

Coronavirus: Flow depression headset and app to tackle UK's 'lockdown loneliness' as new research links loneliness to worse mental health

London, UK - As England is once again in lockdown, new [research](#) shows the rate of 'lockdown loneliness' and its impact on mental health is as high as 27% in the UK. As the NHS strains to support an increase in mental health conditions, the [Flow](#) headset and therapy app treatment for depression, the first of its type to be medically approved in the UK and EU, aims to tackle 'lockdown loneliness' and mental health outcomes by providing immediate, at-home access to effective treatment.

Flow involves patients wearing a brain stimulation headset, while using a behavioural therapy app, which improves areas known to impact depression, including sleep and nutrition.

UK research findings

- The prevalence of loneliness was 27%
- 49% to 70% of respondents reported feeling isolated
- People meeting clinical criteria for depression were almost twice as likely to be lonely
- Worse quality sleep due to the pandemic increased the odds of being lonely

Depression and loneliness

The research identifies that people with depression were almost twice as likely to be lonely, and highlights the importance of effective targeted intervention to reduce the impact of lockdown loneliness. In a recent user analysis, 81% of patients using the Flow headset and therapy app reported feeling better after three weeks, while 34% reported mood improvement and 32% reported anxiety reduction. The type of brain stimulation used in the Flow headset (tDCS) has been shown in clinical randomised controlled trials, including [New England Journal of Medicine](#) and the [British Journal of Psychiatry](#), to have a similar impact to antidepressants, but with fewer and less-severe side effects.

Immediate access to treatment

The research shows that 49% to 70% of respondents reported feeling isolated, so immediate access to effective treatment could help the UK's mental health services, which are straining to support the growing number of people with mental health conditions. Flow improves access to mental health treatment as it can be delivered in 48 hours, allowing people to self-manage their depression at home. This is important as the research shows that in-person social contact has declined with fewer people going to their GP for help with their mental health during isolation.

Sleep and loneliness

The research shows that worse quality sleep due to the pandemic increased the odds of being lonely. The Flow therapy app program, which NHS trusts and healthcare professionals can now recommend, features an interactive chatbot therapist, a constant companion, which offers continuous personalised behavioural therapy in areas proven to reduce symptoms of depression, including sleep.

Daniel Mansson, clinical psychologist and co-founder of Flow says "As England is once again in lockdown, it's important that people can get immediate access to effective therapy. Our clear treatment pathway empowers those most vulnerable to loneliness during these times to take control and self-manage their depression with a drug-free treatment from the comfort of their home."

The research shows that with reduced in-person social contact and without intervention, prolonged loneliness may increase prevalence of mood disorders and exacerbate pre-existing mental health conditions. It recommends that interventions addressing loneliness should focus on individuals who are socially isolated and prioritise those with mental health symptoms.



To normalise conversations around mental health and enhance feelings of solidarity during isolation, Flow is empowering its users to share their stories about how loneliness has impacted their mental health outcomes. Flow user Mike Parsons has lived with depression for most of his life, and his story can be viewed [here](#).

The Flow headset is available to buy [here](#). The Flow app is free to download on [AppStore](#) and [GooglePlay](#).

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Media enquiries

Daniel Mansson, CEO and Co-Founder of Flow, is available for an interview.

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Notes

The Flow chatbot therapist app requires iOS 11.0 (or later) or Android. Compatible with iPhone, iPad and iPod touch, as well as Android devices.

About Flow

Medical device company Flow ('Flow Neuroscience') has developed the first, and only, medically approved home brain stimulation treatment for depression. The headset and accompanying therapy app empowers and motivates individuals to take control, self-manage and reduce the risk of depression with effective, non-pharmacological, digital alternatives. Flow was founded by clinical psychologist Daniel Mansson and neuroscientist Erik Rehn, and consists of prominent researchers in the field of psychiatry, clinical psychology, brain stimulation, neuroscience and machine learning. The company was founded in 2016 and is based in Sweden. For more information, please visit flowneuroscience.com