

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

INTERDEPENDENCE

The following is a snippet from John McGee's book, *Feeling at Home is Where the Heart Must Be*. Read the following and then answer the questions as a team. The goal of this first segment is to start the conversation about interdependence and the current role of it in our lives: personally and professionally

“To be marginalized is to be controlled, isolated and segregated. And, to be a caregiver is more than caring; it is to enter into a mutual change process with the person, with both of them becoming more instead of less—the parent embracing the crying child instead of yelling, the teacher befriending a lonely child instead of punishing, the psychiatric nurse sitting with the confused and belligerent patient instead of opening the heavy seclusion room door, the social worker creating circles of friends around the homeless person instead of simply dishing out soap. Interdependence is a way of looking at ourselves and those who cling to the slippery edges of family and community life. It views others as equals, as people who long for companionship, as a people in pain, and as a people who hunger for justice and union. It rejects the primacy of diagnostic labels and asks us to accept each person as a whole being. It is a life long project that brings about healing and affirmation in us and those whom we serve. It involves purposes different from those that are typically thought of. Instead of focusing on getting rid of aggression or self-injury, it starts us on a road toward feelings of companionship and solidarity—the beginning of the fulfillment of the longing for union. Instead of worrying about compliance or obedience, it calls us to teach new ways of interacting. Instead of seeing ourselves as those who control, it asks us to struggle to create community. Interdependence leads us to bring about feelings of union, emotional well-being, and the instillation of hope at the center of our lives and of those whom we serve.”

-John McGee



Watch the following video: Interdependence by Adrian Corker. The clip explores the idea of interdependence in the form of childhood.

(Note: There is a taxidermy-skinned fox in a couple of the scenes: you may want to give a sidebar warning to those who may take offence.)

<https://vimeo.com/78332737>

- 1 In your own words: define what interdependence is? Why should it be of importance to us?

- 2 Would you say you are more of an independent person or interdependent in the relationships in your life?

- 3 McGee says that “interdependence views others as equals, as people who long for companionship, as a people in pain, and as a people who hunger for justice and union”. To what extent is this true for you/ your team? Would it be noticeable to outsiders looking in?

- 4 McGee says, “Instead of seeing ourselves as those who control, (interdependence) asks us to struggle to create community.” What are 3 ways that you struggle over in regards to creating community?

A

B

C