

Belonging

BELONGING

Social connection is important for everyone. There are many benefits to feeling connected to the people around us. It helps us to feel safe, needed, valued and that we are part of a community. Staying connected with family and friends is a little more challenging now because of Covid-19 but maintaining our relationships with others has never been more important.

This activity will give you an opportunity to think about who is in your network and what you can do to maintain the relationships you already have and how you can build new relationships with others. Don't worry if your sense of belonging or connection to others has changed since Covid-19. Others have most likely had the same experience because of the changes that are happening and there are things you can do to get that feeling of connectedness back.

Use the strategies in the Belonging Tip Sheet to help you come up with ideas about how you can develop your relationships and increase your sense of belonging to others. Write your ideas down in the *Belonging Plan*. Try and be as creative as possible with your ideas for connecting with others and strengthening your existing relationships since it might be a little more difficult now than it was before the Covid-19 pandemic.



Belonging Worksheet

Knowing who is in our network can be helpful in reminding us all the people who we can count on to have fun with, learn with, go to for help or just spend time with. Remember, even a weak or distant connection can still be a part of your network so take a moment to think about all your connections, not just the ones that you interact with every day.

What belonging means to me:

Groups that I belong to include:

(e.g. family, sports team, dance troupe, band, church group, clubs, and friendship groups).

Individuals I feel most comfortable with include:

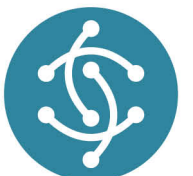
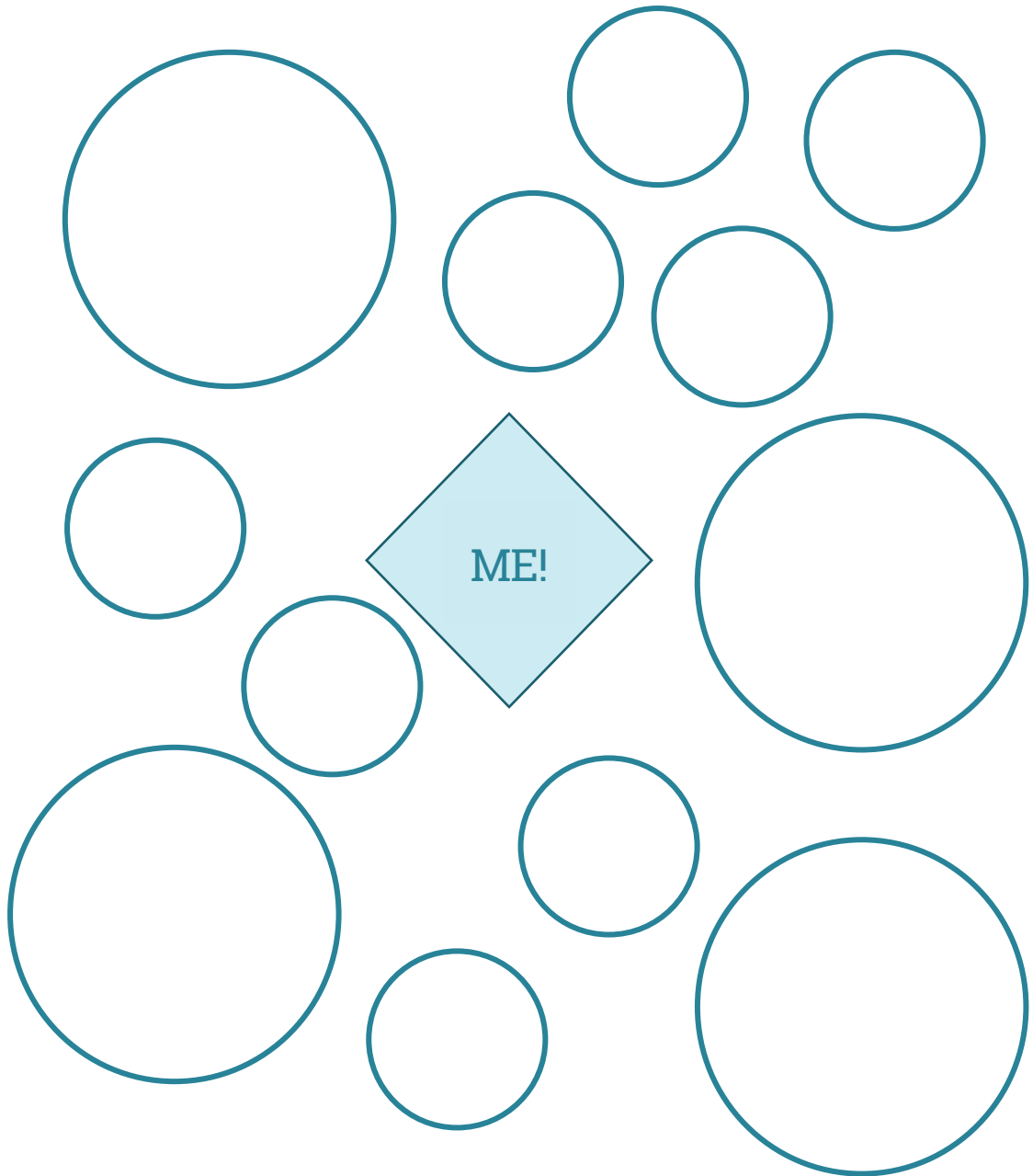
Use the next page to depict your network. In the smaller bubbles, put the individuals you identified. Put the groups in the large ones. Draw more if you need them!

Next, decide which bubbles are your strongest connections. Show these by drawing thick lines connecting you to them.

How has belonging and your connection to others changed since Covid-19?



My Network



Belonging Tip Sheet

Belonging: Feeling connected to the world around you and accepted by important people in your life.

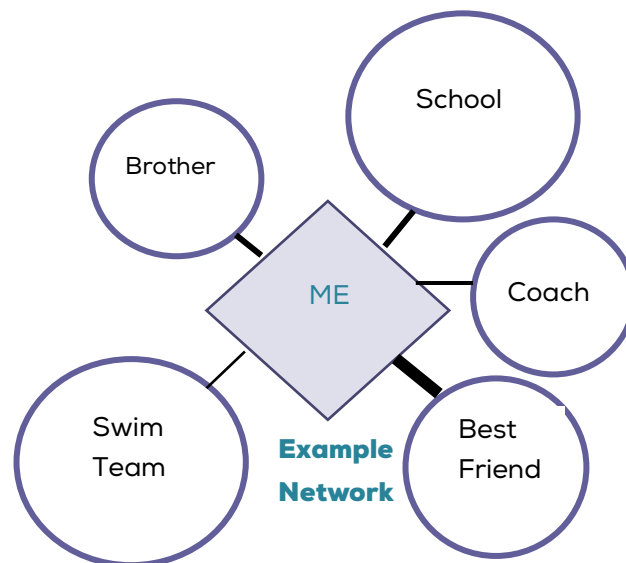
Belonging is important because:

- ✓ Helps us to feel safe
- ✓ Helps us to feel valued and needed
- ✓ Helps us to feel like others share our interests and values
- ✓ Helps us to feel like we are part of a team or community

Strategies to increase belonging during Covid-19

Belonging needs effort! Strengthen existing connections or make new ones by trying the following:

- Call a friend or loved one for a chat (you may also like to set up regular video chats. Seeing faces can help increase connection)
- Spend time connecting with the people you live with
- Join in on conversations around you
- Join a team sport or activity that you enjoy
- Spend time with people close to you (e.g., family and old friends – these relationships need work too!)
- Volunteer your time to help others
- Cooperate and work with others – this means being respectful towards others when solving problems or conflicts

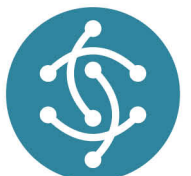


Belonging Plan

Are there any groups in your diagram that you would like to increase your sense of belonging to? If so, briefly note down what you could do to increase your sense of belonging to this group. Think about how you can specifically increase belonging during Covid-19. Be as creative as possible.

Note: Use the strategies in the Tip Sheet to help you as well as your own ideas.

WHO	WHEN	IDEAS / ACTIVITIES TO CONNECT WITH OTHERS



If you are frequently experiencing strong, unpleasant or unhelpful emotions, it can be a good idea to seek additional support to help change this. If you think this is a problem for you, consider discussing it with a member of your household or get in touch with the following services.

If you feel you need further help please contact the school counsellor, Jenelle Hooson, through your homeroom teacher. Or you can ask your parents to contact your homeroom teacher or the assistant principal, Mr Pilgrim, to talk about meeting with Jenelle.

Here are some support options specifically for young people aged between 5 and 25:

- [Need to Talk?](#) Free call or text 1737 any time to speak to a trained counsellor, for any reason
- [Youthline](#): 0800 376 633 (24/7), or free text 234 (8am-12am), or email talk@youthline.co.nz
- [What's Up](#): online chat (7pm-10pm) or 0800 WHATSUP / 0800 9428 787 children's helpline (12pm-11pm weekdays, 3pm-11pm weekends)
- [Kidsline](#) (ages 5-18): 0800 543 754 (24/7 but between 4pm and 9pm calls are answered by a Kidsline Buddy, specially-trained year 12 and 13 students)

Further resources to help parents support their children during this time:

<https://www.allright.org.nz/>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/>

