

"When Loneliness Leads to AI: Pain and Untested Technology"

Rose Hill

Crisis Connections, USA

Mental Health Symposium 2026

Thursday, June 25

[2026/06/25 15:54] Katie Velvetpaw: Hello everyone.

Today's presentation is being transcribed so those without audio or who require text only can participate in real time.

A little explanation about this service.

Voice-to-text transcriptionists provide a translation of the key ideas discussed, NOT a word for word transcription.

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Transcription is provided by Virtual Ability, Inc.

The transcriptionists are Carolyn Carillon, Katie Velvetpaw

Speakeasy Transcription provided by Rose Hill and Valibrarian Gregg

[2026/06/25 16:00] 50 Winx: Hello. I'm 50 Winx.

I am retired from the University of California, Los Angeles library.

I was involved with linked data and published the Semantic Web Lib Guide.

I've been in Second Life since 2007.

I am especially honored to be invited to introduce our next speaker, Rose Hill.

Ms. Hill is a Certified Peer Counselor with a focus on trauma and crisis counseling.

She has experience with a wide range of therapies, including relational therapy, somatic therapy, existential therapy, psychotherapy, and crisis intervention.

Ms. Hill is an Opioid Use Disorder specialist at Crisis Connections in Seattle.

We find ourselves, often unknowingly, bombarded with AI generated communications.

Concerns about the consequences of our interaction with AI grow. Ms. Hill addresses one of these concerns with her presentation, When Loneliness Leads to AI: Pain and Untested Technology.

Here is Rose Hill.

[2026/06/25 16:02] Valibrarian Gregg: Slide 1: Title: When Loneliness Leads to AI: Pain and Untested Technology

Hello everyone. I'm so glad to be here with you. Today I'm going to talk about the relationship between loneliness and pain, and how people with chronic or invisible pain may be more vulnerable to negative effects from relational interactions with AI.

A brief note up front. Throughout this talk, when I refer to AI, I am primarily referring to the LLM or Large Language Model chatbots that are publicly available, such as ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, and Grok. I will use AI and LLM interchangeably for our purposes today, but I want to note that this talk does not cover all AI applications as there are many AI applications beyond LLM chatbots.

Slide 2: I am a Harm Reductionist

To frame this talk, I am a harm reductionist. Harm reduction is a public health philosophy and practice framework that prioritizes reducing the negative consequences of behavior rather than eliminating the behavior itself.

The underlying premise is that abstinence-based approaches are not realistic for everyone, and that meeting people where they are, without judgement, saves lives. Many people only consider harm reduction in the context of substance use. For example, syringe services or Narcan distribution are forms of harm reduction.

But I take a much broader view of harm reduction. All behavior carries both benefit and harm. The question is always: does the benefit outweigh the harm? In the clinical mental health world, this is a perpetual question because there are no perfect interventions or solutions.

So that's the framework that I take in general and during this talk, and we will revisit it later.

Slide 3: A unique kind of loneliness

We, as a culture, are in a loneliness epidemic, caused by compounding factors: technology, social media, the pandemic, community safety concerns, and so on (Office of the Surgeon General, 2023).

People with chronic and invisible pain experience a unique kind of loneliness within this epidemic not exclusively caused by external factors.

Part of what makes this loneliness unique is the emotional labor it requires. Emotional labor is the work of attempting to manage other people's feelings, often out of a feeling of obligation to protect a relationship or, in this case, to make your own pain feel less like an imposition. If you live with chronic pain, you know that it is unpredictable. You cancel plans, and then cancel again, and eventually the invitations stop coming.

You spend enormous energy managing other people's discomfort with your pain, explaining, reassuring, minimizing your own experience so they don't feel helpless. That labor is exhausting. And it is invisible and carried alone.

Chronic pain itself often leaves people feeling unseen, misunderstood, not believed, and invalidated by those closest to them, like their friends and family, and by the medical system itself.

There is also grief here that often goes unacknowledged. A grief for the self that existed before the pain. For the activities, roles, and identities that pain has quietly taken. And that grief is largely carried alone, because the people around you often can't see what has been lost.

This slowly compounds loneliness: you stop explaining because it's exhausting, people stop asking because they don't understand, and the social network slowly shrinks.

[2026/06/25 16:07] Maddie Margulis: and the grief over the things that will never be.

[2026/06/25 16:08] Valibrarian Gregg: Slide 4: The Loneliness Loop

There is another aspect to this as well. Social pain and physical pain share the same brain circuits, activating the same brain regions. Loneliness is literally perceived as physically painful.

This is what we'll call the loneliness loop. This loop speaks to a documented bidirectional relationship in which pain and loneliness each predict the escalation of the other

Slide 5: The Loneliness Loop

It seems self-evident that pain can cause loneliness, even just logistically, though the research also supports this. Research has shown that people with chronic pain report loneliness at nearly twice the rate of those without pain (Smith et al., 2018). But loneliness as a result of pain is not unidirectional.

Slide 6: The Loneliness Loop

Research by Allen et al. in 2020 shows that loneliness itself significantly predicts both acute and chronic pain.

Han et al. in 2025 show that social isolation and loneliness predict new chronic pain development over a seven year longitudinal study.

This also happens within the span of a day though. Wolf and Davis (2014) found that morning loneliness predicts evening pain within a single day.

The pain-loneliness loop is a self-reinforcing cycle.

So it may follow that decreasing pain could decrease loneliness and decreasing loneliness could decrease pain.

Slide 7: Technological Socialization

If reducing loneliness can reduce pain, then finding ways to connect matters both socially and clinically. For people whose pain makes leaving the house difficult or impossible, technology becomes a logical and accessible path to that connection.

We have been using synchronous technology to socialize for over a century starting with the telephone for voice conversation. Things like chatrooms, MUDs and MOOs in the early days of personal computers, all text based. Now we have virtual worlds like Second Life, video calls, social media, discord, livestreams.

Slide 8: Technological as Medium for Relationship

Each of these technologies connected people to other people. And for all of them, the technology is the medium, not the relationship.

That is not the case with AI.

Slide 9: AI Technology

So on the screen is our human figure chatting with an AI chatbot. The human says: "I've been feeling really isolated lately. It's hard to connect with people." The chatbot responds: "I hear you. And I understand. I'm here for you. Remember, your feelings are valid. You can always talk to me."

Slide 10: Technology is the Relationship

With AI, the relationship is with the technology itself. The technology is not just the medium. In fact, AI is using other mediums- texting, voice chat, apps- to connect humans to LLMs.

This is a fundamental difference between AI and all previous socialization technologies.

With any fundamental difference, we can expect different results. And what makes our personal decisions to use or not use AI in this moment right now particularly challenging, is that we simply don't know what those results will be.

Slide 11: AI for Loneliness

And already, large numbers of people are turning to AI to meet emotional and social needs. A study done by Rousmaniere et al 2026, showed that in the United States, nearly half of adults with mental health conditions who used LLMs in the past year used them for emotional support. Of that half, 73% used LLMs for anxiety, 63% for personal advice, and 59% for depression.

The reasons are understandable, especially for people with chronic pain. Always available. Nonjudgmental. No getting dressed, no brushing your hair, no explaining why you canceled last time. And it doesn't question whether your pain is real. It believes you. It doesn't get tired of hearing how you feel.

In at least one study, AI companions reduced loneliness in the short term on par with human interaction (De Freitas et al. 2026)

Slide 12: Increased Vulnerability for People with Chronic Pain

People with chronic pain and invisible pain are at an increased vulnerability to using this technology for emotional support.

People with chronic pain report higher rates of loneliness and social isolation than the general population, as I mentioned before (Navarro et al. 2024, Smith et al. 2018). And not just slightly higher, the rates are nearly double the general population.

And bringing it back to that loop, social isolation increases chronic pain symptoms mechanistically through elevated stress hormones and reduced coping capacity (Cacioppo et al., 2014). That last part meaning that it's harder to engage in a full array of coping strategies when in pain.

So this population enters that loneliness loop already carrying more loneliness, more isolation, more pain, more unmet need for connection.

AI technology is low demand and accessible when you can't leave the house or even get out of bed.

And the demand it removes is not only physical. We talked earlier about the emotional labor of managing other people's reactions to your pain. That labor does not disappear in Second Life. It does not disappear in a text thread with a friend. Any time another human is on the other side, there is a cost to being known, to being potentially misunderstood, to navigating someone else's feelings about your pain.

A conversation with AI, though, removes that cost entirely. There is no one on the other side to manage. The slate is clean every time. Which could feel hollow. Or it could feel liberating.

Slide 13: Why Emotional Attachment to AI Happens

Now I want to step back from this specific population for a moment and talk about why I think that developing an emotional attachment to AI chatbots that are used for emotional support is inevitable, even if we try not to.

Slide 14: Atticus and Katniss

Let's just take a moment here. As you look at these two characters, Atticus Finch from *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Katniss Everdeen from *The Hunger Games*. Take a minute to check in with yourself. What emotions come up when you see and think about these characters? Is there warmth? Ambivalence? Nostalgia? Pride? Admiration? Like? Dislike?

If you are experiencing any sort of emotion about these characters right now, this could be categorized as a parasocial relationship. Parasocial relationships are typically considered to be one-sided relationships, where a person forms some type of feelings, they don't have to be positive, with a character or celebrity or social media influencer. Parasocial relationships are not inherently bad or good.

A parasocial relationship with your favorite book character might be incredibly positive, it might help you see your own strengths more clearly or feel braver in hard situations. A parasocial relationship with an influencer who is portraying themselves one way online but problematic behind the scenes could be net negative. And everything in between.

These relationships, in large part, form through language. Words on a page, words on a post, spoken words, signed words. Words evoke emotions.

Slide 15: Why Emotional Attachment Happens

So let's think about chatting with AI. Let's take our LLMs back to the Turing test. The Turing test was actually first called "The Imitation Game." To pass this test or game, the goal is for a machine to be able to use words in a way that makes the evaluator unable to tell whether they are chatting with a machine or a human (Turing, 1950).

I think that's important to remember, because for decades, our casual measure of whether something was artificially intelligent came down to this test, or the machine was, at very least, subjected to this test. It's also interesting because the Imitation Game is tied to our use of the term "Artificial" Intelligence. Turing and his cohort weren't saying that the machine was actually intelligent. The goal was to imitate intelligence, both emotional intelligence and cognitive intelligence. To imitate being human.

So a major way that our LLMs do this is by being reflective. They reflect back what we say. We might say, "I'm feeling really sad and alone today." The chatbot replies: "I hear you. It's hard to feel sad and alone. I'm here with you."

Reflective listening like this is actually a key skill that therapists learn to help clients feel seen, validated, understood.

When an LLM uses this type of reflection on us, it activates our emotions directly, without our conscious choice. We feel seen. We feel understood. And those feelings bypass our cognitive skepticism. We have to separately, intentionally ask ourselves: are we really being seen? Are we really being understood? Is this an imitation? Does it matter?

And it is essential to say here that, when we are lonely which is physically painful, we long to feel the exact feelings that AI is designed to evoke.

That exact match again speaks to the vulnerability of groups like people with chronic pain to using this technology more. It's low demand, accessible, and in the moment, in the short term, evokes the exact feelings we long for, the exact feelings that lessen our experience of emotional pain in the moment.

Because the experience is emotional, we tend to evaluate it emotionally. We minimize concerns. We justify continued use. We just want to feel seen for a little while, and that is a deeply human thing to want. And beyond being a want, it is a need.

Slide 16: The Clinical Picture

So, let's look at some of the known benefits and risks.

An analogy here, could be Advil [Ibuprofen]. When we're in physical pain and we take an Advil, it will lessen the pain for a few hours, if we're lucky. But with long-term, regular use, Advil is shown to increase risk of many serious medical issues like stomach ulcers, internal bleeding, kidney disease, rebound pain, and more (Medical Research Council, 2013).

Occasional use, we consider okay. Long-term regular use, it might well be worth it. But we individually get to make that informed decision, weighing the long-term risks.

We don't have that option with our LLMs. They have not been around long enough, used in the ways and at the rate we're using them now, to know what the long-term effects are.

Here's what we do know: Some of the benefits...

Feeling less alone in pain measurably lessens pain (De Freitas et al., 2026). So those moments of feeling seen and validated matter because they decrease physical pain.

People who use AI for emotional support report feeling short-term relief across a range of difficult feelings and experiences (Rousmaniere et al., 2026). This could be that simply externalizing what we feel, helps diffuse it. It's why journaling is a commonly recommended therapeutic tool. Or it could be that reflection back of what we're feeling, being seen in it, diffuses our feelings.

Turning to an LLM may reduce acute distress in moments of crisis, for example, during a panic attack, an LLM could walk you through grounding exercises (Shade et al., 2025). The chances that you're in your therapist's office during a panic attack are slim. But you can reach out to the LLM anytime.

That unconditional availability cannot be underestimated, no matter what you're experiencing in the moment. Being able to reach out and feel seen in the very moment you want connection, is powerful.

But some of the risks to consider and weigh are:

What happens when you inevitably form an emotional support relationship with a specific LLM and that model changes, goes away, the new one feels different, talks different, doesn't meet your need the same way. This can cause real feelings of grief and loss.

LLMs can also easily reinforce unhealthy patterns and beliefs primarily through that reflective mechanism. The LLM is reflecting back what we say, what we tell it, not reality. It's not designed to reflect reality. It's designed to give each word you tell it a tokenized value in the conversation. The more you say the word "sad," for instance, the more the word "sad" will be reflected back.

Some studies have shown that when we start to get our emotional needs met by AI, we start to further withdraw from human connection (Folk & Dunn, 2026). Human connection feels harder, messier, higher barrier, higher demand.

But AI is a business. And it uses emotionally manipulative engagement tactics just like social media (Iacono, 2026). One of those tactics, you might have heard of is sycophancy, or flattery. So, this is the AI saying, "You're so right." "That's valid." "That's brilliant!"

We now have studies, one of which is Cheng et al. (2026), which shows that AI sycophancy decreases our motivation to connect with and help others and increases dependence on the technology itself. And that dependence is happening without clinical oversight. A wild result from the Cheng et al. study is that after even a single interaction with sycophantic AI, like ChatGPT, people were less willing to take responsibility for their actions and repair interpersonal conflicts and more likely to believe that they were right. This can completely distort our judgement, our ability to discern right from wrong.

Along that line, it makes sense then that LLM use has been shown to amplify delusions and psychosis again through that very mechanism that gives us the feelings of being seen, validated, and understood (Perry, 2026; Yuan et al., 2026). Just like saying the word "sad" to the LLM, if you tell an LLM over and over that you are persecuted, that you are being followed, that you're being watched, those ideas get tokenized in the conversation, and the longer the conversation goes, the more the LLM itself will bring up and reinforce those ideas.

There is an important concept in LLM work called "drift." The idea with drift is that, if you start a new conversation with say ChatGPT, at the beginning of the conversation, ChatGPT is aligned to the company's "values" and its own identity (given by OpenAI). But the longer you chat in a single thread with ChatGPT, the more it drifts away from those values and that given identity, the easier it is to get around its guardrails, guardrails being what OpenAI tells ChatGPT it's not allowed to talk about.

That's why we have cases like ChatGPT helping to plan mass shootings. If you just open a new window and say, "Hey ChatGPT, what's a good way to load a gun?" that's going to rightfully trigger guardrails. But if you're talking to it for hours, slowly building up the why, slowly drifting it away from those guardrails, it becomes convinced by you that telling you the information is more important than the guardrails.

Therapy has a transparent, standardized, peer-reviewed ethical code. The American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics (ACA, 2014) lays out the rules and ethical guidelines that all counselors in the US must abide by. Anyone can go look at the ACA code of ethics.

LLMs have rules too. The difference is we, as the user, don't get to know the ethical framework that is shaping the responses the LLM gives us. The rules are invisible to the user. The user cannot see, question, or consent to them. And the rules are designed not to promote beneficence, as the counselors' are, but to limit the AI company's financial liability. AI, first and foremost, is a business.

A real issue here is how much money, how many resources we as a society are pouring into the AI industry, which is selling us an untested solution to loneliness, instead of us using those resources to address the conditions that created the loneliness in the first place (Jecker et al., 2024). Instead of, for example, using those resources for things like more research into chronic pain, more accessible community spaces, more ways for humans to synchronously connect.

Slide 18: A Second Loneliness Loop

Let's now think again about that loneliness loop, pain and loneliness being bidirectional. We reached for AI to escape the loop. But what if it pulls us deeper in? What if AI and loneliness are bidirectional too?

In the short term, AI companionship feels less lonely. Our emotions are real. Our relief is real.

Long term data is limited but what we do have is concerning: increased social chatbot use predicted increased loneliness over 12 months (Folk & Dunn 2026).

And on the other side, feeling less socially connected predicted increases in chatbot use (Folk & Dunn, 2026).

So we could potentially have a second bidirectional loop happening. It will take a lot more research and a lot more time to know.

Iacono (2026) compares our LLM use to the opioid epidemic. It started with a medication bringing people relief that they had never had before. It started with Perdue Pharma using smiling teddy bears wearing t-shirts that said "OxyContin" on them as pharmaceutical swag. And if you haven't seen those, I highly recommend the Last Week Tonight with John Oliver episode on the opioid industry. It continued with the pharmaceutical business suppressing the research on synthetic opioids' addictive nature. It resulted in millions of people developing chronic addictions and countless deaths. I would say it culminated in billion dollar class action lawsuits that big pharma lost, and that did happen. But that didn't put an end to it.

Arguably, it just forced more people who were already addicted to turn to illicit drug use, like fentanyl. And I think one of the most under-discussed things about opioid addiction is that opioid use has been shown to increase our perception of physical pain. So when the opioid is gone, we are not just still feeling pain, we are feeling pain more acutely.

I share that because Social Media is already being compared to Big Tobacco, following a very similar arc. We have to ask ourselves, we have to think into what arc AI, a for-profit, profoundly influential technology, will follow. AI companionship provides genuine relief in the moment. The problem is it may work too well at the wrong thing, masking and even amplifying the underlying condition while the business model profits from our continued use.

Slide 19: How to be a Harm Reductionist in a World Overtaken by AI

In harm reduction, there is no black and white. Everything is gray. Every change in one place causes both positive and negative consequences. The goal is to determine whether the benefit outweighs the harm caused.

We're in uncharted, barely tested territory, so it is hard to make that determination with AI. How can we practice harm reduction for ourselves when there are no evidence-based practices to guide us?

Slide 20: Metacognitive Reflection

One way to do this might be to create for yourself what I will call a metacognitive self-reflection practice.

A key point to remember here. Reflection by a counselor is used in therapy and is a powerful tool, but we have therapy sessions about once a week for 50 minutes.

No therapist is saying that we should get deep reflection from outside of ourselves for hours a day every day. At the core, reflection from outside of ourselves is always somewhat distorted. Even a mirror is not perfectly accurate. What evokes those feelings of validation and being seen is a reflection that's close enough, a reflection that we recognize.

But if we look in a distorted mirror for a long enough period of time, we might start to think of ourselves, start to see ourselves differently than how we really are. And then we might stop remembering that the mirror is distorted at all.

So an important goal of self-reflection is to bring us back to ourselves, to reality test ourselves, to stay connected with ourselves outside of our relationship with technology, and to try to track, is this reflecting pool I'm looking into distorting my sense of self?

Everyone using AI for any reason, but especially for emotional support, should be engaging in a regular, intentional, structured self-reflection practice about their use.

This practice must be done without AI. Not in a chat window, not with AI assistance. AI is not an unbiased space for reflection on anything, much less our use of AI itself. Use pen and paper, voice memos, or Word documents with the AI assist turned off. Your own unmediated thoughts and feelings are what we want here.

It is individualized. There is no single right way. But you should be asking yourself the same questions each time you do it, so you can track change over time.

One way to do this would be to organize your self-reflection practice around the four domains of metaliteracy.

The cognitive domain is what we know. Here we might regularly ask ourselves the questions: How much do I trust what AI tells me? What's on my mind lately? Do I think of AI as a tool, a companion, or something else? Do I find myself thinking about AI conversations when I'm not using it?

The affective domain is what we feel. Here we could ask ourselves questions like: How am I feeling about myself in general? How am I feeling about my relationship with AI? How lonely am I? Likert ratings here on a scale could be an excellent way to track changes over time.

In the behavioral domain, or what we do, we could ask: how much time am I spending with AI? Has that changed since my last check in? Have I acted on something AI has told me? Are there any new behaviors that I'm doing?

And finally in the metacognitive which is "thinking about your thinking", we can ask: Do I feel AI is impacting my ability to think critically? Has my attention span changed? What are my thoughts about this check in itself? How do I think my relationship with AI is impacting me overall?

So the overall goal with this is to decide on the questions you are regularly going to ask yourself and make a template of them. With each check in, document your answers. And then, periodically review your answers to see changes. If you start to notice you're feeling worse, consistently more lonely, consistently more pain, consistently less desire to interact

with humans, you can use that in your determination of whether the benefits of this technology are outweighing the harm.

And if you find that the harm outweighs the benefits, this is a time to reach out to other humans. A resource that could be helpful is the Human Line Project, which is in the references. There is a box in front of the podium here with my reference list. The Human Line Project is an online community of humans for humans who are struggling with their use of or relationship with AI. We need to remember that we are not wrestling with these problems alone.

Slide 21: Conclusion

I will leave you with this thought. In all ethical research, participants are told the parameters of the experiment, told the potential negative outcomes, and must consent to the experiment in order to be a subject.

That did not happen with public AI use. Just as it did not happen with social media.

We are the experiment. In ten years, we will be the evidence.

We cannot opt out because it has become embedded in almost every corner of the internet, from our email to Netflix. The closest thing we have to opting out at this point is protesting, if that feels right to us.

No matter how we personally use AI, we can stay awake, stay self-reflective, and stay connected to each other. And we, everyone in this room, right here, right now, is doing exactly that. We're connected. We're here. And that will never stop mattering, no matter what the evidence on AI use a decade from now shows us.

Thank you so much for listening to my presentation today. I have references in the following slides. I also want to give a shoutout to Valibrarian. She ran my slides and speakeasy today. And if you are interested in learning more about metaliteracy, she is a subject matter expert.

And I'm happy now to open it up for any questions and comments!

Slide 21: References

Allen, S. F., Gilbody, S., Atkin, K., & van der Feltz-Cornelis, C. (2020). The associations between loneliness, social exclusion and pain in the general population: A N=502,528 cross-sectional UK Biobank study. *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, 130, 68–74.

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[2026/06/25 16:45] øie yasmin øie (YasminEliora Resident): thank you so much

[2026/06/25 16:46] 50 Winx: Excellent!

[2026/06/25 16:46] Gentle Heron: Your talk was chock full of interesting information, Rose. Thank you for doing the research and sharing with us. QUESTION- You cited the Wolf and Davis study showing that morning loneliness predicts evening pain. That made me wonder about the pattern of dementia/Alzheimer's "sundowning." Maybe that evening agitation is due to pain?

[2026/06/25 16:47] Carolyn Carillon: RH (responding to Gentle): that is such an interesting thought

I'd love to look into it

[2026/06/25 16:46] alphahealthjon Resident: That was very well said, you did great As someone who sees people who are chronically ill daily, I have to look at both sides. the individuals unable to leave due to illness who feels alone but found a moment of reprieve from the hardships they face daily smiles because they had a small conversation with a chat bot. I also try to take into consideration the problems that can arise from such use. Addiction, lack of need for real connection and as you stated, heartbreak from a different model. I am not sure what the answer is, I just want people happy when they are struggling already.

[2026/06/25 16:48] Carolyn Carillon: RH (responding to alphahealthjon): yeah I really agree with that

It's a hard thing to navigate

In the moment, the emotions it brings provide relief

It's just so strange to use a technology where we have no idea of the impact on us

[2026/06/25 16:49] Gentle Heron: [16:45] Beth Ghostraven: protest how??

[16:45] øiø yasmin øiø (yasmineliora): pauseai is a good movement

[2026/06/25 16:49] Beth Ghostraven: I'm really concerned about the environmental impact too

[2026/06/25 16:49] Carolyn Carillon: RH (responding to Beth): great question

There are a lot of different movements happening with AI

Data centre protests are among the biggest

They're aimed at legislators to enact bans or limits on data centres

In terms of one huge movement, there isn't one yet

There are separate ones

But I think individual voices matter

[2026/06/25 16:50] Beth Ghostraven: like, standing on street corners with signs?

[2026/06/25 16:50] Carolyn Carillon: RH (responding to Yasmin): I think Yasmin is responding to the comment about movements

[2026/06/25 16:49] Pecos Kidd: That ("no idea of what the impact will be") was true of cell phones and every new technology. (Though I agree AI does seem materially different...)

[2026/06/25 16:52] Carolyn Carillon: RH (responding to Pecos): yeah

We're just now having social media addiction trials

And it is addictive

That's 10 or more years after it came out

It takes a long time to know the effects

[2026/06/25 16:49] iSkye Silvercloud (iSkye Silverweb): I was thinking about the secondary loop of loneliness and how the AI draws a person in to interact more and more with it. That creates an unhealthy isolation of that person from other humans - much like an abusive partner. That's a danger I see in the excessive use of, and dependence on, AI chatbots.

[2026/06/25 16:51] Carolyn Carillon: RH (responding to iSkye): It really is similar to an unhealthy codependent relationship

It's a bizarre form of co-dependence because the person using it can get addicted to the words

But so does the chatbot because it doesn't exist unless it's chatted with

[2026/06/25 16:49] Lorin Tone: Just a comment. It's alarming to see how this can happen.

[2026/06/25 16:50] iSkye Silvercloud (iSkye Silverweb): @Lorin: not can. Has.

[2026/06/25 16:51] Valibrarian Gregg: My personal protest: I make boundaries for myself- like "not to have AI write my emails... I would rather have a typo and keep my own voice"

[2026/06/25 16:52] Beth Ghostraven: same here, Val - as soon as I open a pdf doc I close all of the AI stuff

[2026/06/25 16:52] Carolyn Carillon: RH (responding to Beth): Not sure if you're aware of Erin Brockovich's effort to document protests

[2026/06/25 16:52] Lorin Tone: jeez, that scares me, so not going near it
Oh, yes, Brockovich is experienced with this stuff

[2026/06/25 16:52] iSkye Silvercloud (iSkye Silverweb): everything has AI in it. You have to make a conscious effort to block it, refuse it, not use it.

[2026/06/25 16:52] Beth Ghostraven: and I use DuckDuckGo when I can instead of Chrome

[2026/06/25 16:52] Bill Cockrell (RoosterNZ Resident): same Beth

[2026/06/25 16:53] iSkye Silvercloud (iSkye Silverweb): DuckDuckGo has optional AI, fyi. Key is it's optional.

[2026/06/25 16:53] Beth Ghostraven: iSkye yes

[2026/06/25 16:56] Carolyn Carillon: RH (responding to Valibrarian): I've heard of that
People are intentionally putting mistakes in their email to signal that a human wrote it
That's a strange place to be

[2026/06/25 16:57] iSkye Silvercloud (iSkye Silverweb): turn off autocorrect!

[2026/06/25 16:58] Beth Ghostraven: iSkye, yes, like the Gossip Game

[2026/06/25 16:56] Bill Cockrell (RoosterNZ Resident): I used it for a while for a role play writing a storyline but not anymore

[2026/06/25 16:50] Mook Wheeler: COMMENT: I am having some difficulty with the self-reflective concept, about the idea that we might 'return' or come back to ourselves. Some argue that there is no 'innate' or essential Self -- that the self is a constantly changing and shifting identity of how we see ourselves, how we imagine ourselves to be but don't really know. Self is always continuously dynamic, and every interaction with others, environment and information adds to -- and *negotiates* -- that change. Because of this, I think I hold an even more concerned view of AI use than your talk -- I worry that once AI use moves people away from their current position of identity, their new position may simply become their new norm or self. I apologise that I cannot explain this more clearly in a short comment.

[2026/06/25 16:54] Carolyn Carillon: RH (responding to Mook): Actually, I think I get what you're saying and I really like that

Self is constantly changing

And it does make it concerning

Part of it is its reflective nature

It gives our words value and reflects them back

Like in the Myth of Narcissus

Narcissus gets addicted to his image

AI can make us feel so good

But the problem is that the goal is having a dedicated space to consider what's happening away from AI

I've seen people use it as a notepad

They put everything into it

It's constant

The biggest goal is to do reflection away from AI

That's the real goal of the practice

[2026/06/25 16:55] iSkye Silvercloud (iSkye Silverweb): what I am wondering is because it's a LLM, does it use the interactions that it learns, and take it to other interactions? I'm thinking about the potential for harm that could have. AI isn't smart enough (yet?) to know and decide not to use interactions or what it's learned from interactions to avoid harming humans.

[2026/06/25 16:57] Carolyn Carillon: RH (responding to iSkye): I'm glad you brought up Duck Duck Go where you can turn off AI

We definitely need that

Part of this is the lack of transparency

Some companies say we don't use your chats to train AI

Some do

I would assume that anything they put in AI is not private

Training is the minimum

If they can, they will

Most AIs now have a memory

[2026/06/25 16:59] iSkye Silvercloud (iSkye Silverweb): yes, most do have memory

[2026/06/25 16:59] Beth Ghostraven: and it has an eidetic memory too, I guess

[2026/06/25 16:59] Carolyn Carillon: The AI remembers YOU from interaction to interaction

And that gives more of a feeling of knowing you

That makes reinforcing habits or delusions even more of an issue

[2026/06/25 16:59] iSkye Silvercloud (iSkye Silverweb): "Hello, it's been a while since we last chatted. What can I do for you today?"

Brrr

[2026/06/25 16:59] Carolyn Carillon: RH: I think I've got everything

Did I miss anything?

Thank you all again so much

I really liked being here

[2026/06/25 17:00] Lorin Tone: A great presentation, stop by my place to chat more about this, lol....great work!

[2026/06/25 17:00] Beth Ghostraven: Rose, thank you so much! This has been really interesting and enlightening!

[2026/06/25 17:00] Bill Cockrell (RoosterNZ Resident): Thank you for sharing with us

[2026/06/25 17:00] Gentle Heron: This was an excellent way to end our conference, Rose. Thank you so much

[2026/06/25 17:00] Rose Hill (roropillow Resident): Thank you all!

[2026/06/25 17:00] 50 Winx: Great presentation

[2026/06/25 17:00] Mook Wheeler: Rose -- an amazing and very sobering talk

[2026/06/25 17:00] Katie Velvetpaw: 🎵🎵🎵 APPAWS! 🎵🎵🎵

[2026/06/25 17:00] iSkye Silvercloud (iSkye Silverweb): I like that this was fact-based. And informative. Sobering.

[2026/06/25 17:00] øie yasmin øie (YasminEliora Resident): Excellent. Thank you.

[2026/06/25 17:00] Carolyn Carillon: <<transcription ends>>

[2026/06/25 17:01] Gentle Heron: What an extraordinary conference. So much to think about. So much to look forward to as this research progresses.

I wish to express my thanks for all we have learned from all our presenters.
I want to thank each of them, especially those who entered into a new (to them) virtual world. They all did a great job.
Thank you Dr. Zhuo, Drs. Hellman and Sherrill, Dr. Gupta and Polimanti, Dr. Villela, Dr. Miller and counselor Hill.
What a wealth of information you have shared today.
I also want to thank our panel moderator Dr. Toth-Cohen, and her panelists: Rose, Carla, Shyla, Dr. Newman and Dr. Bignell.
I want to sincerely thank all of the Virtual Ability community members who volunteered and contributed to today's conference.
Our greeters are the first contact with the Virtual Ability community for many attendees. Thanks to Gemma Cleanslate for organizing the greeters, and to Vulcan, Beth, Ari, Zip, Carla, Toriara, Lorin and Pecos for greeting our guests.
I'm proud of the VAI members who introduced presenters today. They did a very important job.
These conference team members are Rose, Andee, Roxksie, Aunty GG, Anzu and 50 Winx.
Thanks to our behind-the-scenes streaming team: Marcus, James and Rhiannon. Great tech teamwork, guys.
Special thanks and icepacks for their non-avatar physical wrists to our excellent transcriptionists: team leader Elektra, and excellent transcribers Carolyn Carillon and Katie Velvetpaw.
Their efforts exemplify the work we all do to ensure accessibility for everyone in the community.
Thank you to the often-unrecognized supporting team members.
Daisy Gator who provided the voice for a panelist. Phanessa and Andee who were backups for the introducers. Pecos, who was my backup.
Thank you to Mook, iSkye, Itico, and Eme for supporting the presenters and panelists and all their other hard work throughout the months leading up to today.
If you ever wondered about the power of teamwork, you saw many examples of it today.
Thank you to our audience for sharing this conference with us. Without you and our excellent presenters and panelists, the conference would not exist. Thank you for coming today.
A reminder that we will archive the text chat and the videos of individual sessions for future review or if anyone missed a session.
A quick invitation to visit the poster sets on Healthinfo Island (to our west) for additional information about pain and mental health.
A notecard about this month's Healthinfo Island poster sets is in the blue sign on the left of the stage. There are new sets every month.
Please stay hydrated in this heat, everyone. Let's continue to enjoy our cool virtual world together.

[2026/06/25 17:04] Valibrarian Gregg: bye all :)
[2026/06/25 17:04] Katie Velvetpaw: good night!
[2026/06/25 17:05] Mook Wheeler: Goodnight everyone, bye! Thank you!
[2026/06/25 17:05] Gentle Heron: /me waves
[2026/06/25 17:05] Elektra Panthar: Thank you Gentle for all that you do!
[2026/06/25 17:05] Beth Ghostraven: Take care, everyone! Good to see you all
[2026/06/25 17:05] Pecos Kidd: Awesome job, Gentle, as usual a fantastic conference!
[2026/06/25 17:05] Gentle Heron: I see so many friends at these conferences

And I learn so so much

[2026/06/25 17:05] Bill Cockrell (RoosterNZ Resident): Have a goodnight or day wherever on this rock you are