

## 20 Connection Tips to Create Belonging

Belonging occurs when people feel safe and comfortable, and accepted for who they are. We can all play a role, no matter how big or small, in creating a community where everyone feels that they belong.

The challenge is to reach out to people that you perhaps don't know well, or at all, and include them in your connection actions and activities. If this is new for you, or them, start small, and think about meaningful actions that you can take more frequently, rather than one large event.

As your connections grow, and belonging starts to take shape, you may all feel more inclined to share in bigger events. The trick though, is to remember that we are all *'Neighbours Every Day'!*

1. **Start small.** By making small connections throughout the year, you will build up confidence and grow your network. Check out our [Connection Conversation Cards](#) for some helpful and fun conversation ideas.
2. **Leave a connection card** for your neighbour(s) with a friendly message. Share your contact details and offer a chat, or whatever you are comfortable with. They may not respond immediately, however this simple act can be a great start to building a sense of belonging.
3. **Volunteer** at a local community organisation AND if you can, invite a neighbour or friend or family member to volunteer with you. Shared experiences and activities can be a good way to get to know others in a relaxed environment - and to feel part of something bigger. [Here are a few ideas to get you started.](#)
4. **'Cuppa by the kerb'** - Bring your own cuppa and snack - AND meet in your street! Invite people you know and people you don't OR ask those you do know to bring someone new. Check out [Neighbours Every Day free resources](#) (connection cards, invitations and more!) to help you connect with your neighbours. Make it a regular event and watch the connections grow!
5. **Get out there.** Hang out on your verandah or in your front garden if you have one, or perhaps spend a bit more time at your letter box. Try going for short walks. Spend time in communal areas, shared or mixed-use spaces where you're more likely to catch up with people. This will create more opportunities to connect with your neighbours. Be that person. Smile, wave, say hello. You will probably make someone's day - and you'll feel good too.
6. **Do some 'Random Acts of Kindness.'** For example, *'Pay it forward'* at a café and buy the next person's coffee. Thoughtful actions like this can help people feel seen and valued.

7. **Make a call.** Check your contacts or address book and call someone you haven't spoken with for some time. Even though people are busy, it's rare that a random call is not appreciated.
8. **Ask for and offer help.** Being thoughtful brings people together and connects us all. We all appreciate support with jobs that can be thankless undertakings alone yet are quite fun with others. Helping with tasks can provide easy conversation starters, help you connect, and ultimately create belonging.
9. **Host connections.** A simple morning tea, afternoon tea or shared plate / potluck event. In the warmer weather you can do this in your front yard, or communal area, or driveway / car park.
10. **Places to connect:** Neighbourhood houses; community gardens; parks (including dog parks); churches and temples; clubs and groups - sporting, yoga, dance, singing, craft, walking, running, riding, cycling, knitting, sewing, Men's Sheds, mothers' groups, are just some of things you can try to connect with others, share common interests and create belonging. Invite a friend, family member or neighbour to attend a class with you! Or go alone, you might make a new friend.
11. **Wellness walks** in your local park or neighbourhood. Ask one person or more to join you. Each person you invite can bring along someone they don't know well, or someone new. This can be a small (or big!) thing and perhaps even become a regular event. Walking and talking is an easy way to get out and about with others. Dogs may be welcome, as may children in prams or on bikes. Good for your body, head and heart. Consider setting a regular meeting place and time each week.
12. **Workshops.** You can host or attend these. Examples: bike maintenance; household repairs; gardening; tree planting; bush care activities and more. Learning with others can be fun and another way to connect with others over shared experiences.
13. **Goods exchanges.** You can host or seek these out e.g., books, unwanted kitchen or other home appliances, other artifacts. Searching for hidden treasures can be fun and a different way to connect with others who enjoy the hunt! Anything left over you can donate to charity.
14. **Host or attend fun events.** Some examples are karaoke; trivia; picnic games; front yard outdoor movie nights; markets; garage sales; progressive dinners; potlucks; local community events. Shared fun is a great way to create belonging.

15. **Community project.** Try a community project for your street. For example, a [Street Library](#); or a [Conversation Bench](#); or an art display; or bird feeders; or a cleanup; or even a colouring in competition. Working together on a shared interest project that creates tangible results allows you to track your progress, improving your neighbourhood and broadening your social circle. These projects grow community connection and create belonging.
16. **Be thoughtful.** Drop off care packages e.g., chocolates or fruit, home baked goods or meals; '*appreciation notes*', your contact details, or perhaps a letter; flowers, spare eggs, veggies, plant cuttings, seedlings; activities for kids e.g., [colouring in pages](#), games or puzzles. Surprise gifts (however small) are usually welcomed and appreciated - and help people feel like they belong.
17. **Be a good listener.** People always appreciate good listeners and as such feel seen and valued. Active listening involves paying attention, reflecting on what they have said, asking questions if you need to clarify something and summarizing back to them that you have heard. Active listening can elevate a conversation to a moment of true connection.
18. **Stay connected, start a meaningful conversation.** Be a good neighbour and a great listener. [Ask R U OK?](#) Staying connected is more important than ever, a conversation could change a life. Learn what to say after R U OK? Download the FREE resources for tips and ideas to help you share the message in your community at [ruok.org.au](http://ruok.org.au)
19. **Read [10 Ways to achieve belonging](#)** and check out [Neighbours Every Day free resources](#) for year round use AND share these resources others.
20. **[Subscribe to Verandah enews by Neighbours Every Day](#).** Share with family, friends, neighbours, workmates, or use the good news information in your own communications. Post a link to Verandah by Neighbours Every Day on your social media or email the newsletter to your networks – and help Create Belonging.

We recommend that people make themselves aware of the [public health authorities' advice](#) and only do those connection actions which are safe to do.