

CAMPAIGN:

We Belong

Summary: Everyone has something to offer their community. Whatever one's culture, talents, knowledge, experiences, or perspective, we need everyone's voice for a community to thrive. We miss out when people are excluded. The You Belong campaign focuses on the idea that diversity is something to be honored and celebrated. In this campaign, Peer Leaders help solicit stories of times when someone felt they belonged and highlight what groups and individuals bring to the community.

Goals:

- To recognize that diversity is to be celebrated within a community.
- To help individuals champion stories of diversity and belonging.
- To aid individuals in recognizing what they uniquely bring to their community.
- To foster a sense of belonging for students who don't feel like they belong.



Peer Leader Meeting

Fun: Play Cups or Rock Paper Scissors - When players find new partners, they have to introduce themselves and name someone who makes them feel that they belong. Conversely, they could also choose to share what makes them feel they belong. For example, "When someone takes the time to ask me about the traditions in my family's culture, they help me feel interesting and celebrated."

Share: Break into smaller groups, and ask students and staff to share what they feel like they bring to the community. Answers should range widely and could include things like, "I bring my love of tennis", "I bring my gender fluidity", "I am a strong black woman", "I am an artist with a view all my own", "I bring my passion for politics", "I bring my faith", etc.



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WE NEED EVERYONE'S VOICE
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PEOPLE ARE EXCLUDED."

Plan: Now that you have taken time to share about the importance of belonging and diversity, it's time to strategize together about ways your team could help the rest of your community internalize stories about the Strength that comes with belonging.

School Wide Campaign

Now that you have planned your campaign, how will you bring a celebration of diversity to the rest of your school and community?

Mediums:

Presentations

- Go to a local elementary school; read and discuss diversity and belonging with one of the following books:
1. **3 Balls of Wool** by Henriqueta Cristina
 2. **Fur, Feather, Fin, All of Us are Kin** by Diane Lang and Stephanie Laberis
 3. **The Word Collector** by Peter J. Reynolds

- Present on the importance of belonging within classrooms. Have students write down what they bring to their community on puzzle pieces. Assemble the puzzle for a visual reminder that we need everyone to create a vibrant community.

Classroom Integration

- Prompt Psychology or Biology classes to study the emotional, physical, and psychological effects of connection and belonging.
- Assign Art, Photography, or Creative Writing students to create pieces based on the theme of belonging, or that speak to what they bring to their community.
- Have English or Literature classes read books that speak to the power of belonging.
- Allow Economics, Sociology, or Criminology classes to study the power of positive social ties as protective factors.



“HOST A STORY NIGHT
WHERE PARTICIPANTS
CAN SHARE SHORT STORIES
OF TIMES THEY EXPERIENCED
BELONGING.”

Art, Mural, and Wall Displays

- Make a poll, and ask students to share about the different groups that make your school or group diverse. Using these words, create a large “Wordle” to display.
- Flowers can be a great symbol of diversity. Create a wall display where individuals write on different shapes and colors of flowers what they bring to the community, to form a wildflower bouquet.

All School Activities

- Band with other community organizations to highlight cultural events where Peer Leaders explain what their group or sub-culture means to them.
- Host a story night where participants can share short stories of times they experienced belonging.

Video and Photography

- Host a photography exhibit where participants take photos with the theme of “Belonging” and put it on display. Scan these photos and make them a running screensaver on school computers.
- Create a booth where groups and individuals can enter and answer the questions, “What do you bring to our community? Who or what makes you feel like you belong?” Share this video in an assembly or during morning TV announcements.

Social Media

- Challenge participants to take photos with people who represent “belonging” to them with short captions. Ask them to tag two other friends to do the same.
- Make your campaign spread further by using hashtags like #YouBelong, #WeBelong, #WhatIBring, or make it fit your context with your town or mascot, such as #BearsBelong.

Audio: Music and Announcements

- Have students and staff submit a song that they consider to represent them and play them during passing periods. Make an effort to include various genres.
- Highlight diversity in every sense by interviewing Peer Leaders in the newspaper about what they offer the people around them.

Modifications (if needed)

- Note that not every student will feel a deep sense of belonging to a group of people. Some students will name objects, places, or animals that help them to feel that they belong. This may be a way that an

individual feels they add to their community. This campaign shouldn't feel like a school spirit campaign.

Ways to partner with other entities

- Have club tables set up and share information for individuals who want to get more connected.
- Have Student Government host opportunities for individuals to volunteer their time and talents within the school or community.

Evaluation (mini)

- Focus on successes with Peer Leaders.
- Celebrate and share stories of connection.
- Encourage staff and faculty to share what the event meant for them.
- Check your numbers:
 - How many Peer Leaders participated?
 - What percentage of students participated?
- Consider what lessons were learned
 - How could you increase or diversify participation? Did you keep it fun? Did you highlight student stories of Strength? Was there diversity in your responses?
 - Make note of what to keep in mind for next year.

Celebrate!

- Note what you accomplished as Adult Advisors.
- Share stories of connection with each other.
- Express gratitude for the belonging that the Peer Leader team offers each other!

