

Inclusivity and diversity are at the heart of sport. However, research shows that including people isn't enough. Unless people feel they belong, they are less likely to thrive in the roles they occupy within sport.

## What is belonging?

**Being part of a community** – coaches value a sense of community; whether it is a work team or an entire organisation, being part of a community involves sharing an *identity* and *values*.

**Being able to contribute** – coaches who perceive themselves, and are being perceived by others, as a *valued* part of the community, can speak up, contribute ideas, and share different thoughts free from fear.

**Being accepted and respected** – if coaches are recognised both personally and professionally and their uniqueness is accepted and valued, then coaches are enabled to feel safe to bring their full self to work.



## Why belonging matters?

**Belonging impacts coaches' well-being.** It affects their self-confidence, self-esteem, sense of self, mental health and well-being.

**Belonging leads to greater performance.** It can increase coaches' performance, innovation, creativity, collaboration, progression and retention.



**Note:** If coaches don't experience a sense of belonging, they are more likely to feel insecure about their place at work and feel less freedom to be their authentic selves. The felt-insecurity or fear can undermine performance, creativity, ability and willingness to collaborate.

Coaches explained that feeling they don't belong is associated with under-performance, lack of motivation, seeing their career coming to a halt, and falling "out of love" with coaching. The feeling of not fitting in can be painful, distracting and exhausting.