

TOOL FOR BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY: LOVE NOTES

Building beloved community offers us the opportunity to know and care for one another as human beings and to build the trust needed to successfully leap into the unknown together - to dare, to imagine, to disagree, to risk. From there, great change is possible.

Move to End Violence core partner, [Movement Strategy Center](#), introduced us to this Love Notes exercise, which builds beloved community in two ways. First, Love Notes provides an opportunity for the writer to express and highlight what s/he values about each person's humanity. Second, the collective sharing of each Love Note creates a foundation upon which the group builds authentic relationships with one another.

*Love is creative and redemptive.
Love builds up and unites. Yes,
love—which means understanding,
creative, redemptive goodwill,
even for one's enemies
—is the solution...*

— **Martin Luther King, Jr., 1957**



This Love Notes tool can be used for building Beloved Community in various settings with a variety of communities, including:

Potential Settings

Welcoming a new team member
Team-building retreats
Conferences/convenings
Board meetings

Potential Communities

Staff	Members
Volunteers	Survivors
Board members	Youth

Purpose

- Build relationship and community based on humanity and authentic connection.

Outcomes

- Participants begin to develop deep and intimate relationships and the web of community in partners and small groups.
- Participants are open, curious, and excited about who is in the room.
- Love Notes sets the tone by modeling generosity, vulnerability, and openness through sharing “what we love” about each person in the room.



Process

1. Write a Love Note about each participant, with an introduction explaining the purpose.

To draft Love Notes here are some questions to consider:

- What do I love about this person?
- What are her gifts?
- How does she work with others on the team?
- What has she done that really blew me away?
- What about her personality is admirable?
- What is her contribution to the movement/field/team?

“Special Delivery”

How will you deliver your Love Notes? Hand-delivered? Mailed? Placed in staff box?

Introduction: Love Notes should have an introduction explaining their purpose.

For example:

“Enclosed, please find a “Love Note” from us to you, which we hope offers a sense of why we invited/selected/hired you for XYZ. Specifically, we thought we’d share what we already love about you — as well as some of our hopes and dreams for your participation.”

2. Based on the content of each Love Note, create pairings of people. Introduce pairs to one another, vis-a-vis the Love Note, inviting the pair to have authentic, generative conversations.

Some questions to make the best pairs:

- What do these folks have in common?
- Do they care about the same things?
- Do they work on the same issues?
- Do they have similar practices?
- Do they have a similar approach?

Pairings: Love Note pairs should encourage generative conversations, based on commonalities.

For example:

“Dear XYZ,

Please connect with ABC. Here is what we “**love**” about ABC: (insert Love Note of ABC)

Introduce yourselves, and explore together *how the **movement moment** is showing up in your life*. Within that conversation, some themes you might enjoy exploring together include: your journey into this work, the big questions you are wrestling with in your work, your self-care practice, an innovative strategy for social change, etc.”

3. Share Love Notes of all participants and encourage them to become curious about one another and continue making authentic connections.

Find more resources and ideas for building Beloved Community at <http://www.movetoendviolence.org/topics/core-practice-beloved-community/>



WELCOME TO MOVE TO END VIOLENCE

Dear Beckie,

During the original stakeholder interviews you were one of the most innovative and inspiring people we spoke to, sharing the lessons you learned as the Executive Director of the first Asian American Domestic Violence Shelter in the U.S. You were a visionary leader in the Move to End Violence advisory committee and the heart of Cohort 1. Beckie, you have an infectious optimism and can-do spirit and are a gifted bridger who connects with people across difference with grace, curiosity, and charm. Your long tenure in the anti-violence movement offers an incredible perspective as we seek to build a new movement capable of creating the world we want. Being with you, Beckie, is being in beloved community.

With love,

Move to End Violence team