

# Counseling Capsules

An information service from the UTEP Counseling Center  
Visit our web site at: <http://sa.utep.edu/counsel/>

## Loneliness

### WHAT IS LONELINESS?

Loneliness does not necessarily mean being alone. You can feel lonely when you are in a class, or in the middle of a party. Loneliness is a painful awareness that you are not feeling connected to others. Loneliness means to feel:

- ◆ Excluded from a group.
- ◆ Unloved by those around you.
- ◆ That there is no one with whom to share your personal concerns and experiences.
- ◆ That it is difficult to make friends and/or go beyond being mere acquaintances.

### NEGATIVE EFFECT OF LONELINESS

- ◆ You depend on your classmates and friends to build your self-esteem and to initiate activities, etc.
- ◆ You blame yourself and other students for your poor social relationships. You falsely assume that nobody likes you.
- ◆ You do not make any attempt to get involved in social activities. You expect everyone that you admire to like and include you in their activities and conversations. If they do not include you in their social activities you may become more withdrawn, angry and isolated from other activities.
- ◆ You become self-conscious and worry unnecessarily about being evaluated by your instructors, classmates and peers.
- ◆ You have difficulty engaging in assertive behavior. You are afraid to stand up for your rights and say "no" to unreasonable requests.
- ◆ You avoid meeting people and new situations. You have difficulty introducing yourself, making telephone calls and participating in group activities.
- ◆ You perceive yourself in a negative way. You become overly critical of your physical appearance.
- ◆ You feel isolated, alone and unhappy about your situation.

### HOW TO OVERCOME

- ◆ Seek out situations that enable you to get involved with other students. For example, ask someone in your class to be your study partner.
- ◆ Learn to be assertive. If you are shy, learn to say "hello" or start a short conversation with the student who sits next to you in class, on the bus, etc. Get involved in class discussions.
- ◆ Learn to enjoy life by developing your social skills. If you see someone that you like, don't just sit there and hope that the person will come to you. Make the first move. Use verbal or nonverbal cues to let the person know that you are interested in getting to know him or her. Make eye contact, smile, and introduce yourself.
- ◆ Get involved in campus organizations and activities.
- ◆ Do some volunteer work. Helping others will boost your self-esteem and make you feel good about yourself.
- ◆ Don't judge people on the basis of your past experiences. Give your instructors, classmates and peers a chance, and try to get to know them. Remember! There are individual differences in people. Learn to admire and accept these differences.
- ◆ When you are alone, use the time to enjoy yourself: reading, listening to music or watching a favorite television show. Do not spend time worrying endlessly about your problems.

# ***Counseling Capsules***

*An information service from the UTEP Counseling Center*

*Visit our web site at: <http://www.utep.edu/counsel>*

**HELP! WHERE CAN YOU FIND IT:**

|  |
|--|
| <b>University Counseling Center...747-5302<br/>202 West Union: 8-7 M-T / 8-5 W-F</b> |
|--|