The Social-Belonging Intervention: A Guide For Use and Customization

Gregory M. Walton
Stanford University

Mary C. Murphy
Indiana University

Christine Logel
Renison University
College, University of
Waterloo

David S. Yeager
University of Texas,
Austin

and the

The College Transition Collaborative

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To learn more about the College Transition Collaborative, see:
http://collegetransitioncollaborative.org/

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***************************BETA DRAFT SHARING AND FEEDBACK***********************
Our goal is to make this guide as helpful as possible. To accomplish this, we would like your feedback on the "beta" draft. Although we value all forms of feedback, we're especially interested in learning:

- *Would you be able to take this guide and use it effectively to advance your own work (e.g., in using, customizing, or learning from the social-belonging intervention)? Why or why not?*
- *What parts are especially helpful and effective?*
- *What parts are confusing or inadequate?*

If you would be willing to provide us feedback, we'd be happy to send you the beta draft. If so, just email me (gwalton@stanford.edu). Thank you in advance. In the final version, we will acknowledge you and all those who contributed to the guide.

Sincerely yours,

Greg Walton and the College Transition Collaborative
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I. Who Should Read This Document

This document is designed for **researchers** and **academic administrators** interested in (1) using, (2) customizing, or (3) learning from the social-belonging intervention.[1]

This may involve future research, for instance to learn more about how the social-belonging intervention works and contexts in which it is more or less effective as well as efforts to develop new, related interventions. And it may involve efforts to apply the intervention or send effective messages to students about belonging in other contexts so as to improve student outcomes.

We:
1. Discuss the theoretical background of the belonging intervention.
2. Discuss a variety of important design considerations in constructing messages about belonging. These considerations are relevant both to the construction of social-belonging intervention exercises that have been the focus of past research (reviewed here) and to other school communications (e.g., welcome videos and addresses, etc.)
3. Share complete past intervention materials, which may be used as a base for future research and for the use in new contexts, and include annotations relevant to important design considerations.
4. Share best practices for *how* to customize intervention materials for new contexts.

Reflecting the focus of past research, we emphasize belonging in the transition to college but the guiding principles are relevant to belonging in other contexts and to messages about growth and belonging more broadly. We also address other contexts, especially the transition to middle school, where appropriate.

Because the social-belonging intervention is delivered to real students during an often-challenging transition in their lives, we encourage anyone who seeks to implement the intervention to read this guide carefully and to think through any potential risk of harm to students, even if unlikely.

This document is **not** intended for use in a context without careful consideration of whether the social-belonging intervention may be relevant and helpful in that context. Please see Section II.4 (page 20-21) for more information on when the social-belonging intervention is more and less likely to be effective.

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[1] Walton & Cohen, 2007, 2011

We also encourage all non-research audiences interested in implementing the intervention to contact CTC (ctc@collegetransitioncollaborative.org) for more information and possibilities for collaboration, particularly:
- Administrators seeking ready-to-implement materials for immediate use at your school or organization
- Organizations or individuals seeking to adapt the social-belonging intervention for broad dissemination platforms, e.g. as part of a suite of commercial services offered to schools or as a non-commercial online tool.

CTC and the Project for Education Research that Scales (PERTS) are currently developing partnerships and tools to enable practitioners to implement social-psychological interventions to improve student outcomes. Please visit collegetransitioncollaborative.org and perts.net for more information.

For additional information on this guide and/or how to design interventions, contact: ctc@collegetransitioncollaborative.org

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