Some women felt the pressure of having to make DECISIONS without support; others noted the weight of having to undertake the TASKS of everyday living solo. This experience impacted on some women PSYCHOLOGICALLY as a lack of confidence and in others as a triggered BEHAVIOIRS ranging from avoidance of difficult situations to binge-eating.

This was experienced distinct as a desire for EMOTIONAL and/or for PHYSICAL closeness and as the act of being LOVING TO OTHERS and RECEIVING LOVE in return.

Visceral descriptions of the experience of loneliness, as ‘dead time’ or as ‘cold and darkness’.

Formed a theme in terms of motivation to connect socially and to ‘justify’ seeking company.

This theme subdivided into the expression of STIGMA FROM OTHERS particularly damaging was the idea that they might be PITIED and attitudes which could indicate SELF-STIGMA.

Important to note that the experience of loneliness was a FLUCTUATING STATE; it was exacerbated by CIRCUMSTANTIAL factors like illness and SITUATIONAL ones like going on holiday or eating out.

Figure 1 ‘SOLO-NESSNESS: THEMATIC ANALYSIS’

Some women experienced this as SOCIAL ISOLATION others noted it as a PRACTICAL REALITY.

Some women felt the pressure of having to make DECISIONS without support; others noted the weight of having to undertake the TASKS of everyday living solo.