



Inclusion starts with me.

While there is no 'one size fits all' approach to inclusion there are some things we can think about to help make our neighbourhoods stronger sources of welcome and belonging.



Say hello

Behind every door there is a story. While we don't have to be friends with our neighbours to be neighbourly, saying hello, acknowledging people, and just knowing their name can go a long way to encouraging them to feel a sense of safety, welcome, and belonging. Research has shown this to be true!

Tip: So what are you waiting for? Say hello.

Find the common value

People who live with a disability, mental illness, or other enhanced vulnerability sometimes miss out on being seen for their gifts, talents, interests, and individual identity. Take the time to learn more about the person. You may find that you have a lot in common and will greatly enjoy the chance to bond over a shared interest in a meaningful way.

Tip: Ask about a person's interests and passions.



'Think' access

Can people get into your space? Is the information you share in plain English? Beyond removing any physical barriers think about how you might be able to make small accommodations to help more people to be involved. By encouraging a diversity of ways that people can contribute you are providing more opportunities for a diversity of skills, perspectives, and individuals to be included.

Tip: Ask what might be making access difficult and how you might address them.

The art of asking

Don't wait for people to come along. It can take a lot of courage to step out and try something new, and sometimes we need to have the support of a trusted friend, neighbour or family member to actively encourage or invite us along.

Tip: Could you invite someone, connect them to someone else, accompany them, or give them a lift?



Think roles, not activities

If you want to encourage people to feel a deeper sense of belonging, think about a role - big or small - that they can fill that will contribute to them being missed when not there. Think about the roles you hold in your family and community, and how important they are to your sense of value and purpose.

Tip: Get to know the person and find a role that could be a good fit for them.

Social connections

Human beings have a fundamental need to connect. Community groups are often formed with a goal or activity in mind, but it's the social connections that keep people coming back again and again. Whatever the aim of your group, don't lose sight of the important role it plays in creating social connections - the building blocks to belonging.

Tip: Think about how you can support people to build and maintain important social connections.



This is an invitation for you to think about what opportunities for inclusion might exist in your own neighbourhood and how you can encourage others to feel a sense of belonging in them.

