



## ▶▶ How Culture & Belonging Impact Wellbeing

*"Having a sense of belonging is important in life and is considered a protective factor that can help in navigating life's challenges. When a person feels like they belong, they feel included, accepted, and supported." [youthinprogress.org](https://youthinprogress.org)*

Culture influences beliefs and values. Parents/caregivers and other family members teach children about their culture (i.e. behaviors, stereotypes, and positive attitudes). Learning about one's culture can help children's self-esteem which plays a role in "belonging". When children don't experience feelings of "belonging" they can experience feelings of isolation, sadness, and identity struggles.

It is human nature to want to belong and be accepted. Helping children feel included, and that they belong, helps them build a strong sense of self-worth and identity, which are essential to their wellbeing. Relationships are crucial to a sense of belonging; therefore, encouraging safe and open discussion about culture(s) and differences can promote acceptance and the importance of community. By supporting children's cultural identity(ies) we plant seeds for a positive relationship with their self and the diverse cultural backgrounds of their peers and school community.

### **Ways to support children with difficult experiences:**

- Actively listen. Hold back on offering a solution. There is strength in being present.
- Normalize feelings. Share your own feelings and experiences as a way to connect.
- Offer a safe place for them to express their feelings.
- Reassure them that they can't control people's behaviors.

### **Ways to promote feelings of belonging with children include:**

- Spending time discussing different cultural identities and backgrounds, including your own.
- Modeling respectful and accepting language.
- Helping children find places and spaces where they feel comfortable and celebrated for who they are.
- Support children's interests and encourage exploration.

### **Resources**

#### **LA County Department of Mental Health**

**DMH Helpline: 1-800-854-7771**

Access to a variety of mental health resources, including programs and online tools.

#### **Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: Dial 9-8-8**

Connection to a counselor who will provide free/confidential emotional support and crisis counseling to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress, and resources.

#### **LA vs Hate: [Lavshate.org](https://lavshate.org)**

A community-centered system designed to support residents and communities targeted for hate acts in LA County

### **Helpful Online Reads**

#### **Three Strategies to Help Children Feel They Belong**

#### **Creating a Sense of Belonging for Children**

#### **Helping Your Child Embrace Their Cultural Identity**