

# Leisure is a teenager's informal education

## Social Desk

The Director of Tehran's Student Psychological Services and Counseling Center, Zahra Mostadam, has emphasized the importance of optimizing the use of leisure time for teenagers.

She stressed that all institutions and organizations working in the youth sector should collaborate to ensure this, IRNA reported.

Mostadam highlighted that the concept of leisure has become a significant concern in contemporary society. Today's teenagers and young adults, she noted, are selective about how they spend their free time, often viewing it as an opportunity to invest in personal life. This shift has led to a decline in deep emotional-family relationships and participation in extended family gatherings, as young people increasingly lean towards individualism and cultural transformation.

The proliferation of virtual spaces and media facilities, Mostadam explained, has diminished direct communication between teenagers and their families. As reliance on these devices grows, life has become more passive for these young individuals.

The official warned that certain behavioral approaches, such as the passive confrontational approach, could expose teenagers and young adults to social harm. This could lead them to adopt harmful thought systems, competing with both healthy and unhealthy lifestyles.

She further elaborated that these choices for spending free time come with a mix of positive and negative information, transforming the teenager into a shaper. This could potentially rob adolescents of their agency - their independent ability to act based on personal will. Mostadam cited expert psychological research

to argue for the provision of active free time conditions for teenagers and young adults, as opposed to passivity.

"Being active in free time," she said, "will foster creativity and dynamism in teenagers and young adults. Society today needs to nurture a generation with positive self-esteem and should provide an active structure for identity and personality development, particularly in children, teenagers, and young adults."

Mostadam underscored that leisure time is, in essence, an informal education period for teenagers. She urged for the identification of the open windows of adolescent life in this area, and the development of programs for each psychological opening. This would bolster personal growth, social skills development, frustration tolerance, resilience, and psychological well-being.

She stressed that the optimal use of teenagers' and young adults' free time, as the future generation of society, necessitates the consensus of all organizations active in the youth sector, as well as fundamental and interdisciplinary thinking and decisions.

Mostadam reminded that many of today's new phenomena, such as unplanned leisure or passive leisure, are the result of industrial developments and the increasing complexity of human life. Therefore, she concluded, how this opportunity of free time is utilized will significantly impact the growth, creativity, and initiative of teenagers and young adults.



● IRNA

## Iran's serum production surges as country produces 16m units per month



● IRNA

blood factor for several months. "This was due to complications with raw materials for the production of factor eight and recombinant," he said, and further assured that these materials have now been imported, resolving the issue.

Mohammadi also highlighted a previous issue with currency exchange for raw materials, which had contributed to the scarcity of transplant drugs. He stated that this problem has been rectified, and production for the next three months is underway, with distribution set to commence next week. The Director of the Food and Drug Organization further noted that a lack of medicinal stock for a period of 3 to 6 months is deemed a shortage. This serves as a caution for pharmaceutical industries to either boost their production or increase imports.

Mohammadi also projected a significant growth in pharmaceutical exports this year, following the removal of preferential currency in the pharmaceutical sector. He emphasized the need for continuous monitoring by the industries, collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the representative offices of the Islamic Republic of Iran abroad to establish and strengthen markets for Iranian medicines.

In conclusion, Mohammadi expressed optimism about achieving the annual drug export target of 2 billion euros as outlined in the 7th Development Plan bill, with the cooperation of the pharmaceutical industry.

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Heydar Mohammadi, the director of the Food and Drug Organization of Iran, revealed that domestic serum production has surged to 16 million units per month due to increased consumption. He also indicated that this figure is set to rise further.

Mohammadi explained that in addition to domestic production, the country imports 6 million serums monthly. He noted that the demand for serums typically escalates during the summer season due to the heat, which will likely necessitate an increase in imports, according to IRNA.

The director also announced the establishment of a new serum factory in Tabriz, which is poised to commence production soon. Despite the uptick in production and imports, Mohammadi acknowledged that the country has yet to achieve a stable serum reserve. He attributed this to a shift towards higher consumption patterns among the populace.

Addressing the issue of drug shortages, Mohammadi confirmed that there had been a deficit in transplant drugs and

## Loneliness is everywhere



● brainandlife.org



By Ali Amiri  
Staff writer

Loneliness has permeated our human societies, casting its shadow on individuals from all walks of life. In an effort to understand the profound effects of loneliness on general and mental health, we sat down with Mohsen Qasemi, a psychology researcher who has gained authority on the subject through years of research. Qasemi sheds light on the true nature of loneliness, its impact, and offers strategies to combat this pervasive issue.

According to him, loneliness is not merely the absence of social interaction; it is a subjective feeling of isolation and disconnection, even when surrounded by others. This feeling can persist regardless of the number of social connections a person possesses. It is a deeply rooted sensation that resonates within an individual's psyche. Recent studies, Qasemi states, have unveiled the alarming prevalence of loneliness in our society.

"In a 2022 survey conducted in the United States, it was revealed that nearly 60 percent of adults reported experiencing loneliness at least some of the time," he said, adding, "This staggering figure serves as an urgent wake-up call, demanding our attention and action." Various factors contribute to the rise of loneliness. Qasemi highlights the impact of social media, which, although connecting individuals virtually, lacks the depth and intimacy of face-to-face interactions. Moreover, urbanization, decreased community engagement, and evolving family structures have played significant roles in isolating individuals and fostering a sense of

disconnection.

Chronic loneliness not only impacts mental health but physical well-being as well. The loneliness expert stresses that isolated individuals face a higher risk of developing conditions such as cardiovascular problems, weakened immune systems, and sleep disturbances. Unhealthy habits, such as smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, and sedentary lifestyles, are more prevalent among the lonely population.

Loneliness takes a significant toll on mental well-being of people. Qasemi warns that it is intricately linked to an increased risk of mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and substance abuse. Preexisting conditions can worsen, and new challenges may emerge from the burden of loneliness.

"Low self-esteem, decreased self-worth, and a pervasive sense of isolation from society are common experiences faced by the lonely," he noted.

In a bid to combat loneliness, he urges individuals to take proactive steps.

"Acknowledging and recognizing your loneliness is the vital first move. Engaging in activities that foster genuine connections, such as joining community groups, helping others in need, taking up hobbies or participating in sports can provide valuable opportunities for social engagement," he advised.

He further pointed out that seeking professional help from psychologists or therapists is also encouraged, particularly for those facing severe loneliness or struggling with mental health challenges.

But what to do with loneliness on a collective level?

"It is important to foster a culture of connectedness. Inclusivity, face-to-face interactions, and support systems for vulnerable individuals are crucial," he suggested.

"Governments and organizations must implement programs that tackle loneliness head-on, forge mental health awareness, and allocate resources for community activities and initiatives that promote social connections."

The effects of loneliness on general and mental health are undeniable, but with awareness, empathy, and collective action, we can reshape our society into a more compassionate and connected place. "Only through understanding the true nature of loneliness we can start to devise strategies to combat it," he said.