

Increasing Youth Belonging

Students Spoke, We Listened



What/who makes you feel connected to your school?

"My friends and teachers who I have good bonds with"

"Understanding teachers"

"Sports"

"Music and theatre"

"My positive friends and peers make me feel like I belong."

"Clubs"

"School-wide activities that bring people together"

"School counselor"

"My friends!"

"My teachers make me feel connected to school!"

"Being in leadership roles"

continued >>

Wisconsin high school youth shared these thoughts at the Mental Wellness Student Leadership Summit 2025 hosted by the Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health on April 11, 2025 in Madison.



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What is the biggest obstacle to belonging at your school?

- ▲ "Mental health stigma."
- ▲ "Fear of judgment and being unloved."
- ▲ "Negative peers and comments."
- ▲ "Disrespectful and rude peers."
- ▲ "Contradictory subcultures."
- ▲ "Feeling unsupported."
- ▲ "Not fitting in."
- ▲ "People don't care."
- ▲ "Self-hatred."
- ▲ "People are scared of judgment from others."
- ▲ "People don't make others feel welcome."
- ▲ "Bullying for being unapologetically yourself."



Students' suggestions to improving culture and belonging at school:

- ✓ "We all need to be kind."
- ✓ "More uplifting activities school-wide."
- ✓ "Less cliquy."
- ✓ "We can all succeed by building each other up."
- ✓ "More diversity."
- ✓ "More people get involved in clubs, sports, assemblies, etc."
- ✓ "More inclusive."
- ✓ "Less judgment and more inviting others."

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