BELONGING IN BOZEMAN

Belonging and Acceptance for LGBTQ+

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INTRODUCTION AND SIGNIFICANCE

From 2010 to 2020, LGBTQ State Policy Landscape Dramatically Improved in Some, Though Not All, Areas of the Country; Gender Identity Progress Lags Behind

State LGBTQ Policy Tallies, 2010 vs. 2020

Overall Tally

2010 → 2020

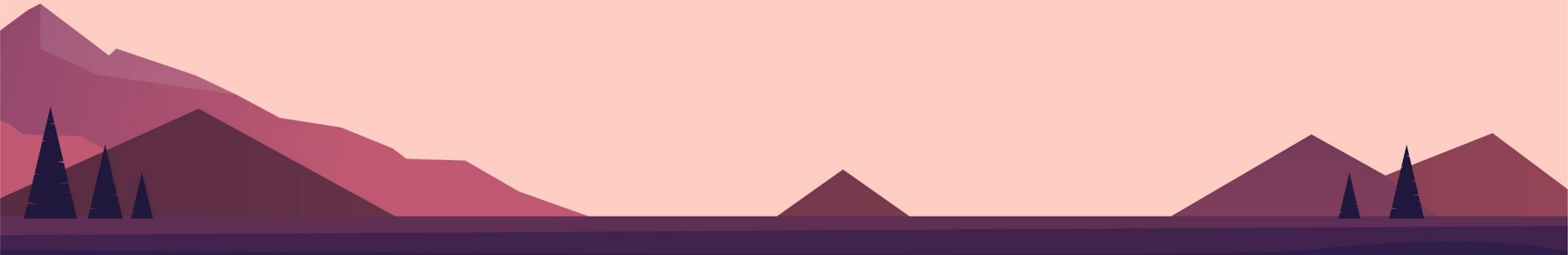Legend: Negative | Low | Fair | Medium | High

STUDY AIMS

- Examine the level of belonging of LGBTQ+ in Bozeman, MT.

- Identify strategies on how to increase this level of belonging.

METHODOLOGY

- Recruitment
- Characteristics of Sample
- Interview Protocol

METHODOLOGY CONT.

Analysis Approach:

- Qualitative Interviewing

- Sample questions:
  What changes do you think could be made to increase the sense of belonging for LGBTQ+ people in Bozeman?
  Do you feel as though Bozeman is welcoming of LGBTQ+? Why or why not?

- Coding

RESULTS:

Four main themes emerged during the course of our interviews:

1. Education
2. Acceptance
3. LGBTQ+ Groups and Organizations
4. Safety

- Each of these was discussed by participants as an improvable aspect of belonging in Bozeman
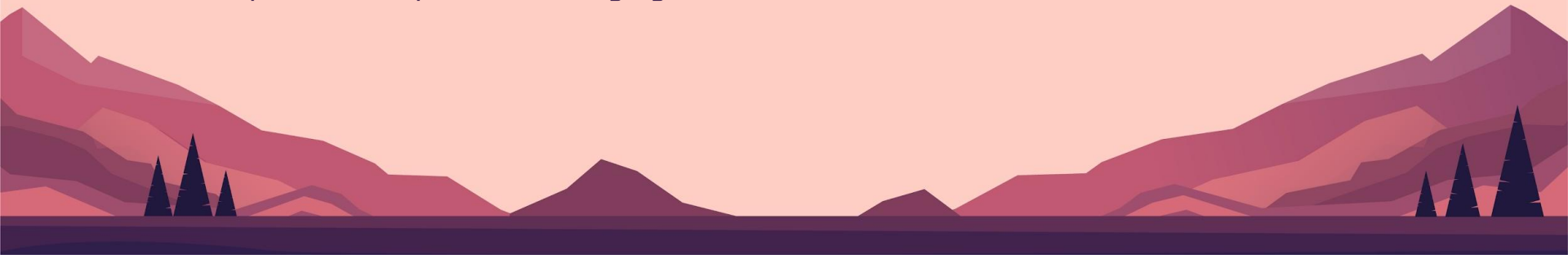
RESULTS: EDUCATION

- One prevailing theme across the different interviews was providing education to others regarding the LGBTQ+ community.
- Specifically, educating others on how to live amongst this community, because it does exist and is ever growing.
- The LGBTQ+ community is asking for education geared towards others on how to coexist in society where everyone feels safe.

RESULTS: ACCEPTANCE

- ❖ A prominent theme in my interview was the acceptance that the LGBTQ+ community receives
- ❖ Longing for Acceptance was a common theme
- ❖ Participation in LGBTQ+ events and self-expression contributes to feelings of acceptance

RESULTS: DRAG & ORGANIZATIONS

❖ Participants agreed that involvement in organizations increased their feelings of belonging

❖ The representation that organizations provide also increased feelings of belonging

❖ Involvement in organizations led participants to feel less isolated

❖ However, participants commented on that organizations need to be more vocal both on campus and in Bozeman.

RESULTS: SAFETY AND BELONGING

❖ We found a repeating theme of safety as a major component of belonging

❖ Several participants reported feeling unsafe due to their sexual identity

❖ Participants discussed feeling that they need to hide aspects of themselves in order to feel safe in public spaces, impacting their sense of belonging

❖ Participants described feeling more welcome and more like they belong in the small, local shops in Bozeman than in larger, more commercialized spaces

IMPLICATIONS

❖ Do LGBT+ people feel as though they belong in Bozeman?
  ➢ Yes, to a degree

❖ What changes need to made to increase belonging?
  ➢ Educate members of the Bozeman community about LGBT+ existence and experience
  ➢ Better and more frequent LGBT+ representation
  ➢ More vocal organizations and groups (making such organizations easier for LGBT+ people to find in the community)

"I FEEL LIKE THE TRUE BOZEMAN SPIRIT IS WELCOMING, BUT CERTAINLY ON A LARGER SCALE, I DEFINITELY STILL LOOK OVER MY SHOULDER."

LGBTQ+ Belonging In Bozeman: Executive Summary

Introduction

Research into belongingness among the LGBTQ+ population has indicated a lack of belonging among this group. According to Parmenter et al., the LGBT+ community greatly values acceptance and inclusion and, as such, faces emotional difficulties in communities where they feel they do not belong or have to hide their identity. In the world of education, LGBTQ students are more likely than their sexual majority counterparts to feel unwelcome in academic institutions, and the need for belonging may be especially important for college students due to the many major shifts in life that occur when students begin higher education (Blankenau et al., 2022). According to the Movement Advancement Project, the population of LGBT+ people in Montana is around 30,000 individuals. As a growing population that has historically faced many societal challenges, it is important to focus on this group when examining community belonging. The current study aims to examine the feelings of belonging among LGBTQ+ adults in Bozeman, and identify potential ways to increase the level of belonging.

The belongingness of the LGBTQ+ in Bozeman is important to understand because on the MSU campus alone, 53% of the LGBTQ+ students surveyed felt as though they had to conceal their sexual orientation or identities (Mallory & Sears, 2017). Further research shows that there is a correlation between higher levels of discrimination and higher levels of loneliness and the feeling, which has a direct, negative effect, on mental health (Wilson & Liss, 2022). Understanding ways in which to improve levels of belonging can be crucial to the mental health of this community.

Prior studies on belonging suggest that higher levels of perceived belongingness, or feelings of being valued or connected to a group or community, can act as a protective factor that prevents potential harmful impacts of societal stigma and rejection on mental health. Goodman (2017) found that feelings of social connectedness significantly increased positive resilience for transgender and gender expansive youth. Community belonging, in particular, is strongly related to self-perceived general and mental health and, whereas social isolation can adversely affect health. Social engagement and attachment are also associated with positive health outcomes (Wike & Tomlinson, 2021).

Facilitating an opportunity for LGBTQ+ youth to engage in community events related to art could foster relationships with peers and community members. Collaborating in these events has enabled feelings of the fulfillment of essential needs like autonomy, community, and voice to express their needs which would contribute to their sense of belonging (Moran, 2022). Freud (1949), Adler (1925/1968), Sullivan (1953), and Kohut (1984) have found that belongingness is an essential need for humans because it facilitates cognitive growth, emotional development, and healthy psychological functioning. Institutional heterosexism contributes to social exclusion and has prevented feelings of belonging within the LGBTQ+ community (Murray, 2020).

Results suggested that sexual minority identity was associated with lower safety and belongingness, which, in turn, was associated with more significant depression and anxiety and lower happiness. This can be the result of what is known as minority stress, a type of chronic stress that is unique to a minority group, in this context, the LGBTQ+ community (Moran, 2022). The failure of medical professionals to acknowledge LGBTQ+ individuals, and perpetuate stigma also prevents these individuals from seeking treatment for both physical and mental ailments, furthering feelings of isolation (Griffin et al., 2018). A greater sense of belonging has consistently been found to relate to positive mental health among LGBTQIA+ college students. We hypothesized that, consistent with minority stress theory, LGBTQIA+ students would feel less safe, have less of a sense of belonging, have higher levels of depression, anxiety, and happiness would occur serially via lower safety and belonging. (Wilson & Liss, 2020).

Methodology

In order to recruit participants, we gathered a convenience sample of our peer groups. We individually reached out to these participants to set up one on one interviews. These individuals consisted of three males and one female between the ages of 20-22 living in Bozeman, MT. The interview process began with a brief introduction and summary of the consent form informing them of the basics of the research project. The interview questions consisted of ten semi-structured questions as well as additional

questions that related to the participants specifically as the interview was taking place. The interviews were recorded to be transcribed later. After the interview was transcribed, each researcher individually went through and found codes (themes) that were notable throughout the interview. The researchers then came together as a group and created a codebook of ten codes that were common and applicable to all the interviews. These codes were then used to further explain and analyze the results and implications.

Results

Throughout our interviews, we found four main recurring themes including education, acceptance, LGBTQ+ groups and organizations, and safety. Each of these were discussed by participants as an important aspect of belonging, and as an improvable part of life in Bozeman for this group. Education in this context means teaching those that are not a part of this group about the LGBTQ+ community. Education has the potential to bring a greater level of understanding about this group, which could lead to a greater level of respect and empathy for LGBTQ+ individuals. Acceptance was also an important theme, with several participants mentioning a longing to be accepted by both their community and by society more generally. We found that participation in LGBTQ+ events and the ability to express themselves openly contributed to our participants' feelings of acceptance. One participant stated, "Belonging, it means the acceptance of your true and whole self… people who you want to be around want you to be there." Working towards a higher level of acceptance would allow members of this group to express themselves more freely, which would in turn increase belonging.

Involvement in LGBTQ+ organizations was mentioned by several participants as a great way to feel more accepted and feel like they belong in Bozeman. Being involved in these organizations or groups provides a sense of community and helps with the feelings of isolation that can often be a part of the LGBTQ+ experience. While there are a few of these groups in Bozeman, our participants noted that they are difficult to find, and that events put on by these groups would benefit from better advertising. Participants stated that these groups need to be more vocal both in Bozeman generally as well as on the MSU campus. Making sure that groups and events are advertised enough to reach the LGBTQ+ people of Bozeman so that they can participate would increase feelings of belonging by allowing them to see support from their community.

Finally, the feeling of safety was described as an essential component of belonging. Many participants reported that they often feel unsafe due to their sexual identity. They discussed feeling that they needed to hide aspects of themselves in order to feel safe in public spaces, which greatly lowers their sense of belonging. While the smaller, local shops in Bozeman were noted by participants to be mostly welcoming and safe, the majority of public spaces in Bozeman still necessitate a certain level of discretion to ensure personal safety. One participant stated, "How could you belong somewhere if you don't feel safe there?" Safety is clearly a major concern for LGBTQ+ people in Bozeman, and increasing safety through education and public acceptance is an important avenue to creating a greater sense of belonging for this group.

Implications

Overall, the interviews that we conducted gave us some great insight on how members of the LBGTQ+ population experience Bozeman. We surmounted that, while they do feel like they belong in the city, there is a point where that feeling of belonging ends. Once outside of the downtown and campus area, those feelings of belonging decreased amongst our participants. However, there are ways that the city can help expand these feelings of belonging. We can start by educating members on the existence of the LGBTQ+ community and their experiences. This education can be done through community outreach programs and keeping LGBTQ+ support apparent all year and not just in the month of June. This education would be boosted with more accurate LGBTQ+ representation, through showing queer families in local advertisements, including more queer stories in local media, and also by having LGBTQ+ organizations and groups be more vocal about the events they are hosting, and having them be more public will make it easier for people just coming into their own to find resources and support. Through these, our hope is that those who are ill informed or misinformed on the LGBTQ+ community can come away with a deeper understanding of the community and in turn, increase the feelings of safety and belonging amongst the LGBTQ+ population of Bozeman.

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LGBTQ+ Quotes

Young adult male

- In Bozeman in general, yeah, I mean, I've been walking down the street, holding hands with a partner of mine and someone drove by in a truck and yelled the f slur. You know, and that's just kinda something that unfortunately a lot of people that are isolated from the LGBTQ community will do, because they think it's funny, and they don't realize the weight of it.
- The one thing I think that the community could always do better - I don't think that there's ever a limit to this, is call it out. If you are in a position to, if you're able to put yourself in a position where you feel uncomfortable but it's going to help uh, even just one person in the community, and you know it'll all be fine afterwards, after the uncomfortable period, do it
- Just having the (LGBTQ+) community makes you feel more included, just having people that you know are in the community and you know are in your town, even if you don't know them, never met a single one in your life but you see pride flags around town, you're gonna be, you're gonna feel more accepted than you would if you drove around town and there weren't any pride flags, and you still didn't know anyone you know? So just the fact that the community puts itself out and exists uh, is really good. Yeah
- I cannot be myself in those places because everyone's also carrying [a gun]. So who knows if there's someone is so against it [being gay] that they would use force, which I know there are because it's happened.
- Drag for me, is similar, in a sense of belonging in the community and um closeness to the community, um, is similar to that of a retreat for a buddhist monk..So by doing drag, it allows me, for one night to be like, I guess one way to put it would be at the forefront of the community. You know, Drag Queens are *clap* out there. They are putting themselves out there, for everyone in the community, for themselves, like you know they are fighting a ton of battles, um that a lot of people in the LGBTQ community don't even see. Um, but the reason I say that that metaphor is accurate is because when I do drag, I then, during it feel ultra close to the community, right, very accepted.

Young adult female

- We were taking a little walk. When like at some point this summer, just like right for the sunset just very normal, whatever. And we were, holding hands, and this, like, guy in this orange truck drove by, like really slowly. And he like yelled something at us. And we were like, what? He was like, Are you two friends or sisters? …. you know, your alarm bells, go off. You're like I'm no longer in a safe environment and we were in like, in a neighborhood behind my fucking apartment.. so then I was like oh we're, I think I said we're sisters, which is hilarious because we could not look more different. So, yeah, we're totally related. Um, But yeah, then he was like, oh you guys are sisters. I was like yep. We are. He was like okay. He was like, you guys aren't dating or anything, right? I was like nope. Like, because I didn't know what he was doing and then he was like, okay and he followed us for a little bit longer and like drove away and then he circled back around. And at this point we'd kind of started to pick up the pace. Like okay, time to go home at this point, like no longer safe…. it feels like this weird mix of like, they'll put on, the city and like companies in the city will like put on stuff to be like, we love queer

- people, and like we love whatever like this is all great. But these people still exist that make it feel very unsafe.
- Because I think even if somewhere you thought you belonged, if it's like, if that place is no longer safe, it's like okay, how could you belong somewhere if you couldn't be safe there?
- Like we've, my favorite place in the world is Applebee's. I fucking love Applebee's, and like it's very like so sometimes we'll go out to eat there, and it's very clear, like before we walk into like a Walmart or like places that are pretty commercialized and not like these little Bozeman spots, she'll like, drop my hand. Like, she'll be like, I'm not holding your hand like into this Walmart. Like that's fine, that makes sense, or like I'll do it to her. I'm, it's very, we're a little bit more careful about it, right? Which makes it difficult to feel like you belong somewhere.
- I feel like the true Bozeman spirit is. Like especially because it's so outdoorsy and like the outdoors community, honestly it is very accepting. Like it's very much like "look after the trails, look after where you go and like, we can give a fuck what you do there." Just very cool to be a part of. So, it's like, that's very cool. I really enjoyed that a lot. And like yeah, like those, those Bozeman places feel like, Oh yeah, like it's you
know, I feel good. I feel happy to be here. I'm excited to be here like Bozeman and puts on like a pride and all that stuff. And it's like through Bozeman natives, I love that. So I feel like at its core, it is. But certainly, on a larger scale I definitely look over my shoulder
- I think they're trying harder than they were in the past…. I always think there's always more that we could be doing to learn about people that are different than us.

Young adult male

- Yeah, I would say belonging, it means the acceptance of your true and whole self, I think it's more, even more than that it's not just acceptance but like you want to be there, people who you want to be around want you to be here. I feel like it's just support from many different aspects.
- Yeah, I would say my first year being in Bozeman it was definitely shaky, I was not true to myself. I was more so in the closet as part of my identity. Later in my college career I did come out and was able to do so successfully and safely. I think that just over all helped with one acceptance of my community but also my perception of the community. I didn't feel like I was being forced into something by the community I was in. I was being more so embraced by the community that I lived in and the people I surrounded myself with.
- I think MSU could be better at providing training on microaggression and kind of how to recognize identities without using stereotypes or microaggressions. I think that can be a really cool training or like a mandated, not necessarily mandated, but like an online class or something that is offered for any student who wants to take it or it can be implemented into their core classes or something like that. Just so like even if people do disagree, they aren't necessarily using harsh language or like discounting someone's personal identity.
- I think of course it's always important to bring up intersectionality and like how different identities do interact and that is very important especially when looking at belonging because a person might have several identities that may not be represented well in a

community. Focusing on one isn't necessarily effective and I think it is important to consider intersectionality.

Young adult male

- YES! I think it is very welcoming compared to where I came from -- a small town in Montana. I think it had one group for LGBTQ, but it got shut down because parents thought it was indoctrinating their children. So coming from that and going to Bozeman, I feel it's very open. It's a lot more inclusive…..[The town I grew up in]It wasn't a place you would talk about it ever. People never said anything about their sexuality if they weren't straight. And you never saw any gay couples or anything like that.
- You go into coffee shops and see signs that say we support the LGBTQ+, and during June, you see all the pride stuff up everywhere, even from the hospital and stuff like that, which is nice. What can they do more? IDK be more accepting all year around, not just the month of June.

Disability and Belonging
in Bozeman: A Qualitative Study

Katie Allee, Miller Rijfkogel, Madison Sharpe, Griffin Schumacher

Introduction

- Importance
    - 26% of U.S. adults (CDC)
    - 6% of Bozeman population (census.gov)
        - Up to 21% including 65+
- Background
    - Americans with Disabilities Act
    - Ableism
    - Social & Physical isolation
    - Diagnosis complexities

FACT OF THE DAY:
DISABLED PEOPLE ARE THE WORLD'S LARGEST MINORITY GROUP.

Introduction Cont.

- Project Aims
    - Analyze interviewees' unique perspectives & experiences
        - Make Bozeman more accessible & increase disabled people's sense of belonging.
    - Examine disabled individuals' level of belonging in Bozeman
        - Determine how their sense of belonging can be improved.
    - Identify physical & social elements in Bozeman with direct impact on disabled individuals' sense of belonging.

Methods

- Convenience Sample
- Recruitment Strategies
- Interview Structure
- Participant Characteristics

Results

- Common Themes:
    - Experience with disability
        - Positive/Negative
    - Experience with accessibility
    - Impact of diagnosis status
    - Factors with impact on belonging
        - Positive/Negative
    - Social Life

Quotes:

Participant 1: "The only thing that makes me feel like I belong is doing my research, doing my school." "What makes me feel like I belong is because no one there treats me any different than they would treat anyone else."

Participant 2: "That's what belonging is to me… family and good friends too."

Participant 3: "[My church's] fellowship, that's been, you know, a good help…people there have been willing to accommodate."

Participant 4: "I and the three other women with who I share the space…we just have so much fun talking about books, and politics and culture, and there is a great deal of laughter. And that is so important, being able to laugh. True laughter."

Implications

- Common Issues
    - Physical accessibility
    - ADA noncompliance
    - Biases/Ableism/Assumptions
- Propositions
    - Accessibility to ADA reporting
    - Spreading awareness
- Future Studies
    - Interview variety of disability identities
    - Amplify disabled voices

Questions?

Executive Summary
Introduction & Significance

Since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), disabled Americans have been legally protected against discrimination in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public (Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990). Despite these protections, disabled Americans face regular discrimination across nearly every area of social life, either as a result of a lack of physical accessibility or social infrastructures that limit disabled people's ability to engage in the social environment (Brown, 2016). Research suggests that, even when disabled individuals are integrated into a social environment, it is common for their experiences to be separated from those of their nondisabled counterparts, which threatens their sense of true belonging and inclusion (Jones & Gallus, 2021). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), disabled adults make up 26 percent of the U.S. population. This means that 61 million Americans have a disability that impacts their major life activities, making the disabled population the largest minority in the United States (CDC, 2018). Though this statistic accounts for the majority of disabled Americans, it is impossible to account for the number of Americans who live with undiagnosed conditions that impact their daily lives. The disabled identity extends across social, ethnic, class, age, and socioeconomic boundaries. The complexities associated with disability and the disabled identity pervade virtually every aspect of social life, and in turn must be considered an important factor in determining individuals' sense of belonging. Previous research in the arena of social belonging and its relationship with disability demonstrates that disabled people are more likely to experience social isolation and emotional loneliness than nondisabled people (MacDonald et al., 2018). The unique, personal, and individualized experiences associated with the disabled identity necessitate a qualitative study, wherein participants are encouraged to tell the interviewer stories about their lives and the impacts of their condition. The purpose of this storytelling method of gathering data is to allow the interviewers to thoroughly examine each participant's experience and perspective and to gather ample information–unique to each participant–that can later be coded and analyzed as part of larger themes determined by the study as a whole.

Methodology

The participants in this study were recruited through posters around Bozeman, word of mouth, and convenience sampling. Since the disabled population comprises various forms of disability (physical, cognitive, learning, etc.) the recruitment qualifications for participants in this study were left fairly broad. The recruitment protocol sought out adults in Bozeman who identify as disabled, and required no official diagnosis to account for the struggles faced by individuals with certain conditions in attaining official diagnoses. The convenience sampling nature of this study resulted in the recruitment of four participants. All of the participants were caucasian, but varied in age, profession, and length of time lived in Bozeman. Three of the participants were in their 60's and one was in her 20's, three women and one male, one student of MSU, and two employed, one retired, and one unemployed. They all lived in Bozeman over the range of 2 to 10 years. Three participants were interviewed over WebEx and one in person with either one or two interviewers. Everyone was asked the same questions, including asking how they would describe Bozeman, their experience with disability, what belonging means to them and how it applies to Bozeman, what affects their sense of belonging in the community and what Bozeman can do to better support disabled residents. The answers from these interviews were coded using NVivo software into categories (detailed below).

Results

This study found that disabled people in Bozeman link their sense of belonging to their experiences with accessibility, their diagnosis status, social life, and positive and negative disability-related factors with an impact on belonging (see Table 1). The interviews elucidated that the physical elements directly impacting disabled individuals' sense of belonging are organizations and places that accommodate the needs of the disabled person, as well as the ones that do not. These include shops, restaurants, gyms, classrooms, ski resorts, churches, and even parking garages. Satisfactory accommodations included both sensitivity on the part of business owners to the needs of disabled individuals and actual physical

adjustments made to the building (i.e. attention to air quality and wheelchair accessibility). Even institutions or offices that are charged with caring for people with disabilities, such as healthcare facilities and disability services, at times impeded individuals' sense of belonging rather than fostering it. Outdoor recreation areas in Bozeman can either promote or inhibit a sense of belonging for those with disabilities. One participant stated, "at Bridger, I am not physically able to get up to the Ridge safely. And I get a lot of mess for needing the lifts. I can't go anywhere that's not lift serviced…it's just not feasible for my body. I got called a spoiled skier for that." This study found that the social elements in Bozeman directly impacting disabled individuals' sense of belonging are groups where people of similar interests connect, the proximity to family, and the presence (or absence) of a network of friends. Findings detailed by Carter (2021) situate the importance of friendships in facilitating feelings of belonging for disabled people. In particular, this study emphasized that the extent to which an individual is known well by others in a community directly impacts the sense of connectedness and, thus belonging. In concurrence with the findings of this qualitative study, a 2017 study on the influence of social factors on students' sense of belonging highlighted the importance of accommodations, access, and support services in facilitating a sense of belonging and positively impacting the experiences of disabled individuals. This study also demonstrated that self-advocacy and perception of the campus climate toward disabled students directly impacted sense of belonging (Fleming et al.). A 1998 journal article details the implications of the social constructions of disability, emphasizing that advocacy and accommodations for people with disabilities should focus on the universal human need for assistance, rather than singling out individuals for their specific needs (Danforth & Rhodes). As one study participant relayed "What makes me feel like I belong is [when] no one… treats me any different than they would treat anyone else." Another common theme among disabled individuals in Bozeman related to their sense of isolation and loneliness. While the outdoor living space is a point of interest for the disabled community, there is an unfair stigma in Bozeman that makes disabled people feel that they do not belong. Though three of the participants spoke of the outdoor opportunities that Bozeman offers, they were often discounted from participating or not invited due to preconceived notions about their abilities. One study participant shared "The second anyone sees that I have a cane, they automatically nix me as a person to ski with [or] a person to climb with." This imposed social isolation, along with participants' need to work from home or reduced hours in an office, contributes to a sense of seclusion.

Implications

Findings among disabled participants in this Bozeman study were consistent with the research. Lack of accommodations was a common theme in the literature. Brown (2016) noted challenges in the workplace where disabled people "must seek work that capitalizes on their strengths, accepting that some assignments may be beyond their reach." This study reported the need for disabled individuals to work part-time rather than full-time jobs, a theme from our own findings, and noted the challenges in providing students with assistive tools in the classroom. Fleming et al. further addressed the challenges for disabled students, "[Even] when factors that are typically known to influence student persistence were controlled for, students with disabilities still had lower retention and completion rates than did their peers without disabilities." Finally, much of the research, specifically that of Korporaal (2008), McVilly (2006), and Robinson's (2018) studies discussed the pervasive effects of disabilities on feelings of loneliness. Accommodated spaces were important to belonging, while "social exclusion, either from particular places or more generally" inhibited it. "Young people's confidence, willingness to enter social spaces and relationships were magnified by ways that systems responded to their impairment, at worst fracturing their sense of feeling welcome and included" (Robinson et al., 2018). This study has significant implications for the city of Bozeman and MSU to enhance the way spaces accommodate those with disabilities. Greater sensitivity among business owners, government officials, healthcare providers, and university personnel has the potential to improve the sense of belonging for disabled persons in the community. Future research in this area should account for a more diverse sample of disabled Bozeman residents, possibly accounting for socioeconomic diversity, as well as a wider variety of disabilities. Disabled community members must have a voice in conversations related to policies that shape Bozeman's physical landscape and the social environment.

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Appendix

Table 1

Codebook

Code	Description
Experience w/ Disability	The participant's individualized perspective on disability: how their condition impacts their day-to-day life, and their experiences as a resident of Bozeman.
Experience w/ Accessibility	Positive and negative aspects of accessibility encountered by the participant. Could be physical or social.
Impact of Diagnosis Status	The impact of the participant's diagnosis on their lives: whether it impacts their ability to have accommodation requests fulfilled.
Factors w/ Negative Impact on Belonging	Social and/or physical aspects of Bozeman that negatively impact disabled residents' sense of belonging.
Factors w/ Positive Impact on Belonging	Social and/or physical aspects of Bozeman that positively impact disabled residents' sense of belonging.
Social Life	The participant's interaction with others, either within the Bozeman community or outside of it.

Quotes from Disabled Residents

Participant 1 – MSU student (young adult)

- The people, the community that Bozeman has created is not--is not for disabled people. Because it's such an outdoorsy-focused community. And I love that like, but they always forget that disabled people. And I walk in with a cane. No one wants to help me. And it's they just create a community of a hyper-focus on the outdoors, without focusing on including people who also like the outdoors and will have fun out there. But maybe enjoy it in a different way than another person would.
- And my main thing is, I think the biggest thing is I have a tumor on my pineal gland. And that's been what's causing seizures, fainting, blacking out. All that fun stuff, right? So I, the main issue with me is I struggle with certain classes here. Cuz there was--I had a class in Reid 401 and my seizures typically are heat induced. And so I went to class, and then I have a seizure. So that was my main thing with, uh, campus.
- Yes. Because the school was not built for disabled people. I think that's universally agreed. And it's just and especially with the community in Bozeman, not just the school and the people. Since I enjoy skiing, I enjoy climbing. The second anyone sees that I have a cane. They automatically nix me as a person to ski with a person to climb with, etc. And so I feel like, I don't really feel like I belong, because I haven't found anyone who looks past that to do fun things with.
- I'm not even sure because obviously, Montana State could work to make all of its buildings accessible, not just like, three of its buildings accessible. So that would be the nice part of it that Montana State could do strictly from accessibility wise. But they should definitely have more support for disabled students. Because the Office of Disability Services, well, they can help with some things. I emailed them three months ago, and they haven't responded. So I think they could improve their support outreach from there. As well as I've struggled to get accommodations, because doctors haven't settled on a diagnosis for me. And they require a hard diagnosis, not just symptoms. And I think, I guess I understand to a certain point, but also at a certain point, the symptoms outweigh the need for a diagnosis.
- Overall, I, I expected the college down to be better behaved about this. And I expected a college to be better than it is, since there's such a high rate of people with disabilities not completing their education or not even trying for their education, because they can't. And I'm very disappointed to see that a prominent college has done nothing or made no efforts to make things more accessible or work with disabled students.

Participant 2– retired Male

- It feels good. To me belonging is having family close to you that you see a lot which I do. You know, a lot of people don't, especially here where I live. I rarely see anybody's family members or grandkids or kids come in to see them. I have that. I have that. I feel privileged but that's what belonging is to me is family and good friends too. And that's pretty much like belonging.
- That's one of the issues here in Bozeman and accessibility to certain things, you know, the parking it's overcrowded so far away, you've got to park so far away from things. It's tough for me to go out and eat with my family. Unless they bring, I bring a wheelchair with me. You know, and that's one of those, get it into the car and unload it, I had an electric one bit that stopped you because I can't afford a handicap vehicle. So, but that's one of the issues there is that I think

do too, the accessibility. What you were saying earlier about, To me, it's just the distance is where you have to park to get to things, that's that's a bit of an issue for someone like me, you know, and I'm sure for other folks

- Like right now, where I live, we have an elevator and they're repairing and they're redoing it so I have no way to get up to do laundry on the second floor. So I have somebody come in and take my laundry and go do it for me. So things like that, you know, but that was expected they told us it was going to happen, but it's down for three weeks. So yeah, but I like to do my own laundry. You know, when I can, it gives me something to do. So. Yeah. Things like that. Like we mentioned, accessibility is just something, you know, very tough. I've had people do things for me and I'm not used to that.
- Yeah, that would be one of them. More parking, more handicap Parking. Because it's pretty limited in most places. Which I've noticed, you know, yeah, that would be one of the main things you know, and then there are some places where you go, and you have to go upstairs. They do have elevators but you have to park in a certain place and it's still a long ways away from those elevators so to speak.
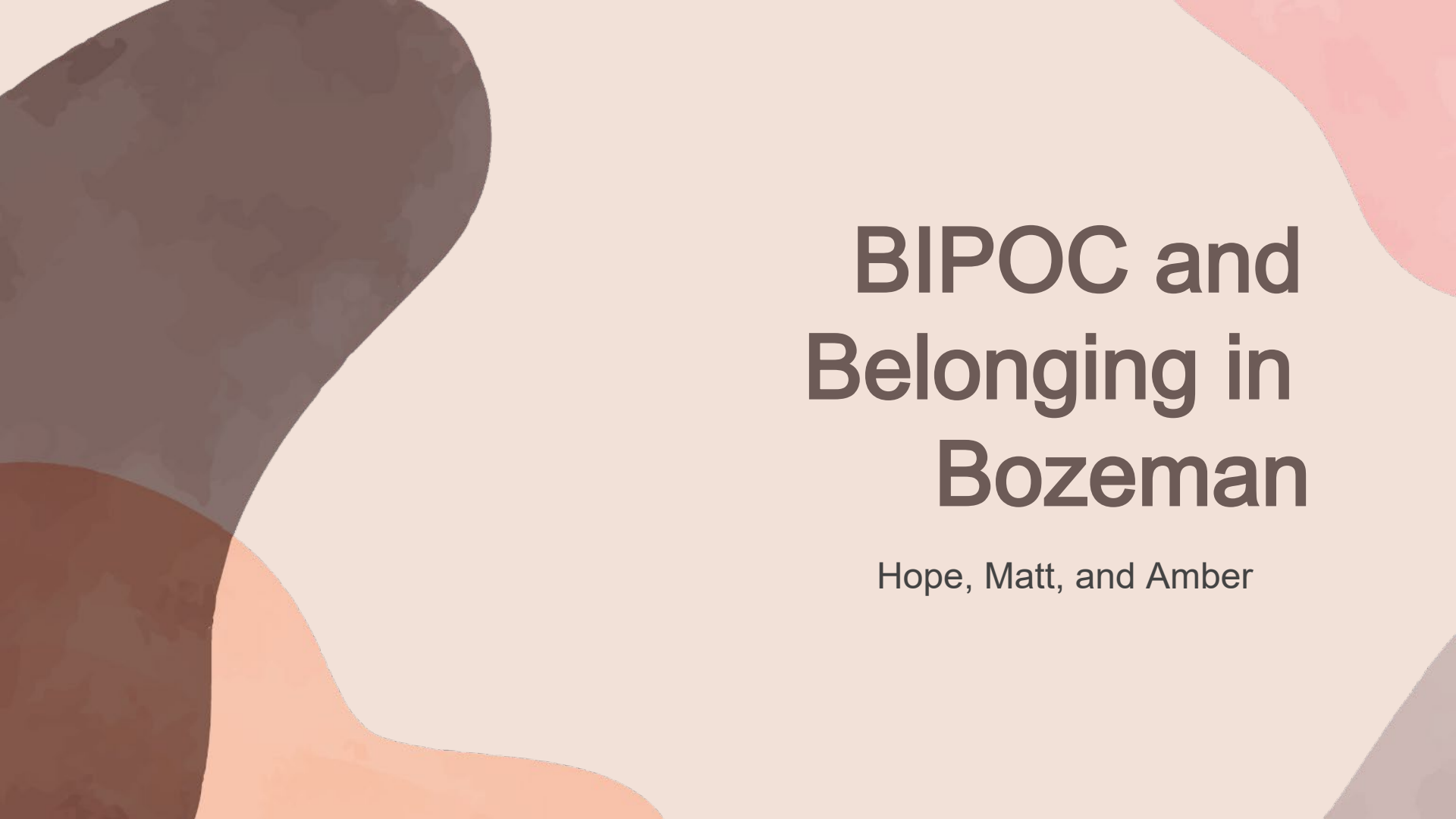
Participant 3 – retired female

- Yeah. And just in the time, well, your question is, How would I describe it? I would say that it still has a great deal of openness to people. If you're walking down the street and you greet someone, they'll greet you back. And that's not true everywhere. So it's an open city. In my experience, I like it, that there are trails in the city, so that one can do quite a bit of walking just in the city, away from traffic. And I think that's really good. Culturally, of course, with MSU here, that really, really makes the community very vibrant in terms of the arts and sciences. And there are many opportunities for lectures and things like that, that I really appreciate. And I have a granddaughter here, which is the reason I moved here. And so I'm participating in school events and things like that. And I really enjoy this, it still has a small town feel, and events like that. And there are so many artistic institutions here
- Well, I think the most limiting factor for me, is mobility—well two of them--mobility, and the chemical sensitivity. I am so sensitive that if I'm around cleaning supplies, or strong colognes, I have to just leave immediately. And I literally have to stop breathing after the first breath. And I've learned this from very hard experience. For example, one time, I was waiting for a doctor's appointment in a waiting room with somebody's perfume there. And I didn't leave. And for about 15 minutes I was exposed to it. Well, that was in April, that triggered nausea. So great for months and months and months, that by that fall, I had gone from 127 pounds to 104 pounds. So this is really serious stuff. I've noticed that more and more places are putting up signs, asking people not to wear perfumes and things like that, for example, more and more doctor's offices have that. So I appreciate that.
- And I'm glad the city's, you know, open to it [hearing from people with disabilities]and actually encouraging it and seeking it. That's really good.

Participant 4 – retired female

- Well, that's changed a lot in the last couple of years. Well, just with COVID, and the huge increase in population. Like I say, it used to be a really nice, quaint, small mountain town. You know, it's changed a lot. I say we're a zoom town. You know, by my estimates, well, I know we had a 35% population increase with COVID. And I've also heard statistics that 30 to 35% of the preexisting population left. Oh, wow. So that means because they couldn't afford it anymore, or they went somewhere else. So that means that we've got 60% of people who didn't live here three years ago. Yeah. You know, so you know, when I tell them what I liked about Bozeman, you know, Bozeman Hot Springs is key for me, because deepwater warm and chlorinated like every one of those things is important, like that there's no chemicals in it. And I am able to ski so Bridger Bowl is a pretty sweet place you know, I used to really like the Ellen and the Emerson and and a lot of the activities but I can't be in public due to fragrances and, and petrochemicals but mostly fragrances and so
- I like seeing the air quality here in Bozeman. And it's bad, like the kind of nicotine colored haze that sits on the valley. And so then I started following that. There is only one air quality monitor in Gallatin County, it's by the McDonald's. Oh, by the old high school, it is the lowest quality air quality monitor that the EPA allows. And so it's only regular monitoring particulate 2.5. You know, that the Ellen, like, old building doesn't have good ventilation, they don't have air purification in there, if I just go into the Ellen, Emerson, Wilson, any of those things. And I used to have a whole bunch of air quality monitors. Like this little guy. You know, but, you know, so it's monitoring, and it would alert me to the air quality, the air quality goes absolutely horrific, within just from people being in there, the CO2 levels go through the roof. And so, you know, I think that there's a lot that Bozeman could do in public, you know, to just really work to mitigate fragrances. Even the doctor's offices don't have fragrance free, you know, policies, and if they do, they don't enforce them. You know, so yeah, I mean, building codes could help, you know, for better ventilation, I think, you know, COVID brought us awareness of that kind of stuff. But if they're not monitoring the air quality, you know, on an individual business basis, on a community basis, we're not going to get anywhere
- My hope is, is that long COVID Which is kind of all in this soup of mystery illnesses, will help because there's a lot of funding going to these mystery illnesses, you know, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue, biologic encephalomyelitis, all that stuff, you know. But there's a lot of bias about it. Like there was a meta study that came out of one of the universities in Ontario, that basically said, it's all in your head.
- But anyway, you asked about Bozeman, I mean, I think we need to have way more air quality monitors. And I think that citizens are going to have to do that. And a lot of the monitors that are coming out on the market are for people to be collecting data and that data like individuals to be collecting data. So I have an air quality monitor here right by my computer. And like I'm at zero, you know, reading in my house right now, but Bozeman is at 16, which is still anything under 50 is pretty good. But like yesterday, Bozeman was in the red zone, and my house was clean.
- HRDC runs the streamline bus. And HRDC gets really pretty much all the funding for disabled people in our area, disabled low income elderly, they get almost all the funding funding funnels through HRDC that place needs to be burned to the ground and resurrected. And after eight years of persistence I qualified to buy one of their new homes really and qualified for every income assistance program out there five of them. And I ended up walking away from me and

literally I got to the point where I'm like any other place but HRDC and HRDC was unwilling and unable to accommodate this fragrance issue. And then also migraine issues and all that kind of thing with the lighting and with the ventilation. And the home that I qualified for because I'm single was like if the building was an H it was the middle unit that was squished in and shorter than the other units on each side and I've only had one operating window on the ground floor on the north side. So I wouldn't have been able to air out my house if I needed to. And, and, and also like I don't know if you saw Bozeman cohousing. You know, I tried to buy in there. They ended up being outrageously expensive, but they also could not even consider accommodating this. They wanted the project to get off the ground and they really didn't care about disabilities. But HRDC is so key to everybody with disabilities. And they are the ones they're not trauma informed. And they are not fragrance free at HRDC and they do not make their facilities fragrance free. And that's the place you got to start in Bozeman because they are not going to be grand you know health care reform grand you know air quality code roof form, it's them simply taking very simple steps. And, and that goes right down to respect. I mean, I probably, I would say eight out of I will just give you one example. There was an article in the newspaper about buying a mobile home, okay. And there's issues with that. And there was an article by somebody on the HRDC industry advisory council, who wrote the article, I wanted to get in contact with them. So I called the front desk and HRDC, who asked somebody else because they had no idea who this person was, or who or who was in charge of this committee, or who the committee was. So then they transferred me to another person who doesn't know who asked another person who doesn't know who sends me to another person where I leave a voicemail, whose outgoing message says, I'm going to be out of the office two months ago for five days, who never called me back. And that is HRDC in a nutshell, right there, get your paperwork in on time in hardcopy to our office 48 hours before our meeting, and then they lose it. So not only is their person not prepared, they've lost your entire financial, medical background history, probably 20 times before I got to the point where I could buy a house through them. And then I just decided I don't want them in my life.

BIPOC and Belonging in Bozeman

Hope, Matt, and Amber

Significance: Tolerant or Truly Inclusive?

Bozeman is becoming a rapidly diverse town due to the influx of people the last few years. Does this mean we are welcoming to all?
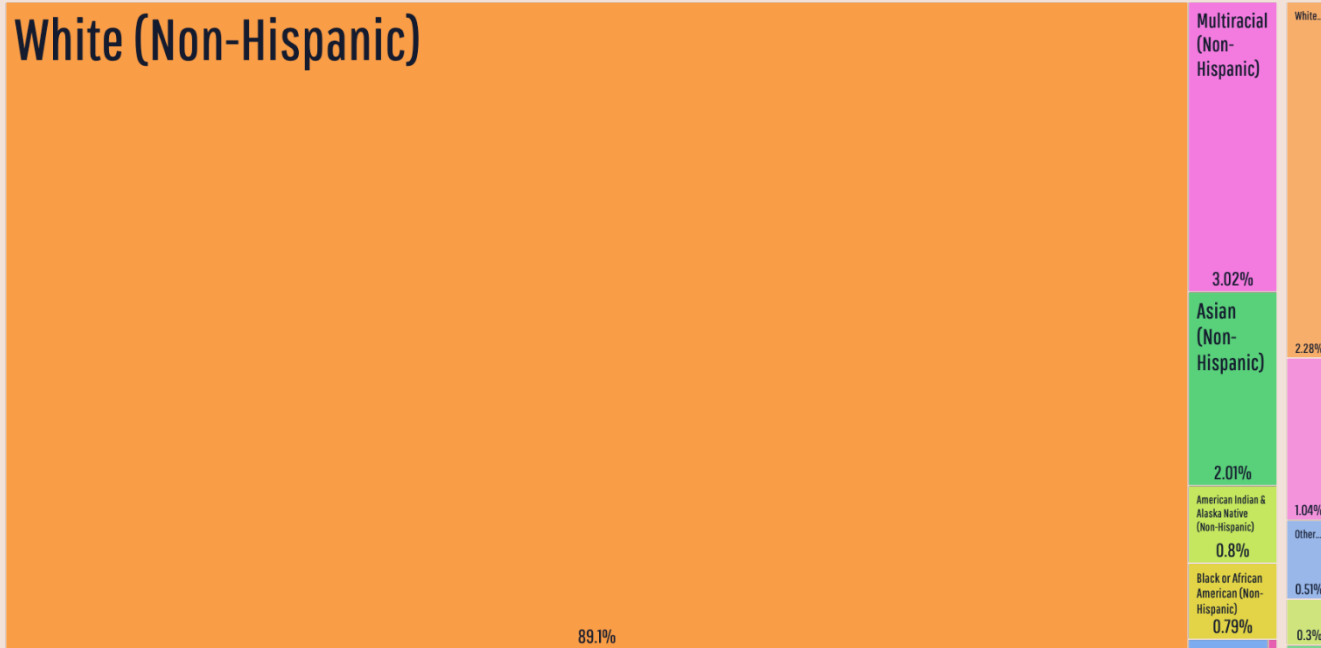
Is Bozeman just tolerant of BIPOC peoples or are we truly trying to make them feel included and like they belong?

Montana City or Town

Select one or more Cities or Towns

Bozeman city

Total Population (count)
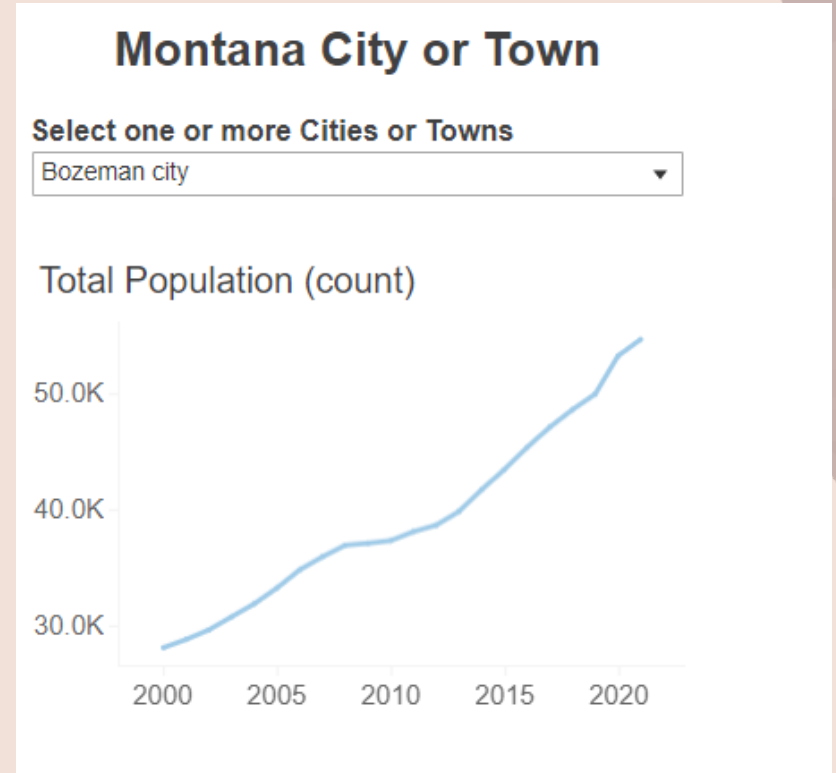
Statistics of Bozeman Population

Study Aims

Examine traditionally marginalized groups' feelings of belonging in Bozeman.

What changes can be made to create a more inclusive community for BIPOC individuals?

Describe the progress we have seen regarding inclusiveness and diversity in Bozeman.

Methodology

- Recruitment of our participants

- Participants

- Interview protocol

- "Do you feel supported in the community, what are some of the reasons?"

- "What does it mean to belong in a community to you?"

Results

Themes/codes among participants: Awareness, Sense of community, Microaggressions, Education, Accountability, Diversity, Leadership, and Resources.

"Like my doctor here, I know she didn't mean any harm by it, but when I first saw her she commented on my skin and she's like, wow you have such dark skin, so tough. Like, I'm like, Why? Why is it different? Like you wouldn't say that to someone white."

Results: Participant #1

- Noticies his "Blackness" more in Bozeman than Townsend

  "I don't want to feel special.."

- Themes of microaggressions towards minorities.

- Seeks community and resources.

- Values effort.

- Overall, enjoys Bozeman and Montana as a whole.

Results: Participant #2

- Wants opinions to be heard as someone that came from elsewhere.

  "Letting us know that we are heard. That our opinions are validated."

- Doesn't want to change things just wants to feel understood.

- Still looking for a community outside of work to belong to.

- Feels that the Bozeman community values and protects nature.

Results: Participant #3

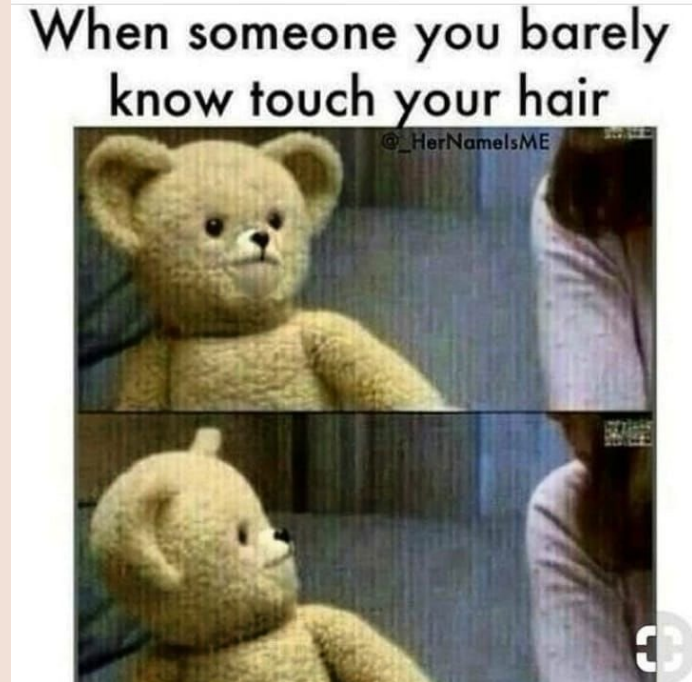- Microaggressions

  "I worked food service here and retail here and I've gotten multiple people who refuse to come to my check out line."

  "Like I get a lot of people that will come up and like touch my hair like, 'Oh your hairs so great!', without asking and stuff like that."

- Wants education directed towards basic knowledge of other cultures.

- Seeks more resources in order to find community.

Results: Participant #4

- Does not see Bozeman as inherently racist.
  - Microaggressions

- Stereotypes

  "And people, you know, comment like, oh, well, you definitely grew up with Asian morals."

- Wants to see BIPOC in leadership positions.

  "I guess to see more people in positions of leadership that are mixed. Just because like the boards that we have in the community would be representing basically the minority."

- Feels that MSU has great clubs, but the community at large needs more resources and awareness.

- Feels that she does not have a sense of community here.

Implications

- Resources towards minority communities would make prospering and finding community easier. Groups, events, translators, ect..

- Promoting minorities to leadership positions gives them a seat at the table and allows for different perspectives to be heard.

- Education is a key factor in changing hearts and minds as well as raising awareness.

- There is a need and want for accountability.

"Diversity is having a seat at the table, Inclusion is having a voice, and Belonging is having that voice be heard" (Jodi LeBlanc).

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Introduction and Significance

Bozeman's population as we know is rapidly growing and with this rapid growth comes more diversity in the population. Data from Data USA shows that from 2000 to 2020 the city's population went from 29,000 to 52,000. The town is growing because of the college, the outdoor recreation available, and the slower way of life compared to the major urban areas of the United States. With this rapid growth, we have to ask the question as a city: are we welcoming the BIPOC community? Belonging is important for everyone in a community and in a recent study by Valcke et al. they state "Nevertheless, as we will argue below, sense of collective belongingness–to an organization or, as presently studied, to society – is utterly important for minority members, as feelings of inclusion promote social well-being and help to sustain harmonious relationships among social groups" (Valcke et al., 2020).

According to Data USA, we know what the population of Bozeman looks like with Hispanics being the largest minority group at 4.15% of the population and the second largest being multiracial (nonhispanic) at 3.02% of the population. White non-Hispanic is 89.1% of the population of Bozeman showing that the BIPOC community is small (but growing) in Bozeman and merits the question of: Does the BIPOC community feel they belong and whether we as a city are inclusive to the BIPOC community? In this study, we intend to look at traditionally marginalized groups and their sense of belonging as well as how Bozeman can work to create a more inclusive community. We intend to do this by analyzing both the progress the city has already made as well as what the city can do more to better this sense of belonging.

Methodology

For this study, the recruitment process was a mix of 2 convenience samples of people we knew and 2 probability sample participants which were random. For the random participants, we had a professor create an announcement of our study for a class, and participants reached out to us. The interviews were recorded and in person which varied in length from 15-30 minutes in which we would ask a predetermined question such as "Do you feel supported in the community? If so, what are some of the reasons why?" The predetermined questions cover the 1.) Understanding inclusivity and belonging here in Bozeman, 2.) How Bozeman is different from where they grew up, 3.) Ideas of inclusivity and belonging, 4.) Problems they have faced in Bozeman, and 5.) Solutions for Bozeman to better inclusivity and belonging. After we were done asking our questions we asked participants if they wanted to add anything to the interview.

After the interview was completed we would listen to the recording and transcribe the interview so that we could see common themes between our 4 participants and their answers to our questions. You will see what we found in the results section down below, but this helped us get a better understanding of the characteristics of our participants. Our participants were in their early to mid-20s and with three participants enrolled in Montana State University and one working professionally. Our participants identified as Hispanic, Mixed-Nonhispanic, Asian-American, and Hawaiian with one male and three females who participated in the study.

Results

- Participant #1 is a mixed man in his lower 20's, who is originally from Townsend Montana. He is a Montana State University Student here in Bozeman. He noted that his blackness is more noticeable in Bozeman than when he's in his hometown of Townsend and that he just wants to feel as if he fit's in. "I don't want to feel special" was something he noted. There was a theme with our participants, including participant #1 of having to

deal with microaggressions. One example being the touching of our participants' hair without their consent. In order to combat this and find a sense of belonging, resources and community are wanted and needed. This participant values the effort people are making to make them feel welcome and overall enjoys Bozeman and loves the community.

- Participant #2 is a Mexican working professional in her 20s who immigrated from Mexico but spent most of her formative years in California. She moved to Montana for the outdoors and slower paced lifestyle. She loves how Bozeman cares and protects nature and how there are many opportunities to get outside. Still looking for a community to belong to and feels like if her opinions were to be heard it would go a long way especially as someone not from here. Feels there needs to be more resources for Spanish speaking communities.
- Participant #3 is a Native Hawaiian student who works in the community in her early 20s who came from Philadelphia. She moved to Bozeman for school. She has dealt with many microaggressions including unwanted physical contact, lack of understanding of culture and other races, refusal of contact based on skin color, and people in prestigious professions lacking in education. She would like more awareness, a community she can trust, microaggressions being denounced and accountability for those, education, diversity in the community, and more resources especially for Spanish speakers.
- Participant #4 is a mixed Asian American student who works in the community in her early 20s. She moved to Bozeman for school. She has dealt with microaggressions based on her race including slurs and men fetishizing her. She does not feel as if she belongs to the community yet as it does not feel like the community she had at home. She feels like there needs to be more resources for Asian Americans that focus on personal identification and emotions within the culture. She feels that having BIPOC in leadership positions that represent the minority would be helpful.

Implications

Providing resources is a key in creating strong communities all across the world. We know that. By supporting our BIPOC communities and providing resources in the form of translators, event planning, and group formation we can better create a space where everyone feels like they have support. We can also focus on putting BIPOC people in leadership positions. This allows for different voices to have a seat at the table and have a say in decision making. When BIPOC people are in leadership positions the city will better be able to provide needed and helpful resources to the larger community.

Education on the topic is also very important. Communicating with everyone that these communities are here and important is key to building a cohesive community where everyone feels like they belong. With education comes accountability which is essential. When people are empowered to stand up for what is right, the community grows stronger and becomes more cohesive. Finding more ways in which we can successfully hold people accountable in a purely productive way would be helpful and it's something worth researching more.

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Participant #2:

Mexican Female in her 20s who works in the community.

- "To be heard and if you have questions or concerns, or you want to put your two cents, you know, at least get feedback from it, whether it is going towards what you would like or expressing as to why it wouldn't work out."
- "The biggest thing was that I wanted to live somewhere where there was a lot of care for the nature at this place, you know, really does care for nature."

Participant #3:

Hawaiian Native Female in her 20s is a student who works in the community.

- "Like my doctor here, I know she didn't mean any harm by it, but when I first saw her she commented on my skin and she's like, wow you have such dark skin, so tough. Like, I'm like, Why? Why is it different? Like you wouldn't say that to someone white."
- "Like I get a lot of people that will come up and like touch my hair like, 'Oh your hair is so great!', without asking and stuff like that."
- "Being here everyone says that like, oh there's no racism here. Oh like everyone's so nice here. But I think it's like a fake nice in my opinion, like people are definitely nice but there's a lot more like microaggressions and I get that most people here haven't probably seen a person of color or many or have like friends and sometimes it feels like I'm in a zoo."
- "I think like awareness in Bozeman would be nice. Just like basic knowledge of other cultures."
- "Just like more awareness, like, not everyone's like I got in trouble once because my, my hairs in a ponytail and I have like naturally frizzy, puffy hair. Yeah, I didn't get in trouble but I was told to put it in a bun and verbally reprimanded. I started just like slicking it back just so I didn't get into trouble."
- "In Bozeman, I do have friends who are like, aware of the differences and issues and but they still have our friends with people who support the confederate flag. Like, what? Like, I don't trust them so much, because I'm one of your friends but you're saying that's okay, yeah, and there's a lot of people like that here."
- "There have been people at grocery stores like checking me out. And they'll, like, start speaking Spanish to me. I'm not Hispanic. So that's really annoying. I have this one kind of really bad lady who's checking me out. She started speaking Spanish to me. And it wasn't even crap Spanish. And I said that I'm not Spanish. She was like, Oh, you look Mexican. Oh, okay. And I can't like growing up. I was told that you can't like say anything you have to be respectful. You can't do anything. Even if they are pissing you off. Cuz you just can't. And so shut my mouth. And she was like, oh, are you native? No. She was like, she said some other things that she was like, sorry, I didn't mean to offend you. And it's kind of like you could have just said nothing.
- "Here I don't feel like I can really talk to anyone about it. It's like none of my white friends can understand. They're gonna brush it off and not going to help."

Participant #4:

Mixed Asian American in her 20s who is a student and works in the community.

- "You know, I have a lot of people ask me, like, where am I from? Because I am racially ambiguous. And like, there's a lot of jokes made about, you know, it's just more of a wow, compared to coming from somewhere that is mixed."
- " There're some people that are really against the influx of different types of people and like, that hold true to their ideals and maybe don't want to think outside of their bubble. You know, and like, there are some aggressive people that I've met, like, someone yelled a slur and stuff, or when I was walking with my friend, which is, you know, not the greatest, but like other people, they welcome the change and like, the ability to see life from a different perspective, which I think is great."
- "We were just walking down College, and someone came around in a truck a couple of times yelling stuff about COVID. So I guess just some kid just wanting to I don't know do whatever he was doing which, you know, I guess it just more came up as ignorant."
- "You know, someone commenting that like they like ethnic women and like fetishizing us. You know, just the little things you don't say that. It can be uncomfortable."
- "There's outside blood in you. And like I do get asked it a lot more and it is like a subject of talk. And people, you know, comment like, oh, well, you definitely grew up with Asian morals. Or you're smart, because you're Asian. I wouldn't say it was an atmosphere of malice. It's just you know, it's just more interesting because of the demands for it."
- "I guess to see more people in positions of leadership that are mixed. Just because like the boards that we have in the community would be representing basically the minority. Great, but I'm not sure if there's more, I don't look at the legislator. "

Belonging Within Senior Citizens

By Rebecca Harwell, Jonathan Goslar, Holly Snook, Genevieve Weiss

Introduction

- Population of Interest
  - Stats; 16% of Population; 2030 1 in 5 will be 65+
    - Life expectancy increasing
- Importance of this population
- Motivation of the study

Significance

- Purpose of the study: So the city can understand belonging in 65+ community.

Study Aims

1. Explore diverse perspectives related to feelings of belonging among senior citizens.
2. Describe the challenges that senior citizens face in the city of Bozeman.
3. Identify how the city of Bozeman can improve the sense of belonging within the senior citizen community.

Methodology

- Recruitment Strategy
- We used Webex to record, hand transcribed interviews, Microsoft word, Google slides
- 4 participants were interviewed, 2 male and 2 female. Age range between 65-85 years old.
- Wanted to have participants both in and out of assisted living.
- Relevant characteristics
- Measures

Methodology Cont.

- **Interview protocol**

Semi Structured Sample Questions

- What types of activities and behaviors give you a sense of belonging?
- Do you feel that the city of Bozeman has effective resources to contribute to your sense of belonging for your generation?
- How can the city of Bozeman support you more?

Results 💡

Themes among participants: Activities, Friendships, Senior Assistance, and Community

Interviewer: What has the city of Bozeman done to make you feel supported?"

Participant 1: "Well I think it comes from here." (The assisted living home.)

Participant 2: "It's a very outdoor community. Tremendously outdoor community. The city of Bozeman really promotes that."

Participant 3: "Befrienders help me a lot in making me feel supported."

Participant 4: "The city provides the support for the trails on that hill and I walk them all the time."

Implications

- What needs to happen now?
- What changes can be made to empower participants and/or create supportive communities?

Discussion

Introduction and Significance

The senior citizen community is important and worthy of research. This is because we can learn how time has altered perceptions of belonging within this group and how their current sense of belonging fits within the community, they live in. This population of interest is important because various identity groups make up an established community. It is imperative that the senior citizen community is recognized and heard in how they perceive their sense of belonging in the community they call home. A previous study concluded that social and physical well-being was predicted due to social cohesion, belonging, and changes in the elderly community (Cramm, J.M., and Nieboer, 2015). This shows how fundamental a sense of belonging is to the well-being of individuals and the community. A recent study states that feelings were defined as a part of belonging, and furthermore, knowing and a state of being also represent other aspects of belonging (Jakebec, Olfert, Choi, Dawe, and Sheehan 2019). Belonging is not just a surface-level aspect of society. It is a far more profound and complicated matter and has larger effects on society as a whole. The purpose of this storytelling project aims to discover more about this population and synthesize and analyze stories to find solutions to better support the senior citizen community.

Methodology

Beginning the process of gathering participants, we decided to use convenient sampling as our method. We contacted assisted living facilities in Bozeman for two of the participants and for the other two, we used individuals that we knew personally. We interviewed four participants in total. Two were male, two were female, all between the ages of 65-85. From a previous study on social exclusion and retirement villages, we found that members in community assisted living feel they retain a sense of belonging more continuously when in an assisted living facility (Nielson, et al., 2019). Once participants had agreed to be interviewed, we debriefed participants beforehand about the types of questions we would ask them related to their sense of belonging in the city of Bozeman and informed them that they would be receiving compensation in the form of a $25 Amazon Gift Card for their participation in the study. We informed participants that their participation is entirely voluntary, and if they wished to stop at any given point, questioning would end effectively immediately. We used WebEx recording software to record the interviews, which lasted between 20-30 minutes. Once interviews were recorded, we then hand-transcribed them into a Microsoft Word document. Once transcribed, each member of our group listened to and regrouped to then evaluate common themes and codes regarding our participants' sense of belonging within the city of Bozeman. The common themes we found relate to the ideas of a study emphasizing the importance of familiarity later in life as an associate to feelings of belonging (Carragher L, Ryan C., 2020).

Results

Each participant has lived different lives, and not one of them is the same. Participant 1 is from out of state and has moved around a lot in life and found a career as a professor and a writer. McLaren and colleagues (2013) found that individuals who live in assisted living homes are more depressed than others who live in their own home. However, participant one is 80 years old and only moved into the senior assistance home within the past year and feels the home helps with their sense of belonging within Bozeman the most, they described the activities they participate in such as group walks. These activities help with their feeling of belonging. The participant spoke of how walking with a group each day is nice and making friends through such activities helps with their sense of belonging.

Participant 2 has lived here for the past fifteen years. They are a highly social and active member of the community participating in recreational activities and community engagement and live independently. "It's a very outdoor community. Tremendously outdoor community. The city of Bozeman really promotes that" (Participant 2). Campbell (2002) said that individuals that

are more dependent tend to be more active. Participant 2, however, is more independent and has more opportunities to partake in activities.

Participant 3 spent their twenties beginning to raise six children while maintaining a career in the healthcare system. At the age of 80, participant 3 remains stuck in the house because of anatomical abnormalities, and their inability to pursue physical activity. "Befrienders help me a lot and they help me with errands, and senior assistance brings me boxes of food but I can't finish all of the food so my son helps me with extra food" (Participant 3). With Befrienders of Bozeman, Senior Assistance, and familial relations, they have found support and a sense of belonging. "Loneliness was linked with poor hearing ability, poor health, and having a lower income" (Perlman and Others, 1978). Participant 3 has health problem which in turn can turn into loneliness.

Participant 4, lives in assisted living. They are 85 and live with their partner. They have a very stable life.They spoke about activities such as walking trails and other group activities. They believe that a sense of belonging comes from family, friends, and social activities and that better transportation around Bozeman would be useful to those not as fortunate as they are.

The participants described different activities and resources that help with their feeling of belonging. The most common activities included walking in groups whether that is on a trail or through a park. Through these activities, they have made friends that are in either the same or similar situations. A significant factor that comes into play for the feeling of belonging includes family and other social activities. Familial relationships, friends, social activities (group activities), and access to transportation help individuals feel like they belong (Table 1, See Appendix A).

Implications

We found that senior citizens believe that more accessibility to get around Bozeman would make them feel like they better belong here. Many stated things that they believed helped them feel like they belong. Some of these being having staff inform them of current events and weather so they can be better prepared for their day and being close to family and friends or being a part of social groups makes them feel like they belong."Results indicated that a higher sense of belonging predicted more reasons to live overall, and child-related concerns, responsibility to family, and survival and coping beliefs, specifically" (Kissane & McLaren, 2006). These findings are situated completely within the broader literature. People enjoy being able to do what they want and see who they want to see, this makes our group feel they belong. The implications for institutional and local policy change for Bozeman is the city council is already working on getting an expanded bus district. This would allow more people around Bozeman that don't have cars to get around easier. The takeaway is very clear: they want to achieve their goals and not feel stuck in one spot. They want to live their lives like when they were younger and not want to be hunkered down. Some important areas for future research would be expanding the city's current public bus routes which are already in the works. Also just having people to be around that they can find common ground with like befrienders which is already an organization. Maybe having more places that create outdoor group activities. "Older adults living at home often lose touch with others due to retirement, loss of a spouse or friends, changes in access to transportation and other reasons" (*Keeping well and socially connected*. Courage: Action for Better Aging).

Appendix A
What makes you feel like you belong?

	Family	Friends	Activities	Assisted Living
Participant 1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Participant 2			Yes	
Participant 3	Yes			
Participant 4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Total	3 Participants	2 Participants	3 Participants	2 Participants

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Senior Citizen Quotes

Participant 1

- It's a very outdoor community. Tremendously outdoor community. The city of Bozeman really promotes that. Yeah, they really do. I mean, just look at any publication or opportunity, it's out there. The city of Bozeman promotes getting outside. I mean there's the Outside Bozeman magazine, you know? Stepping out, over The BoZone is constantly "Oh this rivers, and fishing's great. Or this show's going on or, it's time to think about ski slop" or all of that so. Oh yeah. There is a remarkable amount of access to information and things to do for people of my age. I never think that I'm a senior citizen, I just don't

- You know the city of Bozeman is pretty damn good at providing any kind of information or things for people of my age. I mean they are just wonderful about it. I mean you can just know if you need any information anywhere all you have to do is hit a website or go to the courthouse or the chamber of commerce, which is all city sponsored stuff. And they have people there that know what they are talking about. They do an excellent job.

- Yeah, it's very noticeable especially when I talk to old friends. And they get a big kick out of it. They say, "How do you guys do this in Montana?" I say, "Well I just walk into city hall. It's on the way to work and I'm done in five minutes, really." They've got to take a day off of work or if they're retired they've got to take a day off of pickleball or something. Yeah I mean it's easy. Yeah the city of Bozeman is doing a really good job.

Participant 2

- But I do think that belonging comes, you just have to be patient. And you know, work things through. And some people, you really enjoy others maybe not so much. And pretty soon, you have friendships.
- I would get involved in the activities that they offer here which is great. At 2 o'clock I'm going on this scenic tour again. And um the people know my name and um I sit with various people at tables for meals and things. And that's it.
- I mean I've noticed the growth. But I don't worry about it because I didn't grow up here. And all the people I've talked to, so often have lived here all their lives and their families and so forth. So I don't have that feeling of loss that others may have

Participant 3

- My son takes me for drives or drives me to places. He spends a majority of his time here helping me.

- It's hard to feel isolated. I can only walk to my car right outside and with the snow, I have a difficult time even doing that. My son has to drive me to doctors appointments, I can't go alone, I need help for that.

- I will normally eat something from a meal that is given Senior assistance and watch tv. It's hard for me to get up and move around so I have to stay in one area. After my son returns home, he'll make me dinner and then head off to bed

Participant 4

- Anyway, as far as belonging in Bozeman. I have a community garden, I don't know if you know where those are east of campus. At the base of the street, anyway you get to know all the other gardens, you get to
know neighbors, you get to- if you're in a worship group you get to people in the worship group. But you help develop friendships. This morning I had my weekly coffee with a friend of mine. He was at MSU for a long time

- But I get a lot of walking, and you run into people there that you get to know. So I think the basic thing about belonging is getting out of your house... Or invite people in. but you know you go to a coffee shop or like I did this morning with one friend and I will tomorrow morning with another good friend. There are people available to do that.
- yeah we are lucky. Now it's changing as it grows, it gets more impersonal. You know you tend not to know the clerk in the store quite often as well as you might have.

- Other people may complain that there are things lacking that they would like to participate in but I don't find that lack. I'm pretty well supported on whatever I decide I want to do. They could at considerable financial cost move to get the roadway transportation system a larger extension. That would be nice, the city is growing so fast that they have to put together a transportation infrastructure.

- I select activities that help me belong. It's less personal than it was when it was smaller but there are things that mitigate that to some extent. The capability of doing things that may not have been available at the time. One of my problems is you know... Baldy is a mountain just north east of town, have you been to Baldy? It's a big mountain. For years I did that once a week it went up to about four thousand feet elevation change and went 5 miles each way and tried to stay in condition that way and enjoy the outdoors. I can't do that anymore. It was nice that the federal, state, and local provided the resources to get to trailheads to get up the mountain. I understand that if you want to hike on a trail now you got to get there really early in the morning because there are so many people, few trailheads, small parking lots and during the day if you park there a vehicle could be trashed and have stuff stolen out of it. That wasn't true before that's unfortunate. but I don't do that anymore, it doesn't impact me. I just read it in the newspaper as far as the criminal element that tends to approve with a bigger community and those with a smaller one. That's a subtraction to a sense of contentment I don't know about belonging. What's the difference between contentment and belonging?