



"Belonging Salad"

The Four Pillars of Belonging



INCLUSION

Inclusion is a salad, not a smoothie.

DOES MEAN:

- Shared access
- Removing systemic barriers
- All voices valued and empowered

DOES NOT MEAN:

- Forced consensus or eliminating disagreement
- Lowering standards or competency
- Erasing differences



CONNECTION

Connection is the dressing that ties it together.

DOES MEAN:

- Trust built on mutual respect
- Shared purpose
- Active empathy
- Reciprocity

DOES NOT MEAN:

- Forced harmony or cliquishness
- Superficial friendliness
- Sacrificing individuality

belonging SALAD

AGENCY

Agency is getting to help make the salad.

DOES MEAN:

- Self-determination & choice
- Taking initiative
- Psychological safety
- "Voice and choice"

DOES NOT MEAN:

- Freedom without boundaries
- Abandonment or "figure it out yourself"
- Illusion of control or "pseudo-choices"



RECOGNITION

Recognition is appreciating the specific flavors.

DOES MEAN:

- Validation of worth and contribution
- Dignity-centered feedback
- Equitable visibility
- Specific & timely appreciation

DOES NOT MEAN:

- Empty praise or participation trophies
- Transactional rewards
- Favoritism or visibility bias (i.e., "loudest gets the mic")

