

## EDUCATORS' GUIDE

# Design for Belonging

## How Belonging Feels

There are many definitions of belonging and its insistent opposing force, othering. Belonging is being accepted and invited to participate; being part of something and having the opportunity to show up as yourself. More than that, it means being able to raise issues and confront harsh truths as a full member of a community. Othering, by contrast, is treating people from another group as essentially different from and generally inferior to the group you belong to. Once these terms enter your frame of reference, you'll find that belonging and othering show up everywhere.

People often speak casually about a “sense of belonging.” We call it a “sense” because we feel belonging and othering in our bodies. Your body knows the tingle of being truly seen and the shrinking devastation of being turned away. Indeed, our individual situations may vary greatly, but collectively we know personally what it feels like to belong and to be othered as well. Understanding our feelings – not shying away from feelings and not ignoring signs of othering – gives us powerful fuel to promote greater belonging and reduce othering across a wide range of contexts.

This activity from *Design for Belonging* by Susie Wise is a great starting point for anyone who wants to think about belonging. Feelings of belonging are powerful. Belonging is a real factor in having the confidence to believe in oneself and in one's ability to do hard things. It has been adapted for use in K12 and higher education classrooms.

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# Activity: Emotional Journey Map

## LEARNING GOAL

To help learners understand their feelings of belonging and othering. To help them develop self-awareness, confidence, and the agency to spark change.

## WHERE TO USE THIS ACTIVITY

Classrooms | Virtual learning sessions (Zoom, etc.) | Workshops

## MATERIALS

Paper | Writing instrument

## FORMAT

Individual work, with opportunity for individual or paired reflection

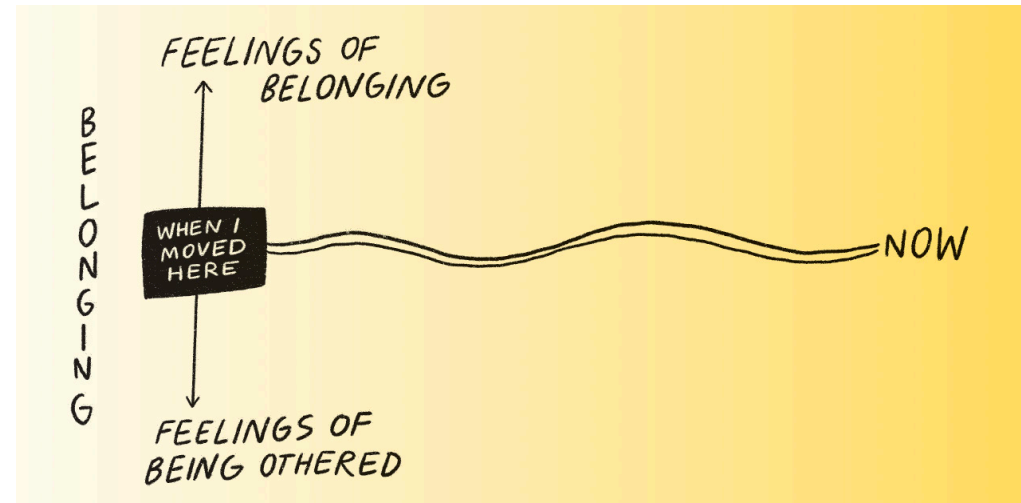
## INSTRUCTIONS

An emotional journey map can be used to chart your feelings, both positive and negative, over time. It is used in design to help identify when and where different emotions occur. In this example, the y-axis represents the emotional ups and downs—in this case, highs and lows—of belonging, and the x-axis represents time. Use this exercise to track the emotional journey of where you live, a job you have had, or an organization of which you are a part.

**1. Think about a place where you have felt belonging or othering.** Perhaps the place is the town, neighborhood, or campus where you currently live, and the time frame runs from when you originally moved there until today. Once you have a specific time and place in mind, draw a line to represent the emotional ups and downs you have experienced and make some notes about what was happening for you emotionally at those different junctures. Get as detailed as possible, exploring what circumstances created the different emotional states.

**2. After you've made your map, reflect on what might have caused or enabled a high or low belonging experience.** For the highs, was something created that supported those feelings? For the lows, did you experience explicit othering or exclusion or something more subtle?

3. Once you've reflected on your own experiences, use this same tool to talk to someone else about their belonging journey since joining your team or moving to your city or your country.



**WE'D LOVE YOUR FEEDBACK!**



This educators' guide is a **prototype (hooray!)**. We're hoping to understand what types of materials are useful to educators and learners in K12 and higher education classrooms. If you used this, please share your feedback with us in this four-question survey.

**WANT TO READ MORE?**

**Check out *Design for Belonging!*** The book offers even more ways to nurture an inquisitive mind and the ability to act with intention.

Learn about all of our d.school books at [dschool.stanford.edu/books](https://dschool.stanford.edu/books).

To request a complimentary examination copy to review for use in your classroom, contact Penguin Random House Education at [k12education@penguinrandomhouse.com](mailto:k12education@penguinrandomhouse.com) for PreK–12 Education or [highereducation@penguinrandomhouse.com](mailto:highereducation@penguinrandomhouse.com) for Higher Education.