



## McGill Office of Religious and Spiritual Life (MORSL)

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### MM1: Relationships, Belonging and Community Workshop

#### Pathways for Community Participation and Belonging.

A Community is a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common. It describes a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals. As places where we find belonging, diverse communities we choose to take part in offer unique supportive pathways to help us through our lives. People choose communities that match their interests and resources and offer the possibility of meaning, enjoyment, and challenge. Supportive communities also defines roles and activities and offers opportunities for belonging, friendship, expression of identity and personal development. Each of the five broad types of communities identified below contains many more that could be explored.

- **Faith or Religious Communities:** People who consider their faith or religion to be very important may find themselves plugged into a community of faith and develop a sense of belonging there. Even in places where participation in organized religion has declined, today people increasingly are able to identify with groups that enable them to express their spirituality.
- **Sports Communities:** “Sport has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand” (Nelson Mandela). Sports have a way of bringing people together. They make young people feel more connected to the greater community. It gives common ground to help strangers connect, helps forge new friendships, and fosters greater inclusion.
- **Activism:** Youth and social activism are not just about agitating for change. Activism provides a social platform for initiating and building stronger connections to community through diverse activities.
- **Social Media:** Positively used, social media can be a powerful tool to connect with people from around the world. These connections are organized around common interests and hobbies. People who are active on social media are more likely to visit their friends in person and volunteer in community events, thus creating communities of belonging.
- **Arts Communities:** According to 2016 Canadian National report on Community and Belonging, 34% of Canadians who attended an arts or cultural performance in the previous year were more likely to do a favour for a neighbour. Participation in artistic activities and events increases our sense of belonging and our engagement in community.

Lastly, it is important to note that there is no perfect community. Each community faces challenges and setbacks. Geography and resources privilege some communities over others. Economic cycles follow prosperity with deprivation. Inequalities of power and money and the weight of history influence the distribution of opportunities, as do individual and family failings. A healthy community keeps struggling to find effective ways to increase opportunities for people and families who experience poverty of money, meaning or friends.



### II. Supplementary Resources on how to Build Relationships and Community

- *How to Have a Good Conversation:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6n3iNh4XLI> (12 min.) Crucial to building and enhancing our communities is how we speak to each other. Initiating good conversations is essential to establishing relationships and to showing the ‘other’ that they are accepted and that they belong. In this video Celeste Headlee, a famed talk show host, shares various ways to hold a good conversation. “Go out [and] talk to people, listen to people and be prepared to be amazed!”
- *Belonging:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgT-GQvwZ9k> (4min.) “Belonging” presents George, a young Syrian who struggled to find his identity as a child. After fleeing his country and going to Paris, through evoking his memories as a boy scout, he rediscovers his belonging to a community.
- *Where is home? Where do you belong?:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c0mVa7d08tg> (5min.) What does it mean to feel at home? Is your feeling based on culture, love, or location? In this talk, Vamba explores his ideas about what it means to truly belong. Vamba Sherif, born in Liberia, is a novelist, journalist, and film critic. He's lived in Kuwait and Syria before settling in the Netherlands.
- *The meaning of home: More than Bricks and Mortar?:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3WRcK9FY7fs> (16 min.) Dr. Craig Gurney asks: what is the true meaning of home? Is it really a place of safety and security? Craig is a Lecturer at a University.
- Listing of clubs and communities on and around campus: <https://www.mcgill.ca/morsl/connect/clubs>

**To find additional Meaning Making  
Workshop resources, visit our website:**





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### MM1: Relationships, belonging and community” Workshop

#### About this workshop:

The goal of this workshop is to expose participants to various strategies for establishing relationships and building community. Specifically, the workshop aims to promote the value of building personal relationships with people who are different from you; embracing multi-faceted personal identity.

Blurb: Forming connections and a sense of community with our classmates, colleagues is important in building our identity and cultivating meaning. But how do we nurture these relationships, especially in a world of constant movement of people? Join this workshop to develop personal strategies to actively engage and participate in the community, as well as nurture positive relationships to foster your wellbeing.

#### Learning outcomes

By the end of this workshop, participants should be able to;

- Discuss the idea of **personal identity** including its key aspects and meaning.
- Evaluate what it means to belong to a **community** when we have a complex identity (e.g. **transnational**), outside the bounds of geography.
- Identify various strategies to actively engage and participate in communities they belong to.
- Develop strategies for nurturing positive relationships to foster personal wellbeing.

#### Activity IV: Personal Chart of Belonging

#### Instructions:

On this worksheet, list all the communities you belong to. Various categories of communities are provided.



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## Personal Chart of Belonging

	<b>Groups you're most engaged in</b>	<b>List all your communities*</b>	<b>Rank</b>
<b>1</b>	School/academic community		
<b>2</b>	Personal interests/hobbies/sports		
<b>3</b>	Religion and culture		
<b>4</b>	Social justice/social movements		
<b>5</b>	Personal interests/hobbies/sports		
<b>6</b>	Friendships/social (including social media)		
<b>7</b>	Other communities (gender, race, sexuality, student groups, parents/caregivers, etc.)		



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### Reflection questions:

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1. From the list you created, identify the ones you feel the most engaged in/connected to (feel at home).
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2. What underlying values or characteristics connect the members of these groups?
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