

"Aloneliness" is the author's term for the phenomenon that has given rise to such states-of-being as aloneness, loneliness, solitude, alienation, isolation, and aloneliness anxiety. Most studies into this phenomenon have focused on the theoretical dimensions, with little or no attention given to resolution strategies. This article develops such resolution strategies and offers guidelines for counselors.

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Resolutions of Aloneliness

The words *aloneness, loneliness, isolation, and alienation* are prevalent in today's society. Indeed, they are expressions of a state-of-being that is a phenomenon of the twentieth century (Bassi, 1976; Fromm, 1941; Graham, 1969; Rogers, 1970; Sadler, 1975). *Depression, despair, anxiety, aggression, boredom, shyness, and lack of self-esteem* are other state-of-being words that are common to our time.

Aloneliness is my term for the phenomenon that encompasses such states-of-being as aloneness, loneliness, solitude, alienation, isolation, aloneliness anxiety, existential aloneness and loneliness, and the aloneliness of separate identities. The term *aloneliness* is used herein as the central concept of the phenomenon because the others are too specific, are relative to a specific situation and context, and have narrow positive or negative connotations.

Most of the explorations into aloneliness have been along the lines of describing it and developing schemata of its components and dynamics. Relatively little work has been done in developing resolution strategies that effectively alleviate the concerns related to the phenomenon. The purpose of this paper is to explore aloneliness in terms of its resolutions.

This paper will comprise four aspects: (a) an overview of the background of the phenomenon, (b) a brief summary of my formulation of aloneliness, (c) an overview of the possible means of resolution, and (d) a presentation of the general resolution strategies and procedures that can be applied to individual situations.

BACKGROUND

Traditionally, most of the research on aloneliness and its components has focused on the theoretical dimensions as well as on describing and analyzing the various components, influences, and dynamics of aloneliness (Ford & Zorn, 1975; Fromm-Reichmann, 1959; Gotesky, 1965; Mijuskovic, 1977; Portnoff, 1976; Rosenbaum & Rosenbaum, 1973; Weiss, 1973). It has not been until relatively recently that researchers

(D'Abov, 1972; Gordon, 1976; Kubistant, 1977a; Potthoff, 1976) have begun to explore the phenomenon as a whole, both in itself and in relation to other phenomena and situations.

The paucity of research related to the area of developing and testing resolution strategies seems to stem from three sources: (a) it is difficult to develop objective resolution strategies because the particular forms of aloneliness are unique to the individual, (b) many researchers hold that they must first obtain a complete understanding of the phenomenon before they can develop resolution strategies, and (c) many researchers often lack the expertise for practical development and application and many practitioners often lack the expertise for detailed scientific research.

Explorations of the resolutions of aloneliness usually have taken the forms of: (a) the inclusion of aloneliness as a by-product of other phenomena (such as depression, anxiety, and self-doubt), reasoning that treatment of these will also treat aloneliness; (b) the inclusion of only those situations and components of aloneliness that can be handled by that particular theoretical approach or discipline, with those components that do not fit into that particular approach usually dismissed as irrelevant or subsumed by some other phenomena; and (c) the extrapolation of the results of research into the one component or situation of aloneliness to include all components and situations of the whole phenomenon. Systematic research, development, and implementation of the resolution of aloneliness do seem to be in the infant stages.

A SCHEMA OF ALONELINESS

It is an underlying theme of this paper that the more one knows about aloneliness both in general and in its particular forms in the individual, the better one can develop and implement effective resolution strategies. Failure to do this merely perpetuates the myths, confusions, and anxieties of aloneliness. In fact, many have concluded that the most pervasive and devastating form of aloneliness present in today's society is what may be called aloneliness/loneliness anxiety (Fromm-Reichmann, 1959; Gordon, 1976; May, 1953; Moustakas, 1961, 1974; Rosenbaum & Rosenbaum, 1973; Weigert, 1960).

The following is a brief overview of my conceptions of aloneliness (see Figure 1). A more extensive

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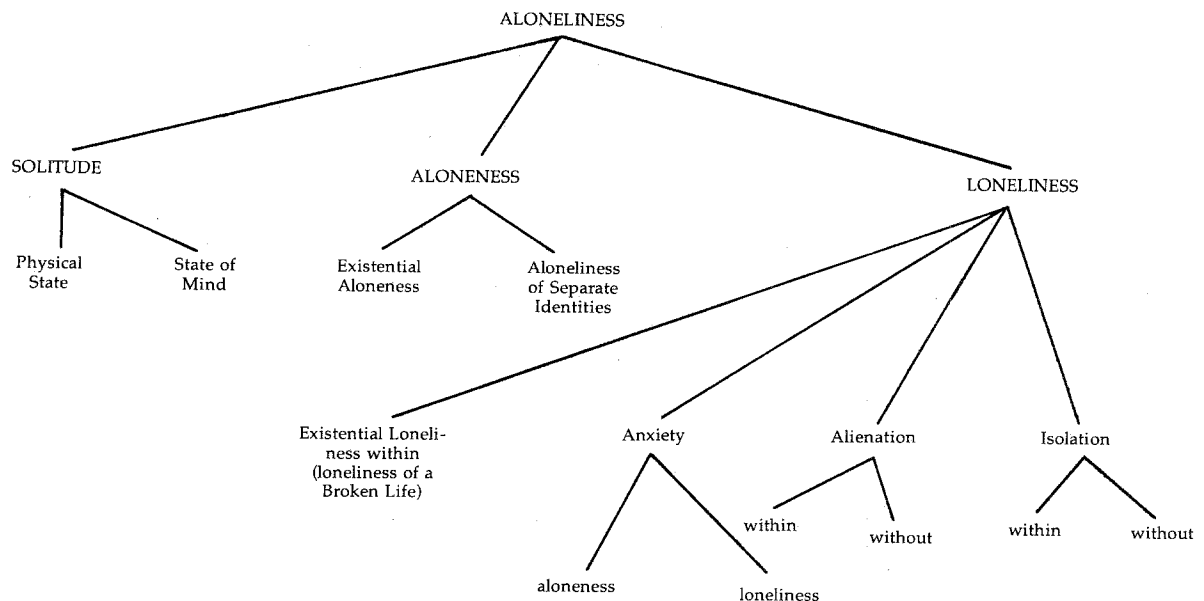


FIGURE I

Schema of Aloneliness

analysis is available in earlier works (Kubistant, 1977 a & b). This formulation is not necessarily the "right" one; it is merely my own. The purpose of development of such schemata is based on the premise that knowledge of the components is the first step towards resolution. If individuals are unaware of which particular forms they are experiencing, they will be in a weaker position to develop, much less implement, effective resolution strategies.

PRIMARY CONCEPTS

The primary concepts of aloneliness include aloneness, loneliness, and solitude. Each concept is separate, but when taken together they provide balance to the whole phenomenon.

Aloneness is the existentially neutral concept that reflects one's uniqueness, separateness, and individuality. It is the particular situation, and one's reactions to it, that determine the positive and negative connotations.

Solitude represents the more positive aspects of one's aloneliness. Solitude is either a physical state and/or a state of mind. It is most often used for getting in touch with self, for rejuvenation, and as an aid to creativity.

Loneliness represents the more negative aspects of one's aloneliness. Loneliness is a resultant feeling that reflects that something is lacking in one's life and/or one is not handling particular situations well.

Together, these primary concepts provide the symmetry by which the whole phenomenon can be better understood. These primary concepts can be viewed much like that of the simplistic notion of a hydrogen atom that is composed of a neutron with a neutral valence (aloneness), a proton with a positive valence (solitude), and is orbited by an electron with a negative valence (loneliness).

SECONDARY CONCEPTS

The secondary concepts of aloneliness are the more specific examples of the primary concepts. These sec-

ondary concepts are related to specific situations and circumstances.

There are two general forms of aloneness. Existential aloneness is that state that reflects one's unique individuality and, ultimately, one's finiteness. States of existential aloneness are a fact of life. I was born alone and I will die alone. What I call the aloneliness of separate identities is related to Moustakas's (1961) notion of the loneliness of separate identities. This is a further realization of one's separateness and individuality put in the perspective of one's relationships. Essentially, this means that as much as a couple is open, honest, and in love with each other, they can never merge into the same consciousness.

As was stated earlier, solitude is either a physical state and/or a state of mind. It reflects any of the positive aspects of aloneness and aloneliness.

The secondary concepts of loneliness are existential loneliness, aloneliness anxiety, alienation, and isolation. Existential loneliness is related to Moustakas's (1961, 1972, 1974) notion of the loneliness of a broken life. This is that state that some individuals make for themselves and/or can almost be said to be determined by "fate." Individuals experiencing this form of loneliness are often more sensitive to loneliness and/or experience deeper forms of it.

Aloneliness anxiety is the fear to be by oneself for fear of being lonely. What often happens in these situations is that such individuals miss the opportunity of discovering their uniqueness.

Alienation and isolation have some valid overlap, but they have distinct qualities as well. Although both can be promoted from within as well as from without, alienation seems to be more affectively and subjectively related, while isolation seems to be more spatially and objectively related. For example, I might be alienated from a group for my beliefs, while I might be isolated due to a contagious illness.

The above schema represents a very cursory overview of the author's view of aloneliness. One point must be noted here: this represents about the tenth

revision of my thinking. It seems to reflect my movement as a person in that as I change, grow, and experience new things, so my notions about such phenomena change, grow, and alter. My challenge to the reader is to have you compare this schema with your own.

Explorations and developments of such schemata comprise the foundation of resolution strategies. This kind of awareness is analogous to the X-rays of self-exploration. Without such awareness, one would be shooting in the dark.

MEANS TOWARD RESOLUTION

As was stated earlier, most of the research in this area has been focused on the theoretical aspects of aloneliness. However, there has been a growing number of people who have been giving their attention to ways of resolving aloneliness. Some of the more major contributors include Bassi (1976), Burton (1970), Collins (1973), D'Aboy (1972), Ford and Zorn (1975), Fromm-Reichmann (1959), Graham (1969), Hammer (1972), Kennedy (1975), Moustakas (1961, 1972, 1974), Potthoff (1976), Rosenbaum and Rosenbaum (1973), Sadler (1975), Tanner (1973), Walker (1966), and Wood (1974).

TERMINOLOGY

The term *resolution* is being used throughout this paper to connote the successful solution of the particular form of aloneliness. Different forms of aloneliness need to be resolved in different ways. Hence, "coping" strategies represent those forms of resolution that are applied to aloneliness, and "conquering" strategies represent those forms of resolution that are applied to loneliness. The complete resolution strategies of the primary concepts will be described later.

METHODS OF RESOLUTION

It is hard being lonely alone but that is the place everyone must start. Because each person's forms and contexts of aloneliness are unique, so must their resolutions be unique. Individuals who take an active role in their resolutions are often more successful than individuals who sit back and "hope for the best."

Self-help does not exclude enlisting aids. One should look at the use of others as allies and not as people who will "cure" one's aloneliness. Help from significant others often provides an opportunity for the individual to gain perspective, obtain feedback, and provide settings to practice new strategies.

An increasing number of helping professionals are viewing aloneliness as a valid issue to be addressed in counseling sessions. These professional services may take the forms of individual work, general group work, specific group work (such as workshops and courses on aloneliness), and the more commercial approaches. The latter include dating and singles services and specific interest groups, such as Parents Without Partners and Alcoholics Anonymous.

No matter what the professional setting, my colleague and I (Herd & Kubistant, 1975) have found some general guidelines to be useful when working with aloneliness issues.

1 The best thing you, the professional, can bring to these sessions is you the person. Initially, phrases

such as "I am here," "I understand," and "I care" are often what the individuals need the most.

2 Have them verbalize their lonely feelings as much as possible. What do they feel like? What images (animals, scenes, and the like) come to their minds?

3 Help them differentiate their specific forms of aloneliness and help them distinguish their aloneliness from depression, boredom, shyness, anxiety, and other states.

4 Especially in the beginning, focus on concrete issues instead of on abstract philosophical issues.

5 Eventually, have them explore what their forms of aloneliness are a means to (such as growth, awareness, or the need to make other life changes) and what they may be getting out of their specific forms (such as avoidance or not having to risk).

6 Help them develop resolution strategies and make sure these coping or conquering strategies are appropriate for their particular forms of aloneliness.

7 Encourage the practice of new skills in the sessions.

RELATED QUALITIES

Aloneliness doesn't exist in isolation. There are a number of related qualities and phenomena that can aid in the understanding and resolution of the individual's particular forms of aloneliness. Some of the most applicable of these include communication, awareness, responsibility, risk, creativity, and humor. These will be described below.

Phenomena like aloneliness are often difficult to grasp because they are so vague and diffuse. Hence, the ability to verbalize these forms to self and others often provides the handle by which one may obtain a better grasp on one's specific aloneliness. This ability to verbalize and communicate the particular forms is related to one's awareness. Awareness can be called the ability to communicate within the self. Together, awareness and verbalization often provide the means by which one may obtain a clearer perspective of oneself and the situation.

Assuming responsibility for self is often an important aid to resolution. If individuals take active responsibility for themselves, they will be less apt to seek simplistic solutions and less likely to place the blame outside of themselves (Rosenbaum & Rosenbaum, 1973). Responsible persons may utilize outside sources but only as an aid to the work being done on themselves. Once the individuals accept this responsibility, any change, learning, or resolution is often more permanent.

The ability to take risks involves trying new behaviors and alternatives. There is not only the kind of risk associated with actions, but there is also the kind of risk that is associated with allowing one to be oneself. Rosenbaum and Rosenbaum (1973) state that lonely people are often lazy people who rarely take any active roles in their lives, much less any risks. Risk implies openness and change and by taking risks the individual takes direct and responsible action to resolve one's particular form of aloneliness.

Many researchers (Ford & Zorn, 1975; Fromm-Reichmann, 1959; Gordon, 1976; Moustakas, 1961; Potthoff, 1976; Tournier, 1962) have stated that creativity seems to be beneficial in aiding the resolu-

tion of aloneliness, but how or why is rarely stated. Creating, both in the cognitive and practical sense, seems to activate the energies of the psyche. Once these energies are activated, one is usually more motivated and confident to take the steps to resolve one's particular forms of aloneliness. Hence, creativity seems to be a catalyst toward resolution.

Finally, humor seems to be valuable in resolution. There is nothing like a good laugh to gain perspective about self. Like creativity, humor seems to be that necessary pause that aids in obtaining a clearer perspective of self, the situation, and, ultimately, of the strategies needed for resolution.

RESOLUTION STRATEGIES

Throughout this paper it has been stressed that the subject matter represents general patterns. Aloneliness is too diverse and diffuse to be objectified. It must be seen in the context of a particular individual in a particular situation. The following are the general resolution strategies that seem to be most often used in resolving aloneliness.

It must be stated here that there are no specific resolution strategies, per se, for solitude. When not used as an avoidance mechanism solitude is good for the psyche. The only thing that individuals must keep in mind is that they have to be aware of their respective needs in order to know when solitude is needed.

COPING STRATEGIES

Coping strategies are related to aloneliness and imply that nothing can be (or should be) changed. Aloneliness may often be associated with pain (especially in regard to a separation in a primary relationship), but this pain merely reflects one's separateness. Coping with aloneliness usually takes on the sequence that can be referred to as the "Four A's." (a) Become aware of your aloneliness and learn how it differs from your solitude and loneliness. (b) Admit that your aloneliness is present in your life and, in fact, that it points to your unique individuality. (c) Accept that aloneliness is a fact of life in that there may be times when you might be more acutely and painfully aware of your aloneliness. (d) Allow these alone feelings and states to run their course and don't complicate the whole issue by avoiding or resisting. This sequence is similar to those developed by Moustakas (1961), Portnoff (1976), and Weiss (1973).

Resolving your aloneliness cannot only aid in your acceptance of your situations but also help you become more in touch with your unique individuality.

CONQUERING STRATEGIES

Conquering strategies are related to loneliness and imply that something can be changed or overcome. Loneliness connotes some kind of deficit that may emanate from within and/or from your physical and social environment. Conquering loneliness implies that you realize that you are the main tool in the resolution. You must be willing to explore and even change yourself. Without such willingness no effective resolution is possible.

Once again, the resolution process must begin with awareness of the particular form of loneliness you are experiencing. Remember that loneliness is a

resultant feeling and that an effective resolution not only has to include the feeling but the attitudes, behaviors, and circumstances that caused it as well.

Once this has been established, one avenue that may be explored is convincing yourself of the necessity of establishing and/or improving meaningful and genuine relationships. Along these lines, you must be able to distinguish between a meaningful relationship and a contact or acquaintance. After this has been recognized, you have to take active steps to establish these meaningful relationships (Rosenbaum & Rosenbaum, 1973).

This whole process will probably be difficult and involve some risks. And risk implies that you will probably stumble somewhere along the way. It is hard to change your ways of functioning after so many years of practice. What is important is to keep trying and learning from your experiences. Although this process may be slow and difficult, the alternative is to do nothing and allow your loneliness to eventually rule your life (Rosenbaum & Rosenbaum, 1973).

CONCLUSION

Aloneliness is a complicated and diffuse phenomenon that is often handled by avoidance or subsuming it under some other phenomenon. If we can pay direct attention to aloneliness we can gain a better perspective of what it is and what it is not. After this is reached we can be in a stronger position to develop and apply more appropriate resolution strategies.

The methods and strategies presented here represent generalizations of what can be done. It is up to the individuals to adapt and develop their own methods and strategies.

It is the author's hope that by exploring aloneliness in this way we can obtain a better perspective of the phenomenon and of its relationship to other phenomena as well. And, in the long run, we can only learn more about the individual psyche and humankind.

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Adult education and counseling are needed facilitative and helping functions for a nation growing older. The current challenge seems to be to make counseling and educational services more widely available to people of all ages. Fulfilling adult needs and helping them adjust to new life circumstances will stretch the counseling system far beyond its traditional settings in schools and public service agencies. Present trends highlight the need for accessible, even convenient, resources for stimulating lifelong learning, adjustment to change, and personal development. In fact, the need structure of most adults seems to be weighted far more heavily in the direction of developmental counseling and learning more effective ways to fulfill their needs. Opportunities for adult education, career planning and assessment, and counseling services head the list of needed resources.

HENRY H. GOODMAN

Adult Education and Counseling: An Emerging Synthesis

In our complex and changing lives, the work of the professional counselor of adults is growing in importance and recognition. Counseling clients come from all situations and have needs in many areas of life. According to Tyler (1973), the need for counseling is greater now than in the past. She speaks of an enormous extension of the range of life possibilities—overchoice in ways of living and mobility—that have to be narrowed down into real choices. At the same

time, Tyler points out, informal counseling is harder to come by today.

Adults of all ages need and want counseling services. But they want counselors who are themselves mature, caring, and effective people. The case for making counseling services widely available to adults is being made by researchers and practitioners in the field of developmental psychology, human growth, adult education, career development, and gerontology. The 1970s produced an outpouring of research, publications, and conferences on adult development. Lifespan developmental psychology, life structure studies, and work and career adjustment were consistent topics for research and speculation.

ADULT DEVELOPMENTAL COUNSELING

Life stages and invariant developmental sequences, so prevalent in early theories, are beginning to give way to an emerging theory of a more fluid life cycle

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