

Building Belonging at School

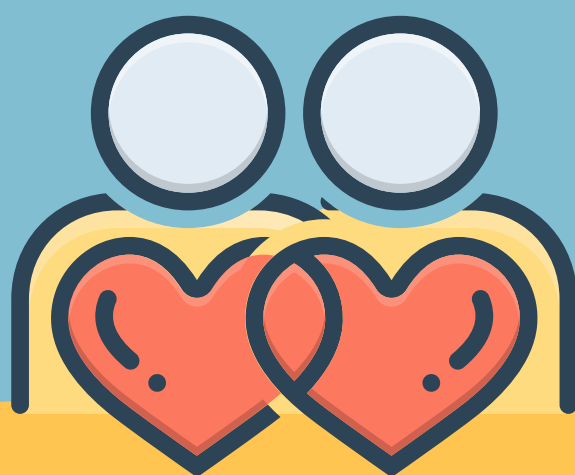


BELONGING IS A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN NEED!

Every individual searches for a sense of connection with the people and places in their lives. This is especially true at school. Students spend a huge portion of their time during their childhood and adolescence at school, which makes it essential that the learning environment cultivates a sense of belonging and well-being for students.

What is It?

- Acceptance
- Respect
- Inclusion
- Support



Students who feel a sense of belonging at School:

- Feel more energized
- Are more likely to spend time on task and return to activities more quickly
- Are more likely to choose to be engaged in the school environment
- Develop the skills to build a sense of Positive identity
- Are more likely to experience positive mental and physical health

Building Belonging in the Classroom



Start with safety!

Kids who don't feel like they belong, often don't experience emotional, mental and/ or physical safety at school.

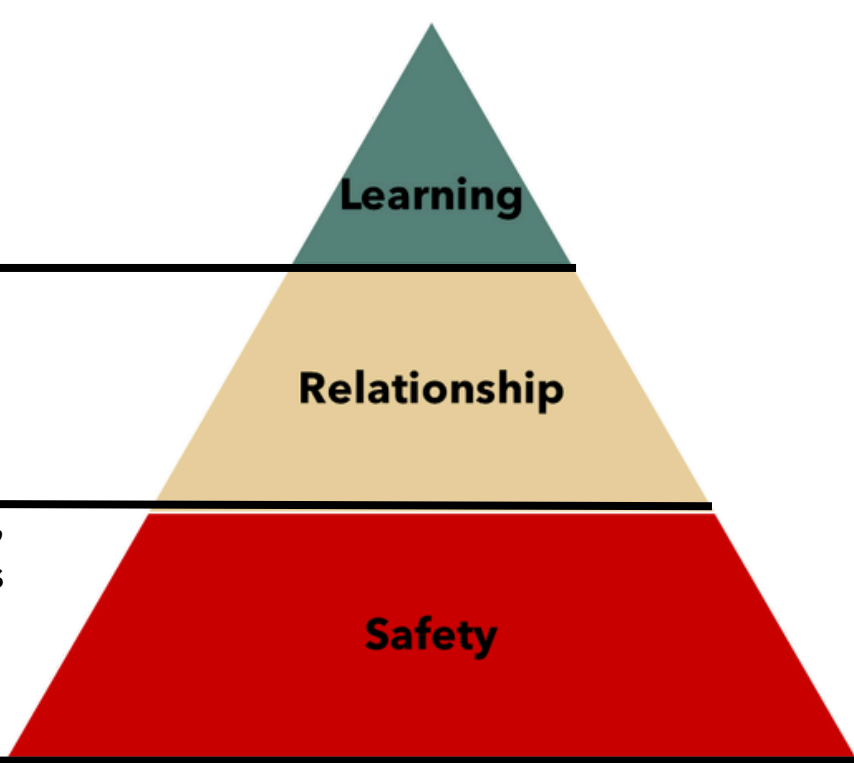
Resources for Compassionate Learning Communities recommends the following:

Cultural Safety, connecting to experience, Reinforcing school culture ad beliefs

Using the language of together, collaboration, Promoting common ground

In order for learning to take place, students need to have safety needs met first!

“In this place, with these people I feel safe”



It doesn't take extensive planning and lessons to foster belonging at school. Deleon Gray, Associate Professor of Educational Psychology suggests the following considerations for the classroom :



Culture:

Creating continuity between home and school lives of students. Especially important for historically underrepresented students, who benefit from seeing their ancestral heritage and community reflected in the classroom

Passion:

What do students care about most? Finding out is key! This gives more meaning and life to the activities that students do and makes those activities more valuable for students to engage in,

Relationship:

To understand what matters to students, teachers need to build interpersonal relationships with youth of all backgrounds through authentic compliments, authentic praise and authentic connections

High Standards, Rigorous Support:

Having high standards combined with rigorous support, adopting a communal orientation and letting students know they have the safety to be wrong, because mistakes mean that they are being ambitious.

Resources for Belonging:

[Teacher Plus: Creating that Sense of Belonging](#)

[Fostering Belonging, Transforming Schools: The Impact of Restorative Practices](#)

[CASEL Guide to SEL: Belonging and Emotional Safety.](#)

[Fostering Belonging with Classroom Norms](#)

More mental health and well-being resources can be found on our Mental Wellness Hub

