

Community Awareness

# Alleviating Loneliness in Teenagers

Group member: xxxx

School Name: xxxx

Target audience: 15 to 18 years old, Grades 9 to 12

## Research Information

Loneliness is defined as a distressing feeling that accompanies the perception that one's social needs are not being met by the quantity or quality of one's social relationships (Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2010). According to the UK government's *Tackling Loneliness Strategy Review*, people between the ages of 16 to 24 are highly susceptible to loneliness (Reinhardt et al., 2021). This age group includes high school students like us, making this topic highly relevant to our daily lives and our peers'. The issue of teenagers being more prone to loneliness might be caused by their eagerness to feel a sense of belonging during such a vital developmental period.

In our previous research and interviews with peers and teachers, we discovered that the global pandemic, which occurred during a critical developmental stage for this generation of teenagers, has introduced unique social challenges for them, making them even more vulnerable in the face of loneliness. Students experienced unstable accommodations, online lessons, and an overreliance on digital communication. These factors created additional obstacles to maintaining social relationships and honing socialization skills, which led to discomfort in social situations. These disruptions might lead to an enhanced sense of isolation and, when severe, cause mental health disorders such as depression, sleep disorders, and anxiety.

Therefore, our project aims to mitigate loneliness among high school students in Shenzhen, particularly those between the ages of 15 to 18, serving as a representative sample of the broader high school population. We utilize various online and offline approaches, experimenting with methods that could inspire future applications on a larger scale.

## **Campaign Design**

For the campaigns we designed, we aimed to raise awareness among our peers about loneliness, propose ideas on how to mitigate loneliness in their daily lives, and provide platforms for high school students to build social connections to actively reduce loneliness. We recognized the significance of both online and offline interactions; thus, we designed three separate activities.

First, we organized a drawing board in the busiest area of our school, where students could use coloured pens to illustrate their ideas. This not only provided a visually engaging and satisfying experience for people pass by but also used art as a medium to foster connections. By collaborating on the drawing board, students could engage with one another and create a collective piece of expression.

Second, we created an online message board for teenagers to share their thoughts and post reactions to others' messages, reinforcing a sense of connection within the high school community. This allows students to empathize with and even see reflections of themselves in the experiences and emotions of others.

Lastly, we held a seminar featuring a short interactive lecture on loneliness, spreading professional insights on the topic while incorporating activities to encourage participants to open up and communicate with their peers.

### **Activity 1: *Connect Via Art***

#### **Target Audience Analysis:**

This activity is open to all members of our school (xxxx), but is targeted specifically to the students, who range from 14 to 19 years old, equivalent to the grades 9 to 12.

As previous school-wide creative events have yielded great success, we devised an

artistic activity that would promote interpersonal connections by bringing people together to create a large piece of artwork on a blank canvas, linking to our theme of loneliness while being an enjoyable experience.

**Campaign format and content:**

This activity is both in-campus and offline, as face-to-face interactions are more conducive to building stronger ties. “*Connect Via Art*” is a collaborative art project which is conducted on campus for 5 consecutive days. The process of slowly filling up the canvas with individual pieces also carries the message that— just like the drawings— each of us is a small but integral part that makes up the colorful SCIE community.

**Marketing strategy:**

For *Connect Via Art*, we ensured that the activity could be publicized to reach our target audience through social media promotion and off-line campus site exposure. For social media promotion, our team members shared the posters and event information to our WeChat moments and further promoted it through a student-based platform which connects students from all year groups— thus reaching a wider audience beyond our social circles. For offline promotion, we printed out copies of our posters and pasted them around campus sites. The activity is set up on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the main teaching buildings at our school, visible to everyone entering the building. The location itself ensures school-wide exposure and publicity.

**Activity Details:**

**Date:** February 17-21 (Monday to Friday), 2025

**Time:** Everyday 24 hours

**Location:** periphery of volleyball court on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor platform, on xxxx school campus.

**Campaign materials:**

- 1) 100\*320 cm linen canvas, fixed to the fencing of the volleyball court using zip ties
- 2) 7-piece set of colored acrylic markers featuring a diverse range of iridescent colors, placed on tables next to the canvas
- 3) A4 colored-printed posters\*10
- 4) A large portable whiteboard to hang our posters, making our campaign seen more clearly by passers-by
- 5) Cameras and polaroid cameras to record the artwork and creative process

**Procedure:**

- 1) Pick up a few colors of your choice from the colored markers set;
- 2) Make creative drawings according to the themes of loneliness, connection and friendship and/or write inspiring and supportive quotes on the canvas;
- 3) As this is a collaborative project, people can expand on top of other people's drawings, like adding flowers next to the trees other people drew.

**Activity 2: Online Message Board — *Web of Hearts*****Target Audience Analysis:**

Many high school students nowadays may find it difficult to express their emotions openly in real life due to the fear judgement or lack of understanding from their peers.

Raised on the internet, they are comfortable with social media and online interactions, but often crave meaningful connections rather than superficial engagement.

Hence, *Web of Hearts* aims to provide an accessible platform for high school students to share their unspoken thoughts— whether misunderstood emotions, unheard troubles,

or personal life moments. Likes and comments can also encourage mutual support and connection.

### **Plan**

Group members have designed a WeChat mini-program, where users (high school students) are able to post messages and photos as well as like and comment others' posts through scanning a QR code. The program was launched on February 28<sup>th</sup>. As of March 14<sup>th</sup>, Soul Tree Hollow has been ongoing for 14 days and made considerable outcome. We will continue to operate and manage it for some more time.

We made a post introducing the functions of the program and encouraging users to post and interact with others. As a result, all users who click on the mini-program can learn how to operate it.

### **Marketing Strategy**

To promote *Web of Hearts*, we designed an informative poster, which detailed the significance of mitigating loneliness and the introduction of the campaign and included the QR code. The poster was posted on social media, including the school's electronic campus wall which connects students from all year groups. We also printed A3-sized posters and pasted them on the prominent bulletin board of the school to invite all students to participate, which ensures school-wide exposure and publicity.

### **Campaign format and content**

We utilized a WeChat mini-program, where users can post messages and photos as well as like and comment other's posts through scanning a QR code.

The format of online mini-program is chosen because it is not restricted by time and place. Students can simply scan the QR code to participate. It provides great convenience for

all students in xxxx School , especially during the mock exam period. Its flexibility meets students' need to relieve stress and loneliness and establish connections with others in their fragmented time during exams. Additionally, the online format allows users to post anonymously, which encourages them to freely express their troubles and emotions that they might otherwise hesitate to share due to concern or embarrassment. (To ensure that the content does not violate school guidelines, the members would review and approve all comments before it is published.)

We posted a Top-Post introducing the functions of the online message board *Web of Hearts*, encouraging users to post and interact with others. As a result, all users who click on the mini-program can learn how to operate it.

From our previous project in the preliminary round, both teacher and student interviewees mentioned the impact of the internet and social media on teenagers' feelings of loneliness. Indeed, social media exposes us to mixed and diverse voices, yet teenagers remain trapped within the need for performance, struggling to express genuine emotions or connection with others, which can lead to the sense of loneliness. However, our group firmly believes that we can also utilize the power of social media itself to break down barriers between people, listen to the inner emotions of others, create resonance with their feelings of loneliness, and ultimately dissolve these feelings by fostering meaningful connections among the students.

**Activity Details:**

**Date:** February 28<sup>th</sup> to current

**Comments received:** 52 (as of writing portfolio)

**Hits:** 375

**Activity 3: Seminar on Loneliness****Target Audience Analysis**

High school students, as teenagers, are rather impatient. Already faced with hours of daily lectures, they often find it mentally taxing to engage with additional academic lectures. Therefore, when conducting the seminar, we tried to emphasize audience participation, ensuring that the material is understood in a fun and interesting way.

**Format and Content**

The activity is divided into three main parts: an icebreaker game, the presentation, and a Kahoot quiz.

Icebreaker: A list of “would you rather...” or open-ended questions, ranging from silly filler questions to more reflective and thought-provoking ones. Participants would draw a slip of paper containing one question and share their answer. Other audience members would be encouraged to give their own thoughts. Example: “Complete this sentence: I wish that somebody would share... with me.”

Presentation: An educational lecture about loneliness, discussing its different forms and causes, as well as giving advice on how to alleviate loneliness. Audience members are asked questions throughout, such as to think about why teenagers and young adults are more susceptible to feeling lonely.

Kahoot: A brief quiz on the contents of the presentation on Kahoot. As observed in in-class uses, a Kahoot game stirs up a lighthearted competitiveness in high school students, inducing them to take the activity more seriously while assessing their knowledge retention.



## Marketing Strategy

The original intention for this activity was a more formal lecture to be delivered during a grade assembly. However, as the Head of Year did not respond to our proposal in time, last minute adjustments had to be made, and this activity was simply advertised through word-of-mouth.

## Activity Details

**Date:** March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

**Time:** 16:40 to 17:47

**Location:** classroom A509 on the xxxx campus

## Feedback

-Kahoot Quiz Questionnaire

-Interview

## References

- Hawkley, L. C., & Cacioppo, J. T. (2010). Loneliness Matters: A Theoretical and Empirical Review of Consequences and Mechanisms. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 40(2), 218–227. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12160-010-9210-8>
- Reinhardt, G., Vidovic, D., & Hammerton, C. (2021). Understanding Loneliness: A systematic review of the impact of social prescribing initiatives on loneliness. *Perspectives in Public Health*, 141(4), 204–213. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1757913920967040>