

Belonging is the Answer



For hundreds of years, we have known that belonging is core to human health. In the last few generations, we have seen an increase in mental, emotional and behavioral health problems related to loneliness and isolation. This is true among young people. The solution is still the same: we need healthy interconnected relationships if we are to survive and thrive.

National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention and Surgeon General's National Strategy for Suicide Prevention:

"Connectedness to family members, teachers, coworkers, community organizations and social institutions can help protect individuals from a wide range of health problems, including suicide risk."

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Suicide Prevention Vision:

"Prevent suicidal behavior by building and strengthening connectedness or social bonds within and among persons, families, and communities."

Vivek Murthy, Former Surgeon General:

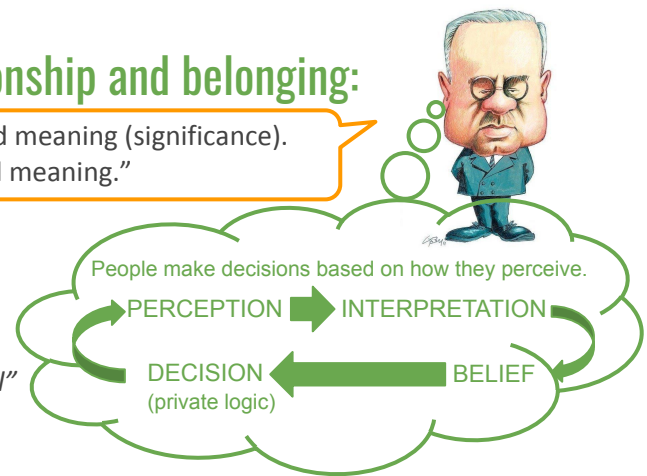
"We have thought of ourselves as an individualistic society. The data around loneliness tells us that we are interdependent creatures and that ultimately, we need each other."

Genesis 2:18 "It is not good for man to be alone."

Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Sociologists on relationship and belonging:

Alfred Adler - "The goal of behavior is belonging (sense of connection) and meaning (significance). Misbehavior is from a "mis"- taken belief about how to find belonging and meaning."

1. Children are social beings
2. Behavior is goal oriented - on purpose
3. A child's primary goal is to belong and feel significant
4. A misbehaving child is a discouraged child
5. Social responsibility or Community Feeling - "*Gemeinschaftsgefühl*"
6. Horizontal Relationships - everyone is worthy of equal dignity and respect
7. Mistakes are wonderful opportunities to learn
8. Make sure the message of love gets through



Rudolf Dreikurs "Since the child is a social being, his strongest motivation is the desire to belong. His security or lack of it depends on his *feeling of belonging* within the group. This is his basic requirement. Everything he does is aimed at finding his place."

Norman Garmezy (Grandfather of Resilience Theory) "Children who experience chronic adversity fare better or recover more successfully when they have a *positive relationship with a competent adult*, they are good learners and problem-solvers, they are *engaging to other people*, and they have areas of competence and perceived efficacy *valued by self or society*."

Anne Masten - "Positive adaptation and development in the aftermath of adversity in children and youth are common under all but the most extreme situations because resilience depends on ordinary human adaptive systems that are characteristic of human organisms, cultures, and societies. **These can be described at many levels from the molecular to the societal.** Fundamental psychosocial systems for resilience include *attachment relationships and families*; neuropsychological systems of learning and problem solving, self-regulation, mastery motivation, and meaning making; and cultural traditions or organizations that nurture these systems, such as religions or schools."

Bernard Lefkowitz - "Again and again, I found that the same pattern was repeated: the kid who managed to climb out of the morass of poverty and social pathology was the kid who found *somebody... who helped them* invent a promising future."

Jean Baker Miller - "Growth fostering relationships are a central human necessity and disconnections are the main source of psychological problems."

Michael Rutter - "Vulnerable children with one good relationship were less likely to develop behavioral problems"

Bessel Van Der Kolk - "Our culture teaches us to focus on personal uniqueness, but at a deeper level, we barely exist as individual organisms."