



# BOTH/AND

## The Inherent Tensions in Building Belonging

**Presented by: Tricia Brand**  
Vice President of Diversity, Equity,  
Inclusion & Belonging



**HOW DO WE  
DEFINE  
BELONGING?**



**A FEELING**

...of mattering to a group or a community

**AN EXPERIENCE**

...of safety, of indispensable value, and of meaningful contribution to something bigger than ourselves

**A CONNECTION**

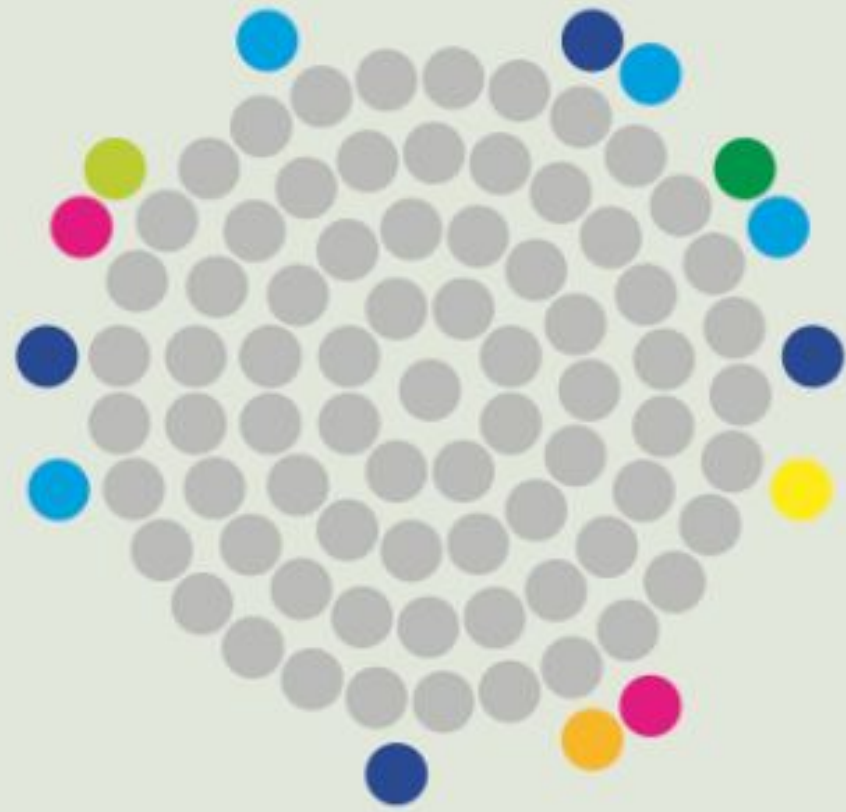
...that is dynamic, reciprocal, and happens in relationship



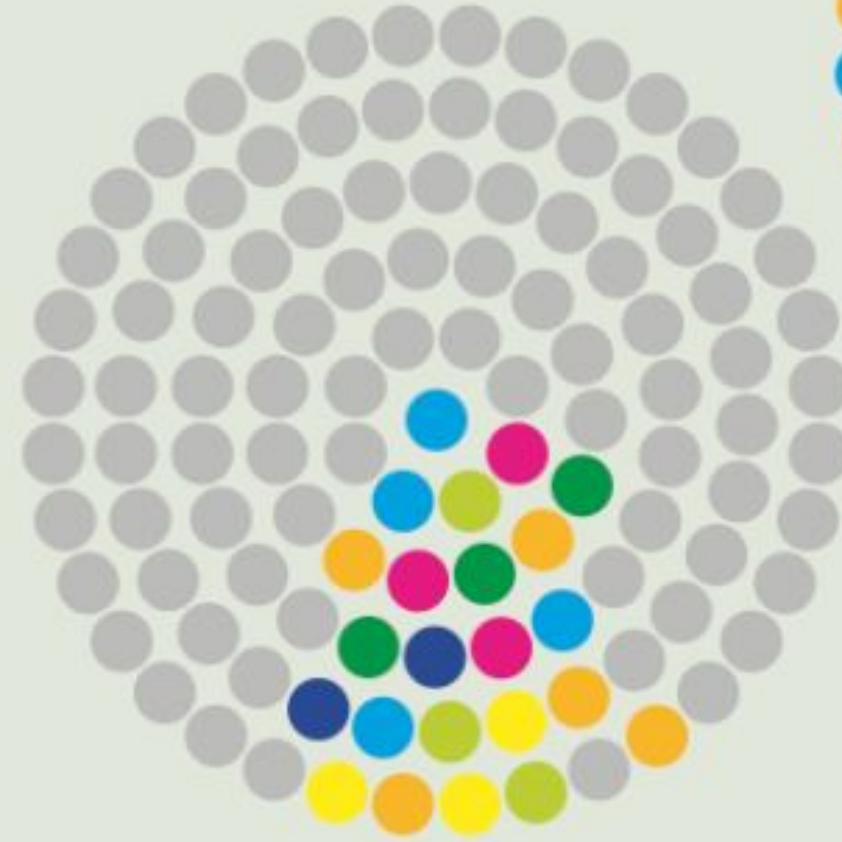




Othering  
& Belonging  
Institute



Exclusion



Inclusion



Belonging



# BELONGING STATEMENTS

- **Belonging without Othering is our aspiration**
- **Belonging is an evolving concept**
- Belonging is dynamic – it's both a noun and a verb
- Belonging is beyond access--it includes the right to co-create shared structures and norms
- **Belonging is not saming--it sees humanity across difference**
- **Belonging requires a sharing and shifting of power**
- Belonging invites us to develop our skills in deep listening and curiosity

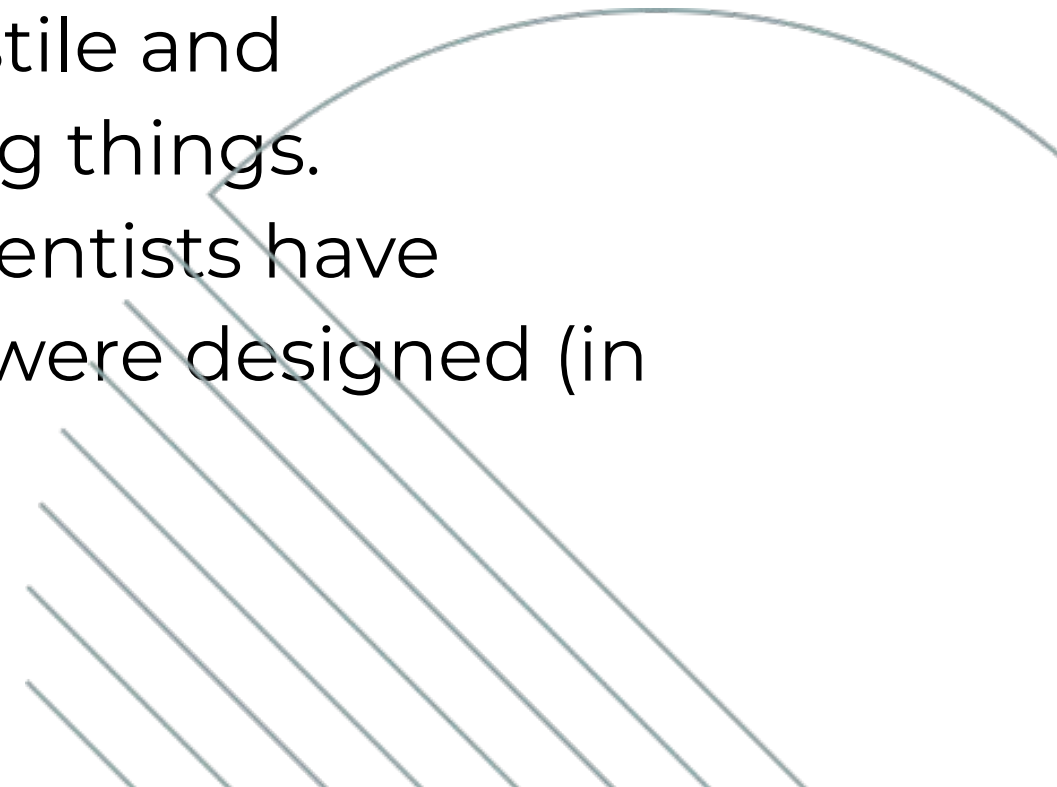


Created by **Ashley Gallegos, Sarah Crowell, and Evan Bissell**  
for **Belonging, A Weekly Practice**

# My Background as Educational Psychologist

## I consider the psychology of belonging

- Belonging is a new and relatively modern concept—that we should coexist as way to ensure we ALL exist. My well-being is inextricably linked to your well-being.
- Social adaptation and evolution is happening much faster in some parts of our brain than other parts of the brain.
- The world can be a very hostile and unforgiving place to all living things. Psychologists and Neuroscientists have researched how our brains were designed (in part, with that in mind)



# My Background as Educational Psychologist

## I consider the psychology of belonging

- Our emotional and feeling brain is very connected to the earlier part of our early brains as humans—which was constantly scanning for affirmations that we are safe and understood and scanning for potential threats—survive as a species.
- Our creative, reasoning, and analytical brain is adapts much faster than the feeling parts of the brain.
- The universe can be a very hostile and unforgiving place to all living things. Psychologists and Neuroscientists have some longstanding agreement that our brains were designed (in part, with that in mind)



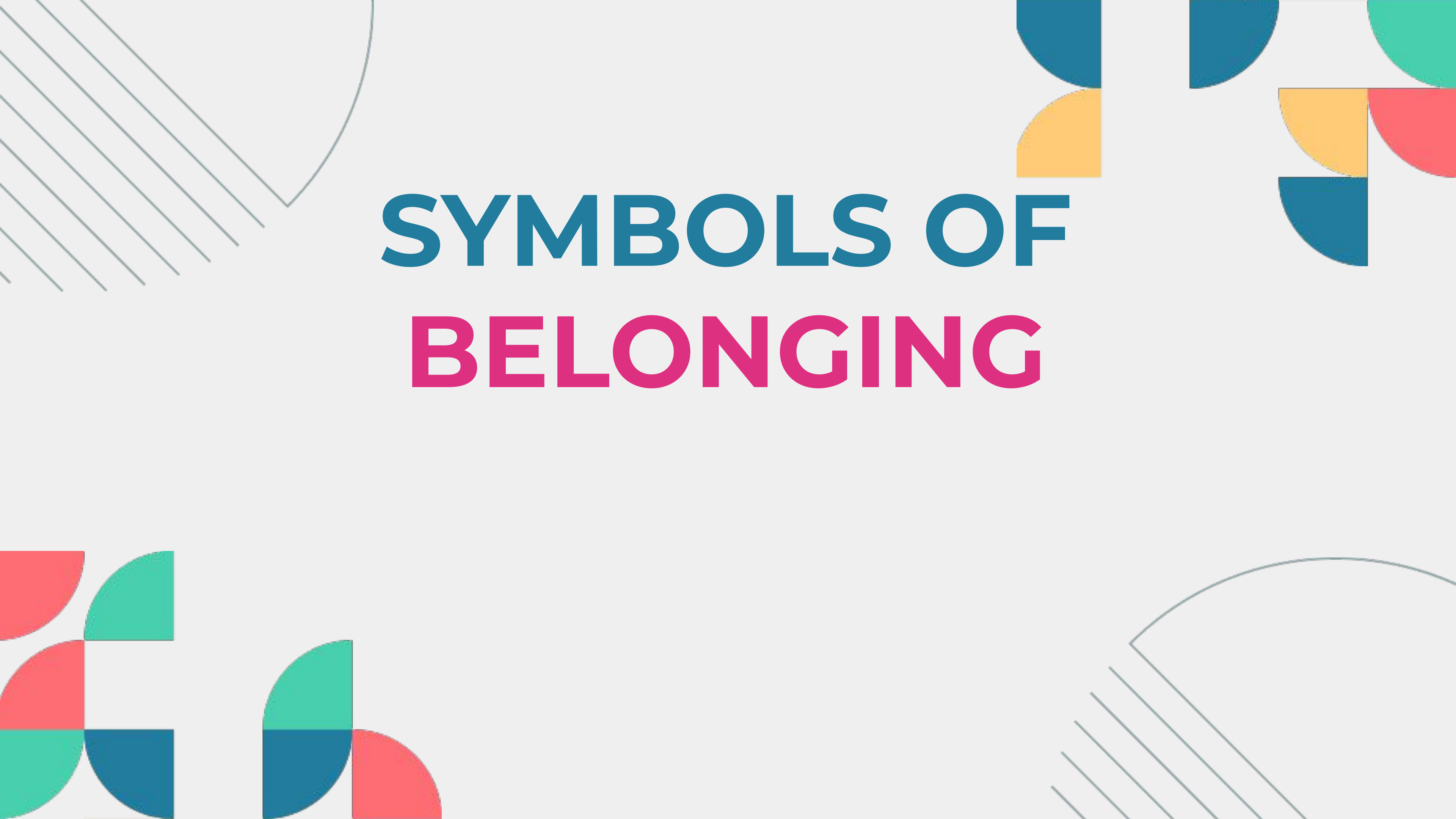
# My Background as Educational Psychologist

## I consider the psychology of belonging

- All these brain areas work together all the time. We don't always have full understanding of over what makes us feel afraid, makes us anxious, sad, joyful, amused...and the more negative feelings can be automatic and lasting.
- It's what our brain needs to not be entirely overwhelmed all the time, but these systems no longer serve us in the way it did for our ancestors.
- When it's integrated with systems of socialization that sort us, othering persists—living things are programmed and socialized to constantly sort:
  - good/bad
  - safety/danger
  - desirable/undesirable
- Fostering belonging and feeling a sense of belonging is a highly adaptive and pro social behavior—but it requires constant unlearning and rewriting social scripts to prevent othering and to signal acceptance, interest and even protection.







# SYMBOLS OF BELONGING



# MUCH GRATITUDE

[tricia.brand@cca.edu](mailto:tricia.brand@cca.edu)