
Harmful Impacts of Social Isolation and How to Minimize Them

People in society live, work, and play in groups, and to be separate from humanity can be disorienting and questions their place in the world. Isolation is easily confused with words like loneliness and alienation. Isolation is defined in the Merriam Webster Dictionary as “the state of being in a place or situation that is separate from others” (Merriam-Webster). Isolation can cause a series of health effects on a human being, especially elderly people. Others who are isolated develop psychotic tendencies which cause them to destroy themselves, as well as others. People are often driven mad by isolation, like living in total darkness and not getting any daylight. Isolation is a compelling topic that causes physical and mental health defects, which can affect the way people develop.

Social isolation is affiliated with an increased fatality in older adults. About one of five elderly adults are socially isolated from their loved ones, which increases their risks for severe mental and physical health. According to an article from Gary Rotstein, he has said, “interacting with others, feeling connected to other people, doing purposeful activities with others and/or maintaining meaningful social relationships.’ If you’re not doing any of that, you might want to work on it — for your own good” (Rotstein). Group-based interventions where assistants are well trained and where the elderly are actively engaged in their development seems to be more effective. Older people who engage in constructive activities with others tend to live longer and have a sensation of purpose in life.

In the same way that isolation affects people physically, it can also affect them mentally. The effects of isolation can become even more pronounced if a person experiences it in complete darkness and a lack of daylight. To live in absolute darkness can cause psychological consequences. An impact of being in impenetrable darkness is it can affect a person’s sleep cycle. Sarita Robinson said, “Two of the key mechanisms for sleep cycle regulation, the hormone melatonin and the brain’s suprachiasmatic nucleus, both rely on light to function” (Robinson).

Daylight helps people feel awake and not constantly feeling drowsy. Without daylight and a lack of sleep can make people feel depressed and fatigued. Lack of sleep has been linked to increased risk of cancer risk and heart disease. People that struggle with isolation will experience major mental health issues as long as others decide not to aid them.

Isolation affects people on a personal level in many ways. From personal experience, I tend to isolate myself from other people because I have difficulty being a part of a group. I have asked myself why this lifestyle I currently possess has occurred onto me. The harder I try to find the answer, the further away the answer seems to disappear as if I am playing hide and seek with a child. Whether I am attending school, church or a family event, I still feel like I do not belong in any group and wish to leave the area. There is a reason we as a society face different trials in our lives. Everyone faces situations in our lives that we may not want to overcome. As long as we as a society isolate ourselves from others, we lose our way to communicate and help one another.

Isolation is a serious issue regarding mental and physical health and should be looked further into. Many people who feel isolated are put into situations they have no control over. A person's health is affected by these situations every day. A high percentage of elderly people are affected by isolation. People can feel isolated by living in darkness and not getting any daylight. Lack of daylight can cause people to have mental problems in life. If people can learn to communicate with others, the world may be a little better when it comes to overcoming isolation.

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