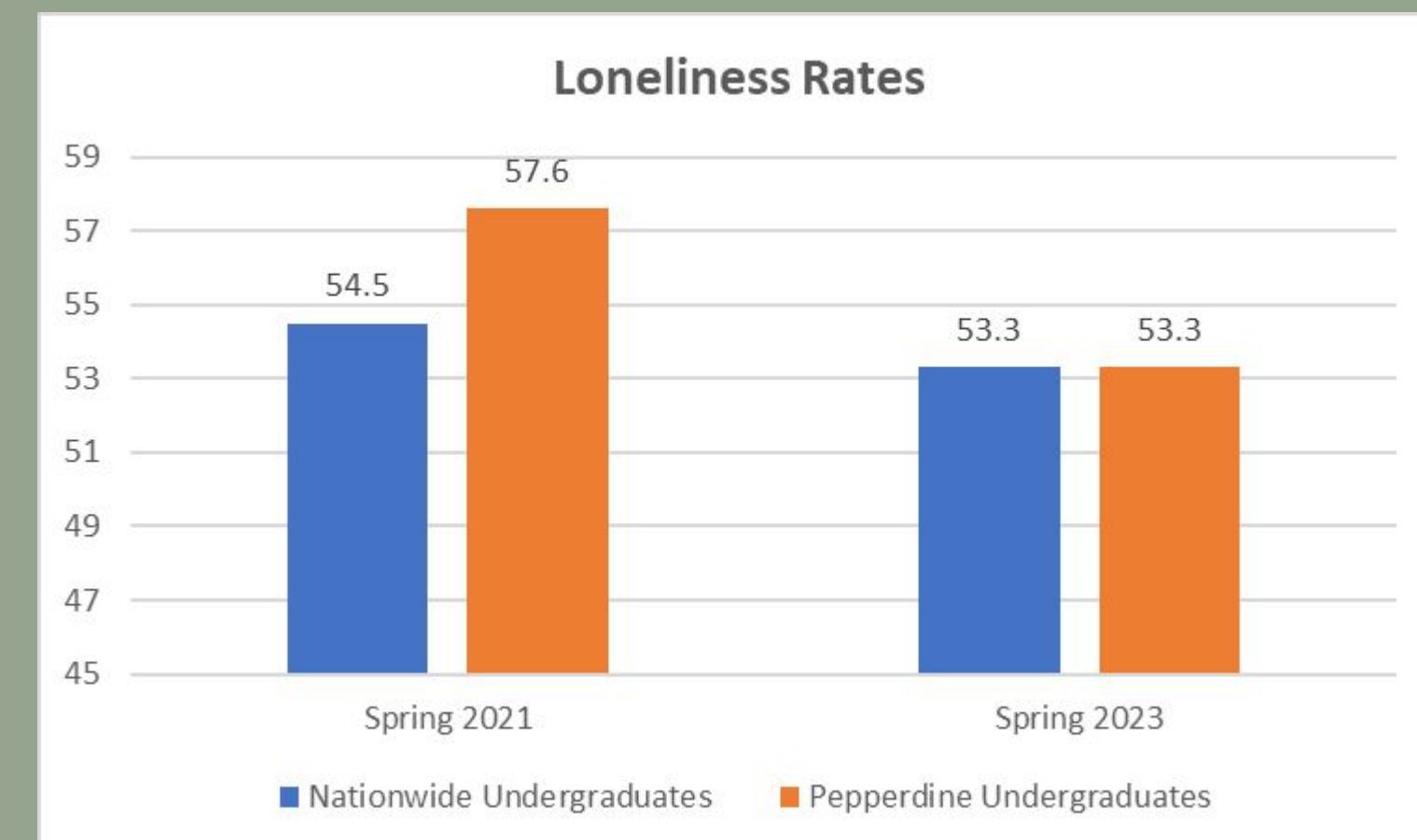


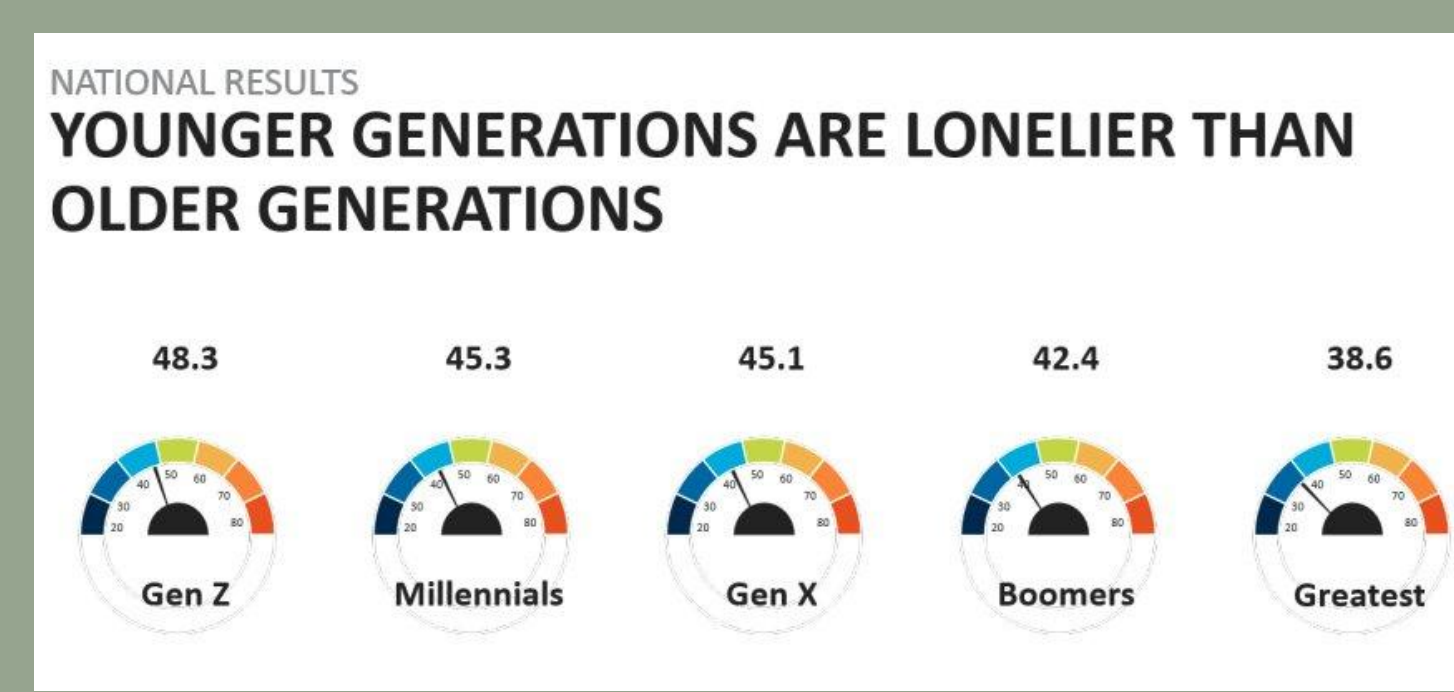
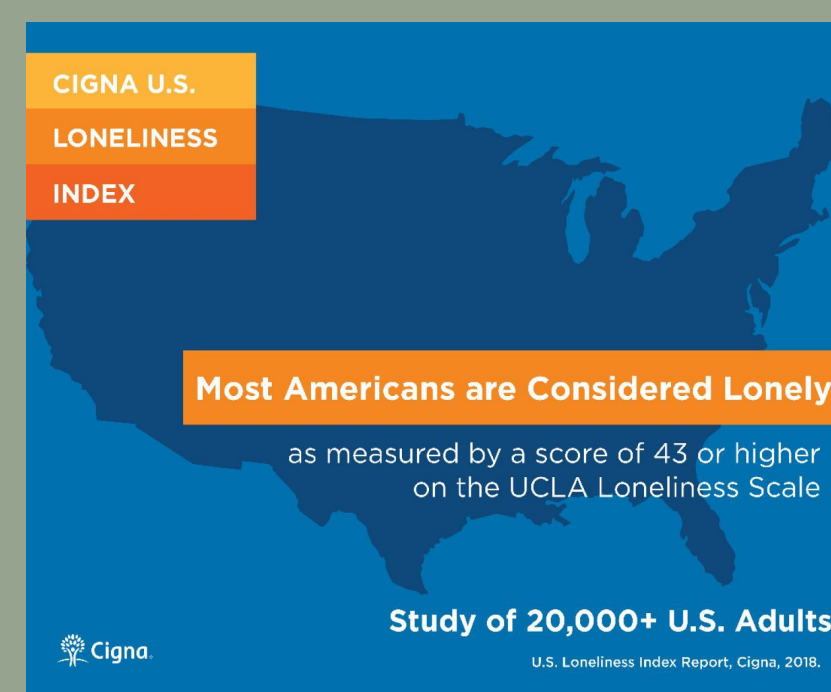
Loneliness in the Words of First-Generation College Students

Ellen Galstian and Emily Sardaryan ~ Faculty Advisor: Dr. Khanh Bui
Social Science Division

INTRODUCTION



Loneliness rates nationwide vs. Pepperdine for 2021 & 2023



Loneliness is as detrimental as...



...to physical health.

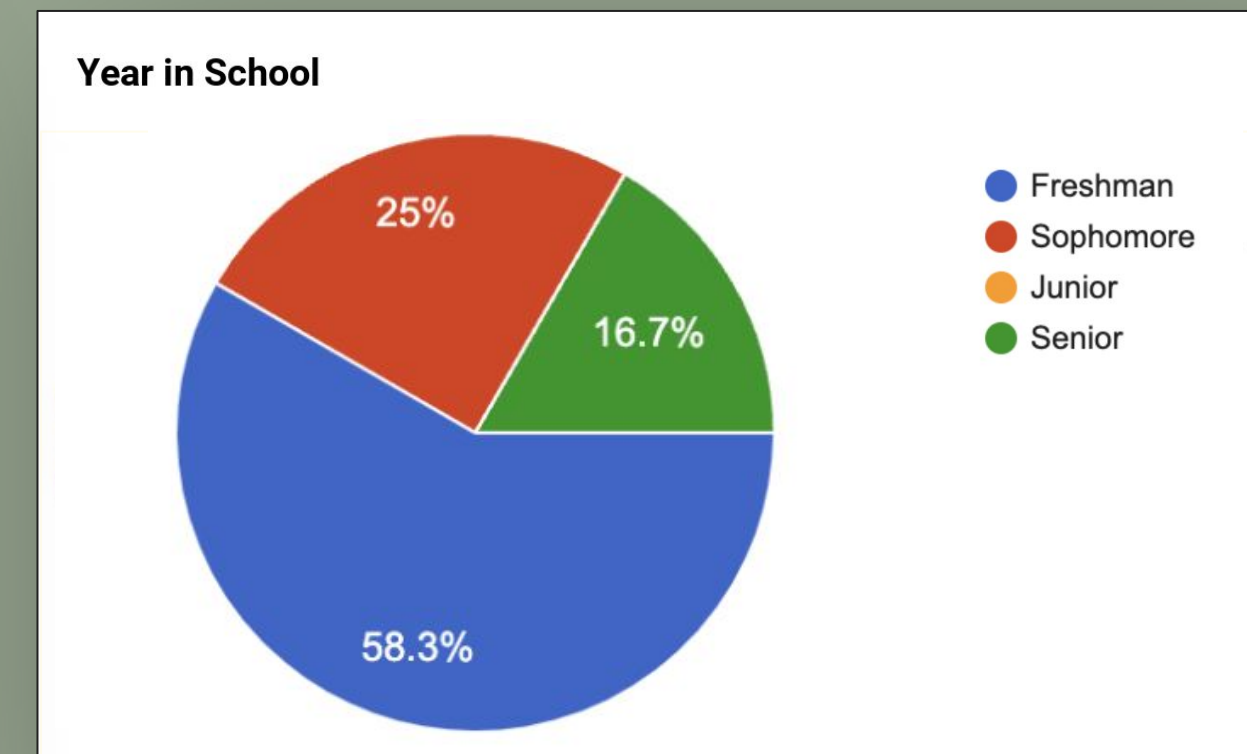
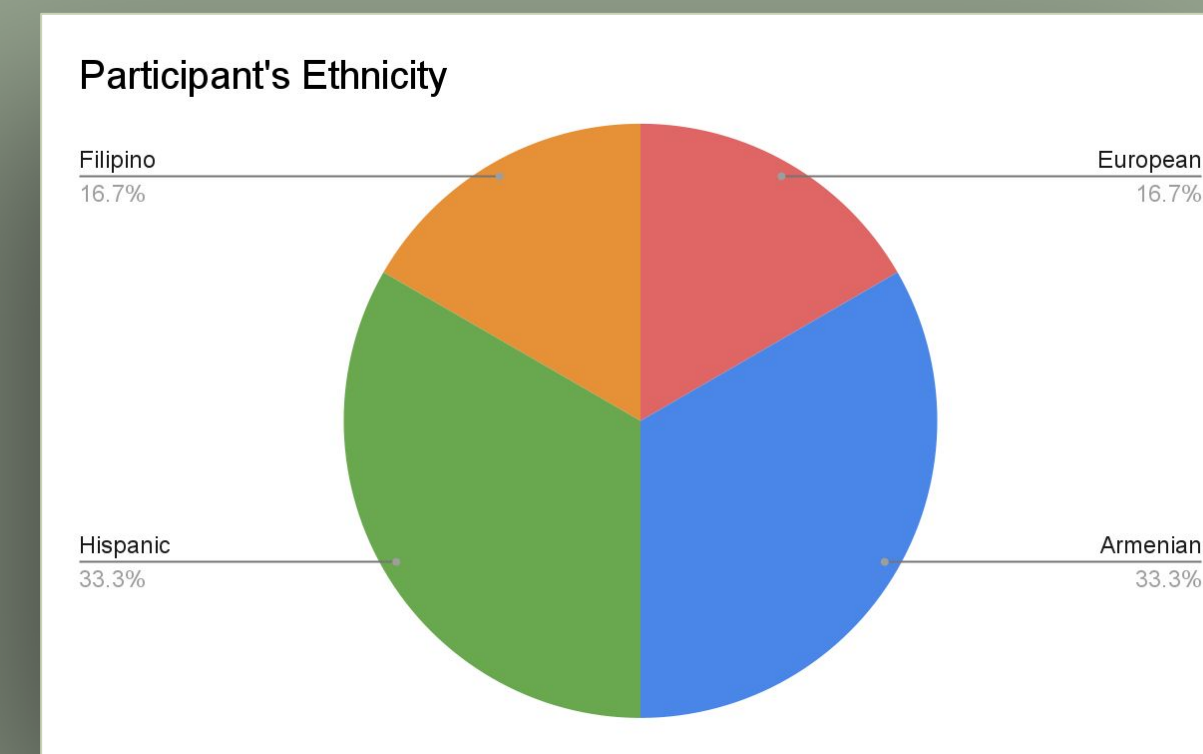
Loneliness also decreases sleep quality and increases daytime dysfunction.



METHOD

Participants

(6 total; 2 men, 4 women)



Procedure

Moderators

Ellen Galstian
Sophomore;
Psychology major;
Moderated all focus groups.



Emily Sardaryan
Sophomore;
Psychology major on the Pre-med track;
Moderated all focus groups.

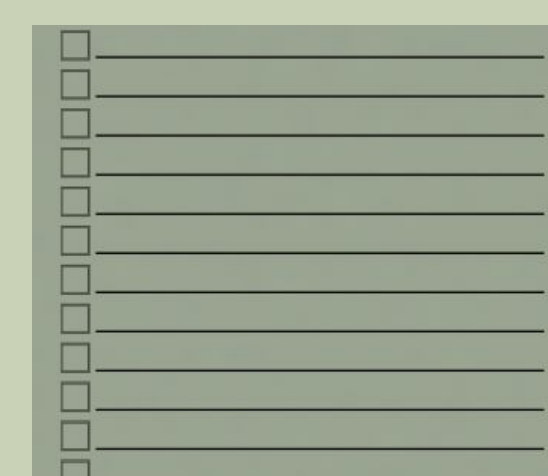
Focus Groups
(lasted 30 - 60 minutes)

1. Students discussed loneliness.

- Have you ever felt lonely at Pepperdine before? If yes, what did this feel like?
- In what situations do you, as a first-gen student, feel particularly lonely?
- What helps you when you are feeling lonely?



2. Students listed words related to loneliness.



3. Students suggested ways to reduce loneliness among first-gen college students.



RESULTS

Themes of What Students Said

Academics

"I feel extra alone...All these people are going out. They could feel alone, too, in some aspects, but I feel like it's so much more exemplified when I'm literally sitting there and doing work and purposefully saying no to going out sometimes because I have to prioritize my grades...And it's like I don't have that luxury. I just have to figure it out."

Social Media



"It's really hard when I'm scrolling on Instagram...all these girls are doing all these things and going everywhere. And I'm wondering if I stayed for one weekend, would I be having fun?"

Familial Relations

"And the struggle of trying to talk to my teachers and having them understand me. And then going to my family, having them understand that I cannot participate in something because I have to focus on my studies."



Access to a Car

"But I didn't have a car last year. And I think more first-generation students don't have a car than people whose parents went to college because my parents were like, 'Well, it's college. You won't need a car.' But they didn't go to college, so they don't know right?"

Time for Connection

"Even if you have time to do it, you might not have the money for it. And you know that money you worked so hard for, you need to save for something important down the line because without the school, you might not get a good career. This is what we're riding on for the future, so."

Campus on the Weekend



"I think there's a lot of planned activities, which are great, but they kind of all stop on the weekends...I think a lot of people, especially if you don't have a lot of friends, just being in your room is like a trap."

Responsibilities

"It just felt kind of lonely not being able to go [out with friends]. Even though I was at work with other people, it just didn't feel the same. So it was tough."

First-Year Experience

"I think when I first moved in, it was just hard to meet friends, so it was just a bit lonely, but then I started to find people and I don't really feel lonely here anymore."

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- Robert E. William, Professor of Political Science and Divisional Dean; and
- Steve Zelman, Academic Support and Resource Specialist for Religion and Social Science Divisions.

Goals of Research Program

- Immediate goal: Understand loneliness in first-generation undergraduates' own words.
- Ultimate goal: Help alleviate loneliness among first-generation college students.