

Othering, Belonging, Breaking, & Bridging

CURRICULUM DEVELOPED BY: Gerald Lenoir, Miriam Magaña Lopez, Ashley Gallegos, and Tanya Díaz



BLUEPRINT FOR
BELONGING

Illustration "Build Bridges" by Gustaf Öhrnell Hjalmar

Facilitators Guide

This training is made for movement based organizations, but could be modified for other organizations. The curriculum includes modules on the topics of othering, breaking, bridging and belonging. This is designed for folks who have already been introduced to the concepts but can use a refresher through examples. The second part of the training is an interactive discussion using case studies of real world examples of bridging. There are four different written cases with accompanying resources which will allow facilitators to choose a case that will be most relevant to their audience.

Workshop Materials

- Facilitators Guide
- **Workshop Slides**
- Case Studies (choose one or do a series of all four)
- Case Study Summary and Discussion Questions

Facilitator Preparation



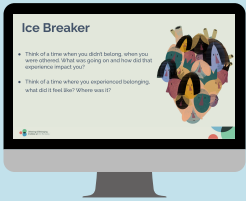

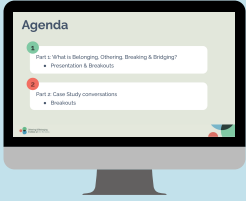
- Prepare a short story from your own life on experiencing othering and belonging
- Review agenda and handouts
- If you are new to concepts, reach out to the OBI team to discuss ahead of time. You can e-mail: belonging@berkeley.edu

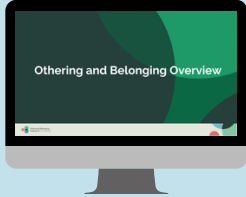
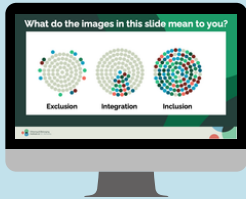

This curriculum was developed as part of the Blueprint for Belonging project, a collaborative initiative of over 50 organizations united in achieving transformative change in California through the development of strategic narrative that underpins all our collective work across communities, movements, issues and policies. This narrative is centered on an outcome of inclusion and belonging for all marginalized groups. It focuses on eliminating racialized inequity, creating empathetic identities that bridge differences, and promoting an inclusive and responsive government.

This training is designed to be 90 minutes long.


- **55 minutes for overview/slides**
- **30 minutes for small group discussion of the cases & report back**
- **5 minutes for evaluation and conclusion**

This curriculum development was led by Miriam Magaña Lopez, Ashley Gallegos and Gerald Lenoir.

Time	Slide	Talking Points
1 min		
1 min		Facilitator Introductions
6 mins		<p>Before we begin with the presentation we want you all to take a few moments to reflect on these two questions. While we will not have time to share within the large group - we want to break you into groups of 2-3 to engage in this conversation.</p>
2 mins		<p>The Why of This Session?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brief Statement about why this session is being offered - related to your organization and community context 2. Read the intended outcomes on the slide 3. Brief review of workshop agenda
1 mins		<p>The training is structured into two parts. In the first part of the training we will discuss the definitions of belonging, othering, breaking and bridging. We will provide examples of these concepts and allow for reflection in each step of the way.</p>

		<p>The second part of the training will focus on dissecting a case study that will allow us to further see how the application of these frameworks are being utilized through a real case. You all got the written case study ahead of time and we hope you had time to read it. If not, we will provide a little bit of time in part 2 for you to catch up. In this way, we are able to further engage with the frameworks of othering, belonging, breaking and bridging.</p>
		
<p>3 mins</p>		<p>In this first slide, can a few people interpret the images on the screen, and reflect on what they mean to you?</p>
<p>3 mins</p>		<p>Can a few folks reflect on what the difference in this slide is compared to the first slide?</p> <p>[after reflection]</p> <p>Here we want to show the difference between belonging and inclusion. Belonging is expansive, whereas integration presupposes an existing order that is more restrictive. Belonging is also a process, not only a destination.</p> <p>It is important to say that the notion of belonging is developed out of criticisms of previous frames for addressing persistent patterns of injustice and exclusion such as inclusion or diversity (which is another frame often used a lot).</p>



		<p>Belonging does require a degree of inclusion and equity - if some people in society are excluded from certain institutions or communities, then belonging cannot exist for those people. Or if people are denied material resources to meet their needs, or if extreme disparities exist, then belonging is unlikely to exist.</p> <p>However, we want to emphasize that it is not enough to simply welcome people into the existing structures and processes. Nor even is it enough include them as their full selves—even though that’s better than the assimilation of “integration” and the tokenism of “diversity.” What does inclusion miss? First, it is arguably too formal in its application to take into account the affective and subjective level of making people truly feel that they belong. But most fundamentally, belonging means people can co-create or re-create structures and institutions together. It allows for systems that are open for all of the new entrants—the ones who had previously been “outside”—with the result that everyone has a stake in those systems. This requires a lot of vulnerability from those who have been on the “inside” from the start. But while this latter group gives up some control over the whole, it cannot itself be dehumanized or excluded. It realigns in a more fair and just arrangement, where everyone is represented and ultimately no one is pushed to the outside.</p>
<p>2 mins</p>		<p>The goal we are working towards is to build a society built on belonging. In our previous discussion of the slides you all began to define what belonging means. How is the institute defining belonging? [Read definition]</p> <p>In the case section you will have more opportunity to explore in detail what moving towards belonging can look like.</p>

2
mins



Why are we pushing for this idea of belonging? In our society we've seen an increase of polarization, divisions, and what we call othering. What is othering?

Othering is a set of dynamics, processes and structures that engender marginality and persistent inequality across any of the full range of human differences based on group identities. Important notes: Simply recognizing difference is not othering; and the opposite of "othering" is not "saming."


A few indices of othering include: lack of effective voice, lack of representation, lack of recognition and lack of power or humanity. We may all experience othering in one of these ways, but when we experience them in multiple forms it becomes more durable and dangerous. It is also important to note that othering may be more durable or felt differently depending on who or what is doing the othering based on the power dynamic at play.


A warning: in the next five slides we will be showing pictures that display forms of structural othering, narrative othering, interpersonal othering and cross-group othering. Some viewers may find some of the images to be disturbing.

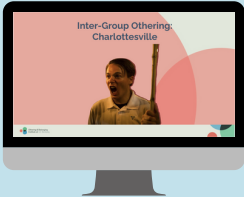

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There are explicit (obvious) ways we other - in our history and current day. And as we mentioned in the last slide, othering can occur structurally, between groups or in interpersonal relationships.

		<p>For instance, the so-called “Muslim Ban” which barred entry into the USA for citizens from several Muslim-majority nations is a clear example of how policies are used to exclude and other people based on who they are (in this case, their religion). Often policies may not be explicit in their othering, but have a disparate impact. In this case, plausible deniability was built into the Trump executive order by not banning “Muslims,” but based on country of origin. The motive was clear and had been stated publicly on the campaign trail, however.</p> <p>To make matters worse, the media is also used to justify these xenophobic policies. Media narratives since September 11, 2001 in particular have trafficked in misinterpretation and caricature in the way that they depict Muslims, and in phrases that misleadingly tie violence to religious identity.</p>
1 mins		<p>Another example of structural othering is among folks with disabilities.</p> <p>There are approximately 40.7 million people in the United States today living with disabilities. As a society that deems people who are able bodied to be normal, those with disabilities are seen as the other. Not only are there negative narratives about folks with disabilities, such as that they are “unproductive” because some are unable to work, they are also physically othered. For a long time people with disabilities were socially secluded to their homes or healthcare institutions and could not access public transportation, stores, and buildings that only have stairs.</p>

		<p>While in the 1970s, the disability rights movement created more opportunities for folks such as laws that protected people with disabilities from discrimination, and mandated physical accessibility - even still today there is much that needs to be done to ensure that folks with disabilities are able to access all public spaces, like buildings and outdoor spaces. The way we physically design our public & private spaces can *either* structurally other *or* structurally include people who have disabilities.</p>
<p>1 mins</p>		<p>A strong, conservative ideological narrative exists around public aid recipients as “freeloaders,” con artists, or otherwise undeserving. An image that has been powerful in pushing this narrative is that of the “welfare queen”—a Black woman who dishonestly works the system to get rich at the expense of taxpayers.</p> <p>This image was pushed based on one case of an individual committing fraud in Chicago in 1974. But it was amplified by Ronald Reagan throughout his political career, misleadingly presenting an outrageous story as the rule rather than the exception. This was convenient for his preexisting goal of attacking food stamps and other forms of public assistance.</p> <p>The story became a kind of watershed in the way Americans were convinced to think about public aid recipients, so much so that politicians in both parties began adopting talk of the poor as dishonest cheats. The narrative has clear racist and misogynistic overtones, and puts particular stigma and scrutiny on Black and women aid recipients.</p>

		<p>But it is much broader too, and has so much cultural currency that we hear it across focus groups and interviews with members of diverse immigrant communities.</p>
<p>1 mins</p>		<p>Othering is deeply embedded in our society, both structurally and via narratives. Now this deeply embedded othering also shows up between groups of people, or between individuals.</p> <p>First, cross-group othering is when groups of people are othered due to their identity by another group that doesn't share that same identity.</p> <p>A clear example of cross-group othering is illustrated by the 2017 white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, VA. This included a group marching while chanting slogans like “white lives matter” and “Jews will not replace us.”</p> <p>Counter-protesters gathered at University of Virginia, and a white supremacist drove his car into a crowd of counterprotestors, killing Heather Heyer.</p>
<p>1 mins</p>		<p>And lastly, we know that othering can also occur interpersonally. Here we have two well-known instances of white women calling the cops on 1) a Black family that was barbecuing in Lake Merritt in Oakland, CA and 2) on a Black male who was bird watching in New York. These are both examples of racially motivated misuse of police force on law-abiding black Americans.</p>

10
mins



Now that we've run through a few examples of how othering shows up in our society we want to pause to reflect and digest the information.

First, everyone please take 3 minutes to quietly reflect or write some thoughts down. We will then break into small groups and for the next 7 minutes, please discuss these questions.

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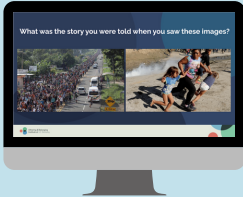


We want to move towards a society built on belonging.

However, we face barriers to move towards belonging. As just outlined, One of the major issues that we are seeing in society and in our communities is “othering.” We will provide examples of how othering is embedded in our society and in the way we interact with people.

Next we will explain the frameworks of bridging and breaking. As a society we have to decide how we approach this issue. Do we decide to break which will get us to this space of continuing to other? Or do we decide to bridge and help us move towards a society built on belonging.

I want to note that this is an oversimplification of the process because we acknowledge that breaking and bridging can happen at the same time. For example, White Supremacist might be bonding with other white folks, while at the same time breaking with people of color. However, we want to provide you this roadmap to organize today's presentation.

<p>4 mins</p>		<p>Next we will explain the frameworks of bridging and breaking. As a society we have to decide how we approach the issue of othering. Do we decide to break which will keep us othering? Or do we decide to bridge and help us move towards a society built on belonging.</p> <p>We will first watch a video. [Play video: Bridging: Towards a Society Built on Belonging] As mentioned in the video - we are living in an increasingly fragmented world and we as a society can decide to either continue breaking or bridge.</p>
<p>2 mins</p>		<p>First - we want to explain what we mean when we say breaking. [Read points on slide]</p> <p>When we engage in breaking, we can cross the line from - We have different opinions - to ‘those people’ are less than human and are less worthy of support and resources. And that’s a dangerous line to cross if we care about the survival of humanity. It doesn't mean that we can’t have passionate views, goals and agendas. But breaking diminishes our ability to find common ground and bridge our differences.</p>
<p>5 mins</p>		<p>Before speaking on this slide. I want you all to take a moment and to look at these images. For those who may not be as familiar with the topic - In 2018, thousands of immigrants from Mexico and Central America, part of what was called the ‘migrant caravan’ came to the US border. These are some of the images captured.</p>

Now, what was the story you were told about the so-called Migrant Caravan?


I'm hearing: [insert comments] What else?

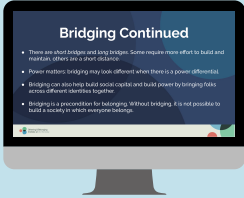

Former President Trump and other political leaders publicly called the caravan an invasion, and pushed the narrative that “if you don’t want America to be overrun by masses of illegal aliens, you’d better vote Republican”. In this example, Trump used fear tactics to other and de-humanize both migrants at the border and immigrants already living in the US, and he blamed them for a whole host of problems they hadn’t caused.




The dominant narrative of the migrant caravan was “these people are dangerous” and therefore we began to see increased breaking. This narrative impacted REAL people.



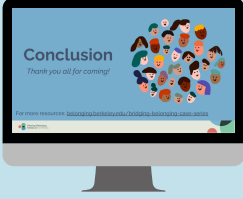
We saw Breaking between immigrants and those non-immigrant folks who saw them as a threat. Immigrants experienced more racism and cruelty, and greater barriers to belonging. And non-immigrant folks who embraced this narrative ended up blaming a false target, immigrants, for some very real challenges they were experiencing.

So who wins in this scenario? Some might argue, no-one. But in this example, Republican politicians used this narrative and fear tactics to win votes. They created a false threat and told people that only they can solve it. We share this example because it illustrates how easy it is for political leaders and other elites to get us to turn against each other instead of toward each other, even though turning toward each other is what we actually need to do to solve the massive challenges we’re all facing.

		<p>I also want to highlight that we share this case because it highlights the role of fear and anxiety. When people are uncertain, scared, when we are in a crisis, or when we are facing rapid changes it puts people at heightened anxiety and in these moments – it easy for them to turn against people, and break instead of bridge.</p> <p>Now, in this example we saw what can happen when we chose to break instead of bridge. If we asked the people in the caravan why they were coming we would know that these are people who came to the US border fleeing persecution, poverty and violence. We would know that these are farmers who have been experiencing crop failures all made more extreme by climate change. I challenge you to think what would have changed if instead of distilling fear about a group of people we instead chose to extend our arms in support. Instead of seeing them as invaders, what if we saw them as people seeking help? What if instead the narrative was around helping them. “Do we need to give them water or food?” Or “Climate change is worsening conditions for farmers, we demand that our leaders take action to address climate change.” These are the narratives that will help us bridge instead of break, and help us address a real issue that is impact all of us.</p>
<p>2 mins</p>		<p>In the last slide we shared an example of what happens when we break and ended us by reflecting on what the possibilities could be if we instead chose to bridge. What is bridging?</p> <p>[read points on slide]</p>

		<p>Bridging can build social capital and help power building because it is bringing more people into a space that allows them to acknowledge that their liberation is tied to the liberation of others. It allows people to build empathy and shared connection, which will in turn make people want to show up to support others.</p>
<p>2 mins</p>		<p>There are short bridges and long bridges. Some require more effort to build and maintain, others are a short distance. What is defined as a short and long bridge will vary per person and what you feel comfortable doing. We think it is important to start where you are at and begin bridging across group lines that make sense to you and your group.</p> <p>We also do want to highlight the role of power. People who have power vs folks who are marginalized carry different levels of power. It may not always be possible to bridge across power differences but it shouldn't be precondition that never allows bridging to happen.</p> <p>However, it is also important to note that bridging can be used as a tool to build power. By bringing folks across different identities together you can build a bigger base.</p>
<p>5 mins</p>		<p>Now that we've introduced the frameworks of belonging, othering, breaking and bridging we will spend the remainder of the session further discussing one case. Earlier in the training we discussed a case of what happened when breaking occurred, this case will allow us to see what happens when we instead bridge.</p>

		<p>You all received the case study ahead of time and we hope that you read it. If not we will provide 5 minutes for you to look it over and I will also summarize it briefly.</p> <p>[After 5 minutes. Summarize the case in your own words, use the drafted outline to help you cover the main points.]</p> <p>Now we will spend the remainder of the time discussing questions from the case. [Note if more than 15 people break into smaller groups. If you break into smaller groups provide a few minutes at the end for a large group discussion].</p>
<p>25 mins</p>		<p>Reminders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the microphone • Encourage all participants to share a response • Although there are many questions, you do not have to answer them all
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1 min		Review the intended outcomes and give people an opportunity to fill out an evaluation link.
1 min		Thank everyone for coming. People can look for more information using this link.