We Belong

Digital Zine
Foreword

Hello!
My name is Kirsty Reynolds and I am a visual artist and socially engaged practitioner. I am passionate about using art, play and drama to bring people and communities together. I believe in the potential of creativity to support positive mental health, and regularly make zines and illustrations about life and self-care to help smash stigma and raise awareness.

It has been a great experience to work on this collaborative zine through the We Belong programme. I enjoyed producing a variety of zines which consider who I am, my place in the world, and all the things that make me... me! I hope that the zines I created will help spread Good Vibes, and offer some tips on how to not only survive, but thrive during these testing times.

I hope that this collaborative project inspires other young people to create zines which reflect their unique reasons for ‘being’. My intention for this resource is to enable others to share their own ideas of self-care and to allow us to make connections.

I loved looking over all the We Belong zine submissions, seeing how each maker has been inspired and really made the zine their own! I hope all of the We Belong participants enjoyed producing them and that they continue to create art and zines to express their thoughts and feelings — whether these are personal projects, or artworks to share and celebrate.

I am really looking forward to being further involved in the We Belong programme, and hope to meet everyone involved in real life very soon!

Thank you to the We Belong participants for being so thoughtful in your zine responses, sharing your creativity, and most importantly giving it a go! You guys rock!

Kirsty created some YouTube tutorials to help the We Belong cohort create their zines

They also had some help from the Daikon Zine collective, who shared tips and advice for creating zine content and collaborating with others

Turn the page to see an excerpt from Daikon’s D.I.T (do it together) zine guide
zine-making as D.I.T. (do-it-together)

by Bella, daikon* zine
Making a zine together is a great way to connect with people and learn from each other. It can bring people together who share similar experiences or interests to make us feel like we’re not alone. At least that’s what zine-making has felt like for me.
Since the pandemic we’ve all had to think of new ways to meet people, nurture our relationships and feel a sense of community. Here are some prompts to help you think about how zine-making could help us connect to each other:
What creative skills do you have?

What new mediums would you like to try?

Think about how your creation might compliment someone else’s, for example by taking inspiration from an artwork to write a poem or making a collage using a text someone else has written.
What conversations do we have through print and paper?

Contributing our art, writing, collage and/or photography to a zine can be feel scary, especially when it’s about our thoughts and feelings… but you might find that other people have experienced similar things.

Or we might learn something new that can help us understand one another better.
A huge thank you to all of the We Belong participants who sent us pictures and excerpts from their zines!

Check them out! 👉
Don't let people bring you down
My Favourite Season is Winter!

I love snakes

My favourite songs: music, ghosts

My favourite animal is a snake!
Hiss!

I'm Polish!

I'm 11 (and awesome too)
About me!!!

Just remember bullies bully because they are often jealous of you.

You're the most valued friend I could ever have.

Rachel 2020
Without the darkness there may never come the light.

— Albus Dumbledore

Determination is like sighting a gorilla. You don't give up when you're tired. You give up when the gorilla is tired.

All the good vibes you might need.
Blossom and grow like a beautiful flower.
I attended We Belong’s workshops and we did activities such as drumming, dancing and drawing which I really enjoyed.

We even attended a musical called Fame. By the end we were all singing and dancing!

Boris announces a national lockdown to control the spread of the Coronavirus.

This gave us the opportunity to develop new skills, such as gardening which we all enjoyed to do!
During lockdown I had to get to grips with online learning. It was different to learning at school. I had missed my friends and could not wait to see them in September. In the meantime I got to grips with using apps such as Teams and Zoom.

This year I spent a lot of time with my family.

I love riding my bike!

We have had movie nights and walks in the park.
Thank you for viewing my zine, I hope you have enjoyed it.
the stars were aligned, and everything felt right. i looked at you; eye to eye and smiled; ear to ear just like that my fear, which i once had, finally disappeared.

before i met you; i felt like water surrounded on a island

now you have turned me into; blue ripples crashing gently to form a diamond

i am blessed to be your foster daughter
you've raised us all alone,
you became our everything,
your house became our home,
you've taught us everything we know.
you watched us develop and grow

Your endless cups of tea,
help you calm down after
losing your patience with me.
But one day I will see
how much of a positive
influence you have been
on me.
Find out more about the We Belong Programme

We Belong is a programme designed to tackle loneliness by building a supportive community and creative platform to empower children in care.

The arts enrichment programme aims to:

» Build relationships between looked after children and local authorities
» Connect children in care with each other
» Raise awareness of their experiences and give them a space, platform and voice

Head to anewdirection.org.uk/we-belong to find out more

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