

FINDING YOUR ALLIES

One of our primary needs as human beings is a sense of belongingness and connection.

There are many ways belongingness contributes to our lives. Feeling like we belong to something beyond ourselves enables:

- Self-acceptance
- Provides a sense of identity
- Feelings of safety and security
- Feelings of self-worth
- Purpose and meaning



We often associate a sense of belongingness with other people being present. But guess what? You can find support and belonging beyond relationships.

Let us begin by exploring some sources of a sense of belonging and support that go beyond personal relationships and some ways we can connect with them :

Nature, Places, Objects:

Many individuals find solace and connection in nature. Spending time outdoors (e.g. visiting your local park, trekking, going to the beach) can provide a deep sense of connection and well-being.

Similarly, some of us have certain places (real or imaginary) or objects that provide a sense of safety and comfort for us. These may be linked to pleasant memories and can serve as anchors for us throughout our lives.

Try it out:

- Take a walk or spend time in your nearest natural environment
- Write or draw about how nature makes you feel and how it contributes to your sense of belongingness.



Spirituality and faith:

Many people derive a sense of belongingness from their religious faith or spirituality. Similarly, mindfulness practices such as meditation can help foster a connection with a higher self.

Try it out:

- Practise your faith in any way you choose: visiting places of worship, praying, meditating, singing and chanting (feel free to find your own options)
- Write about your faith, what it means to you and how it supports you on a daily basis.



Goals and Values:

A sense of belonging can also be found in having personal goals and milestones and working towards them. This gives us purpose and meaning, providing a sense of belongingness to our own journey through life. Additionally, aligning with a particular philosophy, ideology or set of values can create a sense of belonging with like-minded individuals.

Try it out:

- *Identify and work out a plan for a specific goal that is important to you. These goals may relate to your career, your passions or even your contribution to society. Think about why this goal is important to you and what you can do every day to work towards it.*
- *Reflect on your personal achievements and on how close you are to reaching the goals you had set for yourself.*



Hobbies and Passions:

Engaging in activities that one is passionate about, whether it's art, sports, or other hobbies, can provide a sense of belonging. It can also create a sense of belonging to a larger community of enthusiasts (yes Potterheads, we see you!).

Try it Out:

- Make a list of activities you feel passionate about, and identify how you can engage with these on a daily basis. Here are some examples to get you started:
 - Listening to your favourite genre of music
 - Playing a sport that you love
 - Painting, drawing...art-ing it out!
 - _____
 - _____
- Reflect on how engaging in these activities contribute to your sense of belonging



Creativity:

Doing something creative or even viewing creative work of others, can bring a sense of connectedness to our lives. For example making or appreciating works of art can be a way to feel like a part of something bigger. Creativity can help us experience 'flow' - where we are completely immersed in an activity. When we are in flow we are completely focused on an activity without distractions and without a focus on performance or outcome.

Try it out:

- Create a piece of art (e.g. drawing, poetry, painting, sculpture) and reflect on how this contributes to your sense of belonging



Communities and cultures :

Connecting with our cultural traditions and heritage can also provide a sense of belonging. This could include participating in communities based on shared interests and identities. Now, with the advent of technology, many now find solace and support in online communities through social media posts, online groups and forums.

Try it out:

- Join an online community related to your interests - Instagram, twitter, Quora, Reddit, Tumblr are some spaces to explore



From the time of conception, we are hard-wired to connect with our environments in a way that makes us feel valued, understood and supported. However, not everyone has access to a support system or community. In such a case, we need to get a little creative and build connections and a sense of belonging in alternative ways. We hope this worksheet has helped you do that and broadened your understanding of what it means to belong.

If you, or someone you know is looking to seek professional help, reach out to us at **The Mood Space** <https://www.themoodspace.com/getstarted> and our Care Team will get back to you within 24 hours.

Not looking for professional help just yet? We understand, keep browsing through our Care Space tools and explore our self-help handouts and worksheets to navigate mental health-related challenges in a better manner.