

# Social Wellbeing **Workbook**



## **Enhancing Social Belongingness in University**

# Defining Social Wellbeing

Social wellbeing involves creating and cultivating positive relationships with those around you.

To have fulfilling relationships and interactions, it is crucial to establish boundaries, communicate in a constructive manner, and offer understanding and respect to others.

In a relationship that supports your sense of social wellbeing, you should be able to be yourself without fear of judgement while enabling the other individual in the relationship to do the same.





The social wellbeing workbook should be used independently or with the assistance of a mental health professional.

This resource is designed to provide information about social wellness in an interactive and self-driven manner. In addition, the workbook aims to support students' sense of belonging in university and help them to overcome feelings of homesickness.

If you are in need of additional support, contact your healthcare provider or utilize the resources listed on page 12.

# Importance of Social Belonging

Social belonging is a subjective sense of feeling accepted or included within a specific social environment.

Experiencing social belonging and feeling connected to others is an important aspect of mental health and overall wellness.

## 5 Pillars of Belonging

Individuals must feel...

1 Welcomed

2 Known

3 Included

4 Supported

5 Connected



# Assessing Current Sense of Belongingness

How important is social wellbeing to you?

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**

Not important at all

Very important

How would you rate your social belonging at Carleton University?

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**

Very poor

Excellent

To what extent do you feel that you are able to increase your sense of social belonging?

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**

Unable

Very able

# Ways to Improve Social Belonging in University

There are many steps that can be taken to improve social wellbeing and belonging in university.

For example, you could...

- Join a club or participate in extracurriculars
- Spend time with people who live with/near you
- Initiate conversations with classmates or people you see on campus
- Attend social events
- Volunteer with organizations on campus

Which of these options would you be most interested in taking to increase your social belonging?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

# Things to Keep in Mind



1

It takes time to increase social wellbeing and belonging so be patient and continue to take steps towards change despite a lack of immediate benefit.

2

It may be helpful to reach out to a mental health professional, friend, or someone that you trust for support.

3

The transition to university can be incredibly difficult. If you are struggling, just remember that you are doing the best you can and it is okay to have bad days!

# What is Homesickness?

Homesickness is characterized by anxiety or stress related symptoms that occur in response to being away from familiar people or environments for an extended period of time.



Homesickness is quite common for university students.

In the context of university, homesickness can be experienced by everyone regardless of whether they are an international student or not.

This can be overcome by increasing social belonging and getting out of your comfort zone to introduce new patterns into your routine that are unique to your new city.

# Being Comfortable With Alone Time

Although it is important to spend time with others to increase social belonging, it is equally as important to be comfortable spending time alone.

It is inevitable that you will have periods of time spent in isolation, but that does not mean you have to feel lonely during these times!

A healthy balance of alone time has been shown to reduce stress, allow time for self care, increase creativity and overall wellness, and allow you to learn more about yourself.

Each of these benefits will also play a role in improving the quality of your relationships, further increasing social wellbeing.



# Building on your Experience



Where did you grow up?

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Was there a big transition from where you grew up to Ottawa? Explain.

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What are some of the things that you enjoy about living in Ottawa?

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What is something that you look forward to doing in Ottawa soon?

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What has been the highlight of your experience in Ottawa thus far?

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Reflect on your answers to these questions to get a better understanding of what you want to get out of your time in Ottawa.

Use this to improve your alone time and time with friends and thus, increase your overall wellness and social belonging!

# Moving Forward



Now that you have completed this workbook, continue to reflect on social wellbeing and belonging and what that looks like for you!

Some things to try...

- Journaling
- Creating goals that align with social wellbeing
- Becoming more involved on campus or in the community
- Making plans to do something that you enjoy with the people around you
- Begin a new hobby in your alone time

# Additional Resources

If you are need of mental health support, contact any of the following resources that are available and free to Carleton University students.

- Empower me (24/7 helpline)
  - 1-833-628-5589
- Good2Talk (24/7 helpline)
  - 1-866-925-5454
- Carleton Counselling (in-person and virtual appointments)
  - 613-520-6674
- Residence counselling
  - 613-520-2600 ext. 8061 (if living in residence)
- Wellness services navigator (provides a personalized list of mental health resources)
  - <https://wellness.carleton.ca/navigator/>



