

Social Belonging Interventions

Intervention Report Snapshot | Supporting Postsecondary Success Topic Area

WHAT WORKS CLEARINGHOUSE™

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Large numbers of students who enroll in college do not complete a degree. Yet, earning a college degree is one of the primary pathways for economic success and is increasingly required for good jobs and high wages. *Social Belonging* interventions for college students aim to reduce the impacts of negative stereotypes that may burden students in underrepresented groups and affect their persistence in college. Examples of such groups are racial or ethnic minority groups, women in engineering, and first-generation college students. There are different variations of *Social Belonging* interventions but they all have in common a goal of influencing students' sense that they could be successful within a college setting.

This What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) report, part of the WWC's Supporting Postsecondary Success topic area, explores the effects of *Social Belonging* interventions on

postsecondary students' academic achievement, progressing in college, and college enrollment. The WWC identified 14 studies of *Social Belonging* interventions. Seven of these studies meet WWC standards. The evidence presented in this report is from studies of the impact of *Social Belonging* on postsecondary students in less advantaged or underrepresented groups—including Asian, White, Black, Hispanic, first-generation, and female students—in both public and private postsecondary settings.

Findings on *Social Belonging* interventions from seven studies that meet WWC standards are shown below. The table reports an effectiveness rating, the improvement index, and the number of studies and students that contributed to the findings. The improvement index is a measure of the intervention's effect on an outcome.

What Happens When Students Participate in *Social Belonging* Interventions?

The WWC found that implementing <i>Social Belonging</i> interventions:	Effectiveness rating	Study findings	Evidence meeting WWC standards (version 4.0)	
		Improvement index (percentile points)	Number of studies	Number of students
Has inconsistent effects on academic achievement	Mixed effects	+6	6	3,640
Has inconsistent effects on progressing in college	Mixed effects	+6	3	2,484
May result in little to no change in college enrollment	No discernible effects	-1	2	1,893

Note: The improvement index can be interpreted as the expected change in percentile rank for an average comparison group student if that student had received the intervention. A positive improvement index does not necessarily mean the estimated effect is statistically significant.

FINDINGS ARE BASED ON:

7 studies with 5,096 students in 24 postsecondary institutions



STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS:

Race: 42% minority

Ethnicity: 29% Hispanic

What Do *Social Belonging* Interventions Cost?

Costs of implementing *Social Belonging* interventions include time for college personnel to prepare and deliver intervention materials to students. *Social Belonging* interventions may require the use of existing campus facilities, or they may be delivered online in a location of

each student's choosing. Online delivery may incur costs in the form of information technology infrastructure and software. Postsecondary institutions can access existing intervention materials for free online at sites such as those listed below. Alternatively, college personnel can adapt intervention materials described in the studies reviewed in the Intervention Report linked below.

LEARN MORE



Read more about *Social Belonging* interventions and the studies summarized here in the [Intervention Report](#). The following website provides additional information on implementing *Social Belonging* interventions: [PERTS \(Project for Education Research that Scales\)](#).