lewe?"

Interviewer: "Is there in your mind a relation between spirituality and your experiencing of loneliness in your own life?"

Deelnemer: "Kommunikasie nie, help my help my help my en dis net tjoep, stilte en die dag of nie die dag nie maar dit was 'n proses gewees waardeur ek gegaan het voordat ek die geestelike wêreld verwerp het maar daai proses kan ek vandag sê is waar my lewe begin."

Participant: "Communication, help me, help me, help me and there is just absolute silence and the day or not the day, but it was a process that I went through, before I rejected the spiritual world, but that process I can say today is where my life started."

He describes a process of experiences where he did not receive the help and relieve that he expected when he prayed to God. This lead him to reject the spiritual world and he started to change his life.

Existential loneliness to the extent where one feels even deserted by God.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar vir jou 'n verband tussen spiritualiteit en eensaamheid belewenis in jou eie lewe?"

Interviewer: "Is there in your mind a relation between spirituality and your experiencing of loneliness in your own life?"

Deelnemer: "So ek was baie eensaam in daai opsig waar ek, selfs God het my teleurgestel."

Participant: "So I was very lonely in that way where I, even God disappointed me."

He experienced himself as very lonely when even God also disappointed him.

Patience as a need when lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Nee dis omtrent bedoelend is jou verstaan daarvan. Jy noem dat mense selfugtig is, hoe sal jy graag wil he ander mense moet jou hanteer wanneer jy eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "No, what is important is your understanding of it. You mention that people are selfish, how would you like other people to treat you when you are lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Geduld. Dis hoe eenvoudig dit is, geduld."

Participant: "Patience. That is how simple it is, patience."

He wants people to have patience with him when he feels lonely.

Confused about the causes of his emotional experience.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So jy se dit is eerder 'n reaksie op 'n emosionele belewenis as noodwendig kom ons noem dit breinchemie?"

Interviewer: "So you say it is rather a reaction on an emotional experience thanlet's call it brain chemistry?"

Deelnemer: "Dit mag dalk wel, moontlik is dit brein breinchemie speel seker maar 'n rol, dis die enigste ding wat regtig verduidelik die feit dat ek volgens die DSM depressie episodes en hipomaniëse episodes ervaar, maar ek dink nie dis die ek dink nie die gemoedsversteuring in so intens nie, ek dink nie ek sal ek dink nie dis eerder iets soos psychothemia, ek begin twyfel aan my diagnose, ek kan nie."

Participant: "It might possibly, it is probable brain... brain chemistry plays a role, that is the only thing that really explains the fact that I according to the DSM experience depression episodes and hypomanic episodes, but I don't think it's the. I don't think the mood dysfunction is that intense, I don't think I will... I rather think it is something like psychothermia, I am starting to doubt about my diagnoses, I cannot."

He has doubts about his diagnosis and seems to struggle to understand the causes of his emotional experiences.

When people reach out to him because of his empathic nature he feels less lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As jy terugkyk oor jou lewe is daar spesifieke tye waar jy meer eensaam was."

Interviewer: "If you look back over your life, are there specific times that you were lonelier?"

Deelnemer: "Ek kan nie eerlik waar nou as ek so terug dink hulle is wat uitgereik het of dit 'n verandering in my was wat dit makliker vir mense gemaak het om uit te reik na my toe maar

mense het begin uitreik en een aspek was wat ek gepraat het van die mense aan my kant wat uitreik na my toe my vriendinne wat ek se my so goed verstaan hulle almal het deur moeilike tye gegaan en ek was die een man gewees wat geluister het wat nie probeer het om die emosie te gebruik om in haar broek te kom nie en die een ou gewees wat die kon sien snap wat voel om seer te wees, daai empatiese aspek.”

Participant: “I cannot honestly....but now, if I think back. They that reached out ... whether that was a change in me that made it easier for people to reach out and help me but people started to reach out and one aspect was what I said of people that were siding with me, that reached out to me...my girlfriends that I said understood me so well... they all went through difficult times and I was the one man that listened that did not try to use the emotion to get into her panty and was the one guy that could see, understand how it feels to be hurt, that empathetic aspect.”

His empathic relationships with female friends made it possible for them to reach out at him. This made a difference in his experience of loneliness.

Not being understood as a dimension of loneliness. Lack of empathic understanding.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Is daar tye, in jou, in die afgelope ruk waar jy eensaamheid beleef het of waar jy eensaam gevoel het?”

Interviewer: “Are there times, in you, in recent times where you experienced loneliness or where you felt lonely?”

Deelnemer: “Ja. Oor die loop van die laaste jaar was daar ‘n paar verskeie gevalle gewees waar ek eensaam gevoel het, waar ek net gevoel het asof, ek voel eensaam wanneer ek voel ek word nie verstaan nie.”

Participant: “Yes. Over the last year there was a few. Various cases where I felt lonely, where I just felt as if, I feel lonely when I feel I am not being understood.”

He recalls recent experiences of loneliness. In particular experiences where he did not feel understood.

Not being understood.

Onderhoudvoerder: “So op ‘n manier kan jy ook veiliger plekke kry wat jou kan toelaat om bewus te word van wat jy eintlik voel?”

Interviewer: “So in a way you can also find safer places that will allow you to become aware of what you really feel?”

Deelnemer: “Probleem wat ek altyd teëkom is dat mense verstaan nie, nie dat hulle nie verstaan nie, hulle dis asof wats fout met jou, hoekom is jy so, jy is mos presies nie dit nie?”

Participant: "Problem that I always run into is that people don't understand, not that they do not understand, they. It is as if ...what's wrong with you, why are you like that, you are exactly not that?"

People do not understand him.

Knowledge of one's partner's emotional workings serves to increase empathic relatedness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So op 'n manier kan jy ook veiliger plekke kry wat jou kan toelaat om bewus te word van wat jy eintlik voel?"

Interviewer: "So in a way you can also find safer places that will allow you to become aware of what you really feel?"

Deelnemer: "Maar oor die laaste maand en half met beide van ons se probleme het het ons emosioneel mekaar baie baie beter leer ken en die empatie het baie sterker ontwikkel."

Participant: "But over the last month and a half with both of our problems we both got to know each other much much better emotionally and the empathy has developed much stronger."

He experienced that when he and his partner got to know each other better on an emotional level the empathy has also increased.

Not being understood = loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dit klink asof jy in daai woestyn fase meer en meer bewus moes raak van jou eensaamheid met hierdie niks."

Interviewer: "It sounds as if you became more and more aware of your loneliness with the nothing in that dessert phase."

Deelnemer: "Ek het 'n situasie gehad waar 'n klomp mense my nie verstaan het nie, wat nie die moeite gedoen het om my te verstaan nie wat nie bereid was om emosioneel met my te deel nie, ek het 'n God gehad wat dieselfde gedoen het, behalwe as jy iets anders wil weet is dit al oor spiritualiteit."

Participant: "I had a situation where a lot of people did not understand me, who did not go to the trouble to understand me, who were not prepared to share with me emotionally, I had a God that did the same, except if you want to know something else, and it is about spirituality."

He again mentions that the experience of not being understood by people made him feel lonely.

Communicating with others in an atmosphere where there is no anger but patience can assist in becoming normal.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe sal dit jou laat voel as hulle geduldig is of geduld het met jou?"

Interviewer: "How will it make you feel if they have patience or if they have patience with you?"

Deelnemer: "As ek eensaam is en daar iemand met wie ek kan kommunikeer tree ek baie snaaks op, as gevolg van die angstigheid. Al wat ek soek is geduld, as jy geduldig met my is en nie kwaad raak nie en nie frustreerd raak nie gaan ek afkom en ek gaan normaal raak en ek gaan voel asof ek deel is van die groep, deel is van die mense rondom my."

Participant: "If I am lonely and there is somebody with whom I can communicate, my conduct is strange, because of anxiety. All I am looking for is patience, if you have patience with me and do not become angry and do not become frustrated I will come down and I will become normal and I will get to feel I am part of the group, part of the people around me."

He feels that having people he can communicate with and who does not get angry with him and have patience with him will let him become normal.

Connecting to others by listening.

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He feels that having people he can communicate with and who does not get angry with him and have patience with him will let him become normal.

He relates closely to the experience his girlfriend goes through. Empathic understanding.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat is dit wat jy voel op die oomblik?"

Interviewer: "What do you feel at this moment?"

Deelnemer: "Maar ek het dieselfde goed met haar gesien, met haar probleme en pyn."

Participant: "But I have seen the same stuff with her, with her problems and pains."

It seems that his experience is closely tied with that of his girlfriend.

Uses empathic understanding to relate to others.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dit klink vir my dis 'n gevoel wat nie vreemd is vir jou nie?"

Interviewer: "It sounds to me it is a feeling that is no longer unfamiliar to you?"

Deelnemer: "Dit mag dalk baie moontlik wees hoekom ek verlede week of die week voor dit of wanneer ook al was ingestort het want ek was basies besig gewees om my eie lewe te ervaar deur iemand anders se ervaring. OK ek is so bly ons het nie gepause nie want ek dink dit was 'n belangrike manier van antwoord gewees."

Participant: "That might very well be why I collapsed last week or the week before that or whenever because I was basically busy experiencing my own life by means of somebody else's experience. OK I am so glad we did not pause because I think that was an important manner of answering."

He uses his girlfriend's experience to illustrate his own feelings.

If people are not understood by others they experience loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is dit 'n gesprek wat baie opkom tussen die pasiënte?"

Interviewer: "Is that a popular topic for discussion/conversation that often arise among the patients?"

Deelnemer: "Ek weet nie maar ek het al gehoor die wat wat al ek het nie noodwendig ek het al 'n paar keer gehoor van eensaamheid maar wat ek het al baie hoor mense verstaan my nie en vir my beteken verstaan nie eensaam. So dit is jou persoonlike konneksie in terme so ek hoor die ou se."

Participant: "I don't know, but I have heard those that...even if I had not necessary...I have heard about loneliness a few times, but what I have heard often is that people don't understand me and for me understanding means not lonely. Therefore it is your personal connection in terms so I hear the guy's/says."

He relates the experience of others not being understood by people as an experience of loneliness.

I am not understood therefore I am lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is dit 'n gesprek wat baie opkom tussen die pasiënte?"

Interviewer: "Is that a topic that often arises among the patients?"

Deelnemer: "Dit is my persoonlike konneksie so ek hoor die ou se niemand verstaan hom nie dit beteken vir my hy is eensaam."

Participant: "That is my personal connection so I hear the guy says nobody understands him...it means to me he is lonely."

Loneliness as unique to certain relationships and absent in others....in this case with women friends. Again brings up the notion on being understood.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wel bestaan verhoudings en interpersoonlike konteks."

Interviewer: "Well do relationships and interpersonal context."

Deelnemer: "Ja, ek het 'n handjie vol mense in my lewe wat ek nooit eensaam of baie selde mee eensaam voel. Dis almal goeie vriende van my, almal vrouens."

Participant: "Yes, I have got a handful of people in my life that I never or very seldom feel lonely with. It is very good friends of mine, all women."

In relationship to certain people he does not experience loneliness. These relationships are with women friends.

Sees loneliness and anxiety at the core of his struggle.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ons het vinnig aan die vraag geraak maar ek wil hom graag weer verby jou hardloop. Watter rol speel jou eensaamheid in jou psigiatriese toestand?"

Interviewer: "We have touched briefly on the question, but I would like to run it again past you again. What role does your loneliness play in your psychiatric condition?"

Deelnemer: "Waar my aggressie vandaan kom, waar my fantasieë vandaan kom, hierdie absolute heen en weer swing is angs, dis eensaamheid, dis angs, dis hoe ek emosioneel probeer om 'n balans te vind, wanneer ek nie behoort nie."

Participant: "Where my aggression comes from, where my fantasies originate from, this absolute to and fro swing is anxiety, it is loneliness, it's anxiety, that is how I emotionally try to find the balance, when I don't belong."

He starts by questioning his diagnosis and after reflections with his girlfriend has discovered that at the core of his issues is his experience of loneliness which he likens to anxiety.

Anxiety supersedes rejection because of the anticipation of rejection causing anxiety.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So dis 'n slegte ervaring?"

Interviewer: "So it is a bad experience?"

Deelnemer: "My gedagtes, en hoe ouer ek geword het hoe meer het daai konneksie hoe sterker het die konneksie tussen dit en angs geword terwyl die konneksie tussen dit en verwerping swakker geword."

Participant: "My thoughts, and the older I got the more that connection, the stronger that connection between that and anxiety became, while the connection between that and rejection became weaker."

He experienced, as he got older that he feels more anxious than rejected and understand this as because he anticipates rejection.

Anxiety as overt in interpersonal communication.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So jy antisipeer dit?"

Interviewer: "So you anticipate that?"

Deelnemer: "Plus dit kom uit in sosiale kontekste dis nou 'n klomp groep mense. Ek probeer myself demonstreer as iemand wat die moeite werd is om mee gekommunikeer te kan word en dit kom as angstig oor."

Participant: "Plus it shows in social contexts that is now a big group of people. I try to demonstrate myself as somebody that is worthwhile communicating with and that is seen as being anxious."

He experiences himself as coming across anxious when communicating with people.

Loneliness increasing anxiety.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Jy het netnou ook daarna verwys dit klink asof jy verstaan op 'n manier dat angs amper trappe van vergelyking, 'n trappie verder is as eensaamheid, want dit klink asof die angs volg op die eensaamheid."

Interviewer: "You have just now also referred to it, it seems as if you understand in a way that anxiety has levels of intensity, a step worse than loneliness, because it sounds as if the anxiety follows on the loneliness."

Deelnemer: "Hoe intenser my gevoel van eensaamheid raak hoe harder word die volume, want dit rocks die angs."

Participant: "The more intense my feeling of loneliness gets the louder the volume becomes, because it rocks the anxiety."

He experiences his anxiety increasing as the intensity of his loneliness increases.

Anxiety results in fight or flight that leads to relief by substance use.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Jy het netnou ook daarna verwys dit klink asof jy verstaan op 'n manier dat angs amper trappe van vergelyking 'n trappie verder is as eensaamheid, want dit klink asof die angs volg op die eensaamheid."

Interviewer: "You have just now also referred to it, it seems as if you understand in a way that anxiety has levels of intensity, a step worse than loneliness, because it sounds as if the anxiety follows on the loneliness."

Deelnemer: "Op 'n sekere tyd skop die angs in en as dit erg genoeg raak en dit gaan na die klassieke fight of flight situasies toe en dis gewoonlik wanneer ek 'n bottel wyn uitdrink."

Participant: "At a certain time the anxiety kicks in and if it gets bad enough and it develops to the classic fight or flight situations and that is when I normally drink a bottle of wine."

At extreme levels of anxiety he experience a fight or flight feeling and needs to use alcohol to cope with his feelings.

Writing as entering a mental space where he goes when he feels lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar spesifieke plekke waarheen jy gaan as jy eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "Are there specific places which you go to when you feel lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Huidiglik nie, behalwe as jy die lessenaar in die studeerkamer wanneer ek wil skryf."

Participant: "Presently not, except if you see the desk in the study when I want to write."

He writes about his experiences to help him cope. This seems to be a kind of mental space where he goes when he feels lonely.

Pushing people away in reaction to hurt.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As jy terugkyk oor jou lewe is daar spesifieke tye waar jy meer eensaam was."

Interviewer: "If you look back over your life are there specific times when you were lonelier?"

Deelnemer: "Met puberteit het die aantal mense wat uit my lewe gestap het, die tempo het versnel, ek het begin om mense aktief weg te stoot."

Participant: "With puberty a number of people walked out of my life, the rate increased, I started to push people away actively."

He actively pushed people away.

Physical presence with another is experienced as meaningful.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het dit 'n verskil tot jou eensaamheid belewenis?"

Interviewer: "Did it make a difference to your experience of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Plus natuurlik dat ons nie ons fisiese intimiteit is iets wat geweldig tekort skiet, ek praat nie van die seksuele sy van dit nie, sy was vir 2 half weke in die hospitaal gewees, die dag nadat sy ontslaan is word ek opgeneem en ek gaan 23 weke in die hospitaal wees, so daai fisiese intimiteit en vir beide van ons is fisiese intimiteit om vasgehou te word of net langs die persoon op die bed te le en jou hand so teen die persoon se been te sit, net daai fisiese kontak is geweldig belangrik vir ons."

Participant: "Plus of course that we do notour physical intimacy is something that falls short tremendously, I am not referring to the sexual side of it, she was in hospital for 2 half weeks, the day she was released/discharged I was hospitalised and I am going to be in hospital for 23 weeks, so that physical intimacy.... And for both of us physical intimacy is to

be held or just to lay next to the person on the bed and to put your hand against the person's leg, just that physical contact is very important to us."

He experiences that the physical intimacy that they share, touching and lying next to each other on the bed means a lot.

Feeling powerless as to how to change his girlfriends situation. Loneliness and powerlessness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het dit 'n verskil tot jou eensaamheid belewenis?"

Interviewer: "Did it make a difference to your experience of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Baie groot verskil. Op die oomblik voel ek nog steeds eensaam op 'n ander manier want sy gaan deur hel en is in amper eensaamheid in 'n magteloosheid konteks."

Participant: "A huge difference. At the moment I still feel lonely in a way because she is going through hell and is almost in loneliness in a powerless/helpless context."

He still feels lonely in reaction to his girlfriend's suffering. He also feels powerless.

The notion that if somebody doesn't need you they leave you.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Maak dit 'n verskil in jou eensaamheid belewenis."

Interviewer: "Does it make a difference to your loneliness experience?"

Deelnemer: "Toe dinge by die huis begin verander het in daardie opsig, toe sy meer aandag begin kry het toe onttrek sy nou ek meen ek kan nie eens meer die hele storie onthou nie. Ja."

Participant: "When things started changing at home in that aspect, when she started getting more attention, she withdrew....now I mean I can't even remember the full story anymore. Yes."

It seems that working through issues or struggling together keep a relationship close. In our struggles we connect.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Maak dit 'n verskil in jou eensaamheid belewenis?"

Interviewer: "Does it make a difference to your loneliness experience?"

Deelnemer: "Baie baie baie vrouens en vriendskappe gehad, wat geëindig het die oomblik toe die persoon deur hulle probleme gewerk het."

Participant: "Had many, many, many women and friendships, that ended the moment the persons had worked through their problems."

He has experienced that in many relationships the relationships ended after working through their issues.

Not being present or not being in terms of existence as reflected in interpersonal relationships.

Not feeling lonely but being able to relate to other's loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ja partykeer vat jy gesprekke na 'n dieper vlakke en situasies kom na vore en dinge raak los."

Interviewer: "Yes, sometimes you take conversations to deeper levels and situations arise and things get lose."

Deelnemer: "Want ek is nie eensaam nie, ek ja ek is eensaam in sekere maniere maar ek voel geliefd, ek voel belangrik, ek voel asof mense aktief probeer om my te verstaan ek het iemand wat verstaan waardeur ek gaan hoe dinge werk hoekom ek is soos ek is hoekom ek optree soos ek optree en bereid is om my te aanvaar soos wie en wat ek is en bereid is om saam met my hierdie pad te stap om te probeer om te herstel so ek het ander areas ander verhoudings waar ek eensaam voel weereens soos my ouers maar ek voel ek voel geliefd en deel van iemand. Maar nou ervaar sy weer wat ek altyd ervaar."

Participant: "Because I am not lonely, I. Yes I am lonely in certain aspects but I feel loved, I feel important, I feel as if people are actively trying to understand me...I have somebody that understands what I am going through...how things work.. why I am the way I am...why I conduct myself the way I conduct myself and who is prepared to accept me the way I am and what I am and is prepared to walk with me this road to try to recuperate...so I have other areas..other relationships where I feel lonely...once again like my parents but I feel.. I feel loved and part of somebody. But now she is experiencing again what I normally experience."

He experiences that he currently is not lonely but that his girlfriend is. He does refer to relationships where people understand him which makes him less lonely but that he still feels lonely in relation to his parents.

Feeling less lonely in understanding relationships but still feels lonely in others.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ja partykeer vat jy gesprekke na 'n dieper vlakke en situasies kom na vore en dinge raak los."

Interviewer: "Yes, sometimes you take conversations to deeper levels and situations arise and things get lose."

Deelnemer: "Want ek is nie eensaam nie, ek ja ek is eensaam in sekere maniere maar ek voel geliefd, ek voel belangrik, ek voel asof mense aktief probeer om my te verstaan ek het iemand wat verstaan waardeur ek gaan hoe dinge werk hoekom ek is soos ek is hoekom ek optree soos ek optree en bereid is om my te aanvaar soos wie en wat ek is en bereid is om saam met my hierdie pad te stap om te probeer om te herstel so ek het ander areas ander verhoudings waar ek eensaam voel weereens soos my ouers maar ek voel ek voel geliefd en deel van iemand. Maar nou ervaar sy weer wat ek altyd ervaar."

Participant: "Because I am not lonely, I...yes I am lonely in certain aspects but I feel loved, I feel important, I feel as if people are actively trying to understand me...I have somebody that understands what I am going through...how things work.. why I am the way I am...why I conduct myself the way I conduct myself and who is prepared to accept me the way I am and what I am and is prepared to walk with me this road to try to recuperate...so I have other areas...other relationships where I feel lonely...once again like my parents but I feel.. I feel loved and part of somebody. But now she is experiencing again what I normally experience."

Relating to other people's experience of loneliness.

Connecting to others involves risk.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy tegnologie het 'n verskil gemaak aan mense se eensaamheid ervaring as 'n ou dink aan facebook, twitter en skype en die tipe van dinge wat 'n ou deesdae kry?"

Interviewer: "Do you think technology made a difference to peoples' loneliness experience if one thinks about Facebook, twitter and skype and those type of things that one gets these days?"

Deelnemer: "Dis makliker om konneksies terug te kry wat jy verloor het vir een of ander rede in die verlede soos byvoorbeeld mense kontak verloor maar my persoonlike opinie omtrent dit is dit is te gevaarlik uit 'n privaatheids oogpunt."

Participant: "It is easier to get connections back that you have lost for some reason or another in the past for instance... people lost contact but my personal opinion about it is, it is too dangerous from a privacy point."

He feels that people connect easier through the use of technology but that it involves risk to privacy.

An understanding of being alone as not being with others.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe sal jy die verskil verstaan?"

Interviewer: "How will you understand the difference?"

Deelnemer: "Mens het nie nodig om alleen te wees om eensaam te wees nie. Hulle gebruik die woordeboek definisie van alleen. Alleen beteken eenvoudig jy is alleen, daar is niemand rondom jou nie, daar is niemand in dieselfde vertrek as jy nie of dieselfde huis as jy nie. Eensaamheid is heeltemal anderster."

Participant: "One does not need to be alone to be lonely. They use the dictionary definition for alone. Alone simply means you are alone, there is nobody around you, and there is nobody in the same room as you or in the same house as you are. Loneliness is completely different."

Being alone as not being in the presence of others.

Being lonely in relationship.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe sal jy die verskil verstaan?"

Interviewer: "How will you understand the difference?"

Deelnemer: "Jy kan saam met iemand in 'n verhouding wees en dus nie alleen nie maar eensaam wees, so daar is 'n baie baie groot verskil tussen die twee vir my."

Participant: "You can be in a relationship with someone and therefore not alone but lonely, so there is a huge huge difference between the two for me."

You can be in relationship and be lonely.

Interpersonal association finds the common denominator.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is dit iets wat buite die hospitaal ook so is of is dit net hier?"

Interviewer: "Is it something that is also outside the hospital like that or is it just here?"

Deelnemer: "Ek sit, ek ry rond, ek sit by kliente heeldag lank, as ek 'n permanente posisies wil hê in 'n maatskappy, in daai departement gaan ek deur 'n klomp mense omring word wat gaan belangstel in dieselfde tipe goed as ek maar dit gaan oppervlakkige verhoudings wees maar dit gaan tog verhoudings wees waar ek goed kan deel omtrent myself plus ek kom agter dat IT mense is, mense wat sterk in tegnologie is, kan ek mee kommunikeer, ek dink ons almal lei aan dieselfde siekte."

Participant: "I sit, I drive around, I sit with clients the whole day, if I want a permanent position in the company, in that department, I will be surrounded by a lot of people who will be interested in the same type of stuff as me, but it will be shallow relationships, but at least it will be relationships where I will be able to share things about myself plus I discover that IT are people, people that are strong in technology, with who I can communicate, I think we all have the same sickness."

He finds that he associates more easily with people who has the same interests and works in the same field as him.

Loneliness affects ones perception of others.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat dink jy was die gevolge van daai eensaamheid op jou lewe? Het dit gelyk of alle dinge reaksies op 'n sielkunde."

Interviewer: "What do you think were the consequences of that loneliness on your life? Did it look like whether all things were reactions on psychology?"

Deelnemer: "Ek het ook aktief mense weggestoot van my met die idee dat wat is die punt om iemand in jou lewe toe te laat terwyl hulle jou in elke geval net weer op die einde van die dag"

gaan los? En ek het baie krities geraak, van alles, in sluitende myself, beteweterig, moes altyd reg wees.”

Participant: “I have also actively pushed people away from me with the idea that what is the point of letting somebody into your life while they are just going to leave you at the end of the day? And I became very critical, about everything including myself, know-all, always had to be right.”

He actively pushed people away in reaction to the thought that it is not worth it to allow people into your life if they are going to leave you at the end.

He also became critical of himself and felt that he always had to be right.

Loneliness as a break in interpersonal communication specifically of ones needs.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Is daar tye, in jou, in die afgelope ruk waar jy eensaamheid beleef het of waar jy eensaam gevoel het?”

Interviewer: “Are there times, in you, in the recent past where you experienced loneliness or where you felt lonely?”

Deelnemer: “As ek myself nie kan effektief kommunikeer aan ‘n persoon nie, my behoeftes op iemand kan kommunikeer nie, dan voel ek eensaam.”

Participant: “If I cannot effectively communicate myself to a person, can communicate my needs to somebody, then I feel lonely.”

He also feels lonely when he cannot communicate his needs to somebody

The positive role of medication in his treatment.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Klink vir my of daai gedagtes implikasies het vir behandeling?”

Interviewer: “Sounds to me as if those thoughts have implications for treatment?”

Deelnemer: “Maar weereens, die Limicton die Welbutrin, die Urbanol, alles wat ek drink om die gemoedsversteuring aan te spreek spreek my emosionele kondisie aan, dit maak my rustiger, dit maak my egaliger.”

Participant: “But once again, the Limicton, the Welbutrin, the Urbanol, everything that I drink to address the mood sickness addresses my emotional condition, it makes me more relaxed, it makes me smoother.”

He feels that the medication he drinks helps to calm him and deal with emotional situations.

The MDT as different role players in treatment. Feeling understood make the feelings of loneliness go away.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ok. As jy bietjie dink in die psigiatriese konteks wat ons partykeer noem die multidissiplinêre span die sielkundiges die psigiaters die susters almal wat betrokke is op een of ander manier is daar 'n spesifieke gevoel of gedagtes wat jy rondom eensaamheid het en die rolle wat die mense vertolk in jou behandeling?"

Interviewer: "Ok. If you think a bit in the psychiatric context that we sometimes call the multidisciplinary team, the psychologists, the psychiatrists, the sisters, everybody that is involved in one way or another, is there a specific feeling or thought that you have around loneliness and the roles that the people play in your treatment?"

Deelnemer: "Wel, rondom eensaamheid as sulks nie. Wel, korreksie, dit het altyd vir my gevoel asof ek konstant tussen eilande moet beweeg. Ek moet beweeg van psigiater na sielkundige toe, na dokter toe, na die hospitaal toe ens, dis eilande wat 'n stukkie aanspreek en hierdie eiland stukgies steek jy aan maar soos alles in die lewe is probleme geïntegreerd, sedert ek hier uitgekome het, uit Denmar uit gekome het en almal van julle begin met mekaar praat op 'n amper dag tot dag basis en ek kry die empatie en ondersteuning van die susters af kan ek die gevoel van eensaamheid, is nie daar nie."

Participant: "Well, not about loneliness as such. Well, correction, it has always felt to me as if I am constantly moving among islands. I must move from psychiatrist to psychologist, to doctor, to the hospital etc, those are islands that address a piece and these island parts you knit together but like everything in life problems are integrated, since I got out of here, got out of Denmar and all of you started talking to each other on virtually a day to day basis and I get empathy and support from the sisters, I find that the feeling of loneliness is not there."

He describes the multi disciplinary team as islands that each person plays a role in his treatment. When he receives empathic understanding from the nursing staff in hospital the feeling of loneliness goes away.

4.5. Participant 5

He has fantasies of walking on the beach but he is always alone.

Onderhoudvoerder: "In jou fantasieë wanneer jy sit en dagdroom of dink speel eensaamheid ooit 'n rol?"

Interviewer: "In your fantasies when you sit and daydream or think does loneliness ever play a role?"

Deelnemer 5: "Ja ek sal fantaseer dat ek langs die see stap en 'n stok optel en dit in die see gooi en by 'n roomys stalletjie gaan roomys koop maar dis altyd ek alleen wat iewers uitstap so dit doen."

Participant 5: "Yes I will fantasise that I am walking next to the sea and find a stick and throw it into the sea and buy an ice cream at an ice cream booth, but it is always me on my own that walks somewhere."

The participant has fantasies of walking on the beach but he is always alone. This may indicate a feeling that the participant has of loneliness being a chronic state. That no matter where he goes or what he does he always feels lonely. He has a peaceful feeling associated with this seen on the beach.

Because he is alone he can't hurt anybody.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Laat dit jou dan anders voel?"

Interviewer: "Does that make you then feel different?"

Deelnemer 5: "Dit laat my rustig voel, dis net ek en my fantasieë, alleen, daar is niemand anders nie so ek kan niemand seer maak nie."

Participant 5: "It makes me feel relaxed, me and my fantasy alone there is nobody else therefore I cannot hurt anybody."

Fantasies of self harm in reaction to loneliness.

The participant has fantasies about hurting himself just to feel something.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So sou jy sê dat al daai ervarings in die verlede en die verliese en die eensaamheid nog steeds 'n huidige tema is in terapie?"

Interviewer: "Would you say that all those experiences in the past and the losses and loneliness is still a theme in therapy?"

Deelnemer 5: "Ja, definitief. Daar is ander goed wat ook in spel in die sessie maar daai is die hoof goed waaroor ons praat wat ons net aanraak, dis nog baie seer dis nog baie vars, dit maak my baie seer so ek het gedink wat ek partykeer voel of om myself weer met iodene te wil brand of sny of weer 'n eetversteurnis, ooreeting en opgooi net om iets te doen om die pyn weg te kry."

Participant 5: "Yes definitely. Other things also play a role in the session but these are the main factors that we discuss and we touch on, it is still very painful and recent, it hurts a lot, therefore I thought, what I sometimes feel is to burn myself with iodine or cut or again develop an eating disorder, over eating and vomiting just to do something to get rid of the pain."

Fantasies of self-harm surfaces here in response to loneliness feelings. The aim of the self harm seems to be to an escape from emotional pain.

He feels that you can become lonelier as you grow older because of physical limitations that comes with age.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n verband tussen ouderdom en eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is a relationship between age and loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ja, ek dink as jy ouer raak is jy minder aktief so jy gaan nie meer uit nie jy gaan nie meer winkels toe byvoorbeeld nie want partykeer sit jy in 'n senior sentrum vir bejaardes of hoe ouer jy word, het jy nie meer al die energie om te doen wat jy gedoen het nie, waar jy jonk is en jy is lus om fiets te ry maar as jy ouer is het jy nie meer die krag nie ook nie meer lus nie, so jy is meer alleen want jy kan miskien nie meer so lekker sien om te lees nie so dit maak dit erger."

Participant: "Yes, I think as you become older you are less active therefore you don't go out anymore for example you don't go to shops anymore because sometimes you sit in a centre for seniors or old age; or the older you become it is to say the less energy you have to do what you want to do, when you are young and you feel like cycling, but when you are older you don't have the physical strength or the interest therefore you are more lonely because your eyesight is slipping and you can't read therefore it becomes worse."

He experienced his childhood years before his teenage years as particularly lonely. Also after the loss of his intimate partner.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As jy so terugdink oor jou lewe, was daar 'n spesifieke tyd wat jy baie eensaam gevoel het of wat uitstaan bo die res van die ander tye?"

Interviewer: "If you think back on your life, was there a specific time that you felt lonelier than other times?"

Deelnemer: "Ek sal sê my laat kinderjare en voor my tiener jare en nou weer na Niel dood is, na 2007 was dit vir my erg alleen."

Participant: "I would say my late childhood and before my teen years and now again after Niel's Death, after 2007 it was seriously lonely for me."

Before he goes to bed and when he wakes up he is more aware of his feelings of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar spesifieke tye wat jy meer eensaam voel as ander?"

Interviewer: "Are there specific times that you feel more lonely than at other times?"

Deelnemer: "Gewoonlik voor ek gaan slaap en in die oggende vroeg. Ek assosieer dit ook met my depressie. Dis erger in die oggende as in die aand. Gistraand net voor ek gaan slaap. Dis in die oggende wat ek so alleen voel."

Participant: "Normally before I go to bed and early in the mornings. It also associates it with my depression. It's worse in the mornings than evenings. Last night just before I went to bed. It is in the mornings that I feel so lonely."

He also associates these times with feeling depressed.

His experience of time changes when feeling lonely. Time moves slower when he feels lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Jou belewenis van tyd, verander dit as jy eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "Your experience of time does that change if you feel lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Ja, partykeer kan die tyd so lank vat om verby te gaan ander kere is dit so vinnig, ek kan nie glo die dag is verby nie, ander kere voel dit of dit 2 dae in 1 is want dit gaan so stadig verby."

Participant: "Yes, sometimes the time goes so slow other times so fast, I cannot believe the day is over, other times it seems that 2 days fit into 1 day because times passes so slowly."

Loneliness spans throughout life regardless of the presence of others.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So kom ons skop af met hierdie vraag was daar al ooit op 'n stadium in jou lewe 'n tyd wat jy baie eensaam gevoel het? Kan jy my miskien meer daarvan vertel?"

Interviewer: "So let's kick off with this question. Has there ever been in your life a stage that you felt very lonely? Can you tell me more about it?"

Deelnemer: "Ek sal sê my hele lewe lank het ek alleen gevoel."

Participant: "I would say that I have felt lonely all my life."

He sees himself in future as being alone.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy in daai werk van jou ander mense teëgekome wat eensaam is? Pasiënte met wie jy gewerk het?"

Interviewer: "Have you ever met other people in your type of work that are lonely? Patients that you worked with?"

Deelnemer: "Maar lyk my dit gaan my voorland wees."

Participant: "But it seems that it is going to be my destiny."

He sees being alone as a short term experience and loneliness as a long term experience.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n verskil tussen alleenheid en eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you believe there is a difference between being alone and loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ja. Alleenheid dink ek is meer kort termyn en eensaamheid is 'n meer langtermyn gevoel. Dis hoe ek dit sien."

Participant: "Yes. Being alone I think is more short term and loneliness is more a long term feeling. That is the way I see it."

He feels that everybody will at one stage in their life experience loneliness

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy dat almal op 'n stadium in hulle lewe eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "Do you think that everybody at a stage of their lives feels lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Ja. Een of ander tyd sal hulle alleen voel, eensaam voel."

Participant: "Yes. Sometime or another they will feel alone, feel lonely."

Not being ready to be in a relationship and not being close to his family makes him believe that he will be lonely in future.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy dat almal op 'n stadium in hulle lewe eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "Do you think that everybody at a stage of their lives feel lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Ja. Een of ander tyd sal hulle alleen voel, eensaam voel."

Participant: "Yes. Sometime or another they will feel alone, feel lonely."

He feels that loneliness will feature in his future.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As jy partykeer dink oor die toekoms dink jy partykeer daar lê eensaamheid in jou toekoms?"

Interviewer: "If you think about the future do you think loneliness is in your future?"

Deelnemer: "Ja, definitief."

Participant: "Yes, definitely."

Death can be an escape from loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy dat die dood partykeer gesien word as 'n ontsnapping aan eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you think that death is sometimes seen as an escape from loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ja ,in my lewe het dit."

Participant: "Yes, in my life it has."

Death can be an escape from loneliness.

He fights against the urge to hurt himself in hospital because of the punishment he anticipates.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is dit alles dinge wat jy in die verlede gebruik het?"

Interviewer: "Is that all the things that you have used in the past?"

Deelnemer: "Ja as ek by die huis kom kon ek dit met graagte gedoen het want daar was niemand rondom my nie, maar hier moet ek as ek so voel met ek baklei daarteen want as ek dit doen is daar altyd die vrees dat ek na 'n toe saal toe moet gaan dan verloor ek my oop saal status en my OT status en dan word ek toegesluit en ek wil nie toegesluit wees nie ek wil vry wees so dis al hierdie vrese en baklei teen die gevoelens, soos ek sê die groot mannetjie baklei teen die lelike mannetjie om nie iets verkeerd te doen nie."

Participant: "Yes when I arrived at home I could do it with love, because there was nobody around me, but here I must if I feel that way I must fight against it because if I do it there is always the fear that I have to go to a closed ward, then I lose my open ward status and my OT status and then I get locked up and I don't want to be locked up, I want to be free, so it is all these fears and fighting against the feelings, as I say the big man fights the ugly man so as not to do something wrong."

He feels this is a constant struggle within him.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So voel dit nou 'n konstante stryd binne jou?"

Interviewer: "So does it have a constant struggle inside you?"

Deelnemer: "Ja."

Participant: "Yes."

He feels that loneliness is something that you never get rid off and that it always stays in your head.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As jy weer bietjie dink aan mense in die algemeen dink jy daar kom ooit 'n punt waar hulle kan se waar hulle het nou gedeal met eensaamheid dis nou verby?"

Interviewer: "If you think about people in general again do you think there is ever a point reached where they can say they have dealt with the loneliness and that it is now history?"

Deelnemer: "Ek dink nie mens kan heeltemal van dit ontslae raak nie want alleenheid is een van daai gevoelens wat mens kry reg deur jou lewe, daai gevoelens van damm ek wens ek het tog net iemand gehad wat my kan verstaan, my aanvaar net soos ek is, ek dink nie jy kan dit heeltemal afskryf nie, dit sal altyd in jou agterkop iewers weggekrui wees."

Participant: "I don't think one can get rid of it totally because aloneness is one of those feelings that one gets right through your life, those feelings of damn I wish I had someone that

could understand me, accept me as I am, I don't think you can write it off completely, it will always be somewhere in your mind."

He would like to help someone else overcome their loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sien jy dat jy in die toekoms 'n rol sal speel in iemand se lewe om hulle te help met eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you see yourself in future playing a role in somebody's life helping them to cope with loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek sal graag wou voor dit gebeur sal ek baie dankbaar wees as ek dit kan doen maar ek glo nie dit sal gebeur nie, as iemand oor my pad sal kom ja."

Participant: "I would like to, before it happens I will be happy if I can do it but I don't believe it will happen, if someone crosses me road yes."

He feels alone at the place where he stays. He is in a routine between work and home that makes him feel more lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Voel dit vir jou soms alleen daar?"

Interviewer: "Does it sometimes feel lonely there?"

Deelnemer: "Ja, kom ons se vanaf 2007 het ek heeltemal alleen gevoel, alleen gebly nooit ander mense rondom my gehad nie toe ek weer begin werk het het ek die diere weggegee want ek het gevoel ek kan nie na hulle kyk nie want ek kan nie na myself kyk nie, dit was maar net werk toe huis toe werk toe huis toe nooit uitgegaan nie, winkels toe gegaan net om vinnig iets te gaan koop dan gaan ek huis toe so ja dit is heel erg."

Participant: "Yes, let's say since 2007 I have felt completely lonely, stayed alone never had other people around me... when I started working again I gave the pets away because I felt I could not look after them because I can not look after myself, it was just to work to house to work to house... never went out, went to shops just to buy something quickly then I went home.. So yes it is quite bad."

He does not feel that there is anything he can do to change his loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is tans iets wat jy kan doen om jou eie eensaamheid op te los?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is presently something you can do to solve your own loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Nee, nie waarvan ek weet nie nee."

Participant: "No, not that I know of, no."

He thinks that finding a hobby, pets or even a pot plant to talk to can help people feel less lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat dink jy kan mense doen om hulle eensaamheid te verlig, wat stel jy voor?"

Interviewer: "What do you think people can do to alleviate their own loneliness, what do you suggest?"

Deelnemer: "Hulle sal 'n stokperdjie moet kry waarvan hulle baie hou, 'n troeteldier moet kry, selfs al is dit 'n potplant om mee te gesels, 'n dier te kry, iets om voor lief te wees, en so kan hulle ook 'n dier verstaan jou en 'n dier kan jou nie terug antwoord nie maar dis ten minste iets."

Participant: "They will have to get hobbies that they really like, get a pet, even a potplant to talk to, find a animal, something to love, and in that way they can also understand an animal and an animal can answer back but at least it is something."

He does feel lonely within himself and estranged from himself at times.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Voel jy ooit binne jouself eensaam of vervreemd van jouself?"

Interviewer: "Do you ever feel lonely or divorced from yourself within yourself?"

Deelnemer: "Ja."

Participant: "Yes."

He describes his feelings towards himself and almost seem disgusted with himself, with what he has become.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe sal jy dit beskryf? Daai gevoel."

Interviewer: "How will you describe it? That feeling?"

Deelnemer: "Jy voel vreemd vir jou self as jy van buite af kyk, jy sien die toneel waar jy hierdie hopelose persoon sien sit wat so alleen sit dat hy voel net of hy, dit voel net of, niks maak sin nie alles is een groot gemors, jy sit en kyk hierdie en sê hoe kan ek in dit verander het dis ek maar hoe kan ek in daai hopelose vormpie raak die een wat toe ek getroud was lief was vir partytjies gooi, lief was vir uitgaan so hopeloos geraak het nie sy voete die die woonstel uit sit nie met 'n rewolwer langs hom slaap in die nag, so bang is dat hy nie sy voete wil uitsit by die deur nie, hoe het dit verander? Dat hy eerder alleenheid verkies voor om tussen ander mense te wees?"

Participant: "You feel unknown to yourself if you look from the outside, you see the picture where you see this useless person sitting, sitting so lonely that he feels just heit feels just if, nothing makes sense, everything is one big mess, you sit and watch this and say how can I changed into this, it's me, but how could I have changed into that useless form, the one that

when I was still married loved to throw parties, loved to go out, became so useless that he does not step out of the flat, sleeps with a revolver next to him during the night, so scared that he does not want to step out the door, how did it change? That he will rather choose aloneness than being among people?"

He resorted to hurting himself to feel pain in reaction to loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar ooit dinge wat jy gedoen het om jou eensaamheid te verlig wat eintlik tot jou nadeel gewerk het?"

Interviewer: "Are there ever things that you have done to alleviate your loneliness that actually worked to your detriment?"

Deelnemer: "Ja, myself met iodene gebrand, net om pyn te voel, en ja dis wat ek gewoonlik gedoen het."

Participant: "Yes, burnt myself with iodine, just to feel the pain, and yes that is what I normally did."

Other peoples reaction to him hurting himself made him feel less alone.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe het daai pyn belewenis jou eensaamheid verander?"

Interviewer: "How did that experiencing of pain change your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Sulke goeters, so hulle skel jou ten minste jy kry 'n bietjie aandag jy is bietjie so alleen nie."

Participant: "Such things, they scold you but at least you get a bit of attention, you are not that alone anymore."

He feels that loneliness is one of the worst things one can experience.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar enige iets wat jy voel dat jy vir my nog kan vertel of wat gedagtes of assosiasies wat jy het rondom jou belewenis van eensaamheid of jou verstaan van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Is there something that you feel that you can still tell me or thoughts or associations that you have around you're experiencing of loneliness or your understanding of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek dink eensaamheid is seker een van die ergste goed wat 'n mens kan hê."

Participant: "I think loneliness is one of the worst things one can have."

He speaks to God alone. In the afterlife he will be judged on how he lived. The judgement will determine whether he goes to heaven or hell.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Jy het netnou genoem van die hiernamaals, dink jy daar is in jou verstaan van godsdienst of spiritualiteit 'n verband met eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "You referred to the hereafter, do you think there is in your understanding of religion or spirituality a relationship with loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek dink partykeer as jy met God praat en ek is Joods as jy met God praat dan praat jy direk met hom en jy praat alleen met hom, daar moenie mense rondom jou wees nie, dis waarvoor ek bid nie voor ander mense nie ek bid ook nie in my kerk nie in sinagoge nie dis my verhouding met God, en dan sal ek alleen met hom wil wees, dan sal niemand naby my moet kom nie of dan sal ek heeltemal alleen gaan sit, ver ver ver van almal af gaan sit, ek glo as jy doodgaan gaan jy eers na die hiernamaals toe voor jy veroordeel word of jy hel toe of hemel toe gaan dit hang af van hoe jy geleef het. So dit is ek glo daar is die hiernamaals ja."

Participant: "I sometimes think if you talk to God and I am Jewish... if you talk to God then you talk directly to him and you talk privately to him, there should not be people around you, that is what I pray for... not in front of other people. I also don't pray in my church in the synagogue. That is my relationship with God, and then I would like to be alone with him, then nobody must come near me or then I will go and completely alone, far far far from anybody, I believe if you die you first go to the hereafter before you are judged whether you are going to hell or to the heaven, it depends on your conduct/how you lived. So that is I... believe there is hereafter, yes."

He feels that when talking to God at least he is talking to someone. He feels that he can be honest when talking to God.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Bring dit 'n verandering in jou eensaamheid belewenis wanneer jy met God praat?"

Interviewer: "Does it bring a change in your experiencing of loneliness when you talk to God?"

Deelnemer: "Ja, ten minste praat ek met iemand OK alhoewel God nie kan terugpraat nie voel jy jy praat met iemand jy kan vir God enigeiets sê jy kan vir hom sê is woedend kwaad hy sal verstaan. Waar met mense moet jy partykeer hulle gevoelens ook in ag neem en jy kan nie vir hom sê Kobus maak my die hel in nie, ek dink aan jou gevoelens, hoe gaan jy voel."

Participant: "Yes, at least I am talking to someone, OK although God cannot talk back you feel you are talking to someone..you can say anything to God.. you can tell him you are extremely upset .. he will understand. Whereas with people you must sometimes take their feelings also into account and you cannot tell him Kobus makes me angry, I think about your feelings, what you are going to feel like."

School was an escape for him although he already then did not want to make friends.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het dit ook bygedra tot jou gevoel van eensaamheid? Die feit dat jy voel jy pas nie in nie?"

Interviewer: "Did that also contribute to your feeling of loneliness? The fact that you feel you don't fit in?"

Deelnemer: "Skool was vir my 'n ontsnapping. By die skool het ek altyd alleen gesit, eenkant gesit gevoel niemand hou van my nie niemand gaan my maatjie wil wees nie."

Participant: "School was an escape to me. At school I always sat on my own, sat to one side.. felt nobody likes me.. nobody is going to be my friend."

Dit was vir my worse dat ek alleen by skool was, dat ek nie altyd gesê nee ek Kan nie ek wil alleen wees, ek soek nie maatjies nie

He experienced loneliness physically as a pain in his heart and a hollow feeling in his stomach.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Voel jy ooit eensaamheid in jou liggaam? Dat dit 'n fisiese gevoel raak?"

Interviewer: "Do you ever feel loneliness in your body? That it becomes a physical feeling?"

Deelnemer: "Ja partykeer is ek maar gefrustreerd in my hart, dit voel my hart of dit 'n pyn in my hart is, so 'n hol gevoel in my maag voel partykeer soos dit ja."

Participant: "Yes, sometimes I am a bit frustrated in my heart, it feels if my heart. As if it is a pain in my heart, such a hollow feeling in my tummy/stomach... feels like that sometimes, yes."

He had pain in his heart when feeling lonely. The pain was so severe that he had to go to hospital but was told that it is stress related.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is dit iets wat jy algemeen ervaar of net as jy spesifieke?"

Interviewer: "Is that something that you experience regularly/in general or just if you have specific?"

Deelnemer: "Net as ek spesifieke belewenisse het, as ek regtig egtig baie alleen is, dan voel dit of my hart seer is. Ek was eenkeer in die hospitaal toe oor my hart so voel en toe sê hulle vir my nee dis net spanning en tussen die hartweefsel wat seer was."

Participant: "Just when I have specific experiences, when I am really really very lonely, then it feels as if my heart is sore. I was once in/to the hospital because my heart felt like that and then they said to me no it is just stress and among the heart fibre that is hurting."

Drinking coffee and listening to a meditation cd helps him to relax.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar spesifieke wat jy doen as jy so die eensaamheid in jou lyf voel om dit te help verlig?"

Interviewer: "Are there specific things that you do when you feel the loneliness in your body like that to help alleviate it?"

Deelnemer: "Ek gaan drink gewoonlik 'n koppie koffie en dan luister ek na my meditation CD was ek het dan voel ek 'n bietjie beter, net om te ontspan."

Participant: "I normally go and have a cup of coffee and then I listen to my meditation CD that I have and then I feel a bit better, just to relax."

He associates desolate places with his feelings of loneliness. These places have one thing in common and that is that it is difficult to find someone in them.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar sekere plekke wat jy in jou gedagtes met eensaamheid assosieer?"

Interviewer: "Are there certain places in your mind that you associate with loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Die strand, op 'n berg, op 'n rots, ja sulke plekke wat jy nie maklik kan kry nie, plekke wat jy moet soek om my te kry, soos in 'n woud en goed, plekke wat jy nie maklik kan kry nie, ver soek om my te kry ek assosieer dit gewoonlik daarmee."

Participant: "The beach, on a mountain, on a rock, yes places that you do not find easily, places that you have to look for to find, like in a wood and stuff, places that you cannot easily find, seek far to find me, I associate those normally with that."

He goes to any beach when feeling lonely. Nobody can find him there. There seems to be an element of hiding away in his response to loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar sekere plekke waar jy heengaan jy gaan wanneer jy eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "Are there certain places where you go you visit when you feel lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Die strand, ek sal net na enige strand toe gaan wat die naaste is, net op 'n plekkie gaan sit, die heel dag om net alleen te wees niemand sal my daar kry nie."

Participant: "The beach, I will just go to any beach that is nearest, just go and sit in a place, the whole day just to be alone, nobody will find me there."

He feels that doing hobbies, joining a book club or doing volunteer work could take away some of his loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is iets wat jy kan doen wat sal maak dat jy minder alleen is?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is something you can do that will that you are less lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Een van my hobbies beoefen wat ek altyd gehad het miskien n book klub join of iets. Miskien volunteer werk doen of iets wat my miskien bietjie van my alleentyd sal wegvat."

Participant: "One of my hobbies that I pursue that I have always had...may be a book club join or something. May do voluntary work or something that will take me a bit away from my time alone."

He experienced pain and suffering at home and being away helped him escape this.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is dit dinge wat jou in die verlede gehelp het stokpertsjies?"

Interviewer: "Are those things that helped you in the past, hobbies?"

Deelnemer: "Ja dit het ja, ek het by 'n paar organisasies gevulenteer en van ek jonk af was dit vir my lekker gewees om weg te wees van die huis af by die huis af by die huis was baie pyn en leiding so dit was vir my 'n ontsnap storie gewees so ja."

Participant: "Yes, that did yes, I volunteered at a few organizations and since I was young it was enjoyable to me to be away from the house... away from home... at home there was a lot of pain and suffering... so it was an escape story... so yes."

When he works and cares for others he doesn't feel alone. It seems to give him meaning in life to tend to the needs of others.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het dit jou laat minder alleen laat voel om ander mense te help om minder alleen te voel?"

Interviewer: "Did it make you feel less lonely to help other people to feel less lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Ja. Nou nog. Dis waarvoor ek verpleging gaan doen het, om ander mense te help, as ek werk is ek nooit alleen nie, ek voel ek kan ander mense help, en ek voel glad nie alleen nie, want by die werk ek kan nog steeds alleen wees met pasiënte, maar ek kan ook tussen ander mense wees in 'n veilige plek waar niemand jou kan seermaak nie, waar niemand verstaan jy niemand te veel pressure op jou sit nie."

Participant: "Yes. Even now. That is why I did nursing, to help other people, when I work I am never lonely, I feel I can help other people, and I don't feel lonely at all, because at work I can still be alone with patients, but I can also be among other people in a safe place where nobody can hurt you, where nobody understands.. Where nobody puts too much pressure on you."

His work played a big part in relieving his loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So jou werk het 'n groot rol gespeel om jou alleenheid bietjie te verlig?"

Interviewer: "So the work played a big role on relieving you of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ja, baie groot rol gespeel."

Participant: "Yes, played a big role."

In his work he experienced especially older people as being very alone. Not having frequent visits from their family.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy in daai werk van jou ander mense teëgekom wat eensaam is? Pasiënte met wie jy gewerk het?"

Interviewer: "Did you in that work of yours meet other people that were lonely? Patients that you nursed/worked with?"

Deelnemer: "Ja. Baie van die ouer pasiënte daar by die ouertehuis waar ek gewerk het hul kinders kom besoek hulle nie so baie nie, so het het nog altyd die geheue van hulle."

Participant: "Yes. A lot of the older patients at the old age home where I worked... their children do not visit them often, so they only have the memories of them."

He tries sleeping to cope with the loneliness. He also uses sleeping tablets.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar sekere goed wat jy doen om te cope met die eensaamheid of daarmee te deel?"

Interviewer: "Are there anything that you do to cope with the loneliness or to handle it?"

Deelnemer: "Ek probeer slaap. Partykeer as ek by die huis is sal ek 'n ekstra slaap pilletjie vat dat ek net kan slaap dat ek net nie alleen voel nie, dat ek net kan slaap."

Participant: "I try to sleep. Sometimes when I am at home, I will take an extra sleeping pill just to be able to sleep that I don't feel lonely, that I can just sleep."

Other times he drinks coffee and watches tv just to see somebody else on the tv and not feel alone.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar sekere goed wat jy doen om te cope met die eensaamheid of daarmee te deel?"

Interviewer: "Are there certain things that you do to cope with the loneliness or to handle it?"

Deelnemer: "Ander kere sal ek as ek alleen wil wees sal ek TV kyk en koffie drink die heelyd dat ek kan wakker te bly om TV te kyk net om iemand op die TV te kan kyk. Ek weet dit klink baie simpel maar."

Participant: "Other times I will, if I want to be alone, I will watch TV and drink coffee, the whole time that I can stay awake to watch TV just to be able to look at somebody on the TV. I know it sounds very stupid but."

He felt that having pets did take away some of the loneliness feelings.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy 'n troeteldiere of dink jy dat die feit dat mense troeteldiere het of jy."

Interviewer: "Have you got a pet or do you think the fact that people have pets or you."

Deelnemer: "Ek het troeteldiere gehad maar ek moes hulle weggee het toe ek getrek het nou maar troeteldiere het my van die alleenheid bietjie by my weggevat."

Participant: "I have had pets but I had to give them away when I moved but pets took some of the loneliness away from me."

He sees that animals play a big role in providing companionship to people. He experiences a strong link between loneliness and sexual behaviour especially in the gay community. He feels that people seek sexual intimacy to avoid feeling alone.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy 'n troeteldiere of dink jy dat die feit dat mense troeteldiere het."

Interviewer: "Have you got a pet or do you think the fact that people have pets or you?"

Deelnemer: "Diere speel 'n groot rol. Dis hoekom ou tannies en ou ooms altyd troeteldiere het, dis net daai companionship."

Participant: "Pets play a big role. That is why old aunties and old uncles always have pets, it is just that companionship."

Being alone as enjoyable.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So kom ons skop af met hierdie vraag was daar al ooit op 'n stadium in jou lewe 'n tyd wat jy baie eensaam gevoel het en kan jy my miskien meer daarvan vertel?"

Interviewer: "So let's start with this question... has there ever been a stage in your life a time that you felt very lonely and can you tell me more about it?"

Deelnemer: "Dis net vir my lekker om alleen te wees."

Participant: "It is just enjoyable to me to be alone."

Loneliness as choice.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So kom ons skop af met hierdie vraag was daar al ooit op 'n stadium in jou lewe 'n tyd wat jy baie eensaam gevoel het en kan jy my miskien meer daarvan vertel?"

Interviewer: "So let's start with this question... has there ever been a stage in your life a time that you felt very lonely and can you tell me more about it?"

Deelnemer: "Ek sal sê my hele lewe lank het ek alleen gevoel, al was ek tussen ander mense, familie, omgewing ek het altyd gevoel ek wil alleen wees."

Participant: "I will say I have felt lonely throughout my whole life, even when I have been among other people, family, environment... I have always felt I want to be alone."

Being isolated as a familiar feeling.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So kom ons skop af met hierdie vraag was daar al ooit op 'n stadium in jou lewe 'n tyd wat jy baie eensaam gevoel het en kan jy my miskien meer daarvan vertel?"

Interviewer: "So let's start with this question... has there ever been a stage in your life a time that you felt very lonely and can you tell me more about it?"

Deelnemer: "Aan die ander kant waar jy nie alleen wil wees nie maar jy is so gewoon jy isoleer."

Participant: "On the other side where you don't want to be alone, but you are so used to... you isolate."

He feels lonely every day.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe gereeld voel jy eensaam?"

Interviewer: "How often do you feel lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Soos nou elke dag."

Participant: "Like now everyday."

He doesn't talk about his loneliness experience

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy self al ooit met iemand gepraat oor jou ervaring van eensaamheid? Hoe dit jou affekteer?"

Interviewer: "Have you ever yourself discussed your experiencing of loneliness with somebody? How it affects you?"

Deelnemer: "Nee nog nie"

Participant: "No not yet"

He is afraid to get hurt again.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dat jy maar eerder jouself eenkant hou."

Interviewer: "That you rather keep yourself on one side."

Deelnemer: "Ja. Te bang om weer seer te kry, te bang om iemand toe te laat om jou seer te maak."

Participant: "Yes. Too scared to be hurt again, too scared to allow somebody to hurt you again."

He sees loneliness as inherently part of life.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ek verstaan. Hoe dink jy beleef ander mense eensaamheid. Dink jy daar is ander mense wat ook daarmee sukkel?"

Interviewer: "I follow/understand. How do you think other people experience loneliness? Do you think there are other people that also battle with it?"

Deelnemer: "Ek dink daar kan baie mense wees, want alleenheid is maar deel van jou lewe."

Participant: "I think there can be many people, because aloneness is just part of life."

When he just sits and thinks he feels more lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar spesifieke tye wat jy eensaamheid beleef meer as ander tye?"

Interviewer: "Are there specific times that you experience loneliness more than at other times?"

Deelnemer: "Die gedinkery maak my nog meer alleen want jy dink aan wat jy."

Participant: "The thinking makes me even lonelier because you think about what you..."

Being lonely or disconnected from his parents. Struggles with his identity lead to a wish to be away from his parents.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe het jy besluit om dit te doen?"

Interviewer: "How did you decide to do it?"

Deelnemer: "Toe ek 17 was wou ek graag 'n meisiekind gewees het, weggeloop van die huis af net om alleen te wees, om my nuwe lewe te begin. En. Dit was lekker gewees, Weg van die familie af, niemand weet, ek kan 'n heel nuwe identiteit gehad het, dit was lekker gewees, dit het my nogals positief laat voel. Toe het ek het hulle glad nie gemis nie."

Participant: "When I was 17 I really badly wanted to be a girl, abandoned/left home just to be alone, to start my new life. And that was nice, away from the family. Nobody knows, I could have had a completely new identity, that was nice, that made me feel quite positive. At that stage I did not miss them at all."

Wanted to be a girl when he was 17. Wanted to leave home and did not feel that he will miss his parents. In search of a new identity.

Loss of meaning in the face of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As jy dit moet beskryf hoe voel dit om alleen te wees?"

Interviewer: "If you have to describe it how does it feel to be alone?"

Deelnemer: "'n Stadium kom dit dat jy nie meer kan nie dan moet jy in die hospitaal beland want vir die eerste keer in jou lewe, want skielik maak alles nie meer sin nie."

Participant: "A stage arrives that you just cannot anymore and then you have to land in hospital because for the first time in your life, because all of a sudden everything does not make sense anymore."

Being in a lonely place can be very scary.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wanneer jy droom partykeer droom jy ooit daarvan van eensaamheid of alleen wees?"

Interviewer: "When you sometimes dream do you ever dream of that...of loneliness or being alone?"

Deelnemer: "...dis net jy is in hierdie alleen plek en dis nogals vreesaanjaend partykeer."

Participant: "...It's only... you are in this lonely place and that is quite scary sometimes."

Feeling safe in own thoughts.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Jou belewenis binne die hospitaal het dit iets gedoen aan jou ervaring van eensaamheid? Om hier te wees teenoor miskien om buite te wees?"

Interviewer: "Your experience in the hospital, has it influenced your experience of loneliness? To be here versus may be being outside?"

Deelnemer: "Dit het. Ek voel meer veiliger, met my eie gedagtes."

Participant: "It has. I feel safer, with my own thoughts."

He feels safer with his own thoughts in hospital.

Not belonging and loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So kom ons skop af met hierdie vraag was daar al ooit op 'n stadium in jou lewe 'n tyd wat jy baie eensaam gevoel het en kan jy my miskien meer daarvan vertel?"

Interviewer: "Therefore let's kick off with this question. Has there ever been a stage in your life, a time that you felt very lonely and can you tell me a bit more about it?"

Deelnemer: "Alleen was vir my gewees my coping mechanism, my self toe ek 13 jaar was ek uitgenooi na elke partytjie, klasmaats ek altyd eenkant gaan sit want ek het gevoel ek hoort nie tussen ander mense nie. Dis net vir my lekker om alleen te wees. Aan die ander kant waar jy nie alleen wil wees nie maar jy is so gewoond jy isoleer jouself."

Participant: "Alone was for me my coping mechanism myself when I was 13 years I was invited to every party, classmates I always went and sat alone because I felt I don't belong among other people. It is just enjoyable for me to be alone. On the other hand if you don't want to be alone but you are so used to it you isolate yourself."

He also chose to be alone. From a young age he felt that he doesn't belong with others.

Loneliness as people not being interested in you.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As jy dit moet beskryf, hoe voel dit om alleen te wees?"

Interviewer: "If you have to describe it, how does it feel to be alone?"

Deelnemer: "Dit voel erg, dit voel of jy, niemand rêrig belangstel in jou nie. Dit voel net jy, jy is in hierdie kokon of hierdie muur wat om jou gebou het wat niemand moet oorkom nie."

Participant: "It feels bad, it feels if you, nobody is really interested in you. It feels just you, you are in this cocoon or this wall that is built around you that nobody must overcome."

Loneliness as cocoon.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As jy dit moet beskryf hoe voel dit om alleen te wees?"

Interviewer: "If you have to describe it how does it feel to be alone?"

Deelnemer: "Dit voel erg, dit voel of jy, niemand rêrig belangstel in jou nie. Dit voel net jy, jy is in hierdie kokon of hierdie muur wat om jou gebou het van niemand moet oorkom nie,"

Participant: "It feels bad, it feels if you, nobody is really interested in you. It feels just you, you are in this cocoon or this wall that is built around you that nobody can transgress."

Loneliness feels like nobody is interested in you.

Loneliness feels like being in a cocoon. Having built walls around you. He has to be alone to handle himself.

Being locked up on an island without visitors.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wanneer jy droom, droom jy ooit van eensaamheid of alleen wees?"

Interviewer: "When you dream, do you ever dream about loneliness or being alone?"

Deelnemer: "Ja. Ek droom baie keer ek is op die eiland dis net ek, ek is toegesluit op die eiland niemand kom ooit naby my nie."

Participant: "Yes. I often dream I am on an island it is only me I am locked up on the island nobody ever comes near to me."

In relation to loneliness he dreams that he is alone, locked up on an island where nobody ever comes close to him.

Loneliness as a reflective space.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe het jy die breek gevat is dit iets wat jy gedoen het of net besluit het?"

Interviewer: "How did you take the break, is it something that you did or just decided?"

Deelnemer: "Ek het net die besluit gevat en gesê ek gaan weg vir 2 weke en ek het die besluit geneem. Ek was nie alleen nie ek het by my ouma-hulle gaan gekuier maar nog steeds baie tyd op my eie gewees om bietjie te dink oor wat dit ' verhouding beteken wat ek in die verhouding hê en alles so ek kon terug gegaan het en alles op die tafel gesit het en gesê het dis wat ek alles wat ek aan gedink het."

Participant: "I just took the decision and said I am going away for 2 weeks and I took the decision. I was not alone I went to visit my grandmother and them but were still a lot of the time on my own to think a bit about what the relation means what I have in the relationship and all therefore I could go back and put everything on the table and said this is what I thought."

Being alone as coping mechanism.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Jou belewenis binne die hospitaal het dit iets gedoen aan jou ervaring van eensaamheid? Om hier te wees teenoor miskien om buite te wees?"

Interviewer: "Your experience in the hospital did it do something to your experience of loneliness? To be here versus to be outside?"

Deelnemer: "Hulle verstaan nie dat jy alleen wil wees nie, so dis maar ek dink maar alleen wees was maar al die jare my coping mechanism. Net dat ek kan cope met die wêreld daar buite."

Participant: "They do not understand that one wants to be alone, so it is me that want to be alone I think my coping mechanism through all the years. Just so that I can cope with the world outside."

He feels that people struggle to understand his loneliness because people are unique and everybody experiences loneliness differently.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoekom dink jy is dit moeilik vir mense om jou eensaamheid te verstaan?"

Interviewer: "Why do you think it is difficult for people to understand your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Want elkeen is verskillend gebou, verskillende DNA, verskillende gemoedstoestande, verskillende persoonlikhede so hulle elkeen voel verskillend, niemand is dieselfde nie."

Participant: "Because everybody is built differently, different DNA, different moods, different personalities so each feels different, nobody is the same."

He feels that loneliness is ever present when nobody understands you.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sou jy sê dis 'n konstante gevoel of is dit iets wat kom en gaan? Of is dit maar altyd daar?"

Interviewer: "Would you say that is a constant feeling or is it something that comes and goes? Or is it always there?"

Deelnemer: "Dis maar altyd daar, die gevoel dat jy alleen is en eensaam is en niemand jou rêrig verstaan nie."

Participant: "It's always there, the feeling that you are alone and lonely and nobody really understands you."

His grandma understood him better than his mother.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoekom dink jy spesifiek vir haar?"

Interviewer: "Why do you think specifically for her?"

Deelnemer: "My ouma het my beter verstaan as my ma."

Participant: "My grandmother understood me better than my mother."

His grandma understood him better than his mother.

His relationship with his intimate partner relieved his loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar al ooit 'n spesifieke verhouding in jou lewe wat jou eensaamheid verlig het?"

Interviewer: "Has there ever in your life been a specific relation that alleviated your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ja. My verhouding met John."

Participant: "Yes. My relationship with John."

He felt that his intimate partner understood him.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Kan jy my bietjie meer vertel van die verhouding en hoe dit jou eensaamheid verlig het?"

Interviewer: "Can you tell me a bit more about the relationship and how it alleviated your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Dis net dat Neil het my verstaan."

Participant: "It is just that Neil understood me."

Loss of relationship = non understanding

Onderhoudvoerder: "As jy dit moet beskryf hoe voel dit om alleen te wees?"

Interviewer: "If you have to describe it how does it feel to be lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Alles krummel, al is jy vir van ok kom ons sê 10 jaar in 'n verhouding was, of 10 jaar getroud was, dis in hierdie huwelik gewees waar jy nie heeltemal alleen was nie, en skielik word dit weggevat en dan is jy weer alleen, en dan verstaan niemand jou glad nie eens dan nie."

Participant: "Everything crumbles, even if you have been... OK let's say 10 years in a relationship, or were married for 10 years, it is in this marriage that you have not been completely alone, and all of a sudden it gets taken away and then you are lonely again, and then nobody understands you at all."

It's like losing a close relationship, nobody understands you.

Not being understood leads to feelings of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dit klink asof daar 'n noue verband vir jou is tussen verstaan en alleen wees?"

Interviewer: "It sound as if there is a close relationship for you between understanding and being alone?"

Deelnemer: "Ja dit is. Dis maar net een van daai dinge sal ek sê. 'n Ding wat jy moet jy verstaan dat jy alleen wil wees ek verstaan dat jy alleen partykeer moet wees maar dis nog steeds net erg om alleen te voel, dis seker die ergste gevoel dat jy is alleen daar is niemand wat rondom jou is nie as jy hulle die nodigste het nie."

Participant: "Yes it is. It is just one of those things I will say. Something that you have to understand that you want to be alone...I understand that you have to be alone sometimes, but it is still bad to feel lonely, it is may be the worst feeling to be lonely. There is nobody around to you when you need them the most."

He sees a close relationship between not being understood by others and being alone.

The sudden loss of loved ones left him instantly alone. Also he feels that the permanency of death leaves nothing one can do to change things.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is dit vir jou 'n besondere moeilike tyd met eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Is it a particularly difficult time for you with loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ja dit was want skielik van om mense rondom jou te hê wat so lief is vir jou wat ek so lief was voor skielik dat hulle weg is dit is nie as dit nie dit is nie 'n fase as jy geskei is het jy nog kontak het met die persone wat saam met jou was, dis soos in onmiddellike dit tref jou binne 2 millisekondes dan is jy alleen jy kan niks daaraan verander nie."

Participant: "Yes it was, because all of a sudden from being surrounded by people that loves you so. That I loved so much. All of a sudden they are gone. It is not. If it is not. It is not as if (a phase when) you are divorced but you still have contact with the people that were with you, this is like immediately. It hits you within 2 milliseconds. Then you are alone... you can do nothing about it."

In attempts to deal with the sudden loss he tried to deal with the loss by engaging with objects that reminded him of them, this however did not help to make him feel any better.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is dit vir jou 'n besondere moeilike tyd met eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Is it a particularly difficult time for you with loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Jy kan die kussings vir so lank as moontlik in die sloop vashou en dink daar is iemand langs jou, jy kan haar poppe nie optel nie jy kan haar kamer nie regpak nie jy kan alles doen jy is alleen daar is nie iemand anders nie."

Participant: "You can keep the pillows for as long as possible in the pillow cases and think there is somebody next to you, you cannot pick up her dolls, you cannot tidy her room.. you can do everything..you are alone.. there is nobody else."

His mother experienced loneliness after the loss of his father, she went out to meet people to feel less lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy jou ouers het ooit eensaam beleef?"

Interviewer: "Do you think your parents ever experienced loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "My ma het na my pa dood is ja, sy het dit herken sy voel alleen, sy het weer begin night clubs toe gaan net om nie alleen te wees nie."

Participant: "My mother has after the death of my father yes, she admitted she felt lonely, she started again to visit night clubs just not to be alone."

He feels that you cant replace one relationship with another because relationships are special.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy dit help hulle om hulle eensaamheid aan te spreek of dink jy hulle voel maar nog steeds eensaam al is hulle in 'n verhouding?"

Interviewer: "Do you think it helps them to address their loneliness or do you think they still feel lonely even if they are in a relationship?"

Deelnemer: "Ek weet nie, ek is nie seker nie maar as ek kan raai ek dink hulle voel maar soos alleen ek dink nie daai verhouding kan die ander verhouding elke verhouding is spesiaal, dis hoe ek voel, dis nie iets wat ek net kan vervang weer nie, jy kan nie een verhouding met 'n ander verhouding vervang nie dit gaan nie werk nie."

Participant: "I don't know, I am not sure, but if I can guess... I think they feel like lonely... I don't think that relationship can replace the other relationship...every relationship is special, that is how I feel, it is not something that I can just replace, you can't replace one relationship with another...that is not going to work."

He anticipated bad news about the death of someone close to him.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy dit het bygedra tot jou eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you think that has contributed to loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ja want ek het op 'n stadium net gesê OK ek wag nou vir die volgende oproep, wie is nou weer dood, wat gaan nou weer gebeur wat het nou weer verander want as ek nou die oproep kry dan gebeur dit gebeur dit en ek wil ek sit net alles hier in die pot."

Participant: "Yes, because I have just said at some stage...OK, I do not wait for the next call... who died now again, what is going to happen now again...what has changed now again, because if I now receive the call..then it happens..it happens and I want to.. I just put everything here in the pot."

He was alone after the loss of his wife and daughter.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Gehad het, eensaamheid en assosiasie met haar en jou verhouding met haar wat was die omstandighede rondom haar?"

Interviewer: "Have had, loneliness and association with her and your relationship with her...what were the circumstances around her?"

Deelnemer: "Sy en my ex is dood in een karongeluk so hulle is opslag altwee dood van toe af was ek alleen."

Participant: "She and my ex died in one car accident. So both died instantly .. since then I have been alone."

He missis people that was close to him when he feels alone, in particular his grandma.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar tye waar jy so alleen voel wat jy mense mis wat naby jou is?"

Interviewer: "Are there times that you are so lonely that you miss people that are close to you?"

Deelnemer: "Ja, dit gebeur baie, veral vandat ek in die hospitaal is. As ek alleen op die bed le en verlang ek so na my ouma, veral my ouma, en sy lewe nie meer nie so ek."

Participant: "Yes, that happens often, especially since I have been in the hospital. If I lay alone on the bed and I long so for my grandmother, especially my grandmother, and she does not live anymore, so I."

Loss of significant others increases loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy het meer of minder eensaam gevoel na sy dood?"

Interviewer: "Do you think you felt more or less lonely after his death?"

Deelnemer: "Meer eensaam, want jy is, skielik was daar altyd iemand in die aand by die huis, so as jy die dag, as jy die aand van die werk af kom, is daar iemand by die huis."

Participant: "Lonelier, because you are, all of a sudden there were always somebody in the evenings at home, so if you arrive at home the day, the evening if you return from work, there is somebody at home."

He felt lonelier in reaction to the loss of a loved one.

Loss leaves one alone and confused.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy het Meer of minder eensaam gevoel Na sy dood?"

Interviewer: "Do you think you felt more or less lonely after his death?"

Deelnemer: "Maar skielik toe alles weg is toe was alles deurmekaar."

Participant: "But all of a sudden when everything was gone, everything confused."

The loss of a partner left him alone and confused.

Isolation resulting from loss.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So dink jy daar is 'n verband tussen alleen wees en Om jouself Te isoleer van Ander?"

Interviewer: "So you think there is a relationship between being alone and to isolate yourself from other?"

Deelnemer: "Sal nie so sê nie. Ek verstaan, partykeer wil jy net, ek het my begin isoleer Na my ex-partner se dood, ek het my heeltemal geïsoleer, ek het gevoel dat ek wil met sy gedagtes binne my rondloop."

Participant: "Will not say that. I understand, sometimes you just want to, I started isolating myself after the death of my ex-partner, I isolated myself completely, I felt that I want to walk around with my thoughts within myself."

He isolated himself in the face of the loss of his ex-partner.

The medication makes him sleep well.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Die medikasie wat jy huidiglik drink maak dit 'n verskil aan jou eensaamheid."

Interviewer: "The medication that you use at present, does it make a difference to your loneliness."

Deelnemer: "Hulle sê net die aand pil laat my lekker slaap, maar dit laat my weer verskriklike nagmerries kry so wat is die beste, nagmerries of lekker slaap. Sover wen die lekker slaap nog."

Participant: "They just say the evening pill allows me to sleep, but it again gives me bad nightmares so what is best, nightmares or restful sleep. So far the restful sleep is winning."

He feels that loneliness can cause one to develop other symptoms that can lead one to contemplating suicide.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy eensaamheid kan mense doodmaak?"

Interviewer: "Do you think loneliness can kill somebody?"

Deelnemer: "Ja dit kan as dit in iets anders ontaard, dis 'n diep depressie en maniese gevoelens, bipolar, manic depressive episodes kan veroorsaak dat jy skisofrenies raak dat jy so alleen is dat jy mense sien, dat jy fiktiewe mense ontwerp om mee te gesels, dat jy miskien maar 'n oordosis pille vat net om te kan slaap om nie alleen te voel nie, dat jy miskien te veel vat dat jy doodgaan, so ek dink nie eensaamheid kan jou nie doodmaak nie maar die nagevolge van eensaamheid kan jou doodmaak."

Participant: "Yes it can if it develops into something else, it's a deep depression, manic feelings, bipolar, manic depressive episodes can cause you to become schizophrenic, that you are so lonely that you see people, that you design fictitious people to talk to, that you maybe take an overdose of pills just to sleep not to feel lonely, that you possibly take too much that you die, so I don't think loneliness can kill you but the consequences of loneliness can kill you."

A quality of his loneliness experience is his bipolar symptoms and depression.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat dink jy maak dat daai tye uitstaan bo ander?"

Interviewer: "What do you think cause those times to stand out above others?"

Deelnemer: "Net hoe ek gevoel het, my depressie tye, my bipolar tye dis altyd 'n siekte wat verteenwoordigend van daai tyd was. Ek het begin met net om te slaap dat niemand my pla as ek slaap nie. Ek glo as jy slaap kan niemand jou pla nie, seermaak nie, aan jou raak nie, so dit het 'n rukkie gehelp."

Participant: "Just the way I felt, my depression times, my bipolar times. It's always a sickness that was present at those times, that is what it was, I started by just sleeping, that I don't bother anybody when I sleep. I believe if you sleep nobody can bother you, hurt you, touch you, so that helped for a while."

A quality of his loneliness experience is his bipolar symptoms and depression.

He feels that loneliness makes one more vulnerable to depression. The absence of somebody to talk to and share your feelings makes the bad thoughts win.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy dat eensaamheid iets te doen het met jou huidige psigiatriese toestand?"

Interviewer: "Do you think that loneliness has got anything to do with your present psychiatric condition?"

Deelnemer: "Ek dink alleenheid as jy so alleen is is jy meer geneig tot die downward spiral, die depressie gedeelte van dit, jy voel alleen, jy het niemand om mee te gesels nie, niemand om voor te sê jiss ek voel nou so sleg nie, jy sit alleen met jouself en jy is alleen jy kan net jou eie gedagtes, so jy bekyk jou eie gedagtes, dis soos 2 manne wat baklei, die goeie en die slegte mannetjie wat baklei, die slegte mannetjie wen altyd. Dis hoe ek voel."

Participant: "I think loneliness, if you are that lonely you are more inclined to the down spiral, the depression side of it, you feel lonely, you have nobody to chat to, nobody to say to ..jeez now I really feel so bad, you sit alone with yourself and you are lonely...you know only your own thoughts, so you study your own thoughts, it is like 2 men fighting, the good and the bad man that fights, the bad man always win. That is the way I feel."

He feels that loneliness can lead to depression and even suicide.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So dink jy daar is 'n verband tussen eensaamheid en depressie? Miskien van jou perspektief af?"

Interviewer: "So do you think there is a relationship between loneliness and depression? May be from your perspective?"

Deelnemer: "Ja daar is. Dis een van die, ek dink dis een van die faktore wat lei tot depressie of selfs selfmoord."

Participant: "Yes there is. It's one of the, I think it is one of the factors that leads to depression or even suicide."

He is afraid of being alone, especially in the face of his suicidal thoughts.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is dit 'n gedagte wat jou ontstel of hoe voel jy daarvoor?"

Interviewer: "Is that a thought that worries you or how do you feel about it?"

Deelnemer: "Ek is bang om alleen te wees, bang omdat ek niemand ken nie, en niemand, as ek iets oorkom niemand gaan my kan help nie. Veral met die nuwe selfmoord gedagtes en selfmoord neigings is dit n heel ander ball game."

Participant: "I am scared of being alone, scared because I don't know anybody, and nobody, if something happens to me, nobody is going to help me. Especially with the new suicidal thoughts and suicidal tendencies it is a totally other ball game."

He feels there is a relation between his suicidal thoughts and loneliness in that he feels that if he dies he will at least know somebody in the after life.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n verband tussen jou selfmoord gedagtes en eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is a relationship between your suicidal thoughts and loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek dink so. Ek dink dis omdat ek so alleen voel ek voel as ek dood gaan kan ek ten minste, ek weet almal het verskillende gelowe maar ons kan met die hiernamaals iewers iemand sal ken. Dis nogals 'n verband ja."

Participant: "I think so. I think it's because I feel so lonely, I feel if I die then I can at least, I know everybody has got different religions but we will know somebody somewhere in the afterlife."

Feeling alone and being alone as two different phenomena.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n verskil tussen om alleen te wees en alleen te voel?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is a difference between being lonely and feeling lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Ja. Om alleen te voel is net of alleen te wees is jy is alleen daar is niemand om jou nie. Alleen te voel is jy kan tussen mense wees jy kan tussen 1000 mense wees jy voel alleen daar is niemand rondom jou wat of as mens moet probleme hê jy voel alleen jy wil net alleen wees jy voel net alleen jy wil net alleen wees daar is niemand rêrig wat jou verstaan nie."

Participant: "Yes. To feel alone is just to be alone, you are alone there is nobody around you, alone feel is you can be among other people you can be among 1000 people but you feel alone, there is nobody around you, that if one should have problems, you feel alone, you just want to be alone. You just feel you want to be alone, there is nobody that really understands you."

A difference in being alone and feeling alone.

Not always being able to be alone.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Jou belewenis binne die hospitaal het dit iets gedoen aan jou ervaring van eensaamheid? Om hier te wees teenoor miskien om buite te wees?"

Interviewer: "Your experience in the hospital, did that have an influence on your experience of loneliness? To be here versus maybe being outside?"

Deelnemer: "Dit het. Ek voel meer veiliger, met my eie gedagtes. Ek weet as ek nou rêrig moet gaan om alleen te wees kan ek altyd in 'n hoekie gaan wegkruip iewers op die perseel, ek is in 'n oop saal. Maar partykeer wil jy rêrig net alleen wees; en dan sal die mense op jou kop sit, die susters wil nie hê jy moet alleen gaan rondloop nie want hulle is bang omdat ek high risk is."

Participant: "It has. I feel safer, with my own thoughts. I know if I now really have to go to be alone I can always go hide in a corner somewhere on the premises; I am in an open ward. But sometimes you really just want to be alone, and then the people will sit on your head, the sisters don't want you to go wander alone because they are scared because I am a high risk."

Sometimes he wants to be alone but finds this difficult in hospital.

He reads to feel less lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar spesifieke dinge wat jy doen wanneer jy eensaam voel om, iets te doen aan jou eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Are there specific things that you do when you feel lonely to do something about your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek lees."

Participant: "I read."

He had no support, only himself.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Waar het jy jou ondersteuning gekry in so 'n tyd van verlies een eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Where did you get your support in such a time of loss of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Myself ek het niemand gehad wat my ondersteun het nie, ek het net 'n bietjie trauma counselling gehad van die polisie sielkundige en die polisie trauma counsellor, dis al."

Participant: "Myself...I had nobody that supported me, I had a bit of trauma counselling from the police psychologist and the police trauma councillor, that is all."

He felt that he needed support but had none.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy 'n behoefte gehad aan ondersteuning?"

Interviewer: "Did you have a need for support?"

Deelnemer: "Ja, ek het ondersteuning nodig gehad maar ek het nie gekry nie."

Participant: "Yes, I needed support, but I did not get."

He feels that he will benefit from somebody staying with him.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar sou 'n verskil in jou gevoel gewees het as jy saam met iemand gebly het?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there would have been a difference in your feeling if you lived with some one?"

Deelnemer: "Ja net 'n ander asem ek praat so in Pretoria noord net om te wees daar is iemand anders wat jou kan beskerm as daar 'n nood is."

Participant: "Yes, just another breath... I am talking like that, in Pretoria North...just to be...there is somebody else tthat can protect you if there is an emergency."

He felt that his mother's way of dealing with her loneliness did help her although the family did not always approve.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy dit het haar gehelp haar maniere van om haar eensaamheid te verlig?"

Interviewer: "Do you think it helped her...her ways to relieve her loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek dink dit het vir haar gehelp dit was die beste wat sy gedoen het wat vir haar te help. Daar was partykeer tye wat ek of my broers of tannie vir die familie gesê het dis haar manier om van cope gewees al het ons nie van haar vriende gehou nie ons moes dit maar net aanvaar het."

Participant: "I think it had helped her, it was the best of the things she did, that helped for her. There were sometimes times that I or my brothers or aunt said to the family that is her way of coping even if we did not like her friends, we just had to accept it."

He felt that his mother's way of dealing with her loneliness did help her although the family did not always approve.

He felt especially lonely since the age of 10 years. He sees the cause of this as kids who do not want to make friends with him because he is seen as clever, a nerd.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is tye in jou kinder lewe spesifieke fases wat jy meer alleen gevoel het as ander?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there were times in your childhood, specific phases that you felt lonelier than other?"

Deelnemer: "Ja, ek dink dit was hierso by die ouderdom van 10 af wat ek net alleen gevoel het want jou ma het gewerk jou pa het gewerk jou broers was in hoërskool jou klein boetie was in Laerskool saam met jou, maar jy gaan alleen skool want jy is gesien as die nuwe seun, die perfek seun, die slim koppie so party wil nie vriende met jou wees nie want jy is te slim, jy is nie popular nie."

Participant: "Yes I think so, it was round about the age of 10 that I just felt lonely, because your mom worked, your dad worked, your brothers were in high school, your little brother was in the primary school with you, but you attend school alone because you were seen as the new boy, the prefect boy, the clever head...so some do not want to be friends with you because you are too clever, you are not popular."

He still felt alone although he had brothers. He feels that he even felt more alone with them around.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Die feit dat jy broers het het dit 'n verskil gemaak aan jou eensaamheid belewenis?"

Interviewer: "The fact that you have brothers, did it make a difference in your loneliness experience?"

Deelnemer: "Nee ek het nog steeds alleen gevoel met ek sal sê ek het nog meer alleen gevoel met hulle in die rondte, want ons het niks common grounds gehad."

Participant: "No, I still felt alone with them, I will say I felt even lonelier with them in the vicinity, because we had no common grounds."

Relationships are special and has unique aspects of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So jy sê daar is 'n unieke verhouding of interaksie in elke verhouding wat op sy eie manier eensaamheid aanspreek?"

Interviewer: "So you say there is a unique relationship or interaction in each relationship that cope with loneliness in its own way?"

Deelnemer: "Ja dink elke verhouding is spesiaal, is uniek aan 'n eensaamheid."

Participant: "Yes, think every relationship is special. Is unique to loneliness."

He spoke to fellow patients about loneliness and feels that the loneliness exists especially in the context of interpersonal relationships. And that some people cannot handle being alone.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So daar is ander mense wat jy ken wat ook eensaam voel binne hulle psigiatriese toestand."

Interviewer: "So there are other people that you know that also feel lonely within their psychiatric condition."

Deelnemer: "Ek glo so ja. Ek weet in my saal was daar 'n ander oom en nog 'n ander jongerige mannetjie wat altwee ook baie met alleenheid sukkel en dit is ons het al gesels daaroor en daar is baie van die feite wat ooreenstem partykeer wat jy baie in verhoudings wil ingaan of net nie in verhoudings wil ingaan nie. Baie vrouens wil nie alleen wees nie baie mans is geneig om as hulle getrou het of hulle het geskei of hulle lewensmaat is oorlede dan gaan hulle dadelik in 'n ander verhouding, hulle kan nie of wil nie alleen wees nie hulle kan nie alleen wees nie of vir redes dat hulle nie kan kosmaak nie of vir watter redes ook al hulle wil net nie alleen wees nie dan trou hulle maar weer en dan trou hulle maar weer in 'n ander verhouding in so daar is altyd ook daai kwessie van soveel verhoudings in want hulle wil net nie alleen wees nie. Hulle nie alleen wil wees nie kan nie cope met alleen wees in 'n koue bed te slaap sulke gevoelens."

Participant: I believe so yes. I know in my ward there was another uncle/man and another young guy who both also battled a lot with loneliness and it is...we have already discussed it and there are a lot of the facts that coincide.. Sometimes when you really want to get involved in relationships or just not get involved in relationships. Many women don't want to be alone,

many men are bound if they have married or they have divorced or their life companion/wives have died then they immediately go into another relationship, they can't or won't be alone, they can't be alone or for reasons that they cannot cook or for whatever reasons they just don't want to be alone, then they marry again and then they marry again into another relationship, so there is also always that matter of so many relationships because they just don't want to be alone. They don't want to be alone, can't cope with being alone...sleep next to a cold bed...such feelings."

He feels his family drifted apart. This left him without somebody to talk to.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar ooit 'n assosiasie in jou lewe rondom skuldgevoelens en eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Has there ever been an association in your life revolving around guilt feelings and loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ja as my familie so ver verdryf het nie sou ek miskien nog iemand in my lewe gehad het om mee te gesels ja."

Participant: "Yes, if I did not chase my family so far away I might still have had somebody in my life to talk to yes."

A tension exists between being in relationship with people that can help him deal with his pain and being alone with less pain but having to deal with it on your own.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So dit klink my amper asof jy so tussen in staan met 'n behoefte aan die een kant aan mense na aan jou en ook 'n behoefte om alleen te wees en dis partykeer moeilik om daai twee."

Interviewer: "So it sounds almost to me as if you are in the middle with a need on the one side for people near to you and also a need to be alone and sometimes it is difficult to match those two."

Deelnemer: "Dis moeilik om te sê watter kant wil jy nou eintlik moet wees, soek jy mense om jou te help deel met jou pyn of wat jy maar eerder alleenheid en jy het nie so baie pyn nie maar jy moet alleen met jou pyn sit."

Participant: "It is difficult to say what side you really want to be on, are you looking for people to help you with your pain or do you rather take loneliness and you have not got that much pain but you have to sit alone with your pain."

He feels that people feel lonely because of pain and relationships that break up.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoekom dink jy voel mense in die algemeen so eensaam? Jy het netnou gesê dat almal maar op 'n stadium eensaam voel, hoekom dink jy is dit so 'n algemene ding?"

Interviewer: "Why do you think do people in general feel so lonely? You said just now that everybody at some stage feel lonely, why do you think that is a general thing?"

Deelnemer: "Omdat daar pyn in die wêreld is daar is pyn daar is seer daar is verlies, ek dink almal wat in 'n verhouding was en as hulle opbreek en verhoudings."

Participant: "Because there are pains in the world, there are pains, there are sore/hurt/aches, there is loss, I think everybody that was in a relationship and if they break up and relationships."

He felt alone in his marriage and had to take breaks. He felt a sense of responsibility towards his partner.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Jy het netnou verwys na jou huwelik, was daar ooit tye in daai huwelik tye wat jy eensaam gevoel het alhoewel jy in die verhouding was?"

Interviewer: "You have just now referred to your marriage, were there ever times in your marriage times that you felt lonely although you were in a relationship?"

Deelnemer: "Ja as ek 'n bietjie gevoel het dis bietjie te hectic ek kan nie tred hou van alles nie, dan gooi ek so 'n break, ons het so 'n break night gevat ons gaan weg vanaand van mekaar af vanaand net om 'n bietjie."

Participant: "Yes, if I felt a bit that it was a bit to hectic, I cannot keep with everything , then I through a break, we have taken such a break night, we went away the evening from one another just to be a bit."

He isolated himself in reaction to his pain and the fear of getting hurt again

Onderhoudvoerder: "Gehad het, eensaamheid en assosiasie met haar en jou verhouding met haar wat was die omstandighede rondom haar?"

Interviewer: "Have had, loneliness and association with her and your relationship with her what were the circumstances around/with her?"

Deelnemer: "Dan isoleer jy jousef klaar want dan alles wat goed was vernietig jy want jy is te bang om betrokke te raak na alles."

Participant: "Then you already isolate yourself because then everything that was good you destroy because you are too scared to get involved after everything."

He felt that he did not belong in the family, he was exposed to alcohol abuse, manipulation and bullying. He did relate more to his grandmother's family.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat het die pyn en leiding by die huis veroorsaak?"

Interviewer: "What caused the pain and suffering at home?"

Deelnemer: "My ma en pa. My pa is 'n drinker en my ma ag dis 'n lang storie. My pa was 'n alkoholis en my ma het my gemanipuleer het en my gebruik het vir verkeerde doeleindes en goed so dit was vir my nooit lekker om by die huis te wees nie. My oudste broer het my geboelie en so net gevoel ek pas nie by die familie in nie ek pas by my ouma en haar familie."

Participant: "My dad and mom. My dad is a drinker and my mom... agh it is a long story. My dad was an alcoholic and my mom manipulated me and used me for wrong reasons and stuff, so it was never enjoyable for me to be at home. My eldest brother bullied me and so I just felt that I don't fit into the family, I fit with grandma and her family."

He helped especially his grandmother to feel less lonely when he looked after her and talked to her. This allowed her to die peacefully.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy jy het al ooit ander mense gehelp om minder eensaam te voel?"

Interviewer: "Do you think you have ever helped other people to feel less lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Ons het saam maar net ek het net gesê ek wil by my ouma gaan kuier. Dit is lekker gewees dit was lekker om met my ouma te gesels dat sy nie so alleen hoef te gevoel het nie, dat sy rustig kon doodgaan het, sonder dat sy alleen gevoel het in haar laaste oomblikke."

Participant: "We have together, but just I said I wanted to to visit grandmother. It was nice, it was nice to chat to my grandma that she need not have felt that lonely, that she could die in peace, without her feeling alone in her last moments."

He provided companionship to both his mother and grandmother before they died.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Was jy by haar tot haar dood?"

Interviewer: "Were you with her until she died?"

Deelnemer: "Ja, my ma en my ouma. Hulle is 3 weke uitmekaar, 3 dae uitmekaar dood in dieselfde huis, en altwee langs my so ek het my ma is ook nie alleen dood nie, ook nie my ouma nie so ek is bietjie bly daaroor."

Participant: "Yes, my mom and my grandma. They were 3 weeks apart, died 3 days apart in the same house, and both next to me, so my mother did not die alone, neither my grandmother, so I am a little bit glad about that."

People scare him, people hurt him.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Jy noem nou dat jy met jou sielkundige wel al gepraat het oor eensaamheid, voel jy partykeer minder alleen wanneer jy begin praat oor jou eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "You mention now that you have already talked to your psychologist about loneliness, do you sometimes feel less alone when you start to discuss your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Mense maak my bang mense maak my seer."

Participant: "People scare me, people hurt me."

He attempts to relieve his friend's loneliness by spending time together. Visiting familiar places.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar sekere iets wat jy doen of sê om haar te probeer help met haar eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Are there certain things that you do or say to try and help her with the loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek sal vir haar sê kom ons gaan uit of ons praat op die telefoon een keer per dag of stuur mekaar 'n email eenkeer per dag ons doen net iets saam ons gaan loop gaan loop op plekke wat ons altyd geloop het. Gaan vir haar sê onthou jy nog daai tyd toe ons daai en daai gaan doen het gaan swem in die see gaan visvang het op daai strand en so dis net vir die saamgevoel kan kry ja met daai tyd het ja my jy het daai tyd 'n stervis gevang en ek het 'n klipvis gevang en sulke goed wat ons oor sal praat die memories wat ons gehad het saam sal ons oor praat."

Participant: "I will tell her, let us go out or we talk on the telephone once per day or send one another an email once a day... we just do something together, we go and walk, go walk in places where we always used to walk. Are going to say to her, do you still remember that time when we did this and that, went to swim in the sea, went to catch fish in the sea on that beach and so it is just for the togetherness feeling, yes with that time you..you caught a starfish and I caught a rock fish and such things that we will talk about, the memories that we had together, will we talk about."

He relates to a friend his experience of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ken jy ander mense wat eensaam is?"

Interviewer: "Do you know other people that are lonely?"

Deelnemer: "My vriendin in Pearly Beach is ook al heel alleen. Sy like haar eensaamheid ja sy het ook haar eie problem waarmee sy moet saam lewe so sy voel baie alleen op die tyd."

Participant: "My girlfriend in Pearly beach is also quite alone. She likes her loneliness, yes she has also got her own problems with which she has to live so she feels very lonely at this time."

He relates to a friends experience of loneliness.

He seems to isolate himself from people because he doesn't trust them and they only hurt him.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Was dit 'n keuse van jou kant af om nie mense naby jou toe te laat nie?"

Interviewer: "Was it a choice from your side not to allow people near to you?"

Deelnemer: "Ja. Ek vertrou nie mense nie. Hulle maak my net seer, dis al wat hulle doen."

Participant: "Yes. I do not trust people. They just hurt me, that is all they do."

He would rather be alone than face the hurt.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So sê jy dan partykeer vat jy eerder die eensaamheid as die seer?"

Interviewer: "So you say then sometimes you rather take the loneliness than the pain?"

Deelnemer: "Ja."

Participant: "Yes."

He has felt alone in the relationship.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy al ooit alleen gevoel het in die verhouding?"

Interviewer: "Have you ever felt lonely in a relationship?"

Deelnemer: "Nie baie erg nie net 'n bietjie."

Participant: "Not very much, just a bit."

He has yearned to have people close to him when he felt lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wanneer jy eensaam voel is daar partykeer tye wat jy voel jy wil graag mense naby jou hê?"

Interviewer: "When you feel lonely, are there sometimes that you feel you would like to have people near to you?"

Deelnemer: "Ja, of net kontak met iemand te he, al is dit net 'n epos of 'n facebook boodskap of 'n telefoon oproep of 'n email net 'n bietjie iets van iemand af."

Participant: "Yes, or just to have contact with someone, even if it is just an email or a Facebook message or a telephone call or an email just something from somebody."

He experienced his intimate relationship as intense and had to take a break. He both felt alone as well as wanting to be alone.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe het jy dit ervaar?"

Interviewer: "How did you experience that?"

Deelnemer: "Ek het dit nodig gehad, nodig gehad Om 'n break te vat. Die huwelik se verhouding was so intens gewees dat ek moes 'n breek gevat het. Ek het alleen gevoel en ek wou alleen gewees het."

Participant: "I needed it, needed it to take a break. The marriage relationship was so intense that I had to take a break. I felt alone and I wanted to be alone."

The break enabled him to think about his life and relationship.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe het jy die breek gevat is dit iets wat jy gedoen het of net besluit het?"

Interviewer: "How did you take the break, is it something that you just did or just decided?"

Deelnemer: "Ek het net die besluit gevat en gesê ek gaan weg vir 2 weke en ek het die besluit geneem. Ek was nie alleen nie ek het by my ouma-hulle gaan gekuier maar nog steeds baie tyd op my eie gewees om bietjie te dink oor wat dit in verhouding beteken wat ek in die verhouding hê en alles so ek kon terug gegaan het en alles op die tafel gesit het en gesê het dis wat ek alles wat ek aan gedink het."

Participant: "I just took the decision and said I am going away for two weeks and I took the decision. In was not alone, I visited at my grandmothers but was still a lot of the time on my own, to think a bit what it means in the relationship, what I have in the relationship and everything so I could go back and put everything on the table and said this is all that I have thought of."

Loneliness as a reflective space.

Isolation leads to interpersonal disconnectedness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So dink jy daar is 'n verband tussen alleen wees en om jouself te isoleer van ander?"

Interviewer: "So do you think there is a relationship between being alone and to isolate yourself from others?"

Deelnemer: "Hierdie geheue of hierdie gevoelens hy is nog naby jou en dan isoleer jy jouself"

Participant: "This memory or these feelings, he is still near you and then you isolate yourself."

Feeling abandoned by others in time of need.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dit klink asof daar 'n noue verband vir jou is tussen verstaan en alleen wees?"

Interviewer: "It sound as if there is a close relationship for you between understanding and being alone?"

Deelnemer: "Ergste gevoel dat jy is alleen daar is niemand wat rondom jou is nie as jy hulle die nodigste het nie."

Participant: "Worst feeling that you are alone, there is nobody around you, when you need them most."

He feels that he gets some support by talking to his psychologist.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Voel jy nou later jare dat jy nou die ondersteuning kry?"

Interviewer: "Do you now, in later years, feel that you now get the necessary support?"

Deelnemer: "Ek kan sê ek praat met my sielkundige ja sy vertaan my bietjie baie beter as wat meeste mense my verstaan sy kan my eerlik sê dis soos sy dink sy weet wanneer ek alleen raak in 'n sessie wanneer ek afswitch, wanneer my brein afswitch sy weet hoe om dit te hanteer, so dis eintlik goed, want sy weet om my die spasie te gee en ook wanneer sy my kan druk om 'n antwoord te kry of wanneer sy my moet los, dit is goed."

Participant: "I can say I do talk to my psychologist, yes, she understands me a bit, much better than most people understand me, she can tell me honestly, that is what she thinks, she knows when I am becoming alone during a session, when I am switching off, when my brain switches off, she knows how to handle it, so it is actually fine, because she knows to allow me the space and also when she can push me to get an answer or when she must leave me, it is fine."

The themes of his loss and loneliness are still discussed in therapy.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So sou jy sê dat al daai ervarings in die verlede en die verliese en die eensaamheid nog steeds 'n huidige tema in die terapie met haar is?"

Interviewer: "So do you say that those experiences in the past and the losses and the loneliness is still a theme at present in the therapy with her?"

Deelnemer: "Ja definitief. Daar is ander goed wat ook in spel in die sessie maar daai is die hoof goed waaroor ons praat wat ons net aanraak, dis nog baie seer dis nog baie vars, dit maak my baie seer so ek gedink wat ek partykeer voel of om myself weer met iodine te wil brand of sny of weer 'n eetversteurnis ooreetings en opgooi net om iets te doen om die pyn weg te kry."

Participant: "Yes definitely, there are also other things that also play into the session, but those are the main things that we discuss that we just touch on, it is still very painful, it is still very fresh, it hurts me a lot so I thought what I sometimes feel or to burn myself again with iodine or cut or again develop an eating disorder, overeating and vomit, just to do something to get the pain away."

The themes of his loss and loneliness are still discussed in therapy. He has fantasies about hurting himself just to feel something or to get rid of the pain.

He feels that loneliness plays a major role in his psychiatric conditions and that research should be done on the topic to find out about the causes and how to help people feel less lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy eensaamheid is iets wat behandel moet word in sê nou maar 'n psigiatriese konteks?"

Interviewer: "Do you think loneliness is something that should be treated in a psychiatric context?"

Deelnemer: "n Sielkundge of 'n psigiater of maatskaplike werker of wie ook al in die span is maar ek dink dit moet definitief behandel word want dis 'n hoof bestanddeel van psigiatrie is in depressie en bipolar."

Participant: "a Psychologist or a psychiatrist or a social worker or whoever that is in the team, but I think it must definitely be treated, because it is a main ingredient of psychiatry in depression and bipolar."

He feels that nobody apart from the professional team understands his loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is mense in jou verlede in jou lewe wat jou eensaamheid verstaan?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there are people in your past in your life that understand your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Nee behalwe die professionele team maar ek dink nie enige iemand anders verstaan dit so lekker nie."

Participant: "No, except the professional team, but I don't think anybody else understands it properly."

He feels less alone when talking about his loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Jy noem nou dat jy met jou sielkundige wel al gepraat het oor eensaamheid, voel jy partykeer minder alleen wanneer jy begin praat oor jou eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "You mention now that you have already discussed loneliness with your psychologist, do you sometimes feel less alone when you start to discuss your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ja, dit help nogals baie. Ten minste is dit iemand wat verstaan wat jou nie oordeel nie, wat tog sê maar jy is stupid om jouself te isoleer, hoekom het jy nie liewerster gaan om iets anders te gaan doen nie. Dit het so erg geraak dat as ek ingaan by checkers en 'n rak is verander dan raak ek paniek bevange, ek wil nie tussen mense wees nie."

Participant: "Yes, it helps a lot. At least it is somebody that understands, that does not judge you, that says you are stupid to isolate yourself, why did you not rather go to do something

else. It became so bad that if I go into Checkers and a shelf had been changed then I became anxious, I don't want to be among people."

Occupational therapy helps him keep productively busy then he does not have to sit alone at the ward.

Onderhoudvoerder: "In jou behandeling hier in die hospitaal is daar spesifieke van die professionele mense of die multidissiplinêre spanlede wat jy voel jou meer help met eensaamheid."

Interviewer: "In your treatment here in the hospital are there specific members of the professional people or the multi-disciplinary team members that you feel helped you more with the loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Die arbeidsterapie help dat ek iets produktiefs doen met my hande, en dat ek nie alleen hoef te sit by die saal nie."

Participant: "The occupational therapists help that I do something productive with my hands, and that I need not sit all alone at the ward."

The psychologist helps him explore the dimensions of his loneliness experience. He sees it as a puzzle with different pieces.

Onderhoudvoerder: "In jou behandeling hier in die hospitaal is daar spesifieke van die professionele mense of die multidissiplinêre spanlede wat jy voel jou meer help met eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "In your treatment here in the hospital are there specific members of the professional people or the multi-disciplinary team members that you feel helped you more with the loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Die sielkundige help my om te werk aan hoekom ek hou van alleen te wees of hou van eensaam wees of hoekom ek hou van om eensaam te wees so dit help so stukkie vir stukkie ja."

Participant: "The psychologist helps me to work on why I like to be alone or like to be lonely or why I like to be lonely, so it helps piece by piece yes."

He doesn't like sharing his problems. But does discuss it on surface with his psychologist.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar 'n spesifieke rede hoekom nie?"

Interviewer: "Is there a specific reason why not?"

Deelnemer: "Want ek hou nie daarvan om my probleme met mense te deel nie. Ek voel dis my eie probleme. En nou is dit 'n bietjie anderster, ek praat nou met my sielkundige so sy werk nou so bietjie op die surface, dis dan waar dit begin. Ek kom 'n bietjie uit ja."

Participant: "Because I don't like to share my problems with other people. I feel it is my own problems. And now it is slightly different, I now discuss it with my psychologist so she works now a bit on the surface that is then where it starts. I get out a bit, yes."

When he reaches out to fellow patients he experiences rejection which hurts.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sou jy sê dis 'n konstante gevoel of is dit iets wat kom en gaan? Of is dit maar altyd daar?"

Interviewer: "Would you say it is a constant feeling or is it something that comes and goes? Or is it just always there?"

Deelnemer: "En daar is nie regtig space om met hulle te praat nie, dan voel jy so half verwerp."

Participant: "And there is not really space to chat to them, then you feel half rejected."

4.6. Participant 6

He has a rich fantasy life in reaction to loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is eensaamheid 'n tema in jou fantasie wêreld?"

Interviewer: "Is loneliness a theme in your fantasy world?"

Deelnemer 6: "Ek fantaseer baie om eensaam te wees ek fantaseer wanneer ek eensaam is, ek het 'n baie lewendige fantasie wêreld wanneer die wêreld vir my baie eensaam is. En ja, die fantasieë raak groter hoe meer eensaam ek voel hoe meer fisies en eksplisiet raak die fantasieë. Daar is heel baie geleenthede spesifieke geleenthede wat ek terug roep in die fantasieë en situasies wat ek terugroep in die fantasieë, persone wat ek inroep in die fantasieë, en dan is my fantasie wêreld vir my baie baie breër en kom baie baie naby aan die bewustheid. My fantasie wêreld gaan dan obviously ook gepaard met die intensiteit, met belewenis intensiteit van my eie fisiese seksualiteit, so dit is; kom ons sê maar net ek hou dit nogal op datum. Ja beslis."

Participant 6: "I fantasise a lot about being lonely I fantasise a lot when I am lonely, and I have a very lively fantasy world when the world is very lonely to me. And yes, lots of the fantasies become bigger, as I feel more lonely the more physical and explicit the fantasies become. There are a lot of specific events that I recall in the fantasies, people that I call into the fantasies, and my fantasy world is much much wider and surfaces close to my consciousness. My fantasy world then obviously is accompanied by a huge intensity, with an intense experience of my own physical sexuality, therefore, let's only say I keep it up to date. Yes, definitely."

The participant refers to the richness of the fantasies he has. He describes the sexual nature of his fantasies. He also states that he has a lot of control over his fantasy life, being able to call in people he wants to fantasize about.

Dreams of past relationships

The participant dreams about a relationship he had earlier in his life.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As ons bietjie gaan kyk na jou drome, is daar ooit die tema van eensaamheid in jou drome?"

Interviewer: "If we analyse your dreams for a while, is there ever a theme of of loneliness in your dreams?"

Deelnemer 6: "En dan snaaks genoeg, net vir die interessantheid, ek het omtrent 28 jaar gelede 'n verhouding gehad vir so vyf- ses- sewe jaar en tot vandag toe nog droom ek, so helder soos wat jy hier sit, van daardie mense."

Participant 6: "And then funny enough, just for interest sake, I had a relationship about 28 years ago for five six seven years and up to today I dream, as clear as you sitting there, about those people."

Significant relationships return in dreams. In a way this may also be a response to feelings of loneliness as the lost relationship and closeness resurfaces in the dream.

Loneliness as a topic of discussion among psychiatric inpatients.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe weet jy dit?"

Interviewer: "How do you know that?"

Deelnemer: "Wel ek sit hierso in 'n hospitaal vol mense wat somtyds praat oor eensaamheid."

Participant: "Well, I sit here in the hospital full of people that sometimes talk about loneliness."

As an inpatient he experiences that a lot of fellow patients talks about loneliness.

Dreams as wish fulfilment.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As ons bietjie gaan kyk na jou drome, is daar ooit die tema van eensaamheid in jou drome?"

Interviewer: "If we look at your dreams, does the theme of loneliness ever feature in your dreams?"

Deelnemer 6: "Ek vind dat my drome die wat ek kan onthou sentreer meer rondom die gesinslewe en gesinslede wat weg is, wat nog hier is, maar ek sou sê omtrent die helfte van die drome, die ander helfte van die drome is tog drome met 'n fisiese ondertoon, sterk biologiese fisiese ondertoon, en Freud self het gesê dat een van die aspekte van drome is wensvervulling, en ek sien dit ook tog so."

Participant 6: "I find that my dreams, those that I can remember centre more around the family life and family members, that have left, that are still here but I would say that is half of

the dreams, the other half of the dreams are dreams with a physical undertone a strong biological physical undertone and Freud himself said that one of the aspects of dreams is wishfulfilment, and I also see it that way."

The participant agrees with Freud that dreams are about wish fulfilment. In his experience of dreams the content often entails the presence of family members, past and present. He also states that there is a biological or physical element to his dreams.

He still experiences periods of loneliness but to a lesser degree.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dit klink asof jy dan heenwys amper asof daar 'n konstante stryd is tussen die eensaamheid en die aggressie? Of dat die eensaamheid iets is wat 'n ou konstant moet aanspreek in jou lewe?"

Interviewer: "It sounds as if you then point, almost as if there is a constant struggle between the loneliness and the aggression? Or that the loneliness is something that one must constantly adress in your life"

Deelnemer: "Ek het baie ernstig en baie langdurig oor die eensaamheid in my lewe gekyk en belewe nog soms 'n eensame elemente maar minder as vroeër."

Participant: "I have taken a serious and long look at the loneliness in my life and am still sometimes experiencing an element of loneliness but less than previously."

He feels that Christ was the pit of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe verstaan jy die verband tussen geestelikheid of spiritualiteit in eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "What is your understanding of the relationship between psychiatric or spirituality in loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Kyk Christus was seker die pit van eensaamheid gewees. Hy was tog op 'n mission van sy eie van sy begin af."

Participant: "See, Christ was probably the core of loneliness. He was really on a mission on his own right from the start."

He sees loneliness as an experience that prepares you for when you are not lonely. Loneliness does not last forever but comes and goes.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Watse betekenis heg jy aan eensaamheid of jou ervaring van eensaamheid? Wat beteken dit vir jou? Het dit jy vir jou sin en betekenis."

Interviewer: "What meaning do you attach to loneliness or your perception of loneliness? What does it mean to you? Does it make sense and has it got meaning."

Deelnemer: "Eensaamheid is bloot daardie belewenis wat jou jou voorberei vir tye wanneer jy nie eensaam is nie, en dit kom ook deur, mens moet nooit eensaamheid sien as 'n ding wat vir ewig en ewig voortduur nie, hy sal weer verby gaan en dus berei jy jou voor vir wanneer jy weer eensaam is."

Participant: "Loneliness is purely that experience that prepares you for those times that you are not lonely, and that also comes through, one must never see loneliness as something that will go for ever and ever, it will pass and therefore you are preparing yourself for when you are going to be lonely again."

Having conversations with God or other people brings him relief of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat dink jy bring verligting vir jou van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "What do you think brings the relief to you from loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ag dit verskil. Partykeer het ek 'n gesprek met God, partykeer is dit 'n gesprek met iemand anders."

Participant: "Ah, it differs. Sometimes I have a conversation with God, sometimes a conversation with someone else."

He feels that there are few positive aspects to loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Jy al ooit 'n positiewe ervaring gehad rondom eensaamheid of positiewe assosiasies met eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Have you ever had a positive experience concerning loneliness or had positive associations to loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "En alleenheid is iets anders maar eensaamheid se positiewe effekte is vir my baie min."

Participant: "And aloneness is something else, but the positive effects of loneliness to me are very little."

He feels that loneliness makes one discover new levels of one's self.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As 'n ou sê jy staan in verhouding met jouself dat dit dalk 'n demensie van eensaamheid kan wees?"

Interviewer: "If one says that you stand in relation to yourself that that could possibly be a dimension of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek dink 'n mens ontdek konstant nuwe vlakke van jouself wanneer jy op in totale eensaamheid leef."

Participant: "I think a person constantly discovers new levels of yourself when you submerge totally in loneliness."

He finds two sides of himself, the positive side and the negative side.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As 'n ou sê jy staan in verhouding met jousef dat dit dalk 'n demensie van eensaamheid kan wees?"

Interviewer: "If one says that you stand in relation to yourself that that could possibly be a dimension of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "He finds two sides of himself, the positive side and the negative side."

Participant: "He finds two sides of himself, the positive side and the negative side."

If you don't make peace with the positive and negative sides of yourself you will always be estranged from yourself.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As 'n ou sê jy staan in verhouding met jousef dat dit dalk 'n demensie van eensaamheid kan wees?"

Interviewer: "If one says that you stand in relation to yourself that that could possibly be a dimension of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Mens darf nie te veel vrede maak daarmee nie, maar as jy nie in 'n mate vrede maak daarmee nie sal jy konstant vreemd bly vir jousef."

Participant: "One should not allow yourself to make too much peace with that, but if you do not make peace with it to a certain extent, you will constantly be foreign/unknown to yourself."

He sees loneliness as playing a part in how one behaves.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As 'n ou sê jy staan in verhouding met jousef dat dit dalk 'n demensie van eensaamheid kan wees?"

Interviewer: "If one says that you stand in relation to yourself that that could possibly be a dimension of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "En 'n groot gedeelte daarvan berus by die eensaamheid."

Participant: "And a huge portion of it is founded on loneliness."

He feels particularly lonely in the dimensions of his sexual, physical being.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dit bring my by die volgende vraag watse aksies gedrag of wat doen jy as jy eensaamheid voel? Watse aksies spruit uit die ervaring van eensaamheid? Indien enige in jou opinie."

Interviewer: "That brings me to the next question... what actions, conduct or what do you do when you feel loneliness. What actions come forth the experience of loneliness? If any in your opinion."

Deelnemer: "Nee, op hierdie stadium moet 'n mens iets anders bybring wat nie apart staan van persoonlikheid nie. En dit is dat ag mens hoef dit nie in verband te bring nie, mens hoef net te sê dat een van die van die vlakke waarop ek dikwels intense eensaamheid sal beleef is die fisiese, die seksuele."

Participant: "No, at this stage one must involve something else which does not stand divorced from personality. And that is that... ah one does not have to bring it into relation, one just needs to say that one of the ...of the levels on which I often experience intense loneliness is the physical, the sexual."

For him loneliness is an emotional experience not one he feels in his body.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Vertel my by die volgende vraag is daar vir jou 'n liggaamlike belewenis van eensaamheid of dink jy jy voel dit partykeer in jou lyf of in jou liggaam?"

Interviewer: "Tell me. With the next question...is there a physical experience of loneliness for you or do you think you sometimes feel it in your body or in your bones?"

Deelnemer: "Nee, dis dis vir my 'n emosionele belewenis."

Participant: "No, this is an emotional experience to me."

He feels that if he cannot be satisfied in terms of his loneliness experience he can at least satisfy himself on another level by eating sweets.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe verstaan jy die verband wat jy nou net genoem het tussen die eet, om te eet en die ervaring van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "How do you understand the relation that you have just mentioned between, diet, to eat and the experience of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Alles is so eenvoudig as ek myself nie kan tevrede hê op een vlak nie dan kan ek maar self my behoorlik tevrede maak op 'n ander vlak. En as ek nie op een vlak lekker kan beleef nie dan kan ek tenminste lekker te beleef, en so aan."

Participant: "Everything is so simple, if I cannot have myself content on one level and can make myself very satisfied on another level. And if I cannot experience satisfactorily on one level then I can at least on another, and so on."

He will become promiscuous in the face of sexual loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dit bring my by die volgende vraag watse aksies gedrag of wat doen jy as jy eensaamheid voel? Watse aksies spruit uit die ervaring van eensaamheid? Indien enige in jou opinie."

Interviewer: "That brings me to the next question... what actions, conduct or what do you do when you feel loneliness. What actions come forth the experience of loneliness? If any in your opinion."

Deelnemer: "Ek maar buite beweeg en op maniere optree wat, ag geheel en al nie rekonsilieerbaar is met die goeie ek nie, dan sal ek heel promisku optree, sal ek soms self."

Participant: "I just move outside and conduct myself in ways that, ah, are totally irreconcilable with the good I, then I will be promiscuous, will I sometimes self."

The risk factors involved in promiscuous sexual relations takes away some of the painful feelings associated with loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Jy het netnou seksualiteit genoem, hoe verstaan jy die verband tussen eensaamheid en seksualiteit?"

Interviewer: "You have just now mentioned sexuality, how do you understand the relationship between loneliness and sexuality?"

Deelnemer: "Gevaarlikheid by die bevrediging in, in daar is 'n risiko element 'n riskante element met en dit is juis daardie risiko element wat die snykant van die eensaamheid wegvat."

Participant: "Danger with the fulfilment, in that is a risk element, a risk element and it is that risk element that takes the cutting edge away from the loneliness."

He lost many family members and his dreams revolve around the themes of family life and the lossess.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As ons bietjie gaan kyk na jou drome, is daar ooit die tema van eensaamheid in jou drome of."

Interviewer: "If we look at your dreams a bit, is there ever the theme of loneliness in your dreams."

Deelnemer: "Om my drome dis deesdae ek het in 'n redelik kort tydperk my hele gesin omtrent verloor waar hulle dood is, so ek vind dat my drome die wat ek kan onthou sentreer meer rondom die gesinslewe en gesinslede wat weg is, wat nog hier is."

Participant: "Around my dreams... it is these days... I have in a relatively short time. Virtually lost my whole family, where they died, therefore I find that my dreams, those that I can remember, centre/revolve around the family life and family members that are lost, that are still around."

He feels that his father's inability to understand his psychiatric illness is the loneliest experience of his life.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So kom ons begin ons skop AF met die eerste vraag. Kan jy my vertel van 'n ervaring wat jy al gehad het van waar jy eensaamheid beleef het of waar eensaamheid vir jou na vore gekom het of waar dit in jou gedagtes omgegaan het?"

Interviewer: "So let us start... we kick off with the first question. Can you tell me about an experience you have already had. From where you experienced loneliness or where loneliness came to the front for you or where it went around in your thoughts?"

Deelnemer: "En daardie na daardie uitlating van hom, julle weet nie hoe dit is om met twee malletjies in een huis saam te leef nie, staan vir my uit as die een van die mees eensame belewenisse in my lewe wat ek ooit gehad het. Mees ettiketerende, die mees eensame."

Participant: "And that...after that remark of his, you don't know what it is like to live with 2 mad people in one house, stands out for me as one of the loneliest experiences in my life that I have ever had. Most labelling, the loneliest."

He feels that his father's inability to understand his psychiatric illness is the loneliest experience of his life.

His experience of loneliness elicited aggression in him.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe het daai ervaring van eensaamheid op daai stadium gevoel vir jou?"

Interviewer: "How did that experience of loneliness at that stage feel for you?"

Deelnemer: "Dit het onmiddellik van my kant af geweldige aggressie ontlok."

Participant: "It has immediately from my side elicited tremendous aggression."

He feels that the lonelier he feels the more aggression he experiences.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe verstaan jy die verband tussen aggressie en jou eensaamheid belewenis?"

Interviewer: "How do you understand the relationship between aggression and your loneliness experience?"

Deelnemer: "Ag ek weet nie, ek dink ek weet. Ek dink hoe dieper die eensaamheid hoe groter die aggressie."

Participant: "Ag I don't know, I think I know. I think the deeper the loneliness the bigger the aggression."

He feels that reacting with aggression is actually an attack at loneliness itself. In a way it makes him feel less lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe verstaan jy die verband tussen aggressie en jou eensaamheid belewenis?"

Interviewer: "How do you understand the relationship between aggression and your loneliness experience?"

Deelnemer: "So asof hoe aggressiewer jy sal wees, hoe minder die eensaamheid sal wees. En eintlik is dit, val jy nie die ander persoon aan nie maar val jy die eensaamheid direk aan met jou eie persoonlike aggressie."

Participant: "So it is as if the more aggressive you will be, the less the loneliness will be. And actually it is, you don't attack the other person but attack the loneliness directly with your own personal aggression."

He feels that reacting with aggression actually an attack at loneliness itself. In a way it makes him feel less lonely.

He associates his aggressive response to the experiences of other psychiatric patients.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe verstaan jy die verband tussen aggressie en jou eensaamheid belewenis?"

Interviewer: "How do you understand the relationship between aggression and your loneliness experience?"

Deelnemer: "Wanneer jy byvoorbeeld onder psigiatriese pasiënte gaan kyk, na hulle aggressie vlakke, dis asof die een die ander probeer doodwurg en nie regverdig nie, maar juis doodmaak."

Participant: "If you for instance look among psychiatric patients, their aggression levels, it is as if the one tries to suffocate the other and not fair, but just kill."

He feels that dealing with loneliness takes a special effort. If it is not addressed the aggression will always be there.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dit klink asof jy dan heenwys amper asof daar 'n konstante stryd is tussen die eensaamheid en die aggressie? Of dat die eensaamheid iets is wat 'n ou konstant moet aanspreek in jou lewe?"

Interviewer: "It sounds as if you can point, almost as if there is a constant fight between loneliness and aggression? Or that the loneliness is something that must addressed constantly in your life?"

Deelnemer: "Dit vat 'n spesiale effort om die eensaamheid aan te spreek en vir solank as wat 'n mens die eensaamheid nie behoorlik aangespreek het nie, sal die aggressie altyd daar wees."

Participant: "It takes a special effort to address the loneliness and for as long as one has not properly addressed the loneliness, the aggression will always be there."

He feels you don't have to be lonely to feel lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n verskil tussen om alleen te wees en alleen te voel?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is a difference between being lonely and feeling lonely?"

Deelnemer: "O ja. 'n Mens, mens hoef nie noodwendig alleen te wees om alleen te voel nie."

Participant: "O yes. One does not need to be alone to feel lonely."

He feels that loneliness calls for an will decision and that circumstances don't make you lonely but rather your mindset.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat dink jy bring verligting vir jou van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "What do you think brings you relief from loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "So vra eensaamheid tipe van 'n wilsbesluit want dis nie net omstandighede wat jou eensaam maak nie, dis ook jou eie mindset wat jou eensaam maak."

Participant: "Thus loneliness calls for a mental decision, because it is not only circumstances that make you lonely, it is also your own mind-set that makes you lonely?"

He relates his first recollection of an experience of loneliness to his relationship with his father.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So kom ons begin ons skop af met die eerste vraag. Kan jy my vertel van 'n ervaring wat jy al gehad het van waar jy eensaamheid beleef het of waar eensaamheid vir jou na vore gekom het of waar dit in jou gedagtes omgegaan het?"

Interviewer: "So let's start, we kick off with the first question. Can you tell me about an experience that you have had where you experienced loneliness or where loneliness came to the forefront for you or where it went around in your thoughts?"

Deelnemer: "Ja, ek sal, ek dink maar sommer net, dink maar sommer net aan 'n geleentheid wat gebeur het met my pa."

Participant: "Yes well I, I just think, just think about the incident that happened with my dad."

He also feels loneliness on a social level. He will befriends strange people in reaction to this loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dit bring my by die volgende vraag. Watter aksies, gedrag of wat doen jy as jy eensaamheid voel? Watse aksies spruit uit die ervaring van eensaamheid? Indien enige in jou opinie."

Interviewer: "It brings me to the next question, what actions, conduct or what do you do if you feel lonely? What actions come forth from your experience of loneliness? If any in your opinion."

Deelnemer: "Op sosiale vlak is ek dikwels, voel ek dikwels eensaam. En beleef ek maak soms met vreemde mense vriende wanneer ek so eensaam voel."

Participant: "On a social level I am often, I often feel lonely. And experience that I often make friends with foreigners when I feel so lonely".

He feels that most people do not understand psychiatric illness and do not know how to deal with it.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dit klink asof jy dan heenwys amper asof daar 'n konstante stryd is tussen die eensaamheid en die aggressie? Of dat die eensaamheid iets is wat 'n ou konstant moet aanspreek in jou lewe?"

Interviewer: "It sounds as if you point towards a constant struggle between loneliness and aggression? Or that the loneliness is something that you constantly have to address in your life?"

Deelnemer: "Die meesste ouens daar buite, verstaan nie psigiatriese siekte nie, en nommer twee, weet nie hoe om dit te hanteer nie."

Participant: "The most guys out there, do not understand psychiatric disease, and number two, don't know how to handle it."

He feels that people in general don't understand psychiatric illness but that the psychiatric patient's lived world experience is much more than only their psychiatric illness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dit klink asof jy dan sê dat daar dan 'n algemene onkunde is by mense rondom die verstaan van die psigiatriese pasiënt se belewenis wêreld?"

Interviewer: "It sounds as if you are saying that there is a general ignorance with people around the understanding of the psychiatric patient's world experience."

Deelnemer: "Op hierdie stadium van die wedstryd, sy belewenis wêreld is veel groter as sy siekte. Maar daar is 'n onbegrip vir die siekte, en dis al wat ek op hierdie stadium wil sê van dit."

Participant: "At this stage of the game, his world of experience is much bigger than his sickness. But there is a misconception of the sickness, and that is all that I at this stage want to say about it."

He feels that psychiatric illness is inherently a lonely process.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Watse rol dink jy speel eensaamheid dan in die siekte ervaring van die psigiatriese pasiënte? Sien jy verbande tussen eensaamheid en jou psigiatriese kondisie?"

Interviewer: "What role do you think does loneliness play then in the illness experience of the psychiatric patients? Do you see relationships between loneliness and your psychiatric condition?"

Deelnemer: "Die psigiatriese siekte per se is vereensaamende fenomeen."

Participant: "The psychiatric sickness per se is a phenomenon that makes one lonelier."

He feels that psychiatric illness is inherently a lonely process.

He feels that because people don't understand psychiatric illness it causes psychiatric patients to feel isolated.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Watse rol dink jy speel eensaamheid dan in die siekte ervaring van die psigiatriese pasiënte? Sien jy verbande tussen eensaamheid en jou psigiatriese kondisie?"

Interviewer: What role do you think does loneliness play then in the sickness experience of the psychiatric patients? Do you see relationships between loneliness and your psychiatric condition?"

Deelnemer: "Omdat daar onbegrip is, is daar direk voortvloeiend daaruit wanbegrip van die isolasie en die eensaamheid wat die psigiatriese pasiënt beleef, ek dink sy, sy siekte is isolerend, as 'n mens nie 'n sterk ondersteuning stelsel het nie, wat baie min psigiatriese pasiënte het."

Participant: "Because there is no understanding, there is directly flowing from it a misconception of the isolation and the loneliness that the psychiatric patient experiences, I think his sickness is isolating, if one has not got a strong support system, that very few psychiatric patients have."

The psychiatric patient often has to stand alone for his illness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n verskil tussen om alleen te wees en alleen te voel?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is a difference between being alone and feeling alone?"

Deelnemer: "Te midde van ander mense as gevolg van hulle isolerende wanbegrip, kyk die psigiatriese pasiënte staan dikwels uit as die ou wat alleen sy siekte bepleit."

Participant: "Amidst other people because of their isolating non comprehension, the psychiatric patient often stands out as the one that is alone pleading his illness."

The psychiatric patient often has to stand alone with his illness.

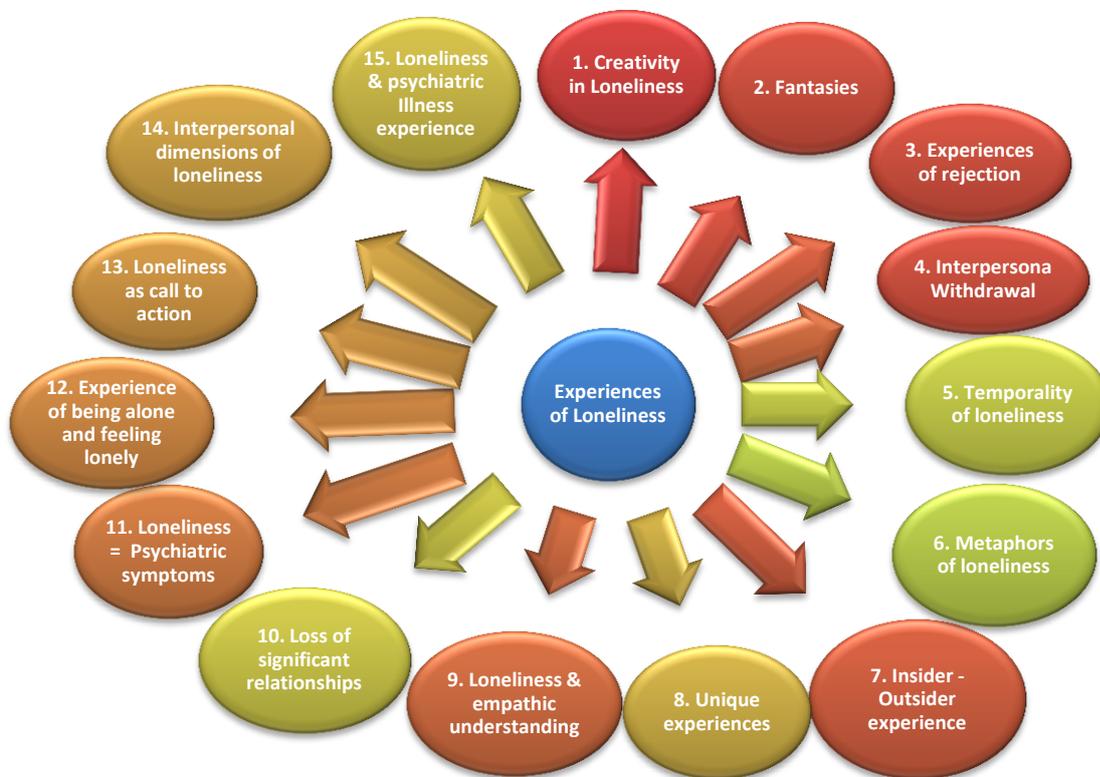
This chapter presented the first level of empirical findings, that of the bracketed meaning units as identified in each participants interviews. In chapter five the next level of empirical findings, that of the umbrella themes will be presented.

Chapter 5: Empirical findings II: Umbrella themes from the bracketed meaning units of experiences of loneliness

In this chapter the findings of chapter four are categorized in umbrella themes that capture the essence of the group of clustered meaning units from which they emerged. Fifteen main umbrella themes were identified and are presented in figure one below. These themes were creativity in loneliness, fantasies, experiences of rejection, interpersonal withdrawal, temporality of loneliness, metaphors of loneliness, insider-outsider experience, unique experiences, loneliness and empathic understanding, loss of significant relationships, loneliness and psychiatric symptoms, being alone and feeling lonely, loneliness as call to action, interpersonal dimensions of loneliness and loneliness and psychiatric illness experience. Following the main themes are their clustered meaning units with excerpts from the transcribed interviews to illustrate their origin in the original data set. Only the most capturing descriptions of the themes are presented here. Due to the fact that all the interviews were conducted in the participant's language of choice, Afrikaans, the excerpts are followed by a translation into English. The meaning units are presented according to the specific research participants from whose interview the meaning units were identified.

Some themes were present in all of the research participants' experience of loneliness, where others were unique to the individual's experience. It was also found that the depth and extent of the participant's experience of loneliness varied in intensity and quality. A possible contributing factor to the richness of the information could be the therapeutic-like conversational style of data collection employed by the researcher. This process involved a skilful awareness of how both researcher and participant engaged with the subject matter. The therapeutic-like interviews showed appropriate empathy in putting the participants at ease as well as recognizing interactional difficulties the participants might have had in engaging with the subject matter. Appropriate sensitivity was shown to participant's emotional reactions to certain interview questions as well as those incidents where further exploration of their experience led to emotional reactions. The participant's experiences were often conveyed in a raw and unfiltered manner. Another view on the richness of the experience of loneliness revealed by the participants' stroke with the phenomenological mission, the mission of revealing what had already been there. According to this view the participants already had had a sense of their experience of loneliness prior to the commencement of the research. Therefore it was readily accessible to them during the interview process.

Figure 1: Experiences of loneliness



5.1. Creativity in loneliness

Tough times are often creative times.

For participant 1 creativity also brought relief from feelings of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar sekere goed wat jy doen as jy eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "Are there specific things you do when you feel lonely?"

Deelnemer 1: "Creative artwork... dit gee my 'n relief, dat ek van my beste kunswerke wat ek gedoen het by die Departement van Kuns, Vereeniging van Kuns daar in Magnolia Dal uitgestal het, dit was op daai tydstop gewees toe die dinge verkeerd geloop het en by my werk, nie verkeerd geloop het, toe ek my werk verloor het."

Participant 1: "Creative artwork... that gives me relief, that I displayed some of my best art works at the Department of Art, Association of Art in Magnolia Dal, it was at that point in time when everything went wrong, wrong at my work, when I lost my job."

He expresses that he keeps himself busy with creative work when he feels lonely. This brings some form of relief to his experience of loneliness. He also reports that his best creative work was done

during a particularly bad (lonely) period of his life. The idea of creativity-in-suffering presents itself here. Our darkest hour may be our finest hour.

Creative expression: loneliness as a space for creativity.

Participant 1 expressed how he tries to keep himself busy with creative artwork when he feels lonely. The experience of loneliness moves him to engage in creative activity. This activity keeps him busy but also seems to add some meaning to his experience.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar sekere goed wat jy doen as jy eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "Are there specific things you do when you feel lonely?"

Deelnemer 1: "... ek hou my besig, ek het die gawe dat ek kunswerk kan doen. Creative artwork en dan hou ek my besig..."

Participant 1: "... I keep busy, I have the gift to do artwork. Creative artwork and then I keep myself busy..."

Thus a dimension of creativity in the face of loneliness may be a meaning making activity. Being creative and creating meaning may be part of a similar process. In a way loneliness can also assist to "think out of the box" or express oneself more authentically because of a lessened sensitivity to critique from others. Being alone can also lead being disconnected from the restrictions of this world thus leading to more creative expression and unique ideas.

Creativity in the face of loneliness.

Participant 2 described how he resorts to creative activities such as arts and crafts in the face of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy ooit eensaam of vervreemd van jou self gevoel binne jouself?"

Interviewer: "Have you ever felt lonely or estranged from yourself within yourself?"

Deelnemer 2: "...dae wat ek voel ek weet nie eens wat om met myself aan te vang nie of ek begin 'n ding, ek is baie lief vir arts en crafts..."

Participant 2: "...days that I feel I don't even know what to do with myself or I start with something, I find arts and crafts very enjoyable..."

Participant 2 described times that he finds himself in a state where he does not know what to do with himself, as if disconnected from himself. He then resorts to creative activities as an escape from feelings of loneliness.

Creativity can be a blessing and a way to cope with loneliness.

Participant 2 relates his experiences of creativity and loneliness as follows:

Onderhoudvoerder: "So is daar kontekste of situasies waar jy meer of minder eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "So are there contexts or situations in which you feel more or less lonely?"

Deelnemer 2: "...as ek allennig is by die huis, dit klink simpel om te sê maar baie keer as ek allennig is by die huis en ek raak besig met my aktiwiteite, die stokperdjies en goed en my gedagtes is heeltyd besig dan stop ek, my gedagtes is heeltyd besig ek probeer heeltyd 'n ding uitsorteer, by mekaar pas, hy gaan nie mooi lyk so nie, gaan beter lyk so, beter lyk so, my gedagtes begin heeltemal wegdwaal, jy konsentreer heeltyd op dit, dan vergeet jy van die eensaamheid en aleenheid. Ek is dankbaar vir die gawe wat ek gekry het om so kreatief te wees, om blomme te kan rangskik en daai tipe goeters, en nie net tevrede te wees met 'n ding nie en te verander en hier te verander en daar te verander tot jy tevrede is en dit ly regtig my aandag af."

Participant 2: "... if I am alone at home, it sounds stupid to say but many times when I am alone at home and I become busy with my activities, the hobbies and stuff and my thoughts are busy the whole time then I stop, my thoughts are continuously busy are continuously busy sorting things out, fit them together, it is not going to look beautiful this way, it is going to look better that way, look better this way, my thoughts start to dwell completely, you concentrate on it continuously, then you forget about loneliness and being alone. I am thankful for the gift I have received to be so creative, to be able to arrange flowers and that type of thing and not just be satisfied with it but to alter here and there until you are satisfied and that really distracts my attention."

Being alone at home and being busy creatively occupies his thoughts and makes him less lonely. He uses creative art work to distract his attention and help him focus on something other than his loneliness. This is another example of how creative expression can somehow alleviate feelings of loneliness and in a way contribute meaning to one's existence.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat doen jy gewoonlik as jy eensaam voel? Is daar spesifieke dinge wat jy doen?"

Interviewer: "What do you normally do when you feel lonely? Are there specific things that you do?"

Deelnemer 2: "...ek doen baie scrap booking en découpage en ek het nou begin mosaik werk doen."

Participant 2: "... I do a lot of scrap booking and decoupage and I have also started doing mosaic work."

The participant mentions some activities of creative expression that he engages in when he feels lonely. This may also tie in with a later theme of *Loneliness as call to action*. The experience of loneliness can act as a driving force to bring people to action to deal or attempt to numb the experience of loneliness. Creative engagement seems to be one of the outcomes of a move from loneliness.

5.2. Fantasies

Living one into stories can be a way to make one feel less lonely.

When asked if there are specific things that the participant does when he feels lonely he responded that he loves reading.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat doen jy gewoonlik as jy eensaam voel? Is daar spesifieke dinge wat jy doen?"

Interviewer: "What do you normally do when you are lonely? Are there specific things that you do?"

Deelnemer 2: "Wel ek is lief vir lees."

Participant 2: "Well I like reading."

Reading when lonely and immersing himself into stories seems to help the participant feel less lonely.

Escape into fantasy in the face of loneliness.

Participant 3 describes places he associates with loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar sekere plekke waar jy, ja plekke waar jy gaan in jou gedagtes?"

Interviewer: "Are there certain places where you... yes places where you were you go in your thoughts?"

Deelnemer 3: "Ja, dis maar altyd die lonely planets die islands maar ek hou van islands dis mooi daar, en donkerte ek was baie daar ek hou van die aande eks baie nocturnal, donkerte in sekere opsigte is swimming in the void, jy kan alleen voel maar aan die ander kant you have got nothing to lose you are free. Ek weet nie dis moeilik ek sou se die karoo, dit voel baie lonely daar, dis scary daar."

Participant 3: "Yes, it is always the lonely planets the islands but I love the islands It is beautiful there, and darkness I was there a lot I like the evenings I am very nocturnal, darkness in a certain way is swimming in the void, you can feel lonely but on the other hand you have got nothing to lose you are free. I don't know it is difficult I would say the karoo, it feels very lonely there, it is scary there."

The participant goes to lonely planets in his thoughts. He prefers nights and refers to the darkness as a beautiful place. He sees himself as nocturnal. He states that on the one hand when experiencing loneliness you have nothing to lose so you are free. He also refers to the Karoo as a particularly lonely place, and adds that it is scary. This brings up the duality of the loneliness experience; it is both beautiful and scary.

Entering into fantasy relationships to ease feelings of loneliness.

Fantasies not only include places but also relationships. This serves as an attempt to create another person to ease loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar 'n sekere impak of sekere verhouding in fantasie tydens jou eie belewenis van eensaamheid? Is jy nou in 'n seksuele verhouding of nie?"

Interviewer: "Is there a certain impact or certain relationship in fantasy during your experience of loneliness? Are you in a sexual relationship or not?"

Deelnemer 3: "... porn op die internet, ja dan voel jy maxima dory jy leef jou fantasies uit dis 'n goeie exercise vir jou imagination en sulke goed. Ja jy dink dan jy is maar addicted op 'n sekere manier, jy kan nogals addicted raak daaraan, addicted, maar omdat jy lonely is dan wil jy 'n relationship hê met hierdie fantasy."

Participant 3: "...porn on the internet, yes then you feel maxima dory, you live out your fantasies it is a nice exercise for your imagination and such things. Yes you then think you are addicted in a certain way, you can become addicted to it, addicted, and then you are, but because you are lonely you want a relationship with the fantasy."

The participant longs for a soulmate but the lack of one leads him to view pornography and live out his fantasies in that way. The loneliness drives him to have a relationship with a fantasy person. He employs his imagination to colour in his fantasies. This may point in a way to an underlying driving force behind pornography. The prevalence of pornography may be fuelled by feelings of loneliness and a longing for intimacy unfulfilled in reality but somehow soothed by pornography.

A need to be alone as resulting in a withdrawal into fantasy.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So dink jy dat eensaamheid jou preferred state geword het?"

Interviewer: "So do you believe that loneliness became your preferred state?"

Deelnemer 4: "Ja. Ek het baie me-time nodig soos hulle dit stel, ek hou daarvan om myself in 'n wêreld te verloor wat nie ander mense insluit nie."

Participant 4: "Yes. I need a lot of me-time as they put it, I love it to lose myself in a world that does not include other people."

The participant prefers being alone. He needs to spend time alone and loses himself in a fantasy world without people.

5.3. Experiences of rejection

Experience of rejection can contribute to feelings of loneliness.

Participant 3 immediately associates loneliness with rejection that he has experienced in his life.

Onderhoudvoerder: “So miskien kan ons afskop met ‘n vraag om die gedagtes so bietjie te stimuleer oor eensaamheid. As jy so terugkyk oor jou lewe was daar spesifieke tyd of ‘n insident of ‘n periode waar jy baie eensaam gevoel het, en indien daar was, kan jy my dalk bietjie meer vertel daarvan: Hoe was jou ervaring gewees”

Interviewer: “So maybe we can kick-off with a question about loneliness to stimulate your thoughts a bit. If you look back on your life; was there a specific time or incident or a period of time in which you felt very lonely and if so can you tell me about it? What was your experience like?”

Deelnemer 3: “Baie rejection en ja kleuterskool rejection, daar ook maar gehad; einde van laerskool het ek niks vriende gehad nie; altyd vat mens dit maar persoonlik as daar iets fout is met jou maar dis omdat jy eintlik van ‘n ander agtergrond afkom.”

Participant 3: “Lots of rejection and yes, rejection in kindergarden as well, end of primary school I had no friends, one takes all this personally like there is something wrong with you but it is actually because you come from a different background.”

The participant experienced rejection from other people from a very young age. The end result was having no friends by the end of primary school. He also refers to being from a different background. Thus being different can lead to rejection and loneliness.

Loneliness springs from non acceptance in relationship

Onderhoudvoerder: “Sal jy omgee om dit dalk vir my te lees? (Exerpt from thoughts on loneliness that the participant wrote down.)”

Interviewer: “Will you mind reading it to me? (Excerpt from thoughts on loneliness that the participant wrote down).”

Deelnemer 3: “There is no sense of belonging if you are not part of something. It makes you think or believe you are not loveable nothing to love about you. Lonely in relationships anyway it’s all about them.”

Participant 3: “There is no sense of belonging if you are not part of something. It makes you think or believe you are not loveable nothing to love about you. Lonely in relationships anyway it’s all about them.”

Feeling that he does not belong also makes the participant feels like he is unloveable. He expressess the feeling that ineventably he will be alone in relationship because it is all about the other person at the end of the day.

Facing rejection from others in reaction to spiritual questions.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Dit klink asof jy in daai woestyn fase meer en meer bewus moes raak van jou eensaamheid met hierdie niks.”

Interviewer: "It sounds as if you had to become more and more aware of your loneliness with this nothing during that desert phase."

Deelnemer 4: "Klomp goed uit geloof en nie net uit Christenskap nie, hoekom?, waar kom hierdie vandaan en baie mense het probeer om my te beantwoord, ander mense het probeer om demone uit my te dryf ander mense het probeer om my eenvoudig bombasties te antwoord bla bla bla. Asseblief bly net weg van my. Dis ook miskien in 'n mate eensaamheid want tussen al hierdie mense wat ek gevra het dis net 'n paar van my vriende weereens die vriende wat nie weet dat jy eensaam voel nie, wat die moeite gedoen het om te probeer verstaan wat ek probeer vra."

Participant 4: "Lots of stuff from religion and not only out of Christianity, why?, where does this originate from and lots of people tried to answer me, other people tried to drive out demons from me and others tried to answer me simply bombastic blab la bla. Please just keep away from me. It might also be loneliness to an extent because among all these people I asked it was only a few of my friends once again friends that did not know that you were lonely, that did go to the trouble to try and understand what I'm trying to ask."

In his quest to find answers on his spiritual questions he experienced people rejecting him and that made him feel lonely. This may point to a larger societal dynamic where people are scared to question because they fear rejection and loneliness. Therefore they cannot be authentic but have to keep their questions for themselves.

Loneliness does not exist in the absence of rejection.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sê jy dat lack of kommunikasie bydrae tot 'n pasiënt se belewenis eensaamheidheid?"

Interviewer: "Are you saying that a lack of communication contributes to a patient's experience of loneliness?"

Deelnemer 4: "In die hospitaal het ek mense gekry wat kommunikeer met mekaar, inligting uit ruil en so my as 'n geheel aan gesprek en dit laat my waardevol voel. Dit laat natuurlik mense voel asof iemand aktief probeer om te verstaan hoe kompleks die situasies is, waar alles agtermekaar kom, agtermekaar gesit kan word en dis is daar nie 'n gevoel van verwerping nie. Die teenoorgestelde, soos die eensaamheid verdwyn."

Participant 4: "In hospital I found people here that communicate with each other, exchange information and thereby addressed me in total and that made me feel valuable. That of course makes one feel as if somebody is actively trying to understand how complex the situations are, where everything fits in, could be ordered and then no feeling of rejection exists. The opposite like the loneliness disappears."

When he does not experience rejection and he feels that people try to understand him his loneliness disappears.

5.4. Interpersonal withdrawal

Withdrawing himself in reaction to loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sou jy eerder sê jy het spesifieke tydperke van eensaamheid of is dit amper 'n ervaring wat deurlopend is?"

Interviewer: "Would you rather say that you have specific times that you are lonely or is it an ongoing experience?"

Deelnemer 3: "Elke move wat jy maak in 'n interaction met mense is 'n fout op die einde. It turns out to be wrong dan trek jy nog meer terug en jy word nog meer introverted en seclude jousef so ek sien myself basically as a recluse"

Participant 3: "Every move that you make in the interaction with people is a mistake in the end it turns out to be wrong then you withdraw even further and you become more introverted and you seclude yourself more. Therefore I basically see myself as a recluse."

The participant's negative outcome in relationships leads him to withdraw himself from others. He becomes introverted and secludes himself. He then states how he incorporates this feeling into his identity and sees himself as a recluse. It is interesting to note here that the reaction to interpersonal rejection is withdrawal. It seems then that rejection leads to an increased sense of loneliness.

Withdrawal in reaction to loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As kind of adollesent of volwassene wanneer dink jy is die eerste keer waar jy eensaamheid beleef het?"

Interviewer: "As a child or adolescent or adult when do you think was the first time that you experienced loneliness?"

Deelnemer 4: "Daar was ook tye gewees voor dit waar ek myself in 'n dop ingetrek het soos byvoorbeeld in standerd 2 en standerd 3."

Participant 4: "There were also times before that where I withdrew into myself for example standerd 2 and standerd 3."

The participant immediately associates loneliness with withdrawing into his shell. He recalls earlier periods in his life where he has withdrawn.

Withdrawal in response to hurt as a defensive manoeuvre.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sê jy dat a lack of kommunikasie bydrae tot die pasiënt se eensaamheidheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you say that a lack of communication contributed to the loneliness of the patient?"

Deelnemer 4: "Juis daarmee het ek 'n probleem. Jy is seer, jys is stukkend. Ons as lewende wesens insluitende mense wanneer jy seer is wanneer jy stukkend is trek jy terug, dis beskermend, dis 'n manier om te oorleef."

Participant 4: "Especially with that I have a problem. You are hurt, you are broken. We as living beings including people when you are hurt, when you are broken down, you withdraw, to protect yourself, that is the way to survive."

The participant experiences his withdrawal as a way to survive and protect himself. Withdrawing from people and preferring solitary activities.

Withdrawal in reaction to not communicating as the start of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar ander spesifieke verhoudings waar jy veral bewus was van die dinamika, dat mense jou nie verstaan nie verstaan nie wat jou eensaam laat voel het?"

Interviewer: "Are there other specific relationships where you were aware of a dynamic of people not understanding you that left you feeling lonely?"

Deelnemer 4: "Ten spyte van hoe ook al ek probeer het het ek agterkom die persoon begin belangstelling verloor, dit is asof ek net sê jy stel nie belang in my nie, en daarna begin die onttrekking, die eensaamheid proses."

Participant 4: "Regardless of how I tried I became aware that the other person is losing interest, it is as if I just say you are not interested in me, and after that the withdrawal starts the loneliness process."

If the participant experiences that people are not interested in him this makes him withdraw and he sees this as the beginning of the loneliness process.

5.5. Temporality of loneliness

Loneliness manifests itself in a time continuum.

The participant expressed that loneliness is a theme throughout his life.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As jy so terugdink oor jou lewe kan jy tye onthou of 'n tyd onthou waar jy spesifiek baie eensaam gevoel het en kan jy my dalk bietjie meer vertel van so 'n tyd?"

Interviewer: "If you look back over your life can you remember times or a time that you were you specifically felt really lonely and can you perhaps tell me a bit more about such a time?"

Deelnemer 1: "Daar die tye van eensaamheid is aanhoudend, daar is nie 'n spesifieke tyd wat ek kan uitsonder nie."

Participant 1: "Those times of loneliness are continues, there is no specific time that I can point out."

The participant expresses the time dimension of loneliness as continues.

Loneliness is ever present but at times conscious awareness of it increases.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Was jy getroud voorheen?"

Interviewer: "Have you been married before?"

Deelnemer 1: "Ja, maar sy het saam met 'n ander man weggeloop."

Participant 1: "Yes, but she left with another man."

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe het dit jou eensaamheid belewenis geaffekteer?"

Interviewer: "How did it affect your loneliness experience?"

Deelnemer 1: "Maar daar kom aande en dae dan dink 'n ou daaraan veral as jy kersfees en wanneer die die fees seisoen raak en jy is in 'n winkel sentrum en jy loop alleen daar rond, en jy sien 'n man en 'n vrou en 'n gesin gelukkig saam en hulle hou hande vas en hulle lag en gesels en jy is alleen en jy loop alleen daar rond, jy dwaal maar net daar rond, dit maak 'n ou seer."

Participant 1: "But there are evenings and days that one thinks of it especially at Christmas and festive times when you are in a shopping centre and you are walking on your own, and you see a man and woman and a family happy together and they are holding hands and they are laughing and talking and you are wandering around alone, you are wandering around aimless, that hurts one."

At certain times the feelings of loneliness are more on the fore ground, especially when he is reminded of other peoples interpersonal connections. Being made aware visually of other people's close relationship with family he becomes more aware of his own loneliness.

Loneliness spans throughout life regardless of the presence of others.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So kom ons skop af met hierdie vraag was daar al ooit op 'n stadium in jou lewe 'n tyd wat jy baie eensaam gevoel het? Kan jy my miskien meer daarvan vertel?"

Interviewer: "So let's kick off with this question. Has there ever been in your life a stage that you felt very lonely? Can you tell me more about it?"

Deelnemer: "Ek sal sê my hele lewe lank het ek alleen gevoel."

Participant: "I would say that I have felt lonely all my life."

He sees being alone as a short term experience and loneliness as a long term experience.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n verskil tussen alleenheid en eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you believe there is a difference between being alone and loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ja. Alleenheid dink ek is meer kort termyn en eensaamheid is 'n meer langtermyn gevoel. Dis hoe ek dit sien."

Participant: "Yes. Being alone I think is more short term and loneliness is more a long term feeling. That is the way I see it."

5.6. Metaphors of loneliness

Loneliness is compared to lying on cold cement.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is dit in tye wat jy baie eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "Is it in times that you feel very lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Ja. As ek hartseer is of so dan wil ek my nie seermaak met sê nou maar my seermaak met 'n mes of iets nie, ek wil ek wil swaar kry, ek wil op 'n stuk sement gaan lê en kyk of ek so aan die slaap kan raak, of net daarso sit."

Participant: "Yes. When I am sad or such then I want to hurt myself, hurt myself with a knife or something, I want to suffer, I want to lay on a piece of cement and see if I can fall asleep or so, or just sit there."

Laying on a piece of cement, which is cold, can be a metaphor for the experience loneliness. Seeing if one can fall asleep this way can be a way to test one's ability to cope with loneliness or to have an "external" experience of an internal state.

Loneliness "like winter" a "barren landscape" and like being "left alone on the planet". Three metaphors to describe the feeling of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe voel dit vir jou wanneer jy alleen is? Hoe voel daai eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "How does it feel to you when you are alone? How do you experience that loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek voel soos die winter jy is in 'n barren landscape voel asof jy alleen gelos is op die planeet. They left you here to your own devices."

Participant: "I feel like the winter you are in a barren landscape feels as if you were left alone on the planet. They left you here to your own devices."

Loneliness is "like winter" a "barren landscape" or like being "left alone on the planet" as three metaphors to describe the feeling of loneliness.

Associates loneliness with a prison where you are forced to be alone with your own thoughts.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar spesifieke goed wat jy doen as jy eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "Are there specific things that you do when you are lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Met loneliness you are sort of forced to be with your own thoughts en ek dink dis hoekom tronke daar is om mense daar dieper dink oor wat hulle gedoen het."

Participant: "With loneliness you are sort of forced to be with your own thoughts and I think that is why jails are there because people there think deeper about what they have done."

The participant associates loneliness with a prison where you are forced to be alone with your own thoughts.

Being locked up on an island without visitors.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wanneer jy droom, droom jy ooit van eensaamheid of alleen wees?"

Interviewer: "When you dream, do you ever dream about loneliness or being alone?"

Deelnemer: "Ja. Ek droom baie keer ek is op die eiland dis net ek, ek is toegesluit op die eiland niemand kom ooit naby my nie."

Participant: "Yes. I often dream I am on an island it is only me I am locked up on the island nobody ever comes near to me."

In relation to loneliness he dreams that he is alone, locked up on an island where nobody ever comes close to him.

5.7. Insider - outsider experience

The perspective of the lonely person as the outsider can be an interesting phenomenon to explore. It may give the lonely person some licence to comment on societal issues.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar enige iets wat jy voel jy nog wil bydra?"

Interviewer: "Is there anything else that you feel you still want to contribute?"

Deelnemer: "Omdat ek 'n alleen loper is sien ek dinge hierso gebeur by die hospitaal, dit is dat van hierdie jong ouens wat hier is, is hier for no reason at all, hulle hoort nie hier nie, hulle gebruik nog steeds drugs."

Participant: "Because I am a loner I see things happening here in the hospital, that is that some of the young guys that are here are here for no reason at all, they don't belong here, they still use drugs."

Because he is a loner he sees various things. This is an interesting statement because it brings into the analysis the question of different views or the insider outsider perspective. Often being alone or being a loner can give one a certain perspective on a situation or reality that you would not have had if you were part of the group. The so called participant observer or just observer and being the outcast.

The insider – outsider perspective.

Onderhoudvoerder: Refer to above quote

Interviewer: Refer to above quote.

This outsider perspective compels him to point out injustices and other problems he sees in the hospital.

He sees himself as an outsider. The insider-outsider is an interesting view.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Wat het jy al in jou lewe gedoen om met eensaamheid te cope?”

Interviewer: “What have you done in your life to cope with loneliness?”

Deelnemer: “Want hulle kan dit nie aldag verstaan nie want hulle is sosiale klomp mense hulle gaan nie deur hoe kan ek sê dieselfde probleme as wat ek gaan nie maar hulle ervaar nie daai gevoel van eensaamheid nie want hulle is groot gesinne wat mekaar ondersteun en bymekaar staan en goed en dan kom jy as ‘n buitestaander daar aan, dan voel jy net maar ek voel nie deel van die gesin of behoort deel van die gesprek of iets van daai aard nie.”

Participant: “Because they can’t always understand it because they are a lot of social people, they are not what can I say experiencing the same problems as me but their experiences don’t include those feelings of loneliness because they are big families that support one another and stick together and stuff and then you arrive there as a bystander. Then you just feel I don’t feel like part of the family or should be part of the conversation or something similar.”

He sees himself as an outsider. The insider-outsider is an interesting view.

Being an outcast or outsider.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Sou jy eerder sê jy het ‘n spesifieke tydperk van eensaamheid of is dit amper ‘n ervaring wat deurlopend is?”

Interviewer: “Would you rather say you had a specific time span of loneliness or is it almost an experience that is continuous?”

Deelnemer: “Dis ‘n ander faktor dat ek nie die geld het daarvoor nie en omdat ek ook nie goed met mense oor die weg kom nie is ek baie bang vir base en vir werksomstandighede. So dit het ‘n groot effek, jy is alienated, jy is ‘n alien, ek hou van aliens ek hou van science fiction.”

Participant: “It is another factor that I did not have money for that and because I did not get on well with people I am very afraid of bosses and work situations. Therefore, it has a huge effect in total, you are alienated, you are an alien, I like aliens I like science fiction.”

Because of this he associates himself with aliens and being an outsider.

5.8. Unique experiences

Fate & Loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Was dit spesifiek in die afrigting of was dit meer in die hardloop self?"

Interviewer: "Was it specifically in the training or was it more in the running itself?"

Deelnemer: "In die hardloop self het ek die eensaamheid het ek wel mense ontmoet en ek het groot vriendskap kring gebou, maar toe kom die noodlot in toe kan ek nou nie meer aan dit deelneem nie."

Participant: "In the running itself I experience loneliness but I have met people and I built a big ring of friends, but then the fate stepped in then I could no longer participate in it."

Fate brought about injury, injury stopped the running and not running meant not engaging with people which ultimately leads to loneliness.

Self-harm in reaction to loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sê vir my, as jy die alleenheid moet beskryf, hoe sal jy alleenheid beskryf of eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Tell me, if you have to describe the aloneness, how will you describe aloneness or loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "en 'n dogter en ek is baie lief vir hulle en hulle ondersteun my baie maar terhalwe van dit raak dit vir my partykeer so dat ek in 'n hoek gaan sit of ek voel dat ek nie vanaand op die bed wil slaap nie, jy weet dat ek ek wil ongemaklik wees."

Participant: "and a daughter and I love them very much and they support me a lot but in spite of it sometimes it becomes so to me that I go and sit in a corner or I feel that I don't want to sleep on the bed tonight, you know, that I want to be uncomfortable."

Something pointing to "self harm" or possibly denying himself anything good. It's like the loneliness hurts him. (interesting idea to be explored.)

Sport, especially running and connecting with people eased feelings of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe het dit jou eensaamheid geaffekteer?"

Interviewer: "How did it influence your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "die hardloopry dit is maar al waarmee ek die eensaamheid weggevat."

Participant: "the running that is all with which I removed the loneliness."

Involvement in running activities took away the loneliness.

Sees the Karoo as a lonely place. Desolate.

Onderhoudvoerder: "O ek weet nie dis moeilik ek sou se die karoo voel baie lonely daar dis scary daar."

Interviewer: "O, I don't know, it is difficult, I would say the karoo feels lonely, it's scary there."

Deelnemer: "He refers to the Karoo as a particularly lonely place."

Participant: "He refers to the Karoo as a particularly lonely place."

More questioning can lead to doubting yourself.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar gaan 'n tyd in jou toekoms kom wat jy minder eensaam gaan voel."

Interviewer: "Do you think there will a time in your future that you will feel less lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Dan het jy weer heeltemal nuwe vrae dan wonder jy weer oor als in jou lewe dan weet jy weer nie of dit die beste ding is nie dan gaan dit weer sleg daar is weer nie hoop nie jy weet nie."

Participant: "Then you have completely new questions again... then you wonder again about everything in your life....then again you don't know whether it is the best thing. Then it goes bad again... there is again no hope... you don't know..."

Sometimes this process goes into a negative cycle of self doubt, not knowing who you are.

His bodily experience of loneliness is irritation.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ek wonder waar jy jou liggaam inpas in jou eensaamheid belewenis. Is daar ooit 'n fisiese gevoel wat jy assosieer met eensaamheid of wat jy dit in jou liggaam voel?"

Interviewer: "I wonder where you are fitting your body in in your loneliness experience. Is there ever a physical feeling that you associate with loneliness or that you feel in your body?"

Deelnemer: "Omdat jyu so lank alleen is dan raak jy irritated as mens nie as jy loneliness as jy alleen is dan voel jy ek weet nie ek dink nie regtig baie nie weet nie."

Participant: "Because you are lonely for such a long time you become irritated... if one does not...if loneliness... if you are alone then you feel... I don't know. I don't really think a lot. Don't know..."

Masturbation and mutilation as themes in the bodily experience of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar sekere goed wat jy met jou liggaam doen as jy eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "Are there certain things that you do to your body when you feel lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Ja daar was die masturbation gewees en ja self mutilation 'n bietjie ek krap myself so dis al hoe jy ek weet nie."

Participant: "Yes, there was the masturbation and yes a bit of self-mutilation. I scratch myself...so that is the only... I don't know..."

He associates masturbation and mutilation as things he does when he experiences loneliness.

Loneliness is a feeling he can get used to.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wanneer iemand jou nou nie verstaan nie en jy kry daai gevoel van eensaamheid of jy wil onttrek hoe sou jy daai gevoel beskryf? In terme van jou belewenis van eensaamheid, wat, hoe voel dit? Hoe is dit?"

Interviewer: "If somebody does not understand you now and you get that impression of loneliness or you want to withdraw, how will you describe that feeling? In terms of your experiencing of loneliness, what, what does it feel like? How is it?"

Deelnemer: "Eensaamheid stel spesifiek, is dit soos water op 'n eend se rug, want ek is gewoond daaraan."

Participant: "Loneliness states specifically, it is like water on a duck's back, because I am used to it."

Over time he has become used to feeling loney.

The striving to be popular equals fake connectedness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Maar dink jy die feit dat facebook trek al oor die sewe honderd miljoen gebruikers se vir ons iets van mense se behoefte om tog kontak te maak."

Interviewer: "But do you think the fact that Facebook have already got more than seven million users tells us something about people's need to make contact."

Deelnemer: "Ek sal eerder se dit spreek tot ons die mense se behoefte om te lyk of ons gewild is."

Participant: "I would rather say it reprimands/talks to us, the people's need to create an impression that we are popular."

He feels that internet connections such as Facebook points to people's need to be popular rather than their need to connect.

Popularity as a false sense of connectedness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So jy sê daar is 'n tipe fakingness aan daai."

Interviewer: "So you say there is a type of faking in that"

Deelnemer: "Mense wat met my op skool was wat nooit met my gepraat het nie, mense wat my eintlik lelik hanteer het my skielik wil friend op facebook miskien het hulle verander miskien wil hulle kommunikeer miskien het hulle groot geword maar is dit nie die geval gewees van een vrou. Dit gaan persy oor gewildheid."

Participant: "People that were at school with me that never talked to me, people that have actually treated me badly, that all of a sudden want to befriend me on Facebook, may be they have changed, may be they want to communicate, and may be they grew up but is it not a case of one woman. It per se revolves around popularity."

He experiences that people do not connect on Facebook for authentic reasons but that they only want to connect to people that others have connected to. He sees it as all about popularity.

The intellects can numb the feelings of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Jy het netnou genoem jy trek ook baie in tegnologie as jy tot watter mate verlig dit jou eensaamheid tot watter mate."

Interviewer: "You mentioned just now that you indulge a lot in technology, to what extent it relieves the loneliness, to what extent..."

Deelnemer: "Onderdruk my emosies as 'n mens jou jou gedagte proses opbreek in suiwer intellektueel en indien moontlik suiwer emosioneel is dit gewoonlik 'n mengelmoes van die twee wanneer jy dink. Wanneer ek myself onttrek in tegnologie kan ek myself verloor in die iets wat absolute intellektuele konsentrasie verg, die logiese, die voorste gedeelte van my brein moet een honderd persent fokus op wat ek doen, dit beteken die emosies is nie daar nie."

Participant: "Suppress my emotions, if a person breaks up his thought process in pure intellectual and if possible pure emotional it is normally a chaotic mixture of the two when you think. When I withdraw myself into technology I can lose myself in the something that demands absolute intellectual concentration, the logical, the front portion of my brain must focus one hundred percent on what I am doing, that means the emotions are not there."

He finds that if he withdraws into technology he suppresses his emotions because it is an arena where he operates purely intellectually.

Numbness associated with loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So jy klink weer amper soos die numbness wat jy dan beleef in terme van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "So that almost again sounds like the numbness that you experience in terms of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Nee nie 'n geval van ek beleef die numbness nie, ek is op soek daarna."

Participant: "No not a case of I experience the numbness, I am in search of it."

He is in search of the numbness.

Attempts to override emotions with intellect to escape loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Of is dit meer 'n afleiding."

Interviewer: "Or is it more of a distraction."

Deelnemer: "Ek kan dit vir jou baie eenvoudig veduidelik. Dieselfde tipe ding wat mens kry as jy as mens iets soos opiate inspuit. Jy raak mos net af jy raak dan aan die slaap ens maar die gedagtes gaan net skoon die emosionele goeters al daai goeters verdwyn, jy is net rustig. So daai gevoel in die emosionele kant word kan ek kry deur middel van intense intellektuele stimulasie."

Participant: "I can explain it to you very simple. The same type of thing that a person gets when you inject a person with opiates. You just become rotten then you fall asleep etc. but the thoughts become pure the emotional aspects fall away, you are at ease. So that feeling in the emotional side I can get through intense intellectual stimulation."

He equates intense intellectual stimulation with using opiate drugs where the emotions disappear completely.

The experience of loneliness when just waking up.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar ooit tye wat jy wakker word en dan eensaam voel soos in die middel van die nag of spesifieke belewenisse het?"

Interviewer: "Are there ever times that you wake up and then feel lonely like in the middle of the night or have specific experiences?"

Deelnemer: "Ek het slaap probleme in die algemeen maar ek het die trick geleer om wanneer ek wakker word net my gedagtes nie toe te laat om weg te hardloop nie."

Participant: "I have sleeping problems in general, but I have learnt the trick to when I wake up, just to curb my thoughts not to overtake my mind."

He experiences feelings of loneliness when he wakes up in the middle of the night.

Music as a way to cope with loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dit bring my by die volgende vraag, is dit ook die tipe van dinge wat jy sal doen as jy eensaamheid probeer bekamp of beveg? Hoe sal jy reageer op daai eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "That brings me to the next question, is it also the type of things that you will do if you try to curb or fight loneliness? How will you react to that loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Nie actually hier is die punt, ek sal musiek begin luister, ek sal begin luister na ek sal my oorfone in my telefoon plug."

Participant: "Not actually, here is the point, I will start to listen to music, I will start to listen at..., I will plug my earphones into my telephone."

Intoxication takes away his feelings.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe het daai substance gebruik 'n verskil gemaak aan jou eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "How did that substance use make a difference to your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Wel, jy voel goed of jy voel net nie meer nie of miskien gee jy ook net nie om nie wanneer jy onder die invloed is van substance."

Participant: "Well, you feel well or you feel nothing or maybe you just don't care anymore when you are under the influence of the substance."

The substances changes his feeling state and at times takes away his feelings.

Loneliness in relation to self...unstructured experience.

Onderhoudvoerder: "In terme van eensaamheid is daar ooit tye wat jy vervreemd voel van jouself of eensaam voel in verhouding tot jouself?"

Interviewer: "In terms of loneliness are there ever times that you feel divorced from yourself or feel lonely in relation to yourself?"

Deelnemer: "In fisika kan jy 'n stel 'n paar bladsye vol vergelykings neerplonk hier is die heelal, verduidelik, dis die heelal. Ek kan nie dit doen met myself nie. So in daai opsig sal ek se daar is baie eensaamheid maar as ek disconnect tussen eensaamheid en self."

Participant: "In physics you can scribble down a set of equations on a few pages, here is the globe, explain, this is the globe. I can't do that with myself. Therefore in that instance I would say there is a lot of loneliness, but when I disconnect between loneliness and self."

He compares this self estrangement to physics where there are formulas that structure experience. He experiences a lot of loneliness in relation to himself.

Everybody feels lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy ander mense sukkel met eensaamheid? Voel eensaam?"

Interviewer: "Do you think other people battle with loneliness? Feel lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Is dit 'n leidende vraag? Want natuurlik."

Participant: "Is this a leading question? Because of course."

He feels that it is obvious that people feel lonely.

Drug use as an attempt to deal with loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat dink jy doen mense ander mense behalwe jy as hulle eensaam is?"

Interviewer: "What do you think people, other people except you, do when they are lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Jong, hulle probeer uitreik op 'n verskeidenheid van maniere. Dwelms natuurlik die algemene ene because it works for the record."

Participant: Well, they try to reach out in many different ways. Drugs, of course the most popular one because it works for the record."

He feels that people reach out in various ways in reaction to loneliness. Drugs are one of the most common ways in his opinion that people use to deal with loneliness.

A difference in the experience of loneliness between the sexes. With men feeling less lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n verskil tussen die belewenis eensaamheid tussen mans en vrouens?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is a difference between the way men and women experience loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Seker. Ek dink eensaamheid is minder 'n probleem vir ons mans."

Participant: "Certainly. I think loneliness is less of a problem for us men."

He views that loneliness is less of a problem for men.

A lesser need in men for interaction.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n verskil tussen die belewenis eensaamheid tussen mans en vrouens?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is a difference between the way men and women experience loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Hulle self is nie, 'n man en ek veralgemeen geweldig baie hierso, verkies dit om te gaan sit en dink oor wat hom pla, en moontlik 'n oplossing."

Participant: "They themselves are not, a man and I am generalising a lot here, chooses it to go and sit and think about what is bothering him, and possibly a solution."

He sees men as needing less interaction and thinking more about solutions for issues.

He speaks to God alone. In the afterlife he will be judged on how he lived. The judgement will determine whether he goes to heaven or hell.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Jy het netnou genoem van die hiernamaals, dink jy daar is in jou verstaan van godsdienst of spiritualiteit 'n verband met eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "You referred to the hereafter, do you think there is in your understanding of religion or spirituality a relationship with loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek dink partykeer as jy met God praat en ek is Joods as jy met God praat dan praat jy direk met hom en jy praat alleen met hom, daar moenie mense rondom jou wees nie, dis waarvoor ek bid nie voor ander mense nie ek bid ook nie in my kerk nie in sinagoge nie dis my verhouding met God, en dan sal ek alleen met hom wil wees, dan sal niemand naby my moet kom nie of dan sal ek heeltemal alleen gaan sit, ver ver ver van almal af gaan sit, ek glo as jy doodgaan gaan jy eers na die hiernamaals toe voor jy veroordeel word of jy hel toe of hemel toe gaan dit hang af van hoe jy geleef het. So dit is ek glo daar is die hiernamaals ja."

Participant: "I sometimes think if you talk to God and I am Jewish... if you talk to God then you talk directly to him and you talk privately to him, there should not be people around you, that is what I pray for... not in front of other people. I also don't pray in my church in the synagogue. That is my relationship with God, and then I would like to be alone with him, then nobody must come near me or then I will go and completely alone, far far far from anybody, I believe if you die you first go to the hereafter before you are judged whether you are going to hell or to the heaven, it depends on your conduct/how you lived. So that is I... believe there is hereafter, yes."

5.9. Loneliness and empathic understanding

Feeling understood in relationship- empathic understanding

Onderhoudvoerder: "Was daar al 'n spesifieke verhouding in jou lewe wat jou eensaamheid verlig het?"

Interviewer: "Has there ever been a specific relationship in your life that alleviated the loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "En dit is hoe, dis regtig bitter min dit is net met my een vriendin met wie ek so openlik kan wees en kan praat, ek voel sy verstaan my omrede sy net self net voor die tyd deur 'n egskeiding is en dis ook maar trauma en goed so ons is maar saam mekaar se verliese te verwerk en daaroor gepraat en aan gegaan."

Participant: "And that is how, it is really very seldom, it is just with the one girlfriend with who I can be so open and talk, I feel she understands me because she herself went through a divorce just before and that is also trauma and stuff, therefore we shared each other's losses and talked about it and carried on."

He experiences his sisters as not being able to understand.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat dink jy maak haar so eensaam?"

Interviewer: "What do you think makes her so lonely?"

Deelnemer: "My 2 susters, hulle is altwee geskei en altwee vinnig weer getroud en weet hulle kan nie verstaan van eensaamheid en alleen wees of iets in daai aard nie."

Participant: "My 2 sisters, both of them were divorced and both got married quickly again and know they can't understand loneliness and be alone of something of that sort."

Being misunderstood by people leads him to feel like the outcast.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ek verstaan ek volg Dink jy dat spiritualiteit of miskien geloof of relegie enigsins met eensaamheid geassosieer kan word en jou belewenis?"

Interviewer: "I understand... I follow.... Do you think that spirituality or may be faith or religion could in any way be associated with loneliness or your experience?"

Deelnemer: "Op baie vlakke van my lewe word ek misverstaan, die manier hoe ek liefde gee word misverstaan, die manier hoe ek create word misverstaan, die manier hoe ek die lewe sien, ek probeer 'n all inclusive point of view te hê om juis hulle point of view te hê dis nogals partykeer selfreflecting en selfconflingting maar ja, ek word misverstaan op 'n spirituele vlak."

Participant: "On many levels of my life I am misunderstood, the manner in which I give love is being misunderstood, the manner in which I create is being misunderstood, the manner in which I see life, I try to have an all-inclusive point of view, specifically to have their point of view, it is sometimes quite self reflecting and self-conflicting but yes, I am being misunderstood on a spiritual level."

He experiences himself as being misunderstood by people.

When people reach out to him because of his empathic nature he feels less lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As jy terugkyk oor jou lewe is daar spesifieke tye waar jy meer eensaam was."

Interviewer: "If you look back over your life, are there specific times that you were lonelier?"

Deelnemer: "Ek kan nie eerlik waar nou as ek so terug dink hulle is wat uitgereik het of dit 'n verandering in my was wat dit makliker vir mense gemaak het om uit te reik na my toe maar mense het begin uitreik en een aspek was wat ek gepraat het van die mense aan my kant wat uitreik na my toe my vriendinne wat ek se my so goed verstaan hulle almal het deur moeilike tye gegaan en ek was die een man gewees wat geluister het wat nie probeer het om die emosie te gebruik om in haar broek te kom nie en die een ou gewees wat die kon sien snap wat voel om seer te wees, daai empatiese aspek."

Participant: "I cannot honestly....but now, if I think back. They that reached out ... whether that was a change in me that made it easier for people to reach out and help me but people started to reach out and one aspect was what I said of people that were siding with me, that reached out to me...my girlfriends that I said understood me so well... they all went through difficult times and I was the one man that listened that did not try to use the emotion to get into her pants and was the one guy that could see, understand how it feels to be hurt, that empathetic aspect."

His empathic relationships with female friends made it possible for them to reach out at him. This made a difference in his experience of loneliness.

I am not understood therefore I am lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is dit 'n gesprek wat baie opkom tussen die pasiënte?"

Interviewer: "Is that a topic that often arises among the patients?"

Deelnemer: "Dit is my persoonlike konneksie so ek hoor die ou se niemand verstaan hom nie dit beteken vir my hy is eensaam."

Participant: "That is my personal connection so I hear the guy says nobody understands him...it means to me he is lonely."

Not being understood leads to feelings of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dit klink asof daar 'n noue verband vir jou is tussen verstaan en alleen wees?"

Interviewer: "It sound as if there is a close relationship for you between understanding and being alone?"

Deelnemer: "Ja dit is. Dis maar net een van daai dinge sal ek sê. 'n Ding wat jy moet jy verstaan dat jy alleen wil wees ek verstaan dat jy alleen partykeer moet wees maar dis nog steeds net erg om alleen te voel, dis seker die ergste gevoel dat jy is alleen daar is niemand wat rondom jou is nie as jy hulle die nodigste het nie."

Participant: "Yes it is. It is just one of those things I will say. Something that you have to understand that you want to be alone...I understand that you have to be alone sometimes, but it is still bad to feel lonely, it is may be the worst feeling to be lonely. There is nobody around to you when you need them the most."

He sees a close relationship between not being understood by others and being alone.

5.10. Loss of significant relationships

Breakdown of marriage significantly increased feelings of loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe het dit jou eensaamheid geaffekteer?"

Interviewer: "How did it affect your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ja dit het baie baie geaffekteer. Die, dit was dit was dit was moeilike tye gewees. Ek het nie ek het nie die selfvertroue gehad om te meng met jy weet om in 'n groep soos in 'n kerk groep te gaan behoort maar met die hardloopry dit is maar al waarmee ek die eensaamheid weggevat het ek het nie regtig moeite gedoen nie ek sal nie se of ek nou dit het seker so dit werk seker so dat 'n ou jou jy jy raak op 'n stadium so dat jy worry nie meer daaroor nie."

Participant: Yes it affected it a lot, a lot. The, it was. It was. It was difficult times. I did not have...I did not have the confidence to mingle with... you know to become part of a group such as in the church but with the running. That is the only thing that I took the loneliness away... I did not really go to any trouble...I will not say if I had...so it had...so it works that you a guy...you get to a stage that you don't worry about it anymore

Emphasizes the degree to which his wife leaving him affected his experience of loneliness.

One can be lonely whilst being in relationship as well.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het die verhouding waarna jy nou verwys 'n verskil gemaak in jou belewenis van eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Has the relationship you referred to now make a difference in your experience of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Nee, glad nie."

Participant: "No not at all."

This relationship did not change his loneliness feelings.

In attempts to deal with the sudden loss he tried to deal with the loss by engaging with objects that reminded him of them, this however did not help to make him feel any better.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is dit vir jou 'n besondere moeilike tyd met eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Is it a particularly difficult time for you with loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Jy kan die kussings vir so lank as moontlik in die sloop vashou en dink daar is iemand langs jou, jy kan haar poppe nie optel nie jy kan haar kamer nie regpak nie jy kan alles doen jy is alleen daar is nie iemand anders nie."

Participant: "You can keep the pillows for as long as possible in the pillow cases and think there is somebody next to you, you cannot pick up her dolls, you cannot tidy her room.. you can do everything..you are alone.. there is nobody else."

He was alone after the loss of his wife and daughter.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Gehad het, eensaamheid en assosiasie met haar en jou verhouding met haar wat was die omstandighede rondom haar?"

Interviewer: "Have had, loneliness and association with her and your relationship with her...what were the circumstances around her?"

Deelnemer: "Sy en my ex is dood in een karongeluk so hulle is opslag altwee dood van toe af was ek alleen."

Participant: "She and my ex died in one car accident. So both died instantly .. since then I have been alone."

He missis people that was close to him when he feels alone, in particular his grandma.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar tye waar jy so alleen voel wat jy mense mis wat naby jou is?"

Interviewer: "Are there times that you are so lonely that you miss people that are close to you?"

Deelnemer: "Ja, dit gebeur baie, veral vandat ek in die hospitaal is. As ek alleen op die bed le en verlang ek so na my ouma, veral my ouma, en sy lewe nie meer nie so ek."

Participant: "Yes, that happens often, especially since I have been in the hospital. If I lay alone on the bed and I long so for my grandmother, especially my grandmother, and she does not live anymore, so I."

Loss of brother and father left him feeling lonely.

5.11. Loneliness and psychiatric symptoms

Link between psychiatric condition and loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy dat eensaamheid iets te doen het met jou psigiatriese toestand? Dink jy eensaamheid het 'n rol gespeel?"

Interviewer: "Do you think loneliness has something to do with your psychiatric condition? Do you think loneliness played a role?"

Deelnemer: Ja

Participant: Yes

He does see a link between his psychiatric condition and his experience of loneliness.

Abandonment by significant others can lead to suicide.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Het jy probeer?"

Interviewer: "Have you tried?"

Deelnemer: “Ja, het ek selfmoord probeer pleeg terwyl die seuns daar by my gebly het. Was ek ek was so bly gewees wat gebeur het is die sy ek het ouditeurs werk gedoen en ek was in Wolmarans stad en toe bel hulle my een van my kollegas my my ex vrou het gebel en ek moet haar dringend kontak. En toe kom ek terug, ek sou oorgeslaap het daar maar toe kom ek terug toe bel ek haar toe se sy vir my asseblief ek moet haar kom haal, toe bly sy by in Bapsfontein by ‘n ingenieur, ek moet haar kom haal, sy wil terug kom na my toe, toe is ek verskriklik baie bly dat sy dit gedoen het, toe het ek ‘n huis daar in Silverton. Dit was nie ‘n maand gewees nie toe trek sy in daar by my saam met haar buite egtelike kind want sy is toe weer getroud met n man maar die man is weg en sy het toe ‘n kind by ‘n ander ou, ‘n buite egtelike kind, ‘n dogtertjie toe trek sy in by my en ek weet nie wat het toe gebeur nie, sy het net ‘n maand daar gebly toe die een aand toe sê sy vir my sy gaan uittrek toe het sy ‘n ander man ontmoet toe trek sy Esselenpark toe so ek is toe baie seergemaak daardeur. Dis toe bly ek en die seuns maar nog verder daar in Meyerspark.”

Participant: “Yes I tried to commit suicide while my sons lived with me. I was so glad what happened that time. I did auditors work and I was in Wolmaransstad and then they phoned, one of my colleagues, he said my ex wife has phoned and I must contact her urgently. And then I came back, I would have slept over but then I came back. I then phoned her. She then told me to please come fetch her, at that time she was staying with an engineer in Bapsfontein, I must fetch her, she wants to come back to me. Then I was very happy that she did it. At that time I had a house in Silverton, it was not a month and then she and her extramarital child moved in with me, because then she was married again to a man but the man left and then she had a child with another man, an extramarital child, a daughter, then she moved in with me. I don’t know what happened then, but she just stayed for one month and then the one night she told me she is going to move out. She met another man and then she moved to Esselenpark. I was very hurt by it. My sons and I stayed on there in Meyerspark.”

He tells the story of how he got his hopes up of having a meaningful relationship only to be disappointed at the end. This feeling of abandonment then drove him to attempt suicide.

Loneliness to suicide. Not living. Here the existential theme of terminating one’s own existence as the ultimate act of loneliness can be explored.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Wat maak dit so negatiewe ervaring?”

Interviewer: “What makes it such a negative experience?”

Deelnemer: “Dis nie so negatief; as jy so negatief raak jy weet eensaamheid dat jy onverantwoordelike dinge wil doen.”

Participant: “It is not that negative, if you become that negative because of loneliness that you want to do irresponsible things.”

Loneliness makes him negative which leads to him contemplating irresponsible behaviours. Possibly the participant refers to suicide here.

Feels there is a relation between his psychiatric condition and loneliness experience.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy eensaamheid speel 'n rol in jou psigiatriese toestand?"

Interviewer: "Do you think loneliness plays a role in your psychiatric condition?"

Deelnemer: "Jy kan tog so dink ja. Daar kom party dae wat ek heeltemal soos die Engelse se rock bottom is ek voel die medikasie help nie eers nie. Soos Sondag oggend wat ek jou gesms het ek was die hele dag in 'n toestand gewees, ek het die heel dag gehuil en ten spyte van die medikasie het ek niks beter gevoel nie."

Participant: "You can surely think so yes. There are days that I am like the English say rock bottom, I feel the medication does not even help. Like the Sunday morning that I SMS'e you...I was in a state the whole day, I cried the whole day and in spite of the medication I did not feel any better."

Anxiety as overt in interpersonal communication.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So jy antisipeer dit?"

Interviewer: "So you anticipate that?"

Deelnemer: "Plus dit kom uit in sosiale kontekste dis nou 'n klomp groep mense. Ek probeer myself demonstreer as iemand wat die moeite werd is om mee gekommunikeer te kan word en dit kom as angstig oor."

Participant: "Plus it shows in social contexts that is now a big group of people. I try to demonstrate myself as somebody that is worthwhile communicating with and that is seen as being anxious."

He experiences himself as coming across anxious when communicating with people.

He associates his aggressive response to the experiences of other psychiatric patients.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe verstaan jy die verband tussen aggressie en jou eensaamheid belewenis?"

Interviewer: "How do you understand the relationship between aggression and your loneliness experience?"

Deelnemer: "Wanneer jy byvoorbeeld onder psigiatriese pasiënte gaan kyk, na hulle aggressie vlakke, dis asof die een die ander probeer doodwurg en nie regverdig nie, maar juis doodmaak."

Participant: "If you for instance look among psychiatric patients, their aggression levels, it is as if the one tries to suffocate the other and not fair, but just kill."

5.12. The experience of being alone and feeling lonely have different qualities

Being alone is at times a positive experience.

Onderhoudvoerder: "OK. Dink jy daar is 'n verskil tussen om alleen te wees en eensaam te voel?"

Interviewer: "OK. Do you think there is a difference between being lonely and feeling lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Om alleen te wees is vir my is lekkerder as om eensaam te wees."

Participant: "To be alone is nicer to me than to be lonely."

A difference in the quality of experience between being alone and feeling of lonely.

Being lonely is a negative experience.

Onderhoudvoerder: "OK. Dink jy daar is 'n verskil tussen om alleen te wees en eensaam te voel?"

Interviewer: "OK. Do you think there is a difference between being lonely and feeling lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Ek sal dit liewerster alleen wil wees as om die ervaring van eensaamheid aanhoudend te hê, jy weet."

Participant: "I will rather be alone than to have the experience of loneliness all the time, you know."

Being alone is better than experiencing loneliness constantly.

He experiences that people feel different towards loneliness, some people desire to be alone and others cannot stand being alone.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy mense oor die algemeen ervaar eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you think people in general experience loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "En baie kan dit nie hanteer om allenyg of eensaam te wees nie, hulle wil gedurig mense om hulle hê."

Participant: "And many can't handle to be alone or lonely, they always want to have people around them."

He reflects on the being a part of rather than feeling a part of which is emotion bound. He experiences that people feel different towards loneliness, some people desire to be alone and others cannot stand being alone.

Some people feel lonely but not all people experience loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy almal ervaar eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Do you think everybody experiences loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Sal nie kan sê almal ervaar eensaamheid nie. Ek weet van 'n paar mense wat baie kere eensaam voel, maar hoe sal ek sê, dis nie almal nie."

Participant: "Won't be able to say everybody experiences loneliness. I know of a few people that often feel lonely, but how will I say, it is not everybody."

Some people feel lonely but not all people experience loneliness.

Being alone and feeling alone are associated.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy daar is 'n verkil tussen om alleen te wees en alleen te voel?"

Interviewer: "Do you think there is a difference between being lonely and feeling lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Daar is 'n verskil en nie 'n verkil nie. Dit gaan gepaard met mekaar jy voel alleen en jy is alleen of jy kan partykeer net alleen voel al is jy nie alleen nie of jy is alleen maar jy voel nie alleen nie. Wat jy voel is at one with everything around you."

Participant: "There is a difference and there is no difference. It goes together, you feel alone and you are alone or you can sometimes just feel alone even if you are not alone, or you are alone but you do not feel alone. What you feel is at one with everything around you."

He states that being alone and feeling lonely are associated with each other. Sometimes one can feel alone without being alone and at other times you can be alone but not feel alone.

Not always being able to be alone.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Jou belewenis binne die hospitaal het dit iets gedoen aan jou ervaring van eensaamheid? Om hier te wees teenoor miskien om buite te wees?"

Interviewer: "Your experience in the hospital, did that have an influence on your experience of loneliness? To be here versus maybe being outside?"

Deelnemer: "Dit het. Ek voel meer veiliger, met my eie gedagtes. Ek weet as ek nou rêrig moet gaan om alleen te wees kan ek altyd in 'n hoekie gaan wegkruip iewers op die perseel, ek is in 'n oop saal. Maar partykeer wil jy rêrig net alleen wees; en dan sal die mense op jou kop sit, die susters wil nie hê jy moet alleen gaan rondloop nie want hulle is bang omdat ek high risk is."

Participant: "It has. I feel safer, with my own thoughts. I know if I now really have to go to be alone I can always go hide in a corner somewhere on the premises; I am in an open ward. But sometimes you really just want to be alone, and then the people will sit on your head, the sisters don't want you to go wander alone because they are scared because I am a high risk."

Sometimes he wants to be alone but finds this difficult in hospital.

5.13. Loneliness as call to action

Responding to loneliness by taking action.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Fantaseer jy ooit om eensaam te wees of alleen te wees?"

Interviewer: "Do you ever fantasize to be lonely or to be alone?"

Deelnemer: "Nee, ek fantaseer nie daaroor nie, ek maak ek maak 'n effort dat ek so dat as ek voel ek wil eensaam wees dan sal ek 'n effort maak en 'n verskoning uit dink om 'n plan van aksie te doen om eensaam te wees of alleen en nie gesteur te wees nie"

Participant: "No, I never fantasize about that, I make an effort so that if I feel I want to be lonely then I will make an effort and think of an excuse to get a plan of action to be lonely or to be alone, not to be bothered."

Rather than relating to loneliness in fantasy he acts on the feelings and adjusts his behaviour to address the feelings of loneliness.

Rather than emotion he resorts to action.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Watse gevoel emosie volg partykeer die ervaring van eensaamheid vir jou?"

Interviewer: "What emotional feeling in you sometimes follows the experience of loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek raak nie aggressief of emosioneel nie. Ek sal maar by myself maar net soos ek netnou ook gesê het iets uitdink om iets te doen."

Participant: "I do not become aggressive or emotional. I will be on my own, but just as I have said just now I will think of something to do."

Again he refers to acting on emotions by resorting to certain behaviours to lessen the emotional intensity.

Being busy with household activities also distracts him from the loneliness feelings.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So is daar kontekste of situasies waar jy meer of minder eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "So there are contexts or situations where you feel more or less lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Maar nou kom ek by gewone werk goed, wasgoed was, huis skoonmaak, kos maak, dit lei baie keer nie my aandag af nie want jy sit nog steeds en dink. Baie keer dan maak ek kos en so vir hoeveel mense het ek nou eintlik kos gemaak dis mos nou eintlik te veel kos dan maak ek somer vir 4 of 5 mense kos sonder jy dink nie eens daaraan as jy begin nie jy haal net uit en begin kos maak."

Participant: "But now I get to doing normal work, doing the washing, tidy the house, cook food, it often do not divert my thoughts because you still sit and think. Often I cook the food

and so for how many people did you cook, it is way too much food, then I cook for 4 or 5 people without thinking when you start, you just take the food out and start cooking.”

He tried venturing out, making friends and getting involved.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Wat het jy al in jou lewe gedoen om met eensaamheid te cope?”

Interviewer: “What have you already done in your life to cope with loneliness?”

Deelnemer: “Ek het probeer om vriende te maak en uit te gaan en meer betrokke te raak by dinge.”

Participant: “I tried to make friends and to go out and to become more involved in things.”

He feels that loneliness calls for an will decision and that circumstances don’t make you lonely but rather your mindset.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Wat dink jy bring verligting vir jou van eensaamheid?”

Interviewer: “What do you think brings you relief from loneliness?”

Deelnemer: “So vra eensaamheid tipe van ‘n wilsbesluit want dis nie net omstandighede wat jou eensaam maak nie, dis ook jou eie mindset wat jou eensaam maak.”

Participant: “Thus loneliness calls for a mental decision, because it is not only circumstances that make you lonely, it is also your own mind-set that makes you lonely?”

5.14. Interpersonal dimensions of loneliness

When he feels lonely he wants to be alone. This is an important reaction to loneliness which might indicate the working through or dealing with loneliness feelings. Positive or negative?

Onderhoudvoerder: “Is daar spesifieke plekke waar jy gaan as jy alleen voel?”

Interviewer: “Are there specific places where you go when you are lonely?”

Deelnemer: “Ja daar is gewoonlik gaan ek maar na ‘n na ‘n krieket veld of ‘n skool se rugby veld net ‘n oop stuk grond. Waar niemand kan kom nie, waar jy alleen is niemand kan jou pla nie, ek gaan sit baie kere hierso waar daar niemand van die pasiënte verby loop nie. Ek sal nie in ‘n shopping centre gaan sit nie alleen nie, sit en dink en eensaam wees nie, dis te bedrywig.”

Participant: “Yes, there is. Normally I go to a cricket field or a rugby field at a school...just an open piece of ground....where nobody can come, where you are alone, nobody can bother you, I often go and sit here where nobody of the patients walk past. I will not go and sit in a shopping centre all on my own, sit and think and be lonely, that is too much activity.

Again he tends to prefer isolating himself when he feels lonely.

A theme repeating is that in experiencing loneliness one may also choose to be alone.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wanneer jy eensaam voel wat verwag jy van mense om jou, wat sal jy graag wil hê ander moet doen?"

Interviewer: "When you feel lonely what do you expect of the people around you, what would you like other people to do?"

Deelnemer: "Ek as ek een as 284ehav kan nie sê eensaam is ek hartseer is en emosioneel dan dan dan voel ek dat dan dink 284ehav wil liewers alleen wees, en ek weet nie of ek dit kan klassifiseer dat daai drie eensaamheid self dieselfde is nie, maar as ek eensaamheid as ek eensaam is is dit vanselfsprekend dan is ek hartseer en dan is dit vir my 'n teleurstelling in wat sal 'n mens sê, ek is skaam daaroor, ek wil nie hê mense moet my sien nie."

Participant: "I. If I lone...if I ...I can not say lonely if I am sad/heartbroken. And emotional then...then...then I feel that.. then I think I would rather be alone, and I don't know whether I can classify that the three lonelinesses are the same, but if I loneliness...if I am lonely it goes unsaid that I am heartbroken/sad and then it is a disappointment in what will one say, I am ashamed thereof, I do not want people to see me."

A theme of not being authentic presents itself here. Sometimes people need to be inauthentic to be accepted by certain groups.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Ek verstaan. Sê my bietjie dink jy daar is 'n verband tussen geestelikheid of spiritualiteit en eensaamheid? Miskien ook Godsdiens?"

Interviewer: "I understand.. Tell me do you think there is a relationship between psychology or spirituality or loneliness? May be even religion?"

Deelnemer: "Dis 'n moeilike vraag ek is. Jy meen as ek 'n meer 'n godsdienstige persoon is? Dat ek minder eensaam gaan wees? Ek dink 'n ou sal nie 'n ou sal nie sal minder eensaam en jy sal gouer 'n vriendskapkring opbou, dit kan 'n gimmick tipe van 'n vriendskap kring wees, jy weet. Ek het al so so groep bygewoon dit is dit is jy doen jy doen jou voor as 'n persoon wat jy nie is nie, veral in die godsdienstige kringe, sal is ek as ek daar is dan sal ek my voordoen as 'n persoon wat ek nie regtig is nie."

Participant: "That is a difficult question...I am. You mean if I am more of a religious person? That I am going to be less lonely? I think one will not...one will not be ..Will be less lonely because you will develop a friendship circle faster, it can be a gimmick type of a friendship circle, you know. I have already attended such a group it is...it is..you present...you present yourself as a person that you are not, especially in the religious circles, will...am I if I am there, will I present myself as a person that I am really not."

He believes that in religious circles he will build up a friendship circle quicker but that there will be a fake quality to it. Religion or spirituality does not necessarily change his loneliness state.

Loneliness can be experienced regardless of the presence of Intimate relationships.

Onderhoudvoerder: "As jy bietjie dink aan jou verhoudings wat jy in jou lewe gehad het met Ander mense, was daar ooit 'n tyd wat jy eensaam gevoel het alhoewel jy in 'n verhouding was?"

Interviewer: "If you think a bit about your relationships that you have had in your life with other people, was there ever a time that you felt lonely although you were in a relationship?"

Deelnemer: "In die in die verhoudings wat ek met die vroulike geslag die verhoudings wat ek gehad het ek het nie in met die huwelik en die wat jy nou as net 'n gewone verhouding gebruik dan sal ek sê in die huwelik het ek het ek eensaamheid beleef."

Participant: "In the...in the relationships that I had with the female sex...the relationships that I have had...I have not in...with marriage and those that you now just use as the normal relationship will I say in marriage did I ...did I experience loneliness."

Although he was in a marital relationship he still experienced feelings of loneliness. However in more friendship relationships he did not experience loneliness.

A theme of association presents itself here. In dealing with feelings of loneliness and connecting to others there seems to be a strong link between how one sees yourself and the type of people you associate with.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Waarom dink jy voel ander mense soms eensaam?"

Interviewer: "Why do you think other people feel lonely sometimes?"

Deelnemer: "Ek self is het meer ek maak gouer vriende met met mans persone en met se maar met vrou persone wat 'n disleksie het wat hakkell of in 'n rystoel is wat kruppel loop of so dit is vir my baie baie gemakliker en vinniger om vriende te maak met die tipe persoon as wat ek sal high society girl hier buite sien en haar maar liewerster ignore. Ek gaan eerder lekkerder gesels met die tipe persone uit te vind, te gesels, as wat dit met 'n ander high society persoon eerste klas persoon."

Participant: "I myself am. Have more..I make friends quicker with..with men and with just say with women that have a dislection that stutter/stammer or is in a wheelchair that walk cripple or something...it is much much more convenient and faster for me to befriend with this type of person than when I see high society girl standing here outside and rather ignore her. I will rather enjoy talking to this type of person, enquiring, chatting, as with another high class society person, first class person."

In forming relationships he tends to be more comfortable with other people who have disabilities. He seems to feel more confident in approaching them and starting a conversation. He does not feel that comfortable with people of a higher standing.

Society is based on the fact that people need to be together.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy almal voel alleen? Alle mense?"

Interviewer: "Do you think everybody feels alone? All people?"

Deelnemer: "Wel ek dink society wil dis hoekom ons in stede bly ons wil almal saam wees."

Participant: "Well, I think society will...that is why we live in cities. We want to be together."

He views society as needing to be together.

People scare him, people hurt him.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Jy noem nou dat jy met jou sielkundige wel al gepraat het oor eensaamheid, voel jy partykeer minder alleen wanneer jy begin praat oor jou eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "You mention now that you have already talked to your psychologist about loneliness, do you sometimes feel less alone when you start to discuss your loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Mense maak my bang mense maak my seer."

Participant: "People scare me, people hurt me."

He attempts to relieve his friend's loneliness by spending time together. Visiting familiar places.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar sekere iets wat jy doen of sê om haar te probeer help met haar eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "Are there certain things that you do or say to try and help her with the loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek sal vir haar sê kom ons gaan uit of ons praat op die telefoon een keer per dag of stuur mekaar 'n email eenkeer per dag ons doen net iets saam ons gaan loop gaan loop op plekke wat ons altyd geloop het. Gaan vir haar sê onthou jy nog daai tyd toe ons daai en daai gaan doen het gaan swem in die see gaan visvang het op daai strand en so dis net vir die saamgevoel kan kry ja met daai tyd het ja my jy het daai tyd 'n stervis gevang en ek het 'n klipvis gevang en sulke goed wat ons oor sal praat die memories wat ons gehad het saam sal ons oor praat."

Participant: "I will tell her, let us go out or we talk on the telephone once per day or send one another an email once a day... we just do something together, we go and walk, go walk in places where we always used to walk. Are going to say to her, do you still remember that time when we did this and that, went to swim in the sea, went to catch fish in the sea on that beach and so it is just for the togetherness feeling, yes with that time you..you caught a starfish and I caught a rock fish and such things that we will talk about, the memories that we had together, will we talk about."

He relates his first recollection of an experience of loneliness to his relationship with his father.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So kom ons begin ons skop af met die eerste vraag. Kan jy my vertel van 'n ervaring wat jy al gehad het van waar jy eensaamheid beleef het of waar eensaamheid vir jou na vore gekom het of waar dit in jou gedagtes omgegaan het?"

Interviewer: "So let's start, we kick off with the first question. Can you tell me about an experience that you have had where you experienced loneliness or where loneliness came to the forefront for you or where it went around in your thoughts?"

Deelnemer: "Ja, ek sal, ek dink maar sommer net, dink maar sommer net aan 'n geleentheid wat gebeur het met my pa."

Participant: "Yes well I, I just think, just think about the incident that happened with my dad."

He also feels loneliness on a social level. He will befriends strange people in reaction to this loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dit bring my by die volgende vraag. Watter aksies, gedrag of wat doen jy as jy eensaamheid voel? Watse aksies spruit uit die ervaring van eensaamheid? Indien enige in jou opinie."

Interviewer: "It brings me to the next question, what actions, conduct or what do you do if you feel lonely? What actions come forth from your experience of loneliness? If any in your opinion."

Deelnemer: "Op sosiale vlak is ek dikwels, voel ek dikwels eensaam. En beleef ek maak soms met vreemde mense vriende wanneer ek so eensaam voel."

Participant: "On a social level I am often, I often feel lonely. And experience that I often make friends with foreigners when I feel so lonely".

5.15. Loneliness and psychiatric illness experience

Hospital provides a context where loneliness can be countered by meaningful involvement.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar 'n verskil in jou gevoel van eensaamheid as jy binne die hospitaal is teenoor as jy buite die hospitaal is? Of hoe ervaar jy eensaamheid in die hospitaal?"

Interviewer: "Is there a difference in your feeling of loneliness when you are inside the hospital versus when you are outside the hospital? Or how do you experience the loneliness in the hospital?"

Deelnemer: "Nee, hier in die hospitaal is ek te betrokke om eensaam te wees. Ek weet nie of ek dit nou reg stel nie. Maar buitekant is daar nie tye wat ek voel ja ek gaan nou hierso sit en tjank en tjank en huil en omdat ek nou eensaam is nie, wag waar is my pelle, hoekom het ek

nie iemand om fliiek toe te vat nie, jy weet, wat het verkeerd geloop in my lewe, buitekant sal ek dit nie doen nie.”

Participant: “No, not here in the hospital, I am too involved to be lonely. I don’t know whether I am saying it correctly. But outside there are not times that I feel yes I am going to sit here and cry and cry and cry and because I am not lonely now, wait where are my friends, why haven’t I got somebody to take to the movies, you know, what went wrong in my life, outside I will not do that.”

His involvement in hospital activities seems to alleviate feelings of loneliness. There is a difference between in-hospital and out-of-hospital experiences of loneliness.

Not understanding role of medication.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Die medikasie wat jy drink, het dit enigsins ‘n impak op jou eensaamheid ervaring? Dink jy dit maak ‘n verskil?”

Interviewer: “The medication that you drink, has it got any impact on your loneliness experience? Do you think it makes a difference?”

Deelnemer: “Ek drink die medikasie. Nee ek verstaan nou nog nie ek wil nog met my dokter praat in verband met die medikasie wat behels die medikasie, want dit is maar net ‘n kalmeer, askies dit is lyk my die medikasie wat ek drink is maar meer om my te kalmeer, en ek weet nie of die, van die medikasie wat ek drink nie, ek ken nie die name van die medikasie nie.”

Participant: “I drink the medication, no I still do not understand, I still want to talk to my doctor in connection with the medication. What does the medication entail, because it is just a calming effect. It looks to me like the medication that I drink is just to calm me, and I don’t know if the medication that I drink, I don’t know the names of the medication.”

He does not understand the role of the medication in his treatment.

He feels that he gets some support by talking to his psychologist.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Voel jy nou later jare dat jy nou die ondersteuning kry?”

Interviewer: “Do you now, in later years, feel that you now get the necessary support?”

Deelnemer: “Ek kan sê ek praat met my sielkundige ja sy vertaan my bietjie baie beter as wat meeste mense my verstaan sy kan my eerlik sê dis soos sy dink sy weet wanneer ek alleen raak in ‘n sessie wanneer ek afswitch, wanneer my brein afswitch sy weet hoe om dit te hanteer, so dis eintlik goed, want sy weet om my die spasie te gee en ook wanneer sy my kan druk om ‘n antwoord te kry of wanneer sy my moet los, dit is goed.”

Participant: “I can say I do talk to my psychologist, yes, she understands me a bit, much better than most people understand me, she can tell me honestly, that is what she thinks, she knows when I am becoming alone during a session, when I am switching off, when my brain

switches off, she knows how to handle it, so it is actually fine, because she knows to allow me the space and also when she can push me to get an answer or when she must leave me, it is fine.”

He feels that loneliness plays a major role in his psychiatric conditions and that research should be done on the topic to find out about the causes and how to help people feel less lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Dink jy eensaamheid is iets wat behandel moet word in sê nou maar ‘n psigiatriese konteks?”

Interviewer: “Do you think loneliness is something that should be treated in a psychiatric context?”

Deelnemer: “‘n Sielkundge of ‘n psigiater of maatskaplike werker of wie ook al in die span is maar ek dink dit moet definitief behandel word want dis ‘n hoof bestanddeel van psigiatrie is in depressie en bipolar.”

Participant: “a Psychologist or a psychiatrist or a social worker or whoever that is in the team, but I think it must definitely be treated, because it is a main ingredient of psychiatry in depression and bipolar.”

He feels that people in general don’t understand psychiatric illness but that the psychiatric patient’s lived world experience is much more than only their psychiatric illness.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Dit klink asof jy dan sê dat daar dan ‘n algemene onkunde is by mense rondom die verstaan van die psigiatriese pasiënt se belewenis wêreld?”

Interviewer: “It sounds as if you are saying that there is a general ignorance with people around the understanding of the psychiatric patient’s world experience.”

Deelnemer: “Op hierdie stadium van die wedstryd, sy belewenis wêreld is veel groter as sy siekte. Maar daar is ‘n onbegrip vir die siekte, en dis al wat ek op hierdie stadium wil sê van dit.”

Participant: “At this stage of the game, his world of experience is much bigger than his sickness. But there is a misconception of the sickness, and that is all that I at this stage want to say about it.”

The psychiatric pasient often has to stand alone for his illness.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Dink jy daar is ‘n verskil tussen om alleen te wees en alleen te voel?”

Interviewer: “Do you think there is a difference between being alone and feeling alone?”

Deelnemer: “Te midde van ander mense as gevolg van hulle isolerende wanbegrip, kyk die psigiatriese pasiënte staan dikwels uit as die ou wat alleen sy siekte bepleit.”

Participant: "Amidst other people because of their isolating non comprehension, the psychiatric patient often stands out as the one that is alone pleading his illness."

The psychiatric patient often has to stand alone with his illness.

5.16. Summary

The findings of the current study show that there are various meanings attached to the experience of loneliness by some psychiatric patients. These themes overlap greatly and this fact will receive further attention in chapter seven. It was significant that a rich and diverse range of experience was presented in the interviews. Participants were surprisingly open and detailed in their experience of loneliness and the meanings they couple with the experience of loneliness. The following fifteen main themes emerged: Creativity in loneliness, fantasies, experience of rejection, interpersonal withdrawal, temporality of loneliness, metaphors of loneliness, insider-outsider experience, unique experiences, loneliness and empathic understanding, loss of significant relationships, loneliness and psychiatric symptoms, the experience of being alone and feeling lonely, loneliness as call to action, interpersonal dimensions of loneliness, loneliness and psychiatric illness experience.

Chapter 6: Applying existential phenomenological lenses to the meanings in the experiences of loneliness

In this chapter the existential phenomenological lenses described in chapter three will be applied to the bracketed meaning units as discussed in chapter four. Thus the meanings identified from the participants' accounts of their experience of loneliness will be viewed through existential phenomenological lenses. This interpretative discourse is underpinned by the approach of hermeneutics.

6.1. The Hermeneutics

The present study employed the hermeneutic circle to interpret the findings. Hermeneutics is concerned both with the understanding as well as the interpretation of that which is studied; it is concerned with the dynamic relationship between the part and the whole at different levels. The principle here is that if you want to understand any given part you look to the whole and to understand the whole you look to the parts. As such the meaning of a word only becomes clear as we see it in the context of the whole sentence. At the same time the meaning of the sentence depends upon the cumulative meanings of the individual words (Langdridge 2007). This process can be seen as a zooming in and out to see the bigger picture but also the details within the picture.

The existential perspective asserts that understanding cannot exist in a vacuum, and that, in the hermeneutic or interpretive phase, the researcher does not attempt to seek the absolute understanding or a complete suppression of biases. However, through interpretation that incorporates the awareness of one's own presuppositions, new meanings can surface and better interpretations and richer descriptions of the experience of loneliness can be achieved (Packer 1985).

Phenomenology and hermeneutics converge to provide not only a description of an experience, but also a reflective account of the meaning of a human experience as it is lived. Here we can speak of lived meaning. Subjective experience is closely linked with the meanings we couple with experience. One can accordingly state that meaning presents itself within subjective experience.

Since this study is concerned with the meanings of loneliness it also involves the interpretations made by the author of the research participant's experiences of loneliness. Thus the entry into the meaning of a text can be made at a number of different levels, all of which relates to one another, and many of which will offer different levels of perspectives on the part-whole coherence of the data. This study is also idiographic in nature, thus looking at the particular in detail via in-depth analysis as well as a commitment to understand the participant's experience of loneliness from their perspective, within a particular context at a particular time.

In phenomenological research, the identification of assumptions or biases prior to conducting interviews and doing interpretation is recommended. This forms part of the researchers' hermeneutic circle (Heidegger 1962). Assumptions and biases are both an obstacle and an aid to understanding

the place where the data and the interpreter meet each other (Gadamer 1979). A lack of awareness regarding the dominant view; inadequate knowledge of a culture, language, or discipline; unchallenged biases; unconscious pre-understandings; premature interpretive closure, and ideological constraints may prevent the expression of or privilege certain ideas over others and lead to errors of understanding of the data.

I therefore had to constantly be aware of my own thoughts and feelings regarding the topic of loneliness to ensure that I do not contaminate the data but rather interpret the data given the bracketing of my own ideas regarding loneliness.

In the process of looking at the key contributions by existential thinkers two phenomenological lenses have been described in chapter 3. The first lens is that of the life-world existentials and the second lens the existential dimensions of existence. We will now turn our attention to how the experience of loneliness looks through the former.

6.2. The Life-world existentials as a phenomenological lens on loneliness

In the process of understanding experience and discovering the meanings of loneliness I used existential reflection to further illuminate the participants' experience of loneliness by examining the structures of meanings in terms of which these lived experiences can be described and interpreted.

Four fundamental life-world themes or existentials have been identified for reflecting on human experiences: lived space (spatiality), lived body (corporeality), lived time (temporality), and lived human relation (relationality or communality) (Van Manen 2002). These dimensions of the human experience impact one another and all play a part in the way meaning is created. I have argued in chapter 3 that a fifth dimension of experience that of the lived spirit or lived meaning (spirituality) is also a way of experiencing the lived world. One way of understanding loneliness is to view it through the lens of life-world existentials.

The meaning units of the experience of loneliness as laid out in chapter four were grouped under the different life-world existentials by the use of guided existential reflection. The description of these existentials enriched and deepened the understanding of what the phenomenon was like, and the experiential qualities that constituted the meanings in loneliness. Following is an exposition of these findings.

6.2.1. Spatiality

One of the ways in which we experience life is through our experience of space. Here I would like to refer to lived space as felt space. We have a different feeling quality in different spaces. Some spaces may cause us to feel unsafe where other spaces may bring about feelings of comfort. We can relate to certain spaces or places with fond memories and to others with traumatic memories that may evoke intense feelings. Space here not only refers to the physical surroundings or environment but also to mental space as well as imagined space. The sense of space also impacts the other

existentials of lived time, lived body, lived relationship and lived spirit. It is important to note that we do not only experience life in one life-world existential at a time but rather experience life through these existentials simultaneously. It is often our awareness of the particular life-world existential that brings the experience to consciousness.

If we then look at loneliness as a real human experience we see that loneliness is also experienced through our sense of spatiality. Following will be a layout of the meaning units and themes of the experience of loneliness that relates to the experience spatiality.

Some participants described loneliness as a space for creative expression. The fact that one can be alone in one's thoughts can be a creative space. Yet other participants described loneliness as a reflective space where they are more in touch with themselves. Other participants withdrew into a fantasy world in reaction to loneliness, here entering a different kind of space. Loneliness was also described by some as an empty space in which they felt trapped. Here they described a specific feeling quality associated with the space. Loneliness was likened by some to being in a prison or being locked up on an island without any visitors. Others described the space of loneliness as being in a cocoon.

The issue of belonging or not belonging was also raised by some in spatial terms. Here they referred to their experience of loneliness as being an outcast or outsider. Here they felt positioned outside the spaces of others. Some participants described feeling alone even in public. They described a public space as bringing about feelings of loneliness. Some places were associated by participants with their loved ones and times when they had been happy. These places often reminded them of their loneliness. Some participants recreated their home spaces elsewhere which they occupied to ease feelings of loneliness through feelings of familiarity. Here the value of familiar and comforting spaces comes to the fore.

Some participants described time spent in nature as a positive space but a space that could also make them more aware of their feelings of loneliness. Here the dual nature of a specific space is illustrated; it can be both comforting and disturbing. One participant described the Karoo as a particular lonely place, a place he described as desolate. Some participants associated certain places with feeling lonely and other places as places where they went to when they wanted to be alone. Some described the workplace as a space where they felt particularly lonely. Other participants described the place where they stay as particularly lonely. Some participants described the routine of moving between different spaces, work and home as increasing their feelings of loneliness.

Most participants described the common quality of lonely spaces as finding it difficult to find somebody in those kinds of spaces. Some participants described going to a beach when they feel lonely because nobody can find them there. Others described the home space as filled with pain and suffering and being away from home helped them escape these feelings. Here it is illustrated that one can decide to step in and out of certain spaces based on the feelings of loneliness they invoke. Other participants described being alone at home as a space in which they could creatively occupy their

thoughts and this made them feel less lonely. Some described writing stories and poetry as a mental space which they entered when they felt lonely. Other participants described the hospital space as one that provided a context where loneliness could be countered by meaningful involvement in activities as well as with staff and patients at the hospital. Some participants described loneliness as a common experience in the hospital space among inpatients.

Looking at loneliness through the lens of the life-world existential of spatiality we have seen that the experience of some spaces may invoke feelings of loneliness and others may comfort in this regard. Thus the experience of loneliness has an effect on felt or lived space and this impacts how loneliness is experienced through the other life-world existentials.

Next we will turn our attention to temporality as a life world existential through which loneliness is experienced.

6.2.2. Temporality

Temporality as existential puts human experience within the context of time. Lived time is the subjective experience of time as it is perceived at different moments. Human beings are temporarily situated in the world, and relates to the past, present and future through this life-world existential. The experience in the present is always related to both past and future. Thus our perception of time in the present is influenced by how we perceive the past and future i.e. on a time continuum. The experience of time also affects the meaning of an experience as it is lived. The chronological sequence of events is less important than how the lived events are perceived. Here the influence of time impacts on the nature of the experience. Thus we make sense of an experience through our perception of time because we exist in time. Therefore experiences recalled from a different time may have different meanings according to the time in which they are recalled as well as the time in which they were originally experienced. The perception of time also influences the other life-world existentials of spatiality, corporeality, relationality and spirituality, as all of these are situated in time.

We will now look at the themes and meaning units of the experience of loneliness that relates to temporality.

Some participants expressed that they experienced certain times as particularly difficult or tough but that these times were often also creative times. Therefore the experience of a particular time can have dual meanings. Tough times are often creative times. Other participants were taken back in time in their dreams of specific past relationships. Some participants commented that loneliness increased with age. Here they considered various time periods across the various life stages. Other participants felt that loneliness was ever present but that at various times conscious awareness of it increased. Here a depth quality to time is illustrated that at one time one can feel at a deeper level than other times.

The repetition of childhood behaviour in reaction to loneliness was noted by some participants. Here reactions in a different time in the past can be repeated in the present, thus linking the past with the present time. Some participants expressed the lack of time contributed to their emotional state. The

state of being involved in a relationship can also result in having less time to feel lonely. Here the perception of time is influenced by the relationship status or the relationality of an individual's existence illustrating the multifactor influence of both temporality and relationality.

There is also a temporary relief of feelings of loneliness from time to time noted by some participants. Here a particular experience at a particular time is seen as not continuing into the future. The perception of the duration of time can also be influenced by the nature of an experience. Here some participants stated that the duration of time is experienced as longer during times of loneliness. Others again emphasized the fact that loneliness is present throughout life and throughout time. Thus an experience can also be perceived as static over a period of time.

Some participants felt that loneliness awaited them in future. Here illustrating an anticipatory quality of the experience of time. Thus one might anticipate that one may feel lonely in future. This influences both the quality of the experience of loneliness in the present as well as in the future. An interesting observation by one participant was that being with people of different generations left him feeling lonely because of the generation gap between him and others. Here time can also bring a divide between people of different generations, thus impacting on the relationality of existence.

Some participants also commented on how substance use could alter their perception of time. Others described particular times such as weekends as particularly lonely. Some participants felt that loneliness had been present from early in life but that the quality of the experience changed throughout the various life stages. Others found that adolescence was a particularly lonely time. One participant felt that one could become lonelier as one grew older because of physical limitations to engage in activities. Here one finds the existentials of temporality and corporeality influencing each other in that the body and also ones perception of one's body changes over time and has an impact on the qualities of an experience.

Some participants noted that the ever-present nature of loneliness spanned throughout life regardless of the presence of others. Other participants related that the experience of loneliness at a particular time was related to the relational status of one's existence. One participant situated being alone in a time frame different from loneliness in that being alone was seen as a short term experience and loneliness as a long term experience. Some participants stated that the fact that they were not ready to be in a relationship and that they were not close to their family made them believe that they will be lonely in future.

Some participants expressed feeling trapped in loneliness and that made it felt like time was standing still. Lonely periods were described by some as useful and they often preferred being alone. Some participants looked back at times when they had been happy and this often reminded them of their present loneliness. Other participants expressed that feelings of loneliness increased at night times when they became quiet. One participant stated that he felt that loneliness was ever-present when nobody understood him. Here the quality of the relationality also impacts on the time at which loneliness is experienced. Some participants referred to alone time as being a pleasant experience.

By looking at loneliness as experienced through the life-world existential of temporality we see that loneliness is situated in time. This situatedness of loneliness in time then also influences the nature or quality of the experience of loneliness as it relates to that particular time.

Next we will look at the life-world existential of corporeality and how loneliness is experienced through the body.

6.2.3. Corporeality

Corporeality refers to the lived body as a life world existential. We relate to the world around us through our bodies. This not only refers to our senses but also to our physical presence in the world. We relate to others through our bodies and others relates to us through their bodies. A person's perception of their own body also impacts on the way they relate to time, space and person. Through corporeality, a person experiences the world through the senses, movement, and through bodily awareness. Here we refer to experience as being embodied.

Through the existential of corporeality the experience of loneliness is also experienced through the body. We will now look at the themes and unit meetings of loneliness that point towards the embodied nature of the loneliness experience.

For some participants the experience of loneliness led to fantasies of self harm. This points to the reality that mental pain or suffering can also bring about physical pain and suffering in the form of self harm. Thus loneliness is experienced through physical pain. One participant stated that he fought against the urge to hurt himself in hospital because of the punishment that he anticipated. Another resorted to hurting himself to feel pain in reaction to loneliness. Yet another participant stated that other people's reaction to him hurting himself made him feel less alone. Here is another example of how relationality and corporeality influence each other. Loneliness can present physically. Here one participant stated that he experienced loneliness physically as a pain in his heart and a hollow feeling in his stomach. Here the symbolic meaning of the experience and how it presents physically is illustrated. One participant described his feeling of loneliness as lying on cold cement, here alluding to the physical sensation of feeling cold associated with the loneliness experience. Some participants associated reduced feelings of loneliness with physical exercise and connecting with people through sport, here illustrating that we relate to others through our bodies.

Other participants associated auto-erotic behaviour in the form of masturbation as comforting their feelings of loneliness, usually owing to the lack of having a sexual partner. This illustrates that the lived body also yearns for a real physical relationship. Other participants found sex to be another way to curb feelings of loneliness. Here healthy sexual relationships were seen as opposite to loneliness. Sex was also seen by some participants as a way to a deeper connectedness with another person. Some participants felt particularly lonely in their sexual, physical being. One participant pointed out that he saw sexual relations as both intellectual and emotional. He also stated that he became promiscuous when he felt sexually lonely. For other participants the rejection of sexual advances led

to increased feelings of loneliness. Others stated that loneliness and a lack of an intimate sexual partner led them to make use of pornography to ease their loneliness.

Some participants stated that loneliness led to anxiety and this necessitated the relief of anxiety symptoms by substance use. Here loneliness presents physically in the form of anxiety symptoms. Substance use is also an avenue to relieve the physical symptoms of loneliness. Here we see that self-medicating can also be a response to loneliness, thus substances could be a substitute for the lack of company in a state of loneliness. One participant noted that intoxication took away his feelings of loneliness. Loneliness can also lead to suicide as noted by some participants. Here the death of the physical body is seen as the ultimate relief from feelings of loneliness. Here the theme of terminating one's existence as the ultimate act of loneliness comes to the fore. Loneliness could also lead to depression and alter brain chemistry, one participant noted.

Some participants felt that certain physical attributes could also make one less attractive to others and could lead to not being accepted in groups. Here a form of physical or bodily self-confidence is considered as necessary to be part of groups and to relate. Some participants expressed that the physical presence with another was experienced as meaningful.

When looking at the experience of loneliness as an experience also felt through the body we can see that relating to others, belonging and finding a sense of meaning in one's existence is strongly related to the life-world existential of corporeality.

Next we will look at relationality and its relation to the experience of loneliness.

6.2.4. Relationality

The existential of relationality refers to the lived relations and interconnectedness of human beings. Human beings find themselves in relationships on many different levels. This web of interconnectedness stretches from primary relationships in the core family, parents and children to community and society as a whole. This interconnected relational quality of human existence then also has a bearing on the experience of loneliness.

We will now look at some themes and meaning units that refer to the relational quality of loneliness.

Some participants mentioned that they entered into fantasy relationships to ease their feelings of loneliness. Others stated that they dreamt of past relationships when they felt lonely. Most participants stated that the lack of a social life made them feel like outcasts and this made them feel lonely. Most participants saw healthy sexual relationships as opposite to loneliness. Others saw sex as being an expression of deeper interpersonal connectedness. They also saw the rejection of sexual advances as leading to loneliness. Some participants noted that loneliness and a lack of an intimate sexual partner led them to use pornography to ease their feelings of loneliness.

Some participants emphasized the importance of communication in stating that the lack of communication in interpersonal relationships caused them to withdraw. Other participants stated that loneliness was not connected to the lack of the presence of others. The lack of meaningful

connections with family made some participants believe that they would be lonely in future. Some participants stated that although they were in public they still found themselves to be lonely. Others in an attempt to protect themselves from the hurt of not having meaningful interpersonal relationships became self-reliant. Some participants stated that their relationship with their pets made them feel less lonely.

Some participants connected their self-worth to feeling cared for. These participants found meaning in caring for others and this made them feel less lonely. The participants mentioned that lost loved ones often return in dreams. This can be a reminder of loneliness. An important theme that seems to be at the core of human connectedness is emphatic understanding. Most participants mentioned that empathic understanding in relationships is what makes them feel less lonely and more understood. They pointed out that this empathic understanding is more and at a much deeper level than intellectual understanding. It seems that empathy is what connects human beings. The lack of this empathic understanding brings division between people. Being misunderstood or not understood by people made some participants feel like outcasts and left them lonely. Others stated that their empathic relatedness to others also drew people close to them. Other participants stated that they connect to others by listening. Some participants stated that people struggle to understand their loneliness because people are unique and everybody experiences loneliness differently.

Some participants equalled the experience of interpersonal rejection to feelings of loneliness. They also referred to loneliness as originating from non-acceptance in relationships. Loneliness does not exist in the absence of rejection according to most participants. In the face of rejection some participants stated that they pushed people away before they could be rejected.

Meaningful intimate relationships made most participants feel less lonely. According to the participants the lack of understanding of their psychiatric illness made them feel particularly lonely. Most participants experienced loneliness in the face of loss in significant relationships. Another relational quality of loneliness mentioned by most participants was that one can be lonely even when in a relationship. The need for emotional support is another quality of relational connectedness that the participants emphasized.

In attempts to deal with the sudden loss of significant relationships some participants mentioned that they engaged with objects that reminded them of those people. They also stated that relationships were not replaceable because relationships were special. Some participants mentioned that they felt isolated after the loss of interpersonal relationships. Other participants mentioned feeling suicidal after being abandoned by others. Others withdrew in reaction to hurt experienced in interpersonal relationships. The participants felt that self-confidence was needed to connect to others and that the lack thereof could lead to loneliness. Most participants felt that they found a sense of personal meaning in important relationships. In some relationships they connected through their loneliness. In other relationships humour was used to connect with others.

Some participants stated that they did not feel that they could be themselves in relationship. In a sense they had to be inauthentic to be accepted. Most participants stated that one could be lonely although being in relationship, and that the presence of others did not necessarily alleviate loneliness. Some participants mentioned that one could cling to others in the fear of loneliness. Talking to other people was seen as a way of connecting interpersonally. Friendships were seen as easing feelings of loneliness by most participants. Some participants associated loneliness with not being able to share themselves with others.

Some participants found that exploring new relationships relieved feelings of loneliness. Most participants saw interpersonal connectedness as essential to feel whole and complete as a person. The participants noted that a special paradoxical relationship existed between the need to be alone and the need to be with others. They stated that being alone at times was necessary but that not being in a significant relationship with a special person was seen as a negative state. Some participants also mentioned that sharing your life with someone else was a way of knowing that they existed. Thus intimate relationships serve as the validation of one's existence. Other participants felt that the lack of social support made them feel lonely.

Some participants stated that society was based on the fact that people needed to be together but that it was important to remain authentic to yourself in relationships and that social conformity could lead to the real self being suppressed. Some participants noted that people had lost the ability and know-how to connect with each other and that negative experiences in relationships made people weary of other people. Others mentioned that people also connected through their struggles. Most participants felt that connecting to others involved taking a risk. They also felt that they associated more easily with people who had the same interests and worked in the same field as them.

When looking at how loneliness is experienced through the lived world existential of relationality it is quite clear that loneliness is strongly associated with the lack of meaningful and supportive relationships. Most participants felt that being with people did not alleviate loneliness but that it is rather the quality of that connection that made them feel less lonely.

We will now turn our attention to the life-world existential of spirituality and how it related to the experience of loneliness.

6.2.5. Spirituality

In an earlier section I argued that we also experience our lived world through spirituality. Spirituality here does not refer only to religious beliefs and convictions but rather to the experiential dimensions of spiritual experiences. People often give meaning to their experience through a spiritual relatedness to themselves and the world around them. Here spirituality refers to the ultimate relatedness of ourselves to the universe as a whole and our participation in all that is in existence. Spirituality also refers to our creative and meaningful living as well as self-reflective spiritual activity such as intuition, faith, hope, and courage.

Rizzuto (1991) defines spiritual and religious experiences as those experiences that involve the attribution of religious or spiritual meaning to an event. This spiritual or religious framework consists of beliefs, symbols and language to describe and make sense of experiences. Nelson (2009) commented that religious or spiritual experiences may also fall outside of a person's known religious or spiritual frame of reference. This may often lead to new spiritual insights and a change in the existing spiritual or religious frame of reference.

Vaillant (2008) associates spirituality with what he called positive emotions. These emotions are compassion, forgiveness, love, hope, joy, trust, awe, gratitude and the like. He postulates that these positive emotions are essential to our survival as human beings and plays an adaptive role to connect us to our worlds, the planet we live on as well as to the community the people that inhabit this planet with us. He also emphasizes the universality of religious and spiritual experiences and that the impact of these experiences on all the dimensions of human existence should not be denied.

Hegel (1807) felt that being comes into existence in the human spirit. Kierkegaard commented that man is a synthesis of the psychical and the physical and that a synthesis is unthinkable if the two are not united in a third. This third he referred to as spirit (Kierkegaard 1844b).

In this study a number of participants referred to loneliness and how it relates to spirituality. We will now turn our attention to some meaning units of the experience of loneliness that relate to the life-world existential of spirituality.

One participant noted that there existed a relationship between his experience of loneliness and the spirited times of his depression. He stated that he often experienced these times as particularly creative times, with particular creative output. For some participants creativity also brought relief during times of loneliness. They expressed that they kept themselves busy with creative work when they felt lonely. This brought some form of relief to their experience of loneliness.

Some reported that their best creative work was done during a particularly lonely period of their life. The idea of creativity-in-suffering presents itself here. Our darkest hour may be our finest hour. The experience of loneliness was also a moving force to some moving them to engage in creative activity. Thus a dimension of creativity in the face of loneliness may be a meaning-making activity. Being creative is thus similar to creating meaning. In a way loneliness can also assist to "think out of the box" or express oneself more authentically because of a lessened sensitivity to critique from others. Being alone can also be an opportunity for being disconnected from the restrictions of this world, thus leading to more creative expression and new ideas.

Being alone in one's thoughts can also be a creative space as reported by some participants. Some participants preferred to be alone and do creative work. Others described doing creative activities such as arts and crafts in the face of loneliness. Others saw creativity as a blessing and a way to cope with loneliness, which is another example of how creative expression can somehow alleviate feelings of loneliness and in a way contribute to the meaning of one's existence.

Some participants mentioned activities of creative expression in which they engaged when they felt lonely. The experience of loneliness can act as a driving force to bring people into action to deal with or attempt to numb the experience of loneliness. Creative engagement seems to be one of the outcomes of going through loneliness. On the other hand loneliness can also impair creative thinking. Here some participants mentioned becoming too depressed to do anything because of their feelings of loneliness.

Being in a creative space also means being a creator. Some participants also felt that they could live out their creativity in their dreams. Here they created others in their dreams as a means not to feel lonely. Some participants stated that they brought back people from their past in their dreams, thus an act of recreating the presence of others. This stemmed from the hope that those who passed on will somehow return. However when they awoke, the sudden reality hit that they were still alone. Some participants stated that one could awake in a searching or longing state as if looking for someone or missing someone. Thus the mind creates the idea of the presence of another in order to ease feelings of loneliness. Some participants felt that there was a relation between suicidal thoughts and loneliness in that if they commit suicide and die they would at least know somebody in the afterlife.

Some participants felt less lonely being connected to nature and the larger universe. Here they felt that if they understood their place in the world, their connectedness to the cosmos they felt less alone and more integrated in their lived world. This also related to finding a spiritual place in the world which was associated with a sense of purpose and meaning. Some participants linked their experience of loneliness with creativity and being in their own universe.

Others felt that it took courage to stare loneliness in the face and to be in touch with yourself. This courage was necessary to be honest with oneself of the nature of their loneliness and then living with a sense of the importance of interpersonal connectedness. Courage was also seen as not denying ones nature but rather embracing it to pursue meaningful engagement. Some participants noted that to allow others to be authentic also helped them to feel less lonely. The concept of courage within existential thinking is significant as it is often seen as the driving force behind finding one's being or in being authentic (Tillich, 2000). The lack of courage often leads to conformity which in the end leads to a restricted and inevitable lonely existence. It also takes courage to live as a spiritual being. Conversely, one can also gain courage from one's spirituality.

Some participants noted that loneliness may evolve from an experience to a character trait in one's identity. Hereby people can become lonely people and not just experience loneliness from time to time. Other participants felt that they lost meaning and purpose in the face of loneliness. Meaning and purpose are strong themes within the life-world existential of spirituality. Some participants felt that being able to see the meaning behind things could be a cure for loneliness.

Some participants expressed their feelings of loneliness through the writing of stories. One participant associated being a writer with being creative and writing the lonely hero type stories. These stories reflect the quest of the lonely hero, usually on a special quest to somehow gain admiration from

someone specific or the community. These stories often had as central theme the hero's quest to overcome his loneliness by finding a loved one. Thus loneliness can drive the hero, but can also overcome the hero. Here also spiritual meaning in stories can be inferred. These stories also speak to the spiritual concepts of courage, faith, hope and love. Most participants saw love as a connecting as well as creative force. Our reflection in interpersonal relationships also lets us know that we exist both physically and spiritually. It seems that working through issues or struggling together could also keep a relationship close and that people could also connect spiritually through their struggles.

Some participants mentioned that they faced rejection from others in reaction to their spiritual questions and beliefs. They expressed that in an attempt to find answers on their spiritual questions they experienced people rejecting them and that made them feel lonely. This may point to a larger societal dynamic where people are scared to question because they fear rejection and loneliness. Therefore they cannot be authentic but have to keep their questions for themselves. Some participants had the feeling that fate brought about loneliness. In this sense they took the experience of loneliness out of their own hands and associated it with a bigger force that somehow influenced them to become lonely.

Some participants connected loneliness on a spiritual level with non-existence. Being lonely is as if one never existed in the first place. Thus loneliness can lead one to feel disconnected from one's own existence. Through the experience of loneliness the spiritual dimension of existence can also be accessed. Some participants noted that different views of spirituality and religion resulted in people being disconnected and lonely. One participant made a clear distinction between being spiritual and being religious. He stated that religion was for those who fear hell and spirituality was for those who had already been there. Here he differentiated between fear and experience in that those who have experienced hardship also developed sensitivity for spiritual aspects of life and those who fear retribution resorted to finding comfort in organised religion.

Some participants felt that in spite of being alone, they could still experience the presence of God. When so, interpersonal loneliness is not the same as spiritual loneliness. One participant's definition of being alone was being alone in the presence of God.

Some participants pointed out that spiritual disappointment led them to make some personal decisions and life changes. Some participants mentioned that as they felt lonely and deserted by God at times, this also led them to reject the spiritual world. Some stated that they felt very lonely when even God had also disappointed him. Other participants commented that they speak to God when they were alone. They also felt that talking to God at least meant that they were talking to someone. He felt that he could be honest when talking to God. One participant felt that Christ had experienced the core of loneliness being forsaken by God when he had been crucified.

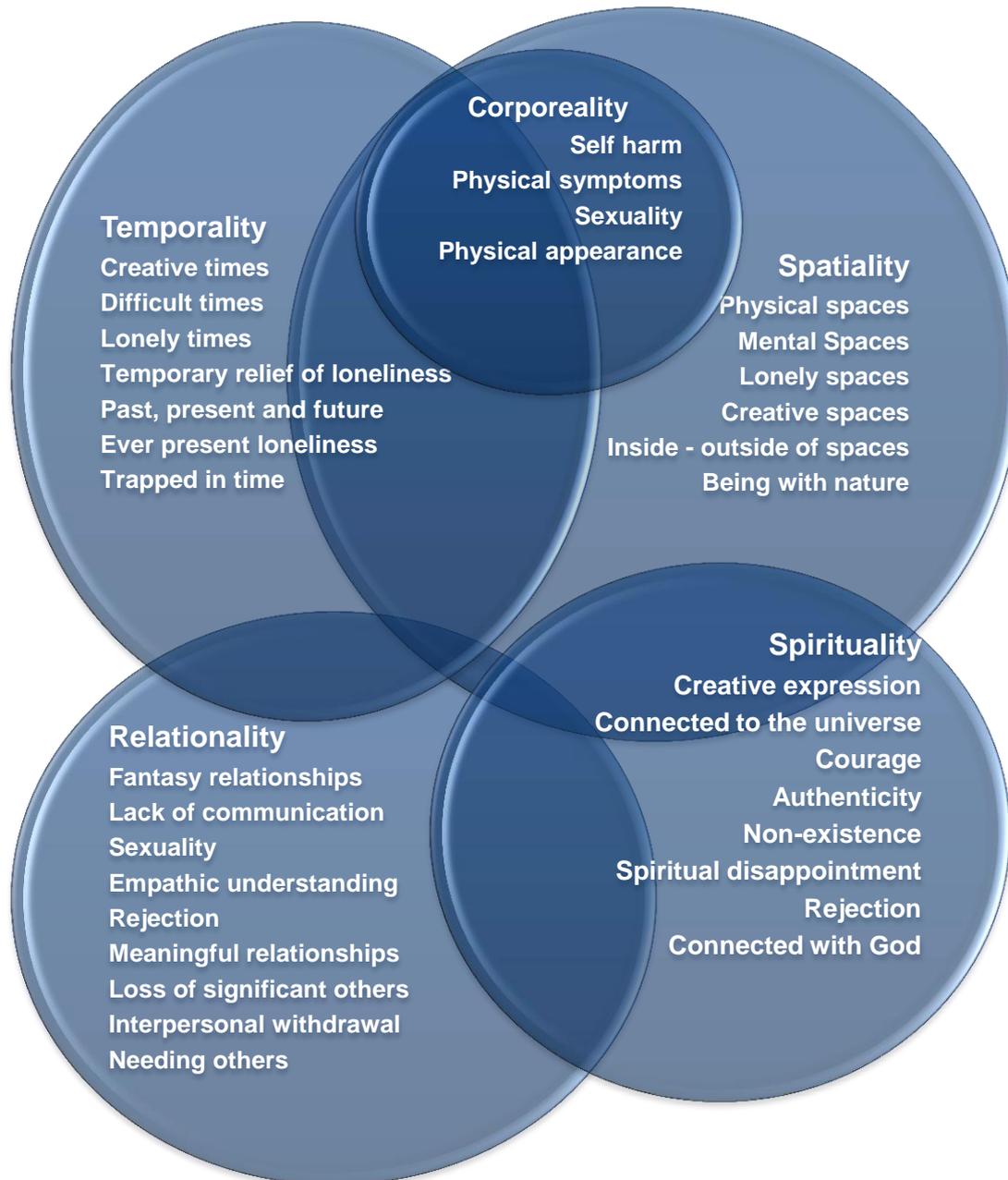
When viewing the experience of loneliness through the life-world existential of spirituality it is striking that our sense of spiritual identity coupled with faith, hope and love in relating to the greater world or universe also impacts on our experience of loneliness. To engage in creative activities, thereby acting

out our spiritual nature we create meaning in our existence. By relating to God or a higher power we can feel less lonely. Finding our place and spiritual connectedness to the world we live in can also contribute to us feeling less lonely and more integrated in the our lived world as a whole.

6.2.6. Summary

The meanings of loneliness as they find expression in the life-world existentials can be summarized according to the following themes as they appear in figure 2. These themes were, under corporeality: self harm, physical symptoms, sexuality and physical appearance. Under temporality: creative times, difficult times, lonely times, temporary relief of loneliness, past, present and future, ever present loneliness and trapped in time. Under relationality: fantasy relationships, lack of communication, sexuality, empathic understanding, rejection, meaningful relationships, loss of significant others, interpersonal withdrawal, needing others. Under spatiality: physical spaces mental spaces, lonely spaces, creative spaces, inside - outside of spaces, being with nature. Under spirituality: creative expression, connected to the universe, courage, authenticity, non-existence, spiritual disappointment, rejection, connected with God.

Figure 2: Meanings of loneliness in the life-world existentials



Next we will turn our attention to another phenomenological lens – that is, the four dimensions of existence; *eigenwelt*, *mitwelt*, *umwelt* and *überwelt* and how loneliness relates to these dimensions of existence.

6.3. The four existential dimensions of existence as phenomenological lens on loneliness

Another existential phenomenological lens to view the experience of loneliness through is that of the four dimensions of existence. These are the *eigenwelt*, the *mitwelt*, the *umwelt* and the *überwelt*. The four dimensions of existence can be described as dimensions of existence-in-the-world or being-in-the-world. These dimensions by no means exist as distinct separate spheres but rather our existence finds expression in all of these dimensions simultaneously. The task is then to understand the

meanings of loneliness as a meaning-in-the-world and therefore also understand these meanings as belonging to different dimensions of existence.

6.3.1. *Eigenwelt* (Self-experience)

The *eigenwelt* is the psychological, personal or private dimension of our existence. It involves the person's relationship with himself and to intimate others. We connect through the "I" or "self" to the internal world that we construct out of experiences in the different dimensions of existence. The task is to achieve the integration of the self and a sense of centeredness. Here self-reflection plays a role in achieving an inner sense of individuality. This dimension is regulated by our thinking, both verbal and nonverbal. The challenge is to find a creative outlet to express the self and find meaning through a sense of self-worth.

Meanings of loneliness in the *eigenwelt*

Some participants expressed that they couldn't talk about their loneliness experience but would rather keep it to themselves. They however differentiated between loneliness and solitude stating that solitude could be a positive experience. Some participants stated that one was in a sense one's own company, thus referring to the self-related quality of the *eigenwelt*.

Some participants felt that loneliness could also be a question of being afraid to be yourself. Inauthentic being can then also be related to an inner sense of loneliness. Most participants experienced loneliness as a feeling within themselves.

Some participants described feeling trapped in loneliness while others experienced loneliness as emptiness. Some felt that they wanted to hide in the face of loneliness. Some associate loneliness with a prison where they were forced to be alone with their own thoughts. Others likened loneliness to being locked up on an island without visitors. Yet others saw loneliness as a reflective space and being alone as a coping mechanism. By these experiences we can see that a quality of the loneliness experience is that it is like being withdrawn into the *eigenwelt* and this withdrawn state could then make it difficult to relate to others and thus disturb the *mitwelt* or interpersonal dimension of existence.

Certain participants stated that they had a yearning to just "be" and that just "to be" is seen as a space where they could freely and truly be themselves in all their emotional experiences. This relates to another quality of the *eigenwelt*, that of being able just to be with yourself. Some participants also noted that in response to loneliness one could become self-reliant. Loneliness could also force one to be self-reflective and this might lead to one becoming a better person through the process of self-reflection. Too much questioning of existence could also lead one to doubting yourself thereby contributing to an inner sense of uncertainty.

Some participants noted that they had the urge to harm themselves when feeling lonely. Some participants noted that they also felt lonely in relation to themselves, feeling estranged from themselves at times. In engaging in self-reflection on the experience of loneliness a person can also be confronted with two sides of himself, the positive side and the negative side as noted by some

participants. They also felt that if you don't make peace with the positive and negative sides of yourself you will always be estranged from yourself. Some participants felt that loving oneself should be the starting point to deal with loneliness. They also noted that you could discover inner hidden treasures through a process of introspection during times of loneliness.

The participants felt that psychiatric patients often stand alone in their illness. Extreme feelings of loneliness could also lead patients to commit suicide. Some participants associated sadness with loneliness. Some felt that loneliness made one more vulnerable to depression. Here the existential theme of terminating one's own existence as the ultimate act of loneliness comes to the fore. Totally withdrawing into the *eigenwelt* can thus contribute to suicidal feelings.

Some participants expressed feeling powerless in the face of loneliness. Others associated strong feelings such as being rejected, not being part of, not being good enough, being worthless, having no value, being helpless, always being wrong and being abandoned and angry with loneliness. Some participants saw loneliness and anxiety at the core of their anguish. Others noted that loneliness also increased anxiety.

Getting in touch with one self through psychotherapy made some participants gain insight into their loneliness experience. Some participants felt that being understood made the feelings of loneliness go away. Other participants felt that nobody would understand their loneliness.

The experience of loneliness also overlaps in the psychological and physical dimensions of living. Some participants felt that being in a lonely place could be very scary but one could feel safe in one's own thoughts. Some participants also coupled loneliness with anguish about one's own identity.

Some participants felt that being alone in their own thoughts helped them to be creative. They strongly associated creativity with a self-reflective attitude as part of the *eigenwelt* dimension of existence. Other participants had fantasies of being alone and likened an empty mind to loneliness. Some participants admitted to escaping into fantasy in the face of loneliness. Here they engaged in fantasy relationships to ease their feelings of loneliness. By escaping into fantasy they were taken up in the *eigenwelt*. Some participants experienced self-destructive impulses in relation to loneliness thereby directing their negative feelings towards themselves.

Some participants stated that a sense of self-worth in their work played a big part in relieving their loneliness. Their self-worth was also connected to feeling cared for thus, within the *eigenwelt* loneliness is related to a sense of self-worth. Reflections on loneliness struck at the heart of some participant's experience and evoked intense emotional experiences. Some participants stated that not understanding themselves made them feel lonely within themselves.

By looking at the experience of loneliness as it presents itself in the *eigenwelt* we can see that loneliness is a personal experience that calls on the individual to take a self-reflective stance towards their loneliness experience. A tension exists between the need to connect and the need to be alone,

thus between the *eigenwelt* and the *mitwelt*. Accordingly loneliness can have both positive and negative qualities in the *eigenwelt*.

We will now look at the experience of loneliness as it presents itself in the *mitwelt*.

6.3.2. *Mitwelt* (Experience of others)

The *mitwelt* is the social or interpersonal dimension of human existence. It is our everyday encounters and experience with others. Here cultural and community relatedness also features. As human beings we are connected and interact with the world of other people. Here the social self is the point of contact between a person's centre and the world of others. In this dimension we find meaning by striving with others for establishing values and connecting to greater society and the communities we find ourselves in.

We will now turn our attention to how the experience of loneliness presents itself in the dimension of the *mitwelt*.

Meanings of loneliness in the *mitwelt*

Feelings of abandonment by significant others in interpersonal relationships can lead some participants to contemplate suicide. Some participants stated that the absence of somebody to talk to and share your feelings made the bad thoughts win, thus the lack of meaningful interpersonal engagement can contribute to negative thoughts.

Loneliness was also associated with non-acceptance in relationship by some participants. Being oneself or authentic to one's being often led some participants to feel rejected and lonely. They referred here to a tension they experienced between conforming to social expectations and being themselves. Questioning oneself about the right way to act in relationships also contributed to feelings of loneliness. Some participants noted that not knowing the expectations of others in relationship made them feel lonelier. A few participants stated that they withdrew themselves from others when they felt lonely. They pushed people away before they could be rejected by them. Some participants viewed themselves as outsiders, although this made them feel lonely it also put them in a position to give social commentary on what they saw other people do, thus giving them an outsider view on society.

Some participants experienced loneliness in the face of loss. They expressed a longing for lost love ones. Other participants felt that the permanency of death left nothing one could do to change things. In attempts to deal with the sudden loss they engaged with objects such as photographs and belongings that reminded them of the person they lost. Some felt that you could not replace one relationship with another because relationships were special. Loss left one alone and confused, others noted. Some participants felt isolated as a result of the loss. This seems to point to a circular nature of the experience in that one is lonely but lacks confidence, which leads to fearfulness of people and more loneliness. Some participants likened loneliness to not sharing yourself with others. Imaginary relationships can be a way to deal with loneliness.

When some participants reached out and cared for others they felt less alone. They seemed to find meaning in taking care of the needs of others. On the other hand estrangement from family contributed to feelings of loneliness. Most participants felt that getting more involved with your family and circle of friends and allowing others to support you could counter feelings of loneliness. One participant felt that being the only child could also increase feelings of loneliness. Some participants referred to having specific roles in a family, like being a father, and that these roles could also make one feel less lonely.

Some participants noted that one-on-one interaction was less threatening than group interactions. Some participants expressed the fact that everybody felt lonely, hereby also associating themselves with the larger community in their shared experience of loneliness. Most participants also expressed the desire to help other people overcome their experience of loneliness, thus they were also aware of the need in greater society to overcome loneliness. Some participants also stated that they felt lonely in the workplace, thus being aware of experiencing loneliness in different interpersonal contexts, in their families as well as at work. They also felt that doing hobbies, joining a book club or doing volunteer work could take away some of their loneliness.

Popularity could give a false sense of connectedness as noted by some participants. In striving to be popular people could be fake or inauthentic and thereby create a false sense of connectedness. Some participants referred to loneliness in the psychiatric hospital context by stating that reaching out to fellow patients could be met with rejection, which could be a hurtful experience and contribute to them feeling lonely. Some participants stated that they felt alienated at times from others. These participants associated a lack of social relationships with feeling like an outcast and this brought about feelings of loneliness. Feeling alienated or not a part of a group or community also made them feel lonely. Some participants described feeling alone in public.

Feeling understood in relationship, when people showed empathic understanding towards them, made some participants to feel connected with others. Being able to understand the differences in experience is necessary to be empathic. Thus the experience of loneliness is strongly associated with a lack of empathic understanding between people. A few participants felt like outcasts because they were being misunderstood. This empathic understanding seems to be a way that people relate to one another. Other participants felt that people struggled to understand their loneliness because people were unique and everybody experience loneliness differently. Some participants noted that the lack of emotional support and the absence of anybody who cared contributed to them feeling lonely.

Some participants noted that communicating with others in an atmosphere where there was no anger but patience could assist them in becoming normal. Thus feeling accepted and understood could help psychiatric patients feel part of society.

Sport, especially running and connecting with people eased feelings of loneliness. This brought about a feeling of belonging to a group and community. Some participants also noted that they used humour

to connect to others. Some noted that self-confidence was necessary to be part of a group. Other participants were less in need of group interactions to feel less lonely.

Some participants expressed that the risk of being rejected or getting hurt may also cause them not to venture into new relationships. Talking for some participants seems to be the way of relating meaningfully to others. Loneliness especially relates significantly to the absence of romantic partners. Some participants noted that a tension existed between the need to be alone and the need to be with others. Other participants felt that people would connect less in future because people lost the ability and know-how to connect with each other. They also noted that interpersonal connections would look different in the future. Most participants commented that when they had experienced rejection of their sexual advances, it left them feeling lonely. Sexual relationships can therefore impact on the loneliness experience. Physical attributes can make one less attractive to others and can lead to not being accepted in a group as well as being rejected sexually.

Most participants noted that if somebody did not need you and they left you, it was experienced as very painful. Some participants reported connecting to others through their struggles and noted that some people could not handle being alone. Some participants felt that making someone else feel less lonely while they are dying can allow them to die peacefully. Other participants felt abandoned by others in time of need.

When looking at the experience of loneliness through the dimension of the *mitwelt* it can be said that loneliness particularly impacts on this dimension of existence. This is due to the fact that the *mitwelt* or with-world implies a sense of connectedness and that loneliness is often seen as resulting from a lack of such a connectedness.

Next we will turn our attention to the *umwelt* as a dimension of human existence.

6.3.3. *Umwelt* (Experience of world)

The *umwelt* is the physical dimension of human existence. It involves the senses and the body. Through our bodies we relate to the physical world around us. Action is our outlet. The point of reference here is that of the objects in the material world. Our body is the point of contact with this world. In this dimension we find meaning through a sense of efficacy, through the satisfactory interaction between our body and the physical world, when we know that what we do makes a difference and has concrete results.

Following we will look at how the experience of loneliness related to the *umwelt*.

Meanings of loneliness in the *Umwelt*

Some participants expressed that engaging with the environment, nature and doing creative things helped them to feel less lonely. Thus becoming aware and engaging in the world around them made them feel more connected. Other participants noted that time in nature could initially be experienced as positive but could later become irritating because it made them more aware of their loneliness.

A few participants felt that having pets around them helped to alleviate loneliness feelings. They felt that animals played a big role in providing companionship to people. Here again a meaningful connection to other animals in the world around a person lessened feelings of loneliness.

Some participants noted that by physically moving away from one's environment where there were lots of reminders of loneliness which could change one's perception of loneliness. Thus one's environment can become a reminder of loneliness. Some participants would also hide away or blend into their environments to appear less lonely, here using their environments to address their feelings of loneliness.

Other participants described how they experienced loneliness as a physical sensation in their bodies, such as pain in their heart and a hollow feeling in their stomach here the body's relation to the rest of experience is illustrated. When consulting physicians they were often told that the physical experiences were stress related. Some also associated a physical numbness with loneliness. One participant's bodily experience of loneliness was feeling irritated. Other participants expressed feeling exhausted by the loneliness experience. A few participants associated substance use and loneliness. They felt that while being intoxicated they experienced less loneliness. They felt that connecting physically through one's body was a form of meaningful relations. By using substances they numbed the body's reaction to loneliness. Thus the experience of loneliness was strongly associated with physical experiences.

Some participants associated desolate physical environments with feelings of loneliness. These places had one thing in common and that is that it is difficult to find meaningful connections in them. Sex was seen by some participants as a deeper connectedness between two people.

Some participants saw loneliness as playing a part in how one behaved towards one's environment. Whether you felt that you belong there or felt alien to your environment determined if you were lonely or not. One could also feel alone at the place where one resided as noted by some. This emphasises the fact that one's immediate physical environment has a bearing on the experience of loneliness. The routine nature of daily activities contributed to feelings of loneliness according to a few participants. Material things, the things or objects with which one surrounded yourself, such as photos, or objects that reminded you of loneliness also played a significant role in the experience of loneliness, as reported by some participants.

Some participants felt that physical places where one could just be yourself, such as at their homes made them feel less lonely. A few participants resorted to recreating their home spaces to feel less lonely and recreating other spaces where they felt less lonely. Here they manipulated their physical environment to create a sense of comfort. Some physical places associated with loved-ones and times where they were happy also reminded some participants of their loneliness.

Thus looking at the Umwelt or world around a person one can see that the perception of the environment and how one engages with this environment has a significant impact on the quality of one's loneliness experience.

Next we will turn our attention to how loneliness relates to the *überwelt* as a dimension of human existence.

6.3.4. *Überwelt* (Experiencing the spiritual)

The *überwelt* is the spiritual or meaning dimension of human existence. This is the world of meaningfulness, of ideas, religious beliefs, ethical values, faith and hope. The *überwelt* is the attitude or philosophy with which one approaches life. Here we connect through our soul through the world of ideas and their concrete significance in our everyday existence. The task here is to find meaning. This dimension is regulated by our intuition. The outlet is our connection to a wider network of meaning with the universe and others through a spiritual connectedness. Here we find a sense of meaning through purpose and a spiritual identity. A tension exists here between being caught between two aspects of the same world: the spiritual and the natural world. Here spirituality is seen as lived meaning and meaningful connectedness.

We will now look at the meaning units of loneliness and how they relate to the *überwelt*.

Meanings of loneliness in the *überwelt*

Some participants expressed losing meaning in the face of loneliness. Here they referred to a loss of the sense of their existence and that in a sense not being connected to others made existence not worthwhile. One participant felt that Christ had experienced the core of loneliness, here referring to Christ being abandoned by God at the crucifixion. Here loneliness is related to the experience of a spiritual leader. Thus participants may associate their experience of loneliness with that of a religious leader.

Having conversations with God or other people brought some participants relief of loneliness. Therefore spiritual relatedness to God through prayer or conversation made participants feel less alone, they therefore reach out to the spiritual in times of loneliness. Some participants felt that talking to God at least felt like they were talking to someone. Here God was seen as filling a void left by the lack of meaningful interpersonal connectedness. They felt that they could be honest when talking to God, thus the quality of God being all knowing made them feel more comfortable in being authentic. Some participants felt that they might be judged in the afterlife on how they lived. This sense of spiritual awareness then also contributed to how they constructed their value and meaning systems based on what they perceived as good or bad in terms of their spiritual and religious beliefs.

Interestingly some participants saw loneliness as a choice. They felt that one's choices could direct the outcome of one's life. Spiritual disappointment impacted on the choices some participants made in their life. Here the importance of participant's spiritual experiences comes to the fore. They felt that their spiritual experiences directed their choices and thus also the direction their life had taken. Some participants saw death as the ultimate escape from loneliness. Here they referred to the experience of loneliness as being associated with physical existence and that it would end if their physical existence ended. The afterlife was identified as a place where loneliness would not be present.

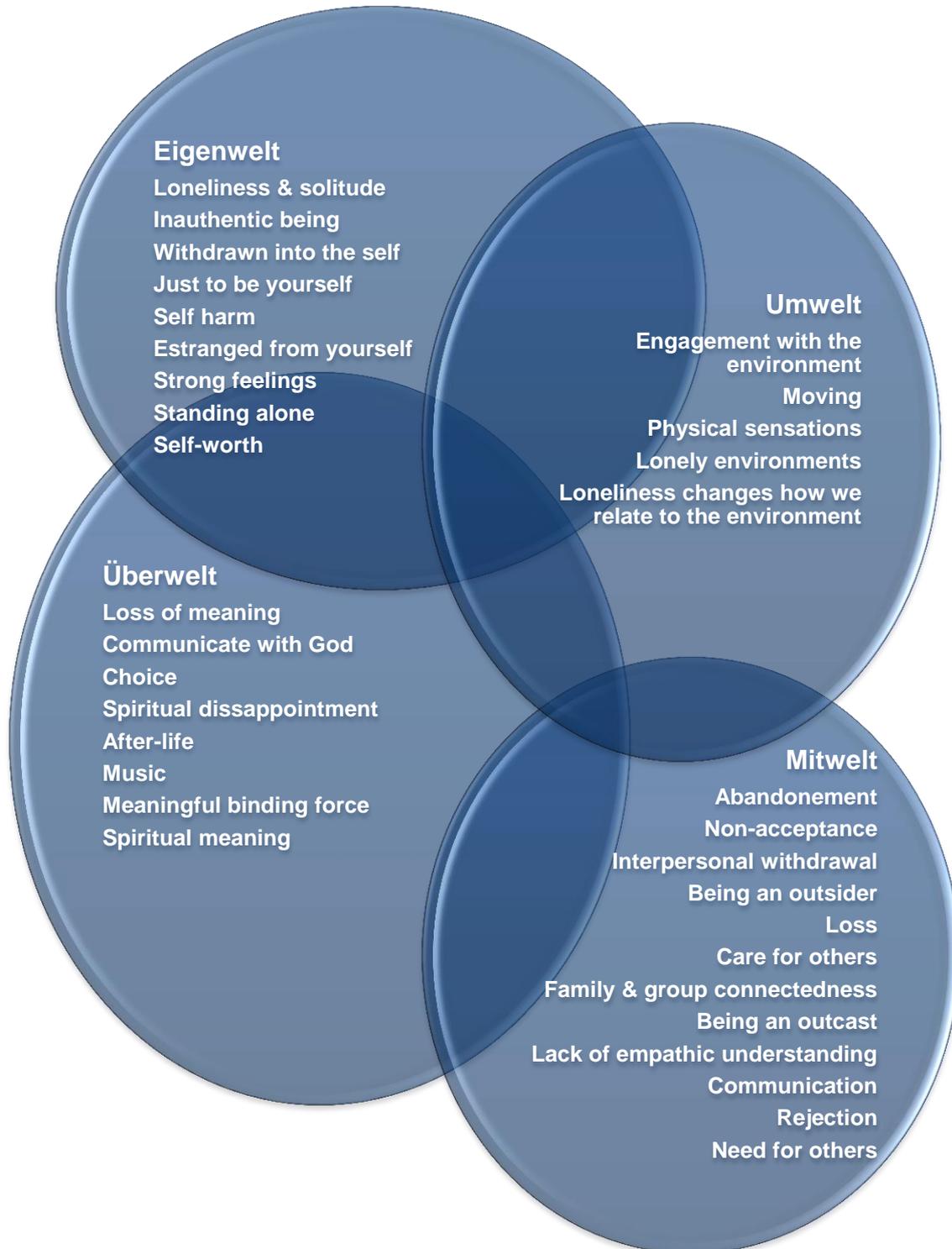
Some participants felt that music, both making music and listening to music helped them cope with loneliness and made them feel connected to other people and the universe on a spiritual level. Here creativity can be linked to a spiritual act, that of creation. If people expressed themselves creatively and thereby tapped into the spiritual dimension of their existence they could find meaning in their lives and this might impact on how they experience loneliness. Some participants listened to loud music and heavy-metal when they felt alone. Here participants associated with certain forms of creative expression and found meaning and comfort in these forms of expression. Others had particular songs associated with loneliness. The specific song represented a certain meaning to the participant with which they associated.

Other participants saw loneliness as a journey and that this journey could be meaningful. One participant stated that meaning related to loneliness in the sense that seeing the meaning behind things could cure loneliness. Here meaning was seen as opposite to loneliness in that finding meaning could end loneliness. Various views of spirituality and religion were noted by some participants. Here some participants felt that you could also be accepted or rejected by the community depending on your spiritual beliefs. Some felt that being honest and open about your spiritual beliefs could lead to rejection by others. Some participants felt spiritually isolated because they were rejected for questioning certain things. Therefore religion and spirituality can be a binding force but could also cause loneliness. Some participants felt that fate brought about loneliness. Here a higher force or process out of their control was seen as bringing loneliness into their lives. The importance of attributing spiritual qualities to experiences is illustrated here. In attempting to find the cause of their loneliness experience they may attribute it to spiritual forces of religious acts.

6.3.5. Summary

The meanings of loneliness as they find expression in the existential dimensions of existence can be summarized according to the following themes as they appear in figure 3. They are in the *eigenwelt*: loneliness and solitude, inauthentic being, withdrawn into the self, just to be yourself, self harm, estranged from yourself, strong feelings, standing alone and self worth. In the *mitwelt*: abandonment, non-acceptance, interpersonal withdrawal, being an outsider, loss, caring for others, family and group connectedness, being an outcast, lack of empathic understanding, communication, rejection and a need for others. In the *umwelt*: engagement with the environment, moving around, physical sensations, lonely environments and loneliness changes how we relate to the environment. In the *überwelt*: loss of meaning, communicating with God, choice, spiritual disappointment, the after-life, music, spirituality as meaningful binding force and spiritual meaning.

Figure 3: Meanings of loneliness in the dimensions of existence



Chapter 7: Appraisal and implications of the study

In this final chapter an appraisal of the meanings of loneliness as well as the experience of loneliness as viewed through the phenomenological lenses of the life-world existentials and the four dimensions of existence will be given. This will be followed by a discussion of the trustworthiness and credibility of the study. Thereafter the implications of the study for practice and future research will be discussed. This will be followed by some concluding remarks.

The first research aim of this study was stated as the question: *“What are the experiences of loneliness in a psychiatric context about?”* The focus here was on discovering the bracketed meaning units present in the experience of loneliness by some psychiatric patients. The second aim turned the focus to explore an existential phenomenological understanding of the meanings in the experiences of loneliness in the psychiatric context. The question here was: *“How can the meanings in the experiences of loneliness in a psychiatric context be understood if viewed through existential phenomenological lenses?”* Here two existential phenomenological lenses were described to view the experience of loneliness through. The first lens described was that of the life-world existentials of relationality, spatiality, temporality, corporeality and spirituality. The second lens was that of the four existential dimensions of existence. These were the dimension of the *eigenwelt*, *mitwelt*, *umwelt* and *überwelt*. The four dimensions of existence can be described as dimensions of existence-in-the-world or being-in-the-world. These dimensions by no means exist as distinct separate spheres but rather our existence finds expression in these dimensions simultaneously. The task is then to understand the meanings of loneliness as a meaning-in-the-world and therefore also understand these meanings as belonging to different dimensions of existence.

After the data had been collected through interviews with the participants, the participants' experiences of loneliness were categorized into bracketed meaning units. Thereafter the existential phenomenological lenses were applied to the bracketed meaning units. I will now present my reflection on the findings.

The findings of the current study show that there are various meanings expressed in the experience of loneliness by some psychiatric patients. It was significant that a rich and diverse range of experiences was presented in the interviews. Participants were surprisingly open and detailed in their experience of loneliness and the meanings they couple with the experience of loneliness.

Various themes were identified: some themes were present in all of the research participants' experience of loneliness, but other themes were unique to the individual's experience. It was also found that the depth and extent of the participant's experience of loneliness varied in intensity and quality.

The following is a reflection on the findings of the study. The interrelated nature of these findings is also highlighted.

The themes that had initially been categorized under unique experience later found expression through the life-world existentials and the existential dimensions of existence. Accordingly, all human

experience can be understood as expressions through the life-world existentials as they present in the existential dimensions of existence.

7.1. The dimension of the *mitwelt* and the life-world existential of relationality

Most participants stated that they experience loneliness especially in the interpersonal dimension of existence. This interpersonal dimension had the following sub-themes: interpersonal withdrawal, insider-outsider experience, loss of significant relationships, experiences of rejection and empathic understanding in relationship. All these themes are interrelated and find expression through the life-world existential of relationality.

7.1.1. Relationality

When looking at the life-world existential of relationality more specifically we see that some participants mentioned that they entered into fantasy relationships for purposes of easing their feelings of loneliness. Others stated that they dreamt of past relationships when they felt lonely. Most participants stated that the lack of a social life made them feel like outcasts and this made them feel lonely.

Some participants equalled the experience of interpersonal rejection to feelings of loneliness. They also referred to loneliness as originating from non-acceptance in relationships. Loneliness does not exist in the absence of rejection according to most participants. In the face of rejection some participants stated that they pushed people away before they could be rejected. When some participants reached out and cared for others they felt less alone.

Some participants saw healthy sexual relationships as opposite to loneliness and an expression of deeper interpersonal connectedness. Some participants connected their self-worth to feeling cared for. Some participants found that exploring new relationships relieved feelings of loneliness. Other participants felt that the lack of social support made them feel lonely.

Some participants stated that society was based on the fact that people needed to be together but that it was important to remain authentic to yourself in relationships and that social conformity could lead to the real self being suppressed.

A tension also exists between conforming to social expectations and being oneself in interpersonal relationships. Sometimes people need to be inauthentic to be accepted by certain groups. Thus one can hypothesize that authenticity can lead to rejection and loneliness.

A need exists among the participants to share their experiences with others and the lack of somebody to share it with makes them feel lonelier. A special relationship exists paradoxically between the need to be alone and the need to be with others. An intimate relationship serves in a way as a validation of one's existence. Imaginary relationships were also a way to deal with loneliness.

When looking at how loneliness is experienced through the live world existential of relationality it is quite clear that loneliness is strongly associated with the lack of meaningful and supportive relationships. Most participants felt that being with people did not alleviate loneliness but that it was

rather the quality of that connection that made them feel less lonely. They also stated that they found a sense of personal meaning in interpersonal relationships and these relationships made the participants feel whole and complete. The participants especially felt connected to those who were lonely. But being among people does not necessarily alleviate loneliness.

7.1.2. Interpersonal withdrawal

Some participants reported that they withdrew themselves in reaction to loneliness. Thus it seems that a reciprocal process comes into being in the face of loneliness, that loneliness leads to withdrawing from other people and that in return leads to feeling lonelier. This withdrawing seems to be a defensive manoeuvre in response to hurt. In this sense the participants reported pushing people away before they could leave them.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Wat dink jy was die gevolge van daai eensaamheid op jou lewe? Het dit gelyk of alle dinge reaksies op 'n sielkunde vlak het?"

Interviewer: "What do you think was the consequences of that loneliness in your life? Did it seem as if all things had reactions on a psychological level?"

Deelnemer 4: "Ek het ook aktief mense weggestoot van my met die idee dat wat is die punt om iemand in jou lewe toe te laat terwyl hulle jou in elke geval net weer op die einde van die dag gaan los?"

Participant 4: "I have also actively distanced people from me with the idea that what is the point to allow somebody into your life if they are in any case going to abandon you at the end of the day."

7.1.3. The insider-outsider experience

Some participants saw themselves as outsiders in that they stood outside of groups or society. Being an outsider also made them feel like outcasts. The perspective of the lonely person as the outsider may give the lonely person some licence to comment on societal issues.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar enige iets wat jy voel jy nog wil bydra?"

Interviewer: "Is there anything else that you feel you still want to contribute?"

Deelnemer: "Omdat ek 'n alleen loper is sien ek dinge hierso gebeur by die hospitaal, dit is dat van hierdie jong ouens wat hier is, is hier for no reason at all, hulle hoort nie hier nie, hulle gebruik nog steeds drugs."

Participant: "Because I am a loner I see things happening here in the hospital, that is that some of the young guys that are here are here for no reason at all, they don't belong here, they still use drugs."

7.1.4. Loss of significant relationships

Most participants noted that abandonment and rejection in the past led to feelings of loneliness. Rejection of sexual advances also leads to participants experiencing loneliness. Most participants strongly associated loneliness with a sense of loss. Especially the loss of significant others increased the participants' experience of loneliness. The loss could also result in one becoming isolated. Some participants however felt that one could be lonely whilst being in a relationship. Losing loved ones to death had a permanent impact on some participants.

One participant felt that the permanency of death left nothing one can do to change things. In attempts to deal with the sudden loss he tried to deal with the loss by engaging with objects that reminded him of them. This however did not help to make him feel any better. The loss could also leave one alone, confused and lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Dink jy het meer of minder eensaam gevoel na sy dood?"

Interviewer: "Do you think you felt more or less lonely after his death?"

Deelnemer: "Meer eensaam, want jy is, skielik was daar altyd iemand in die aand by die huis, so as jy die dag, as jy die aand van die werk af kom, is daar iemand by die huis."

Participant: "Lonelier, because you are, all of a sudden there were always somebody in the evenings at home, so if you arrive at home the day, the evening if you return from work, there is somebody at home."

7.1.5. Experiences of rejection

Some participants noted that when they felt rejected. They felt like outcasts and this made them lonely. Not being accepted in relationship contributed to the experience of loneliness. This also ties in with the theme of authenticity where being authentic may lead to being rejected. Most participants saw rejection as a precursor to the experience of loneliness. One participant noted that he faced rejection from others in reaction to his spiritual questions. Some participants felt that loneliness did not exist in the absence of rejection. They also felt that the feeling quality of loneliness was similar to that of anxiety and rejection.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Sal jy omgee om dit dalk vir my te lees? (Excerpt from thoughts on loneliness that the participant wrote down.)"

Interviewer: "Will you mind reading it to me? (Excerpt from thoughts and loneliness that the participant wrote down)."

Deelnemer 3: "There is no sense of belonging if you are not part of something. It makes you think or believe you are not loveable nothing to love about you. Lonely in relationships anyway it's all about them."

Participant 3: "There is no sense of belonging if you are not part of something. It makes you think or believe you are not loveable nothing to love about you. Lonely in relationships anyway it's all about them."

7.1.6. Loneliness and empathic understanding

Feeling understood in relationship, when people displayed an empathic understanding towards them made some participants to feel connected to others.

Most patients related that the lack empathic understanding in relationship contributed to their loneliness experience. It appears from the participants descriptions that a great need exists to be understood by other. This kind of empathic understanding seems to make the participants feel that they connected to others in a meaningful way. They also noted that being able to understand the differences in experience was necessary to be empathic. Some participants noted that being misunderstood by people made them feel like outcasts. This empathic understanding is also a two way street as mentioned by one participant who stated that when people reached out to him because of his empathic nature he felt less lonely. Thus the exchange of this empathic understanding brings people together and connects them. Empathic understanding is also a need of the psychiatric patient especially in relation to their psychiatric illness. A quality of the empathic understanding is being able to listen to others. Some participants also mentioned that to able to understand loneliness one should appreciate the fact that people were unique and everybody experienced loneliness differently.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is dit 'n gesprek wat baie opkom tussen die pasiënte?"

Interviewer: "Is that a topic that often arises among the patients?"

Deelnemer: "Dit is my persoonlike konneksie so ek hoor die ou se niemand verstaan hom nie dit beteken vir my hy is eensaam."

Participant: "That is my personal connection so I hear the guy says nobody understands him...it means to me he is lonely."

7.1.6.1. Metaphors of loneliness

The participants used a number of metaphors to describe their experience of loneliness. They likened the experience of loneliness with lying on cold cement or "like winter", a "barren landscape" like being "left alone on the planet" or "being in a cocoon". Others described loneliness as pain. Some participants stated that they felt trapped in loneliness. Others felt that an empty mind and loneliness was the same thing. They also compared loneliness to emptiness and stated that loneliness was like a certain atmosphere. Some participants wanted to hide in the face of loneliness. Others stated that standing alone was the same experience as the loneliness experience. Some participants associated loneliness with a prison where one was forced to be alone with one's own thoughts. Others felt that not belonging and loneliness was essentially the same thing. Some participants described loneliness as a reflective space. Others compared the experience of loneliness with being locked up on an island without visitors.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe voel dit vir jou wanneer jy alleen is? Hoe voel daai eensaamheid?"

Interviewer: "How does it feel to you when you are alone? How do you experience that loneliness?"

Deelnemer: "Ek voel soos die winter jy is in 'n barren landscape voel asof jy alleen gelos is op die planeet. They left you here to your own devices."

Participant: "I feel like the winter you are in a barren landscape feels as if you were left alone on the planet. They left you here to your own devices."

When looking at the experience of loneliness through the dimension of the *mitwelt* it can be said that loneliness particularly impacts on this dimension of existence. This is due to the fact that the *mitwelt* or with-world implies a sense of connectedness and that loneliness is often seen as resulting from a lack of such a connectedness.

7.1.7. Other interpersonal experiences

The participants feelings of abandonment by significant others in interpersonal relationships can lead some participants to contemplate suicide. Some participants stated that the absence of somebody to talk to and share your feelings made the bad thoughts win. Thus the lack of meaningful interpersonal engagement can contribute to negative thoughts. Loneliness was also associated with non-acceptance in relationship by some participants. Some participants noted that one-on-one interaction was less threatening than group interactions. Most participants also expressed the desire to help other people overcome their experience of loneliness. Thus they are also aware of the need in greater society to overcome loneliness. When some participants reached out and cared for others they felt less alone.

Some participants referred to loneliness in the psychiatric hospital context by stating that reaching out to fellow patients could be met with rejection which could be a hurtful experience and contribute to them feeling lonely. Feeling alienated or not a part of a group or community also made them feel lonely. Some participants also described feeling alone in public.

Some participants expressed that the risk of being rejected or getting hurt may also cause them not to venture into new relationships. Some participants noted that a tension exists between the need to be alone and the need to be with others. Most participants commented that when they experienced rejection of their sexual advances it left them feeling lonely. Some participants reported connecting to others through their struggles and noted that some people cannot handle being alone.

7.2. The dimension of the *eigenwelt* and the life-world existential of temporality

The *eigenwelt* is the psychological, personal or private dimension of our existence. The subthemes of the participants' experience of loneliness that were identified under the *eigenwelt* or personal dimension were: creativity and loneliness, fantasies as they relate to loneliness and loneliness and psychiatric illness experience. The life-world existential of temporality was seen as most fitting with the *eigenwelt* as it is the personal experience of time as it relates to loneliness.

7.2.1. Temporality

Temporality as existential puts human experience within the context of time. Lived time is the subjective experience of time as it is perceived at different moments. The experience of loneliness can be related to past present and future. Here some participants expressed that they experienced certain times as particularly difficult or tough. Other participants were taken back in time in their dreams of specific past relationships. Here the experience of time also relates to the existential dimension of the *mitwelt* and the life-world existential of relationality.

Some participants commented that loneliness increased with age, illustrating that loneliness feels different at different points in time. Here they bring in the time periods across the different life stages. Some participants felt that loneliness was present from early in life but that the quality of the experience differed throughout the different life stages. One participant felt that one could become more lonely as you grew older because of physical limitations to engage in activities. Other participants felt that loneliness was ever present but that at different times the conscious awareness of it increased, and thus making one feel more alone. There was also a temporary relief of feelings of loneliness from time to time noted by some participants.

Being involved in a relationship can also result in having less time to feel lonely. Here the perception of time is influenced by the relationship status or the relationality of an individual's existence illustrating the multifactor influence of both temporality and relationality.

Some participants felt that loneliness awaited them in future. Here is illustrated an anticipatory quality of the experience of loneliness. One participant situated being alone in a different time frame than loneliness in that being alone was seen as a short term experience and loneliness as a long term experience. Some participants expressed feeling trapped in loneliness and that made it feel like time was standing still. One participant stated that he felt that loneliness was ever-present when nobody understood him. Here the quality of the relationality also impacts on the time at which loneliness is experienced. Some participants referred to alone time as being a pleasant experience.

By looking at loneliness as experienced through the life-world existential of temporality we see that loneliness is situated in time. This situatedness of loneliness in time then also influences the nature or quality of the experience of loneliness as it relates to that particular time. Loneliness thus presents itself in a time continuum. Loneliness is ever present but at times conscious awareness of it increases.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Hoe voel tyd vir jou wanneer jy eensaam voel? Jou belewenis van tyd? Is daar 'n verskil?"

Interviewer: "How do you experience time when you feel lonely? Your perception of time? Is there a difference?"

Deelnemer: "Die dag is vir my verskriklik, die tyd is vir my verskriklik lank die tyd draal, wil nie verby gaan nie. Jy voel partykeer jy wil net iets doen dat die tyd moet verby gaan jy wil die

horlosie aandraai dat jy darem net kan gaan slaap of iets in daai aard. Die tyd raak baie lank as jy eensaam en alleen is raak die tyd baie lank maak nie saak wat jy doen nie jy kry nie die tyd om nie.”

Participant: “The day is horrible the time is tremendously long, the time lingers and does not go past. Sometimes you just feel that you want to do something to get time to pass you want to fast forward the clock just to enable you to go to bed or something similar. Time is slow when you are lonely and alone the time becomes very lengthy, does not matter what you do to pass the time.”

7.2.2. Creativity in loneliness

From the meaning units of loneliness it emerged that there seemed to be a link between the experience of loneliness and depression with a creative space.

Onderhoudvoerder: “So is daar vir jou ‘n verband tussen jou eensaamheid ervaring en kreatiwiteit?”

Interviewer: “Do you perceive a relationship between your loneliness experience and creativity?”

Deelnemer 1: “Ja”

Participant 1: “Yes”

Onderhoudvoerder: “Hoe verstaan jy daai verband?”

Interviewer: “How do you understand that relationship?”

Deelnemer 1: “... van my kunswerke wat ek gedoen het, van die bestes was gewees op die tydstip wat ek in ‘n baie baie diep depressie, major depression time was, jy weet. En dan doen ek van my beste kunswerke.”

Participant 1: “...some of the art works I created, the best of them was at a time when I was in a very very deep depression, a major depression time, you know. And then I do my best art works.”

This seems to be both an interpersonal space as well as a mind space. Creative expression also counters feelings of loneliness but extreme loneliness can impair the creative process. Loneliness can also impair creative thinking. Creativity also presents itself in dream content where the presence of others is created to counter feelings of loneliness but these dreams can also leave the participants feeling lonely.

Some participants felt that being alone in their own thoughts helped them to be creative. They strongly associated creativity with a self-reflective attitude as part of the *eigenwelt* dimension of existence.

7.2.3. Fantasies

Some participants had fantasies of being alone and others had certain fantasies when they had been alone. Some participants expressed themselves through the writing of stories as a way to make them feel less lonely. Other participants escaped into fantasy in the face of loneliness. Some created fantasy relationships to ease their feelings of loneliness. Fantasy role playing was also mentioned as a way to cope with loneliness. Some participants engaged in sexual fantasy relationships to ease their loneliness. Others lost themselves in movies. Destructive fantasies of self harm were mentioned by some. Others mentioned a need to be alone resulting in a withdrawal into fantasy. Fantasies also entered the participant's dreams where they would dream of significant people in their lives both past and present.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Is daar dinge in jou omgewing wat jou meer of minder eensaam laat voel?"

Interviewer: "Are there things in your environment that makes you feel more or less lonely?"

Deelnemer 3: "... en ja movies te kyk ek dink hoekom movies so popular is jy kan jouself in 'n ander wêreld inleef, vergeet wie jy is, vir 'n ruk jouself impartake in 'n ander rol, 'n ander rol te speel, iemand anders te wees wat vriende het of wat jou kan verstaan soos waar jy vandaan kom. So ja, ek dink movies en om musiek te luister dis maar wat ek doen."

Participant 3: "...and yes to watch movies I think the reason why movies are that popular you can let yourself into a different world, forget who you are for a time. You can partake in a different role, play another role, be somebody else that has friends or who can understand you, know where you come from. So yes, I think movies and to listen to music, that is what I do."

Some participants had fantasies of being alone and likened an empty mind to loneliness. Some participants admitted to escaping into fantasy in the face of loneliness. Here they engaged in fantasy relationships to ease their feelings of loneliness. By escaping into fantasy they got taken up or absorbed in the *eigenwelt*. Some participants experienced self destructive impulses in relation to loneliness thereby directing their negative feelings towards themselves.

Some participants described feeling trapped in loneliness while others experienced loneliness as emptiness. Some felt that they wanted to hide in the face of loneliness. Some associated loneliness with a prison where one was forced to be alone with one's own thoughts. Others likened loneliness to being locked up on an island without visitors. Yet others saw loneliness as a reflective space and being alone as a coping mechanism. By these experiences we can see that a quality of the loneliness experience is like being withdrawn into the *eigenwelt*. This withdrawn state could then make it difficult to relate to others and thus disturb the *mitwelt* or interpersonal dimension of existence.

7.2.4. Loneliness and psychiatric illness experience

The psychiatric hospital provides a context where loneliness can be both encountered and countered by meaningful involvement in activities with staff and other patients. The hospital also provides the possibility for different connections than what is available in the outside world. The theme of loneliness often comes up in the context of psychotherapy as reported by the participants. Talking about loneliness does not necessarily bring relief of loneliness. Pharmacological treatment can assist to ease feelings of loneliness. Psychiatric patients often feel stigmatized and the lack of understanding of their illness by those close to them and society contributes to their feelings of loneliness. The participants felt that people in general did not understand psychiatric illness but that the psychiatric patient's lived world experience was much more than only their psychiatric illness. Psychiatric illness is inherently a lonely process and can make one even lonelier.

Onderhoudvoerder: "Watse rol dink jy speel eensaamheid dan in die siekte ervaring van die psigiatriese pasiënte? Sien jy verbande tussen eensaamheid en jou psigiatriese kondisie?"

Interviewer: "What role do you think does loneliness play then in the illness experience of the psychiatric patients? Do you see relationships between loneliness and your psychiatric condition?"

Deelnemer: "Die psigiatriese siekte per se is vereensaamende fenomeen."

Participant: "The psychiatric sickness per se is a phenomenon that makes one lonelier."

The participants felt that psychiatric patients often stood alone in their illness. Some participants associated sadness with loneliness. Some felt that loneliness made one more vulnerable to depression. Extreme feelings of loneliness can also lead patients to commit suicide. Here the existential theme of terminating one's own existence as the ultimate act of loneliness comes to the fore. One can then also hypothesize that totally withdrawing into the *eigenwelt* can contribute to suicidal feelings.

6.2.4. Other personal experiences

Some participants directed aggression towards themselves in reaction to the pain experienced during periods of loneliness. Others felt that being alone left one in essence alone with yourself and your own thoughts. Some participants noted that they also felt lonely in relation to themselves. They also expressed feeling estranged from themselves at times and stated that not understanding themselves made them feel lonely within themselves.

Some participants felt that loving oneself should be the starting point to deal with loneliness. They also noted that you could discover inner hidden treasures through a process of introspection during times of loneliness. Some participants also coupled loneliness with a struggle with one's own identity. Their self-worth was also connected to feeling cared for thus within the *eigenwelt* or self-experience loneliness was related to a sense of self-worth.

Some participants associated strong feelings such as being rejected, not being part of, not being good enough, being worthless, having no value, being helpless, always being wrong and being abandoned and being angry with loneliness.

By looking at the experience of loneliness as it presents in the *eigenwelt* we can see that loneliness is a very personal experience that calls on the individual to take a self-reflective stance towards their loneliness experience. Here some participants stated that they had a yearning to just “be” and that just being was seen as a space where they could freely and truly be themselves in all their emotional experiences. This relates to another quality of the *eigenwelt*, that of being able just to be oneself. A tension also exists between the need to connect and the need to be alone, thus between the *eigenwelt* and the *mitwelt*. Accordingly, in the *eigenwelt* loneliness can have both positive and negative qualities.

7.3. The dimension of the *umwelt* and the life-world existential of spatiality and corporeality

The *umwelt* is the physical dimension of human existence. It involves the senses and the body. Through our bodies we relate to the physical world around us. This human relatedness to the world around us also finds expression through the life-world existentials of spatiality and corporeality. The subthemes of the experience of loneliness most fitting to the dimension of the *umwelt* is: loneliness as a call to action, loneliness and psychiatric symptoms and being alone and feeling alone.

7.3.1. Spatiality

The participants expressed how they experience and associate loneliness with a particular space. These were both physical and mental spaces. Some participants described loneliness as a space for creative expression. Loneliness was also described by some as an empty space in which they felt trapped. Loneliness was likened by some to being in a prison. Others described the space of loneliness as being in a cocoon and feeling trapped in loneliness. Loneliness made them feel positioned outside the spaces of others.

The participants described public spaces as often bringing about feelings of loneliness. Some physical places also reminded them of their loneliness. Some participants described time spent in nature as a positive space but a space that could also make them more aware of their feelings of loneliness. Some described the workplace as a space where they felt particularly lonely. Other participants described the place where they reside as particularly lonely.

Some participants described writing stories and poetry as a mental space which they entered when they felt lonely. Other participants described the hospital space as one that provided a context where loneliness could be countered by meaningful involvement in activities as well as with staff and patients at the hospital.

Looking at loneliness through the lens of the life-world existential of spatiality we have seen that the experience of some spaces may invoke feelings of loneliness and others may comfort the lonely.

Thus the experience of loneliness has an effect on felt or lived space and this also impacts how loneliness is experienced through the other life-world existentials.

7.3.2. Corporeality

Corporeality as life-world existential refers to how we experience life and relate to the world around us through our bodies. Here the participants related how they experience loneliness in and through their bodies. Some participants had fantasies of harming themselves when feeling lonely. They stated that physically hurting themselves made them feel less alone. Here is another example of how relationality and corporeality influence each other. One participant stated that he experienced loneliness physically as a pain in his heart and a hollow feeling in his stomach.

One participant described his feeling of loneliness as lying on cold cement, here alluding to the physical sensation of feeling cold associated with the loneliness experience. Some participants noted that loneliness manifested physically in the form of anxiety symptoms. Loneliness could also lead to suicide as noted by some participants. Here the death of the physical body is seen as the ultimate relief from feelings of loneliness. Loneliness could also lead to depression and alter brain chemistry, one participant noted. Some participants expressed that the physical presence with another was experienced as meaningful.

When looking at the experience of loneliness as an experience also felt through the body we can see that relating to others, belonging and finding a sense of meaning in one's existence is strongly related to the life-world existential of corporeality.

7.3.3. Loneliness as a call to action

The experience of loneliness inspires the individual to take action. It calls the individual forth to engage in interpersonal relationships and connect to others through meaningful activities. This stepping out however takes courage from the individual and does pose challenges to being authentic. Mere conformity for the sake of belonging may allow one to connect to others but this can come at a price in relinquishing one's authentic self. On the other hand being authentic to oneself may lead to interpersonal rejection and leave one feeling lonely. Also, occupying oneself with activities distracts the mind from the feeling brought about by loneliness.

Onderhoudvoerder: "So is daar kontekste of situasies waar jy meer of minder eensaam voel?"

Interviewer: "So are there contexts or situations where you feel more or less lonely?"

Deelnemer: "Baie keer as ek allendig is by die huis, dit klink simpel om te sê maar baie keer as ek allendig is by die huis en ek raak besig met my aktiwiteite, die stokperdjies en goed en my gedagtes is heeltyd besig dan stop ek my gedagtes. Ek probeer heeltyd 'n ding uitsorteer, by mekaar pas, hy gaan nie mooi lyk so nie, gaan beter lyk so, beter lyk so, my gedagtes begin heeltemal wegdwaal, jy konsentreer heeltyd op dit, dan vergeet jy van die eensaamheid."

Participant: "Many times when I am alone at home, it sounds stupid to say, but often when I am alone at home and I get busy with my activities, the hobbies and stuff and my thoughts

are busy then I stop my thoughts. I always try to sort things out, to fit them together, it is not going to look good this way, will look better that way, better like this, my thoughts start to wander completely, you concentrate on it the whole time, then you forget about the loneliness.”

7.3.4. Loneliness and psychiatric symptoms

The participants strongly associated the experience of loneliness with their psychiatric condition. They also suggested that extreme loneliness could lead to suicide. Terminating one’s own existence was also seen as the ultimate escape from loneliness. Abandonment by significant others and stigmatization contributed to their loneliness experience. The experience of loneliness can also lead to depression and withdrawal from relationships. Some participants saw loneliness and the anxiety flowing from that experience as at the core of their struggle. The experience of loneliness contributed to feelings of aggression in some.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Dink jy daar is enige manier wat eensaamheid ‘n rol speel in jou psigiatriese kondisie?”

Interviewer: “Do you think there is any way in which loneliness is playing a role in your psychiatric condition?”

Deelnemer: “Ja dit effect nogals baie dinge in my lewe want jy raak meer depressed omdat jy nie dit kan doen nie jy kan nie achieve nie jy kan nie bereik nie jy word nooit beter daarin nie. Elkeen van daai redes is soos ‘n ekstra blow a wound which causes more depression.”

Participant: “Yes, it influences quite a number of things in my life, because you become more depressed, because you cannot do things, you cannot achieve’ you never become better in something. Each of these reasons is an extra blow, a wound which causes more depression.”

Some participants saw loneliness and anxiety as at the core of their struggle.

7.3.5. Being alone and feeling lonely

Some participants reported that being alone could at times be a positive experience but being lonely was a negative experience. They also expressed that people felt different towards loneliness, some people desired to be alone and others could not stand being alone. Some people feel lonely but not all people experience loneliness. There seems also to be a tension that exists between the need to connect and the need to be alone. Most participants felt that one did not have to be alone to feel lonely.

Onderhoudvoerder: “Dink jy daar is ‘n verkil tussen om alleen te wees en alleen te voel?”

Interviewer: “Do you think there is a difference between being lonely and feeling lonely?”

Deelnemer: "Daar is 'n verskil en nie 'n verkil nie. Dit gaan gepaard met mekaar jy voel alleen en jy is alleen of jy kan partykeer net alleen voel al is jy nie alleen nie of jy is alleen maar jy voel nie alleen nie. Wat jy voel is at one with everything around you."

Participant: "There is a difference and there is no difference. It goes together, you feel alone and you are alone or you can sometimes just feel alone even if you are not alone, or you are alone but you do not feel alone. What you feel is at one with everything around you."

7.3.6. Other experiences of the world around

Becoming aware of and engaging in the world around them made the participants feel more connected. Some participants meaningfully connected to pets as part of the world around them. Some participants noted that by physically moving away from one's environment where there were lots of reminders of loneliness could change one's perception of loneliness. Other participants would also hide away or blend into their environments to appear less lonely here using their environments to address their feelings of loneliness.

One participant's bodily experience of loneliness was feeling irritated. Other participants expressed feeling exhausted by the loneliness experience. Thus the experience of loneliness was strongly associated with physical experiences.

Material things, the things or objects with which one surrounds oneself such as photos, or objects that remind one of loneliness also played a significant role in the experience of loneliness as reported by some participants.

Thus looking at the Umwelt or world around a person one can see that the perception of the environment and how one engages with this environment has a significant impact on the quality of one's loneliness experience.

7.4. The dimension of the überwelt and the life-world existential of spirituality

The überwelt is the spiritual or meaning dimension of human existence. This is the world of meaningfulness, of ideas, religious beliefs, ethical values, faith and hope. The überwelt is the attitude or philosophy with which one approaches life. The life-world existential most fitting with the Überwelt is that of spirituality.

Most of the themes discussed earlier in chapter five under the existential dimension of the Überwelt and the life-world existential of spirituality were drawn from the bracketed meaning unit theme of unique experiences. It seems therefore that many of the unique experiences had a spiritual or meaning quality to it and could therefore be categorized under the überwelt and spirituality. Some themes identified here were: the loss of meaning, relating to the spiritual in the face of loneliness, spiritual disappointment as contributing to feelings of loneliness, creative expression as a meaningful activity, rejection in response to spiritual beliefs and death as the ultimate escape from loneliness.

Some participants expressed that they lost meaning in the face of loneliness. Here they referred to a loss of the sensibility of existence and that in a sense not being connected to others made existence

not worth-while. Some participants related to the experience of loneliness by a spiritual leader. Spiritual relatedness to God or a higher power through prayer or conversation made participants feel less alone. They could thereby find strength in their spirituality in times of loneliness. They felt that they could be authentic before God. The participants' sense of spiritual awareness also contributed to how they constructed their value and meaning systems based on their spiritual experiences.

Interestingly some participants saw loneliness as a choice. They felt that one's choices could direct the outcome of one's life. Spiritual disappointment impacted on the choices some participants made in their life. Here the importance that participant attach to their spiritual experiences is indicated. Some participants saw death as the ultimate escape from loneliness. Some participants felt that you could also be accepted or rejected by the community depending on your spiritual beliefs. Some participants felt spiritually isolated because they were rejected for questioning certain things.

7.4.1. Spirituality

Spirituality here refers to the experiential dimensions of spiritual experiences. People often give meaning to their experience through a spiritual relatedness to themselves and the world around them. Some themes identified here were: creativity as a spiritual expression, the afterlife as a place where people will know others, being aware of the interconnectedness with the universe and cosmos as a whole, finding a sense of spiritual purpose and meaning, courage in the face of loneliness, loss of meaning in loneliness, rejection on the grounds of spiritual beliefs, being spiritual and being religious as being different things, and spiritual disappointment.

Spirituality is linked with creativity as it is an experience where a person draws on inspiration and intuition in a process of bringing into existence something new. Some participants felt that depressed and difficult times were also times where they could express themselves creatively. Being alone can also be an opportunity for being disconnected from the restrictions of this world, thus leading to more creative expression and new ideas. This brought some form of relief to their experience of loneliness.

Some participants felt that there was a relation between suicidal thoughts and loneliness in that if they were to commit suicide and die they would at least know somebody in the after-life. Connecting to nature and the larger universe made some participants feel less lonely.

Here they felt that if they understood their place in the world, their connectedness to the cosmos, they felt less alone and more integrated in their lived world. This also related to finding a spiritual place in the world which was associated with a sense of purpose and meaning. Others felt that it took courage to stare loneliness in the face and to be in touch with oneself.

It also takes courage to live as spiritual beings but one can also get courage from one's spirituality. Other participants felt that they lost meaning and purpose in the face of loneliness. Our reflection on interpersonal relationships also lets us know that we exist both physically and spiritually. Some participants mentioned that they faced rejection from others in reaction to their spiritual questions and beliefs.

One participant made a clear distinction between being spiritual and being religious. It was stated that religion was for those who fear hell and spirituality was for those who had already been there. Here he differentiated between fear and experience in that those who had experienced hardship also developed sensitivity for spiritual aspects of life and those who feared retribution resorted to finding comfort in organized religion. Some participants pointed out that spiritual disappointment led them to make some personal decisions and life changes.

When viewing the experience of loneliness through the life-world existential of spirituality, it is striking that our sense of spiritual identity coupled with faith, hope and love in relating to the greater world or universe also impacts on our experience of loneliness. To engage in creative activities, thereby acting out our spiritual nature we create meaning in our existence. By relating to God or a higher power we can feel less lonely. Finding our place and spiritual connectedness to the world in which we live can also contribute to us feeling less lonely and more integrated in the lived world experience.

7.5. Trustworthiness

In reflecting back on the study it is of importance to give attention to the trustworthiness of the study, the constraints and strengths of the study as well as the implications for future research. Trustworthiness will be discussed under the following criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, authenticity, coherence, sampling adequacy, ethical validation, substantive validation and creativity (Hays & Singh 2012).

7.5.1. Credibility

The credibility of the study is supported by sensitivity to the context and a commitment to a rigorous data analysis process as well as a sound integration within an existential phenomenological framework.

7.5.2. Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which findings could be generalized to a population. In qualitative research generalizability is not the goal. Rather the goal is to provide detailed description of the experiences in given context as emerging through a specific research process. In this study the aim was to uncover the meanings of loneliness through rich descriptions by the participants. The transferability of the findings in this study is limited by the homogenous nature of the participants. All participants were Afrikaans speaking white males. Therefore the inferences made in this study may only apply to this specific group.

7.5.3. Dependability

Dependability refers to the consistency of study results over time and across researchers. The research was conducted in a rigorous way in that it aimed at in-depth interviews with a carefully selected and reasonably homogenous participant group. Throughout the selection process and the interviews the research question was kept in mind. The analysis was done thoroughly and systematically.

7.5.4. Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which findings of a study are genuine reflections of the participants investigated. This study employed bracketing as method of ensuring that the initial research findings were not contaminated by the researcher's own views and perceptions regarding loneliness.

7.5.5. Authenticity

Authenticity refers to the authentic representation of participants' perspectives. In chapter five direct quotes accompany the identified themes to illustrate the participants' perspective on the particular question asked. These quotes serve to make the reader aware of the verbatim expressions of the participants.

7.5.6. Coherence

Coherence involves the selection of an appropriate research tradition to the specific study. This study drew on phenomenology as a research tradition. The purpose of phenomenology is to discover and describe the meaning or essence of participants' lived experiences, or knowledge as it appears to consciousness. Phenomenology was the appropriate method for this study because the study aimed to uncover the meanings of the participants' experience of loneliness. Here intentionality, or being conscious of something, in this case loneliness, was a focus as well the lived world of the participants.

7.5.7. Sampling adequacy

Sampling adequacy refers to using the appropriate sampling size and composition based on the research question and the research tradition within which the research took place. Participants were purposefully selected to take part in the research. They were selected on the grounds of them being psychiatric patients as well as their ability to reflect on their experiences of loneliness. This purposive sampling was fitting for the present study because it ensures that rich and descriptive data can be collected from appropriate participants.

7.5.8. Ethical validation

Ethical validation refers to maintaining a sound ethical and moral stance throughout the research process. This study adhered to ethical rules and principles throughout the study. From the initial approval by the research ethics committee of the university to the confidential and professional way in which data were handled and reported on serves as ethical validation of the study.

7.5.9. Substantive validation

Substantive validation refers to the manner in which the research report shows that it has substance. The measure here is if it significantly contributes knowledge to the discipline or profession. This study undertook an in-depth investigation and thorough systematic interpretation of the participants' experience of loneliness. The study is situated within a consideration of its importance of the study of loneliness and its relevance to the fields of psychiatry and psychology (cf. chapter one). The study achieved its aim of providing an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of loneliness as

experienced by some psychiatric patients as understood through an existential phenomenological paradigm.

7.5.10. Saturation of data

The unique and in depth nature of the data collected pointed to the infinite depth of human experience and suggested that the experiences of loneliness may be unsaturable. Thus there seem to be always more, deeper and varied meanings emergings from the loneliness experience. Therefore there seems to be no point where one can say that all the available data are collected on the loneliness experience. This contrasts with the usual aim in qualitative research of reaching a saturation point when collecting data from a specific population.

7.5.11. Creativity

Creativity refers to implementing original methodological designs, as well as imaginative ways of organising, analysing and presenting data. Showing flexibility in the overall research process is also a sign of rigor. This study described existential phenomenological lenses in a synthesising way through which to view the experience of loneliness. It remained flexible in how data were organized and interpreted. The findings were presented in multiple ways illustrating both the unique and overlapping qualities of the findings.

7.6. Constraints and strengths of the study

Some constraints of this study are the gender and socio-cultural background of the participants, which limit the transferability of the findings. The findings of the present study are thus limited to experiences of male participants who are Afrikaans speaking. They are nonetheless expressive of the lives of the six Afrikaans speaking men to the extent that they were able to provide descriptions of their experience, as well as the extent to which I was able to engage in interpretive phenomenological analysis and writing up the findings.

Another constraint is that the experiential and existential description of experiences of loneliness is limited by the discursive medium or text through which it is expressed, and thus the degree of understanding of the experience is at issue (Altheide & Johnson 1994). Thus the participants' ability to express themselves as well as the researcher's ability to understand what the participants wanted to express could have limited the quality of the data gathered.

One strength of this study is coupled with the researcher's ability to understand and comprehend the language used by the participants to express themselves. This is, the researcher is also a white Afrikaans speaking male and therefore could understand expressions used by the participants in Afrikaans very well. Moreover, being a clinical psychologist by training, the researcher possesses developed skills in listening, eliciting personal responses, containing emotionally sensitive revelations, and for understanding, including understanding some of the unspoken interactions and emotions that are inevitable to these encounters.

7.7. Implications for practice and future research

The description and exploration of the essential themes and existential phenomenological quality of the experience of loneliness contribute to the existing understanding of the phenomenon of loneliness. It may also serve to inform the practice of psychotherapy, where loneliness as theme often features, on the richness and diversity of meanings of the experience of loneliness. It also illustrates the importance and inescapable aspects of lived experience in loneliness.

In knowing some of the possible meanings of the experience of loneliness, future researchers and practitioners can contribute to increasing our understanding of the phenomenon of loneliness as experienced by various people in various contexts.

The research contributes to the current state of knowledge and increases our understanding of the complex phenomenon of loneliness. It illustrates the multidimensional and intricate nature of the experience of loneliness. In addition this study illustrates the value of adopting an existential phenomenological view on human experience and the richness of the experience that emerges.

The study also illustrates the diverse nature of experience as well as that the data can be analysed from various view points, and that this process of uncovering and analysing data may never reach saturation.

It is also important to note the dynamic nature of loneliness and that loneliness is an ever changing experience that we may only hope to capture in the moment as it may look different in the next moment.

7.8. Final comments

The final word on human beings' experience of loneliness remains to be said. This research aimed to provide an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the meanings of loneliness as experienced by some psychiatric patients. Care was taken to allow participants to openly and freely express the meanings of their experience of loneliness. These meanings were discussed from an existential phenomenological perspective. The aim was not to confirm certain hypotheses but rather to illustrate the rich and rather infinite nature of meanings as they relate to the experience of loneliness. These aims were achieved by this study.

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Appendix A

Information leaflet and informed consent for non-clinical research

Title of study: Meanings of loneliness: The subjective experience of psychiatric patients.

Dear Participant

1. Introduction

I would hereby like to invite you to participate in a research study. This information leaflet will help you to decide if you want to participate. Before you agree to take part you should fully understand what is involved. If you have any questions that this leaflet does not fully explain, please do not hesitate to ask the investigator.

2. The nature and purpose of this study

This study aims to contribute to our understanding of the phenomenon of loneliness as experienced by some psychiatric patients and the meanings they attached to it. You as a participant are a very important source of information on how patients experience loneliness.

3. Explanation of procedures to be followed

This study involves the interviewing of participants on their experience of loneliness. I will ask you some questions about your experience of loneliness. You are encouraged to respond to the questions openly and honestly. The aim is to get to a rich understanding of your experience of loneliness and the meanings you attach to it. Therefore you can be as thorough and descriptive in answering the questions as possible. Due to the nature of the study two separate interviews will be held. These interviews will be digitally recorded and transcribed to be analysed later. You may be asked to review the transcribed interview to see if you agree with the information gathered or feel that you want to add to it. After you have agreed to take part in the study we will arrange dates for the interviews.

4. Risk and discomfort involved

Some of the processes may cause some discomfort or take some of your time. The questions we are going to ask will address sensitive issues concerning your experience of loneliness, it may make you feel uncomfortable or evoke emotions, but you need not answer them if you don't want to. The first interview will take about 60 to 120 min of your time. The follow up interview will take about 60 to 90 min.

5. Possible benefits of this study

Although you will not benefit directly from the study, the results of the study will enable us to gain a better understanding of how patients experience loneliness.

You may benefit by the study by gaining more insight into your own experience of loneliness and the meanings you attach to that experience. At the end of the study the findings will be communicated to all participants.

6. Your rights as a participant

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You can refuse to participate or stop at any time during the study or interview without giving any reason. Your withdrawal will not disadvantage you in any way.

7. Ethical approval of the study

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Pretoria and a copy of the approval letter is available if you wish to have one.

8. Information and contact person

The contact person for the study is Kobus Coetsee. If you have any questions about the study please contact him on his cell number 084 552 0562. You can also email him at Kobus.Coetsee@up.ac.za

9. Compensation

Your participation is voluntary. There will be no compensation.

10. Confidentiality

All information that you give will be kept strictly confidential. Once we have analysed the information no one will be able to identify you. Research reports and articles in scientific journals will not include any information that may identify you or the hospital.

Please make sure that you have read and understand the information in this document before signing the consent to participate in the research below.

Consent to participate in this study

I confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this study has told me about the nature, process, risks, discomforts and benefits of the study. I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Information Leaflet and Informed Consent) regarding the study. I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details, will be anonymously processed into research reports. I am participating willingly. I have had time to ask questions and have no objection to participate in the study. I understand that there is no penalty should I wish to discontinue with the study and my withdrawal will not affect any treatment and/or access to health care in future.

I have received a signed copy of this informed consent agreement.

Participant's name (Please print)

Participant's signature: Date.....

Investigator's name: Kobus Coetzee

Investigator's signature Date.....

Witness's Name (Please print)

Witness's signature Date.....

Appendix B

The open ended in depth interview

The following sets out the initial interview question as well as the questions that flowed forth from the initial interview. Apart from the first question these questions were not predetermined but developed from the open ended interview.

1. Introduction

First of all I would like to thank you for your willingness to participate in this research project. As I mentioned before the topic I am researching is the experience of loneliness. What I am interested in is to understand something of your experience of loneliness. It seems that most of us have experienced loneliness in one way, or another at some stage in our life. I am particularly interested in understanding your experience of loneliness and what the experience of loneliness is like to you.

2. The Interview

I would like to start our conversation of with the question:

Can you describe what the experience of loneliness is like for you?

After the initial question some exploratory follow up questions were asked aimed at gaining a rich in depth understanding of the participants experience of loneliness. The following questions emerged from the various interviews as they developed. These questions were not predetermined but were used as the interviews developed to gain a deeper understanding of the participant's experience of loneliness.

Q: What does loneliness mean to you?

Q: What does being alone feel like?

Q: Is there a difference for you in being alone and feeling lonely?

Q: How do you make sense of your experience of loneliness?

Q: What does being alone feel like?

Q: When you dream, does loneliness feature in your dreams.

Q: Do you ever feel distant, estranged or lonely in relation to yourself?

Q: When you fantasize, do you ever fantasize about loneliness.

Q: Which feelings usually follow from you feeling lonely?

Q: Do you see a difference between being alone and feeling alone (or lonely)?

Q: What does loneliness mean to you?

- Q: Is loneliness something you experience as bad? If so, what makes it to be bad?*
- Q: Did you have positive experiences related to loneliness?*
- Q: What do you do when you feel lonely?*
- Q: Where does loneliness feature in your future? How do you understand loneliness in your future?*
- Q: What do you do when you feel lonely?*
- Q: Do you ever What is it like to experience being alone lonely in your closer interpersonal relationships?*
- Q: Have you experienced being lonely in relationships with people who are not really close? How come so? If so, what is that like?*
- Q: When you feel lonely, what do you really want from people close to you (and others)?*
- Q: When you feel lonely, what do you really long for or miss from people close to you (and others)?*
- Q: Has a significant relationship ever alleviated your experience of loneliness?*
- Q: Why do you think people experience loneliness?*
- Q: Do you think that everybody feel lonely?*
- Q: When do you experience loneliness?*
- Q: How often do you feel lonely?*
- Q: How would you describe your experience of loneliness?*
- Q: Do you sometimes have a positive experience of loneliness?*
- Q: How would you describe your positive experience of loneliness?*
- Q: Have loneliness caused you despair?*
- Q: How has loneliness caused you despair?*
- Q: Do you know other lonely people?*
- Q: Have you talked about your experience of loneliness to anybody?*
- Q: With whom did you talk about your experience of loneliness?*
- Q: Do you feel less lonely if you talk about your experience of loneliness?*

Q: What will make you feel less lonely?

Q: Do you believe that loneliness plays a role has something to do with in your psychiatric condition?

Q: What role does loneliness play in your psychiatric condition?

Q: What have you done to cope with your loneliness?

Q: Has what you've answered in question 16 helped you to feel less lonely?

Q: How has what you've done to cope with loneliness helped you?

Q: Why do you feel people feel lonely?

Q: What do you think people can do to feel less lonely?

Q: Do you think that there would be a time in the future that you will feel less lonely?

Q: In which contexts/ situations do you feel lonely/ more lonely?

Q: I wonder how your body fits in when you feel lonely.

Q: How does your body feel when feeling lonely?

Q: Do you do things with your body when you feel lonely? If so, what do you do and how does it feel?

Q: Are there places you connect with you feeling lonely?

Q: Are there places you go when feeling lonely?

Q: How do you experience the places in which you feel lonely? What is the place like for you then?

Q: Are their specific times that you connect with feeling lonely?

Q: How do experience time, what is it like, when you feel lonely?

Q: Are there things you see in your environment which you connect with feeling lonely?

Q: What do things in your environment feel like when you feel lonely?

Q: Which things in your environment make you feel more lonely?

Q: Which things in your environment make you feel less lonely?

Guided reflection questions

The following were the researchers reflective questions asked after all the interviews were completed in order to facilitate guided reflection on the data.

What are the essential meanings of loneliness?

What is the experience of loneliness about?

What is the significance of loneliness in human life?

How is loneliness experienced as it manifests in the eigenwelt?

How is loneliness experienced as it manifests in the mitwelt?

How is loneliness experienced as it manifests in the umwelt?

How is loneliness an embodied experience?

How is loneliness experienced in relation to being alone and not being alone?

Which experiences underpin/substantiate loneliness and how do they relate to loneliness (expectations; needs; desires; understanding; interpersonal reciprocity; etc.)

Which are the spacial and temporal qualities of experienced loneliness?

How does the experience of loneliness unfold?

Appendix C

Letter from Faculty of Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee, University of Pretoria

Letter of Approval from Chief Executive Officers at Weskoppies Psychiatric Hospital

Appendix D: List of Figures

Figure 1: Experiences of loneliness

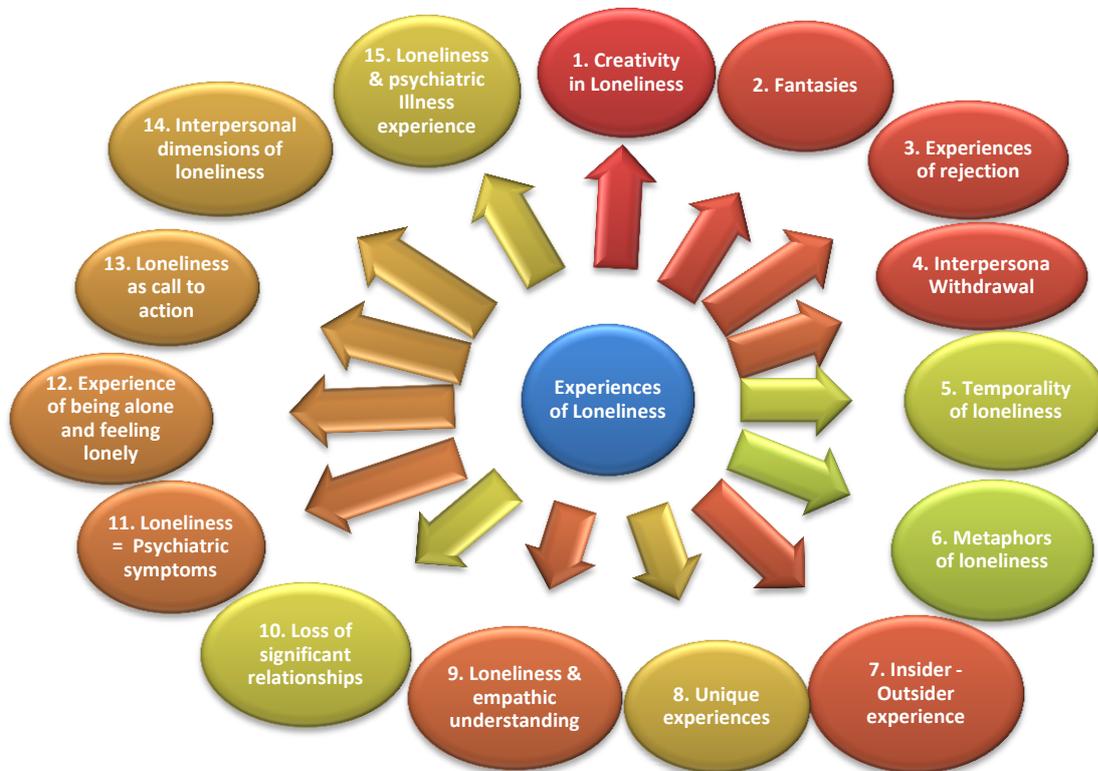


Figure 2: Meanings of loneliness in the life-world existentials

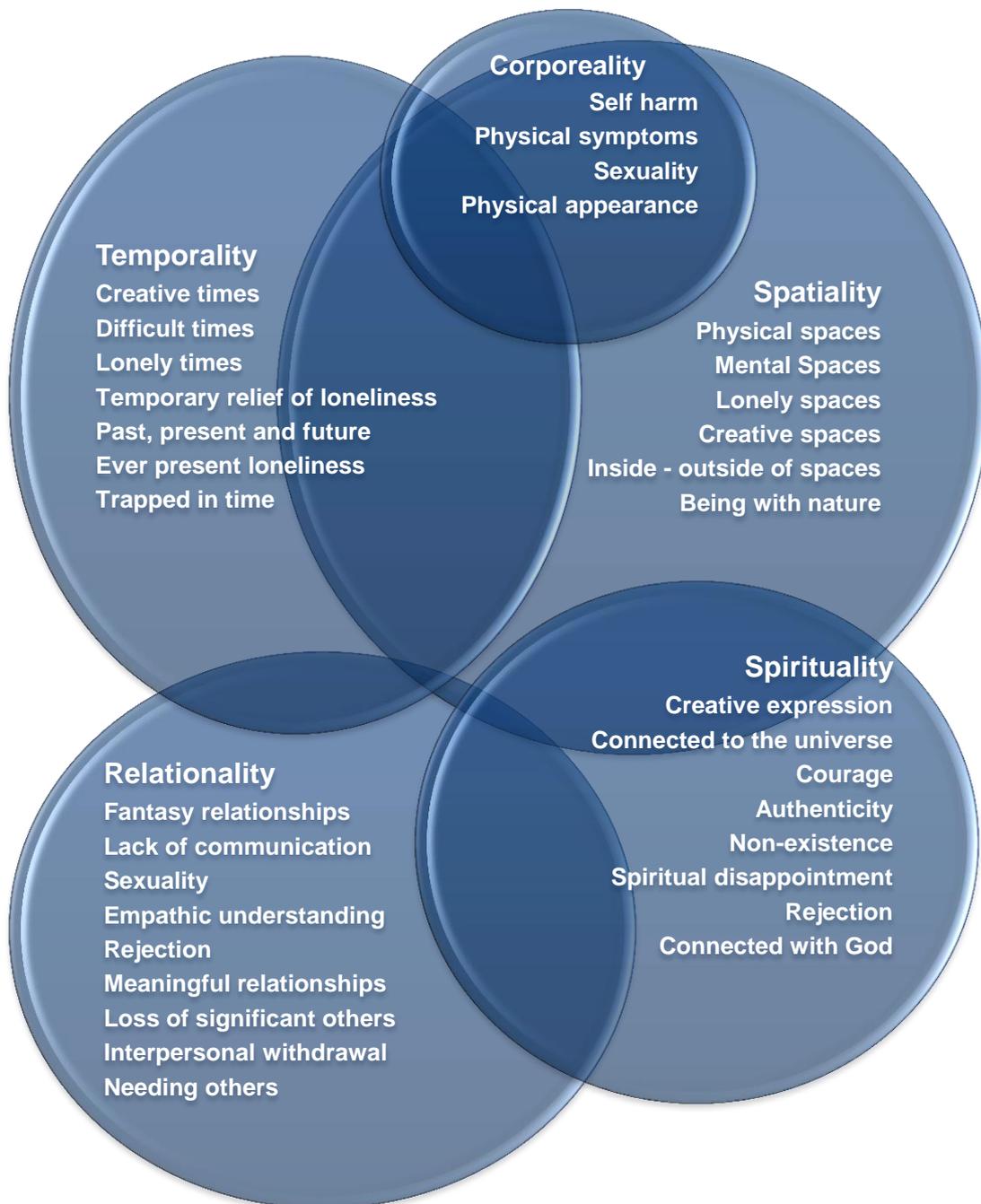


Figure 3: Meanings of loneliness in the dimensions of existence

