

The Cost of Loneliness: Women, Work and The Invisible Force That's Undermining Them As They Rise

Loneliness is a health epidemic on par with the Opioid Crisis, says US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy. In new proprietary research, TheLi.st, Berlin Cameron & Benenson Group found that 53% of women in the workplace experience loneliness—because of their job. And it only gets worse as their careers grow.

*Proprietary Study conducted February 2023 by TheLi.st, Berlin Cameron, and Benenson Strategy Group. We surveyed more than 600 men and women of diverse identities — including women of color, LGBTQ+ women, and women with disabilities — to get an intersectional look at biases and barriers. *Women of color include Black, Latina, Asian, Native American/American Indian/Indigenous or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, or mixed-race women.*



BERLIN CAMERON



TheLi.st



The Loneliness Trap

In the last month, ALL women have felt these emotions at some point as a result of their role:

67%

of women feel unsupported

53%

of women feel lonely

51%

of women feel isolated

Women feel a sense of loneliness driven by isolation, lack of support, and being unable to be their true selves at work...and it gets worse the more senior they get in their jobs.

55%

of senior-level women have felt lonely at their jobs at least once in the past month.

70%

of senior-level women have felt unsupported at their jobs at least once in the past month.

Senior-level men are significantly more likely than senior-level women to say their loneliness or isolation **decreases** the further they've gone in their careers.

And this loneliness and isolation has a chilling effect on the next generation.

Nearly

60%

of women on the ladder say their feelings of loneliness or isolation increased as their careers progressed.

Nearly

53%

of women on the ladder have declined a job, a promotion, quit or stopped working altogether because of the negative impact on their personal life.

"The more successful I get, the more **isolated** I get."

Politics, Senior Policy Analyst

"The higher you grow, the **lonelier** you become."

Advertising, Global Executive Director

"The leader is oftentimes **invisible** within the organization."

Tech, CEO

"There's definitely certain things you can't talk about with your senior leadership team, or it's hard for them to fully understand because they haven't walked in your shoes. It can feel like a pyramid... lower in the company, you've got a lot of people who are all going through the same thing and shared experiences and the higher up you get, the **less of that internal support network** you might have."

Tech, CEO



Our jobs, culture, and ambition are working against us

40%

of senior-level women feel that the challenges at work go beyond reasonable expectations.

40%

of women feel that their company does not help them succeed.

67%

of working women (and 60% of women on the ladder) feel they're being held back on purpose.

For Women of Color, The Isolation Is Compounded by A Lack Of Respect

Only one-in-five women of color strongly agree that they feel respected at work, compared to over a third of white women.

27%

of women of color

do not feel respected or supported by those who report to them, compared to

19%

of white women

19%

of women of color

are very happy/satisfied with their overall career as it stands today, compared to

30%

of white women

Other ambition penalties that women face

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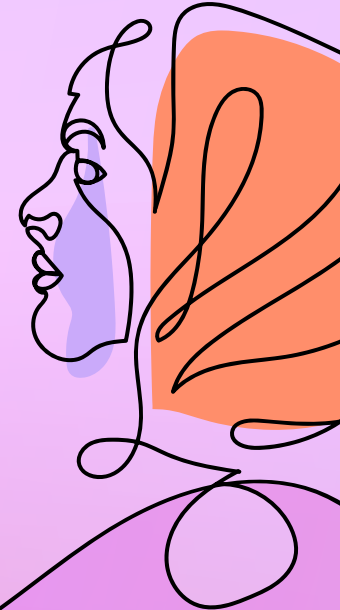
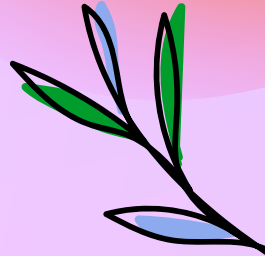
of senior-level women say work combined with responsibilities at home is leaving them burnt out, stressed and overwhelmed.

Nearly half of women say their relationships with friends and family have suffered because of work demands.

To deal with feelings of loneliness and lack of support at work...

92%

of lonely senior-level women have engaged in some type of negative coping behavior at some point in their career, including illegal drugs, overexercising, over spending and gambling.



Community and mentorship are the solutions to loneliness at work.

Mentorship and community are hard to find, but both are key to solving the problem.

24%

of senior-level women reported being held back in their careers by a female colleague or supervisor,

compared to
13%

who were held back by a male.

22%

were held back by both males and females in their careers.

Almost
30%

of senior-level women feel that they don't have anyone to talk to about work.

60%

of women of color want a mentor or advisor but don't currently have one.

65%

of senior-level women do not currently have a mentor or advisor, but 43% of them wish they did.

Faced with lack of support at work, Women have to build their own communities, networks and advisors.

"...it was having a **woman who cared** about my growth and development, who asked me questions about what I wanted to do, where I wanted to be, what was my next step in my career...that was what was most important to me."

Non-profit, Executive Director

I think that it was **seeking mentorship**. That's the reason I was able to rise in any sort of ranks. I had mentors that were other women who were looking out for me for positions. All I could do was pay that forward.

Entertainment, Founder & CEO

"There was a lot of men that I worked with and had great relationships with and I'm grateful for that, but in terms of people who took care of me and looked out for me **[they] were always women.**"

Entertainment, Founder & CEO

"...I view peers as mentors. I don't think there's ever one person or two people that are going to have all of the wisdom, and it's always kind of taken as an amalgamation of the people around me... I think I would say a lot of how I've advanced has actually been through a lot of **peer support and networking.**"

Tech/Digital Health, Co-Founder & CEO

"I feel like they were helping me open the doors, but they're also like the one telling me the door is there, pushing me to walk through the door and making sure that there's someone on the other side opening it... There are opportunities that I never even considered for myself and it's not just like someone making sure that there's somebody there to help me get the opportunity, but understanding that I'm the type of **person worthy of that opportunity.**"

Entertainment, Founder & CEO