Elements of Belonging

1.) TO BE INVITED - being asked to join a group or activity; being invited to an accessible and inclusive event happening in shared spaces.

* Action: "Would you like to come play cards with us this afternoon?"
* Encouragement: Help individuals suggest an activity they want to do with others.
* Support: Pair them with a peer to extend a personal invite to join a group.

2.) TO BE WELCOMED - person is warmly greeted, acknowledged upon arrival and made to feel comfortable.

* Action: "Hi! We're so glad you're here! Let me introduce you to the group.”
* Encouragement: Teach peers to greet the individual by name and make them feel noticed.
* Support: Ensure someone greets them at the door when they enter a room or event.

3.) TO BE SUPPORTED - a person has the necessary tools & assistance to participate meaningfully; accommodations or modifications are made.

* Action: "Let me help you adjust your chair so you're comfortable."; "Do you need any help with this activity, or would you like me to show you how to get started?"
* Encouragement: Foster a culture where peers naturally offer assistance, like explaining game rules.
* Support: Ensure physical or sensory supports are in place for full participation.

4.) TO BE KNOWN - having others understand and remember who you are—your likes, dislikes, and personality. Others recognize a person’s unique traits, strengths and interests.

* Action: "I know you love music—let’s check out that playlist you mentioned!"; "I know you’re great at drawing—why don’t you help us design the event poster?"
* Encouragement: Help peers get to know the person by asking them to share something they enjoy. Share something you’ve learned about a person in a group setting to help others connect with them.
* Support: Create opportunities for the person to express themselves, like talking about a favorite hobby.

5.) TO BE ACCEPTED - being embraced for who you are, without judgment or pressure to change.

* Action: "We all have different ways of doing things, and that's what makes this group fun."
* Encouragement: Encourage peers to celebrate the individual’s strengths and unique qualities. Show genuine interest; "That’s a really cool idea!”
* Support: Reinforce positive behavior from peers when they embrace differences.

6.) TO BE INVOLVED - actively participating in a group, activity, or conversation.

* Action: "Would you like to help lead this activity with me today?"; "What do you think about this?"
* Encouragement: Encourage them to take on a role in the group, like managing supplies or helping with a task.
* Support: Help peers invite the individual to join in and provide the necessary support for involvement.

7.) TO BE NEEDED - contributing to the group in a way that others value, creating a sense of purpose. The individual has a role that is necessary for the group or activity to function.

* Action: "Can you help us set up the chairs? We could really use your help."
* Encouragement: Empower the individual by assigning roles where they can make meaningful contributions. Validate their contribution "This event couldn’t have happened without your help!”
* Support: Set them up for success by explaining tasks clearly and giving them manageable responsibilities.

8.) TO BE BEFRIENDED - forming genuine relationships based on mutual/reciprocal respect, care, and understanding.

* Action: Help initiate friendships by facilitating small group activities where personal connections can form, or organizing one-to-one tasks.
* Encouragement: "You both love animals—maybe you could share stories about your pets with each other."; "I think you and Sarah have a lot in common. Why don’t you two chat during the break?"
* Support: Teach peers to include the individual in conversations or activities beyond just program time.

Elements of Belonging Worksheet

# STEP ONE: Follow Directions For Breaking into Groups/Selecting A Scenario

A) INTEREST CLASSES: Yoga, Art or Fitness

B) BEING A REGULAR: Sunday Sessions or Open Mic Coffee House

C) CHURCH GROUPS: Fair Committee, Greeter/Usher or Serving at Coffee Time

STEP TWO: Discuss As A Group. You are a direct support professional, family member, or advocate for the individual described in your scenario. Come up with examples of things you could say or do to support the community group and/or the individual to create a sense of “belonging.” Develop one or two examples for each element of belonging.

Hint: Think ***Action/Encouragement/Support*** & use the flip side for inspiration.

STEP THREE: **Write your examples** below and be prepared to share

1.) TO BE INVITED - being asked to join a group or activity; in an accessible and inclusive shared spaces.

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2.) TO BE WELCOMED - person is warmly greeted, acknowledged upon arrival and made to feel comfortable.

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3.) TO BE SUPPORTED - has the necessary tools and assistance to participate meaningfully; accommodations made.

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4.) TO BE KNOWN - having others understand & remember your likes, dislikes, unique traits, strengths and interests.

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5.) TO BE ACCEPTED - being embraced for who you are, without judgment or pressure to change.

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6.) TO BE INVOLVED - actively participating in a group, activity, or conversation.

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7.) TO BE NEEDED - contributing valuably to the group, creating a sense of purpose & having a defined valued role.

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8.) TO BE BEFRIENDED - forming genuine relationships based on mutual and reciprocal respect, and understanding.

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