

Connect through strong relationships

A mentally healthy learning community is characterised by strong, supportive relationships.

In this module, you will learn about the importance of social connection on mental health outcomes. You will also learn about your role in fostering an environment that promotes connectedness and belonging and how to support the development of positive relationships.

Why should you support positive social interactions, connectedness and belonging?

Connectedness is the sense of caring for and being cared for by others. Children and young people feel connected when they feel they belong, are an active part of their learning community, are treated equally, and feel safe, accepted, respected and included.

Belonging is the sense that you're a valued member of a community. When children and young people feel like they belong, they're more likely to develop a strong sense of identity, a positive sense of self, and strong relationships.

Connectedness and belonging are associated with positive mental health – both as protective factors and in assisting in recovery from mental health issues. However, when a child or young person feels lonely, isolated, unsupported or like they don't fit in, a range of negative outcomes can occur.

This module explores how learning communities can build connectedness and belonging through:

- relationships
- active participation
- inclusion.

Positive and respectful relationships

Positive and respectful relationships occur when all parties feel respected, secure and supported in their interactions.

This module explores the key aspects of positive and respectful relationships and how you can nurture them in your learning community.

It also explores peer relationships for children and young people as protective and risk factors.



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Promoting connection in your learning community

As an educator, you play an important role in supporting children and young people to develop healthy and supportive relationships with peers, families and the community.

This module explores skills and strategies you can use to:

- promote connection within your early learning service or school
- foster a sense of belonging
- promote connections with families and the broader community.

By completing the Connect module, you will be able to:

- appreciate the influence positive social interactions, connectedness and belonging in learning communities have on mental health outcomes
- understand the central role social connectedness and belonging play in positive mental health outcomes for children and young people
- apply strategies to support the development of positive and respectful connections in your learning community
- feel empowered to create an environment where children and young people feel a sense of connectedness and belonging.