What happens to your brain without any social contact? - Terry Kupers — 中英對照學習本

TED-Ed（講解：Terry Kupers）· 6 分 52 秒

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Everyone needs time to themselves, and peaceful solitude has stress-relieving benefits. But being alone takes on an entirely different dimension when it creeps up or is forced upon you. When that's the case, the effects can be surprisingly extensive. And though different people experience distinct effects at different times, symptoms tend to become more severe and persistent the longer one's isolated. When someone is involuntarily confined to one space indefinitely— for days, weeks, months, or even years— alone and without productive tasks, their body will likely undergo numerous changes. Let's take a look at what may happen and why. Early on, stress hormones may spike, and as time passes, that stress can become chronic.

> 每個人都需要屬於自己的時間，安靜而平和的獨處確實有紓緩壓力的好處。但獨處一旦悄悄找上你，或者根本不是你自己選擇的，它就會變成完全另一回事。在這種情況下，後果可能深遠得令人吃驚。不同的人在不同時候出現的症狀雖然各異，但一般而言，孤立得越久，症狀就越嚴重，也越持久。當一個人被迫無限期地被限制在同一個空間裡——可能是一天、數星期、數個月，甚至好幾年——身邊沒有任何人，也沒有任何有意義的事情可做，他的身體很可能會出現種種變化。讓我們看看究竟會發生甚麼，以及為甚麼。一開始，壓力荷爾蒙可能會急升；隨著時間推移，這種壓力會變成慢性的。

(n.) **solitude**
獨處；獨自一人的狀態

(adj.) **extensive**
廣泛的；深遠的；範圍廣的

(adj.) **persistent**
持續不斷的；久久不散的

(n.) **symptoms**
症狀；病徵

(v.) **undergo**
經歷；承受（變化、程序）

(adj.) **chronic**
慢性的；長期形成的

(v.) **spike**
（數值）急升；飆升

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Social interactions and meaningful activities are essential for emotional stability. This may be because they provide us with what researchers call “social reality testing”— a sort of sounding board where we can gauge how rational our perceptions are. So, when someone’s deprived of those kinds of communication and tasks, their sense of identity and reality becomes threatened. Their thoughts spiral and their impulses take the reins, setting the stage for depression, obsessions, suicidal ideation, and, for some, delusions and hallucinations. Over time, this prolonged

(adj.) **essential**
不可或缺的；至關重要的

(v.) **gauge**
衡量；估量；判斷

(n.) **perceptions**
感知；看法；認知

(adj.) **deprived**
被剝奪的；被奪去機會的

(v.) **spiral**
失控打轉；不斷惡化

(n.) **impulses**
衝動；一時的念頭

agitation can cause the brain's limbic system, which regulates fear and stress, to become especially responsive and hyperactive.

> 社交互動和有意義的活動，是維持情緒穩定不可或缺的部分。原因可能在於，它們提供給我們研究者所稱的「社會現實測試」——就像一塊回音板，讓我們可以判斷自己的感知究竟是否合理。因此，當一個人被剝奪了這類交流與任務，他對自我身分和對現實的感受就會受到威脅。思緒開始失控打轉，衝動則逐步接管一切，為憂鬱、強迫症狀、自殺意念鋪路，某些人更會出現妄想和幻覺。日子久了，這種持續的躁動會令大腦中負責調節恐懼與壓力的邊緣系統變得格外敏感，甚至過度活躍。

(n.) **suicidal ideation**
自殺意念；想死的念頭

(n.) **agitation**
躁動；激動不安

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Meanwhile, the prefrontal cortex, the brain’s hub for reasoning and moral judgment, may shrink, impairing one's focus, memory, and cognition. Overall, the balance shifts from rational thinking towards emotionality. And as someone remains in this state, the imbalance becomes ingrained, making them more prone to bouts of anxiety, rage, and irrational actions. Isolation will also affect other parts of the person's health. They may lose sense of time and have difficulties sleeping. They're more likely to experience heart palpitations, headaches, dizziness, and hypersensitivity. And they may also lose weight because of stress-induced digestive issues and poor appetite. One can attempt to cope by establishing the healthiest routine possible under the extreme circumstances, including robust exercise, reading, and writing.

> 與此同時，負責推理和道德判斷的大腦中樞——前額葉皮質——可能會萎縮，令一個人的專注力、記憶力和認知能力都受損。整體來說，內在的平衡會由理性思考逐漸偏向情緒化。當這種狀態持續下去，失衡就會根深蒂固，讓人更容易爆發一陣陣的焦慮、暴怒和不合常理的行為。孤立還會影響身體其他方面的健康：有人會失去時間感、難以入睡；心悸、頭痛、頭暈和過度敏感也會更容易出現；壓力引起的消化問題加上食慾不振，還可能令體重下降。在極端環境下，人或許可以嘗試建立最健康的生活作息來應對——包括充足的運動、閱讀和寫作。

(v.) **shrink**
萎縮；縮小

(n.) **cognition**
認知能力；思考能力

(n.) **emotionality**
情緒化；感情用事

(adj.) **ingrained**
根深蒂固的；牢不可破的

(adj.) **prone**
傾向於……的；容易出現……的

(n.) **bouts of anxiety**
一陣陣的焦慮；陣發性的不安

(v.) **cope**
應對；想辦法處理

(n.) **routine**
日常作息；慣例

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But that can only do so much. The United Nations, many human rights organizations, and experts classify this kind of forced, prolonged isolation as torture. And yet, it’s something imprisoned people in many countries endure. Also called “solitary confinement” or “restrictive housing,” the practice is most common in the United States. In 2019, more than 120,000 US prisoners lived in solitary confinement, spending

(v.) **classify**
把……分類；歸類

(n.) **torture**
酷刑；虐待

(v.) **endure**
忍受；持續承受

22 to 24 hours a day in mostly windowless cells spanning roughly six by nine feet. Quaker groups introduced solitary confinement to US prisons in the late 1700s, as an alternative to corporal punishment, believing it could bring about reflection and penitence — hence "penitentiary."

但這些方法能做的畢竟有限。聯合國、許多人權組織以及專家，都把這種強迫而長期的隔離歸類為酷刑。然而在許多國家，被囚禁的人卻一直在承受這種待遇。這種做法又叫「單獨監禁」或「限制性收容」，以美國最為普遍。2019年，超過十二萬名美國囚犯曾被單獨監禁，每天有二十二至二十四小時困在大多沒有窗戶的牢房裡，牢房面積大約只有六呎乘九呎（約一點八米乘二點七米）。18世紀末，貴格會團體把單獨監禁引入美國監獄，用它取代體罰，相信這樣可以促成囚犯反思與懺悔——「penitentiary（監獄）」一詞正是由此而來。

(n.) **solitary confinement**
單獨監禁（把囚犯單獨囚禁的做法）

(n.) **restrictive housing**
限制性收容（與單獨監禁同義）

(adj.) **windowless**
沒有窗戶的

(n.) **corporal punishment**
體罰；以身體懲罰

(n.) **penitence**
懺悔；悔罪

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But the practice quickly faced criticism, from public figures all the way to the Supreme Court. Charles Dickens, for one, condemned solitary confinement as "worse than any torture of the body." Its use dwindled, but then, in the 1980s, alongside more punitive, tough-on-crime laws, US prison populations skyrocketed. As prisons grew crowded, incidences of protests, rebellions, and violence grew, and prison authorities increasingly used solitary confinement to maintain control. Many people have been placed in solitary confinement for minor, nonviolent infractions, like talking back to prison guards. And solitary confinement is harmful to everyone, but many who've experienced it have pre-existing mental health disorders, which it only exacerbates.

但這種做法很快就遭到批評，從社會名流一路批到最高法院。查爾斯·狄更斯（Charles Dickens）就是其中之一，他譴責單獨監禁「比任何肉體上的酷刑都更殘酷」。它的使用一度減少，但到了1980年代，隨著更嚴厲、更強調重刑打擊犯罪的法律實施，美國監獄的囚犯人數暴增。監獄越來越擁擠，抗議、暴動和暴力事件隨之增加，監獄當局也就愈來愈倚賴單獨監禁來維持秩序。許多人只是因為輕微、非暴力的違規行為，例如頂撞獄警，就被送進單獨監禁。而且單獨監禁對每一個人都有害；但不少經歷過它的人本來就有心理健康問題，這種處置只會令問題更加嚴重。

(n.) **criticism**
批評；批判

(v.) **condemned**
譴責；嚴厲非難

(v.) **dwindled**
減少；漸漸變少

(adj.) **punitive**
懲罰性的；嚴厲的

(v.) **skyrocketed**
急升；暴增

(n.) **infractions**
違規行為；輕微過失

(n.) **disorders**
（精神或生理上的）障礙；疾病

(v.) **exacerbates**
使加劇；使惡化

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Solitary confinement also seems to have lasting effects that make readjusting to life outside of a cell difficult. People who have gone through solitary confinement are three times more likely to show signs of post-traumatic stress disorder. And they commonly report experiencing

(v.) **readjusting**
重新適應；再融入

(n.) **post-traumatic stress disorder**
創傷後壓力症候群

shifts in their personalities, increased anxiety and paranoia in otherwise ordinary situations, and difficulty concentrating and connecting with others. Some states have restricted the use of solitary confinement in cases involving serious mental illness, children, or pregnancy, and some have adopted 15 or 20 day limits for everyone. But laws that regulate solitary confinement aren't always enforced— and prison authorities have created loopholes.

> 單獨監禁似乎還會留下持久的後果，讓人重新適應牢房以外的生活變得困難。經歷過單獨監禁的人，出現創傷後壓力症候群（post-traumatic stress disorder）的機會是一般人的三倍。他們也普遍反映，自己的性格起了變化，在日常不過的情境裡更容易感到焦慮和偏執，專注力下降，也難以與他人建立連結。有些州已限制在涉及嚴重精神疾病、兒童或懷孕的案件中使用單獨監禁，有些州更為所有人訂下十五天或二十天的上限。但規管單獨監禁的法律並非每次都獲得執行——監獄當局也早已想方設法鑽出漏洞。

(n.) **shifts**
轉變；變化（指性格上的改變）

(n.) **paranoia**
偏執；病態多疑

(v.) **restricted**
限制；約束

(n.) **limits**
上限；期限

(v.) **enforced**
執行；落實

(n.) **loopholes**
漏洞；可乘之機

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Yet solitary confinement does immense damage that is contrary to rehabilitation, while failing to reduce prison violence. Meanwhile, other countries have centered more humane approaches. Norway, for example, imprisons far fewer people per capita than the US while spending five times more per prisoner on accommodations, classes, and work-release programs. Norway also sees far fewer people return to prison after release, with one of the world's lowest rates of recidivism, indicating we tend to get better together.

> 然而，單獨監禁造成的巨大傷害與更生的目標背道而馳，也未能減少監獄暴力。與此同時，其他一些國家就把重點放在更人道的做法上。以挪威（Norway）為例，人均監禁人數遠少於美國，但在住宿、課程和工作外放計劃上，每名囚犯所花的費用是美國的五倍。挪威出獄後重返監獄的人數也少得多，再犯率位居全球最低之列——這說明，當有人陪伴在旁，我們會變得更好。

(adj.) **immense**
巨大的；極大的

(n.) **rehabilitation**
更生；復康

(adj.) **humane**
人道的；有人情味的

(phr.) **per capita**
人均（以人口或囚犯人數計算）

(n.) **accommodations**
住宿；食宿安排

(n.) **recidivism**
再犯率；重犯比率