



# Belong: Fox Valley – Code of Conduct

## 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.

While Belong: Fox Valley does not seek to control individuals' private lives, behavior occurring outside of events may be considered if it reasonably raises concerns about the safety or well-being of community members at Belong: Fox Valley events.

## Duty of Care and Shared Responsibility (Illinois)

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

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

### **Unacceptable Behavior**

The following behaviors are not permitted and may result in removal or exclusion:

- 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 required by law and consistent with venue policy
- Retaliation against anyone who reports a concern
- Any behavior that compromises the safety of individuals or the community

### **Alcohol & Venue Policies (Illinois)**

Alcohol may only be consumed in compliance with venue policies and Illinois 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 those under the legal drinking age (21) or to visibly intoxicated individuals. Organizers may intervene or request that an individual leave if alcohol use compromises safety.

### **Participation Acknowledgment (Non-Waiver)**

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 to understand the situation and determine appropriate action.

Belong: Fox Valley board members working with youth are mandated reporters under Illinois state law. Any concerns involving people under the age of 18 that meet Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS) reporting requirements will be reported as outlined in DCFS guidelines.

### **Enforcement & Consequences**

Belong: Fox Valley reserves the right to take appropriate action to protect the community, including verbal or written communication, removal from an event, temporary suspension, or permanent exclusion (ban)



from some or all Belong: Fox Valley events. Decisions may consider patterns of conduct and credible reports of behavior outside events when relevant to community safety.

Retaliation against anyone who reports a concern in good faith is not permitted.

### **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

This Code of Conduct may be updated as Belong: Fox Valley learns and grows. Community feedback is welcome.