The Belonging Project

2023-2024 Results

Land Acknowledgement

Queen's University is situated on traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Territory. To acknowledge this traditional territory is to recognize its longer history, one predating the establishment of the earliest European colonies. It is also to acknowledge this territory's significance for the Indigenous peoples who lived, and continue to live, upon it – people whose practices and spiritualities were tied to the land and continue to develop in relationship to the territory and its other inhabitants today.

The Kingston Indigenous community continues to reflect the area's Anishnaabek and Haudenosaunee roots. There is also a significant Métis community and there are First Peoples from other Nations across Turtle Island present here today.

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What is "Belonging"?

Having positive social relationships with others

Being a valued member of group or organisation

Being able to express your true self

Belonging
"the subjective feeling of deep connection with social groups, physical places, and individual and collective experiences"
Allen et al. (2021)

Belonging in the Faculty of Health Sciences

Participants in the 2021 DAT-EDI Survey were asked if they had ever felt unwelcome or uncomfortable in FHS. The numbers are the amount of people that correspond with the option given:
ability-47, appearance-71, ethnocultural identity-42, family status-71, gender identity-21, indigenous identity-10, language-26, religion/faith/creed-35, racial identity-61, sex-82, sexual orientation-27, socioeconomic status-58, another-50, no-257, prefer not to answer-16.
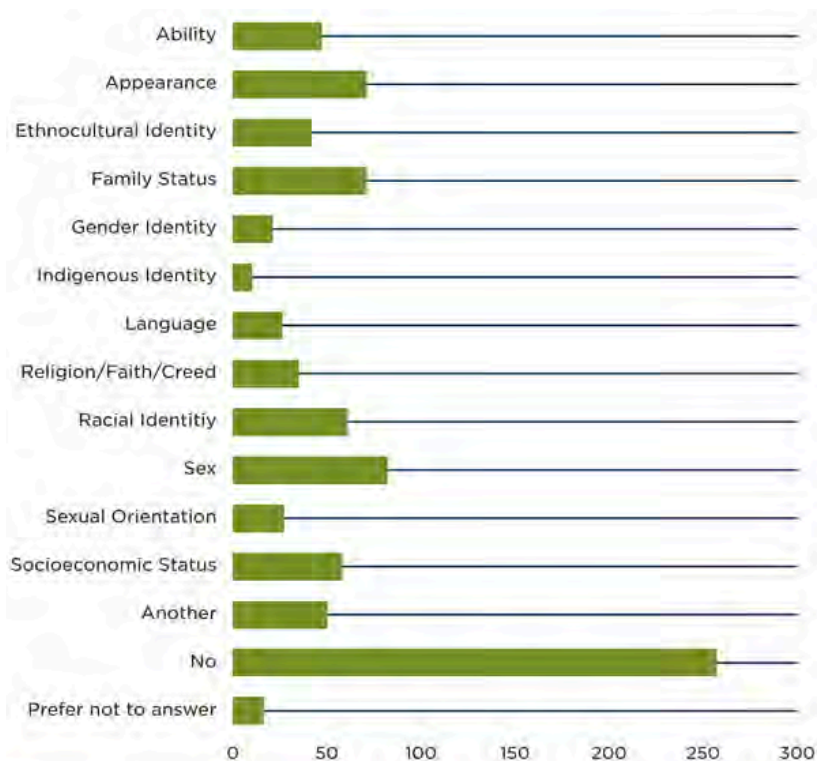
According to the 2021 DAT- EDI Survey, **52% of participants** reported they had felt unwelcome or uncomfortable in health professions education. These results reflect ongoing challenges in creating inclusive and supportive environments within the field, highlighting the need for continued efforts to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion

What is the Belonging Project?

What *is the aim of the project?*

The aim of this project is to collect stories where individuals have felt like they have or have not belonged and understand the role of social identities and community resources in fostering belonging. By examining these personal narratives, the research seeks to uncover the underlying factors that contribute to a sense of inclusion or exclusion. This involves exploring how aspects such as race, gender, socioeconomic status, and cultural background intersect with community support systems, institutions, and social networks to shape experiences of belonging. Ultimately, the findings will inform strategies for creating more inclusive and supportive environments where everyone feels valued and connected.

Click here or Scan the QR code to access the survey!

Who *can participate?*

- ✓ Queen's Health Sciences students, staff, and faculty
- ✓ Community members who have accessed a health service in Kingston

How Were The Data Collected?

Data are collected through ways of survey and is distributed through ways of electronic communication and posters around the Kingston community. The figure on the right illustrates a survey question to gather participant's story of belonging

Please tell us a story about a time then you felt like you belonged or did not belong in one of the following spaces...

(1) Queen's University Faculty of Health Sciences as a student, staff, or faculty member OR

(2) Accessing health care services in Kingston, Ontario as a community member

What do The Belonging Projects Results Reveal?

Space in Which Participant Story of Belonging or Not Belonging Took Place
- 84.9% took place at Queen's University Faculty of Health Sciences as a learner, staff, or faculty.
- 9.3% took place accessing healthcare services in Kingston, Ontario as a community member
- 5.8% took place at another place "other"

n= 86
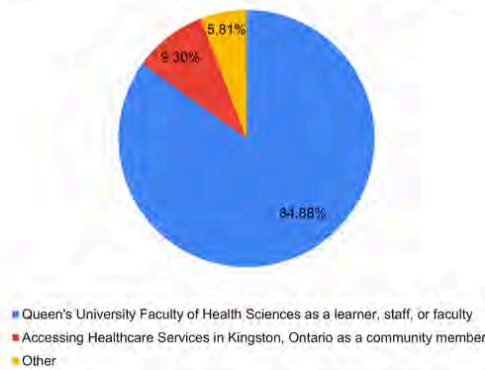
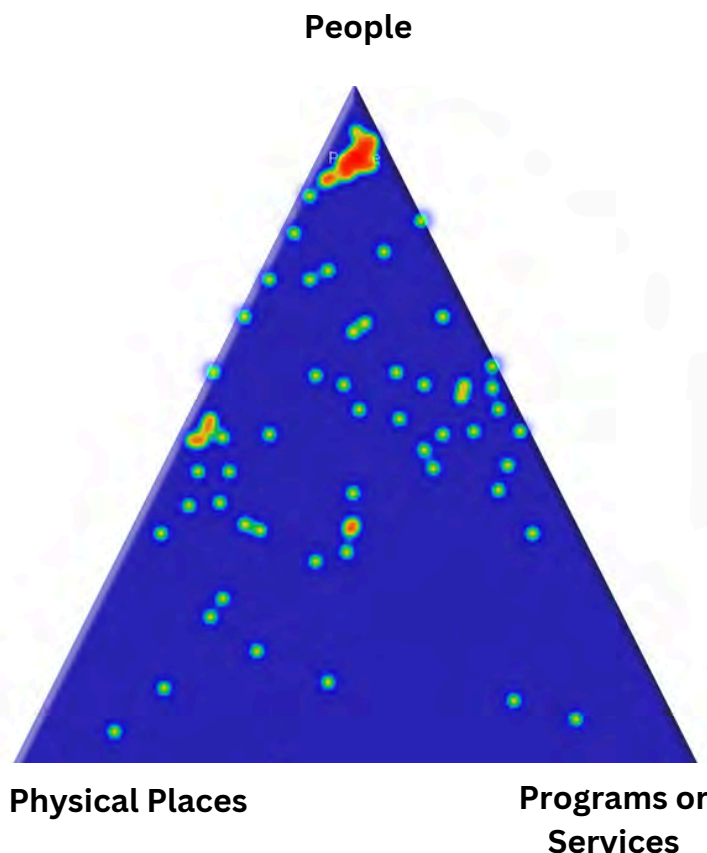## Participant Story of Belonging or Not Belonging
35.3% of stories were positive, 10.6% were neutral, 29.4% were negative, and 24.7% were both positive and negative.

There were diverse stories captured about participant's stories of belonging. Many shared positive, negative, neutral, or both positive and negative stories.

n= 85

People are Central to Belonging

People

Physical Places

Programs or Services

Participants (n=86) were asked to selected which of the following options best impacts their sense of belonging:
1. Programs of Services
2. Physical Spaces
3. People

The results clearly indicated that people are central to the sense of belonging. Most participants emphasized the importance of relationships and interactions with others in shaping their feelings of inclusion and connection within the community. Although programs, services, and physical spaces also contribute to the sense of belonging, they are ultimately secondary to the influence of personal connections and social interactions. This highlights the vital role of community and interpersonal relationships towards a strong sense of belonging.

What Are The Main Themes?

"What made me feel like I did not belong was directly associated with the comments made by those in leadership positions"

Diversity

Discrimination

Equity

Mental Health

Support

People

Inclusion

Disability

Health Care

Community

Accessibility

"I found an incredible group of friends through the BHSc program in first-year classes. They are still my best friends on campus and some of my housemates now that I am in third year."

The main themes were extracted from participant responses, revealing a recurring emphasis on the perception of belonging. Participants frequently highlighted how individuals influence the sense of belonging within the Queen's and Kingston communities. Themes indicated by green boxes reflect generally positive participant responses, red boxes indicate themes with major negative responses, and blue boxes represent themes that were viewed both positively and negatively.

The second most prominent themes included inclusion, discrimination, community, and support. The theme of community focused on the sense of connection individuals feel within a group or environment. Negative experiences related to inclusion often involved access to accessibility and disability services. Experiences with discrimination were closely linked to issues of equity and diversity. Lastly, support was associated with mental health experiences.

Overall, these diverse themes reflect the various factors influencing the Kingston community's perception of belonging.

How Are We Going to Respond to This Information?

When asked if participants believe EDIIA should be a leading priority for the Faculty of Health Sciences # participants responded Strongly Disagree, # responded disagree, #neither agreed or disagreed, #agreed, #strongly agreed, # responded missing.
n=531
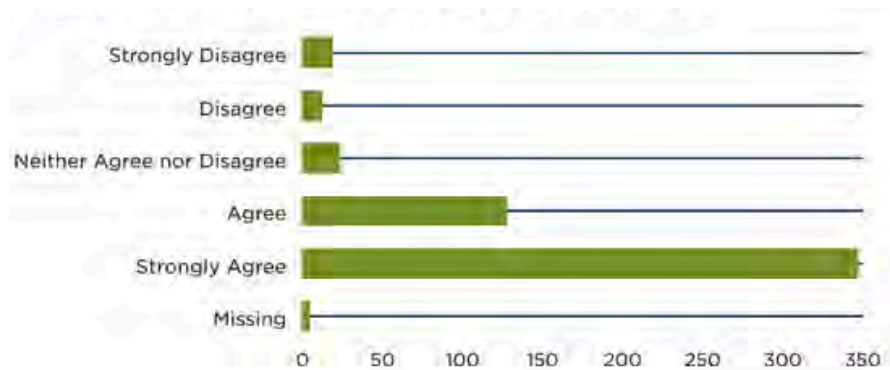
In the 2021 DAT-EDI Survey, many participants strongly believe that EDIIA should be a leading priortiy of Health Sciences.

Next Steps

- Enhance learners, staff, and faculty's sense of belonging at QHS through initiatives such as QHS Belonging Wellness Series for staff and faculty and programming at the Nest for learners (e.g. EDIIA lunch discussions), which create opportunities for building connections across QHS.
- Leverage the Nest's activities and physical space to help build connections.
- Ensure the annual QHS EDIIA General Assembly provides attendees opportunities to build connections with QHS learners, staff, and faculty to enhance a sense of belonging.
- Present the Belonging Project findings at the QHS EDIIA General Assembly.
- Build a bank of case studies using collected stories to support QHS curriculum and professional development activities.
- Encourage learners, staff, and faculty to participate in the QHS Belonging Project to collect additional stories.
- Gain a better understanding of the strength and weaknesses regarding the sense of belonging so it can information programming and policy development.

Works Cited

Allen, K.-A., Kern, M. L., Rozek, C. S., McInerney, D. M., & Slavich, G. M. (2021). Belonging: A review of Conceptual Issues, an integrative framework, and directions for future research. Australian Journal of Psychology, 73(1), 87–102. https://doi.org/10.1080/00049530.2021.1883409

Queen's Health Sciences, Q. H. S. (2023). A Course For Action Queen's Health Sciences: Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Indigeneity, and Accessibility Action Plan. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://healthsci.queensu.ca/source/edi/QHS%20EDIIA%20Action%20Plan%20Full%20Report.pdf