



**SANCTUM
THERAPY**

Where connections grow stronger.

Understanding Loneliness When You've Been Hurt Before

A gentle guide for when present loneliness touches older wounds of bullying, exclusion, or emotional aloneness.

Why this feels so intense

Sometimes loneliness is not only about being alone now. It also wakes up older beliefs like *I don't belong*, *I get left*, or *something is wrong with me*.

What may be happening

- Something small happens: a quiet phone, a cancelled plan, feeling left out.
- Your body reacts fast: tight chest, heavy stomach, numbness, restlessness, shutdown.
- Your mind fills in the blanks: "I don't matter," "No one wants me," or "I am forgettable."
- You protect yourself: withdraw, overthink, cling harder, shut down, or pretend you're fine.

This cycle is not proof that you are broken. It is often a protection pattern learned from relational pain.

What healing often starts with

1. Name the pattern. Notice what triggers loneliness, what you feel in your body, what story shows up, and what you do next.

2. Separate past from present. Ask: *How much of this pain belongs to today, and how much feels older?*

3. Work with shame. Being bullied or left out can create beliefs like *I am too much* or *not enough*. Those beliefs are wounds, not facts.

4. Stop abandoning yourself. Needs do not make you weak. Hurt does not make you dramatic. Learn to stay kind to yourself in the moment.

5. Build safer connection slowly. The goal is not to make everyone choose you. The goal is to notice and choose relationships that are warm, mutual, and steady.

Try this in the moment:

What am I feeling right now?

What am I telling myself?

How old does this feeling seem?

What do I need most in this moment?

What would it look like to stay kind to myself right now?

Most important truth: Wanting connection is not weakness. Feeling hurt by loneliness is not failure. Your pain makes sense, and healing is possible.