

Loneliness and Expressive Suppression; The Role of Pessimism about Expressivity

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Loneliness triggers a state of hypervigilance to social threats (Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2010). As a result, lonely individuals tend to form pessimistic views of the social world, and, accordingly, choose prevention-focused interaction strategies in order to minimize the possibility of negative social evaluations (Lucas et al., 2010). Ironically, these cautious strategies may harm lonely individuals' social interactions (Pilkonis, 1977) and lead to a vicious circle of loneliness.

In the present research, we extended this theory to examine the relationship between loneliness and expressive suppression of emotions. Specifically, we predicted that:

- (a) Social isolation will lead to negative beliefs about expression of emotions (including an expectation of negative evaluations in response to emotional expressions).
- (b) This point of view will lead to the suppression of emotions as a cautious strategy to avoid negative social interactions.

These hypotheses were supported across three studies ($N=625$) using correlational (questionnaires and vignettes) and experimental designs.