

Sense of Belonging

Why is it So Important?

Throughout history the idea of belonging to a 'tribe' or a 'people' has helped us to protect and define ourselves.

Belonging helps us feel:

- valued, needed, and accepted by others
- safer
- that our beliefs are valid
- that our efforts are worthwhile
- comforted by being with others who share our interests and values.

Without a strong Sense of Belonging, we can feel:

- anxious
- isolated
- unsupported.

We are also less likely to:

- interact with others
- weather tough times with hope for a positive future
- take healthy risks and do things that might help make us feel good.

Belonging Requires Effort

There are lots of groups we can belong to, including:

- family
- friendship
- sporting
- community
- interest
- on-line groups
- spiritual groups.

We often play very different roles in each of those groups. Knowing our roles and responsibilities in a group helps strengthen both the group and our Sense of Belonging.

Being part of one or more groups can make us feel really good. But to be valued members, we often have to:

- invest our time, care, and effort
- use skills like:
 - joining conversations
 - cooperation
 - perspective-taking
 - negotiation
 - conflict resolution.



What if I Feel Like I Don't Belong?

None of us can belong to all the groups we'd like to, but it is really important that we feel we belong somewhere and have some connections. If you do feel cut off or isolated, talking with a trusted friend, adult or health professional can really help. Some other helpful resources include:

WEBSITES

www.youthbeyondblue.com
www.lifeline.org.au
www.sane.org
www.reachout.com
www.headspace.org.au
www.inspire.org.au

HELPLINES

Youthbeyondblue: 1300 22 4636
Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800
Lifeline: 13 11 14
Sane Australia: 1800 18 7263

ONLINE COUNSELLING

www.kidshelp.com.au



SENSEABILITY