



Belong: Fox Valley – Code of Conduct

Purpose

This Code of Conduct explains what Belong: Fox Valley is committed to, what behavior is expected at our events, and how we work to create safe, welcoming, and affirming spaces for the LGBTQIA+ community and our allies.

This document is designed to:

- Set **clear expectations** for how people treat one another at Belong: Fox Valley–organized or sponsored events
- Explain **what behavior is not permitted** in Belong: Fox Valley spaces
- Describe **how concerns may be raised** and how Belong: Fox Valley responds when concerns arise

This Code applies to conduct that occurs **at Belong: Fox Valley events or within Belong: Fox Valley-associated spaces**. It is not intended to regulate individuals’ private lives or behavior outside of our events, and it does not make Belong: Fox Valley an investigative or adjudicative authority.

When reviewing this Code, please keep in mind:

- The primary purpose of enforcement is **event safety**, not punishment or determining fault
- Not every concern raised will result in action, and Belong: Fox Valley retains discretion in how it responds
- Consideration of off-site behavior is limited, exceptional, and considered **only** when necessary to assess safety at Belong: Fox Valley events

We encourage everyone who participates in our community—whether online or in person—to read this Code with care. Creating spaces rooted in belonging, dignity, and mutual respect is a shared responsibility, and all participants are expected to follow this Code of Conduct when attending Belong: Fox Valley–organized or sponsored events.

Our Commitment

Belong: Fox Valley exists to create safe, welcoming, and affirming community spaces for LGBTQIA+ people of all ages and their families. Our events are designed to foster connection, mutual support, and a sense of belonging across the Fox Valley region.

We believe that safety—physical, emotional, and psychological—is foundational to belonging. This Code of Conduct establishes shared expectations for behavior so that all participants can engage authentically and without fear of harm, harassment, or exclusion.

The purpose of Belong: Fox Valley shall be to enhance and contribute to the acceptance and belonging of LGBTQIA+ people in our community, to promote inclusion in all aspects of community life, and to provide safe and welcoming spaces for LGBTQIA+ people and allies to gather.



Scope of This Code

This Code of Conduct applies to all Belong: Fox Valley–organized or sponsored events; all event-related spaces (including venues open to the public); and interactions that occur in connection with Belong: Fox Valley events or community spaces.

Belong: Fox Valley does not seek to control or regulate individuals’ private lives and does not monitor or investigate conduct that occurs outside of its events or spaces. Information about behavior that takes place outside Belong: Fox Valley-organized or sponsored events falls outside the general scope of this Code and is not ordinarily considered.

However, in limited and exceptional circumstances, off-site behavior may be considered solely for purposes of event safety when the information provided is easily substantiated and/or corroborated, and clearly indicates that the behavior presents a direct, foreseeable, and material risk to participants at Belong: Fox Valley events. Any concerns regarding off-site behavior will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the board.

Duty of Care and Shared Responsibility

Belong: Fox Valley is committed to exercising reasonable care under the circumstances to help ensure a safe event environment. Attendees share responsibility for their own safety and for acting in ways that do not place themselves or others at risk. Belong: Fox Valley does not guarantee the safety of third-party venues and is not responsible for conditions that are open and obvious or reasonably apparent.

Expected Behavior

When engaging with Belong: Fox Valley-organized or sponsored events, participants are expected to:

- Treat all individuals with dignity, respect, and care
- Honor the diversity of identities, experiences, and expressions within the LGBTQIA+ community and beyond
- Use inclusive, welcoming language
- Respect names, pronouns, and self-identification
- Ask for consent before physical contact of any kind (including hugs)
- Be mindful of shared spaces and follow venue-specific rules
- Engage in good faith; attempt collaboration before conflict
- Stop behaviors when told they are causing harm or discomfort
- Report concerns or unsafe situations to event organizers or board members

Unacceptable Behavior

The following behaviors are not permitted at Belong: Fox Valley-organized or sponsored events:

- Harassment, intimidation, or bullying in any form



- Discriminatory, hateful, or demeaning language or behavior
- Intentional misgendering or refusal to respect someone's identity
- Unwanted sexual attention or advances
- Inappropriate or non-consensual physical contact
- Threats of violence or actual violence
- Stalking, coercion, or controlling behavior
- Excessive intoxication that disrupts the safety or comfort of others
- Possession of weapons except as permitted by law and consistent with venue policy
- Any behavior that compromises the safety of individuals or the community

How to report a concern, how Belong: Fox Valley responds to concerns, and the limits of the organization's authority, are described in the Reporting Concerns and the Enforcement & Consequences sections.

Additional Expectations for Family- & Youth-Inclusive Events

Some Belong: Fox Valley events include children and youth. At these events:

- Conversations, language, and behavior must remain appropriate for all ages
- Alcohol consumption must comply with venue rules and local law
- Parents and caregivers remain responsible for the supervision of children in their care
- Any behavior that creates an unsafe or inappropriate environment for youth will result in immediate intervention by organizers

Alcohol & Venue Policies

Alcohol may only be consumed in compliance with venue policies and local law. Belong: Fox Valley does not serve alcohol unless explicitly stated for a specific event and handled by a licensed and authorized provider. Belong: Fox Valley does not permit the provision of alcohol to minors or to visibly intoxicated individuals. Organizers may intervene or request that an individual leave if alcohol use compromises safety.

Participation Acknowledgment

Participation in Belong: Fox Valley–organized or sponsored events is subject to adherence to this Code of Conduct.

By choosing to attend Belong: Fox Valley events, participants acknowledge that community gatherings involve inherent and variable risks, including interactions with others and conditions beyond the organization's control. Participants are encouraged to make personal decisions that support their own well-being and safety.



Reporting Concerns

Concerns or violations may be reported to event organizers or Belong: Fox Valley Board members. Reports will be handled with care and discretion. Belong: Fox Valley may gather information from multiple sources, as appropriate, to understand the situation and determine whether action is warranted under this Code.

Retaliation against an individual for raising a concern, reporting a potential violation, or participating in a Code of Conduct process in good faith is not permitted.

See the Enforcement & Consequences section for further information on how Belong: Fox Valley responds to concerns and the limits of the organization's authority.

Enforcement & Consequences

Belong: Fox Valley may take action in response to violations of this Code. Actions depend on the nature and severity of the behavior, and may include warnings, removal from an event, temporary suspension, or permanent exclusion from some or all future events.

Retaliation against an individual for raising a concern, reporting a potential violation, or participating in a Code of Conduct process in good faith is not permitted. For purposes of this Code, retaliation includes harassment, intimidation, exclusion, hostility, or other adverse treatment.

Belong: Fox Valley does not adjudicate private disputes or independently investigate conduct or behavior taking place outside of Belong: Fox Valley-organized or sponsored events. In rare cases where off-site behavior is considered, decisions to take action will only be made when the information provided is easily substantiated and/or corroborated, and leaves little to no dispute that the behavior presents a clear, direct, and foreseeable risk to the safety of Belong: Fox Valley events or participants. Any concerns regarding off-site behavior, including retaliatory behaviors in response to actions taken to enforce this Code, will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the board.

Any action taken to enforce this Code is based solely on an assessment of event safety and does not constitute a finding of fact or declaration of responsibility. Belong: Fox Valley does not guarantee that information submitted will result in action and retains discretion to determine whether the standards outlined in this Code have been met.

This Code of Conduct may be updated as Belong: Fox Valley learns and grows. We welcome community feedback as part of our ongoing commitment to safety, belonging, and mutual respect. Contact us at belongfoxvalley@gmail.com.