

The profound power of loneliness

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NSF:

Loneliness is as close to universal as experiences come. Almost everyone has felt isolated, even rejected.

But the power of loneliness — its potential for causing depression and other serious health problems as well as its surprising role in keeping humans safe from harm — may be more profound than researchers had previously presumed, says neuroscience researcher John Cacioppo of the University of Chicago.

Cacioppo has spent nearly three decades exploring the social nature of the human brain, working to find the mechanisms behind traits such as loneliness, empathy, synchrony and emotional contagion. Through his research, funded by the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences, and the National Institute on Aging, he's helped turn loneliness from a curious afterthought in neuroscience to a serious area for research and explanation.

Read the whole story: [NSF](#)