belonging
/bɪˈlɒŋɪŋ/

noun
1.an affinity for a place or situation.
"we feel a real **sense of belonging**"

Students told us about their sense of belonging

"…**even though I got good grades** from high school that got me a place on the course I feel like I don't belong there"

"…not having in-person teaching and formal exams has made me **question my abilities**"

"…mature, disabled and part time student. Nope, I definitely feel like an **outsider**.

"Having studied **remotely** thus far, it is difficult to feel a sense of belonging"

"With **not living on campus** and having a child its hard to make new friends and feel involved"

"I've felt so **lonely** that its affected my ability to concentrate on uni work"

"…I feel **proud** of myself. I chose to be here - I pay to be here - I have worked hard to be here. I believe that this is where I belong"

"…a **safe and inclusive** space where I can be myself (a mature, BAME woman)"

"There is a strong sense of **community** and its also very welcoming"

"Everyone gets along with each other, we all have the same amount of **respect**"

"The university and the city feels like my **home**, I feel I can be myself here and grow as an individual"
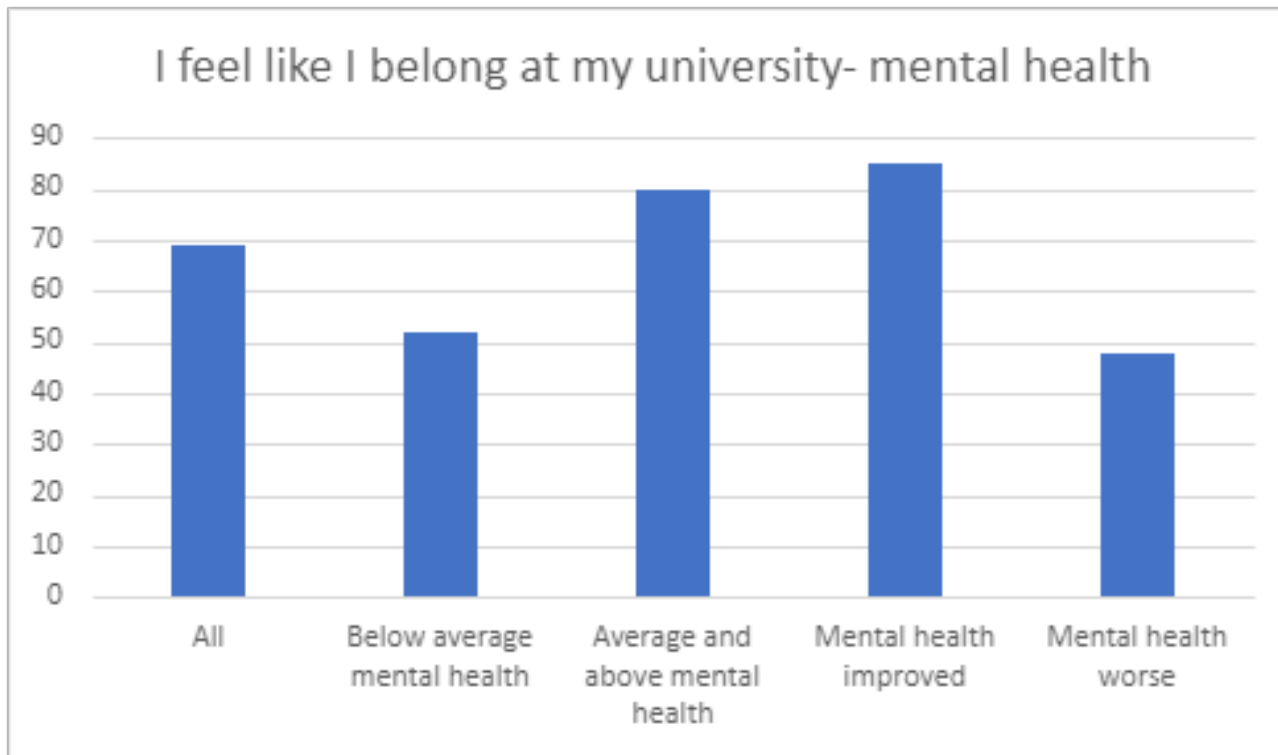
"University is **welcoming** however I get imposter syndrome sometimes"

Demographics.

I feel like I belong at my university- demographics
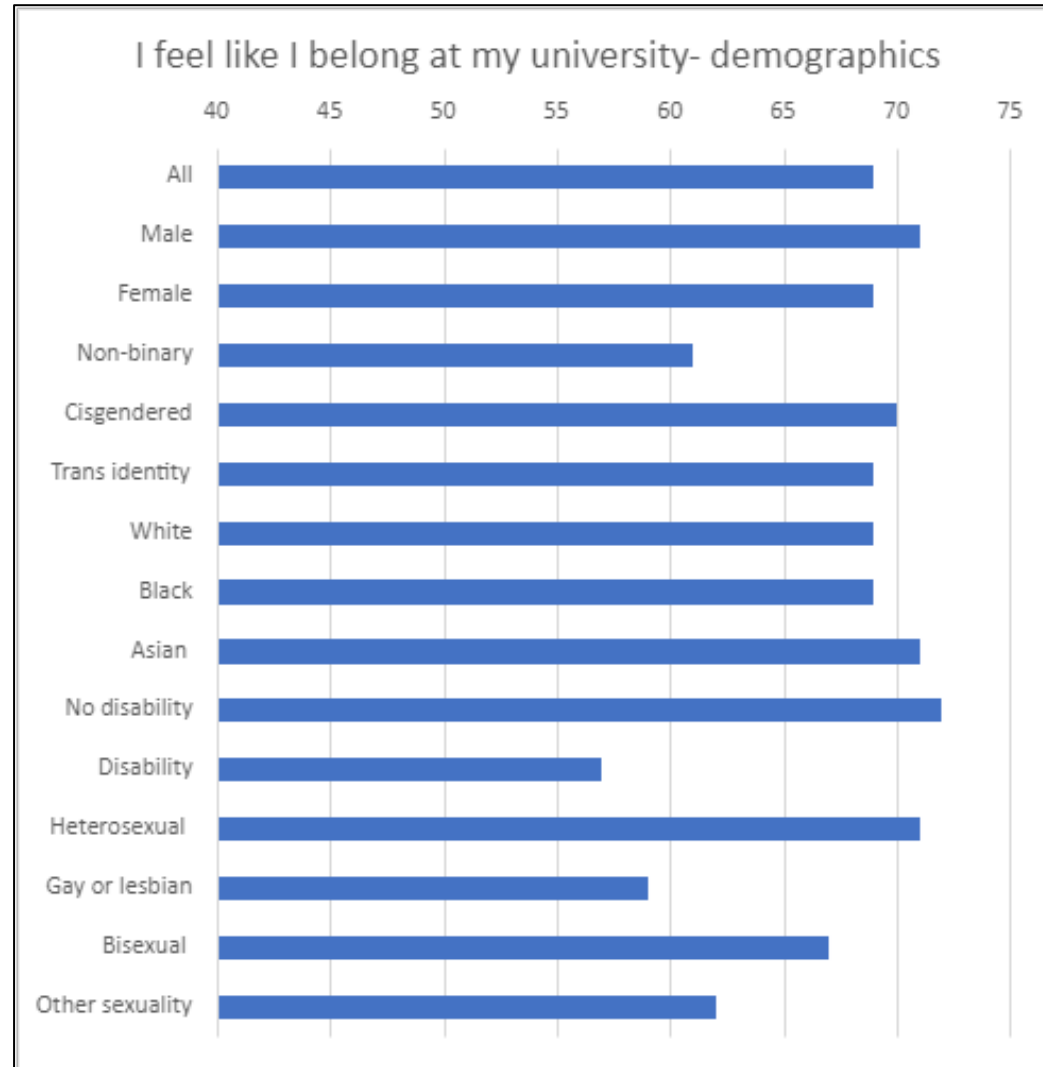
Unlocking belonging.
Mental health is the key.

I feel like I belong at my university- mental health

Of those students who do who reported **below average** mental health

- 52% felt they belonged at university
- 18% thought that their mental health was worse

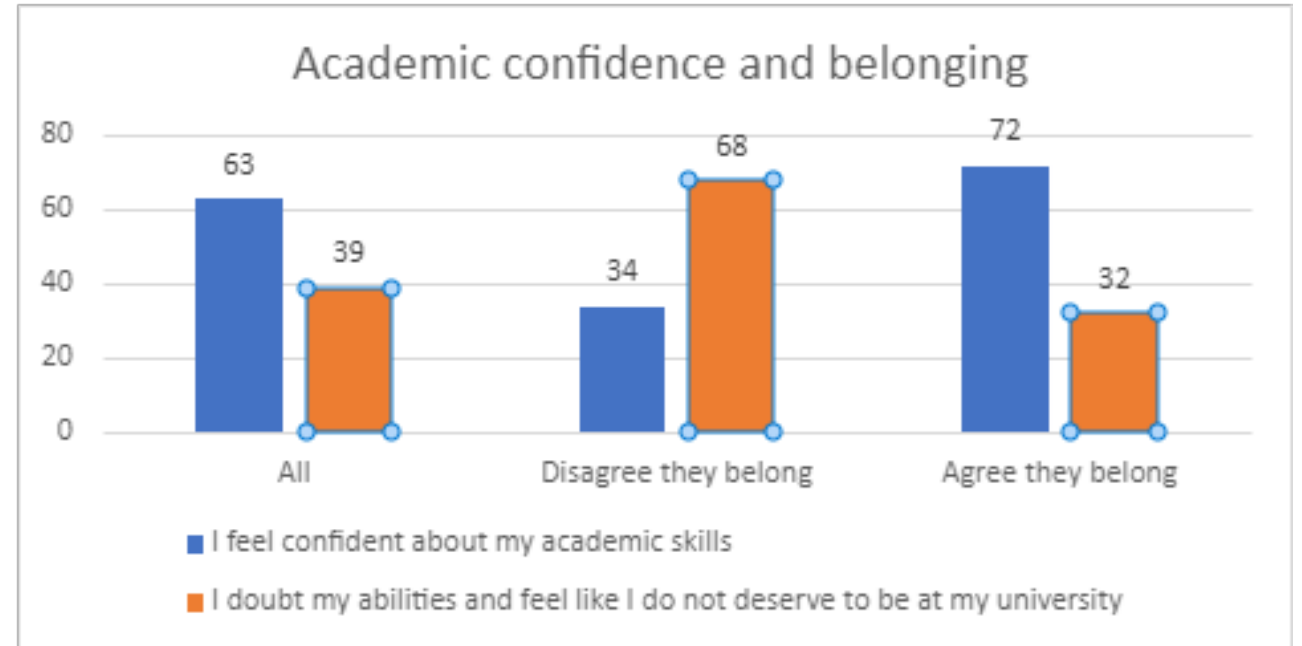For students who reported **average or above** mental health

- 80% felt they belonged at university
- 4% thought that their mental health was worse

"I sometimes feel I don't deserve to be studying at all"

39% of all students agreed that they had doubts and did not deserve to be at university

68% of students who did not feel they belong said they didn't deserve to be at university

Surprisingly, 32% who felt they belonged also said they didn't deserve to be at university

Academic confidence and belonging

- I feel confident about my academic skills
- I doubt my abilities and feel like I do not deserve to be at my university

Labour seeks inquiry into huge jump in top grade A-levels at private schools

At one school, teachers were reportedly told exams boards ha[...] given 'a nod and a wink' to grades being inflated

The London state school where the number of A* grades at A-Level more than doubled during pandemic

The school ranked 19th out of English private and state schools with the highest grade inflation during the pandemic
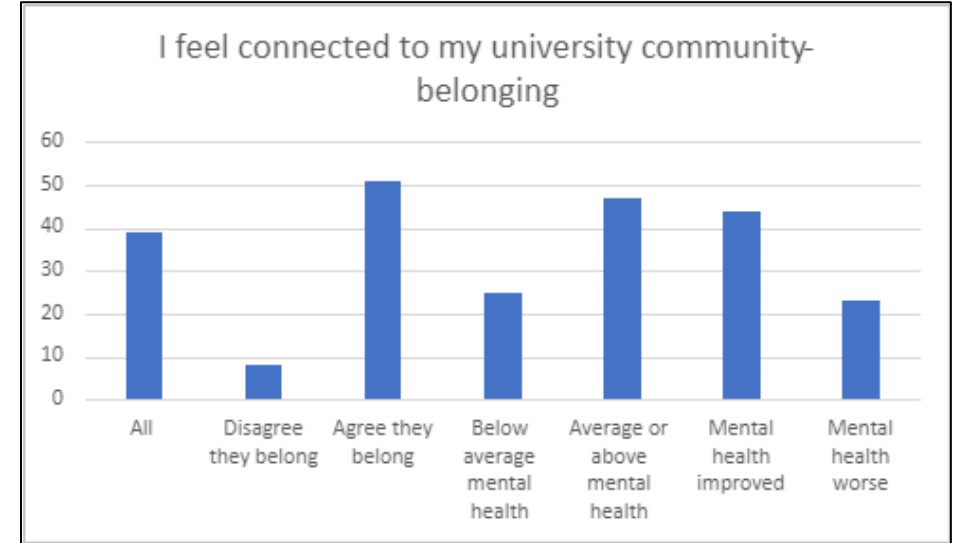
Feeling connected matters.

Overall
I feel connected to my university community – 39%
I feel a sense of community of my course – 55%

Those who do not feel they belong
I feel connected to my university community – 8%
I feel a sense of community of my course – 18%

Impact of blended delivery on community / connectedness

I feel connected to my university community-belonging

I feel a sense of community with others on my course

A/SA   NAND   D/SD

I feel connected to my university community

A/SA   NAND   D/SD
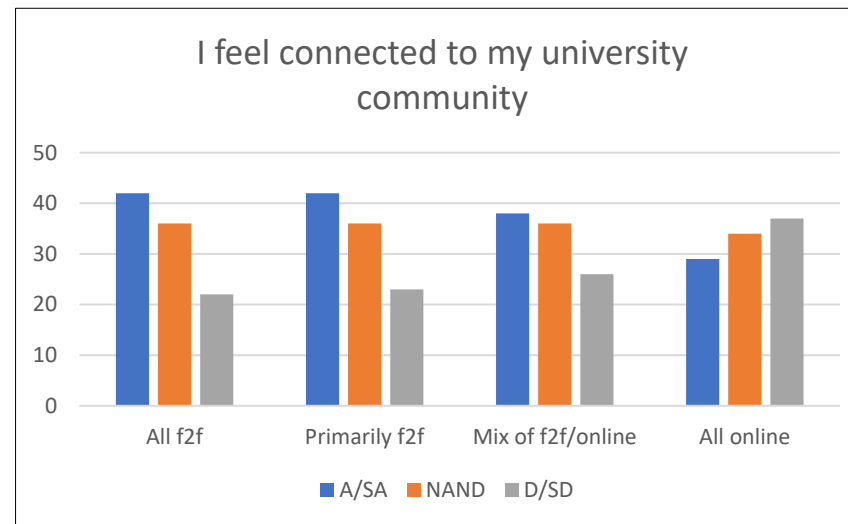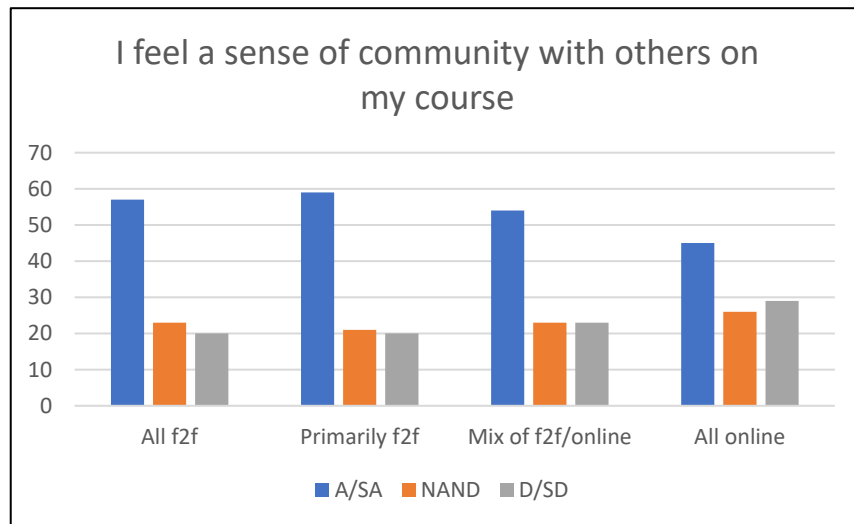
Identity & inclusion

Not confident university values diversity
21% (do not belong)
2% (do belong)

Issues would be addressed
42% (do not belong)
78% (do belong)

I feel confident that my university values diversity - demographics

Inclusion at university - belonging
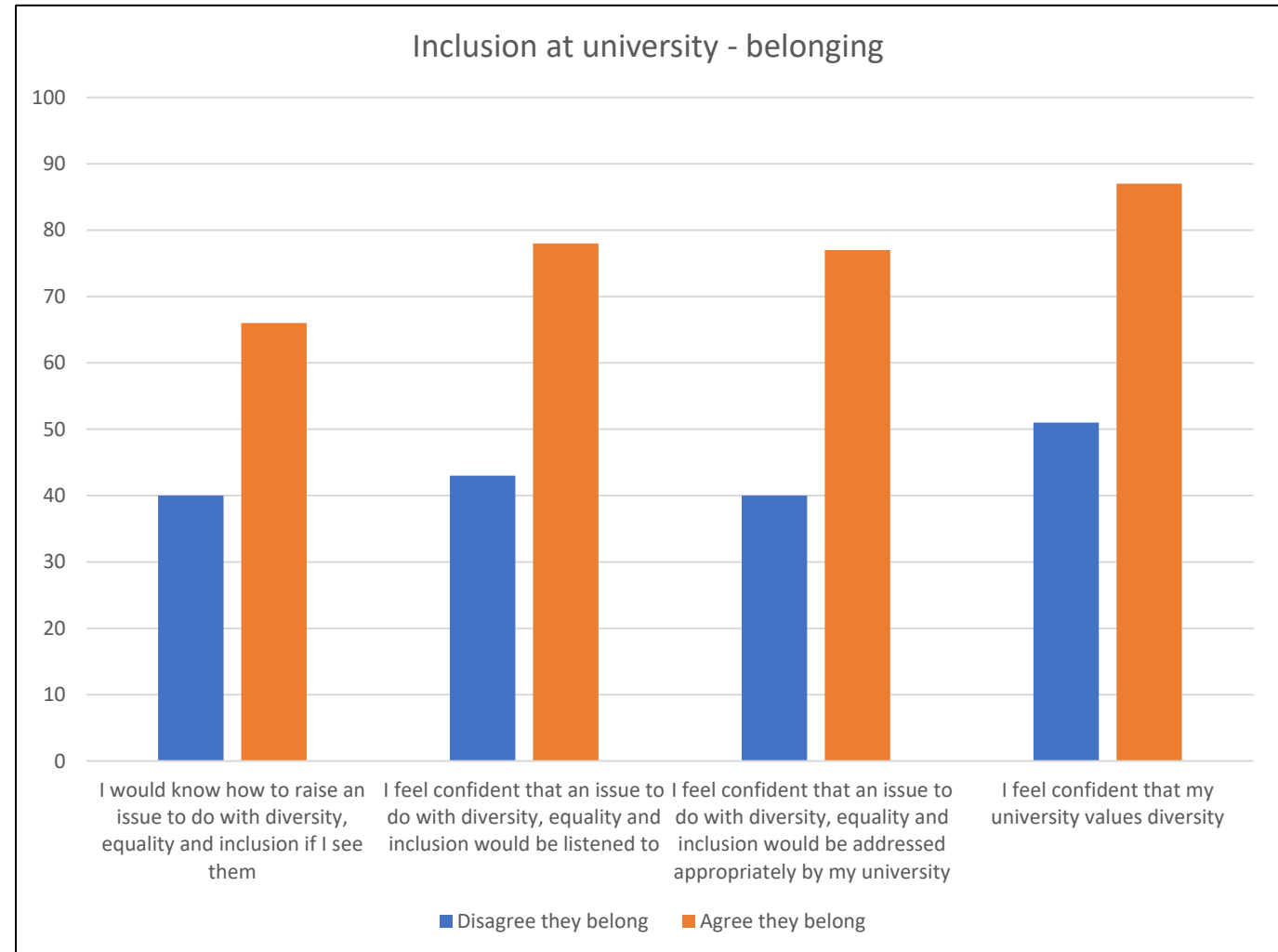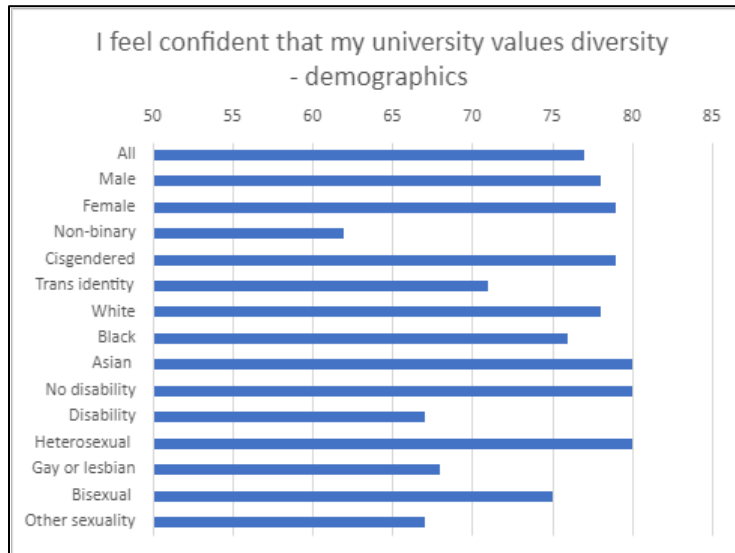
Moving forwards.

What would help you feel a greater sense of belonging

	%
Developing closer or more friendships	
Getting to know other people on my course better	
Meeting like-minded people	
Joining societies / clubs / groups	
Having more time to get used to being at...	
Meeting people who have a similar background...	
Understanding what the university / SU offers...	
Getting to know my personal tutor	
Getting involved in the local community	

What would help you feel a greater sense of belonging?	Do not belong	Belong	Mental Health 1-5	Mental Health 6-10
1. Developing closer or more friendships	50%	44%	48%	44%
2. Getting to know other people on my course better	45%	42%	44%	41%
3. Meeting like-minded people	39%	36%	37%	36%