The Need to Belong Theory (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) suggests that group membership is a fundamental human need. In the evolutionary environment, individuals who lived together were more successful in both survival and reproduction. Some individual differences, however, may account for subtle differences in belongingness needs. Grimes, Cheek and Norem (2011) proposed the STAR Model of Introversion, which suggests that introversion can be broken into four separate domains: Social Introversion, Thinking Introversion, Anxious Introversion and Inhibited Introversion.

Extroverts and individuals high in sociability have increased belonging needs (Leary, Kelly, Cottrell & Schreindorfer, 2013), suggesting that Social Introversion, characterized by a decreased desire for social interaction, may be inversely related to belonging needs. Conversely, individuals high in fear of criticism and rejection show increased belonging needs (Leary et al., 2013), suggesting that Anxious Introversion, characterized by traits of social anxiety, may be associated with increased belonging needs. We hypothesized that belonging needs would be associated with increased Social Introversion and reduced Anxious introversion.

Undergraduate students (n = 271) from a range of ethnicities participated in the study. Participants completed two different surveys for credit for their psychology classes.

Need to Belong showed significant relationships with both Social Introversion and Anxious Introversion in the expected directions. Individuals with a strong need to belong tended to be less socially introverted and more anxiously introverted. A significant difference was found between the two correlations, suggesting that belongingness needs differ between individuals with Social versus Anxious Introversion. These findings are important as they provide the foundation for future studies assessing how differing belonging needs in Social versus Anxious Introverts may affect social behaviors.