Belonging

Skills Workbook

Based from Jean Vanier’s 2002 Video titled

Belonging: The Search for Acceptance

“When we make others know they’re welcome and that they belong then we know we all belong.”

- Jean Vanier

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We hope that you enjoy our materials.

Thank you,

Self Help Alliance Partner Organizations
The Belonging Skills Workbook...

... is meant to complement the Belonging Workshop and the video “Belonging: The Search for Acceptance”.

Belonging Skills...

...Belonging is often described as a basic need for individuals to feel safe and for people to work toward a feeling of being fully human. The skills explored around belonging in this workbook are based from the work of:

Jean Vanier –
a philosopher, and
a visionary around social and human experience

Video “Belonging: The Search for Acceptance” is the basis for the workbook contents.

Belonging is important for us as individuals, but equally important is how we create a sense of belonging for those around us and our community.
Session 1 – Introduction to Belonging

I Feel I Belong When…
Getting to Know Me: I Belong To…

The following exercise is designed to get to know a little more about yourself, or about individuals in a group.

In the spaces below write 3 places you have been or groups you are a member of or things you own, etc. that create a positive sense of belonging for you. These can be anything from groups that you belong to, to feelings associated with belonging in the broad sense based on your hobbies, favourite things, interests such as reading, walking, favourite colour, or items related to where you were born or what you believe. The list is endless!

I Belong To:

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

After you have completed the list, compare with others in the group and explore the following:

- Why do people put down different items?
- Are there right and wrong items that can be listed?
- Can you see yourself belonging to some of the items that were listed by others?
- How does knowing information about each other create a sense of belonging?
History of Jean Vanier and “Belonging: The Search for Acceptance”

Who is Jean Vanier?
(excerpt taken from Personal Reflection ad Group Discussion Questions for video from L’Arche Canada Foundation at www.larchecanfoundation.org)

Jean Vanier is the founder of the international movement of L’Arche communities, where people who have developmental disabilities create homes together with the friends who assist them. He was born in 1928, the son of Governor-General George Vanier and Pauline Vanier. After a career in the Navy and teaching philosophy at the University of Toronto, he lived in a community in France led by his mentor, Fr. Thomas Philippe, O.P., who was chaplain to an institution for people with developmental disabilities.

In 1964, Vanier welcomed two men from an institution to share a house with him in the village of Trosly-Breuil. The house was called “L’Arche,” after Noah’s ark. Soon, young people from other countries came to experience this new way of living together in community and to assist. The first community grew to several households and L’Arche communities sprang up in countries around the world as assistants returned home. Today, there are 120 L’Arche communities on five continents.

Vanier also founded an international support movement for families of people with disabilities, called “Faith and Light.” Now, approximately 1400 such groups flourish around the world. Vanier resides in the original L’Arche community in Trosly-Breuil, France, when he is not traveling and speaking. Jean Vanier has become a leader in consciousness-raising about the plight of all who are marginalized. He is internationally recognized as a social and spiritual leader. He has been acclaimed as “a Canadian who inspires the world” (Maclean’s Magazine) and a “nation builder” (The Globe and Mail), and is author of the best-selling book, Becoming Human (The 1998 CBC Massey Lectures). His most recent book is Finding Peace (Anansi, 2003). Vanier is recipient of numerous honours recognizing his humanitarian work and his leadership as a social visionary, and is a Companion of the Order of Canada.

Belonging: The Search for Acceptance

This film is Jean Vanier’s ideas related to the large panorama of humanity in the 21st Century. The stories are taken from real lives, from both the ordinary and extraordinary. The film speaks to the dignity and diversity of humanity and identifies that we are united through our aloneness and our desire to belong.
Session 2 – What Does Belonging Mean to You?
Definitions of Belonging

From Webster’s Dictionary:

Happiness felt in a secure relationship

Jean Vanier’s Definition:

(Chapter on Belonging)

We human beings are all fundamentally the same. We all belong to a common broken humanity. We all have wounded, broken hearts. Each one of us needs to feel appreciated and understood; we all need help. (pg 37) Fear closes us down; Love opens us up. (pg 68)

Taken from Jean Vanier’s film “Belonging: The Search for Acceptance” (2002).

“When we make others know that they belong – then we all know we belong.”
What did Belonging Mean to the People in the Video?

During the first few minutes of the film “Belonging: The Search for Acceptance”, four voices speak about what belonging means for them. Read the following paraphrased statements and think about the different people and how belonging changes from person to person.

Is there a statement that you feel is most accurate?

What would be your own statement?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Jean Vanier</th>
<th>Belonging is a rethinking, a new vision for our world where every human person is important.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. 1st Male Voice</td>
<td>Part of our need to love and be loved. There is a hunger to belong that lives before all other needs. Our deepest need is for other people, not things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 1st Female Voice</td>
<td>Belonging is fundamental and foundational to the development of person-hood. Who are we when our system of meaning collapses?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. 2nd Female Voice</td>
<td>I value belonging because I know the pain of not belonging.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Think about your definition of belonging, and write down ideas that would make up your definition in the spaces below:

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Belonging Skills Workbook

Self Help Alliance (representing: Cambridge Active Self Help, Mood Disorders Association Waterloo Region, Wellington-Dufferin Self Help, Waterloo Region Self Help)
What Creates Belonging for You?

The following activity focuses around what creates a sense of belonging for you. What is most important to you in order for a sense of belonging to be felt.

Below you will find a list of 10 words and 2 blank spaces. These are provided to help you put together an order of what influences your sense of belonging. In the 2 blank spaces provide anything you like, and the other 10 provided items are there for your use as you feel necessary.

Your Name Above

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order of Importance (list from 1 to 12)</th>
<th>Items that create a sense of belonging for you.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 is most important to least at 12</td>
<td>a) family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) being accepted as I am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e) choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f) opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>g) knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h) compassion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i) social gatherings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>j) laughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>k)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>l)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Upon completing the exercise, look at the list and ask yourself (or if you are comfortable, compare with others, if in a group setting):

• Why did I choose this order?

• If you used the 10 words given, ask yourself, why did I use all 10 words given rather than creating 12 of my own? Did I feel a need to use what was given to have a joint sense of belonging with others completing the task?

• Is this list finite? Or can I add and remove items as I please throughout my journey? Can I make my list have any number of important items I choose?

• Can one item have the same value as another?
What Creates Belonging for You?  
Part 2

After completing the previous activity, you will notice one of the questions related to thinking about your order choice was, why did you not pick all of your own items to list?

If you did, then you do not need to complete this activity, again with different or more items, but may want to refer back to it as your life changes and as your choices for the spaces change.

Below you will find a list of 12 blank spaces. These are provided to help you put together an order of what influences your sense of belonging.

Your Name Above

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order of Importance (list from 1 to 12)</th>
<th>Items that create a sense of belonging for you.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 is most important to least at 12</td>
<td>a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>j)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>k)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>l)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Upon completing the exercise, look at the list and ask yourself (or if you are comfortable, compare with others, if in a group setting):

- Why did I choose this order?
- Is this list finite? Or can I add and remove items as I please throughout my journey?
Session 3 – Love then Belonging? Or Belonging then Love?
Definitions of Love

Webster’s Dictionary Definition

Noun

1. A strong positive emotion of regard and affection
2. Any object of warm affection or devotion
3. A beloved person; used as terms of endearment
4. A deep feeling of sexual desire and attraction

Verb

1. Have a great affection or liking for
2. Get pleasure from
3. Be enamored or in love with
4. Have sexual intercourse with

Vanier’s Definition of Love

Interpreted from Jean Vanier’s written work *Becoming Human* and the film “Belonging: The Search for Acceptance”.

*Love is…*

A strong human need that comes after the basic need of belonging.

*Love is…*

Something that helps to create a sense of belonging. For example, when a child is born, if they are loved then there is a feeling of belonging created within their family.

*Love is…*

An important piece of becoming fully human.
**What is at the Centre of Your Life?**

Below you will find two words: love and belonging. Choose only one of the words and write it in the speech bubble - this will represent that word/feeling as being central in your life.

Write a reason for your choice below and talk about why you made that decision. Share with the group if you desire.

Ask yourself, is it necessary to only have one of the words be central? Can you have a combination of the two feelings?

Q: What reasons did you have for making your choice?

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### Samples of Feelings of Love and Belonging

Look at the lists below, are any of these items interchangeable into the other column? If so, why, and if not, why not?

Feel free to add more items to the list, or remove those that you do not feel apply to you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Love</th>
<th>Belonging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care</td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passion</td>
<td>Compassion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unconditional</td>
<td>Strive for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Welcomed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...
Love and Belonging Through Poetry

Below are two poems by different authors. The one focuses on love and the other on belonging. Read and compare and seek to find the author’s reasons for putting either love or belonging at the centre of their works.

POEM #1

Poem of Love by Ricky Taylor
(taken from the site www.poemsonly.com)

What Is Love...
If love was visible
Love wouldn't be a flower
There are too many types
Love wouldn't be oxygen
Because you can love someone, even after death
Love wouldn't be jewelry
Because it's made from ice
Love wouldn't be money
Because it has no price
But love is visible
I am a product of love
You are a product of love
The feeling I get a quick second after I kiss the one I love
That is love
The way your mom calls your cell 24/7 to see where you are
and who you with
That is love
Love is when you find your one true love and...
Well... Let me not spoil the surprise.

POEM #2

Poem of Belonging by Gabriella, Student at Mary S. Babcock School
(taken from What does Belonging Mean? By students at Mary S. Babcock School, Swanton, Vermont, October 2005)

Be kind to everyone
Everyone is special in their own unique way
Invite others to join in your play
Only treat others as you would like to be treated
Never tease others
Give a smile!
**When a Part is Removed – Does it Still Represent Love or Belonging?**

We often become very comfortable with pieces of art as representing something to us - whether it is a sense of pride in an artist’s work, or we feel connected when we look at a photo or a painting. Or is it that as the picture is, it so clearly represents itself as belonging to a certain time, era, or theme? If a piece of a well-known work is missing, does it hold the same meaning for you?

Do you feel that without this piece (in the painting below for example) that it no longer belongs to a certain time period, certain country, certain artist, certain theme, or is there something that can replace the missing piece?

Think about these questions when you look at the well-known piece below and the missing part. Are you open to the idea that different items could replace what is missing, even if you are not used to the idea – could something else belong in the same place?

Painting is titled *American Gothic* by Grant Wood. (item removed is the pitchfork)
For full image, please visit http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ma98/haven/wood/gallery4.html#gothic,
Session 4 – When Have I Belonged? When Have I Felt I Have Not?
What Feeling do the Photos Give You?

Look at the two photos below and compare the feelings of belonging that they give to you.

Does one make you feel a greater sense of belonging?

If so why, and what could you alter to make both photos give you the same positive feelings of belonging?

List your ideas below:

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OR

...
How Do We Determine What Belongs?

Use (or make) a deck of cards. Take these cards and scramble them. Then put the cards in order, any order you choose. Next, ask someone else to take the scrambled deck and put them in order, any order they choose.

After each of you have done this, talk about the different ways people group cards together:

- by suit
- by colour
- by number
- by order

If one card is removed from the deck prior to your giving it to another individual, is the order that person puts them in the same? Or do they feel that the cards can no longer fit together? Or does it just alter the position of the one card and everything else can remain as a complete set?

Take this scenario and compare it to everyday happenings. Look at the different situations we face and when one thing is different, how do we react? If someone is different by reason of gender, race, sexual orientation, ability, health-related issues, age, the list is infinite, do they still belong?

Can we take our lives and adapt them so that everyone belongs, just like a deck of cards, regardless if one is missing or different than the others?
**People Who Have Changed Communities**

Below is a list of 5 people in history that have altered the way their communities think in regards to an aspect/area of life and living. Take a close read and think about how these changes have affected belonging for them and for others. Write your comments to the right of the name and items. You can do this exercise on your own or share with others as you wish. Add in people you think have made a significant change to better their communities, and why this change is felt.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Event/Item</th>
<th>Your Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Martin Luther King Jr.</td>
<td>Pioneer of the Civil Rights Movement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghandi</td>
<td>Pioneer in the struggle for India’s independence from foreign domination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen Keller</td>
<td>Writer and Political activist for individuals who are visually and hearing impaired</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amelia Earhart</td>
<td>Aviation pioneer and women’s rights activist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother Theresa</td>
<td>Founded Missionaries of Charity in her efforts to spread her humanitarian work worldwide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vanier’s Ideal World

A World Where Everyone Belongs

A World Where There is No Judgement

A World of Peace and of Love
Session 5 – Changing My Community – for You and I!
The Anthropology of Belonging: The Need for Social Inclusion

By Gerda Wever-Rabehl

In this article, I will explore the evolutionary roots of our universal desire to belong to a group.

The Evolution of Belonging. The Threat of Social Isolation

The Need for Groups

Social exclusion is a complex and mysterious phenomenon that permeates all of our relationships and many, if not all, aspects of our lives. Social exclusion and rejection have inspired a rich legacy of contemplation from poets, writers, philosophers, sociologists and anthropologists. After all, human beings are deeply social creatures. We desire to live, love and work with others whom we know and who know us. And so did our ancestors, whose membership to small groups helped protect them from the weather and from predators. Belonging to a group gave them- and gives us- a chance to thrive.

The Evolution of Belonging

For our ancestral brothers and sisters, becoming a social outcast would have been disastrous. Rejection from the group and lacking the benefits that the group offered would have meant death. From an evolutionary standpoint, our survival has depended on the ability to prevent rejection, or to reclaim membership to the group once rejected. This is, in a way, still the case. Evolution has instilled in us a powerful desire to be part of a group of people we can know and whom can know us, and while our world has changed, and while our social ties to others have become less personal and more complex, social connection (and our fear of losing it) continues to be crucial to the quality (and in some cases, even quantity) of our lives.

The Pain of Being an Outcast

Social outcasts feel bad, are anxious and depressed, lack a sense of wellbeing, they harm their immune system and threaten to harm their cardio-vascular health. People who are socially isolated think about and do destructive things and die sooner than socially well connected people. Extreme reactions to social rejection such as depression, suicidal behavior and violence, might be relatively uncommon, but throughout human history social exile has been tantamount to the death sentence. While some people react to their new status as social outcast more radically than others, rejection is pretty much universally experienced as negative and painful, and this experience affects the whole of us: behavior, emotion, perception and cognition. The reason for it, the desire to belong, is equally universal, although the way it is enacted depends differs depending on culture. Let's have a closer look at some of the differences in enacting our need to belong or our fear of social rejection.

More on the Evolution of Belonging

When we meet others, we try to figure out the whole belonging thing right away. We want to know immediately whether the other is friend or foe, and whether he or she is capable enacting their respective friendliness or enmity (Fiske & Yamamoto, 2005). Some suggest that we universally perceive social groups along these two dimensions, warmth (e.g. are they friendly?) and competence (e.g. can they enact their -un-friendliness?). Yet, the ways in which we sort out belonging differs according to culture. We will look at some of the differences between the east and the west.
The East and the West

Our Western emphasis on the self as an independent and autonomous entity has seemingly led to a specific set of expectations in terms of belonging. Westerners seek loose and broad types of belonging. This in contrast with the secure and tight type of belonging one might seek in a society that emphasizes interdependence and social harmony such as Japan or other Eastern collectivists cultures and some Latino cultures (Fiske and Yamamoto, 2005).

This difference between the type of belonging sought by Westerners and Easterners (widely and loosely for North-Americans, securely and tightly for Japanese) also plays out in the ways in which Americans and Japanese respond to strangers. While Americans consider it rude to not address a stranger, Japanese consider caution and minimal contact the most appropriate response when meeting a stranger (Fiske & Yamamoto, 2005).

When it comes to ensuring their membership to a group, Westerners' motives and meta-expectations fit with their philosophy of the autonomous self. They tend to see the interpersonal relationships within the group as a matter of individual choice and control. They are confident, optimistic and trusting, until proven wrong. Japanese on the other hand, prioritize social harmony. Interpersonal relationships are more important to them than truth and they don't mind saying something different under different circumstances. They know and accept that others will do the same. Trust, to them operates in the context of relationships (Fiske & Yamamoto, 2005).

In Closing

Our need to belong to a group is, and always has been, crucial for our survival. We are deeply social creatures and social banishment is still exceedingly threatening to our wellbeing. Our desire to belong to a group, to know and to be known is universal, although the ways in which this desire is enacted might differ according to culture. Based on the work of Fiske and Yamamoto, we have illustrated this point and looked at some of the differences in the ways in which Americans and Japanese enact the desire to belong. These cultural differences however, apply only to the ways in which the desire to belong is enacted. The desire to belong itself, the fear of rejection and the pain of social rejection is universal, shared by us all.


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Different Organizations and their Place in History –
Did They Create a Sense of Belonging?

There are many organizations in history that have tried different methods to build different communities. Take some time to think about the organizations below and do you think that they have or have not created a greater sense of belonging either for a small group of people or humanity at large.

- War Amps
- Adoption Agencies
- Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre (Toronto) (www.milesnadaljcc.ca)
- Self Help Organizations (locally or in a broader context)
- Hong Fook (Toronto – Helps individuals with linguistic and cultural barriers to gain access to mental health services) (www.hongfook.ca)
- Hospitals
- Churches
- Special Olympics
- Universities/Colleges
- Housing Co-Operatives
Take a look at the community above created by the members of Opening New Doors. What would you keep and what would you change? You can go to the next page and create your ideal community!
My Ideal Community

After having looked at the Ideal Community created by the Opening New Doors organization, explore what you think belongs in your ideal community. In the blank space below, create your ideal community. This can include anything and everything that you feel would help you to create a fully inclusive community where all could feel safe, welcome, and experience a sense of belonging. Use the pieces on the next page, cut them out and write on them and attach them to your community as you see fit. Add more or change these as you like!

(There are two pages provided if your community should be larger in size)
My Ideal Community (Continued)
Pieces for My Ideal Community

Cut out the following shapes and on each one write in it what you feel is necessary for your ideal community. Tape them into the ‘not yet developed community’ on the previous pages. Add and remove as you feel fit. The shapes can have significance to what is in your community, or they cannot – it is however you choose to build it!
Outlining the Problems
by Kimberly Read

Article from: http://bipolar.about.com/od/socialissues/a/000425_deaf.htm

There are approximately 20 million hearing-impaired people in the United States, of which about 10% are profoundly deaf (Steinberg, et al, July 1998). These individuals comprise a distinct community of men, women and children who must work daily to function in a world geared for those who can hear. They have to surmount formidable communication barriers with co-workers, employers, neighbors and, in some cases, even friends and family. They must also struggle against stigma and prejudice. In a study lead by Annie Steinberg, MD, 41% of the participants, all of whom were hearing impaired, believed that "communication problems, family stresses, and societal prejudice that accompany it [hearing impairment] could lead to problems ranging from suicidal depression to substance abuse and violent behavior" (Steinberg, July 1998). In addition to these unique needs, members of the deaf community, just as in all cultures, are also struck with the unfortunate reality of severe mental illnesses such as bipolar disorder. In short, this community needs viable mental health resources.

Lack of Interpreters
However, current research indicates that such resources are not readily available. Of the 54 participants in Dr. Steinberg and associates' study, more than half (56%) reported that they had been unable to locate mental health services that were accessible (Steinberg, July 1998). Furthermore, research has also given evidence that psychiatric conditions such as mood disorders are frequently under-diagnosed (Shapira, et al., 1999). Both of these problems seem to be caused by a "lack of and utilization of experienced interpreters, grammatical and syntactic translation problems between American Sign Language and English, and differences in how a deaf individual displays feelings and perceives mental health and the mental health community" (Shapira).

Communication Problems
The scope of communication problems between the hearing and the deaf is not always obvious to many. After all, those who are deaf can still read and write. However, this does not, as it might seem, provide an easy solution. Because hearing loss so readily interferes with the acquisition of vocabulary, the mean English literacy of deaf high school graduates is at the 4.5 grade level (Holt, 1994). One hearing-impaired participant in a study which was evaluating these issues stated, "... many deaf people lack English skills. They are ashamed to write" (Steinberg, July 1998). Also consider that the average deaf adult can lip-read only 26% to 40% of speech (Waldstein & Boothroyd, 1995). Because these communication problems are viewed as such an issue, and for good reason, the majority of participants in a study of cultural and linguistic barriers to mental health service access led by Dr. Annie Steinberg and associates preferred a deaf professional (Steinberg, July 1998). Obviously experienced interpreters are vital.

Language Difficulties
However, the use of an interpreter is only the first step in resolving the problem of adequate mental health resources. The hurdle of grammatical and syntactic difficulties must still be overcome. In November 1998, Dr. Steinberg and others undertook the task of translating The Diagnostic Interview Schedule into American Sign Language, Signed English and speech reading (November 1998). This research team identified several specific translation problems. One of these is the translation of time. For example, since American Sign Language does not often use conjunctions or prepositions, duration concepts such as "for six months or more" present a problem, and time-within-time ("Have you experienced difficulty sleeping for one month or more during the past year?") are even more difficult to communicate. Another translation problem is the use of English phrases such as "feeling on edge." Additionally, hearing-specific phenomena presented a particular challenge. How does one ask a prelingual deaf person if he has been "hearing voices"?
Subtle and Unexpected Differences
Mental health providers must also learn how to recognize and address the differences in how a deaf individual displays feelings and expressions from those who are hearing. For example, someone who is deaf may pound on the floor to get attention. While this is considered aggressive by those who can hear, it is actually quite accepted and normal within the deaf community. Furthermore, while strong emotional displays are pretty much frowned upon in the hearing community, members of the deaf community count on vivid expression of emotion to convey meaning. As a matter of fact, one retrospective study found that clinicians often labeled rapid signing as a symptom of psychotic behavior rather than the change of mood that was actually indicated (Shapira). Another complicating factor in the expression of emotion is that there is a scarcity of signs within this language that can account for subtle changes in mood (Steinberg, November 1998).

Fears
A research study of cultural and linguistic barriers to mental health evaluated the participants' views of mental health institutions and practitioners. This study found that many deaf people have a fear of being incorrectly committed because they are unable to communicate with the staff. One participant is quoted as saying, “Even if I were just asking for directions at the information desk [of a psychiatric hospital], miscommunication could lead to my being committed mistakenly ... I don't want to go there, even for a visit!” (Steinberg, July 1998). This study further indicated that participants felt professionals erroneously consider a nominal level of communication to be adequate. Nathan A. Shapira, in his evaluation of bipolar disorder in inpatients with prelingual deafness, found that those making diagnoses often emphasized appearance over documented symptoms and collateral information (Shapira 1999).

Some Solutions
Examination of these studies clearly indicates that it is important to overcome these barriers and shortcomings in the mental health resources for the hearing impaired.

While the remedy for this is most certainly a challenge, there are solutions. Hearing-impaired people should be encouraged to consider careers in the mental health field. Mental health professionals should secure more translators to work with the mentally ill. Furthermore, clinicians who have little or no experience working with the hearing-impaired should use extreme caution and seek second opinions when diagnosing the deaf. In addition, research and effort is needed to bridge the language barriers which now make it so difficult to communicate.

For comprehensive information about and support for the hearing-impaired, visit the About.com Deafness/Hard of Hearing website with Guide Jamie Berke.

Works Cited


What’s In Your Briefcase?

Have you ever wondered what in your life makes you feel that you belong no matter where you are? Sort of a security blanket, a memento you travel with, something you keep in your pocket that nobody knows about, like a letter from a loved one or a newspaper article? Or something you are always wearing, like a watch or a locket? Or maybe for you it is a specific saying that you repeat over and over to yourself?

In the film “Belonging: The Search for Acceptance” we are introduced to one man who travels everywhere and even sleeps with his briefcase as his pillow. It is not until he opens the briefcase and it is empty that we realize that by having it, and always keeping it with him, he feels secure, as if he belongs to something larger.

Ask yourself, what is this “item” for you? If you like, share this exercise with others or ask them, what is in your briefcase? Explore what makes people feel a sense of belonging regardless of where they are at in their journey of life.

In my briefcase I have…
**How Does L’Arche as a Community Differ from Our Community?**

Look at the two different communities: either the one you live in now or one you have lived in or know about, and compare it to the L’Arche communities explored in the video. Are there similarities?

What would you change about the L'Arche communities to enhance them?

What can change about your choice community to enhance it? If you are not viewing the video, go to the website below for information about the L'Arche Communities:

www.larchecanada.org

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<tr>
<th>L’Arche Community (some are listed…add your own based on the video or website!)</th>
<th>Choice of Community</th>
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<td>• Everyone lives together regardless of race, health, age, developmental issues, gender, etc.</td>
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<td>• Individual abilities is respected</td>
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<td>• Growth for everyone is fostered</td>
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<td>• Celebration for life, and the everyday</td>
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<td>• Celebration of individualism</td>
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<td>• Enjoyable</td>
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<td>• Different resources are available based on what an individual is seeking</td>
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**Your Comments and Ideas**

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Session 7 – Hello? Hello? Are You Listening?
Hello? Hello? Are You Listening?

How often are you standing in line at the store and the person in front of you picks up their cell phone and starts a conversation while the cashier is checking them out? What is your reaction to these situations? Do you feel that this encourages or discourages a sense of belonging between people?

Explore this idea in the following role-play (or on your own in a public setting).

- If you are able to obtain a cell phone, ask another individual or a group of people to sit down with you and have a conversation and while conversing, either make a call or answer the phone and converse with the person on the other end of the phone at the same time. After doing so, ask the others their reaction to what you did and how it made them feel in terms of belonging? Did they feel that they were welcome at that moment in the conversation, or did it alter their sense of belonging?

- If you prefer, go into a public setting where there is a good chance that a number of individuals will have cell phones: a grocery store, a bank, a variety store, anywhere that this is likely. Now, as the phones ring ask yourself either how the individual providing a service to that person feels, or even how you feel standing in a line where people are not speaking to each other, but rather into a piece of technology?

Write your comments below and as you do, come up with ways that in a world of cell phones we can still create a sense of belonging for everyone.
Is Technology Isolating a Younger Generation...
By: Alison O'Brien

"What happens if they bring their disconnectedness to leading the country? Technology will for ever-more play a role, but whether it will be the hero or the enemy is unclear. Certainly, it has the potential to be both."

ALISON O'BRIEN

The school I attend has a population of about 1,500 full-time undergraduate students. It is a small, close-knit community that has a way of making everyone feel welcome. It is a place where your name is more important than a student ID number and the professors always notice if you miss a class. On this campus, however, I am a minority — not because of race or ethnicity, but because I do not own an iPod. And while I enjoy good music just as much as the next person, I have yet to feel inclined to spend my money on a device which, I believe, isolates me. Ironically enough, however, I'm afraid I am considered to be the isolated one.

More and more, I see others walking — usually alone, but sometimes in groups — with a disengaged presence about them. Friends walk by and simply wave rather than stop and talk. As they pass, you notice they are connected, and not to their peers or surroundings, but technologically connected to a device that allows them to immerse themselves in a personal, self-constructed culture while filtering out all they wish to ignore. It is a way many pass their time while they make their way from point A to point B as quickly as possible. This is an all-too-recognizable scenario in today's culture of BlueTooth headsets and ear buds. Thus, proving that technology, and the way we utilize it, has changed drastically.

Technology's role in society began as a way of improving standard of living and productivity during the Industrial Revolution. Then, with the invention of the television set, it took on the form of entertainment and provided a new leisure activity families could enjoy together. Somewhere along the way, however, as technological capabilities further developed, it began to take on countless new forms. From records to CDs, pay phones to cell phones, and VCRs to DVDs, technology has grown exponentially. Still, it is not the advancements the world has made that create a problem, but our use of these advancements.

One major concern surrounding the media and technology saturated world of today is the fact that even though these devices are supposed to help us connect better to one another, they often result in isolationism. We tune into our iPod, look over tomorrow's meeting schedule on our Blackberries, or watch the news on our cell phones. Ironically, however, a decade ago none of these devices even existed, and the down time during the commute to school or work would have been spent conversing with a friend or chatting about the weather with a stranger.

I consider myself fortunate that I grew up in a time before the arrival of cell phones, Blackberries, and mp3 players. I am unique, however, since those in my age group (18 to 22-year-olds) are the last generation to remember their adolescence this way. Even those presently in high school, which is only a difference of four or five years, are so accustomed to sending text messages between classes or getting through the bus ride home with an iPod. While 20 years, the definition of a complete generation, is far from what separates us, there is a major generation gap within a single demographic. Again, this is clearly evidence that the more connected we are, the less connected we become.

What happens, then, when the current high school students — or even worse, their younger siblings — make it to college and there is no one left who remembers life without Blackberries or iPods? What if colleges and universities begin requiring students to have these items because they view their classes
and submit assignments? And what if the bleachers in my school’s Billera Hall go empty because students would rather watch basketball on-line from a dorm room? Far-fetched? Even current technology makes these things possible. They might even become the norm for future college students.

I see students immerse themselves in technology every day. It is these students who will be the future of society — a society that may value technology over human relationships and interconnectedness. The question then arises as to what the implications are for the next generation of leaders of this country — the politicians, business executives, and other professionals. What happens if they bring their disconnectedness to leading the country? Technology will for ever-more play a role, but whether it will be the hero or the enemy is unclear. Certainly, it has the potential to be both.

For now, there is no standard operating procedure or owner’s manual for how technology should be used. We — people my age and younger — are essentially making it up as we go and the rules of the game keep changing. And, while I am quite fond of my cell phone and may even purchase an iPod some day, I feel we must take notice of how we use technology, and we must define the proper, yet delicate, balance that will preserve the natural connection necessary for all human beings. It is up to my generation to figure this out, even if it starts on one small, close-knit campus.

Alison O’Brien of Mount Bethel is a junior at DeSales University in Center Valley. She is serving an internship this semester with The Morning Call Editorial Board.

Article from:
http://www.mcall.com/news/opinion/anotherview/all-left_col-afeb23,0,2631023.story
Statement Exploration

As you are progressing through the workbook you will be increasing your understanding of feelings of belonging for yourself, others and society as a whole. Either on your own, or in a group, look at the statement below and discuss its accuracy. Explore ways that you could work within your own circle of friends, and/or your own community to make the statement a positive one.

Technology is Breaking Down Society’s Sense of Belonging?

- How true do you think the above statement is?

- Is it possible to change this to be a positive statement?
We Can Create a Sense of Belonging in Today’s World by…

Below are some ways that we can use to help create an ongoing sense of belonging for everyone in the emerging world of technology.

Take a read and add your own. Put these into practice and share them with others!

1. When you are in a group, do not have a conversation on your cell phone. If you must answer the cell phone, either excuse yourself from the group or ask the person if you can call them back.

2. Turn off your ringer on your cell phone in public areas so that it does not disturb those around you and avoids making them feel as if they are interrupting you.

3. Keep the television off while eating with friends and family.

4. Avoid surfing the internet while having conversations with others.

5. If you have a headset for music, do not put this on while in public areas where others are conversing. This may give the impression that you do not wish to be spoken to and can create a false sense of alienation.
Principles of Belonging

It is important to make a constant effort to create a sense of belonging for those around us. Below are listed some basic principles to help us make our environment as inviting and welcoming as possible:

- Do not judge each other
- Do not show prejudice toward each other
- Be open and inviting
- Welcome into your life individuals who have different skills than you, look at the world differently, believe in different things, come from different places…
- Engage in conversation with each other as opposed to watching television, searching on the internet, playing video games…
- Help each other and work through questions and ideas about different topics together. If we build trust, we feel we belong.
- Laugh with each other, and not at or about others

Now you try it…list some items that you consider as principles for you when you are creating an environment that fosters belonging:
How a Sense of Exclusion Can be Created in Everyday Areas

Read the article on the next page titled:

“The Importance of Being (A) Regular”

Think about the following questions:

- How did Raheel experience a complete lack of feeling of belonging as a result of switching cafes?

- How did Raheel’s “regular” café build and consistently return a sense of belonging to her?

- Do you consider the attitude and acts of the café attendant intentional toward Raheel? Did she mean to make her feel unwelcome and as though her business was no good there, or is it possible that her actions were accidental?

- Are accidental acts which cause a loss of belonging for a person excusable? Why or why not?
The Importance of Being (a) Regular

By: Raheel Raza

For many years I’ve patronized the same coffee shop around the corner from where I work, downtown. They’re warm and welcoming, exchange pleasantries, miss me when I don’t show up and don’t frown if I’m a few pennies short. However, a few days ago, on my way in from the GO train, I decided to try a change at an uppity, huge, fancy place. Well, what an experience in alienation!

I said a cheery good morning (as I’m used to) – no response. I asked for a bagel. “Which one” the server asked abruptly as though I should know before I order. So I peered at the tree that had a variety of bagels hanging from it’s branches, some with no name and strange seeds. So I had to ask what they were and the server didn’t look happy, impatient to serve her regulars who KNOW what a fuzzy looking bagel with green thingies is all about. Anyway, I chose a bagel and while it was being toasted, I went looking for coffee which I was told was at the other end of the store.

I decided to be adventurous because my regular coffee shop is a little joint that offers only three choices – here there were mega choices. The coffee line-up was long behind me – mostly regulars I could tell because they were holding those little punch cards with free coffees at the end of the line. So I made a quick decision to have a mocchachino. The server glanced at me impatiently tapping her finger and barked, “milk?” Yes I said. “Which one” she asked with raised eyebrows, eager to serve the cute guy behind me who actually got a smile! “What kinds of milk do you have?” I asked not to be outdone by a cutie-pie. She pointed to five milk jugs. I then committed the further sin of asking her which one she recommended and it was as though I’ve abused her. She frowned, leaned over and took the order from the ‘cute’ guy behind me and barked at me “your choice lady”. Intimidated at being called a lady (which by this time I was sure I’m not!), I quickly decided. She banged the coffee in front of me and I made one final mistake of asking where I should pay. “Over there” she said and turned to the next customer before I could make the mistake of asking another question.

I lugged bag, briefcase and suspect mocchachino over to the central cash, where everyone had exact change and I had a $20/- bill which made both me and the bill very unwelcome. “Nothing smaller” the cashier asked loudly while people behind me shifted their feet and sighed loudly at my insensitivity in presenting a large bill. I found myself apologizing profusely at infringing on their territory while I tried to explain that if I had something smaller I would have used it rather than be treated like an alien.

I suddenly realized I hadn’t picked up the bagel so I rushed over. Well, I should have known that you don’t pick where you order – silly me. So I was sent off to pick-up spot, bright red in the face, with ‘rookie’ written all over me. Everyone knew by now that I’m a novice and I knew I’m not welcome here unless I know the ropes. I thought any minute now someone would ask me where I’m from? At the bagel pick-up place, stood a scary server, knife in hand asking which of the dozen spreads I wanted on my bagel. By this time I decided I’ll take whatever I get and run for my life but it wasn’t that simple. I had to line up again to pay for the bagel – with exact change this time.

I think they were happy to see me leave; I know I was happy to leave, butter less bagel and all. I certainly appreciate my little coffee shop and it’s smiling faces all the more.

It’s really nice to be a regular.

Source: www.raheelraza.com
How Can We Alter Feelings of Exclusion?

Sometimes we as people unintentionally create a feeling of exclusion for an individual. It is important that we are aware and sensitive to the feelings of others and that we recognize that it is important to always be accepting, caring and thoughtful in our actions and comments.

Below is a list of some ways that you can work with to alter feelings of exclusion that may exist:

- Smile when you first meeting people
- Listen when people are talking and sharing feelings and information with you
- Do not make fun of others
- Help each other
- Welcome others
- Treat each other with respect
- Keep eye contact and use appropriate body language
- Be friendly and engaging in conversation
- Take information that you already know about a person and engage in follow up conversation
Session 8 – How Do We Find A Sense of Belonging After Tragedy?
Definitions of Tragedy

From Webster's Dictionary:

Noun

1. An event resulting in great loss and misfortune; "the whole city was affected by the irremediable calamity"; "the earthquake was a disaster".

2. Drama in which the protagonist is overcome by some superior force or circumstance; excites terror or pity.

Jean Vanier's Definition (assessed from the film content):

Taken from Jean Vanier's film “Belonging: The Search for Acceptance”

When we become unable to forgive, we leave individuals on the outside, therefore never creating a world of acceptance and belonging.
The tragedy is that we do not become fully human.
Women, War and Fundamentalism in the Middle East
By: Haideh Moghissi, Department of Sociology, York University

A constructive discussion and dialogue about Islam and gender has never been free of its controversies. The task has been how to explain the stubborn survival of traditions and practices hostile to women in Islamic societies without adding to the arsenal of racist imagery about Islam and Muslim women, targeting diasporic communities in the West. How to challenge the inferiorizing stereotypes about Islam and Muslim women without resorting to apologetic and self-glorifying accounts of Islam and Muslims.

But taking up this subject is a daunting job particularly after post- September 11 events. No doubt the tragic events of September 11 traumatized many people and the horrifying loss of life of so many innocents robbed everyone of our sense of security. But this has been particularly true for those of us who are of Middle Eastern origin. Many feel that they have all been implicated in this tragedy in one way or the other. Many of us have gone through the experience of having lost loved ones as a result of different forms of violence and terrorism in our home counties. What was the first direct experience in North America of feeling that their cities are under attack, has been a way of life for many people from the Middle East. But the continued harassment of people who are or appear to be Muslim or of Middle Eastern origin has forever damaged our sense of belonging. A feeling of shame and responsibility for what happened on September 11 has been imposed on all diaspora of Middle Eastern background.

As a gender-conscious woman from an Islamic culture who has experienced, first hand, the consequences of the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in my home-country, I feel agonized by this observation. For, as I have argued elsewhere, I do not believe the political choice facing intellectuals in the Middle East is as limited as it is often implied. We can keep our critical stance against various forms of violence and terrorism that has engulfed Islamic societies and, against foreign interests and policies which in fact nourished and sustained them. We should be able to clearly and unconditionally condemn the horrifying loss of life of innocent people in the World Trade Center as well as the wanton bombing of innocent people of Afghanistan.

In this context, it is indeed a formidable job for any individual from Islamic cultures to keep focus. For all this, unfortunately, has created a sort of defensiveness in many individuals coming from the region which discourages critical thinking and critical analysis. As a gender-conscious woman from an Islamic culture who has experienced, first hand, the consequences of the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in my home-country, I feel agonized by this observation. For, as I have argued elsewhere, I do not believe the political choice facing intellectuals in the Middle East is as limited as it is often implied. We can keep our critical stance against various forms of violence and terrorism that has engulfed Islamic societies and, against foreign interests and policies which in fact nourished and sustained them. We should be able to clearly and unconditionally condemn the horrifying loss of life of innocent people in the World Trade Center as well as the wanton bombing of innocent people of Afghanistan.

However, what we have heard and seen since September 11, from the Muslim communities in the West and from anti-imperialist intellectuals, has been mostly justificatory accounts about Islam and its practices, including the much popularized concept of Jihad that has been used abundantly on both sides. Ziauddin Sardar is right in criticizing Muslims from Egypt to Malaysia for denying terrorism as a problem in the Islamic world and for blaming everyone but themselves and not seeing their own mistakes and shortcomings, such as the absence of political freedom, open debate, civility, and pluralism as the breeding ground for Islamic movements.

It should go without saying that I am not disputing the need for countering the recurrent Islamophobia of media and governments in the West and the racist imagery about Islam and Muslims - the imagery that reduces the life experiences of people from the region to religion and religion alone. Underlying such images is the assumption that Islam is a blanket under which people from Islamic cultures are huddled together regardless of their regional, ethnic, cultural, class and gender differences. However, the best way to counter this imagery is not to deny the more punishing features of Islamic practices and traditions, particularly for women, and to focus, instead, on the positive aspects of Islamic culture. To unconditionally
defend Islam in its totality is the wrong strategy for countering these views. It is to defend the undefendable. In fact, nothing would contrast the stereotypical images of Islam and Muslims better than raising one’s voice against oppressive features of cultural traditions or the inhumane practices of Islamist movements and fundamentalist regimes. To keep an open mind and not fear critiques and self-critique would discredit the monolithic, static conception of Islam promoted by both leaders of fundamentalist movements and rulers that there is one ‘true’ and ‘authentic’ Islam based on the ‘correct’ interpretation of the scripture. It would also be the best way to counter the homogenizing perceptions about people from the Middle East advertised by governments and the media in the West, which obscure the profound heterogeneity of peoples from Muslim societies within or without the Middle East and their differing understanding and interpretations of Islam(s) and Shari’a. To offer apologetic accounts of Shari’a does the opposite.

Which is to say that to defend Islam and Muslims against the well-stocked arsenal of anti-Islamic, anti-Arab/Iranian stereotypes can hardly be done through apologetic accounts of women’s rights in Islamic Shari’a. To argue, for example, that there are preconditions, including the testimony of four eye witnesses, for carrying out the Shari’a sentence of flogging or stoning to death of women and men on charges of adultery, or that murder of a wife accused of adultery by her husband (honour killing) is legally sanctioned, can hardly convince us that the provisions of Shari’a are compatible with the principles of human rights. If all the pre-conditions of these punishments are met, they cannot make legally sanctioned violence against women acceptable and just. And let us not obscure the fact that the testimony of four eye witnesses required by law is admissible only from four men or two men and four women, as according to the Islamic Shari’a: the testimony of two women equals that of one man. No amount of twisting and bending can change the fact that if the principles of the Shari’a are to be maintained, women cannot be treated any better. Indeed, if religious texts and instructions are taken literally, gender equality cannot be achieved in any society, Islamic or non-Islamic.

To be sure, fundamentalism in all religions is a deadly force that uses every possible means to carry its messages. In North America it shows no mercy for the innocent lives lost in abortion clinics; in Israel it doesn’t hesitate to open fire on Muslim worshipers who stand in the way of the creation of a Jewish "promised" land; and in Muslim societies Islamic fundamentalism, which has victimized more people inside the region than outside it and more women than men, takes its most passionately articulated mission to be restoring conservative religious doctrine and teachings on women’s status. Indeed, contempt for women’s intelligence and emotional and moral stability is the marker of Fundamentalists’ religious instructions and moral regime. The archaic provisions of Islamic legal codes and criminal justice, such as the barbaric form of prescribed punishment (including stoning to death), violates the basic human rights of both sexes. But Islamic legal practices are clearly and unapologetically harsher on women. To such ends, they dig up medieval Islamic texts prescribing moral codes or invent rules of conducts when the need arise. Afghanistan under the Taliban and present-day Iran provide numerous examples of ‘Islamic traditions’ whose origin, Islamic or otherwise, cannot easily be traced.

Given these facts, the struggle against this formidable force cannot be postponed until the situation calms down. Such a strategy would only help the region’s reactionary religious and political establishments to wall themselves off against internal challenges and popular demands. When even doubting the rationality of the application of Islamic Shari’a at this time and age can be a life-threatening activity (as is the case in many Muslim countries), are women not justified in refusing to cheer for "democracy" as one Islamic force replaces another? Should they not feel "outsiders" to the patriotic and nationalist projects in the region? The latest show staged by the US-led anti-terrorist coalition and Afghan male elite and the response to it by Afghan women’s organizations such as Afghanistan Feminist Association, Afghan Women’s Network, WAPHA and RAWA are a clear manifestation of the future prospects for women in Afghanistan.

Not even fully in control of the state power, the authorities of Afghanistan’s interim government are trying
to curb expectations with regard to women's rights and status in post-Taliban Afghanistan. Indeed the statements such as those made by new Justice Minister that the country's legal system and new justice will continue to be based on "traditional Islamic law, not an imported, Western-style system" leaves no room for speculation as to what will survive and what will change in "liberated" Afghanistan. Time and time again we have seen that Western governments concern themselves with violations of women's rights in Muslim societies whenever a defiant client state has to be punished by the stick of women's rights, as presently is the case in Afghanistan. It is then reasonable to assume that once the US-led strikes in Afghanistan come to an end and the Northern Alliance forces are fully and firmly in control, rhetoric about Afghan women's human rights will also end. Chilling statements by the "moderate" fundamentalists now in power confirm a reality already known to women living under rigid Islamic rule - that women will continue to be brutalized and caught in a deadly crossfire between competing Islamist forces who each claim to be the bearer of "true" Islam.

Today, the fallacy of the promise that women's demands will be met, automatically, when the movement for democracy succeeds is clear to many women. Women's experiences of the last two decades in Afghanistan and elsewhere in the region have made it abundantly clear that meaningful change for women only will begin when the clerical grip on political institutions and law-making processes is broken and a clear separation of state from religion is materialized. Only with such developments (which include the removal of Shari'a from the legal system), will women begin to gain full citizenship status and legal equality with men. The same is true for religious minorities against whom Shari'a-based laws unapologetically discriminate. In this context, a most urgent question would be, What is the most reasonable and effective way to defend the rights of women in Islamic cultures to autonomy, dignity and self-fulfillment? We may not have a response to that question. But we know for sure that defending out-dated practices and traditions because they are home-grown, non-Western and non-Eurocentric will not take us in that direction.

Within this context, the choice of gender-conscious women from the region is clear. That is to go beyond "us" and "them" and to refuse self-glorification or self-pity. The choice is to free ourselves from "unreal loyalties" which spring from pride of nationality, religious pride, family pride and all other sorts of pride, as Virginal Woolf wrote over half a century ago.3 Writing from the stand point of an "outsider" to social, political and cultural life in England of her time, she declared that her sex and class had very little to do with patriotic and nationalist projects of the "educated" men who were preparing for the Second World War in her country.

[I]f you insist upon fighting to protect me, or 'our' country, let it be understood, soberly and rationally between us, that you are fighting to gratify a sex instinct which I cannot share; to procure benefits which I have not shared and probably will not share..... [I]n fact, as a woman, I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world.4

This statement is as true now as it was then.

Footnotes


The War on Terror

Sept. 11, 2001, marked a turning point in American foreign and domestic policy. A month after the terrorist attacks, Congress passed the USA PATRIOT Act without fully debating its deep impact on civil liberties, particularly on those of ethnic and religious minorities.

Rallying the nation to fight a "war on terrorism" focused attention on Arab and Muslim immigrants and citizens, as well as others who criticized U.S. foreign policy. Public support for surveillance, intimidation, and targeted prosecution has resulted in a psychological corralling of American Muslims and peace activists.

In a move reminiscent of World War I surveillance, the Department of Justice unveiled a plan for the Terrorist Information and Prevention System (TIPS). The government also disclosed the development of the second-generation Computer Assisted Passenger Pre-Screening Program (CAPPS-II). Both of these programs were terminated after protests from a coalition of civil libertarians.

Overt and covert policies, including the Special Registration requirement, the "No-Fly list," aggressive deportations, crackdowns at borders, and surveillance of mosques and homes, echo the repressive policies of the past. Destroyed livelihoods, splintered families, and the loss of a sense of belonging and citizenship are some of the consequences people face as a result of these actions.

The post-9/11 period has seen a dramatic expansion of government surveillance. Law enforcement has received extensive funding for this purpose. With little regulation and poor understanding of constitutional protections, the authorities have overstepped their bounds, especially in monitoring political activity. Many groups and individuals have found out that they have been spied upon; these include peace activists, demonstrators at anti-war rallies, animal-rights groups, student organizations, critics of U.S. policy toward Cuba, and opponents of the World Trade Organization. Federal agencies involved in unlawful surveillance include the Pentagon and the National Security Agency (NSA). Some local and state police anti-terrorism task forces have returned to the days of the infamous police "Red Squads", spying, infiltrating, and intimidating political organizations.

Government agencies and their private contractors have covertly received private customer data from airlines, telephone carriers, credit card firms, and Internet service providers. Congress has begun investigating potential abuses and threats to civil liberties.

Source: http://www.trackedinamerica.org/timeline/after_911/intro/
How Can We Avoid Destroying the Feeling of Belonging After Tragedy?

When we as individuals, communities or a nation face a tragedy, we often find it difficult to move forward into the positive. We have a tendency to dwell on the negative and often, create judgments toward many, based on the acts of a few.

When tragedy strikes, it causes us to question our sense of belonging because our way of acting, living and thriving has been altered. We must look deep within ourselves and look to each other for support and knowledge to take our experiences and continue to move forth to a place where the positive prevails.

Some ways that we can avoid destroying the feeling of belonging after a tragedy include:

- **Talk with each other.** If we have fears, questions, concerns, do not keep them inside, talk with each other about them.

- **Keep in mind that the acts of one person do not define what an entire family, culture, gender etc. are like, what they believe, what they think or how they act.** Instead try to learn about other people and what they do to create a sense of unity and belonging.

- **Work with each other to continue to maintain a sense of identity.** Look at what helps us feel safe where we belong and share ideas and learn what other people seek. Often after a tragedy, identity is challenged for individuals – this is important to work on maintaining and continue to nourish and grow.
Session 9 – When I Feel I Belong, I Feel Good!

*This Session is simply to provide you with additional information, resources, links, ideas, articles and references that you might find interesting around the topic of belonging.

In addition, the final pages are summaries of the video sections explored in Session 2 to 8 (if you have decided to follow along with the video and workbook).
**When I Feel I Belong I Feel…**

Below are some feelings commonly associated with belonging. Add to the list all of the numerous other feelings that you experience when you feel a sense of belonging:

- Happy
- Safe
- Excited
- Loved
- Contributing of ideas and thoughts
- Capable of anything
- Visionary
- Meaningful
- Intelligent
- Healthy

...
List of Community Resources

The following is a small list of some of the different community resources in the Waterloo-Wellington communities that have a focus on belonging and helping individuals to recognize that they are a valuable part of the community. If you have additional community resources that you would like to add to your list, please do so in the empty space at the bottom.

- Action Read Community Literacy Centre [www.actionread.com](http://www.actionread.com)
- Big Brothers and Big Sisters [www.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca](http://www.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca)
- Centre for Research and Education in Human Services [www.crehs.on.ca](http://www.crehs.on.ca)
- Centre for Students with Disabilities – University of Guelph [www.uoguelph.ca](http://www.uoguelph.ca)
- Extend-A-Family [www.eafwr.on.ca](http://www.eafwr.on.ca)
- Spark of Brilliance [www.sparkofbrilliance.org](http://www.sparkofbrilliance.org)
- Waterloo Region Self Help [www.wrsh.ca](http://www.wrsh.ca)
- Cambridge Active Self Help [www.cambridgeactiveselfhelp.ca](http://www.cambridgeactiveselfhelp.ca)
- Wellington-Dufferin Self Help [www.peersupport.ca](http://www.peersupport.ca)
- Mood Disorders Association Waterloo Region [www.mdawr.ca](http://www.mdawr.ca)
- Anxiety Disorders of Canada [www.anxietycanada.ca](http://www.anxietycanada.ca)
List of Recommended Links About Belonging

Listed below are some online links and books that you may find helpful in finding out more information about belonging and some of the topics explored in this workbook.

- Vanier’s written work *Becoming Human*
- Vanier’s video “Belonging: The Search for Acceptance”
- [www.larchecanfoundation.org](http://www.larchecanfoundation.org)
- David Cherniack Films – transcript
- *Who are you without your briefcase?* By Reverend Meg Roberts
- *The Major Life Activity of Belonging* by Ann Hubbard
- Quilt of Belonging [www.invitationproject.ca](http://www.invitationproject.ca) “There is a place for all in the fabric of society”
- *The Quilt of Belonging: Stitching Together Stories of a Nation* by Janice Weaver
- *Language of Belonging* by Ulreik Hanna Meinof
Community belonging and self-perceived health:
Early CCHS findings (January to June 2005)

Over the past 25 years, research has clearly established a causal association between social relationships and health (ref 1, 4). People who are socially isolated and have few ties to other individuals are more likely to suffer from poor physical and mental health and are more likely to die prematurely.

More recently, the notion of “social capital” has received increasing attention in health research. Social capital is generally defined as aspects of social organization, such as civic participation and trust in others, that facilitate cooperation among community members (ref 9). High levels of social capital have been linked to lower mortality rates, lower rates of crime and increased perceptions of positive health (ref 8, 9, 10, 11, 12).

There is, however, some debate about whether social capital benefits the community at large or individual residents—who profit directly from feelings of connectedness to the community. A recent study suggests that the association between social capital and positive perceptions of health is more important at the individual level (ref 12). It is hypothesized that feeling “connected” to one’s community promotes health because such ties promote mutual respect, and thereby increase self-esteem. Another possibility is that interaction among community members results in the transmission of social norms related to health-promoting behaviours such as physical activity and refraining from smoking (ref 1, 4).

Since its inception in 2000/01, the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) has included a question on community belonging. Therefore, it is possible to track the degree to which Canadians feel connected to their local communities. An earlier paper, based on data from the 2000/01 CCHS, revealed an association between individuals’ sense of belonging and their general self-perceived health (ref 14). Based on the first 6 months (January to June) from the 2005 CCHS, this article updates the earlier article.

Comparisons are made between community belonging rates at provincial and health region levels. Because the 2005 CCHS includes questions about self-perceived mental health as well as general health, the previous analysis can be extended by measuring associations between community belonging and mental as well as physical health.

Majority feel connected to local community

In 2005, close to two-thirds of Canadians (64%) reported a strong sense of community belonging; this included 17% who described their sense of belonging as very strong and 47% who reported it as somewhat strong. Just over a quarter (26%) reported a somewhat weak sense of community belonging; 9%, very weak.

Higher in Atlantic provinces

The likelihood of reporting a strong sense of community belonging varied considerably across provinces (Chart 1, Table 1). Approximately three-quarters of the residents of the Atlantic provinces reported a strong sense of belonging, with Newfoundlanders having the highest rate in the country at 79%. Relatively high rates were also reported in Saskatchewan (73%) and British Columbia (69%). Residents of the province of Quebec were the least likely to feel connected, with only 54% reporting a strong sense of belonging. A previous study found that Quebecers were also less likely to report a strong sense of belonging to Canada, but their sense of belonging to their province was similar to that of other Canadians.16

The degree to which the residents of health regions within each province felt connected to their
respective communities also differed widely. Health regions comprised of major urban centres tended to have the lowest rates of community belonging. For example, in Ontario, the lowest rates were among residents of the health regions of York and the City of Toronto; in Manitoba the lowest rate was for Winnipeg; for Saskatchewan, Saskatoon; for Alberta, Calgary and the Capital health region (Edmonton); and for British Columbia, Vancouver. Conversely, predominantly rural health regions had higher rates of belonging. For people living in predominately urban health regions, the average community belonging rate was 63%. By contrast, the average for those living in health regions that were predominately rural was 77% (Chart 2). The highest belonging rate in the country was 89% in the Labrador-Grenfell health region in Newfoundland and Labrador and the lowest was in the Laval health region in Quebec (44%).

Rates increasing

Between 2000/01 and 2005, the proportion of Canadians reporting a strong sense of belonging to their local community rose from 58% to 64%. Significant increases occurred in all provinces except Newfoundland and Labrador (Chart 3). Community belonging increased the most in New Brunswick, where the rate rose from 62% to 73%.

Associated with age

The proportions of men and women who reported a strong sense of community belonging did not differ (Table 2). However, rates did vary by age group. A high proportion (77%) of youth aged 12 to 17 reported a strong sense of belonging, but among young adults aged 18 to 29, the figure was much lower at 55%. At older ages, the rate increased steadily from 61% among those aged 30 to 44 to 72% among seniors (65 or older).

Feeling connected to the community was less common among people who were divorced or separated (57%) or never married (54%), compared with those who were married or living common-law (65%). People living with young children were slightly more likely than those who did not have young children in their household to have a strong sense of belonging.

Modest associations were observed between community belonging and socio-economic status. People with a low household income were less likely to report a strong sense of community belonging, but there were no differences between those with lower-middle, middle, upper-middle or high household incomes. The only association with education was that post-secondary graduates were slightly less likely to feel connected, than were people who had completed only high school.

Community belonging and health

A relatively high proportion of people who felt connected to their local community perceived their health positively. Close to two-thirds of those who felt a very strong or somewhat strong sense of community belonging reported excellent or very good general health (Chart 4). In contrast, only half of those with a very weak sense of belonging viewed their general health so favorably.

At the provincial level, significant associations between community belonging and self-perceived general health emerged in all provinces except Prince Edward Island and Quebec (Chart 5). Associations were particularly strong in British Columbia and Ontario. In British Columbia, 64% of residents with a strong sense of belonging reported excellent or very good general health compared with 51% among those with a weak sense, and in Ontario 64% versus 55%. These findings are particularly relevant in view of evidence that self-perceived general health is predictive of chronic disease incidence, use of medical services, recovery from illness, functional decline, and mortality (ref 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 18).
The likelihood of reporting excellent or very good mental health also declined in parallel with decreases in degree of connectedness—from 81% for those with a very strong sense down to 63% for those with a very weak sense of community belonging (Chart 6). At the provincial level, a strong sense of community belonging was associated with an increased probability of reporting excellent or very good mental health in all provinces except Prince Edward Island (Chart 7).

Even after other potentially confounding factors were taken into account, sense of community belonging was strongly related to both self-perceived general and mental health (Table 3). Compared with those with a weak sense of community belonging, people with a very strong sense had close to twice the odds of reporting excellent or very good general health (Model 1). Similarly, those with a very strong sense of belonging had over two times the odds of excellent or very good mental health (Model 3). When people are asked to rate their general health, psychological factors play a role in perceptions. Therefore, the degree to which physical and mental health factors contribute to associations between community connectedness and perceptions of general health is unknown. However, when the relationship between community belonging and self-perceived general health was examined in a model controlling for self-perceived mental health in addition to other possible cofounders, the odds ratios for belonging diminished but were still significant (Model 2). This suggests that sense of community belonging is associated with both the physical and mental health of individuals. Although due to the cross-sectional nature of this analysis, it is not possible to determine whether it is health that influences sense of community belonging or the other way around.

Data source

Estimates are based on data from the first 6 months of the 2005 (Cycle 3.1) Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), collected between January and June of that year. The CCHS covers the population aged 12 or older living in private households. It does not include residents of Indian reserves, Canadian Forces bases, or some remote areas. Although residents of the three territories are part of the CCHS sample, they are not included in this early release. The overall response rate for this first release of the 2005 CCHS was 76%; the total sample size was 67,741. Approximately 3% of this sample was excluded from this analysis because of non-response to the question on community belonging. All estimates were weighted to be representative of the household population aged 12 or older in 2005. Differences between estimates were tested to ensure statistical significance, which was established at the 0.05 level. To account for survey design effects, standard errors and coefficients of variation were estimated using the bootstrap technique.

The questions

To measure sense of community belonging, respondents to the Canadian Community Health Survey were asked, “How would you describe your sense of belonging to your local community? Would you say it is: very strong? somewhat strong? somewhat weak? very weak?”.

Self-perceived general health was assessed with the question, “In general, would you say your health is: excellent? very good? good? fair? poor?”

Self-perceived mental health was measured with the question, “In general, would you say your mental health is: excellent? very good? good? fair? poor?”

Household income was based on the number of people in the household and total household income from all sources in the 12 months before the interview.

Household – Income Group, People in Household, Total household Income (see next page)
• Lowest
  • 1 to 4
  • Less than $10,000
  • 5 or more
  • Less than $15,000

• Lower-middle
  • 1 or 2
  • $10,000 to $14,999
  • 3 or 4
  • $10,000 to $19,999
  • 5 or more
  • $15,000 to $29,999

• Middle
  • 1 or 2
  • $15,000 to $29,999
  • 3 or 4
  • $20,000 to $39,999
  • 5 or more
  • $30,000 to $59,999

• Upper middle
  • 1 or 2
  • $30,000 to $59,999
  • 3 or 4
  • $40,000 to $79,999
  • 5 or more
  • $60,000 to $79,999

• Highest
  • 1 or 2
  • $60,000 or more
  • 3 or more
  • $80,000 or more

An urban/rural variable was assigned to each record based on the percent urban composition of the health region where the respondent lived. Urban areas were defined as Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), Census Agglomeration (CA) or communities that fall outside CMAs/CAs that have at least 30% of the...
employed labour force commuting to CMAs/CAs. The percent urban composition was calculated for each region by dividing the population living in these urban areas by the total population of the health region.
Footnotes


Source: http://www.statcan.ca/english/research/82-621-XIE/82-621-XIE2005001.htm
Definition of Community Building

Community development is an ongoing process, and an approach, that draws on local wisdom, culture and traditions as it supports opportunities for people and organizations to connect, to build and to strengthen their communities. The goal of community development is improved quality of life for everyone.

Community building is a term that encompasses a whole array of activities that support community development. The people and skills part of community capacity building involves ongoing learning.


Community Development Refers to Developing, or Building Up, Communities to be more self sufficicue, assertive, or involved…[and] include community involvement, as well as a movement which aim to give communities skills and knowledge to build them up.


How to Build Community

TURN OFF YOUR TV. LEAVE YOUR HOUSE. KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS. GREET PEOPLE.
LOOK UP WHEN YOU'RE WALKING. SIT ON YOUR STOOP.
PLANT FLOWERS. USE YOUR LIBRARY. PLAY TOGETHER. BUY FROM LOCAL MERCHANTS.
SHARE WHAT YOU HAVE. HELP A LOST DOG.
TAKE CHILDREN TO THE PARK. HONOR ELDERS. SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS.
FIX IT EVEN IF YOU DIDN'T BREAK IT.
HAVE POTLUCKS. GARDEN TOGETHER. PICK UP LITTER. READ STORIES ALOUD.
DANCE IN THE STREET. TALK TO THE MAIL CARRIER. LISTEN TO THE BIRDS. PUT UP A SWING. HELP CARRY SOMETHING HEAVY. BARTER FOR YOUR GOODS.
START A TRADITION. ASK A QUESTION.
HIRE YOUNG PEOPLE FOR ODD JOBS. ORGANIZE A BLOCK PARTY.
BAKE EXTRA AND SHARE. ASK FOR HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT.
OPEN YOUR SHADES. SING TOGETHER. SHARE YOU SKILLS. TAKE BACK THE NIGHT.
TURN UP THE MUSIC. TURN DOWN THE MUSIC.
LISTEN BEFORE YOU REACT IN ANGER. MEDIATE A CONFLICT. SEEK TO UNDERSTAND.
LEARN FROM NEW AND UNCOMFORTABLE ANGLES.
KNOW THAT NO ONE IS SILENT THOUGH MANY ARE NOT HEARD.
WORK TO CHANGE THIS.

(Source: Conestoga College. Community Organizations I: Social Services.)

Belonging Skills Workbook

Self Help Alliance (representing: Cambridge Active Self Help, Mood Disorders Association Waterloo Region, Wellington-Dufferin Self Help, Waterloo Region Self Help)
**JUMPSTART**

Source: http://www.waramps.ca/champ/jump.html

Members of CHAMP with multiple amputations are Super Champs and belong to JUMPSTART, a program that provides computers.

The War Amps have developed the JUMPSTART program to help everyone feel inclusive in their community!

Computers are the "great equalizer" for Champs with multiple amputations. In the past, these Champs would have been unable to keep up with their peers at school. JUMPSTART levels the playing field.

"The long-term objective of JUMPSTART is employment opportunity. The goal is to produce experts who will be in demand in the high tech job market."

Cliff Chadderton
War Amps CEO

**JUMPSTART Hardware**

Under JUMPSTART, home computers are provided to Super Champs, who gain valuable computer experience which later helps them with their homework and school projects. They develop highly sought-after computer skills which will be valued by future employers.

As Super Champs grow up, JUMPSTART ensures that their computer systems grow with them.

**JUMPSTART Software**

JUMPSTART is committed to making sure that Super Champs have access to educational software. Using their computers, young Super Champs can learn important concepts like shapes, sizes, colours, and numbers. As they get older, appropriate software will complement normal classroom activities.

When a Super CHAMP has mastered or outgrown a computer software program, it is passed on to another Super CHAMP who requires a new challenge. This type of recycling benefits all of our Super Champs.

**JUMPSTART Research**

JUMPSTART is committed to keeping Super Champs and their families up to date on the latest computer technology. JUMPSTART is constantly reviewing educational software which will add to the learning experience of all Super Champs. Also, JUMPSTART researches the latest developments in technology to help amputees use a computer more effectively (i.e.: voice-activated software, special keyboards, different mouse designs, and so on.)
Video Summary segment 1 of 7 (Session #2)

Time: 00:00 to 4:50 min

Description:

- This section of the video focuses on introducing us to different people and different situations from all over the world. In addition, it tells us a little about the work of Jean Vanier and talks about the need that all of us have to feel a sense of belonging. Different needs are conveyed by the spoken word and the visual imagery in the film. The video was developed after the tragedy of September 11\textsuperscript{th}, 2001 and the idea is that our need to belong as individuals and as communities has changed since then.

Video Ideas to Think About for Segment 1 of 7

- Consider belonging in the general sense and think about if you consider it a basic need of every person.
- What do we long for with belonging as people, is it for material items or is it mostly for other people?
- Does everyone have a place where they feel safe and where they belong?
Video Summary segment 2 of 7 (Session #3)

Time: 42:50 to 45:50 min

Description:

- This section of the video looks at the idea of love and forgiveness. The focus is around how love and forgiveness help encourage feelings of belonging. The film looks at how we are all people with similar basic needs and that we are not perfect, but can live with each other in peace if we can learn to forgive.

Video Ideas to Think About for Segment 2 of 7

- Does love come before belonging?
- When you feel you are loved, does this lead to a sense of belonging?
- How/why is forgiveness important in your life?
Video Summary segment 3 of 7 (Session #4)

Time: 10:19 to 15:00 min

Description:

- This section of the video focuses on where we find belonging and how when feelings of belonging are altered, we struggle just to exist. Many find a sense of belonging defined by where they spend the bulk of their time, whether at work or with tasks that they need to complete. The piece looks at how when this changes, do we as people change.

Video Ideas to Think About for Segment 3 of 7

- When have you felt you truly belonged?
- Have you experienced a time when you felt you did not belong at all – how could that have been different so that you did feel a part of what was going on around you?
- Can a single person change feelings of belonging for many?
Video Summary segment 4 of 7 (Session #5)

Time: 45:30 to 48:00 min

Description:

- This section looks at the positive results of the L'Arche community and how everyone has a place where they feel they belong. Vanier emphasizes that no one person is perfect, and that to have a world that is at peace, we need space for everybody rather than a pyramid with a few people at the top and all others down below them.

Video Ideas to Think About for Segment 4 of 7

- How is the L'Arche community different from the community you live in? How is it the same?
- What would be your ideal community/world? What would you include from the community you live in now and what would you remove or change?
Video Summary segment 5 of 7 (Session #6)

Time: 4:50 to 10:00 min

Description:

- This section talks about the beginnings of the L’Arche communities and how they function now. Vanier talks about the ideal of having a place for everyone and that although things may have been difficult in the past, there is always room for hope of something more – somewhere everyone belongs is possible. A look at Vanier’s fully inclusive communities and how this can help for all of us to experience a sense of belonging and identity is explored.

Video Ideas to Think About for Segment 5 of 7

- What is your opinion of the L’Arche community shown?
- Does everyone carry something with them that helps to give/keep a sense of identity?
Video Summary segment 6 of 7 (Session #7)

Time: 19:10 to 21:10 min

Description:

- This section focuses on how the world has evolved and now may create feelings of exclusion to the human race: the idea of the “homeless executive”, talking on cellphones as opposed to in person, false sense of belonging to a group/crowd as defined by what is seen on billboards and in magazines, etc. Vanier explores ideas around returning to a sense of humanity and belonging and away from loneliness.

Video Ideas to Think About for Segment 6 of 7

- How has life changed for people with the rise of mobile technologies (cellphones, laptops, Personal Data Assistants (PDAs), mini-televisions, MP3 Players, etc.)?
- Can we feel belonging if we do not communicate effectively, but rather only quickly, with each other?
Video Summary segment 7 of 7 (Session #8)

Time: 28:30 to 40:00 min (Sept 11th)

Description:

- This section explores the situations of many people that have become refugees to North America as a result of terrible conflict in their homelands. These individuals talk about their struggles to belong after experiencing great tragedy and moving away from all that they know and are accustomed to.

Video Ideas to Think About for Segment 7 of 7

- How does belonging change for someone after they experience a traumatic event?
- What do you think about the term “illegal immigrant” – is it possible for us to look beyond homeland, and accept each other as we are?
Evaluation Tool

Please complete the following evaluation when you feel it is needed or can provide useful information to help enhance the Belonging Workbook.

What information did you find interesting and why?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Did you know this information before?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Did you feel the information was relevant?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What if any, questions were brought to mind that were not discussed that you would like to talk about regarding Belonging?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________