

Let's *talk.*

Three conversations
you should have about
belonging in 2021.

A roadmap for leaders.

Now, more than ever, the events of 2020 have made belonging critically important and yet difficult due to barriers. Social distancing, remote work, feelings of isolation as well as uncertainty and anxiety make it even more difficult to foster a sense of belonging.

2020 certainly has not been business as usual and building and maintaining relationships and fostering inclusion has become much more difficult. Layering on racial injustice and political polarization has people feeling more isolated and excluded than ever before.

Open communication around belonging and sharing ways to prevent those feelings of exclusion can keep your team and organization aligned to face challenges and find ways of working through this period of unrest.

BetterUp's research shows there is definitive value in building a sense of belonging in your organization. From productivity to retention, fostering belonging brings employees into the fold and engages them to connect and foster healthy relationships.

This guide provides a roadmap for leaders to start discussions with their teams and within an organization to bring belonging to the forefront.

Talk about the value of belonging in the organization.

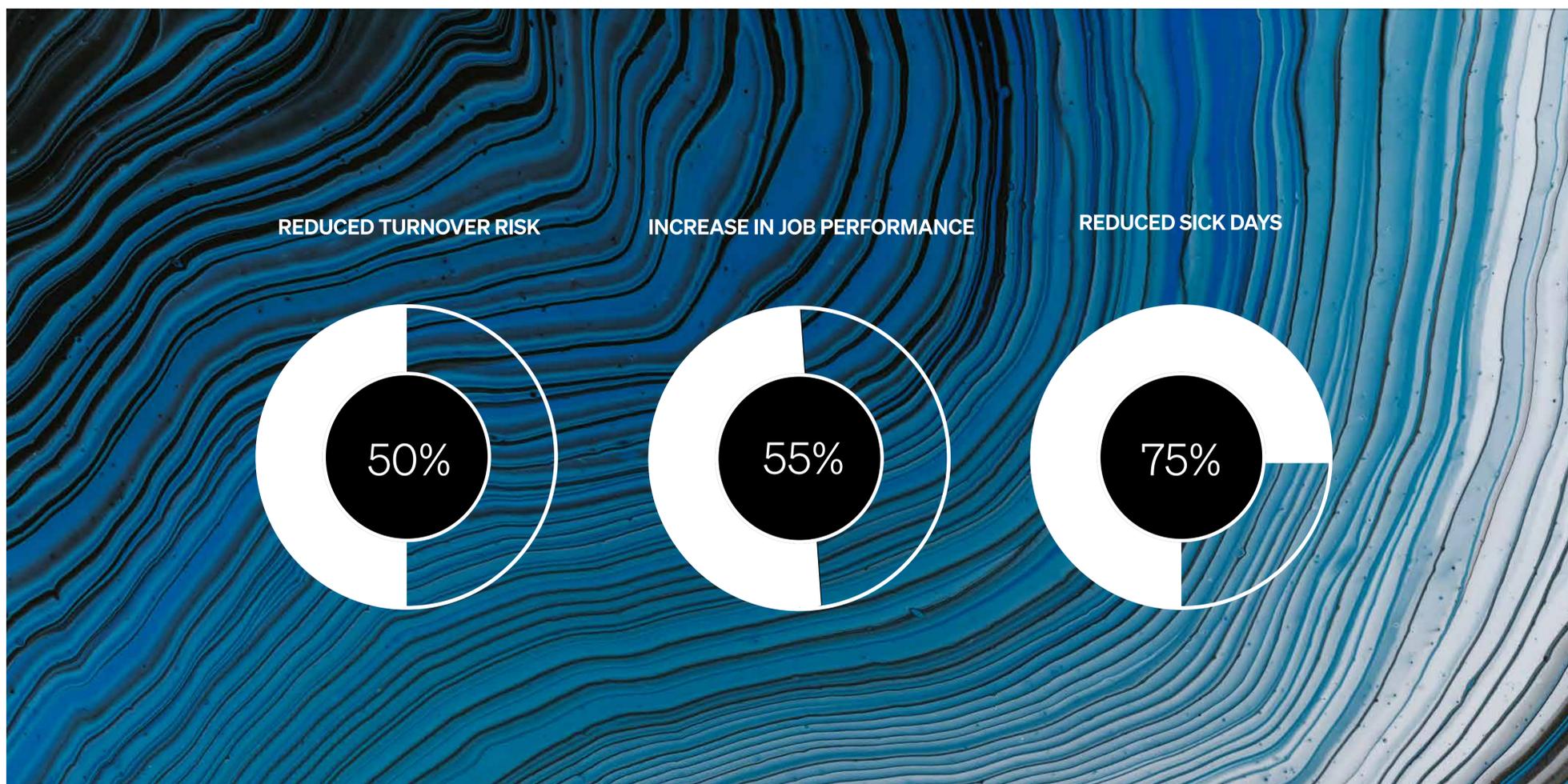
Discuss moments of “unbelonging” and how to take action to remedy them.

Work together on how to prevent exclusion.

Three strategies to foster conversations on belonging.

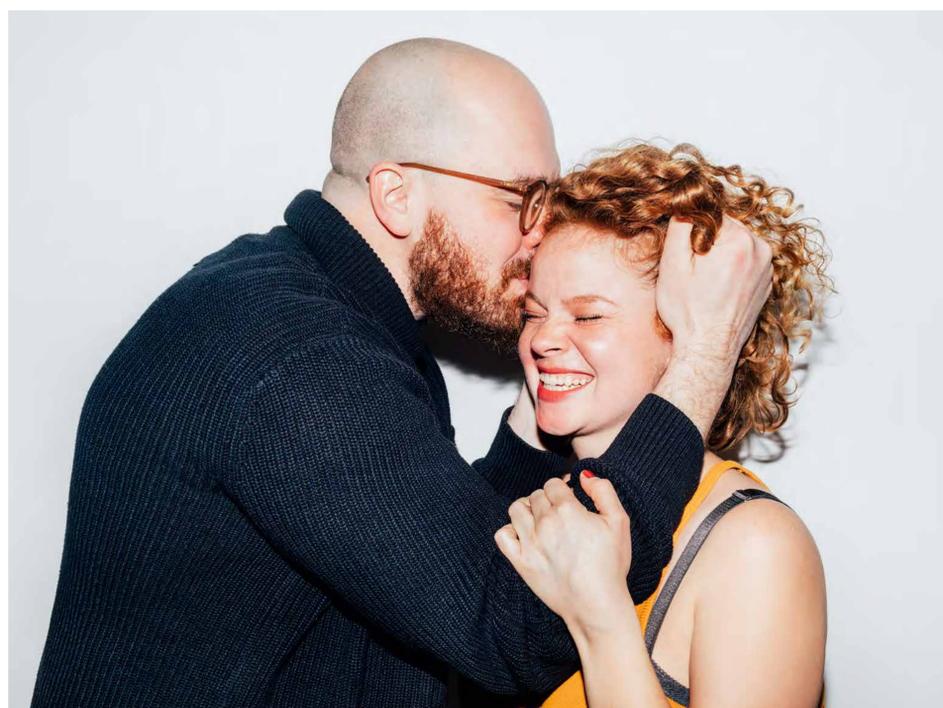
Talk about
the value of
belonging.

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Evidence from evolutionary psychology suggests the need to belonging is a basic human need that is hard wired in our DNA. The threat of exclusion activates our “fight, flight or freeze” response and the pain of social rejection is experienced in similar ways as physical pain.

BetterUp research found that the impact of exclusion is consistent across all demographic groups and that the positive impact of belonging on employee and organizational performance is significant, and in multiple ways. Overall job performance increases, as well as a reduction in turnover and sick days, suggesting that individuals who belong not only perform better but have higher levels of wellbeing.



Why this matters.

There is mounting evidence that exclusion hurts people and hurts business results. On the flipside, belonging promotes performance, teamwork and wellbeing. The starting point for every organization is to open the dialogue about belonging at work. Being able to have an open conversation with your team to talk about belonging can increase the feelings of psychological safety. Setting intentions and discussing belonging is an inclusive act that can start to address some of the challenges people around the world have faced in 2020.

2.5x

Leaders who receive BetterUp coaching on inclusive behaviors increased their direct reports' feelings of belonging 2.5x.

How to *take action.*



Get a pulse from the team on what belonging at work means to them. Talk about any challenges and barriers that have made belonging more challenging in 2020.



Talk about why belonging matters to you, to the team, and to the wider organization. Make your stance clear of belonging as a strategic priority for you personally.



Check in with your team on ways they can lead the change on how your team operates. How might you create new operating norms to make your team more fair, inclusive, and enjoyable to work on?



Enable your team to make personal commitments and hold each other accountable.



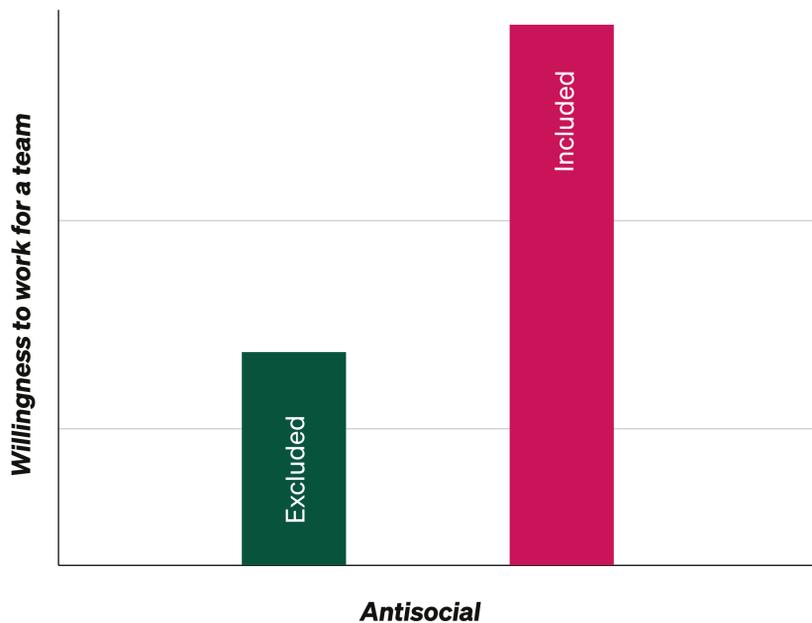
Coach individuals to identify ways they can increase feelings of belonging and connection with the teams they work with.

Discuss moments of
“unbelonging” and
how to take action
to *remedy* them.



As part of our 2019 study on belonging, we determined that group exclusion hurts both individual and team performance. People who feel excluded are less willing to work for the team if they feel like they do not belong. These impacts are swift and long term. Even after 2 minutes of feeling excluded, individuals were 25% less productive on future work tasks with the team.

Unbelonging provokes an antisocial response



Why this matters.

BetterUp's research has proven that there are clear sciencebacked ways to reduce the negative impacts of exclusion. Even when we can't eradicate exclusion overnight, there is power in individual action to improve circumstances that are within the scope of daily work. What's more is the leader plays a crucial role in building the team's capability to remedy incidents of unbelonging

Empowerment

Develop your own remedy or solution to prevent future willingness to work for a team exclusion.

Mentorship

Get into a helping mindset to help others who are feeling excluded.

Perspective

Share personal reflection on how to cope.

Three interventions that work.

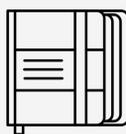
How to *take action.*



Discuss a moment where you felt excluded, the impact it had on you, and how you coped with the event. Hearing stories and reflections from others' experience in being left out and coping mechanisms can be used to reframe behavior of teammates and their own feelings of exclusion.



Talk with the team on moments they have felt excluded during the year and empower them to identify ways those feelings of exclusion may have been remedied.



Invite the team to think about their own responses to help others when they are left out. Sparking a “helping mindset” can drive mentorship within the team but also drive a “pay it forward” mentality to prevent exclusion from happening to others.

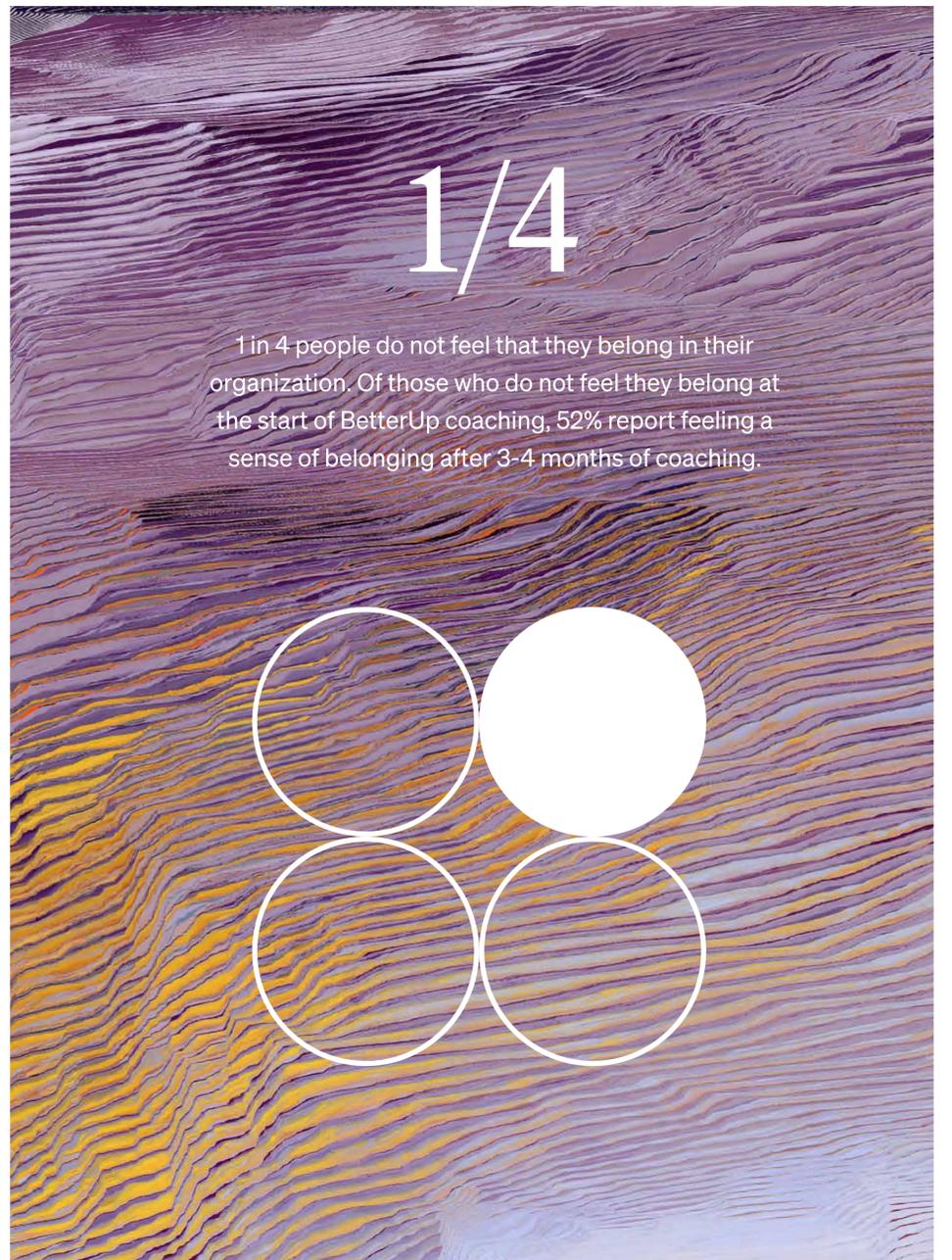
Work together to
prevent exclusion.



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Equity, not special treatment

Prevention required only the presence of a single individual who behaved in a fair manner towards everyone on the team.



Why this matters.

Anyone at any level can be an ally and this means that the power of prevention lies across the organization and at every level of your workforce. However; people need to be supported and encouraged to be allies to others, and team leaders need to build the trust and psychological safety for allies to take action.

How to *take action.*



With your team, identify real examples of allyship that has had an impact on others. Celebrate and recognize those examples.



Consider ways you can support, encourage, and include others in ways that lessen the distance people feel when working remotely. Reflect on ways you could have been more inclusive this year and how you will improve.



Surface challenges and barriers that get in the way of allies speaking up or taking action. Empower the team to identify ways to overcome these challenges.

Partner with BetterUp.

BetterUp partners with the world's leading enterprise companies to drive the deep and lasting change in mindsets, behaviors, and skills needed to foster a culture of inclusion and belonging. Combining the science, coaching, and leading-edge technology, companies can now address pervasively rooted challenges with a personalized, high-touch, and scalable approach.

Science backed approach.

Our evidence-based methodology and program design incorporates insights, techniques, and activities from the latest scientific research. BetterUp's approach is informed by the experts on our Science Board, including Quinetta Roberson, a leading researcher on diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace, and Robin Ely, founder of the Harvard Business School Gender Initiative.

Coaching for all.

Because it meets every individual where they are and provides a safe place for exploration, coaching is particularly well suited for engaging sensitive issues surrounding diversity and inclusion. All BetterUp coaches are equipped to further coach on the topic of Diversity & Inclusion with the completion of a new 12-week certificate course: Coaching for Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging. Specialist and group coaching focus on creating a greater sense of belonging for members, teams, and organizations by having constructive conversations and taking action to further diversity, inclusion, and belonging.



Leading edge technology.

BetterUp's platform builds focus and accountability through personal goal tracking, handpicked resources mapped with those goals, and nudges to keep users on track and notify them of other learning opportunities. We are committed to mitigating bias in our product research, design, and development. We include a review of the language we use and ensure the demographics of our research samples reflect the increasing diversity of our Member population.

Build an inclusive culture where everyone feels like they belong.

[Schedule a demo](#)