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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

LONELINESS: THEORIES, MODELS AND EXPERIENCES

BY

MARK DAVIES

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

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Abstract

Research on loneliness began in earnest in the 1970's. Most of the research on has been to explore the antecedents of it, or its consequences. Little work has been done that directly ties loneliness research to current loneliness theory, how loneliness is experienced phenomenologically, and the relationship loneliness and solitude have with each other. The three stand-alone articles in this dissertation intentionally investigated these three aspects of loneliness. The first article details a qualitative study that investigated whether or not there is evidence that supports (i)Weiss's (1973) social deficit theory; (ii) Peplau and Perlman's (1982) cognitive theory of loneliness; (iii) an existential understanding of loneliness that has to do with loneliness being a function of self-estrangement. Self-concept was the variable that these theories of loneliness were explored on. The second article is a hermeneutic phenomenological investigation that examines the nature of the lived experience of loneliness. The premise of this study was that individuals' experiences are important, and provide a rich source of understanding what loneliness is. From the themes that emerged from this study, implications for counselors in helping client's overcome loneliness were made. The final article explores the relationship between loneliness (both social and existential), aloneness, and solitude. This article proposes a new model of loneliness that specifically incorporates solitude as a legitimate helpful response to loneliness. This model broadens the current theoretical understanding to include, not just relationships with others, but relationship with self and God as possible sources of loneliness. The concluding chapter summarizes the findings of the previous three chapters. Recommendations for future research in loneliness are suggested.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction to the Research Topic

Most, if not everyone, has had the experience of feeling lonely at one time or another. Yet only recently has the psychological community begun to study the phenomenon of loneliness. The psychological community's reticence in investigating the phenomenon of loneliness is somewhat surprising considering how widespread it is, and how devastating the consequences are. Researchers have almost universally accepted the destructive side of loneliness. Loneliness has been linked to depression (Weeks, Michela, Peplau and Bragg, 1980), substance abuse (Sadava and Thompson 1987), crime (Rokach, 1990) mental illness, and suicide (Fromm-Reichmann, 1959). However loneliness does not have to take these extreme forms in order to be destructive. Almost everyone has known first hand the anxiety, dread and fear that is associated with being lonely. Fisher & Phillips (1982) found evidence that vast numbers of individuals live in isolation and experience chronic loneliness and its painful realities on a daily basis.

There are many compelling reasons why loneliness is an important phenomenon to be studied. Peplau and Perlman (1982) suggest that loneliness should be studied because: (a) it is interesting; (b) it is widespread; (c) it is unpleasant and even life threatening; (d) it is an indicator of our social institutions; (e) it may provide new insights about intimacy and friendship; (f) it is gaining momentum within the social sciences. They identified three main issues that are crucial to loneliness research: (a) what is the nature of loneliness? (is it a natural or unnatural state); (b) what are the causes of loneliness? (do they reside in the person or in the environment?); (c) what evidence is there for the theories of loneliness?

The Nature of Loneliness

One of the most cited articles on loneliness is that of Fromm-Reichmann's (1959). Based on her clinical observations the author believed that loneliness was one of the least

satisfactorily conceptualized psychological phenomena. Fromm-Reichmann believed that in most cases poets, patients, and philosophers have a better grasp of the phenomenon of loneliness than do psychologists. Her essential understanding of loneliness was based on the idea that "the longing for interpersonal intimacy stays with every human being from infancy throughout life; and there is no human being who is not threatened by its loss" (p. 307). She believed that why some people fear loneliness more than others had to do with the individual's dependence on others for their self-orientation.

Mendelson (1990) believed that loneliness may be seen as the fear of being alone without the love and approval of significant others. In his examination of the relationship that loneliness and solitude have with each other he noted that connection and solitude are part of being human, each offering its pleasures and pains. In his discussion of Fromm-Reichmann's article, Mendelson suggested that loneliness may stem from both character and circumstance, and some loneliness, rather than be remedied, may have to be endured. Mijuskovic (1977) believed loneliness to be a psychological drive that is always present and intrinsic to our human nature and suggested that only by confronting the real state of our existence in solitude can we transcend it. Mijuskovic made the distinction between existential loneliness and psychological loneliness. Psychological loneliness is experienced occasionally when we become aware of the true nature of our existential state, which is that we are always alone. Szalita (1988) suggested that "loneliness is the price we pay for being human" (p. 234).

Rolheiser (1979) also believed that loneliness is part of our existence. He noted that loneliness has lead to great creativity, as well as to drug and alcohol abuse: to encounter ourselves/others/God in new and profound ways, as well as to lead us into depression and destructive patterns of sexuality. He did not believe that there is any one monolithic description of loneliness and wrote,

> there are different types of loneliness, stemming from different causes, having different meanings, and requiring different solutions....there can be no simple definition of loneliness (p.65).

Rolheiser believed that we are lonely for many things: communication, unity, understanding, God, others and ourselves. He described several types of loneliness: Alienation-loneliness which occurs when we cannot love or understand others or be loved and understood ourselves and we feel alienated or estranged from others; Restlessness-loneliness, which is a constant dissatisfaction and restlessness within us that perpetually keeps us frustrated and in a state of unrest; Fantasy-loneliness, caused by failure to be completely in contact with reality as it is in itself; Rootlessness-loneliness, which occurs when we feel that we have no roots. He suggested that different strategies be employed to cope with the different types of loneliness he has categorized.

Rokach (1988) developed a 3-level model of the experience of loneliness based on the content analysis of verbatim reports of loneliness accounts provided by 516 subjects. Subjects were instructed to write accounts of their thoughts, feelings, and coping strategies during their loneliest experience. In the model developed, 10 factors were subsumed under 4 major categories: self-alienation, interpersonal isolation, distressed reactions, and agony.

Rubenstein and Shaver (1982) ran a study in six major newspapers asking 84 questions with three multiple choice items to select from. The responses were concerned with: (1) How loneliness feels; (2) What is the reason or causes of loneliness?; (3) What is your reaction to loneliness? Using a sample of 3,500 returned questionnaires they found: 60% were sad; 60% were depressed; 55% were bored; 50% felt self pity; 56% longed to be with one special person. A factor analysis of feelings when lonely revealed (in order): desperation; depression; impatient boredom; self-deprecation. As well, factor analysis of why people reported being lonely revealed (in order): being unattached; alienation; being alone; forced isolation; dislocation. The most common response to the question of what loneliness feels like was "a hole or space in my chest". It is interesting to note that the "hole" was experienced within the individual and not in their external, social world. Apparently, when lonely, what is missing is not necessarily to be found in the

external world of social relations, but may have to do more with one's internal world and one's relatedness to self.

France, McDowell and Knowles (1984) suggested that there are 5 dimensions of loneliness--interpersonal, cultural, cosmic, social, and psychological. They theorized that fear and anxiety, alienation, isolation, hopelessness, and/or emptiness can constitute the essential core of these dimensions. They equated loneliness with emptiness which includes: feelings that no one is there; hopelessness, which arises out of the fact that no matter how may friends are around, the individual still feels lonely and alienated; and isolation/loneliness, which has to do with social acceptance. They believed that it is important that everyone explore themselves and their loneliness.

In reviewing the literature it is fair to state that there is no one agreed upon conception of loneliness by researchers. In an overview article Peplau and Perlman (1982) classified eight different categories by which loneliness is understood:

1) psychodynamic models (Fromm-Reichmann, 1959): which understand loneliness as pathological and attribute it to early influences and focus on factors within the individual.

2) phenomenological perspective (Sadler, 1978): which understands loneliness as stemming from poor adjustment and being untrue to ones true self.

3) existential approach (Moustakas, 1961): that accepts loneliness as a fact of life: we are alone and we need to learn to accept that fact and overcome it. The existentialists often have a positive view of loneliness.

4) sociological explanation (Fromm, 1951): loneliness lies outside the individual and is largely due to social forces.

5) interactionist view (Weiss, 1973): where factors in person and environment interact to cause loneliness. Loneliness is seen as normal and perhaps even instinctual.

6) cognitive approach (Perlman and Peplau, 1982): based on attributional theory where loneliness has to do with perception. Loneliness occurs when there is a discrepancy between what a person expects and what they have in the way of social satisfaction.

7) privacy approach: which has to do with the quality rather than the quantity of relationships an individual enjoys.

8) general systems theory (Flanders, 1982): which takes a systemic approach in looking at the various elements. This is a composite approach in looking at how various elements contribute to loneliness.

While most believe that loneliness is multidimensional in nature, the vast majority of loneliness research has been done using the UCLA Loneliness Scale, which is a unidimensional measure of loneliness. There is often a large gap between the theories of loneliness and how it is actually researched. As will be seen in the next section, even the major theories of loneliness have been helpful in remedying this problem.

Theories of Loneliness

While there have been many interpretations and theories regarding the cause and nature of loneliness (Peplau and Perlman, 1982) Paloutzian and Janigian (1987) have classified, in order of influence, the three main theoretical approaches to loneliness: (a) the social-emotional typology pioneered by Weiss (1973); (b) the cognitive model as suggested by Perlman and Peplau (1982); (c) loneliness as a fundamentally existential phenomenon, as suggested by Moustakas (1961). A review of the literature by myself suggests that, indeed these are the three dominant theories in loneliness research.

Weiss' (1973) conception of loneliness has been the dominant theory under which the majority of research has been carried out. The model of loneliness suggested by Weiss views loneliness predominantly in terms of disruptions of the social or emotional attachment system. The genesis of this theory was found in Bowlby's (1973) attachment theory, which Weiss applied to loneliness. Weiss encapsulated his basic understanding of loneliness when he wrote:

> I realized that the loneliness whose nature had been puzzling me was exactly the state that Bowlby was describing, except that it occurred within adults and that it had no particular lost figure on whom to focus. Loneliness, as I put it later, was separation distress without an object (1987, p.4).

Weiss (1973) theorized that loneliness was the response to the absence of some particular type of relationship. He believed that loneliness originated from six types of deficits: attachments (relationships in which a person receives a sense of safety and security); social integration (having a network of relationships); opportunity for nurture (where one feels responsible for the well being of another); reassurance of worth (relationships where one's skills and abilities are noted); reliable alliance (one can count on assistance from another); guidance (where one receives advice). Weiss believed that there are two distinct types of loneliness: emotional loneliness and social loneliness. He identified the absence of an attachment figure, which resulted in a sense of utter aloneness as well as over sensitivity and restless anxiety, as emotional isolation. The absence of an accessible social network, which gives rise to feelings of meaninglessness and marginality as well as aimlessness and boredom Weiss identified as social isolation. The influence of Weiss on the field of loneliness research has been great and the vast majority of the research has been done based on the assumption that loneliness is a problem of social deficits.

Another major school of loneliness theory is the one promoted by Perlman and Peplau (1982). They also approach loneliness from a social deficit point of view. However, theirs' is a cognitive approach. They believed loneliness is the result of a discrepancy between the expectations and the felt experience one has concerning one's relationships with others. Loneliness is seen as the result of an internal event within the individual. The cognitive approach emphasizes the perception and evaluation of social relations and deficits. Cognitive processes, especially attributions, have a moderating influence on the loneliness experiences. Peplau and Perlman believed that two classes of causes can be identified; (i) the events or changes that precipitate the loneliness; (ii) the internal factors that may predispose one to be lonely. They see loneliness as the result of

a combination of changes in the person's actual social relations and changes in a person's social needs or desires. Cognitive processes color the experience of loneliness, shaping our feelings and guiding our actions. People use affective, behavioral, and cognitive clues to arrive at the conclusion that they are lonely. Cognitive discrepancy has to do with loneliness being a function of not getting what we expect in terms of social relationships. Peplau, Miceli and Morasch, (1982) believed that subjective standards for relationships are derived by: (a) past experience that we draw on for our expectations; (b) social comparison, which often can be unrealistic. Personal standards for relationships are not fixed but change over time and Peplau, Miceli and Morasch believed lonely people would do well to examine their own standards for relationships. They identified that an important issue for lonely people is the question of self blame: "is it my fault?"

A third, and very different approach to loneliness, is the existential approach. While the overwhelming majority of researchers have focused on loneliness primarily as a social deficit problem, other psychologists have theorized other kinds of loneliness than those of a social origin. Proponents of the existential approach view loneliness not as a loss of social contacts per se, but as a loss of meaning and self identity. Moustakas's (1961) existential understanding of loneliness has found wide acceptance by the psychological community. Moustakas has suggested that loneliness stems from the existential awareness that we are in fact alone in life. The proper response to this awareness is to accept our condition, and in accepting it, transcend our loneliness (Moustakas, 1961; Storr, 1988). Others (e.g. Mendelson, 1990; Stuewe-Portnoff, 1988) have suggested that loneliness is the result of existential crisis. The more one lacks meaning or purpose in one's life, the more alienated that one feels with one's self or with others, the more loneliness one will experience. The concept of existential loneliness has not been well defined and there has been little research done regarding this construct. However, some research has provided evidence that would support an understanding of loneliness in terms other than being a social deficit. In a study of loneliness among

university students it was found that those student who were identified as being lonely nevertheless reported an abundance of social contacts (Jones, Freemon, and Goswick, 1981; Williams and Solano, 1983). These researchers concluded that what was lacking was not a quantity of relationships, but an interpersonal quality. Another viable explanation to these findings may be that the loneliness these subjects were experiencing was existentia' nature. It was the result, not so much as estrangement from others, as estrangement from self. Qualitative studies have identified existential loneliness as a real phenomenon as reported by their subjects (Rokach, 1988; Stuewe-Portnoff, 1988). Yalom (1980) has surveyed the literature and based on his own work with clients identified existential loneliness as a real problem that has therapeutic implications for counseling. Rokach (1988), based on the results of her survey of 526 subjects, broke loneliness down into the two broad categories of self-alienation and interpersonal alienation.

Overall, little research has been done that directly ties into theory. Despite the theoretical influence Weiss has had, very few studies have directly investigated his social/emotional typology (e.g. Bell & Gonzalez, 1988; de Jong-Gierveld & Raadschelders, 1982; Hojat, 1982). The Emotional/Social Loneliness Indicator (ESLI) (Vincenzi & Grabosky, 1987) is the only loneliness measurement instrument that was created based on Weiss's theories and its use has been limited. Existential loneliness has not been well defined and there has been little direct investigation of this phenomenon. Most of the evidence supporting this conception of loneliness has been indirect. Booth (1983) noted that in contrast to some of the other theories concerning loneliness, the cognitive emotional approach has had a substantial amount of research done on it. However, even this research has been somewhat narrow in scope and most of it has fallen under the rubic of self-attribution. Overall, there has been little effort to directly tie loneliness research to theories concerning loneliness.

A Review of Loneliness Research

The majority of loneliness research has focused on the antecedents and consequences of loneliness. The research can be divided into two broad classes of causal antecedents: individual factors such as characteristics and traits of the person; and social factors which take into account the individual's social circumstances (Krause, et al., 1993). Some of the more prominent features of the social environment that have been linked to loneliness have been infrequent social contacts (Cutrona, 1982; Damsteegt, 1992), and few close friends (Russell et al., 1980). However, Anderssen (1986) believed that a major problem associated with loneliness research was that it was often based on the over-simplistic measure of how many social contacts one has. Fisher and Phillips (1982) found that the quality of social contact was more important than the quantity. Wintrob (1987) noted that her subjects reported a high incidence of social contact, and a great deal of sharing of intimate details. However this sharing of intimate details often was done in a "sales like" fashion which she called pseudo intimacy that lead to shallow, unsatisfying relationships, which resulted in loneliness. Other studies have confirmed that the quality of relationships an individual enjoys with others is more important than the quantity of relationships he/she has (Jones, Freemon & Goswick, 1981; Samter, 1992).

Revenson and Johnson (1984) analyzed survey data from newspaper questionnaires circulated in 3 North American cities to examine the prevalence of loneliness across the life span and some of its correlates in late life. The sample consisted of 2,026 adults (aged 18-89 years). The results indicated that loneliness decreased across the adult life span, with adolescent subjects reporting the highest incidence of loneliness and those aged 65 years and older reporting the least amount of loneliness. Elders were also more satisfied with their social relationships than younger subjects. However, availability and amount of social contact was negatively related to loneliness for all age groups. Their findings are consistent with other demographic studies (e.g. Hansson et al, 1987; Lopata, 1973; Schmitt and Kurdek, 1985). De Jong-Gierveld (1987) found that

living arrangements (i.e. whether or not the subject was living with another, and what relationship they were in with the other) was the most important predictor of loneliness. With regards to gender differences the findings have been inconsistent. Upmanyu, Upmanyu, and Dhingra (1992) found that males were more lonely, while Borys and Perlman (1985) found females to admit to loneliness more readily than males. Borys and Perlman qualify all loneliness research by suggesting the outcome of the research is dependent on the instruments and methodology that is being used to measure loneliness, as well as the sample population.

In contrast to studying social factors that contribute to loneliness there has also been a great deal of research done on the personality traits or characteristics of the lonely individual. Low self-esteem has been consistently associated with loneliness (Jones, 1982; Kalliopuska & Laitinen, 1991; Hojat, 1982). Lonely individuals tend to be shy, think poorly of themselves, expect rejection from others, fail to capitalize on interpersonal opportunities, and are lacking in communication skills (Goswick & Jones, 1981; Samter, 1992). Horowitz, French and Anderson (1982) proposed a prototypical lonely person based on the literature. The more characteristics that an individual had of this prototype, the more likely they were to be lonely. The characteristics were: (a) feels separated isolated from others, not part of the group; (b) feels alienated from others, "I'm different"; (c) feels unloved and uncared for, "others don't like me"; (d) wants a friend, "I don't know how to make friends"; (e) feels inferior, worthless, inadequate, "something is wrong with me"; (f) feels paranoid, angry, depressed, sad, unhappy; (g) avoids social contact, isolates self; is quiet reserved and introspective. This study also showed that lonely people are less able to think of ways of solving the problems posed by interpersonal situations, and in this sense they are less competent. In their review of the research Paterson, Blashko and Janzen (1991) concluded that loneliness has many sources: personality characteristics, interpersonal skills, styles of thinking, situation and experiences, developmental life changes, handicaps, and mental illness. They note that

while prototype notions are useful, "not all categories apply to everyone and no one property is sufficient to be labeled lonely" (p. 259).

In an overview article on the effects of loneliness West, Kellner and Moore (1986) found: (1) loneliness was a problem for a significant portion of the population; (2) in general, adolescents and young adults reported more loneliness than older adults; (3) in most studies women reported more loneliness than men, and unmarried individuals were more lonely than married individuals. However, unmarried older men, (widowed, divorced or never married) reported more loneliness than unmarried older women; (4) there was inadequate data regarding socioeconomic or cultural factors and loneliness to warrant any conclusions; (5) though it is believed to occur in many psychiatric patients, there were no studies relating loneliness to psychiatric disorders; (6) although loneliness is a separate construct from either depression or bereavement, it may contribute to, or be a consequence of, or overlap with both; (7) the relationship between loneliness and alcoholism suggested a relationship between the two, but remains inconclusive because of a lack of controlled studies; (8) loneliness appeared to be one of the factors helpful in distinguishing parents who abuse or neglect their children from those who do not; (9) there was data which suggested that loneliness had an adverse effect on physical health.

Critique of the Current State of Loneliness Research

While the amount of research being done in the field of loneliness has grown steadily there still is a general disagreement about the concept of loneliness itself. Sadler (1978) identified four stages of loneliness: (a) causal stage, (b) the experience itself, (c) consequences, (d) attempts to cope. For the most part, researchers have explored the correlates of personality and environmental factors linked with loneliness, as well as the results of loneliness. In trying to describe what loneliness is, often it is identified with other psychological phenomenon such as depression or anxiety. While a number of different types and causes of loneliness have been theoretically identified, the vast majority of research has reduced the complex phenomenon of loneliness to being merely

a social deficit problem. With regards to conceptualizing loneliness as merely a deficiency in one's social relationship, Zakahi and Duran observed,

> such conceptual definitions are, of course necessary. They help delimit the area of study as well as drawing attention to what should be examined. Unfortunately, such definitions may tend to decrease the emotional importance of loneliness by abstracting the problem (1985, p.203).

Andersson (1986) de Jong-Gierveld and Raadschelders (1982) Rokach (1988, 1990) have suggested that loneliness is a complex phenomenon composed of various dimensions including meaninglessness, interpersonal alienation, existential loneliness, positive loneliness and self-alienation. Despite these suggestions the field of loneliness research has been dominated by the use of the UCLA loneliness scale (Russell, Peplau & Ferguson, 1978; Russell, Peplau & Cutrona, 1980). The UCLA loneliness scale is a unidimensional measure of loneliness that essentially measures a core of interpersonal friendship. In their review of the literature and their research on psychometric properties of the UCLA Oshagan and Allen note,

> Generally, no single conceptualization of what constitutes loneliness is shared by scholars in this area. Although Weiss's (1973) explication of loneliness is most often agreed to, it has nonetheless, failed to generate measurement tools until recently, and so its empirical influence on research has arguably been slight. The strongest influence on the field has come from the UCLA Loneliness Scale, which, despite the lack of a precise conceptual definition of loneliness, has been accepted as the scale for measuring loneliness.. This is due primarily to its empirical qualities of short length, high reliability, unidimentionality, face and discriminant validity, and timeliness (1992, p. 383).

The problem with such an over reliance on the UCLA Loneliness scale in research is that it in fact becomes the working definition of what loneliness is. Jones (1987) believed that the field of loneliness research lacked a sufficient theoretical understanding of loneliness. Several researchers have written on some of the limitations and flaws in current loneliness research (Oshagan & Allen, 1992; Perlman, 1987; Weiss, 1987; Wood, 1987). Others have noted that research methodology in loneliness is somewhat narrow and is not really getting at the problem (de Jong-Gierveld, 1989; Rokach 1990; Stokes, 1987). With the exception of the cognitive understanding to loneliness, little research has been done that is directly tied to theory. Researchers have also noted that the very

personal and subjective nature of loneliness makes it a difficult construct to define precisely (Rokach, 1988; Sadler, 1978).

Another shortcoming in the field of loneliness research has been in the area of psychological intervention. McWhirter (1990) identified three main approaches psychologists take in dealing with loneliness: (i) social skills training; (ii) cognitive behavioral strategies; (iii) and small group therapy. However he believed that in designing interventions, psychologists often ignore the different types and experiences of loneliness. In his review of the literature McWhirter found that generally therapies have not been matched to the type of loneliness an individual may be experiencing. He suggests that the treatment for someone suffering from interpersonal loneliness may be different than the treatment for someone suffering from cultural loneliness. He also is critical of the fact that little research has been done in the effectiveness of a group approach versus an individual approach to loneliness intervention. Generally, little has been written on counseling the lonely, or preventative interventions that could be implemented by the public education system

Thesis Outline

The Problems

In summary the shortcomings of loneliness research are as follows:

1) There is no one agreed-upon conception of loneliness. The result is a confusion about the nature of loneliness. When a researcher uses the term loneliness he/she may have a very different conception of the phenomenon than his/her collegues.

2) The majority of the current research is not directly tied to theory.

3) The theories of loneliness, as well as the research of loneliness have not been tied directly to the actual experience of loneliness.

4) There is an inadequate distinction between aloneness, loneliness and solitude (see Gotesky, 1965) in the literature. While a number of writers have noted that one can

be lonely in a crowd, little attention has been paid to the relationship that loneliness, aloneness and solitude have with each other.

5) While there has been a great deal of theoretical writing on existential loneliness there has been little research done in this area. Such questions as "Is existential loneliness a real phenomenon?" and "What is the difference between existential loneliness and other forms of loneliness?" have not been explored adequately.

6) Little effort has been made to connect loneliness research to possible interventions.

I have consciously attempted to allow these deficiencies in the loneliness literature to guide my own research. The three stand alone articles in this thesis each investigate important areas of loneliness research. The first article explores current existing theories of loneliness; the second article investigates the meanings of loneliness for both the client and the therapist; and the third article attempts to integrate loneliness and solitude.

Article #1:

A Quantitative Investigation of Loneliness Theories

In a summary statement concerning the findings of loneliness research, Jones (1982) noted, "One of the most frequent and consistent correlations of loneliness has been poor self-esteem" (p.238). Perhaps the most widely recognized and used instrument to measure self-concept (and overall esteem) is the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS) developed by Fitts (1965). This instrument is a multidimensional measure of self-concept and overall self-esteem. The TSCS has been used in correlational studies of loneliness (Goswick and Jones, 1981; Kalliopuska and Laitinen, 1991) and been correlated with the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell, Peplau and Cutrona, 1980) which is a unidimensional measure of loneliness. This study used the TSCS with a multidimensional measure of loneliness, the Emotional/Social Loneliness Inventory (ESLI) developed by Vincenzi and Grabosky (1987). The ESLI is specifically based on Weiss's theories concerning social

loneliness and emotional loneliness. There is evidence that suggests that this scale does differentiate between social and emotional loneliness (Oshagan & Allen, 1992; Vincenzi and Grabosky, 1987). It was reasonable to hypothesize that if there are different types of loneliness, then different correlational patterns of self-concept for each type should emerge. As well the ESLI purports to differentiate between an objective measure of loneliness and the subjective experience of loneliness. This differentiation is directly related to exploring Peplau and Perlman's (1982) theories concerning the importance that cognitive mediators play in the experience of loneliness. Clearly if there is a difference between the way a subject experiences a subjective loneliness and objective loneliness, then cognitive mediation must play a role in deciding the difference.

To investigate this a sample of university students (N=87) were administered the ESLI, the TSCS. From the results, the subscales of the TSCS were correlated with the subscales of the ESLI in an effort to see if there were any appreciable differences in the patterns of self-concept issues as they relate to: i) social versus emotional aspects of loneliness; ii) objective versus subjective aspects of loneliness. This study further investigated whether or not there was any evidence to support an existential type of loneliness. It has been suggested that those who experience existential loneliness may be those who are self-alienated, or self-estranged (Moustakas, 1961; Yalom, 1980). Using a combination of the TSCS and the ESLI as well as a self-created scale that purports to measure self-estrangement (the Experience of Life Questionnaire), existential loneliness was investigated by correlating the scores of the ESLI, TSCS and the Experience of Life Questionnaire to see: i) how the scores of self-estrangement were related to self-concept; ii) how the scores of self-estrangement were related to the various types of loneliness as reflected by the ESLI. It was hypothesized that self-estrangement would be positively related to the loneliness the subject reported experiencing.

Conceptually this study investigated the three main theoretical approaches to loneliness: Weiss' social emotional typology; Perlman and Peplau's cognitive

understanding of loneliness; and Moustakas' understanding of loneliness as an existential problem. The study made no presumption to answer in a definitive way the complex questions surrounding loneliness. However it was hoped that this study would provide evidence that would either support or refute the idea of different types of loneliness and the corresponding theories that underlie them.

Article #2:

A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Investigation of Loneliness:

One general criticism is that there is a lack of in depth research done on loneliness. Weiss (1987), a premier researcher in the field of loneliness, does not believe we know much more now than we did when he first put forth his theories on loneliness in 1973. Researchers have noted that the very personal and subjective nature of loneliness makes it a difficult construct to define precisely (Rokach, 1989; Sadler, 1978). Several writers have noted a particular need for more qualitative research to be done (Perlman & Peplau, 1982; Stokes, 1987). Sadler (1978) reviewed the existing literature at that time on the topic of loneliness and concluded that overall it was over simplistic and lacked an in-depth understanding of the experience of loneliness. In his phenomenological investigation of loneliness he found loneliness to be a "multifaceted" phenomenon which has a distinct and separate identity apart from isolation or alienation (two commonly-used synonyms for this feeling). Five dimensions of loneliness Sadler identified are: the interpersonal (awareness of separation from individuals), the social (awareness of being divided in loyalty between competing groups), the cultural (akin to both alienation and anomie), the cosmic (estrangement from the total unity of existence), and the psychological (the natural sense of separation arising from biological individuation). However, little phenomenological investigation of loneliness has been done since that time. This prompted Stokes (1987) to suggest that in order to learn more about loneliness, its meaning to people, and the processes by which it develops and is alleviated, the

methods of phenomenology--direct observation, simple description, and in-depth analysis of the meaning of loneliness to individuals--would be useful. My own review of the literature confirms these criticisms. By far the bulk of loneliness research had reduced the phenomenon to simply being a social deficit problem as measured by the UCLA Loneliness Scale. I believe this to be an inadequate conception of the complex phenomenon of loneliness.

There has been a growing recognition of qualitative research methods as an appropriate way of investigating certain questions. In contrast to the predominant natural science perspective of Western psychology which emphasizes confirming or refuting a hypothesis, phenomenology is a discovery method that focuses on the meaning and significance of experience. As a human science, hermeneutic phenomenology begins from a point of questioning the taken-for-grantedness found in our understanding of a particular human phenomenon. The purpose of this approach is to uncover and disclose the essence of an experience, that which is essential and distinct. The essential structure is composed of themes. Themes are phrases or statements that capture a meaning in the flow of experience. Phenomenological investigation is based on the justification that

> if humans, as scientists, can under proper conditions, use descriptive reports with precision, then it seems to me that humans, as subjects, should also, under the proper conditions, be able to generate valid descriptive reports (Giorgi 1986, p.4).

The second article focused on the question: "What is the lived experience of loneliness?" The study was carried out from the hermeneutic phenomenological perspective developed by van Manen, (1990). Van Manen's approach has its roots in the phenomenological philosophy of Gadamer, Heideggger, Hursserl and Merleau-Ponty. Lived experience refers to how we live life in the everyday moment of here and now. It is prereflective and preconceptual in nature and speaks about what is preverbal, and not readily apparent. Phenomenology has been called a science of examples (van Manen, 1990) and uses the concrete examples of the experience as it is lived. In attempting to "capture" these experiences as lived, the emphasis is first of all on descriptive accuracy.

Through a hermeneutic exploration of these anecdotes and shared experiences the implicit meanings are drawn out and necessarily reduced to themes. Once the themes have emerged they are interrelated and made explicit as possible through textual interpretation. The text itself attempts to evoke the actual experience within the reader of the phenomenon being described. However all interpretation of lived experience is bounded by the fact that it is an interpretation. As such, it will always fall short of actually capturing the full experience. The purpose of the study was not to arrive at the exclusive interpretation of the experience of loneliness, but with one that draws out some of the essence of the experience of loneliness.

Van Manen notes that "the technocratic mind believes that any problem can be solved or answered by some technique or method" but that hermeneutic phenomenology has "no definitive set of research procedures... that one can follow blindly" (1990, p.34). Bearing this in mind, the following is a description of the guidelines I followed in carrying out this research. First the descriptive possibilities of the human experience of loneliness as it has been lived first hand by the participants need were collected. My sample consisted of six subjects who represent a wide variety of life situations. After clearing proper ethical considerations (see Appendix A) participants were invited to tell their story of loneliness. The questions that yielded the most fruitful material are those that concentrated on specific instances of loneliness. Since the interview was presuppositionless (bracketed), questions for the most part were not predetermined, but rather flowed from the clue-and-cue taking process. However, a typical introductory question was, "Tell me about a particular time when you were lonely. What did you feel- physically, emotionally? What did you notice? What did you do?" Other questions had to do with a time when they may have felt lonely, even though they were socially well connected (if this is possible), and about times when they were not lonely. As well I invited the participants to describe a time when they sought solitude, and how this being alone was different from when they were alone and experienced it as loneliness. The

phenomenon of the loneliness was probed until the experience itself was illuminated and described (Ray, 1994). Finally I invited my subjects to share any insights or thoughts that they would consider essential in gaining a deeper understanding of loneliness. In conjunction with their participation I also used anecdotal stories via research, literature, an the insightful experiences of others to draw on in understanding and illuminating my subject matter.

Once a sufficient amount of data had been gathered, I uncovered some of the unifying themes and meanings latent in the contents in the transcribed interviews. The themes were drawn out through a systematic phenomenological reduction, and made as explicit as possible. The first thing looked for in transcriptions was the overall flavor of the participants' experience. Then sections of the text that were particularly graphic or meaningful were extracted and analyzed, looking for themes and possible meanings. The themes were then reviewed looking for how they were inter-related to each other. This thematic analysis of the experiential descriptions was then organized into clusters and named. The analysis moved from the particular of the experience to the themes of abstract meanings. The interpretation of themes depended on the sensitivity and accuracy of the researcher. The safeguards built into this process to keep the results from being simply a display of my own biases and presuppositions were that these themes were reviewed against the transcripts of the interviews. As well, participants were asked to review my findings and interpretations regarding their interviews. The final safeguard built into this process is the text itself: it would either ring "true" or not. As Merleau-Ponty noted, "not only do we never arrive at an exclusive interpretation....but, what is more, we necessarily have to do with equally probable interpretations" (1962, p.118). I worked in close conjunction with a graduate student of my department, as well as the supervision of Dr. Max van Manen in preparing the text. The text was reviewed systematically by a class of graduate students taking a phenomenological research course.

Feedback was used to hone the text into an iconic representation of the experience of loneliness.

The text needed to stay phenomenologically oriented, using the base of actual experience from which to build possible meanings and interpretations. While a complete understanding of loneliness is impossible from such a study, this investigation should hopefully lead to a greater appreciation of the complexity of loneliness as well as deeper understanding of the meaning it holds. It is my intention that this sensitivity would allow therapists and researcher to reflect on their own experience of loneliness, thus becoming more attuned to the loneliness of others. Hopefully this would lead not only to a greater understanding and appreciation of loneliness, but also to newer therapeutic approaches to loneliness.

The literature on loneliness is almost mute with regards to interventions that deal with loneliness. The article attempts to address this deficit in the literature by exploring how the meanings of loneliness may inform counselling the lonely. From the themes that emerged with regards to loneliness, the article derives implications for the therapist in counselling the lonely client. These implications flow directly from the subjects' description of their experience of loneliness. Suggestions are made in light of themes, as well as what existing clinical literature there is, as well as my own clinical experience in working with the lonely.

Article #3: A New Theoretical Approach to Loneliness

Solitude: An Alternative to Loneliness?

Moustakas (1961) and May (1953) both believed that alienation, or self-estrangement is one of the main causes of loneliness. Based on the results of her survey of 526 subjects, Rokach (1988) broke loneliness down into the two broad categories of self-alienation and interpersonal alienation. Perlman indicated his interest in exploring new avenues of loneliness research and wrote,

> I am currently fascinated with the possibility that some forms of loneliness may stem from sources other than relational deficiencies. Therefore, I am intrigued by the possibility of existential forms of loneliness." (1987, p.21).

Recently there have been other suggestions as to how to view loneliness in the light of solitude. Many writers have noted the positive affects of being alone (André, 1992; Koller, 1991; Paterson, Blashko and Janzen, 1991). Storr (1988) made the interesting observation that there has been much more research done on the fear of being alone than the desire to be alone. Landau (1973) noted that many creative geniuses have actively sought solitude. Several writers believe that retreats, solitude, and lonely places are in fact essential for psychological health and development (Moustakas, 1961; Paterson, Blashko and Janzen, 1991; Rolheiser, 1979). While the distinction between being alone and being lonely has been made repeatedly, the link between the two has not been given the careful consideration it deserves. Clearly there is a link between being alone and being lonely. The question that begs to be answered is, why do some experience fulfillment in solitude, while others experience a gnawing sense of loneliness?

The purpose of the last article was to develop a model that provided insight into the relationship of loneliness, aloneness and solitude. Since there is much confusion in the field of loneliness research about what these terms mean (they are often used interchangeably) the three terms were defined in this article. The article reviewed the existing literature on loneliness with a particular focus on the studies that have reported other forms of loneliness rather than merely social forms (e.g.. existential, Moustakas, 1961). This section of the article highlighted some of the shortcomings in understanding loneliness exclusively as a social deficit problem. The discussion then focused on the problem of self-estrangement (Fromm, 1951; Horney, 1950; May, 1953) or the "empty" self (Cushman, 1990) and how it is related to loneliness. Concluding this discussion, loneliness was broadened to include not only desiring a relationship to others, but also a relationship to self and to God.

The article then reviewed the role and purpose that solitude has played from both a religious point of view (Bonhoeffer, 1954; Foster, 1978; Rolheiser, 1979) and a psychological point of view (André', 1992; Moustakas, 1961; Paterson, Blashko and Janzen, 1991; Storr, 1988). This section concluded with a review of the positive results that others experience in solitude. Particular attention was paid to how the solitude experience helped to deepen the individual's relationship with themselves, and thus with others. The aloness that is positive (solitude) will be briefly contrasted with the aloneness that is negative (loneliness).

In synthesizing these overviews of loneliness and solitude the article then introduced a model of loneliness as it relates both to solitude, and to social intercourse. It is argued that while sometimes a legitimate response to loneliness is to seek the company of others, other times it is more beneficial to seek solitude. Thus loneliness is understood as a call to relationship, but relationship can take an "outward" route (seeking the company of others) or an "inward" route (seeking solitude for the sake of deepening one's relationship with self and/or God). The model is circular in nature, whereby it is argued that the more comfortable one becomes in seeking solitude, the more likely that one's social relationships will improve: the better quality of social relationships one enjoys, the more safety and security one will experience and thus find it easier to seek solitude. The article concluded with the possible implications this model has in counseling the lonely, as well as the impact it may have on further research in this area.

This thesis followed the guidelines for a paper thesis-format set out by the University of Alberta, Faculty of Graduate Studies (1992). The thesis concludes with a summary chapter reviewing this body of work. Implications for further research were drawn out. Special emphasis was paid to the ramifications that these research findings may have for the counselor or psychologist in designing interventions to assist those who are experiencing loneliness.

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CHAPTER 2

Review of Current Loneliness Research

Paloutzian and Janigian (1987) identified the 1970's as the "adolescent stage" of loneliness research, wherein the subject was being defined. They called the 1980's the second phase of loneliness research (young adulthood), where measurement and research began in earnest. Finally they went on to offer the hope that the present decade would be one in which loneliness research should reach full maturity. The majority of studies in loneliness have focused on the antecedents and consequences of loneliness. The research can be divided into two broad classes of causal antecedents: individual factors such as characteristics and traits of the person, and social factors which take into account the individual's social circumstances (Krause, et al., 1993). Some of the more prominent features of the social environment that have been linked to loneliness have been infrequent social contacts (Cutrona, 1982; Damsteegt, 1992), low density networks (Stokes, 1987), and few close friends (Horowitz, French & Anderson, 1982). Studies have confirmed that the quality of relationships an individual enjoys with others is more important than the quantity of relationships he/she has (Jones, Freemon & Goswick, 1981; Samter, 1992). There has also been a great deal of research done on the personality traits or characteristics of the lonely individual. Low self-esteem has been consistently associated with loneliness (Jones, 1981; Kalliopuska & Laitinen, 1991; Hojat, 1982). Lonely individuals tend to be shy, think poorly of themselves, expect rejection from others, fail to capitalize on interpersonal opportunities, and are lacking in communication skills (Goswick & Jones, 1981; Samter, 1992). Paterson, Blashko and Janzen (1991) note that loneliness has many sources: personality characteristics, interpersonal skills, styles of thinking, situation and experiences, developmental life changes, handicaps, and mental illness.

While the amount of research in the field of loneliness has grown steadily there still is a general disagreement about the concept of loneliness itself. Sadler (1978) identified four stages of loneliness: (a) causal stage, (b) the experience itself, (c)

consequences, (d) attempts to cope. For the most part, researchers have explored the correlates of personality and environmental factors linked with loneliness, as well as the results of loneliness. The result of this research is a more in-depth understanding of the environmental and personal factors that put individuals at risk of loneliness. As well we have a clearer picture of some of the characteristics of the lonely individual. Despite the increasing amount of research being done in the area of loneliness, Jones (1987) believed that this field still lacks a sufficient theoretical understanding. Overall, little research has actually been tied to a theoretical base. Others have noted that research methodology in loneliness is somewhat narrow and is not really getting at the problem (de Jong-Gierveld, 1987; Rokach 1990). With regards to conceptualizing loneliness as merely a deficiency in one's social relationship, Zakahi and Duran observed,

> such conceptual definitions are, of course necessary. They help delimit the area of study as well as drawing attention to what should be examined. Unfortunately, such definitions may tend to decrease the emotional importance of loneliness by abstracting the problem (1985, p.203).

While there have been many interpretations and theories regarding the cause and nature of loneliness (Peplau and Perlman, 1982) Paloutzian and Janigian (1987) have classified, in order of influence, the three main theoretical approaches to loneliness: (a) the social-emotional typology proposed by Weiss (1973); (b) the cognitive model as suggested by Perlman and Peplau (1982); (c) loneliness as a fundamentally existential phenomenon, as suggested by Moustakas (1961). The purpose of this study was to determine the specific aspects of self concept that are associated with the these three theories of loneliness. Using the dimension of self concept, this study also investigated whether or not there was evidence to support these theories. The existing research demonstrates that self concept has consistently been strongly associated with loneliness and it has been hypothesized that self concept plays a major role in the individual's

experience of loneliness (e.g. Jones, 1981; Jones, Freemon & Goswick, 1981; Jones Sansone and Helm, 1983; Goswick and Jones, 1981). In a summary statement concerning the findings of loneliness research, Jones (1981) noted, "One of the most frequent and consistent correlations of loneliness has been poor self-esteem" (p.238). Based on the importance of self and self-concept to loneliness it was decided that this would be the variable used in this study to explore the three theories of loneliness. It was hypothesized that if the three types of loneliness explored in this study really are distinct, there should be distinct correlational patterns for each type of loneliness. It was further hypothesized that the [illegible] types of loneliness examined in this study should be related to specific aspects of

Method

Instruments

The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS; Fitts, 1965) is a multi-dimensional measure of self-concept, which is how an individual describes/ understands who they are; and self-esteem, which is an individual's evaluation of who they are. The TSCS has been used in other loneliness studies, and because of its multidimensional structure contains the properties pertinent to this study. This scale not only measures overall esteem levels, but also breaks down the scores into subscales that are directly related to the issues of this research. The major subscales of the TSCS are:

A. Total Positive Score. This score indicates the overall level of self-esteem. High scores indicate positive self esteem, low scores indicate low self esteem.

B. Identity. This is how the individual sees themselves, and has to do with their basic identity. High scores indicate a strong sense of self-identity, while low scores indicate a weak sense of self-identity.

C. Self Satisfaction. In the Identity section the individual has described who they feel they are, in this section the individual describes how they feel about their identity. It is "how I feel about myself."

D. Behavior. This is the individual's perception of his own behavior; it is "what I do."

E. Physical Self. This measures the individual's view of their body, health, appearance and sexuality.

F. Moral-Ethical Self. This is a measure of one's feeling about being "good" or "bad" as well as their satisfaction with their relationship to God and religion.

G. Personal Self. This is a measure of the individual's sense of personal worth apart from their body or relationship to others.

H. Family Self. This score reflects ones feelings of adequacy worth and value as a family member.

I. Social Self. This measures the person's sense of adequacy and worth in his social interaction with others.

The ESLI (Vincenzi and Grabosky, 1987) is a multidimensional measure of loneliness. Based on Weiss' theory (1973), it attempts to differentiate between social loneliness and emotional loneliness. As well, it attempts to differentiate between the individual's perception of his/her social network and his/her feelings about it. This is a 30 item questionnaire that uses a Likert-type scale with a 0 to 3 rating with the following four subscales: Emotional Isolation (an evaluation in objective terms any deficiency with intimacy attachments in the subjects current social networks); Social Isolation (an evaluation by the subjects in objective terms any deficiency with their level of social integration and reassurance of worth in their social network); Emotional Loneliness (a measure of a currently felt level of deprivation in intimate relationships and attachments); Social Loneliness (a currently felt level of deprivation in social integration and reassurance of worth). While not as widely used in research as the UCLA the ESLI has the advantage of being directly tied to recognized theory. Oshagan and Allen (1992) found

evidence that supports the claim that the ESLI does distinguish between social versus emotional loneliness.

The EOL is a self made inventory purporting to measure the concept of self-estrangement. Items were based on a review of the literature on self-estrangement[29] (see Andersson, 1986; Horney, 1950; May, 1951; Seeman, 1951, 1975; Snyder, 1974), as well as being gleaned from other scales of alienation (e.g. Ben-Porath, Hosteller & Graham, 1989; Ray, 1982; Roberts, 1987) . Five factors emerged with eigen values greater than one accounting for 66.9 % of the total variance. These factors were identified as :Purpose in Life; Dissonance to True Self; Relatedness to Others; Connectedness to Self; Locus of Control. The validity of this scale was based on four criteria: (i) the items were based on present recognized theories of self-estrangement; (ii) several of the items were drawn from alienation sub-scales presently in use; (iii) four independent experts concurred that this scale had apparent face validity; (iv) the results of the factor analysis of the instrument. The EOL correlated with the TSCS's measure of Identity at r=-.722. The scale reports a Guttmann split half reliability coefficient of .87 and an equal length Spearman-Brown split half of .88. From an original pool of 40 items, 25 were selected to created this five point Likert Scale in which subjects marked their experience of the statement: NEVER ALMOST NEVER SOMETIMES OFTEN ALWAYS. A high score on this questionnaire indicates a high level of self estrangement. A sample of the statements included in the EOL are:

I often am confused as to what I am doing with my life, and why.

I am not the person I appear to be.

---

[29]Also called "self-alienation", "alienation" or simply "estrangement". This article identifies the working concept used in this research as self-estrangement.

I am apt to pass up something I want to do when others feel that its not worth doing.

My life is filled with meaning.

I am a stranger to myself.

I often feel that I am not really there.

I need the advice of my friends to chose movies, books, or music.

I often feel disconnected from myself.

A futher goal of this study was to investigate whether or not there is a form of existential loneliness that is the result of estrangement to self rather than estrangement to others. It was necessary to create the EOL as there were no other scales that directly measured the concept of self-estrangement. This scale has limitations in that it has not been normed against specific populations, nor has it the rigorous revisions and statistical analysis that would add significantly to its validity and reliability. Despite these limitations, after developing, using and statistically analyzing the scale it was decided that it would be included in this study. While the scale is open to criticism, it was felt that it has strong enough face validity, and strong enough statistical properties to be useful in investigating existential loneliness. It must be remembered that this study is simply trying to provide some initial evidence that would either support or dispute loneliness as being an intrapersonal issue rather than an interpersonal issue.

Procedure

The sample was drawn from four undergraduate university classes: a large (100+ students) second year sociology class; a large third year elementary education class; and two midsize (20-40 students) fourth year education psychology classes. Volunteers were asked to take 25-35 minutes to fill out three separate questionnaires (the TSCS, ESLI and the EOL). The research was introduced to the subjects by telling them that this study was concerned with "our experience of life, especially in regards to our social selves and our private selves. What I am trying to do is understand better how these factors contribute to

the loneliness each and everyone of us feels at times." All subjects also completed a demographics questionnaire. In accordance with ethical considerations the covering letter acted as a permission slip complete with a method to withdraw from the study at any time and each individual was assigned a code to ensure anonymity. One hundred and fifteen test packages were distributed to volunteers. By request, 36 students took them home to complete, while the rest were completed in class. Out of this sample 11 test packets were not returned, 17 were spoiled due to incomplete responses, leaving an n of 87. No one withdrew from the study. The average age of the respondents was 23.5 years of age. There were 24 males and 63 females that participated in this study. Statistical analysis found no significant differences in the various demographic categories (e.g. sex, marital relationship, age, current living arrangements) that were employed and thus the group was considered as a whole. The resulting descriptive statistics of this research suggest that what was measured was a "normal" population. The results of the test scores are similar to those done in other studies.

Analysis

The TSCS, the ESLI, and the EOL scores were tabulated for each subscale, as well as global scores. Using a combination of SPSSx and Systat, the results were then analyzed by looking at descriptive statistics. The data were further explored by looking at the demographics breakdown (sex, age, marital status), as well as examining the upper and lower quartiles of the ESLI. The subscales of the TSCS were correlated with the subscales of the ESLI in an effort to see if there were any appreciable differences in the patterns of self-concept issues as they relate to: i) social versus emotional aspects of loneliness; ii) objective versus subjective aspects of loneliness. To investigate the relationship between loneliness and self-estrangement the scores from the TSCS, the ESLI, and the EOL were correlated to see i) how the scores of self-estrangement were related to self-concept; ii) how the scores of self-estrangement were related to the various types of loneliness as depicted by the ESLI. The correlation used was the Pearson Product Moment statistic.

The two tailed test for significance for these correlations was computed using the Bartlett Chi Square statistic. The p was set at .05 and all correlations reported had a $p<.05$.

Three Theories of Loneliness

Weiss' Social Emotional Typology

The theory of loneliness suggested by Weiss (1973) conceptualizes loneliness predominantly in terms of disruptions of the social or emotional attachment system. The genesis of this theory was found in Bowlby's (1973) attachment theory, which Weiss applied to loneliness. Weiss (1973) theorized that loneliness was the response to the absence of some particular type of relationship. He suggested that loneliness originated from six types of deficits: attachments (relationships in which a person receives a sense of safety and security), social integration (having a network of relationships), opportunity for nurture (where one feels responsible for the well being of another), reassurance of worth (relationships where one's skills and abilities are noted), reliable alliance (one can count on assistance from another) and guidance (where one receives advice). Weiss believed that there are two distinct types of loneliness: emotional loneliness and social loneliness. He identified the absence of an attachment figure, which resulted in a sense of utter aloneness as well as over sensitivity and restless anxiety, as emotional isolation. This type of loneliness has to do with the deeper more intimate relationships we share with others. Social loneliness has to do with the absence of an accessible social network, which gives rise to feelings of meaninglessness and marginality as well as aimlessness and boredom. This type of loneliness has more to do with the breadth, rather than the depth of relationships we share with others. Weiss's theoretical assumptions about the nature of loneliness found widespread acceptance in the psychological literature on loneliness and the vast majority of the research has been done based on the assumption that loneliness is a problem of social deficits. Despite the theoretical influence Weiss has had, very few studies have directly investigated his social/emotional typology (e.g. Bell & Gonzalez,

1988; de Jong-Gierveld & Raadschelders, 1982; Hojat, 1982). Some studies have found evidence to support Weiss's typology, while others have not.

Hypothesis #1

The first research question sought to explore the relationships that self-concept as measured by the TSCS have with Social versus Emotional loneliness, as Measured by the ESLI. The ESLI measures these two aspects of loneliness on the Emotional Isolation/Loneliness scales and Social Isolation/ Loneliness scales. It was hypothesized that if social and emotional loneliness are distinct from each other, then the correlational patterns of the TSCS with the ESLI should be unique for each type of loneliness. Specifically it was hypothesized that the TSCS subscale of Social Self (a measurement of social satisfaction) should have a strong negative correlation with the Social Isolation / Loneliness subscales of the ESLI. whereas the subscale of Family Self (a scale that measures more intimate attachments) should be more negatively correlated with the Emotional Isolation/ Loneliness subscales of the ESLI.

Perlman and Peplau's Cognitive Model of Loneliness

Perlman and Peplau (1982) also conceive loneliness from a social deficit point of view, however theirs' is a cognitive approach. They believe loneliness is the result of a discrepancy between the expectations and the felt experience one has concerning one's relationships with others. Loneliness is seen as the result of an internal event within the individual. The cognitive approach emphasizes the perception and evaluation of social relations and deficits. Cognitive processes, especially attributions, have a moderating influence on the loneliness experiences. Cognitive processes color the experience of loneliness, shaping our feelings and guiding our actions. People use affective, behavioral, and cognitive clues to arrive at the conclusion that they are lonely. Peplau and Perlman suggested that two classes of causes can be identified; (i) the events or changes that precipitate the loneliness; (ii) the internal factors that may predispose one to be lonely. Peplau, Miceli and Morasch, (1982) believed that subjective standards for relationships

are derived by: (a) past experience that we draw on for our expectations; (b) social comparison, which often can be unrealistic. Personal standards for relationships are not fixed but change over time. Booth (1983) noted that in contrast to some of the other theories concerning loneliness, the cognitive emotional approach has had a substantial amount of research done on it.

Hypothesis #2

The second research question of this study seeks to explore whether or not the variable of self-concept is a mediator between objective and subjective loneliness as measured by the ESLI. The ESLI measures these two aspects of loneliness and calls them Isolation (objective experience of loneliness) and Loneliness (subjective experience of loneliness). It was hypothesized that correlational patterns of the subscales of the TSCS with these scales on the ESLI should be unique for each. Specifically it was hypothesized that the TSCS subscales of Self Satisfaction and Identity, which are measures of subjective feelings of self, would have stronger negative correlations with Loneliness than Isolation. It was further hypothesized that the TSCS overall should be more strongly negatively correlated to the Loneliness scales of the ESLI than to the Isolation scales. The rationale behind this hypothesis is that self-concept would be one of the internal mediators that individual's would use in determining whether or not they are "lonely."

Existential Loneliness

A third, and very different approach to loneliness, is the existential approach. Proponents of the existential approach view loneliness not as a loss of social contacts per se, but as a loss of meaning and self identity. Moustakas (1961) theorized that loneliness stems from the existential awareness that we are in fact alone in life. The proper response to this awareness is to accept our condition, and in accepting it, transcend our loneliness (Moustakas, 1961; Storr, 1988). Others (e.g. Mendelson, 1990; Stuewe-Portnoff, 1988) have suggested that loneliness is the result of existential crisis. The more one lacks meaning or purpose in one's life, the more alienated that one feels with one's self or with

others, the more loneliness one will experience. Loneliness is understood in terms of being estranged from self, rather than from others. Existential loneliness has not been well defined and there has been little direct investigation of this phenomenon. Most of the evidence supporting this conception of loneliness has been tangential in nature though qualitative studies have identified existential loneliness as a real phenomenon (e.g. Rokach, 1988; Stuewe-Portnoff, 1988; Yalom, 1980).

Hypothesis #3

The third question this research seeks to explore is, whether or not self-estrangement is related to loneliness. If the phenomenon of existential loneliness due to self-estrangement is real, it was hypothesized that the EOL would be positively correlated to the overall score of the ESLI. It was further hypothesized that the TSCS subscale of Identity would be negatively correlated to the ESLI's subscales.

Results and Interpretation

General Findings

Generally, the results (TABLE 1) of this study are consistent with studies similar to it (e.g. Goswick & Jones, 1981; Kalliopuska & Laitinen, 1991; Loucks, 1980). The results of this study reaffirm that loneliness is related to identity issues, negative self perception, dissatisfaction with self, and negative evaluation of ones behavior and functioning. However, by design this study goes beyond merely correlating loneliness to self-concept. Specifically this study attempts to link it findings to the three main theories of loneliness. Questions #1 and #2 of this thesis both concern themselves with the correlational patterns that exist between the TSCS and the ESLI. Overall, the TSCS was negatively correlated to the ESLI. This is what was expected based on other research findings (e.g. Goswick & Jones, 1981; Kalliopuska & Laitenen, 1991). The total score for ESLI had the strongest negative correlations to (in order descending order of strength): (i) the Physical subscale (r=-.585); (ii) the Identity subscale (r=-.542); (iii) the overall score

for self-esteem - Esteem (r=-.514); Satisfaction with Self (r=-.464); and Behavior (r=-.409).

The subscales with low correlations to the ESLI were the Criticism (r=.109), Moral (r=-.142), Personal (r=-350).and Family (r=-.238) scales. Overall, the Emotional Loneliness Scale had the highest negative correlation to the TSCS, while the Social Isolation Scale was the lowest correlation. One of the salient results of this study was how high loneliness was negatively correlated to Physical Self as measured by the ESLI (r=-.585). In all the ESLI's subscales, except Emotional Loneliness, Physical Self was the TSCS's strongest correlate to loneliness. While Goswick and Jones (1981) (r=-.36) and Kalliopuska and Laitinen (1991) (r=-.13) found a significant correlation of Physical Self to the UCLA, neither one report the strength or dominance that is found in this study. This is not a predicted finding of this research, and clearly this is an area for further research.

Almost all the subscales of the three instruments used correlated with each other with a $p<.05$. The exception to this was the TSCS subscale of Criticism with the EOL (r=.198, p=.070) and all four subscales of the ESLI (ESLI Total, r=.109, p=.321). The other correlations that reported a $p>.05$ were: Social with Emotional Isolation (r= -.173, p=.114); Moral with the SI (r=.-.062, p=.575), EL (r=.-.186, p=.089) and SL (r=.-.072, p=.511) subscales ; and Family with the SI (r=-.114, p=.299) subscale. In all of these cases, the correlations were not statistically significant. Thus, these correlations were less relevant to this study.

TABLE 1

PEARSON CORRELATION MATRIX:

TSCS, ESLI, & EOL

	EOL	EI	SI	EL	SL
EOL	1.000				
EI	0.495	1.000			
SI	0.495	0.745	1.000		
EL	0.640	0.842	0.763	1.000	
SL	0.658	0.659	0.822	0.798	1.000
ESLITOTA	0.628	0.889	0.908	0.939	0.904
RITS	0.198	0.030	0.053	0.116	0.184
ESTEEM	-0.841	-0.388	-0.380	-0.563	-0.545
IDENT	-0.752	-0.423	-0.400	-0.618	-0.531
SATISFAC	-0.807	-0.350	-0.342	-0.484	-0.519
BEHAVIOR	-0.755	-0.299	-0.303	-0.455	-0.442
PHYSICAL	-0.818	-0.484	-0.468	-0.602	-0.583
MORAL	-0.345	-0.217	-0.062	-0.186	-0.072
PERSONAL	-0.675	-0.268	-0.217	-0.400	-0.386
FAMILY	-0.532	-0.233	-0.114	-0.277	-0.248
SOCIAL	-0.435	-0.173	-0.323	-0.347	-0.403

	ESLITOTA	CRITS	ESTEEM	IDENT	SATISFAC
ESLITOTA	1.000				
CRITS	0.109	1.000			
ESTEEM	-0.514	-0.242	1.000		
IDENT	-0.542	-0.153	0.909	1.000	
SATISFAC	-0.464	-0.199	0.929	0.749	1.000
BEHAVIOR	-0.409	-0.322	0.921	0.794	0.774
PHYSICAL	-0.585	-0.069	0.877	0.824	0.796
MORAL	-0.142	-0.344	0.497	0.432	0.462
PERSONAL	-0.350	-0.259	0.783	0.717	0.724
FAMILY	-0.238	-0.242	0.681	0.653	0.615
SOCIAL	-0.341	-0.215	0.575	0.560	0.480

	BEHAVIOR	PHYSICAL	MORAL	PERSONAL	FAMILY
BEHAVIOR	1.000				
PHYSICAL	0.813	1.000			
MORAL	0.478	0.298	1.000		
PERSONAL	0.731	0.705	0.589	1.000	
FAMILY	0.623	0.535	0.614	0.770	1.000
SOCIAL	0.564	0.443	0.481	0.683	0.646

Weiss's Social/Emotional Typology

In comparing Emotional Isolation with Social Isolation the correlational patterns and rankings of each of these scales with the TSCS was identical for the strongest four correlations. In comparing Emotional Loneliness with Social Loneliness, the five subscales of the TSCS that correlated strongest to these two subscales were the same: Physical; Esteem; Identity; Satisfaction and Behavior. However in this instance the order of the top three correlations are different for each. Emotional Loneliness was most correlated to Identity (r=-.618), Physical (r=-.602) and Esteem (r=-.563). Social Loneliness was most correlated to Physical (r=-.583), Esteem (r=-.545) and Identity (r= -.531). Here the patterns differ not only in order, but in strength of relationship. The Emotional Loneliness Scale is somewhat unique in that it is the only scale that is most correlated to Identity: all the others are most strongly correlated to the Physical scale.

There are different correlational patterns that exist between the TSCS and the ESLI subscales for Emotional loneliness and Social loneliness. However, these differences are extremely small and subtle. It should be noted that this investigation was limited by the sensitivity of the instruments used, the responses of the sample population, and the statistical investigation employed. The various aspects of self as measured by the TSCS may not have been sensitive enough to differentiate between the two types of loneliness. It must be remembered that there are many other variables associated with loneliness other than self and perhaps these other variables, may be more useful in distinguishing between social and emotional loneliness. In summary, Social and Emotional loneliness were correlated almost identically to the components of self-concept as measured by the sub-scales of the TSCS. This is not what was originally hypothesized.

Perlman and Peplau's Cognitive Approach

Perlman and Peplau (1982) emphasized the cognitive processes that interpret the events and arrive at the conclusion of loneliness. The ESLI calls these two aspects of

loneliness Isolation (an objective assessment of loneliness) and Loneliness (a subjective experience of loneliness). With the exceptions already noted in the analysis of hypothesis #1, it was found that there were great similarities in these scales. The same finding repeated itself in comparing Emotional Loneliness to Social Loneliness. There was little difference found in the correlational patterns of these two types of loneliness. As hypothesized, Self Satisfaction (r=-.484/-.519) and Identity (r=-.618/-.531) were both strongly related to the Loneliness scales, but they were also strongly related to the Isolation scales (r=-.350/-.342 and r=-.423/-.400 respectively). On a grid of 20 correlations there were only four exceptions to an otherwise identical pattern and ranking between Loneliness and Isolation. As predicted the Loneliness scales consistently had stronger correlations to the TSCS subscales than the Isolation Scales. In the top five subscales used for comparison the correlations for Loneliness ranged from r=-.618 to r=-.442, whereas the range for Isolation was from r=-.484 to r=-.299. Thus the TSCS measure of self-concept is more implicated in the scores that relate to a subjective (the Loneliness scales of the ESLI) assessment of loneliness.

Thus, while there were no differences found in the correlational patterns, there was a difference in correlational strength. Overall, the TSCS was more highly correlated to those scales measuring subjective loneliness than to those scales measuring objective loneliness. This is what was originally hypothesized. Based on these results it is fair to conclude that those who have lower self-esteem, and poorer self-concept do experience stronger feelings of subjective loneliness than their high self-esteem counterparts. Those who have low self-esteem may have the exact same social network as others, but nevertheless still experience greater feelings of loneliness. The question left unanswered by these findings is that of causality: does low self-esteem cause feelings of subjective loneliness? or does subjective feelings of loneliness cause low self-esteem? Regardless of the direction of causality, this study does add limited support to the other studies that have

also implicated loneliness to cognitive processes (Anderson, Horowitz and French, 1983; Cutrona, 1982; Fischer and Philips, 1982).

Loneliness and Self Estrangement

The third area this research sought to explore is whether or not self-estrangement is related to loneliness. The Loneliness scale of the ESLI measured a subjective experience of loneliness, and one would expect a strong relationship to exist between this scale and the EOL. The Emotional scale of the ESLI is a measure of loneliness as it relates to intimacy, which again is strongly implicated with loneliness due to self-estrangement. It is generally agreed that maintaining intimate ties with anyone is difficult for the self-estranged individual. It was hypothesized that the measure of self-estrangement (the EOL) would be strongly correlated to the overall score of the ESLI, and particularly with the ESLI subscale of Emotional Loneliness. A summary of the results of the correlations are presented in Table 2.

As expected the correlation of the EOL with the ESLI was a positive one: the more self-estranged an individual was, the more lonely they were likely to be. As can be seen in Table 2, the EOL had even stronger correlations to the ESLI than any of the correlates found between the ESLI and the TSCS. Simply put, self-estrangement had an even stronger relationship with loneliness than did self-concept. Originally it was hypothesized that loneliness that stems from self-estrangement should be subjective in nature. In fact the EOL did have higher correlations to the ESLI scales of Loneliness (r=.640/.648) which measure subjective loneliness, than to the ESLI scales of Isolation (r=.495/.495), which measure objective loneliness. The EOL's strongest correlation was with Social Loneliness (r=.658). Emotional Loneliness was the second highest correlation to the EOL (r= .640). Although the difference between these two correlations is not very large, this is an unexpected finding. It was also hypothesized that if loneliness is related to self-estrangement, then the TSCS subscale of Identity would be correlated to the ESLI's subscales, especially to the subscale of Emotional Loneliness. The TSCS subscale of I

TABLE 2

CORRELATIONAL PATTERNS OF THE
TSCS, EOL AND ESLI

	EMOTIONAL ISOLATION	SOCIAL ISOLATION	EMOTIONAL LONELINESS	SOCIAL LONELINESS	ESLI TOTAL
EOL	r= .495	r= .495	r=.640	r= .658	r= .628
TSCS 'S IDENTITY SCALE	r= -.423	r=-.400	r=-.618	r=-.531	r=-.542

dentity was strongly related to all four subscales of the ESLI with a range from r=-.400 to r=-.618 (Table 1). As expected the correlations between Identity and the ESLI were negative: the more an individual struggled with their own identity ("Who am I?") the more lonely they were likely to be. Identity had a stronger correlation to Emotional Loneliness than any other ESLI subscale (r=-.618).

Overall, both the EOL (r=.628) and the Identity scales (r=-.542) were strongly correlated to the ESLI. In fact, the results of this study provide the strongest evidence to support hypothesis #3. As clear as these results are, they must be tempered by the limitations of the instruments used to measure them. The EOL while soundly constructed, is yet to be a proven valid measure of self-estrangement. Furthermore, there is no universal understanding as to what is meant by self-estrangement. With these limitations in mind, the results of this study strongly suggest that those who struggled with issues of Identity, and those who were experiencing a higher degree of self-estrangement were more likely to be lonely. The direction of causality cannot be established as this is a correlational study. Nor can it be said that this study establishes a phenomenon known as existential loneliness. This study merely shows that the more self-estranged an individual is, the more likely they are to be lonely. To the extent that self-estrangement has been consistently identified with existential loneliness, this study does provide evidence to support, in a limited way, the concept of existential loneliness. However, in the loneliness literature there has been no attempt to identify and bring together in a meaningful way what exactly existential loneliness is and how it is different from other forms of loneliness. Thus, whether or not self- strangement is related to a specific type of loneliness, namely existential loneliness, still remains to be established. The interpretation beyond this finding can vary widely.

Discussion

This study identifies a potentially important issue in dealing with the lonely person: The lonely individual may have problems not just in poor self-concept, but in terms of a lack of self-concept. Self-estrangement is apparently a salient feature of the lonely person. In many of the articles on loneliness, the underlying assumption is often that the lonely person simply needs to find more social contact. The underlying assumption is that loneliness occurs because the individual is in an unsatisfactory state of relationship with others. This study suggests that loneliness may also be related to the quality of relationship that the individual has with him/herself. It is logical to suggest that before individuals can be meaningfully connected to others, they must be meaningfully connected to themselves. Thus issues like self-awareness, identity, and purpose may be crucial in helping the individual deal with, and understand their loneliness. Paterson, Blashko and Janzen (1991), Storr (1988), and Rolheiser (1979) have all suggested that solitude is an important ingredient to mental health. Learning how to transform loneliness into "aloness" (solitude) may be a very important strategy in helping the individual overcome their self-estrangement, as well as their loneliness. Clearly more research needs to be done in distinguishing what the differences are that make being alone either a negative experience or a positive one.

This study attempted to tie its research directly to the three main theories that dominate loneliness research. While the results are useful and contribute in investigating the various theories, more in-depth work clearly needs to be done in the whole field of loneliness research. Weiss (1982, 1987) did not believe that we knew any more about actual loneliness than when he first proposed his theory in 1973. He noted that while we know more about the causes, and the effects, what we don't really understand is the actual experience itself. In order to correct these shortcomings: (i) more research must be done that is directly related to theory; (ii) the theories of loneliness need to be further refined and delineated so that meaningful research can be done on them; (iii) more

phenomenological and qualitative research needs to be done to better understand exactly what loneliness is. Certainly the pervasiveness and the potential destructiveness (as well as the potential benefits) of loneliness warrant more investigation.

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CHAPTER 3

Loneliness: The Problem

While the amount of research being done in the field of loneliness has grown steadily in recent years (Paloutzin & Janigan, 1987) there are still two major shortcomings in loneliness research. The first shortcoming lies in our understanding of the actual phenomenon of loneliness. Several researchers have written on some of the limitations and flaws in current loneliness research (Oshagan & Allen, 1992; Perlman, 1987; Weiss, 1987; Wood, 1987). Others have noted that research methodology in loneliness is somewhat narrow and is not really getting at the problem (de Jong-Gierveld, 1989; Rokach 1990; Stokes, 1987). Weiss (1987, 1982, 1973), one of the premier theoreticians in the field of loneliness, does not believe we know much more now than we did when he first put forth his theories on loneliness. Wood stated "I would add that most of the current research on loneliness focuses on its antecedents (e.g., personality characteristics) or consequences (e.g., depression, coping). Loneliness has been reduced to the intervening variable" (1988, p.42). This has lead to the suggestion by several writers that there is a definite need for more qualitative research to be done on loneliness (Perlman & Peplau, 1982; Stokes, 1987; Weiss, 1987).

Researchers have noted that the very personal and subjective nature of loneliness makes it a difficult construct to define precisely (Rokach, 1989; Sadler, 1978). Several writers have noted a particular need for more qualitative research to be done (Perlman & Peplau, 1982; Stokes, 1987). Sadler (1978) reviewed the existing literature at that time on the topic of loneliness and concluded that overall it was over simplistic and lacked an in-depth understanding of the experience of loneliness. In his phenomenological investigation of loneliness he found loneliness to be a "multifaceted" phenomenon which has a distinct and separate identity apart from isolation or alienation (two commonly-used synonyms for this feeling). Five dimensions of loneliness Sadler identified were: the interpersonal (awareness of separation from individuals), the social (awareness of being

divided in loyalty between competing groups), the cultural (akin to both alienation and anomie), the cosmic (estrangement from the total unity of existence), and the psychological (the natural sense of separation arising from biological individuation). Rokach (1988) developed a 3-level model of the experience of loneliness based on the content analysis of verbatim reports of loneliness accounts provided by 516 subjects. Subjects were instructed to write accounts of their thoughts, feelings, and coping strategies during their loneliest experience. In the model developed, 10 factors were subsumed under 4 major categories: self-alienation, interpersonal isolation, distressed reactions, and agony. Rubenstein and Shaver (1982) ran a study in six major newspapers asking 84 questions with three multiple choice items to select from. The responses were concerned with: (1) How loneliness feels; (2) What is the reason or causes of loneliness?; (3) What is your reaction to loneliness? Using a sample of 3,500 returned questionnaires they found: 60% were sad; 60% were depressed; 55% were bored; 50% felt self pity; 56% longed to be with one special person. A factor analysis of feelings when lonely revealed (in order): desperation; depression; impatient boredom; self-deprecation. As well, factor analysis of why people reported being lonely revealed (in order): being unattached; alienation; being alone; forced isolation; dislocation. The most common response to the question of what loneliness feels like was "a hole or space in my chest". Overall, however, little phenomenological investigation of loneliness has been done with regards to loneliness research. This prompted Stokes (1987) to suggest that in order to learn more about loneliness, its meaning to people, and the processes by which it develops and is alleviated, the methods of phenomenology--direct observation, simple description, and in-depth analysis of the meaning of loneliness to individuals--would be useful. Hermeneutic phenomenology has been identified as a particularly useful method of research in investigating the deeper meaning and significance of every day human experiences: experiences like that of loneliness (Giorgi, 1986; Packer and Addison, 1989; van Manen, 1990).

The second shortcoming in the field of loneliness research has been in the area of psychological intervention. Satran (1990) believed that for the most part, psychologists and psychiatrists are not trained in how to deal with a client's loneliness. McWhirter (1990) identified three main approaches psychologists take in dealing with loneliness: (i) social skills training; (ii) cognitive behavioral strategies; (iii) and small group therapy. The existing literature on counselling the lonely are based on a theoretical approach to working with the lonely (e.g. André, 1991; Rolheiser, 1979; Storr, 1988) or a more clinical approach (e.g. Murphy & Kupshik, 1992; Paterson, Blashko and Janzen, 1991; Yalom, 1980). Overall, little has been reported in the psychological journals that deals directly with working with the lonely client.

In response to these shortcomings this study will focus on the question: "What is the lived experience of loneliness?" The study will be carried out from the hermeneutic phenomenological perspective developed by van Manen, (1990). Phenomenology has been called a science of examples (van Manen, 1990) and uses the concrete examples of the experience as it is lived. In attempting to "capture" these experiences as lived, the emphasis is first of all on descriptive accuracy. Through a hermeneutic exploration of anecdotes and shared experiences implicit meanings are drawn out and necessarily reduced to themes. Once the themes have emerged they are interrelated and made explicit as possible through textual interpretation. The text itself is to attempt to evoke the actual experience within the reader of the phenomenon being described. However all interpretation of lived experience is bounded by the fact that it is an interpretation. As such, it will always fall short of actually capturing the full experience. The purpose of the study is not to arrive at <u>the</u> exclusive interpretation of the experience of loneliness, but to arrive at one that draws out some of the essence of the experience of loneliness. As Merleau-Ponty noted, "not only do we never arrive at an exclusive interpretation....but, what is more, we necessarily have to do with equally probable interpretations" (1962, p.118).

Using van Manen's (1990) approach to hermeneutic phenomenological research, this study will pursue the following objectives: (i) To collect stories and anecdotes of individuals' experiences of loneliness, aloneness and solitude; (ii) To analyze and explore these descriptions along with relevant data from literary sources, using phenomenological and hermeneutic methods so as to create text that iconically reflects an understanding of the experience of loneliness; (iii) To use the insights from this study as a basis for suggesting a way of recognizing and counseling lonely individuals.

The research procedure began by collecting the descriptive possibilities of the human experience of loneliness as it has been lived first hand by the participants. My sample consisted of six subjects who represent a wide variety of life situations. Demographically my sample consisted of four females and two males, three married, one divorced, one widower and one single person. Their ages ranged from 28 to 63. There was nothing unique about this sample and in fact it was because they had no outstanding characteristic that they were chosen. Hopefully their descriptions would match the experience of a wide cross section of individuals. Participants were invited to tell their story of loneliness. The questions that yielded the most fruitful material are those that concentrated on specific instances of loneliness. Since the interview was presuppositionless (bracketed), questions for the most part were not predetermined, but rather flowed from the clue-and-cue taking process. However, a typical introductory question was, "Tell me about a particular time when you were lonely. What did you feel- physically, emotionally? What did you notice? What did you do?" Other questions had to do with a time when they may have felt lonely, even though they were socially well connected (if this is possible), and about times when they were not lonely. As well, I invited the participants to describe a time when they sought solitude, and how this being alone was different from when they were alone and experienced it as loneliness. The phenomenon of the loneliness was probed until the experience itself was illuminated and described (Ray, 994). Finally I invited my subjects to share any insights or thoughts that

they would consider essential in gaining a deeper understanding of loneliness. In conjunction with their participation I also used anecdotal stories via research and literature, as well as the insightful experiences of others to draw on in understanding and illuminating my subject matter.

Once a sufficient amount of data had been gathered, some of the unifying themes and meanings latent in the contents in the transcribed interviews were uncovered. The themes were drawn out through a systematic phenomenological reduction, and made as explicit as possible. The first thing looked for in transcriptions was the overall flavor of the participants' experience. Then sections of the text that were particularly graphic or meaningful were extracted and analyzed, looking for themes and possible meanings. The themes were then reviewed looking for how they were inter-related to each other. This thematic analysis of the experiential descriptions was then organized into clusters and named. The analysis moved from the particular of the experience to the themes of abstract meanings. The interpretation of themes depended on the sensitivity and accuracy of the researcher. The safeguards built into this process to keep the results from being simply a display of my own biases and presuppositions were that these themes were reviewed against the transcripts of the interviews. As well, participants were asked to review my findings and interpretations regarding their interviews. The final safeguard built into this process is the text itself: it would either ring "true" or not. The research was reviewed systematically by a class of graduate students taking a phenomenological research course. Feedback was used to hone the text into an iconic representation of the experience of loneliness. The work was done under the supervision of Dr. Max van Manen.

The text needed to stay phenomenologically oriented, using the base of actual experience from which to build possible meanings and interpretations. While a complete understanding of loneliness is impossible from such a study, this investigation should hopefully lead to a greater appreciation of the complexity of loneliness as well as a

deeper understanding of the meaning it holds. It is my intention that this sensitivity would allow therapists and researcher to reflect on their own experience of loneliness, thus becoming more attuned to the loneliness of others. Hopefully this would lead not only to a greater understanding and appreciation of loneliness, but also to newer therapeutic approaches to loneliness. The reader is invited to use her own experience of loneliness to identity with the text. The "we" used throughout the article is used not to imply absolute universality of the experience, but as a device to invite the reader into the descriptions of loneliness.

The literature on loneliness is almost mute with regards to interventions that deal with loneliness. The article attempts to address this deficit in the literature by exploring some of the meanings that the experience of loneliness engenders. From the themes that emerged with regards to loneliness, the article derives implications for the therapist in counselling the lonely client. These implications flow directly from the subjects' description of their experience of loneliness. Suggestions are made in light of themes, as well as what existing clinical literature there is, as well as my own clinical experience in working with the lonely.

Loneliness as Inner Emptiness

The Experience:

I was new to the city and didn't know anyone. One night I went alone to the movies. After it was over, I noticed a woman exiting ahead of me. She was alone too. My heart quickened with hope - she was walking the same way home that I was. There was a desperation to me. Like a starving person walking by a bakery, I walked behind her wanting to overtake her and just talk to her, just introduce myself to her and learn her name and tell her my name. But she kept looking back at me nervously and increased the pace of her walk. The hope died within. She didn't want any part of me. I felt condemned

again to loneliness. I realize now, the irony of the situation - she was afraid of being alone with me - and so was I. I had this sick empty feeling inside me.

In one psychological research study the most frequently stated description of loneliness by the subjects was "it feels like there is a hole or space inside my chest" (Rubenstein & Shaver, 1982). Loneliness is experienced as the recognition that something is missing in our lives. It is this recognition of this inner emptiness that is the cognitive-affective clue that tells us we are lonely. Loneliness is a presence that is marked by emptiness. We have a heightened sense of being sealed inside our own skin. Whether we like it or not the focus has been turned on us and our situation-that we are alone. We become painfully aware that we are all we've got. As this awareness grows so does our sense of isolation. We become restless, bored, agitated. Time grinds by slowly rather than flowing quickly.

The most natural response to this sense of "something missing" is to initiate searching behavior. We experience the growing desperation of an addict who needs to find his or her next fix. Whom can we phone? Where can we go? What can we do? The urgency of our own inner emptiness is palatable. Often we are so agitated by our aloneness that our judgment is clouded and rationality is dimmed. Rarely do we stop long enough to ask what our discomfort is seeking to tell us. We just want to get away from this gnawing feeling within. And when our aloneness becomes loneliness we are willing to accept almost anything or anyone that will take our boredom, our restlessness, our hunger. We want our emptiness filled. If the individual is lonely for a long enough time, the acute pain of loneliness becomes a dull ache. Anxiety and desperation turn to despair, as the individual gives way to feelings of hopelessness about having their inner needs met. If unresolved, loneliness moves from being an uncomfortable transient emotional state to being an accepted way of life. As the paraplegic resigns him/herself to the wheelchair, so the lonely person can resign him/herself to a life of loneliness.

Implications for Counselors:

The normal procedure for dealing with difficult issues in a client's life is for the counselor to help the client express his/her feelings about the issue, and explore its meaning. Yet when faced with the inner abyss of a client's loneliness often the counselor simply acknowledges that he/she has heard the client's pain and then moves on. The counselor may feel helpless in working with the lonely client. Counselors recognize that such platitudes such as "you need to meet more people" are empty and hollow in the face of the lonely client's real pain. Any move to resist, or provide quick remedies for a client's loneliness will serve only to make them feel more isolated and potentially deepen feelings of low self esteem and unconnectedness. Rather than skirting the issue of loneliness, the counselor should take the time to explore the issue, and allow the client to express what he/she is feeling. The counselor will need to first and foremost allow the lonely client to express their inner emptiness. As many researchers have noted, loneliness is considered to be a social stigma and can be painful and embarrassing for the client to reveal (Bell & Gonzalez, 1988; Horowitz, French & Anderson, 1982; Jones, 1982). Simply hearing them, and giving permission for them to finally explore their pain will strengthen the feeling of connectedness they feel with the counselor. Exploring the client's loneliness with them can yield meaningful insights, and bring up significant therapeutic issues. Ask the client "what have you lost?" "what is it that is missing in your life?" "what are you looking for?" A willingness to go beyond a surface discussion can lead the client to a greater awareness of what they are actually experiencing. Simply allowing them to express their inner emptiness may be the first step in beginning to fill it in. Not only will exploring the client's loneliness be therapeutic, but it will also inform any interventions the counselor might attempt.

Loneliness as Invisibility

The Experience:

We used to go down to the disco every weekend. I remember this one night, no one had asked me or my friend to dance. And I can remember that Lynn and I just stared at each

other and I knew she was thinking the same thing I was: Will anyone ask me to dance? Am I good looking enough? Am I attractive enough? Am I worthy enough.

Some of the most painful times of loneliness come when we are in the presence of others. The child whose classmates ignore her, the single bridesmaid at the reception whom no one asks to dance, the lone figure walking down a street filled with strangers - strangers who all seem to be with someone else. The presence of others does not fill our inner emptiness, our inner longing. They magnify it. When we are lonely we feel invisible. No one really sees who we are as a person. "One of the most frequent and consistent correlates of loneliness has been poor self-esteem" (Jones, 1982, p. 238). It is an embarrassing condition for an adult to be that vulnerable. To admit that we need to give and receive love and care. We need to tell others our story, and know that we are part of theirs. Yet when we cannot we experience anxiety about our very being. Deep inside we feel as helpless and as frustrated as the child who comes crying to mommy because, "no one will play with me." The hurt is deep, for when we are alone there is no one who will wipe away our own tears of loneliness. When people are indifferent, and exclusive, our existence is insulted. We feel shocked and exasperated. "How dare they not care! How dare they shut me out! I'm worth something! I'm a somebody you know!" When others ignore us, and invalidate us we feel angry. But behind the anger is often a deep sense of loneliness. We feel like no one cares. One of the most subtle effects of loneliness is that it creates in us a deep seeded doubt about ourselves: We wonder, "what's wrong with me?" There is often a helplessness as well as a desperation to our loneliness.

And yet how many of us can remember a time where we were recognized. Where someone saw us for who we were. They saw us! The teacher who made us the class helper, the coach who made sure we were included, the friend who phoned, the thoughtful note from our spouse. Almost as if by magic loneliness disappeared. Simply to hear another's story is to validate that person and their life's experience. Unfortunately

some lonely individuals are so used to being ignored that they have no idea what their story is, let alone how to tell another. The very personality factors associated with chronically lonely people such as shyness, poor communication skills, and low self-esteem create barriers that prevent them from sharing their sense of self with another (Horowitz & DeSales, 1979). Quite simply they rarely, if ever, have had the experience of sharing with someone else who they are and what they feel. The chronically lonely person often does not have a deep sense of identity, and is not able to identify his/her emotions.

Implications for Counselors:

In their review of the literature Derlega et al (1991) note that the single most critical aspect of any psychotherapeutic venture is the quality of the relationship that exists between the therapist and the client. The therapeutic alliance is particularly important in working with the lonely client. Pacing and encouragement are critical factors in helping the lonely client get past talking about their loneliness to the point where they are actually sharing it in an authentic way with the counselor. The counselor should take extra care in checking and rechecking with his/her client what he/she is feeling and experiencing in the present moment. Often behind feelings of inner emptiness there is a great deal of emotion that the client has not let him/herself experience. As well, a central focus of therapy should be on developing communication skills and building trust levels to the point where the client can begin to tap into the emotions that lie behind his/her loneliness as communication is typically an aspect where the lonely individual feels inadequate (Zakahi & Duran 1985, 1982). It will not be easy for the client to explore his/her pain and inner emptiness. Intuitively he/she understands that in so doing he/she will be asking the question "is it me?" in earnest. Clearly this is not an easy question for the lonely person suffering from low self-esteem (Goswick & Jones; 1982; Jones, 1981) to ask-he/she already believes it is them. However, it is in the very process of confronting and exploring these issues that a strong relationship with the counselor evolves. Through

the unwavering support and encouragement of the counselor the client can begin to feel connected with someone who does value them. This emotional leverage can be used by the counselor to point out self defeating behaviors and belief systems that the lonely individual holds. The objective of the counselling relationship will be to help improve the client's self esteem to the point where he/she is empowered to initiate and maintain changes in dealing with his/her situation. The client will be much more motivated to change, if in fact he or she believes that they really do have something valuable in his/her personhood to offer others. The relational skills that the client is learning (perhaps for the first time) should be consciously pointed out by the counselor, and strategies should be formulated as to how the client can use some of their new skills, and self-image outside the counselling hour. Gains can be consolidated by having the client participate in group work that focuses on building self-esteem, improving communication skills, or teaching pro-social behavior.

Loneliness as Unrelatedness

The Experience:

If I died tomorrow no one would miss me.....How do I know? Simple, I come home every night after work and the first thing I do is look to see if there are any messages left on my answering machine. There never are.

The answering machine is silent. The apartment is silent. We go to great lengths to escape the silence that is loneliness- singles bars, video games, porno movies, TV, radio, walking the mall- anything so long as we no longer have to listen to the deafening silence of being all alone. And while these activities divert us for a time, the loneliness is still there waiting - waiting to return as soon as the anesthetic we are using at the time wears off. It seems like nothing will suffice. Even sex between two individuals is not enough, if it is outside of true relationship. Casual sex is pseudo-love. After the night of physical union and ecstasy, where we were locked in passion with another, in the morning there is nothing but a hangover of emptiness that was there before the evening

began. There is the mumbled excuse, the awkwardness and then the leaving, all alone. What is it we crave most when we are lonely? What is it that fills our inner emptiness? Sex? Entertainment? The company of others? Or is it relationship? Real meaningful relationship. Someone with whom we can share our lives and who will share his or her life with us. Someone who will receive the gift of ourselves when we give it to them, and someone who gives us the gift of themselves.

Loneliness can be understood as a measure of the distance we feel between ourselves and others. Yet some have never known intimacy or relationship at all in their lives. Many children have never experienced a warm, nurturing relationship while growing up. When it is offered to them at school, or as an adult, they do not know what to do with such an offer. It is foreign to them. Yet there is risk inherent in any relationship. The risk of disappointment, the risk of intimacy, the risk of pain, and perhaps worst of all, the risk of rejection. Often loneliness is chosen because it is safer and more familiar. It too is painful, but at least there are no surprises. We know what to expect. What kind of person can draw us out from our fear and insecurity? Who is it that is safe? Who can we really trust? Loneliness is the ache of this state of non-relatedness. Loneliness is what suggests to us that we are to be in relationship with others.

Implications for Counselors:

It is often assumed that the lonely individual simply lacks companionship with others. The "cure" for this kind of loneliness is simply to expose oneself to more and more social opportunities. However, more and more, researchers believe that it is not so much the quantity of relationships that an individual has, but also their quality (Cutrona, 1982; Fisher and Phillips, 1982; Jones, Freemon and Goswick, 1981; Wintrob, 1987). Horney (1950), Fromm (1951) and May (1953) all believed that unless the genuine self is known and accepted there will always exist a deep loneliness at the core of the individual. Often times helping lonely individuals overcome their loneliness will mean helping them become more in touch with their "real" selves (versus public persona) and learning to

relate to others in an authentic way. The counselling relationship may be the first exposure the client has ever had to relating to another on a truly intimate basis. Being in relationship may be new to them, and they can find it intimidating. The counselor, who is used to relating to others at very intimate levels should not ignore the ambivalence that his/her client may be experiencing or underestimate the significant role they play. The psychological safety of the client must be attenuated to. Often the client will be afraid that if he/she truly reveals who he/she is, he/she will be rejected, causing irreparable harm to his/her self image. Hiding behind masks, protecting him/herself from the judgments of others and living in the fear of abandonment are often prevalent themes in the lonely individual's psychological makeup. The counselor should take great care in stressing his/her unconditional positive regard, especially when the client lets down his/her defenses and shares his/her fears and faults. Often what is most difficult for the client to learn is that it is only in the sharing of his/her authentic self with the counselor and with that he/she will find true affirmation of his/her worth, and satisfying relationships. The key for the counselor is to build a safe enough atmosphere for the lonely individual to express his/her pain, anger and disappointment. Through the client-counselor relationship the client can come to understand what healthy, fulfilling relationships with others are all about. The counselor can help the client translate these understandings and experiences to his/her social world that exists outside the counselling setting.

Loneliness as Aloneness

The Experience:

I remember the first time I ever realized that I was truly alone. It was on a summer holiday with my wife and children. I was alone watching the sun set over the lake. It was on that beach that I felt, not just lonely, but really alone in life. Stark naked alone. I no longer felt any relationship with this familiar lake and its shoreline and its rocks and trees. Like a tree planted in the ground I was there, a complete and utter entity unto myself. Bounded by my own skin . And it was frightening. To really understand in an

undeniable way I that journey through this life alone. That no one can really know my story, my life, my being. Sometimes I find life to be a lonely affair.

Loneliness asks the questions, "who am I? What am I about? Why? am I alive?" It wonders if we can ever really find meaning and connection with others. *I'm scared to die alone.* Sometimes it feels like there is no one who can take our loneliness away. Perhaps it is as Szalita suggests, that loneliness is "the price we pay for being human" (1984, p.234). Loneliness may not be something foreign to our existence. There may be something deeper to loneliness than simply a transient emotional experience. When the individual who has meaningful relationships with others is still experiencing nagging feelings of loneliness he/she may be experiencing a deep sense of existential loneliness. In his qualitative research on loneliness Stuewe-Portnoff concluded by suggesting that all episodes of loneliness are engendered by estrangement and share the common experiential core which is that of meaning deficit (1988). He summarized his findings by stating that, "Missing is to losing as loneliness is to being lost" (p. 548).

Implications for Counselors:

Existential loneliness may not be something pathological to be "cured" by the counselor, but may be an opportunity for deeper psychological growth on the part of the individual (Moustakas, 1961). Existential aloneness may point to a healthy sense of individuation and personal boundaries as the individual explores the questions surrounding the meaning of their existence. In circumstances where the counselor believes that the loneliness the client is experiencing is existential in nature then the whole question of one's purpose in life should be explored. A logotherapeutic approach (Frankl, 1984, 1969) or an existential approach (Yalom, 1980) may be useful in helping the client grapple with the question of personal meaning. While the counselor cannot prescribe meaning for the client he/she can describe it to him/her by interpreting the phenomenological life experience of the client. The counselor perceives details and events in a comprehensive manner and recombines the data into a new gestalt. According

to Frankl one of the most important tools a counselor has in doing logotherapy is his/herself. Yalom echoed Frankl's stance towards the person of the counselor when he wrote, "the counselor's most important tool in this context is his or her own person" (1980, p.482). The conclusion one draws from these writers is that the use of meaning is not merely another "technique" that the counselor can simply learn, practice and master. To be sure there are theoretical underpinnings to be grappled with and interventions to learn, but what is fundamental in this aspect of psychotherapy is the interplay that meaning has in the life of both the counselor and client.

Another approach to dealing with existential loneliness is suggested by religious writers, who have dealt far more extensively with loneliness than has modern psychology. The mystics suggest that it is only through accepting and exploring our loneliness that we will become connected with self and with God (or ultimate meaning to life). They have suggested that through the often difficult practice of solitude we will find our true identity, and be rightly connected to God, to ourselves, and to others. More recently, psychologists are beginning to recognize the potential of solitude in helping the individual deal in a constructive way with the loneliness they experience (e.g. Andre, 1991; Paterson, Blashko & Janzen, 1991; Storr, 1988). One of the main purposes and benefits of solitude is that it allows the individual a time to struggle with identity formation by getting in touch with their real self. Reframing time alone not as loneliness, but as the opportunity for solitude, may help the client move to dealing with some of the deeper issues in their life. Skills such as journalling, and introspection may need to be taught to the client in order to help them become more in touch with their inner spiritual selves.

The Awareness of Loneliness

The Experience:

I walk into the kitchen and am already half way through my sentence before I realize May isn't there. I don't know how many times a day this happens. In the kitchen, in the

bedroom, in the car. I turn, expecting her to be there and she's not. Its like, where did she go? When did she go? Then there is nothing. Just emptiness. Its like I've lost my way. Now I have no one to witness my life.

Usually we are aware of loneliness only when it is present. Seldom do we think of it when we are not lonely. We do not say to ourselves, "I am feeling not lonely right now." Loneliness is a deep sense of inner aloneness that overtakes us and at times can even consume us. Loneliness is aloneness that is uninvited and unwelcomed. Loneliness comes in many guises: as pain, self pity, craving, sadness, or desperation. Loneliness is no longer being a part of that which once was: it is not being a part of that which currently is. Loneliness can be an acute psychological state, or a chronic way of life. Loneliness is the restless painful side of aloneness.

At the very least loneliness is an awareness: that we are lonely. That some inner need within us is not met. Like hunger pangs, the pangs of loneliness are not easily dismissed. However, there is a strong social stigma attached to loneliness and the admission of being in such a state. To admit to this most human of conditions is to admit social failure. The result is, that despite our awareness of loneliness, we hide it, or even deny it. This serves only to increase one's sense of isolation and inner pain. Simply being able to recognize and name it will go a long way in alleviating the loneliness that is so pervasive in our society. Certainly loneliness is a universal experience. It is easy to imagine that there are more people in the world who understand the word loneliness than there are those who understand the word love. Yet we throw the words lonely and loneliness carelessly about implying we all know what they mean: that there is one universal experience of loneliness and once you've had that experience you will never forget it. So when someone says that "I am lonely" we often assume that we know exactly what they mean. Certainly we may be able to identify with their pain and their lostness, but do we really know their loneliness. Can anyone who has never lost their spouse understand the loneliness of a husband who has lost his wife of 35 years? Though

loneliness is one of the most common of all human experiences, it should be understood that it is, at the same time, one of the most personal and unique experiences as well.

Implications for Counselors:

Phenomenological research has found that there are many type of loneliness (Rokach, 1989; Rubenstein & Shaver, 1982; Saddler, 1978). This present study identifies five of the dominant themes associated with loneliness: inner emptiness, invisibility, unrelatedness, aloness and the final one, awareness. McWhirter (1990) believed that in designing interventions often psychologists ignore the different types and experiences of loneliness. He concluded that generally therapies have not been matched to the type of loneliness an individual may be experiencing. Clearly the therapist must have a sensitivity to the nature, cause and experience of the loneliness he/she is attempting to treat. Simply to adopt a single approach in working with the lonely may not be adequate.

In her pioneering article Fromm-Reichmann (1959) suggested that counselors are hesitant to explore their client's loneliness because it may be too close to their own inner loneliness. She went on to state that loneliness was a critical psychological issue deserving of intense scientific study and intervention. However, since her article thirty-five years ago the literature has almost been mute in discussing how to do therapy with the lonely client. I have been researching loneliness for the past five years. Though I have learned a great deal about the current psychological thinking and research in this area, I am not sure that I can say that I have learned a great deal about the experience of loneliness itself. Most of the valuable things I have learned regarding what it means to be actually lonely have come from my own experience of loneliness and the experiences others have shared with me. What has changed for me over the course of my research, is the sensitivity I now have regarding loneliness: where I would have passed by it before, I recognize it now; where I would have been silent about it before, I now openly discuss it with others; where I would have accepted it as "a given" in therapy before, now it often becomes the focus and guiding force of the therapy. I cannot say that I have found any

new dazzling interventions or miracle "cures" to help the client with their loneliness. However, I am more and more impressed with how therapeutic it is for the client to be able to openly discuss and explore her loneliness. Sometimes I can offer practical suggestions or helpful interventions. Other times, as the client explores his own loneliness, it leads him to the very core of the issue he must deal with. But basically, what I think has been most helpful to clients, is my sensitivity to the issue, and my willingness to experience it with them. This can be a very difficult thing. Sometimes in empathizing with their loneliness, I can feel how lost, how overwhelming, and how empty they feel. And, sometimes, in feeling their loneliness, I feel my own. When this happens often my first impulse is to "help the client move on to other, more important things." But for them, their loneliness is the important thing. If I am able to be psychologically present for them, often it is in the meeting of our loneliness, that I find the deepest relationship with them. It is as though, if only I can endure the pain of my client's loneliness long enough, there is born out of that endurance, relationship, and out of that, relationship, hope.

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CHAPTER 4

Introduction

In life, we experience being alone in many different ways. One can be alone physically, psychologically, existentially or spiritually. Being alone can be a description of a physical reality; one is simply not in the presence of others. Being stranded on a desert island is an example. Living in a new city where we don't have any deep meaningful relationships is an example of being psychologically alone. There are people all around us but we do not feel connected to them. There is existential aloneness, which stems from the realization that while relationship in life is possible and desirable, there is no relationship that can remove the fact that we are born, journey through life and die alone. Finally, spiritual loneliness can be experienced when we feel distant or completely cut off from God. Yet while it is true that, at least in an existential sense, we are alone, most of us are uncomfortable with this idea. A major factor for this discomfort is because we equate being alone with being lonely. Indeed, several writers use the terms "alone", "lonely" and "solitude" interchangeably. Not only is this inaccurate, but it confuses any attempt to understand the difference between being alone, lonely and in solitude(Gotesky, 1965).

Often our awareness of being alone leads into the painful experience of loneliness. A review of the psychological literature shows that by and large loneliness has been defined as a "social deficit problem" (West, Kellner & Moore, 1986) and is considered the painful, often destructive side of aloneness (Fromm-Reichmann, 1959; Peplau & Perlman, 1987; Weiss, 1987). It is typically suggested that the "cure" for loneliness is coming into contact with the social world that surrounds the individual. However, a small number of writers have noted that there is aloneness that is desirable, healthy and integrative. This experience of aloneness has been called solitude (Andersson, 1986; André, 1991; Koller, 1990; Paterson, Blashko & Janzen 1991). Tillich (1963) suggested that our response to our aloneness can take one of two forms: that of

loneliness, or that of solitude. Rather than seeking relationship with others outside of oneself, solitude can be defined as a journey inward that seeks to strengthen the individual's relationship with self, and/or with God.

Despite the apparent relationship between loneliness and solitude there has been few investigations that attempt to understand the connection between loneliness and solitude. Nor has there been any comprehensive theory put forth that attempts to explain why at times we seek being alone, and other times we fear it. The purpose of this article is to explore the relationship that solitude and loneliness have with each other. Once the terms "loneliness" and "solitude" have been defined, a circular model of loneliness, as it relates to both solitude as well as social intercourse, is proposed. Implications of this model for research and counseling are then be explored.

Loneliness

The vast number of theories about the nature and cause of loneliness has become a hindrance to research in this area. It has been noted that the very personal and subjective nature of loneliness makes it a difficult construct to define precisely (Rokach, 1988; Sadler, 1978). In an overview article of the research literature, Anderson French and Horowitz (1983) found "the concept of the lonely person is not well defined" (p. 183) and noted that there is a wide array of meanings attached to the word loneliness. In their review of the literature West, Kellner and Moore (1986) identified three important ways that scholars view loneliness: (a) it is a result of deficiencies in a person's social[75] relationships; (b) it is a subjective experience (you can be lonely in a crowd, and not lonely on a desert island); (c) the experience of loneliness is unpleasant and distressing. The majority of those researching loneliness have accepted these three premises. However, a number of researchers have noted that while convenient, these premises are

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[75] The term "social" in this context denotes that loneliness is due to a relational deficit to others - whether those others be intimate others, or simply a social network.

essentially inadequate and do not get to the true nature of the experience of loneliness (de Jong-Gierveld, 1987; Jones, 1987; Wood, 1987).

Some writers believe that loneliness is more complex than simply being a unidimensional construct. France, McDowell and Knowles (1984) contended that there are 5 dimensions of loneliness--interpersonal, cultural, cosmic, social, and psychological. They theorized that fear and anxiety, alienation, isolation, hopelessness, and/or emptiness can constitute the essential core of these dimensions. Several writers have suggested that there is a loneliness that is existential in nature (Mijuskovic, 1977; Moustakas, 1961; Yalom, 1980). This loneliness is the result of the awareness by the individual that essentially he/she is alone in life. Rolheiser (1979) suggested that individuals are lonely for many things: communication, unity, understanding, God, others and ourselves. He described several types of loneliness; alienation, which occurs when we feel alienated or estranged from others, when we cannot love or understand others or be loved and understood ourselves; restlessness, which is a constant dissatisfaction and restlessness within us that perpetually keeps us frustrated and in a state of unrest and loneliness; fantasy-loneliness, which is caused by failure to be completely in contact with reality as it is in itself; rootlessness-loneliness which we experience when we feel that we have no roots. A broader understanding of loneliness has not only been suggested at a theoretical level, but has been supported by research. Rubenstein and Shaver's (1982) factor analysis of respondents' descriptions of loneliness identified unattachment, alienation, being alone, forced isolation and dislocation as various causes of loneliness. Rokach (1988) developed a 3-level model of the experience of loneliness based on the content analysis of verbatim reports of loneliness accounts provided by 516 subjects. The model identified self-alienation, interpersonal isolation, and distressed reactions /agony as the three main types of loneliness. It becomes obvious on both the theoretical level and research level that loneliness is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon.

Despite these findings, loneliness researchers to date have been content to conceptualize loneliness as basically a deficit between the desired amount of social contact an individual wants, and what they actually have (Perlman & Peplau, 1987). Little has been done to explore the various types and experiences of loneliness, and their relationship to each other. Rolheiser (1979) suggested that in coping with loneliness one needs to employ different strategies that are dependent on the type of loneliness one is experiencing. However, for the most part, the connection between the type of loneliness one experiences and the strategy one uses in coping with it has been ignored.

Even if one accepts that loneliness is due in large part to social deficits in the individual's world, there are many other factors that must be considered. In his review of the literature Anderson (1986) found that a major problem associated with loneliness research was that often the measurement of loneliness was defined by how many people an individual knew and how frequent their social outings were. He found this inadequate as it did not take into account the quality of those relationships. Research has confirmed that it is the quality of the social relationship that is critical in determining whether or not the individual perceives him/herself as lonely (Cutrona, 1982; Fisher and Phillips, 1982; Jones, Freemon and Goswick, 1981).

Horney (1950), Fromm (1951) and May (1953) all believed that unless the genuine self is known and accepted there will always exist a deep loneliness at the core of the individual. By being incongruent and phony the individual is doomed to be lonely regardless of how many social contacts she has. Research suggests that the quality of social relationships may be directly influenced by how well connected the individual is to him/self. Jones (1982) found that one of the most consistent correlates to loneliness has been poor self-esteem. Peplau, Miceli and Morasch (1982) believed that the relationship between low self-esteem and loneliness indicated that "intrapsychic self-estrangement is a cause of loneliness" (p.144). Davies (1993) found that self-estrangement was strongly

correlated to loneliness. Anderson summarized the effects of self-estrangement when he stated,

> I draw on the existentialists' position, that it is only the genuine self that can relate and be true. To experience a real self is to feel ontologically safe. However, this is not equivalent with being caught in one's present limitations, as the genuine self is open, flexible, and creative....as long as the self under these circumstances is experienced as a false self and is also the self accepted by others, the resultant reaction is one of self-estrangement (1986, p. 689).

Several writers believe that loneliness is related to the existential questions of life that concern its nature and purpose. It has been theorized that the less one feels purpose and meaning in one's life, the more alienated and lonely one will feel (Gotesky, 1965; Mendelson, 1990; Moustakas, 1961; Yalom, 1980). Unfortunately there has been little research done that examines this premise. However, alienation has been identified as a consistent theme that is associated with loneliness. Stuewe-Portnoff (1988) identified a lack of meaning as a dominant theme in the reports of his subject's description of loneliness. Other research has demonstrated that a commitment to faith, religion or spirituality is negatively related to loneliness (Paloutzin and Ellison, 1982; Paterson, Blashko & Janzen, 1991; Rokach, 1990). Thus there is initial evidence to suggest that the existential questions of meaning and purpose of life do in fact impact the loneliness one experiences. Traditionally, the Christian church has understood this inner emptiness that is the hallmark of loneliness (Davies, 1995) to be the God given part of our humanity that remains unfulfilled until one comes into a personal relationship with God through faith.

It is a fair assessment to say that loneliness has been widely understood by researchers as mainly a social deficit problem that is unidimensional in nature. However this concept of loneliness has been challenged both at a theoretical level and a research level. Researchers have found that it is not the quantity of relationships that one has that is important in determining the amount of loneliness one experiences, but it is the quality of those relationships that is the determining factor. Multidimensional aspects of loneliness have emerged through research. There is some evidence to suggest that themes such as self-alienation and existential crises can result in loneliness. Historically, the

Christian faith has held that there is spiritual loneliness which is the result of humankind's inherent need for a relationship with God. In light of this research I would propose a slight but important modification be made to West, Kellner and Moore's (1986) first working premise, that loneliness is a result of deficiencies in a person's social relationships. While I agree that loneliness is essentially a result of relationship deficits, I suggest that relationship be understood in a broader context than merely involving other individuals. A more complete understanding of relationship should not only include others, but the relationship with have with God and with self. From this standpoint loneliness can be understood as the inner motivation we experience that calls us into deeper relationship with self, God, and others.

Solitude

Traditionally the practice of solitude has been associated with religion (Andrews, 1977; Bonhoeffer, 1955; Rolheiser, 1979). One retreated into silence, often in monasteries or hermitages, in order to spend focused time drawing closer to God. However in the mid seventeenth century there was a perceptible change reflected in the literature and poems of the day that indicate that solitude had become more inward focused. Individuals sought solitude in order to focus on self rather than God. Solitude provided the setting in which insight, creativity and re-creation were optimized (Morrison, 1986; Storr, 1988). With few exceptions the psychological community has been reluctant to study solitude, prompting Storr to note the curious anomaly that we are more interested in exploring the fear of being alone rather than the desire to be alone.

Like loneliness, the term solitude conjures up several different ideas about what it is. There is no consensus among the various writers about the essential nature of solitude and several writers have used the terms solitude and loneliness interchangeably as though they were the same experience (Fromm-Reichmann, 1959; Mijuskovic, 1977; Moustakas, 1961). Traditionally solitude has been associated with ascetic practices left only for the few monks, mystics and artists who dare seek it (Foster, 1978; Moustakas, 1961;

Nouwen, 1986). The focus of solitude in the Christian tradition has been to draw close to God through silent waiting, meditation, contemplation and prayer. Recently there has been a recognition of the potential benefits of solitude by the psychological community (André, 1991; Larson, 1990; Morrison 1986; Paterson, Blashko & Janzen, 1991). Gotesky (1965) defined solitude as simply as being alone without experiencing loneliness:

> solitude is that state or condition of living alone, in any of its many forms, without the pain of loneliness or isolation being an intrinsic component of that state or condition. What is the relation of solitude to the total life of any man capable of living it? We can immediately say this: It is not the whole of his life. He seeks it or enters into it because of need or necessity. When it is necessary or the need is upon him, he will seek the mountain-top in order, perhaps to commune with the stars, to listen to the secrets hidden in his unconscious or to interface with infinite being. (1965; p.236)

Tillich (1963) noted that solitude can be found in the midst of everyday activities such as reading a poem, hearing music, studying a painting, or thinking significant thoughts. Thomas Merton, one of the most famous of the modern day mystics noted that solitude was not so "other worldly". He defined solitude as being alone, and being comfortable in the moment of being alone. For Merton to be in solitude meant,

> in the end, not that one finds a new and mysterious universe to live in, but that the old ordinary universe, with all its everyday poverty and charm, while remaining perfectly ordinary, perfectly real, perfectly poor, becomes transfigured from within (1950; p.211).

The hallmark of solitude is serenity. Phenomenologically the experience of solitude stands in sharp contrast to that of loneliness. Unlike the aloneness that is loneliness, it is the individual who initiates the aloneness of solitude. Typically the individual chooses the time, and more importantly the place (often a place in nature that is quiet and peaceful) of solitude. In contrast to loneliness, solitude is experienced as: freedom rather than confinement; peacefulness rather than restlessness; fulfillment rather than emptiness; calmness rather than anxiety; a sense of being in rhythm rather than out of step. In solitude there is little effort to the act of living. There is no desperation, no

anxiety, just acceptance of all there is. Solitude allows us to become in touch with ourselves, our universe and our God (André, 1991; Nouwen, 1974, 1986).

André (1991) has done the most extensive psychological treatise concerning solitude. However, in light of some of the religious writers, her approach to solitude seems somewhat simplistic. There is little attention to how difficult it is to overcome loneliness and the very concept of solitude seems to be somewhat superfluous. Her basic thesis is that lonely people need to simply reframe their loneliness by understanding it as solitude, and thus enjoy their aloneness. In contrast to André, most of the religious writers have been adamant in suggesting that solitude is not a way around loneliness, it is a way through loneliness (Foster, 1977; Merton, 1950; Nouwen, 1987). Solitude was not sought as an escape from loneliness, but as a resolution of loneliness by seeking a deeper more meaningful relationship with self and God. Larson's (1990) subjects all recognized the benefits of solitude in their lives, yet nevertheless experienced more loneliness when alone, than when in the company of others. The mystics believed that solitude was an appropriate response to loneliness, yet there were no illusions about how difficult the practice of solitude is. Often times the individual who enters solitude does not find release from her loneliness, but faces her loneliness head on. As Nouwen states,

> This difficult road is the road of conversion, the conversion from loneliness into solitude. Instead of running away from our loneliness and trying to forget or deny it, we have to protect it and turn it into fruitful solitude. To live a spiritual life we must first find the courage to enter into the desert of our loneliness and to change it by gentle and persistent efforts into a garden of solitude. This requires not only courage but a strong faith (1986, p. 34).

Traditionally the religious understanding of solitude has been that it is a discipline like other religious disciplines, that needs to be learned and practiced. With regards to individual differences in temperaments suited for solitude Storr noted that "the need to be alone differs in its capacity to be alone" (1988, p.93). Intuitively we understand that some people will find it much easier to practice solitude than others. Robin Lee Graham (1972) was a teenager who took five years to sail around the world alone. He wrote explicitly about the pain of loneliness that he endured on this trip and suggested that anyone who

desires to spend time in solitude needs to begin slowly and first learn to be with him or herself for short periods of time. Morrison (1986) identified several benefits enjoyed by her subjects in their solitude experience. The most dominant themes reported by the subjects were those that described health and healing. This healing was attained by using the time spent in solitude to integrate the physical, psychological, personal, and spiritual processes of the individual. A current pervasive psychological malaise in Western society is "burnout" which results from stress and frenetic activity. Solitude allows one to rediscover one's own natural "rhythms" and align one's life accordingly. The second theme Morrison (1986) identified was that of confronting and overcoming fear. All of her subjects reported experiencing some fear in their solitude, whether that was fear of being alone, or fear of having to deal with issues they would rather not. However, the subjects reported that their solitude allowed them to confront and overcome their fear. The result was the subjects felt more self confident in returning from their solitude experience. The themes of individuation and autonomy also emerged. In coming apart from others the individuals were able to gain a stronger sense of their own identity, become more self-sufficient, and less dependent on others. The individual in fact learns to become intimate with him/herself. Also noted was the benefits of solitude in problem solving. Whether a personal problem or a more abstract problem, it is widely recognized that often it is useful to "get away from it all" in order to think things through. Solitude is the space we need to think deeply about things (Gotesky, 1965). The final theme Morrison (1986) identified was what she called re-creation. This resembles the experience that Merton and other mystics describe when they talk of being in tune with the present moment and with the living God. The loneliness is accepted and transcended, and rather than finding emptiness the result is a deeper sense of personal meaning and connection with the universe.

Larson (1990) theorized that solitude was important for developmental tasks of individuation and identity formation. In his research, Larson found that solitude allowed individuals time apart from others in order to explore and develop their private persona

and reconcile it with their public persona. His subjects reported feeling less self conscious about their actions when alone then when in the presence of others. As well, subjects indicated that solitude gave them a greater ability to concentrate on things, a greater sense of control over their lives, and a greater freedom to explore their creative selves. In his overview of the practice of solitude Storr observed that "the capacity to be alone thus becomes linked with self-discovery and self-realization; becoming aware of one's deepest needs, feelings and impulses." (1986, p. 35). Paterson, Blashko and Janzen recognized the relationship that solitude has to loneliness and state,

> To combat loneliness requires a journey to the self, not more socializing. The capacity to be alone is linked with self-discovery and self-acceptance; it is a process of coming to terms with our inner self, bringing about a sense of peace. Such discovery takes time, solitude and aloneness; it is a process of learning (1991, p. 275).

A notable theme absent from the writings of André (1991), Morrison (1986) and Storr (1986) is the role solitude plays in developing the spiritual dimension of our humanity. Originally solitude was the path used to deepen one's relationship with one's God, rather than oneself. In biblical tradition the wilderness was the place of both spiritual warfare and spiritual maturing. Virtually all the great mystics sought solitude. In his famous statement, "Thou hast made us for Thyself and the heart is restless, until it finds rest in Thee" (1961, p. 29) St. Augustine was suggesting that at least part of the loneliness we experience in life is a result of our desire to be connected to God. Historically, Christianity has recognized this form of loneliness and accorded it great significance and believed it to be best responded to, not by seeking the company of others, but by seeking solitude. Individuals who have been forced into solitude through captivity or calamity have often reported having powerful spiritual experiences (Frankl, 1985; Solzhenitsyn, 1975). Thus solitude is seen as being essential, not only for our psychological/emotional well being, but also for our spiritual well being. Its purpose is not merely to find self, but to find self in relationship with a living, active God who desires to be in relationship with us.

Solitude appears to be a legitimate response for those experiencing what I call "inner-loneliness". This inner emptiness has been identified as an important cause of loneliness (Fromm, 1951; Horny, 1950; May, 1951; Reisman, 1950). Cushman (1990) has suggested that a major cause of low self-esteem is what he terms "inner-emptiness." Inner loneliness results when one is not in a deep and meaningful relationship with self or with God. Biblically the dichotomy between self and God as somewhat artificial: in the biblical tradition the only way to be truly related to self is to be in a faith relationship with God through Christ. Thus, in terms of a Christian understanding, to seek solitude without seeking God is to miss the point. Cushman notes that rather than helping deal with the inner-emptiness that so many individuals experience, psychology has exasperated the problem by pointing towards the use of "life-style solutions." This typically takes the form of pursuing frenetic activity that distracts the individual from her loneliness. The benefit of solitude is that it breaks the individual out of his frenetic attempts to evade loneliness. Instead, it invites the individual to turn and face her loneliness head on. Solitude provides the setting whereby relationship with self and with God is intentionally focused on. This can allow the individual to become better connected to himself, to God and to the others.

Loneliness and Solitude: An Integrative Model

Hegemen (1990) identified two main types of loneliness. The first was that which she called ordinary loneliness, which is the missing of others. The second was a much deeper type of loneliness that was existential in nature. The second type of loneliness that is inward in nature and has more to do with our relationship to ourselves and to God than with our relationship with others. When one experiences this type of loneliness, rather than seeking the company of others, perhaps a more beneficial response would be to seek solitude. In solitude the individual faces her loneliness and in so doing she may be able to overcome her compulsive fear of loneliness. In solitude we become acquainted with our own "inner" world and can spend focused time nurturing our spiritual life. The result is a

greater sense of self-identity, self-autonomy and spiritual growth. Yet, as the mystics realized, solitude is not an end unto itself. Traditionally solitude was seen as an integral part of being in relationship with others. Originally solitude was practiced as a way of connecting with God and with self. However in both cases this connection was to be transferred to the "outer" world of society. The underlying assumption was that the more deeply one was connected to self and God, the more deeply one would be connected to one's fellow man. The practice of solitude was conceived as directly impacting social relationships, by deepening them, and making them more real, and less superfluous. Some have mistaken solitude as simply an escape from the pain of human contact and an avoidance of this painful condition (Freud, 1953). There must be a clear distinction between seeking isolation (the mere avoidance of others) and seeking solitude. The purpose of solitude is not to isolate us from others, but ultimately it is to help us be more deeply related to one another. The thesis of this paper is that these relationships are not linear, but circular in nature. Developing a deeper more meaningful relationship with self, or God, or others is not done in isolation from being in relationship with others. We will not only find relationship with God and self in solitude, but we will also deepen our relationship with others, albeit indirectly. In the same way, the relationships we have with others will impact the relationship with self and God. The relationships we have with others, God, and self are not mutually exclusive, but interdependent. The key is more on the emphasis and focus of where and how we are relating. There are times when we need to in the community of others, just as there are times when we need to withdraw and be in solitude (Bonhoeffer, 1954; Nouwen, 1986). It is critical to distinguish when our loneliness is best satisfied by solitude versus sociability.

Another benefit of solitude is that is weans us from compulsive sociability. Mijuskovic (1992) believed that our strong atomistic orientation as a society has left us bereft of a true sense of community. He believed it is this lack of connection that is the main cause of loneliness in our society. A number of writers have noted that often

friendship and companionship have been sought merely to escape loneliness (Andersson, 1986; Iyer, 1993; Mendelson, 1990).Wintrob (1987) found that while individuals disclose a great deal of intimate details about themselves, it is often in a way that is "sales like" and self promoting. She has labeled this exchange of personal details as "pseudo-intimacy." The result is shallow and empty relationships that result in loneliness. Commenting on the balance between the need to be alone and the need for others. Bonhoeffer observed that,

> the person who comes into a fellowship because he is running away from himself is misusing it for the sake of diversion.....he is not seeking community at all, but only distraction which will allow him to forget his loneliness for a brief time, the very alienation that creates the deadly isolation of man.....let him who cannot be alone beware of community.....let him who is not in community be aware of being alone (1954, p. 76, 77).

Thus solitude not only is the appropriate response for the "inner" loneliness of alienation and meaning, but it also can impact the loneliness we feel as a result of social deficits. The literature clearly reflects that a major factor that impacts loneliness is the quality and not merely the quantity of relationships an individual has (Cutrona. 1982; Fisher and Phillips, 1982; Jones, Freemon and Goswick, 1981). Solitude can be a way to strengthen and deepen one's relationship with self and with others. Paterson, Blashko and Janzen observe that,

> Research clearly shows that a person who has a style of thinking and an independent personality will have greater internal autonomy and be able to make judgments more clearly. These people experience less dependency. They have a greater differentiated system (they are said to be more field independent) and they show greater ability to separate "self" from the "non self." They show greater connectedness to other people and thus experience less loneliness. On the other hand, those people who are more dependent need greater connectedness. If they feel left out or alone, they will succumb to this feeling with greater distress (1991, p. 271).

It is important to note, that the direction of the relationship between loneliness, solitude and social relationship is not one way. Not only will solitude have a positive impact on our relationships with others, but our relationship with others will make solitude much more accessible. It is always easier to leave for the wilderness if one

knows there are others who care for her and will be waiting for her when she returns. It is the community of friends and loved ones that allows solitude to be an experience of deepening relationships rather than one of miserable isolation. While the journey into solitude is often met with resistance, if one has supportive meaningful relationships, solitude will be perceived as less threatening. As well, an understanding of the processes of solitude can be helpful in overcoming the barriers. It may be just as important for psychologists to teach clients solitary skills as it is relational skills.

The model of loneliness and solitude proposed in this article is circular in nature. Loneliness is conceptualized as an inner drive that calls us to relationship. Relationship can be understood in terms of being related outwardly to others, or inwardly to self or God. When the origin of loneliness is due to a deficit in one's outward relationships, then the most appropriate response is that of social intercourse and deepening relationships. When the origin of loneliness is due to self-estrangement, or existential or spiritual crisis, then the most appropriate response would be to seek solitude. The more comfortable one is with self in solitude, the more likely one will enjoy deeper more satisfying relationships with others. Conversely, the higher the quality of social relationships that one enjoys, the more beneficial and accessible solitude will be. Jung noted this relationship and stated,

> growing up involves the progressive achievement of a capacity to be alone and to be with others. Aloneness and togetherness are interdependent. I can only be alone in so far as I can be together with others. I can only be together with others if I am able to be alone (in Hobson, 1974, p. 77).

Implications

Satran (1990) believed that for the most part, psychologists and psychiatrists are not trained in how to deal with a client's loneliness. It is often simply accepted as a given and receives little attention by the therapist. In his review of the literature McWhirter (1990) identified three main approaches psychologists take in dealing with loneliness: (1) social skills training; (2) cognitive behavioral strategies; (3) and small group therapy.

However he believed that in designing interventions often psychologists ignore the different types and experiences of loneliness. Too often it is simply assumed that loneliness can be remedied by the company of others. Certainly if one moves to a new city where one has no relatives or friends it is natural to experience some loneliness. A more outward focused social response is likely appropriate for this type of loneliness. The individual should attempt establishing a social network. However the individual who has never moved from his hometown, and who is surrounded by family and friends, may experience loneliness that is intrapersonal, spiritual or existential in nature. In this situation the inward focus of seeking solitude may be the more appropriate response to the loneliness. Thus, solitude may be seen as a viable intervention in certain situations. It is a mistake, however, to understand solitude and social answers as being dichotomous and unrelated to each other. We need to recognize the relationship that loneliness, solitude, and social relationships have to each other. Mendelson has suggested,

> both connection and solitude being part of the human condition, each offers its pleasures and its pains. A function of psychotherapy in the broader context, may be to free the person to discover the optimal mix for him of relatedness and solitude, and to cope self-respectingly with the sorrows that accompany solitude and that attend connection. Accordingly, loneliness in and of itself, may not necessarily be a condition to be "cured" (1990, p.354).

There are at least three critical challenges facing psychologists in dealing with loneliness. The first of these is at the clinical level. Too often a client's loneliness is merely accepted and not dealt with by the therapist. The client tells her therapist that they are lonely and the therapist acknowledges it, but does little to directly address the problem. If the current literature on loneliness is correct, and it is a multidimensional problem rather than a unidimensional problem then a client's loneliness may be a rich source of information about some of the other problems they may be facing. Thus, counselors not only need to become more sensitive to exploring a client's loneliness, but also more adept at diagnosing the "type" of loneliness they are experiencing. The therapist needs to be asking "Is this cultural loneliness? or existential loneliness? or social loneliness? or spiritual loneliness?" Once having an understanding of the nature of the

client's loneliness the therapist is in a better position to tailor their intervention. This is the next challenge for counselors and psychologists-we need to develop more thoughtful interventions in attempting to help our client's meet the challenge of loneliness. As this article has suggested rather than merely having the client meet more people, at times an appropriate response to loneliness may in fact be solitude. However it will take effort and experience on the counselor's behalf in order to become adept at both diagnosing the type of loneliness and matching it with the appropriate intervention.

The second challenge in dealing with the problem of loneliness lies in primary prevention, namely in our school systems. While I am reticent to suggest one more task to be assumed by our educational system (I realize they are overloaded already), I do believe that the "forth R" is important enough for teachers to be sensitized to. The "forth R" is that of relationship. Often school is the first place outside the family that the child becomes exposed to society at large. In this initial exposure the child can often sink or swim. Erickson (1963) theorized that at ages six through puberty the basic developmental task is that of competence versus inferiority. This task is adequately resolved if the child masters both basic social and intellectual skills. Failure to meet these tasks result in lack of self-confidence and feeling of failure. I would add that they likely point the child towards a life of loneliness. Teachers need to be sensitized to the problem of the lonely child, as well as trained in intervening on their behalf. A child who is repeatedly marginalized in their grade school years is potentially a good candidate for facing a life of loneliness. It is critical in the early years that not just the asocial child be remediated, but as well, the nonsocial child be remediated. As important as it is in the early years to teach children prosocial skills, it may be just as important in high school to teach them solitary skills. Erickson identified the developmental challenge of adolescence as being a time where identity versus role confusion is resolved. The successful resolution of this challenge leaves the individual with a clear sense of self. Larson's (1990) research showed that out of all the age groups adolescents found time alone to be most difficult to

endure. However he believed that solitude may be most critical in adolescence, as identity formation is at an important stage. As this article demonstrates, one of the main purposes and benefits of solitude is that it allows the individual a time to struggle with identity formation by getting in touch with their real self. Once again the challenge is how to integrate the concept of solitude as being part of any curriculum.

The final challenge identified in this article is that of research on loneliness and solitude. Until now the overwhelming majority of research on loneliness has been done on those who are lonely. However, borrowing Maslow's paradigm, perhaps there is a great deal we can learn by studying those who are not lonely. Specifically there is a need to study those who are "masters" of solitude. Ostensibly there must be something the researcher can learn from those who spend large portions of time alone and yet do not find it a destructive experience, but an integrative experience. This population may offer some extremely helpful insights in dealing with the problem of loneliness. The long tradition that Christianity, as well as other religions have shared regarding the solitude experience is of great potential in understanding how being alone can be a healthy and even desirable state. Clearly, there is a need to take seriously and investigate the spiritual role loneliness and solitude plays in the experience of the individual.

Theoretically this article presents a more comprehensive and representative model of loneliness than what is currently in use. As well it provides the counselor with other ways of understanding loneliness and its alleviation. The counselor can now consider the possibility of solitude as a solution to their client's loneliness. To be sure there are still many unanswered questions about loneliness, solitude and social relationships. One of the most difficult unanswered questions is how this model would help the chronically lonely individual who has no meaningful social relationships and has a weak sense of self identity. Clearly more research is vital as is a focus on interventions for loneliness.

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CHAPTER 5

General D' ion and Conclusion

The purpose of this concluding chap'er i' o summarize the findings of the previous three chapters of this dissertatic d synthesize them in a meaningful way as they apply to he field oneliness research. e three articles on research were tied ogether by their common purpose to investigate loneliness beyond merely describing the attributes, causes or antecedents of the lonely individual. The purpose of these three investigations was to better understand at a conceptual and experiential level what loneliness is.

Summary of Findings

Chapter 2 of this dissertation was a quantitative investigation of the three main theories of loneliness: Weiss's (1973) social/emotional typology, Perlman and Peplau's (1982) cognitive approach, and an existential understanding of loneliness(e.g. Mijuskovic, 1977; Mendelson, 1990; Moustakas, 1961). The variable that these three theories of loneliness were measured on was that of self. Based on this investigation there was little evidence to support Weiss' social/emotional typology, some evidence that supported a cognitive mediation effect, and strong evidence that suggested loneliness was tied to self-estrangement. Several writers have theorized a strong link between self-estrangement and existential loneliness (Andersson, 1986; Fromm, 1951; May, 1953). If one accepts this theoretical proposition, then it can be said that this study provided strong support for a type of loneliness that is existential in nature Thus it may be, that in a significant number of the cases, the lonely individual may be lonely not only because he/she lacks relationship with others, but also because he/she lacks relationship with self.

The second study (Chapter 3) was a phenomenological investigation of loneliness. Through interviews and others sources this investigation attempted to discover the dominant themes of an individual's experience of loneliness and understand these

themes. The overriding theme of [illegible]ness. Lonely individuals inevitably felt that they were "missing" something, and reported a general sense of incompleteness. Loneliness was marked by searching behavior, melancholy, self-doubt, feelings of vulnerability and worthlessness and a sense of being "shut out" from the fullness of life. Subjects identified times when they simply longed for the physical presence of others, and other times when the presence of others was insufficient in overcoming their loneliness. What they wanted during these times, were deeper more intimate relationships. Most subjects also understood that there were limitations on all relationships and how much they could answer the call of loneliness. A few subjects described times when they were lonely just to be with self and expressed the need for solitude. The antithesis of loneliness was described in [illegible]onal terms, where individuals felt a sense of belonging and relatedness. This was not only described in terms of being related to other individuals and loved ones, but also in terms of being related meaningfully to oneself, to one's life and one's God. One of the main findings of this investigation was that loneliness is a very personal construct with each subject having their own unique experience of loneliness and while there was a common consensus of what loneliness was, nevertheless each had their own personal meaning. As the interviews progressed, not only did the meaning of loneliness become more evident, but so did the subjects own understanding of their experience. The more they explored their loneliness the more they appeared to appreciate its complexity and its importance.

The third article (Chapter 4) explored the relationship that aloneness, loneliness and solitude have with each others. Working definitions were provided in the article in an attempt to clarify a generally muddling of these concepts as found in the literature (see, Gotesky, 1965). The article reviewed the literature on loneliness and based on this review suggested that loneliness would be better understood as not merely resulting from relational deficits with others, but also as the result of a relational deficit with self and God. From this working definition solitude was then reviewed from a historical viewpoint

and it was suggested that for certain types of loneliness the appropriate response would not be to seek the company of others but to seek only the company of self and God, through the practice of solitude. Solitude was described as being a way through loneliness rather than a way around it. The result of the practice of solitude is that the individual has a deeper sense of self and feels more closely connected to self and to God. In having a stronger relationship with self and with God, the individual is in a more optimal psychological position to enjoy deeper more meaningful relationships with others. Conversely, those who feel significantly related to others will find solitude less threatening as they have a secure base from which to work. Thus the model of loneliness as it relates to solitude described in this article was circular in nature whereby relationships with others, self and God are all interconnected. There are times when it is appropriate to withdraw from others in order to seek solitude, but there is also a time to come out of solitude in order to be in relationship with others.

Suggestions for Further Research

Theoretical Concerns

In reviewing the evolution of loneliness research it can be safely said that the dominant theories of loneliness have been those of Robert Weiss (1977, 1982) who used Bowlby's (1973) work on attachment theory as a basis for understanding loneliness. Others such as Perlman and Peplau (1982; 1987) have built upon Weiss's theories using a cognitive framework. However there is a wide divergence in attempting to understand and conceptualize loneliness (Weiss, 1987). Peplau and Perlman (1982) listed a number of definitions and descriptions found in the literature. Weiss commented that those definitions, "are not descriptions, they are not definitions. They are rather, mini-theories" (1987, p.8). The reason that there are so many "mini-theories" is because there has not been one overriding theory that takes into account the various experiences of loneliness (e.g. interpersonal loneliness versus existential loneliness). The challenge of our current

understanding of loneliness is to knit together the various dominant themes that keep resurfacing into a comprehensive theoretical understanding of loneliness. At the very least, there needs to be more emerging dominant theories (such as Weiss') that attempt a fuller explanation of the experience of loneliness. Guided by such a theoretical base, the ensuing research would have more focus.

Until now, very little research on loneliness has been tied to any theoretical base. Loneliness research could be improved is if there were a concerted effort to directly tie actual research to theory. Currently there exists a gap between the major theories of loneliness and the actual methodology used to investigate loneliness. In their review of the literature and their research on psychometric properties of the UCLA, Oshagan and Allen observed,

> Although Weiss's (1973) explication of loneliness is most often agreed to, it has nonetheless, failed to generate measurement tools until recently, and so its empirical influence on research has arguably been slight. The strongest influence on the field has come from the UCLA Loneliness Scale, which, despite the lack of a precise conceptual definition of loneliness, has been accepted as the scale for measuring loneliness.. (1992, p. 383).

The field of loneliness research has been dominated by the use of the UCLA loneliness scale (Russell, Peplau & Ferguson, 1978; Russell, Peplau & Cutrona, 1980). The UCLA loneliness scale is a unidimensional measure of loneliness that essentially measures a core of interpersonal friendship. The problem with such an over reliance on the UCLA Loneliness scale in research is that it has become the defac-to working definition of what loneliness is. Several have noted that the field of loneliness research lacked a sufficient theoretical understanding of loneliness and written on some of the limitations and flaws in current loneliness research (Jones, 1987; Perlman, 1987; Weiss, 1987; Wood, 1987). Others have noted that research methodology in loneliness is somewhat narrow and is not really getting at the problem (de Jong-Gierveld, 1987; Rokach 1990; Stokes, 1987). With the exception of the cognitive understanding to loneliness, little research has been done that is directly tied to theory. The result is that we

now have a better understanding of what factors are related to loneliness, but we really don't know much more about the phenomenon itself. Better theories and research that is theory driven would serve to alleviate this problem.

Compounding the problem of a lack of theory driven research is the imprecise language that surrounds loneliness research. It would seems that while everyone believes they understand what is meant by the term "loneliness," in fact there are many divergent themes, theories and understandings attached to the word (e.g. Rokach, 1988; Stuewe-Portnoff, 1988; Yalom, 1980). This imprecise use of the term "loneliness" has only served to cloud any attempt at better understanding the experience of loneliness. Loneliness is much too complex and multifaceted of an experience than is currently reflected in the majority of research done in this area. A few notable exceptions are the work done by: Andersson 1986; de Jong-Gierveld and Raadschelders 1982; Rokach 1988, 1990; and Zakahi and Duran, 1985. The situation in loneliness research is somewhat analogous to the difference between the way non-native people see "snow" and the way Eskimos see snow. Because of the importance snow plays in the Eskimo culture Eskimos have 27 different terms to describe what non-natives simply call "snow." They have studied and characterized the different types of snow. This may be what we have done with the word "loneliness." It simply has become a blanket term that often overlooks or ignores the nuances of the various "types" of loneliness. Taking the existing research and attempting to classify and name the various aspects of loneliness (see Rokach, 1988, 1990) would be worthwhile. This would be a starting point for providing researchers in the field of loneliness a common language base.

Research Methodology

Paloutzian and Janigian (1987) identified the 1970's as the "adolescent stage" of loneliness research, where the subject was being defined. They called the 1980's the second phase of loneliness research (young adulthood), where measurement and research

began in earnest. Finally they went on to offer the hope that the present decade would be one in which loneliness research should reach full maturity. The majority of the loneliness research that is published is correlational in nature. The result is that we have a much better understanding of some of the internal and external factors that contribute to loneliness, but we are not much closer to understanding the experience of loneliness than we were when Fromm-Reichmann published her seminal article on loneliness in 1959. Wood observed, "most of the current research on loneliness focuses on its antecedents (e.g., personality characteristics) or consequences (e.g., depression, coping). Loneliness has been reduced to the intervening variable" (1987, p. 42). A more thorough exploration of an individual's experience of loneliness would provide not only for a deeper appreciation for the complex phenomenon of loneliness but also the raw material by which a more integrative theories could be derived. Clearly phenomenological approaches in research would help to overcome some of the deficits that now exist in loneliness research (Perlman & Peplau, 1982; Stokes, 1987). Hermeneutic phenomenology has been noted as especially useful for investigating the deeper meaning and significance of every day human experiences, experiences like that of loneliness (Giorgi, 1986; Packer and Addison, 1989; van Manen, 1990). The advantage of such an approach is that there would be a more in-depth conceptualization of the nature, meaning and experience of loneliness. Current theories could be reviewed in light of this work. Hopefully a deeper understanding of what exactly loneliness is, would evolve.

Practical Applications

One of the critiques made by the editor for the Canadian Journal of Counselling was that my article (Chapter 3) did not use enough citings when it came to the therapeutic intervention part of the paper. The problem is, there are very few articles that deal with the treatment aspect of loneliness. McWhirter, (1990) noted that a large shortcoming in the field of loneliness research has been in the area of psychological intervention. With

few exceptions (e.g. Lopata, 1973; Paterson, Blashko and Janzen, 1991; Yalom, 1980) little has been written on what interventions are helpful in alleviating loneliness. Any suggestions with regards to loneliness intervention have usually been based on the authors' own clinical experience. Little has been done in attempting to actually research which methods are helpful and which are not.

In reviewing the literature, one gets the impression that, just as everyone knows what the term "loneliness" means, so everyone knows what the "cure for loneliness is." The result is that often the counselor is either superficial in his approach to counselling, or he simply ignores it altogether. Even if the therapist desires to help the client deal with her loneliness, the resources for help are scarce. A starting point would be to begin with idiographic studies of treatment of lonely individuals. From this, a body of literature could evolve, and, in turn, interventions could be tried in an experimental setting. Clearly this is where the research on loneliness must eventually lead. It is not enough to know which environmental factors or personal characteristics are associated with loneliness. These findings are important, but only in so far as how they used in formulating interventions to help the lonely with this very painful and even destructive emotion.

Conclusion

There has been widespread criticism of the current state of loneliness research, that it is not really getting to the heart of the matter (de Jong-Gierveld, 1989, Rokach, 1990, Sadler, 1978). In initiating this research project the primary purpose was to attempt to investigate loneliness in ways that the current research has not. This project carried this out by directly exploring the current theories of loneliness, by taking a phenomenological approach to investigating loneliness (as suggested by Stokes, 1987) and by attempting a preliminary explanation of the relationship that aloneness, loneliness and solitude have with each other. In summarizing the findings of this research project it can be said that:

1) loneliness is not only a problem of being related to others but it is also a problem of being related to self. Thus existential loneliness may be a real problem for some individuals.

2) while there is a common consensus about the nature of loneliness, each individual's experience of loneliness is unique and personal. When explored, loneliness can provide the individual with insight and meaning concerning their current life situation.

3) while loneliness is often conceived and investigated as a simple unidimensional concept, individuals' experience of loneliness are often complex and multidimensional in nature.

4) loneliness may in fact not only be a motivation to seek relationship with others, but also to seek relationship with self and/or with God.

5) solitude may at times be the appropriate response to loneliness.

Mijuskovic (1992) distinguished two models of human organization, the organic community and the atomistic society. The organic paradigm stresses the ideal unity of the whole; the mutual interdependence of members; a role perspective; and dynamic or natural functions. The atomistic construction emphasized the value of individual freedom; external connections, and mechanical or causal explanations. He believed that the sense of individual loneliness or alienation experienced is greater in the atomistic society and since both the American family and society are atomistically structured, loneliness is more pronounced and prevalent in American society. This is one of many theories used to explain the cause of loneliness. How true Mijuskovic's ideas are, remain to be seen. However, one thing that is undeniable, is that despite the great advances in global communications, we appear to be an increasingly more lonely society. It is ironic in this day of telecommunications, we do not seem to know how to communicate in a way that satisfies the inner hunger for relationship that we call loneliness. At its core, the study of loneliness begins with the question "why are we lonely?" After five years of research I

am beginning to suspect that, perhaps, a more fruitful approach to studying loneliness may be to ask, "why can't we relate?"

What has changed for me over the course of my research, is the sensitivity I now have regarding loneliness. I cannot say that I have found any new, dazzling interventions or miracle "cures" to help clients with their loneliness. However, I am more and more impressed with how therapeutic it is for the client to be able to openly discuss and explore her loneliness. Sometimes I can offer practical suggestions or helpful interventions. Other times, as the client explores his own loneliness, it leads him to the very core of the issue he must deal with. But basically, what I think has been most helpful to clients, is my experience with, and sensitivity to, the issue, as well as my willingness to experience it with them. This can be a very difficult thing. Sometimes in empathizing with their loneliness, I can feel how lost, how overwhelmed and how empty they feel. And, sometimes, in feeling their loneliness, I feel my own. If I am able to be psychologically present for them, often it is in the meeting of our loneliness, that I find the deepest relationship with them. It is as though, if only I can endure the pain of my client's loneliness long enough, a relationship is born out of that endurance, and out of that, relationship, hope.

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However he believed that in designing interventions often psychologists ignore the different types and experiences of loneliness. Too often it is simply assumed that loneliness can be remedied by the company of others. Certainly if one moves to a new city where one has no relatives or friends it is natural to experience some loneliness. A more outward focused social response is likely appropriate for this type of loneliness. The individual should attempt establishing a social network. However the individual who has never moved from his hometown, and who is surrounded by family and friends, may experience loneliness that is intrapersonal, spiritual or existential in nature. In this situation the inward focus of seeking solitude may be the more appropriate response to the loneliness. Thus, solitude may be seen as a viable intervention in certain situations. It is a mistake, however, to understand solitude and social answers as being dichotomous and unrelated to each other. We need to recognize the relationship that loneliness, solitude, and social relationships have to each other. Mendelson has suggested,

> both connection and solitude being part of the human condition, each offers its pleasures and its pains. A function of psychotherapy in the broader context, may be to free the person to discover the optimal mix for him of relatedness and solitude, and to cope self-respectingly with the sorrows that accompany solitude and that attend connection. Accordingly, loneliness in and of itself, may not necessarily be a condition to be "cured" (1990, p.354).

There are at least three critical challenges facing psychologists in dealing with loneliness. The first of these is at the clinical level. Too often a client's loneliness is merely accepted and not dealt with by the therapist. The client tells her therapist that they are lonely and the therapist acknowledges it, but does little to directly address the problem. If the current literature on loneliness is correct, and it is a multidimensional problem rather than a unidimensional problem then a client's loneliness may be a rich source of information about some of the other problems they may be facing. Thus, counselors not only need to become more sensitive to exploring a client's loneliness, but also more adept at diagnosing the "type" of loneliness they are experiencing. The therapist needs to be asking "Is this cultural loneliness? or existential loneliness? or social loneliness? or spiritual loneliness?" Once having an understanding of the nature of the

client's loneliness the therapist is in a better position to tailor their intervention. This is the next challenge for counselors and psychologists-we need to develop more thoughtful interventions in attempting to help our client's meet the challenge of loneliness. As this article has suggested rather than merely having the client meet more people, at times an appropriate response to loneliness may in fact be solitude. However it will take effort and experience on the counselor's behalf in order to become adept at both diagnosing the type of loneliness and matching it with the appropriate intervention.

The second challenge in dealing with the problem of loneliness lies in primary prevention, namely in our school systems. While I am reticent to suggest one more task to be assumed by our educational system (I realize they are overloaded already), I do believe that the "forth R" is important enough for teachers to be sensitized to. The "forth R" is that of relationship. Often school is the first place outside the family that the child becomes exposed to society at large. In this initial exposure the child can often sink or swim. Erickson (1963) theorized that at ages six through puberty the basic developmental task is that of competence versus inferiority. This task is adequately resolved if the child masters both basic social and intellectual skills. Failure to meet these tasks result in lack of self-confidence and feeling of failure. I would add that they likely point the child towards a life of loneliness. Teachers need to be sensitized to the problem of the lonely child, as well as trained in intervening on their behalf. A child who is repeatedly marginalized in their grade school years is potentially a good candidate for facing a life of loneliness. It is critical in the early years that not just the asocial child be remediated, but as well, the nonsocial child be remediated. As important as it is in the early years to teach children prosocial skills, it may be just as important in high school to teach them solitary skills. Erickson identified the developmental challenge of adolescence as being a time where identity versus role confusion is resolved. The successful resolution of this challenge leaves the individual with a clear sense of self. Larson's (1990) research showed that out of all the age groups adolescents found time alone to be most difficult to

endure. However he believed that solitude may be most critical in adolescence, as identity formation is at an important stage. As this article demonstrates, one of the main purposes and benefits of solitude is that it allows the individual a time to struggle with identity formation by getting in touch with their real self. Once again the challenge is how to integrate the concept of solitude as being part of any curriculum.

The final challenge identified in this article is that of research on loneliness and solitude. Until now the overwhelming majority of research on loneliness has been done on those who are lonely. However, borrowing Maslow's paradigm, perhaps there is a great deal we can learn by studying those who are not lonely. Specifically there is a need to study those who are "masters" of solitude. Ostensibly there must be something the researcher can learn from those who spend large portions of time alone and yet do not find it a destructive experience, but an integrative experience. This population may offer some extremely helpful insights in dealing with the problem of loneliness. The long tradition that Christianity, as well as other religions have shared regarding the solitude experience is of great potential in understanding how being alone can be a healthy and even desirable state. Clearly, there is a need to take seriously and investigate the spiritual role loneliness and solitude plays in the experience of the individual.

Theoretically this article presents a more comprehensive and representative model of loneliness than what is currently in use. As well it provides the counselor with other ways of understanding loneliness and its alleviation. The counselor can now consider the possibility of solitude as a solution to their client's loneliness. To be sure there are still many unanswered questions about loneliness, solitude and social relationships. One of the most difficult unanswered questions is how this model would help the chronically lonely individual who has no meaningful social relationships and has a weak sense of self identity. Clearly more research is vital as is a focus on interventions for loneliness.

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CHAPTER 5

General D' ion and Conclusion

The purpose of this concluding chap'er i' o summarize the findings of the previous three chapters of this dissertatic d synthesize them in a meaningful way as they apply to he field oneliness research. three articles on research were tied ogether by their common purpose to investigate loneliness beyond merely describing the attributes, causes or antecedent of the lonely individual. The purpose of these three investigations was to better understand at a conceptual and experiential level what loneliness is.

Summary of Findings

Chapter 2 of this dissertation was a quantitative investigation of the three main theories of loneliness: Weiss's (1973) social/emotional typology, Perlman and Peplau's (1982) cognitive approach, and an existential understanding of loneliness(e.g. Mijuskovic, 1977; Mendelson, 1990; Moustakas, 1961). The variable that these three theories of loneliness were measured on was that of self. Based on this investigation there was little evidence to support Weiss' social/emotional typology, some evidence that supported a cognitive mediation effect, and strong evidence that suggested loneliness was tied to self-estrangement. Several writers have theorized a strong link between self-estrangement and existential loneliness (Andersson, 1986; Fromm, 1951; May, 1953). If one accepts this theoretical proposition, then it can be said that this study provided strong support for a type of loneliness that is existential in nature Thus it may be, that in a significant number of the cases, the lonely individual may be lonely not only because he/she lacks relationship with others, but also because he/she lacks relationship with self.

The second study (Chapter 3) was a phenomenological investigation of loneliness. Through interviews and others sources this investigation attempted to discover the dominant themes of an individual's experience of loneliness and understand these

themes. The overriding theme of [illegible]ness. Lonely individuals inevitably felt that they were "missing" something, and reported a general sense of incompleteness. Loneliness was marked by searching behavior, melancholy, self-doubt, feelings of vulnerability and worthlessness and a sense of being "shut out" from the fullness of life. Subjects identified times when they simply longed for the physical presence of others, and other times when the presence of others was insufficient in overcoming their loneliness. What they wanted during these times, were deeper more intimate relationships. Most subjects also understood that there were limitations on all relationships and how much they could answer the call of loneliness. A few subjects described times when they were lonely just to be with self and expressed the need for solitude. The antithesis of loneliness was described in [illegible]onal terms, where individuals felt a sense of belonging and relatedness. This was not only described in terms of being related to other individuals and loved ones, but also in terms of being related meaningfully to oneself, to one's life and one's God. One of the main findings of this investigation was that loneliness is a very personal construct with each subject having their own unique experience of loneliness and while there was a common consensus of what loneliness was, nevertheless each had their own personal meaning. As the interviews progressed, not only did the meaning of loneliness become more evident, but so did the subjects own understanding of their experience. The more they explored their loneliness the more they appeared to appreciate its complexity and its importance.

The third article (Chapter 4) explored the relationship that aloneness, loneliness and solitude have with each others. Working definitions were provided in the article in an attempt to clarify a generally muddling of these concepts as found in the literature (see, Gotesky, 1965). The article reviewed the literature on loneliness and based on this review suggested that loneliness would be better understood as not merely resulting from relational deficits with others, but also as the result of a relational deficit with self and God. From this working definition solitude was then reviewed from a historical viewpoint

and it was suggested that for certain types of loneliness the appropriate response would not be to seek the company of others but to seek only the company of self and God, through the practice of solitude. Solitude was described as being a way through loneliness rather than a way around it. The result of the practice of solitude is that the individual has a deeper sense of self and feels more closely connected to self and to God. In having a stronger relationship with self and with God, the individual is in a more optimal psychological position to enjoy deeper more meaningful relationships with others. Conversely, those who feel significantly related to others will find solitude less threatening as they have a secure base from which to work. Thus the model of loneliness as it relates to solitude described in this article was circular in nature whereby relationships with others, self and God are all interconnected. There are times when it is appropriate to withdraw from others in order to seek solitude, but there is also a time to come out of solitude in order to be in relationship with others.

Suggestions for Further Research

Theoretical Concerns

In reviewing the evolution of loneliness research it can be safely said that the dominant theories of loneliness have been those of Robert Weiss (1977, 1982) who used Bowlby's (1973) work on attachment theory as a basis for understanding loneliness. Others such as Perlman and Peplau (1982; 1987) have built upon Weiss's theories using a cognitive framework. However there is a wide divergence in attempting to understand and conceptualize loneliness (Weiss, 1987). Peplau and Perlman (1982) listed a number of definitions and descriptions found in the literature. Weiss commented that those definitions, "are not descriptions, they are not definitions. They are rather, mini-theories" (1987, p.8). The reason that there are so many "mini-theories" is because there has not been one overriding theory that takes into account the various experiences of loneliness (e.g. interpersonal loneliness versus existential loneliness). The challenge of our current

understanding of loneliness is to knit together the various dominant themes that keep resurfacing into a comprehensive theoretical understanding of loneliness. At the very least, there needs to be more emerging dominant theories (such as Weiss') that attempt a fuller explanation of the experience of loneliness. Guided by such a theoretical base, the ensuing research would have more focus.

Until now, very little research on loneliness has been tied to any theoretical base. Loneliness research could be improved is if there were a concerted effort to directly tie actual research to theory. Currently there exists a gap between the major theories of loneliness and the actual methodology used to investigate loneliness. In their review of the literature and their research on psychometric properties of the UCLA, Oshagan and Allen observed,

> Although Weiss's (1973) explication of loneliness is most often agreed to, it has nonetheless, failed to generate measurement tools until recently, and so its empirical influence on research has arguably been slight. The strongest influence on the field has come from the UCLA Loneliness Scale, which, despite the lack of a precise conceptual definition of loneliness, has been accepted as the scale for measuring loneliness.. (1992, p. 383).

The field of loneliness research has been dominated by the use of the UCLA loneliness scale (Russell, Peplau & Ferguson, 1978; Russell, Peplau & Cutrona, 1980). The UCLA loneliness scale is a unidimensional measure of loneliness that essentially measures a core of interpersonal friendship. The problem with such an over reliance on the UCLA Loneliness scale in research is that it has become the defac-to working definition of what loneliness is. Several have noted that the field of loneliness research lacked a sufficient theoretical understanding of loneliness and written on some of the limitations and flaws in current loneliness research (Jones, 1987; Perlman, 1987; Weiss, 1987; Wood, 1987). Others have noted that research methodology in loneliness is somewhat narrow and is not really getting at the problem (de Jong-Gierveld, 1987; Rokach 1990; Stokes, 1987). With the exception of the cognitive understanding to loneliness, little research has been done that is directly tied to theory. The result is that we

now have a better understanding of what factors are related to loneliness, but we really don't know much more about the phenomenon itself. Better theories and research that is theory driven would serve to alleviate this problem.

Compounding the problem of a lack of theory driven research is the imprecise language that surrounds loneliness research. It would seems that while everyone believes they understand what is meant by the term "loneliness," in fact there are many divergent themes, theories and understandings attached to the word (e.g. Rokach, 1988; Stuewe-Portnoff, 1988; Yalom, 1980). This imprecise use of the term "loneliness" has only served to cloud any attempt at better understanding the experience of loneliness. Loneliness is much too complex and multifaceted of an experience than is currently reflected in the majority of research done in this area. A few notable exceptions are the work done by: Andersson 1986; de Jong-Gierveld and Raadschelders 1982; Rokach 1988, 1990; and Zakahi and Duran, 1985. The situation in loneliness research is somewhat analogous to the difference between the way non-native people see "snow" and the way Eskimos see snow. Because of the importance snow plays in the Eskimo culture Eskimos have 27 different terms to describe what non-natives simply call "snow." They have studied and characterized the different types of snow. This may be what we have done with the word "loneliness." It simply has become a blanket term that often overlooks or ignores the nuances of the various "types" of loneliness. Taking the existing research and attempting to classify and name the various aspects of loneliness (see Rokach, 1988, 1990) would be worthwhile. This would be a starting point for providing researchers in the field of loneliness a common language base.

Research Methodology

Paloutzian and Janigian (1987) identified the 1970's as the "adolescent stage" of loneliness research, where the subject was being defined. They called the 1980's the second phase of loneliness research (young adulthood), where measurement and research

began in earnest. Finally they went on to offer the hope that the present decade would be one in which loneliness research should reach full maturity. The majority of the loneliness research that is published is correlational in nature. The result is that we have a much better understanding of some of the internal and external factors that contribute to loneliness, but we are not much closer to understanding the experience of loneliness than we were when Fromm-Reichmann published her seminal article on loneliness in 1959. Wood observed, "most of the current research on loneliness focuses on its antecedents (e.g., personality characteristics) or consequences (e.g., depression, coping). Loneliness has been reduced to the intervening variable" (1987, p. 42). A more thorough exploration of an individual's experience of loneliness would provide not only for a deeper appreciation for the complex phenomenon of loneliness but also the raw material by which a more integrative theories could be derived. Clearly phenomenological approaches in research would help to overcome some of the deficits that now exist in loneliness research (Perlman & Peplau, 1982; Stokes, 1987). Hermeneutic phenomenology has been noted as especially useful for investigating the deeper meaning and significance of every day human experiences, experiences like that of loneliness (Giorgi, 1986; Packer and Addison, 1989; van Manen, 1990). The advantage of such an approach is that there would be a more in-depth conceptualization of the nature, meaning and experience of loneliness. Current theories could be reviewed in light of this work. Hopefully a deeper understanding of what exactly loneliness is, would evolve.

Practical Applications

One of the critiques made by the editor for the Canadian Journal of Counselling was that my article (Chapter 3) did not use enough citings when it came to the therapeutic intervention part of the paper. The problem is, there are very few articles that deal with the treatment aspect of loneliness. McWhirter, (1990) noted that a large shortcoming in the field of loneliness research has been in the area of psychological intervention. With

few exceptions (e.g. Lopata, 1973; Paterson, Blashko and Janzen, 1991; Yalom, 1980) little has been written on what interventions are helpful in alleviating loneliness. Any suggestions with regards to loneliness intervention have usually been based on the authors' own clinical experience. Little has been done in attempting to actually research which methods are helpful and which are not.

In reviewing the literature, one gets the impression that, just as everyone knows what the term "loneliness" means, so everyone knows what the "cure for loneliness is." The result is that often the counselor is either superficial in his approach to counselling, or he simply ignores it altogether. Even if the therapist desires to help the client deal with her loneliness, the resources for help are scarce. A starting point would be to begin with idiographic studies of treatment of lonely individuals. From this, a body of literature could evolve, and, in turn, interventions could be tried in an experimental setting. Clearly this is where the research on loneliness must eventually lead. It is not enough to know which environmental factors or personal characteristics are associated with loneliness. These findings are important, but only in so far as how they used in formulating interventions to help the lonely with this very painful and even destructive emotion.

Conclusion

There has been widespread criticism of the current state of loneliness research, that it is not really getting to the heart of the matter (de Jong-Gierveld, 1989, Rokach, 1990, Sadler, 1978). In initiating this research project the primary purpose was to attempt to investigate loneliness in ways that the current research has not. This project carried this out by directly exploring the current theories of loneliness, by taking a phenomenological approach to investigating loneliness (as suggested by Stokes, 1987) and by attempting a preliminary explanation of the relationship that aloneness, loneliness and solitude have with each other. In summarizing the findings of this research project it can be said that:

1) loneliness is not only a problem of being related to others but it is also a problem of being related to self. Thus existential loneliness may be a real problem for some individuals.

2) while there is a common consensus about the nature of loneliness, each individual's experience of loneliness is unique and personal. When explored, loneliness can provide the individual with insight and meaning concerning their current life situation.

3) while loneliness is often conceived and investigated as a simple unidimensional concept, individuals' experience of loneliness are often complex and multidimensional in nature.

4) loneliness may in fact not only be a motivation to seek relationship with others, but also to seek relationship with self and/or with God.

5) solitude may at times be the appropriate response to loneliness.

Mijuskovic (1992) distinguished two models of human organization, the organic community and the atomistic society. The organic paradigm stresses the ideal unity of the whole; the mutual interdependence of members; a role perspective; and dynamic or natural functions. The atomistic construction emphasized the value of individual freedom; external connections, and mechanical or causal explanations. He believed that the sense of individual loneliness or alienation experienced is greater in the atomistic society and since both the American family and society are atomistically structured, loneliness is more pronounced and prevalent in American society. This is one of many theories used to explain the cause of loneliness. How true Mijuskovic's ideas are, remain to be seen. However, one thing that is undeniable, is that despite the great advances in global communications, we appear to be an increasingly more lonely society. It is ironic in this day of telecommunications, we do not seem to know how to communicate in a way that satisfies the inner hunger for relationship that we call loneliness. At its core, the study of loneliness begins with the question "why are we lonely?" After five years of research I

am beginning to suspect that, perhaps, a more fruitful approach to studying loneliness may be to ask, "why can't we relate?"

What has changed for me over the course of my research, is the sensitivity I now have regarding loneliness. I cannot say that I have found any new, dazzling interventions or miracle "cures" to help clients with their loneliness. However, I am more and more impressed with how therapeutic it is for the client to be able to openly discuss and explore her loneliness. Sometimes I can offer practical suggestions or helpful interventions. Other times, as the client explores his own loneliness, it leads him to the very core of the issue he must deal with. But basically, what I think has been most helpful to clients, is my experience with, and sensitivity to, the issue, as well as my willingness to experience it with them. This can be a very difficult thing. Sometimes in empathizing with their loneliness, I can feel how lost, how overwhelmed and how empty they feel. And, sometimes, in feeling their loneliness, I feel my own. If I am able to be psychologically present for them, often it is in the meeting of our loneliness, that I find the deepest relationship with them. It is as though, if only I can endure the pain of my client's loneliness long enough, a relationship is born out of that endurance, and out of that, relationship, hope.

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