

# Healing Power of Belonging

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## Connecting

What is a curiosity you  
have about our topic  
this morning?

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## Sense of Belonging



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## Why Connectedness?

"A strong sense of connectedness is one of the best ways to prevent developmental trauma, and one of the remedies that should be brought into play for **repair** of early trauma." (Felitti et al. 1998)

"It is perhaps uncommon to consider connectedness as the key to trauma prevention, but when high stress threatens our existence, our sense of belonging and connectedness helps us respond in healthier ways, including reaching out for support. Through our sense of connectedness, we grow and we heal, which is exactly what helps develop resilience." – Terrell and Kain

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## Belonging from the Beginning

- Physiology before Psychology
- Co-regulation from safe caregivers

*"...The infant or small child relies on its caregivers to provide active soothing and comfort behaviorally, providing a sense of safety and belonging within the relational bond."* – Kain and Terrell

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## Science of Belonging

- Predictors of early death:
  - Air Pollution, Obesity, Excessive drinking, LONELINESS
- Social rejection, perceived or real loneliness sends the amygdala into overdrive
- Our stress response is heightened impacting our immune system as we prepare to fight threat
- Our brain responds to social pain the same way it experiences physical pain

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## The impact of toxic stress

- Traumatic experiences come with isolation and disconnection. This experience is terrifying and we are left with a **body memory** that lives in the central nervous system.
  - The central nervous system allows us to experience the here and now. When the body memory is triggered, the experience from the past takes over the here and now and we experience the past as alive in the present: a flashback.
- Boredom a trauma trigger.
  - Boredom is a central nervous system with nothing to do - therefore the trauma memory will begin to play.
  - **The person experiencing this will have no idea this is a memory from the past- they will experience body sensations as if something in their here and now has caused them.**
- **Being alone for extended periods of time, boredom, lack of meaning or purpose and social isolation are all trauma triggers.**

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## Messages of Belonging

- Accepted
- Wanted
- Invited
- Included

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## Growing Belonging

- Rituals and Routines
- Gifts Scavenger Hunt
- Pathfinding

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## Gifts Scavenger Hunt

- What is your most significant gift? *A gift is something you are born with.*
- What is your most significant skill? *A skill is something you have learned.*
- What is your most significant passion? *A passion is something you care enough about that you have acted on it.*  
What is something you know well enough that you could teach it to someone else?
- What is something you would like to learn?

Source: ABCD John McKnight

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### **Power of a Positive Introduction**

- We're not talking about HIPPA violations!
- Remember the strengths you know about this person?!
- Leaning in

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### **Brokering Relationships**

- We're not talking about dropping people off to strangers!
- Using our rolodex
- Mutually enhancing experiences

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## Putting it all Together

Capacities to Build On or Build-Up Gifts of hand, head, heart, identity	Potential Community Opportunities Places, associations, networks where the person's capacities would be welcome	Possible Roles How the person can act as a contributing citizen in this place, association, or network.

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## What possibility do you see emerging?

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*Trauma is real. Together we can heal.*



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## Much Gratitude

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## Google Me!

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- Citizen Advocacy- Tom Kohler, Waddie Welcome & The Beloved Community [cincibility.wordpress.com](http://cincibility.wordpress.com)
- Starfire Council
- The Neuroscience of Human Relationships- Louis Cozolino
- Nurturing Resilience: Helping Clients move forward from Developmental Trauma- Kathy Kain and Stephen Terrell
- The Neuroscience of Belonging
  - <http://www.brainblogger.com/2012/09/17/the-neuroscience-of-belonging/>

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