

Wisconsin Public Psychiatry Network Teleconference (WPPNT)

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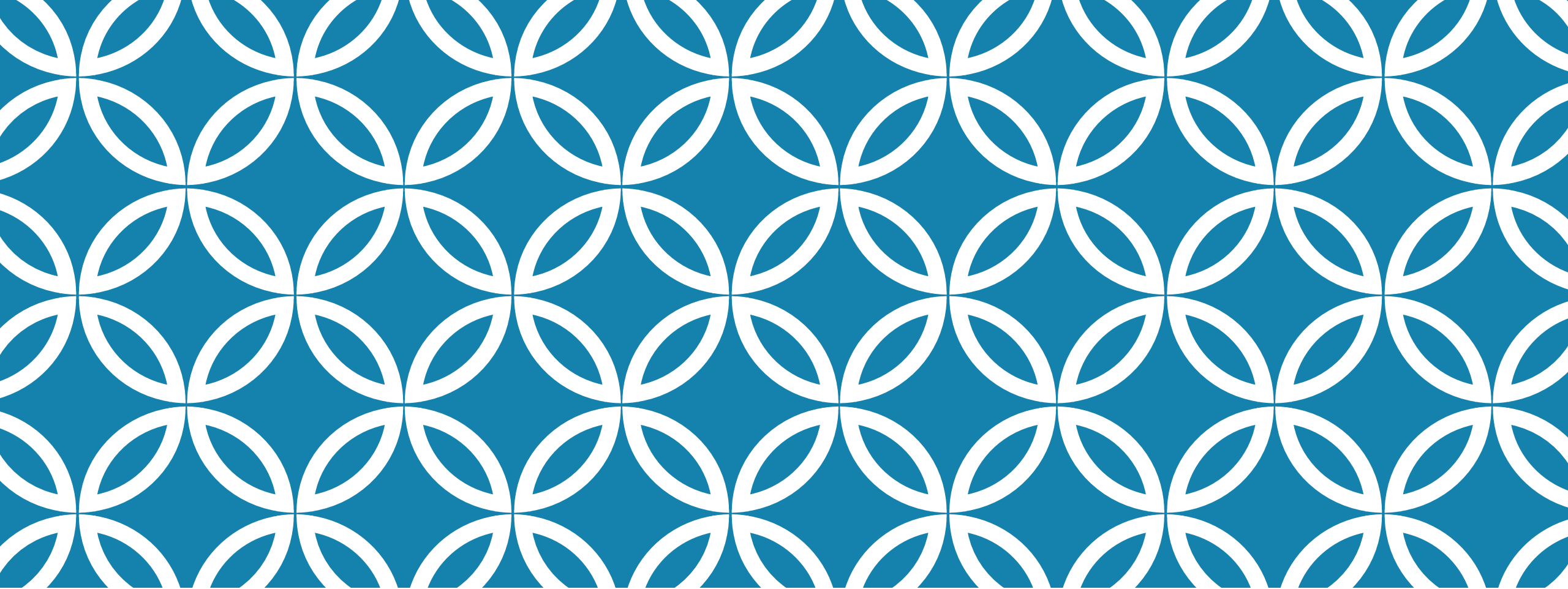
WPPNT Reminders

How to join the Zoom webinar

- **Online:** <https://dhs.wi.zoomgov.com/j/1606358142>
- **Phone:** 669-254-5252
- Enter the Webinar ID: 160 635 8142#.
 - Press # again to join. (There is no participant ID)

Reminders for participants

- Join online or by phone by 11 a.m. Central and wait for the host to start the webinar. Your camera and audio/microphone are disabled.
- [Download or view the presentation materials](#). The evaluation survey opens at 11:59 a.m. the day of the presentation.
- Ask questions to the presenter(s) in the Zoom Q&A window. Each presenter will decide when to address questions. People who join by phone cannot ask questions.
- Use Zoom chat to communicate with the WPPNT coordinator or to share information related to the presentation.
- [Participate live to earn continuing education hours](#) (CEHs). Complete the evaluation survey within two weeks of the live presentation and confirmation of your CEH will be returned by email.
- A link to the video recording of the presentation is posted within four business days of the presentation.
- Presentation materials, evaluations, and video recordings are on the WPPNT webpage: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wppnt/2023.htm>



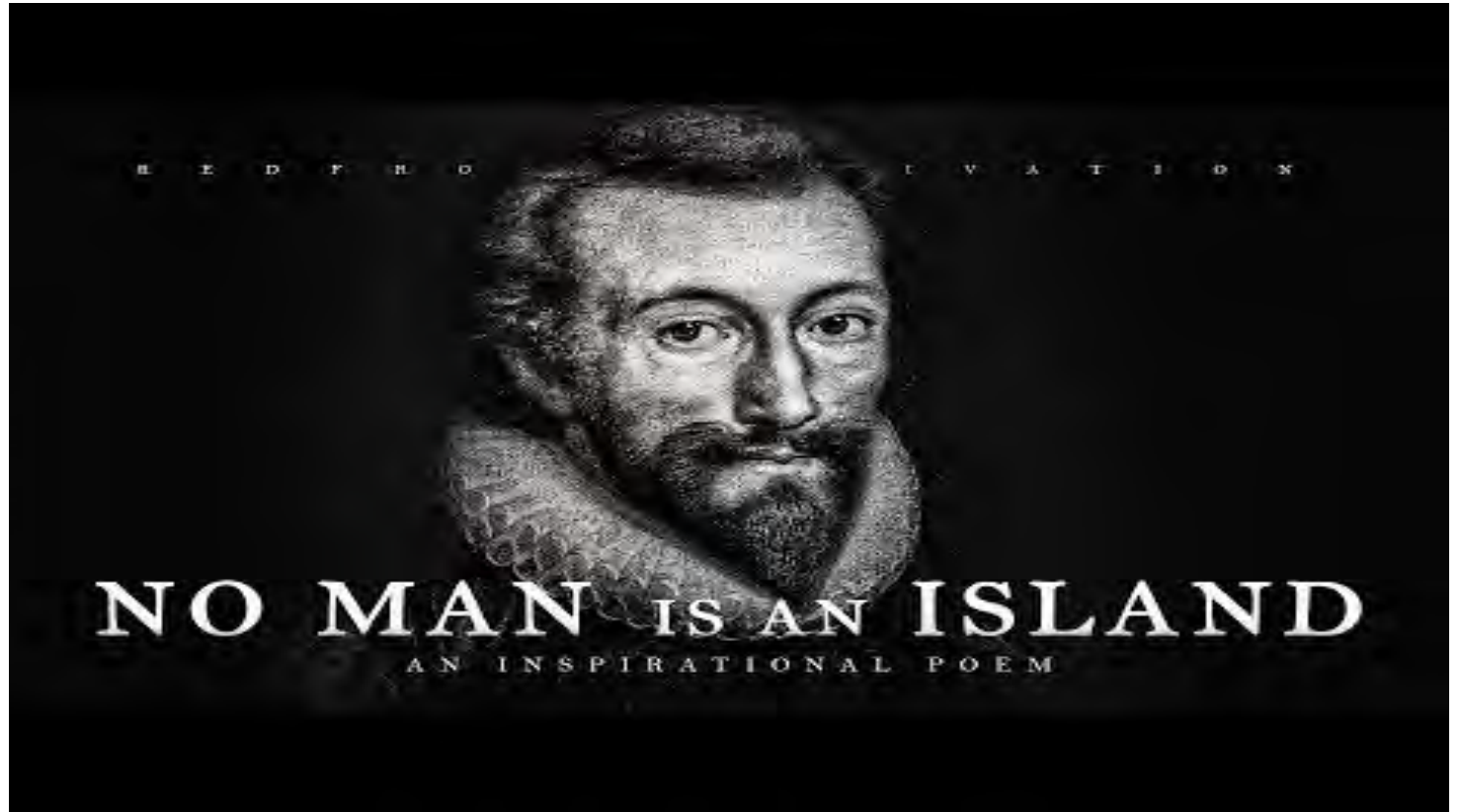
BELONGING

A Look at the Basic Human Need
Angie Theisen, LCSW

NO MAN IS AN ISLAND

No man is an island,
Entire of itself,
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less.
As well as if a promontory were.
As well as if a manor of thy friend's
Or of thine own were:
Any man's death diminishes me,
Because I am involved in mankind,
And therefore never send to know
for whom the bell tolls;
It tolls for thee.

John Donne



OBJECTIVES:

- What does “BELONGING” mean?
- Why is it important to belong?
- What happens if we don’t belong?
- How to foster belonging to children?
- How can I improve my sense of belonging?
- What specific skills can increase my sense of belonging?

WHAT DOES BELONGING MEAN?

Miriam Webster Dictionary defines BELONGING

as:

noun

be·long·ing bi-'lòn-in bē-

Synonyms of belonging

1

: POSSESSION

—usually used in plural

•2

: close or intimate relationship

a sense of *belonging*

belongingness noun

Synonyms for Belonging:

Bond

Attachment

Affiliation

Fellowship

Membership

Community

Relatedness

Partnership

Intimacy

Allegiance

Connection

WHAT DOES BELONGING MEAN?

“**Social connectedness** is the degree to which people have and perceive a desired number, quality, and diversity of relationships that create a sense of belonging, and being cared for, valued, and supported.”

▪ <https://www.cdc.gov/emotional-wellbeing/social-connectedness/affect-health.htm>

Social Connectedness Characteristics Defined by CDC website:

- The number, variety, and types of relationships a person has.
- Having meaningful and regular social exchanges.
- Sense of support from friends, families, and others in the community.
- Sense of belonging.
- Having close bonds with others.
- Feeling loved, cared for, valued, and appreciated by others.
- Having more than 1 person to turn to for support. This includes emotional support when feeling down, and physical support, like getting a ride to the doctor or grocery store, or getting help with childcare on short notice.
- Access to safe public areas to gather (such as parks and recreation centers).

WHAT DOES BELONGING MEAN?

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

- Postulates a theory on motivation for all human behavior based upon incremental satisfaction in 5 areas of basic needs:
 - **Physiological Needs:** food, water, shelter, etc.
 - **Safety Needs:** Protection to violence, bodily harm, emotional security, financial security
 - **Belonging Needs:** Friendships and family bonds, various levels of intimacy, social groups, teams, or clubs that help develop a united identity.
 - **Esteem Needs:** Esteem needs are external respect or acknowledgment and internal self-respect or acknowledgment
 - **Self-actualization Needs:** Achieving full potential as a human being which includes development of skills, talents, education, hobby, or caregiving
- [A Guide to the 5 Levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs - 2023 - MasterClass](#)

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO BELONG?

Creates an Identity

- Creates organization to make sense of the world
- We know a knitting group is not the same as a therapy group
- Businesses are defined by For-Profit or Non-Profit Organizations to understand the mission
- If we have met our physiological and safety needs, we strive to get our belonging needs met by defining ourselves with the groups in our lives
- Variety of relationships to belong to: families, sporting teams, hobbyists, spiritual groups, charities, political parties, cities, countries and nationalities are all ways that we create a joint identity
- It also separates the identity of those who do not belong, such as Packers vs Vikings fans
- The more a person identifies with their preferred group, the more sense of pride, self-esteem, security, validation, attachment, and sense of power

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO BELONG?

Develops Intimacy

- Levels of intimacy defines the relationship type
 - Acquaintance, Friend, Best Friend, Family, Child, Partner or Spouse
- The more intimate the relationship, the more information is shared, then trust, allegiance, sense of security, attachment, and sense of bond are developed.
- Individuals with a strong sense of security and attachment, develop a greater understanding of the levels of intimacy and awareness of personal boundaries.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO BELONG?

Belonging is a protective factor to physical well-being and mental well-being.

- Overall better physical health and mental health, greater sense of resilience, support, efficacy, capability, and problem-solving ability.
- Protected from developing violent relationships or becoming violent towards others and self.
- Create healthy habits of physical activity, sleep hygiene, and maintaining healthy weight.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO BELONG?

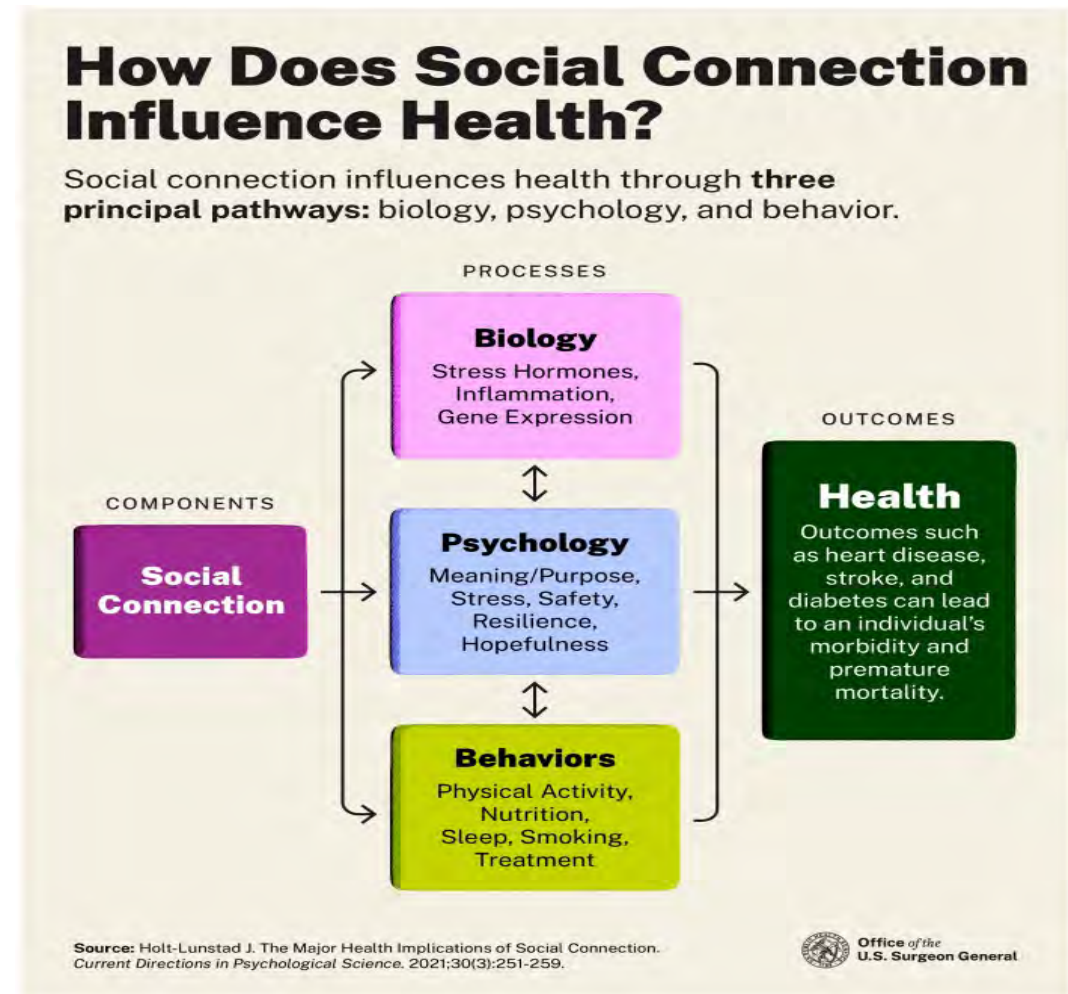
Groups impacted by loneliness according to CDC website on emotional well-being and social connectedness:

- Low-income adults.
- Young adults.
- Older adults.
- Adults living alone.
- People with chronic diseases and disabilities.
- Immigrants.
- Individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (or queer).

<https://www.cdc.gov/emotional-wellbeing/social-connectedness/loneliness.htm>

WHAT HAPPENS IF WE DON'T BELONG?

(from [Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: US Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community](#))



WHAT HAPPENS IF WE DON'T BELONG?

Individuals lacking in sense of belonging have more likelihood of:

- Developing chronic physical issues like fibromyalgia, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, or early death.
- Developing low self-esteem (next step in Maslow's Hierarchy) and cognitive distortions or thinking traps
- Developing mental health conditions such as dementia, addictions, depression, anxiety, and even suicidal ideation
- Mistrusting, perception of rejection, isolation, negative world view, competition, and loneliness

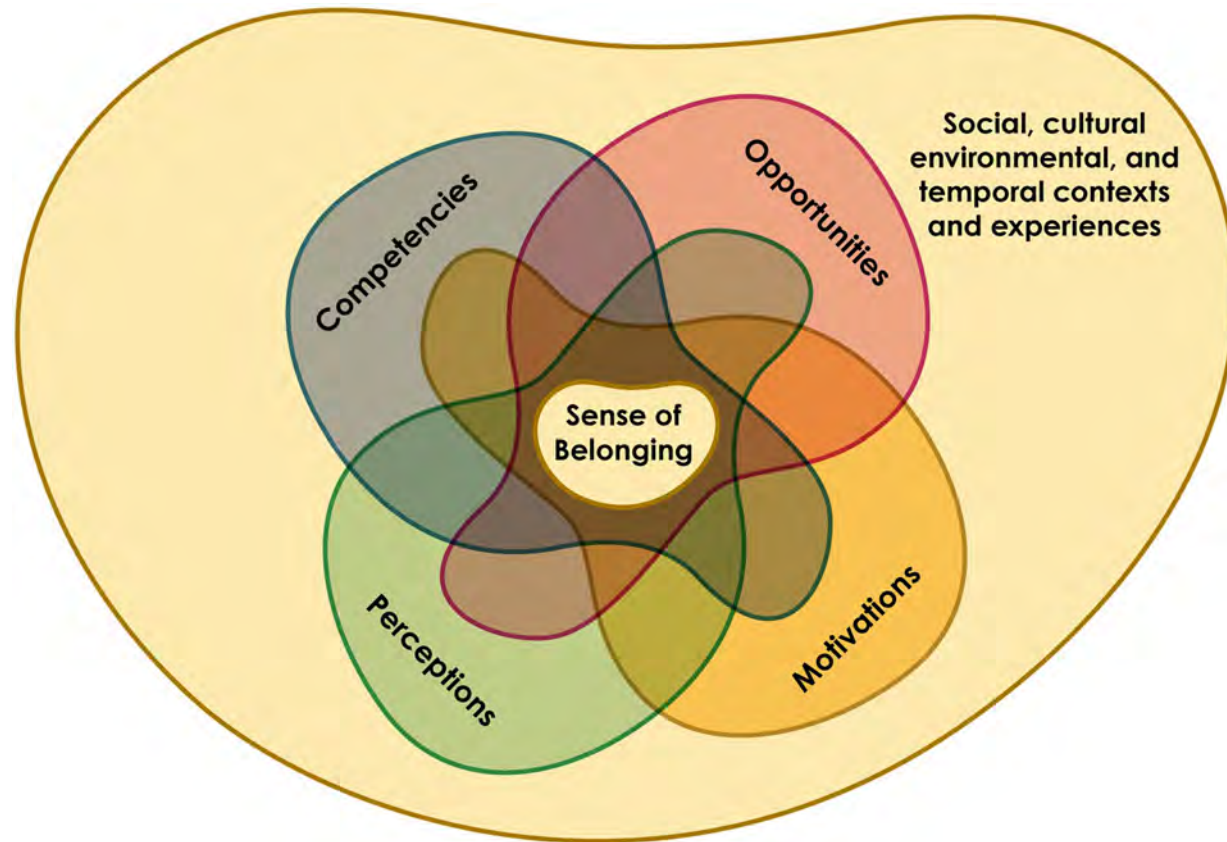
[Health Risks of Social Isolation and Loneliness | CDC](#)

WHAT HAPPENS IF WE DON'T BELONG?

- Educational Impact- grades suffer, decreased test scores, truancy increases, graduation rates decrease, less likelihood to pursue college, increase drop-out rate
- Economic Impact-
 - Decrease in job satisfaction, work performance, competence, and creativity for employees
 - Individuals that lack that connection have reduced ability for adequate employment
 - Research has shown that developing diverse social connections is a predictor for upward economic mobility by providing more opportunities for individuals with lower socioeconomic status in the workforce and abilities to obtain higher wage occupations
 - Research has shown that individuals involved in community programs or volunteering that teach work skills makes the individuals more employable

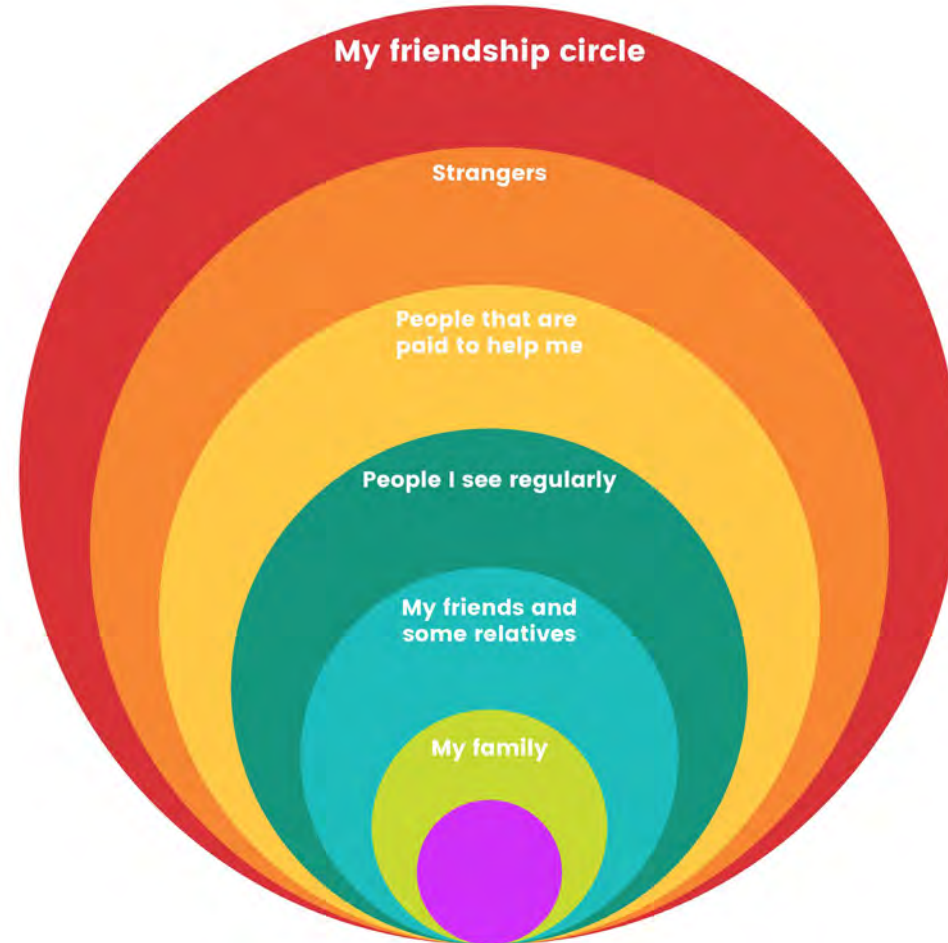
(from [Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: US Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community](#))

HOW CAN I IMPROVE MY SENSE OF BELONGING?

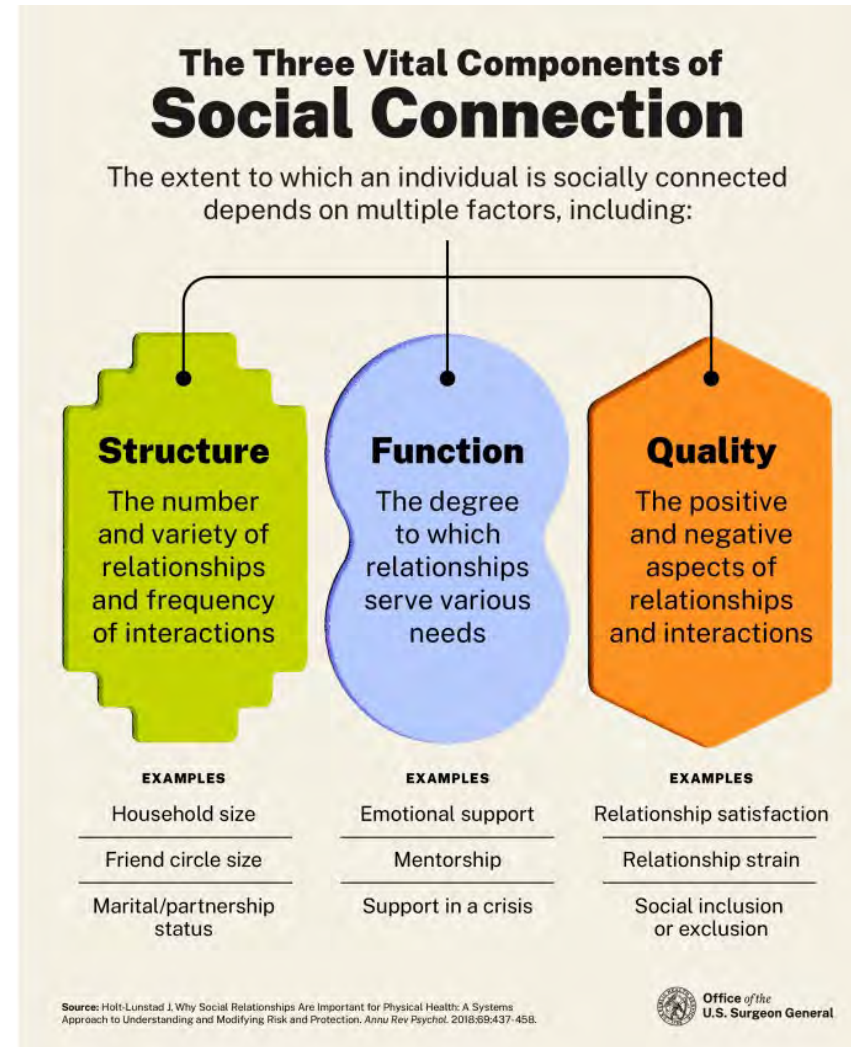


[Belonging: A Review of Conceptual Issues, an Integrative Framework, and Directions for Future Research - PMC \(nih.gov\)](#)

HOW CAN I IMPROVE MY SENSE OF BELONGING?



HOW CAN I IMPROVE MY SENSE OF BELONGING?



(from [Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: US Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community](#))

HOW CAN I IMPROVE MY SENSE OF BELONGING?

Make an effort.

- The most crucial ingredient to building a sense of belonging is effort.
- Make the effort to engage with others.
- Give it time.
- Soon the actions will become second nature.
- Behavioral activation and opposite action are effective strategies for getting yourself to put in the effort.
- Action often is needed to feel motivated.

HOW CAN I IMPROVE MY SENSE OF BELONGING?

Be mindful of others.

- Think less about yourself while with others.
- Make the other person or the group your focus by minimizing distractions.
- Be an active listener.
 - Making conversation increases a sense of belonging.
 - Ask questions, make small talk, self-disclose skillfully and listen to people's responses.
- Take time regularly to nurture your relationships.

HOW CAN I IMPROVE MY SENSE OF BELONGING?

Keep an open mind.

- Try new activities and meet new people.
 - Seek activities and groups of people who you share common interests with.
- Consider new ways of thinking.
- You may need to make it happen to start.
- Ask yourself: How might kindness change this situation? What would it look like to treat others with respect? How can I be of service? How can I reflect my concern for and commitment to others?

(from [Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: US Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community](#))

HOW CAN I IMPROVE MY SENSE OF BELONGING?

Practice an attitude of acceptance.

- Recognize that others have different ways of being, which don't have to change you.
- Refocus differences as an opportunity.
- Focus on similarities rather than differences.
 - Similarities tend to increase bonding.
 - Focus on a mutual goal, such as a volunteer opportunity.

HOW CAN I IMPROVE MY SENSE OF BELONGING?

Validate action.

- Validation is difficult to do to others, however is it even more difficult to validate your own action.
- Every action or effort needs to be *seen and reinforced* as action taken and energy outputted.
- Remind yourself that it can feel discouraging at times as how you feel is valid.
 - It'll feel easier overtime.
 - Giving up is a reasonable urge to experience.
 - Giving up easily rids the distressing emotions experienced while making the changes
 - Giving up perpetuates and increases the feelings of loneliness and the belief that we cannot find people

HOW CAN I IMPROVE MY SENSE OF BELONGING?

Think frequency and proximity.

Frequency: activities that meet on a regular basis.

- Classes- yoga, painting, photography, musical instrument
- Groups- mindfulness, religious services or studies, or support groups
- Leagues- sporting leagues (golf, bowling, pool, etc), trivia, board games, or martial arts
- Arts- dancing, acting, choir, painting sets, or even baking

Proximity: activities or opportunities for connection within your reach.

- Engaging in connecting with coworkers
- Developing or participating in Neighborhood Associations, walking groups
- Volunteering with other parents in children's classes, sports, or school organizations (or just reaching out to other parents to get-together before or after games, after school, or even saying hello)
- Look up opportunities to get-together with people on social media (search using a hobby that you enjoy)

HOW TO FOSTER BELONGING TO CHILDREN?

- Lead by example by getting involved in activities, so children can see how it works.
- Encourage and support children to get involved in activities of their choosing-think proximity and frequency.
- Teach (and model) children to have an open mind.
 - Meeting others is the point of joining.
 - Validate their efforts.
 - Encourage learning something about others.
- Teach children to accept differences of others.
- Creating a sense of belonging is challenging – for adults and children!
 - Give encouragement.
 - Validate their feelings.
 - It can feel discouraging, but it will get better.

HOW TO FOSTER BELONGING TO CHILDREN?

(Cont.)

- Invest in children: strong, secure attachments are protective and a good foundation for other healthy relationships.
- Model healthy social connection: constructive conflict resolution, spending time together, regular contact with family, friends, and neighbors, setting time aside for socializing away from technology or social media, and participating in community events.
- Help children develop strong, safe, and stable relationships with supportive adults like grandparents, teachers, coaches, counselors, and mentors.
- Encourage healthy social connection with peers by supporting individual friendships, as well as participation in structured activities such as volunteering, sports, community activities, and mentorship programs.
- Be attentive to how young people spend their time online. Delay the age at which children join social media platforms and monitor and decrease screen time in favor of positive, in-person, connection building activities.

HOW TO FOSTER BELONGING TO CHILDREN?

(Cont.)

- Identify and aim to reduce behaviors and experiences that may increase the risk for social disconnection, including bullying and excessive or harmful social media use.
- Talk to children about social connection regularly to understand if they are struggling with loneliness or isolation, to destigmatize talking about these feelings, and to create space for children to share their perspective and needs.
 - Look out for potential warning signs of loneliness and social isolation, such as increases in time spent alone, disproportionate online time, limited interactions with friends, or excessive attention-seeking behavior.
- Connect youth to helpers like counselors, educators, and health care providers if they are struggling with loneliness, isolation, or unhealthy relationships.

(from [Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: US Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community](#))

WHAT SKILLS CAN INCREASE MY SENSE OF BELONGING?

Establish and maintain connections

- Devote time to your connections and develop a more diverse network

Give support to others

- Provide support to others while taking care of yourself
- Even “Hello, my name is _____” is a great place to start

Enhance the quality of relationships

- Show others your gratitude for them – it’s contagious
- Address conflict as it arises without blame

<https://www.cdc.gov/emotional-wellbeing/social-connectedness/ways-to-improve.htm>

WHAT SKILLS CAN INCREASE MY SENSE OF BELONGING?

Address barriers to relationships

- Take care of your health so that you can engage
- Throw yourself in fully (with both feet!) when with others
- Maintain healthy boundaries with clear communication
- Carve out time by being creative

Talk with a health care provider about concerns like stress, loneliness, and social isolation

- Talk with someone if you feel isolated or lonely, or if there are major changes or stresses in your life.
- Life changes like new health issues, divorce, retirement, or loss can lead to disconnection.

<https://www.cdc.gov/emotional-wellbeing/social-connectedness/ways-to-improve.htm>

WHAT SKILLS CAN INCREASE MY SENSE OF BELONGING?

Stop wasting time worrying about what others think of you.

Many other people feel just as awkward and nervous as you do. Some people are better at hiding it than others, but there are many introverted people out there struggling with the same self-doubts as you are.

People are much more tolerant than you think. In your mind, the very idea of doing or saying something embarrassing in public is horrifying. You're sure that everyone will judge you. But in reality, it's very unlikely that people are going to make a big deal over a social faux pas. Everyone has done it at some point so most will just ignore it and move on.

[Dealing with Shyness - HelpGuide.org](https://www.helpguide.org/articles/mental-conditions/shyness.htm)

WHAT SKILLS CAN INCREASE MY SENSE OF BELONGING?

Learning to accept yourself:

All too often, we're our own worst critics. We're hard on ourselves in a way we'd never be to others.

Learning to accept yourself doesn't happen overnight—it requires changing your thinking.

You don't have to be perfect to be liked. In fact, our imperfections and quirks can be endearing. Even our weaknesses can bring us closer to others. When someone is honest and open about their vulnerabilities, it's a bonding experience—especially if they're able to laugh at themselves. If you can cheerfully accept your awkwardness and imperfections, you'll likely find that others will, too. They may even like you better for it!

It's okay to make mistakes! Everyone makes mistakes; it's part of being human. So give yourself a break when you mess up. Your value doesn't come from being perfect. If you find self-compassion difficult, try to look at your own mistakes as you would those of a friend. What would you tell your friend? Now follow your own advice.

Talk to yourself with kindness.

When you're thinking such distorted thoughts, it's important to pause and consciously challenge them. Pretend you're an impartial third-party observer, then ask yourself if there are other ways of viewing the situation.

[Dealing with Shyness - HelpGuide.org](https://www.helpguide.org/articles/mental-health/dealing-with-shyness.htm)

WHAT SKILLS CAN INCREASE MY SENSE OF BELONGING?

Improving social skills requires practice. Just as you wouldn't expect to become good on the guitar without some effort, don't expect to become comfortable socially without putting in the time. Start small. Take baby steps towards being more confident and social, then build on those successes.

- Smile at someone you pass on the street.
- Compliment someone you encounter during your day.
- Ask casual open questions.
- Start a conversation with a friendly cashier, receptionist, waiter, or salesperson.

[Dealing with Shyness - HelpGuide.org](#)

WHAT SKILLS CAN INCREASE MY SENSE OF BELONGING?

Face your fears in a gradual way, starting with situations that are slightly stressful and building up to more anxiety-provoking scenarios. Think of it as a stepladder, with each rung a little more stressful than the last. Don't move on to the next step until you've had a positive experience with the step below.

If talking to new people at parties makes you extremely anxious, for example, here is a stepladder you could use:

- Go to a gathering and smile at a few people.
- Ask a simple question (e.g. "Do you know what time it is?"). Once they've answered, politely thank them and then excuse yourself. The key is to make the interaction short and sweet.
- Ask a friend to introduce you to someone at a gathering and help facilitate a short conversation.
- Pick someone at a gathering who seems friendly and approachable. Introduce yourself.
- Identify a non-intimidating group of people at a gathering and approach them. You don't need to make a big entrance. Just join the group and listen to the conversation. Make a comment or two if you'd like, but don't put too much pressure on yourself.
- Join another friendly, approachable group. This time, try to participate a bit more in the conversation.

WHAT SKILLS CAN INCREASE MY SENSE OF BELONGING?

Fake it 'til you make it. Acting as if you're confident can make you feel more confident.

Focus externally, not internally. Instead of worrying about how you're coming across or what you're going to say, switch your focus from yourself to the other person. You'll live more in the moment and you'll feel less self-conscious.

Laugh at yourself. If you do something embarrassing, use humor to put things in perspective. Laugh, learn, and move on.

Do things to help others or brighten another person's day. It can be something as small as a compliment or smile. When you spread positivity, you'll feel better about yourself.

Remark on the surroundings or occasion. ("I love this song!", "This place is beautiful.")

Ask open-ended questions -- requires more than just a yes or no answer. Most people enjoy talking about themselves so asking a question is a good way to get a conversation started.

[Dealing with Shyness - HelpGuide.org](https://www.helpguide.org/articles/mental-conditions/dealing-with-shyness.htm)

WHAT SKILLS CAN INCREASE MY SENSE OF BELONGING?

Tips for strengthening an acquaintance into a friend:

Invite a casual acquaintance out for a walk, to meet for a beverage or go to a movie. Lots of other people feel just as uncomfortable about reaching out and making new friends as you do. Be the one to break the ice.

Carpool to work. Many companies offer carpool programs. If your employer doesn't, simply ask a colleague if they'd like to share rides. Spending regular time together is a great way to get to know others better and offers the opportunity for uninterrupted and deeper conversation.

Track down old friends via social media. It's easy to lose track of friends when you move or change jobs, for example. Make the effort to reconnect and then turn your "online" friends into "real-world" friends by meeting up for coffee instead of chatting on Facebook or Twitter.

Be the friend that you would like to have. Treat your friend just as you want them to treat you. Be reliable, thoughtful, trustworthy, and willing to share yourself and your time.

Be a good listener. Be prepared to listen to and support friends just as you want them to listen to and support you.

Give your friend space. Don't be too clingy or needy. Everyone needs space to be alone or spend time with other people as well.

Don't set too many rules and expectations. Allow friendship to evolve naturally. You're both unique individuals so your friendship probably won't develop exactly as you expect.

Be forgiving. No one is perfect and every friend will make mistakes. No friendship develops smoothly so when there's a bump in the road, try to find a way to overcome the problem and move on. It will often deepen the bond between you.

[Making Good Friends - HelpGuide.org](http://HelpGuide.org)

WHAT CAN INCREASE MY SENSE OF BELONGING?

The bottom line: if the friendship feels good, it is good. But if a person tries to control you, criticizes you, abuses your generosity, or brings unwanted drama or negative influences into your life, it's time to re-evaluate the friendship. A good friend does not require you to compromise your values, always agree with them, or disregard your own needs.

[Making Good Friends - HelpGuide.org](https://www.helpguide.org/articles/relationships/making-good-friends.htm)

HELPFUL RESOURCES

[Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation](#)

[What is a circle of friendship - resources and worksheets \(edplace.com\)](#)

[How Does Social Connectedness Affect Health? | CDC](#)

[Belonging Definition & Meaning - Merriam-Webster](#)

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/relationships-communication/making-good-friends.htm>