

What can I do to help?



Social Cohesion Guide

Belonging together

We all have a role to play in building social cohesion. That includes helping people feel like they belong, are included, can be themselves and take part in society. Most of us do this without even realising. Talking to our neighbours, volunteering, or attending a community event are all things that create a sense of belonging and participation. Even in our workplaces, we are likely doing things that build social cohesion through simple acts like having a coffee or lunch with a new colleague.

We might be part of a family, a school, a workplace, sports team or church – or maybe we are learning a new language or sharing hobbies with others. Whatever community we are in, it feels good to belong, to feel included, to be yourself and be part of something.

We're all different but we want to get along, celebrate our diversity and respect others when we disagree. This is important because not everybody feels that they can be who they are or trusts that their voice will be heard.

We are an increasingly diverse country with many different communities and we need to find ways to listen to each other and hear each other. We want to commit to understanding our differences and strengths and to work on what unifies us and what brings us closer.

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What it looks like

In a society where people get along well, we: know each other, know our neighbours, feel included in our workplaces, and know where to go to get help when we need it.

We feel that we are able to talk to people we might not normally talk to, speak up when we hear people saying discriminatory things, and feel free to share who we are, where we are from, and how we do things.

In a crisis we leave no one behind; everyone is included.

Building more belonging

What you can do

So, what can we do in our communities to help more people belong, embrace diversity, feel connected, take part, trust others, feel respected?

Belonging together

- Identify and address discriminatory behaviour, policies and practices
 - have a courageous conversation with someone who is displaying discriminatory behaviour. Resources on the Human Rights Commission website can be helpful, such as Responding to Racism.
- Help people and organisations get better
 - seek out training in your organisation, local council or through an NGO on tackling discrimination and share your learnings with friends, family and work colleagues.
- Consider where legislative, regulatory, policy changes are needed to support anti-discrimination
 - provide a submission on policies and legislation during public consultation.

Embracing diversity, feeling respected

- Consider if, in your workplace or organisation, you can use, provide or apply for funding to design a programme or service to address discrimination.

Feeling connected

- Provide leadership and co-develop and promote inclusive social norms
 - you do not need to be a manager of a team to be a leader. You can display positive leadership by openly valuing the diverse contributions of your colleagues, friends and acquaintances. This can be through verbally acknowledging the person, giving them space and time to talk and listening to what they have to say.
- Continue to create opportunities for dialogue with diverse communities
 - reach out to new neighbours and make new acquaintances with individuals from different communities. You may meet them at local events or online workshops and hui.
- Co-design policy with diverse community input
 - if you are a policymaker, consider using resources on the DPMPC Policy Project website to develop a robust engagement plan.
- Promote understanding of other cultures and identities
 - set up a Neighbours Day event in your local area such as a shared lunch or afternoon tea.

