Designing Loneliness out of the workplace

THE LONELINESS LAB

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Lendlease
BUROHAPPOLD ENGINEERING
workplace unlimited
Workplace loneliness is a real problem. For 45 hours a week I feel isolated.

Anonymous

“During my years caring for patients, the most common pathology I saw was not heart disease or diabetes; it was loneliness.”

What’s behind the rise in workplace loneliness?

By Jenny Anderson in London • October 15, 2018

Why workplace loneliness is bad for business

By Kathryn Votey, CNN Business

Updated 15:20 GMT (23:20 HKT) December 5, 2018
Over 9 million people in the UK are ‘often’ or ‘always’ lonely

1.2 million office workers with chronic loneliness

Co-op (2017)
Loneliness increases risk of mortality

Risk of heart disease, stroke, dementia, depression and anxiety...

Reduction in lifespan equivalent to smoking and obesity

Murthy (2017)
£600 per person per year
cost to NHS & local services

LSE (2017)
REDUCES:

- Task performance
- Creativity
- Approachability
- Organisational commitment
- Staff turnover
- Trust
COST = £2.23 billion per annum

• Absenteeism = £20M
• Caring = £220M
• Loss of productivity = £665M
• Attrition = £1.62B

Cost per year per employee = £82

Co-op & NEF (2017)
Workplace loneliness is an unpleasant distressing experience that occurs when a person’s interpersonal relationships do not satisfy expectations in quantity or quality.

Wright et al (2006)
OUR MISSION

DESIGN OUT LONELINESS IN OUR CITIES

THE LONELINESS LAB

9 MILLION OF US ARE LONELY.
How can we design the places and spaces that we work in to help nurture meaningful connections between the people who use them, and ultimately reduce loneliness?
WHAT WE’VE BEEN UP TO IN THE LAB

- LITERATURE REVIEW
- PROFILE WORKSHOPS
- NATIONWIDE SAMPLE SURVEY
- 10 BIG IDEAS

Jan’ 2019

2020
2020: build a set of practical tools and case studies to tackle loneliness in the built environment
RESULTS

DESIGN OUT LONELINESS IN OUR CITIES
OVER 50% SAID THEY WERE LONELY

How often do you feel that you have lacked companionship?

- Hardly ever or never: 17.6%
- Some of the time: 41.5%
- Often: 40.9%

How often have you felt left out?

- Hardly ever or never: 15.4%
- Some of the time: 44.0%
- Often: 40.6%

How often have you felt isolated from others?

- Hardly ever or never: 18.7%
- Some of the time: 43.3%
- Often: 38.0%

Average score = 58% (using UCLA loneliness scale)
LONELINESS BY OFFICE LOCATION

Primary Location

- <300 office
- >300 office
- Multiple offices
- Co-working
- Home
- Mobile worker

UCLA Rating (%)

High loneliness

Low loneliness
LONELINESS BY DESK TYPE

High loneliness

80
75
70
65
60
55
50
45
40

UCLA Rating (%)

Low loneliness

Private office

Shared office

Allocated open plan
Non-allocated team area
Non-allocated in building
Remote worker (Home & Mobile)

Primary Office
DESIGN FEATURES THAT REDUCE LONELINESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Feature</th>
<th>UCLA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small waiting area for the lift or stairs</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community notice boards (events, etc.)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desks with no divider screens between them</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity spaces (for ping pong, games, etc.)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open informal meeting areas (drop-in)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistically significant with small & medium effects
4 RELATIONSHIPS

**MEETING PEOPLE**
To increase the quantity of people in your network.

**BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS**
A trusted relationship with the people you work with.

**SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS**
A ‘friendship’ bond that can transcend what you are working on.

**BELONGING**
A feeling that you are accepted and valued as part of a group.
DESIGN FEATURES THAT SUPPORT MEETING PEOPLE

- Intimate quiet places
- Desk with no screens
- Large on-floor tea points
- Team boards showing work
- Staff restaurant with long tables
- Drop-in tables for visitors
- Open informal meeting area
- On-floor breakout spaces
- Team boards with photos
- Multi-function space for activities
- Garden terrace
- Activity spaces for games

Statistically significant with small & medium effects
MEETING
PEOPLE
MEETING
PEOPLE
DESIGN FEATURES THAT SUPPORT BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS

- Intimate quiet places
- Desk with no screens
- Large on-floor tea points
- Team boards showing work
- Staff restaurant with long tables
- Drop-in tables for visitors
- Open informal meeting area
- On-floor breakout spaces
- Team boards with photos
- Multi-function space for activities
- Garden terrace
- Activity spaces for games

Statistically significant with small & medium effects
BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS
BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS
DESIGN FEATURES THAT SUPPORT SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

- Intimate quiet places
- Desk with no screens
- Large on-floor tea points
- Team boards showing work
- Staff restaurant with long tables
- Drop-in tables for visitors
- Open informal meeting area
- On-floor breakout spaces
- Team boards with photos
- Multi-function space for activities
- Garden terrace
- Activity spaces for games

Statistically significant with small & medium effects
SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS
Hi!

Welcome to the neighbourhood.
DESIGN FEATURES THAT SUPPORT A SENSE OF BELONGING

- Intimate quiet places
- Desk with no screens
- Large on-floor tea points
- Team boards showing work
- Staff restaurant with long tables
- Drop-in tables for visitors
- Open informal meeting area
- On-floor breakout spaces
- Team boards with photos
- Multi-function space for activities
- Garden terrace
- Activity spaces for games

Statistically significant with small & medium effects
SENSE OF BELONGING

Single organisation

Co-working space

Public cafe

Authentic

Identity

Family
JOIN US TO MAKE OUR CITIES LESS LONELY.
ACTION LEARNING: TOOLKIT

- SELF REVIEW CHECKLIST
- WORKSHOP APPROACH + TEMPLATE TO CAPTURE FINDINGS
- IDEATION (QUICK WINS + BIGGER INTERVENTIONS)
- PILOT + CHECK IN
THE LONELINESS LAB
INVITES YOU TO

A BREAKFAST WORKSHOP:
DESIGNING LONELINESS OUT OF THE WORKPLACE

DATE: Tuesday, 19th November
TIME: 8:30am arrival for a 9:00am start
      10:30am close
📍 WORKABLE
Level 19, 1 Westfield Avenue,
Stratford, E20 1HZ

RSVP HERE
5 CHALLENGES WE'RE FOCUSING ON

- **WORKPLACE LONELINESS**
  How can we design workplaces that foster friendship?

- **HOMES THAT CONNECT NEIGHBOURS**
  How can we design homes so people can meaningfully connect with their neighbours?

- **BUILDING BELONGING**
  How can we connect lonely people to places and spaces that will help them feel less lonely?

- **PUBLIC AND SHARED SPACES**
  How can we design public and shared spaces to create belonging?

- **YOUTH LONELINESS**
  How can we empower young people to re-imagine cities with connection in mind?
THANK YOU

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