



# Microsoft Tech Resilience Mentoring Program

Training Session (2 of 4)  
*February 2, 2021*

# Welcome back

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## Pilot: Fall 2020

*I felt that I grew as a person. I learned I DO belong in tech and I can help build belongingness in others. Now I have the tools to do so. I debated dropping the major, but this program helped me to officially declare it and feel confident in doing so. This program has changed my life. These skills should be taught to every student.*

- Mentee from 2020 pilot

**96%**

gained insight into why  
students might feel  
lack of belonging in tech

**96%**

gained understanding of  
how to change behavior to  
invite and welcome others  
into tech

# Learning lab structure

Lead in

Learning topic 1 (ex: self-efficacy)  
*mentor story, video, breakout, report back*

CS Challenge

*mentor lead-in, breakout, report back*

Learning topic 2 (ex: growth mindset)  
*mentor story, video, round robin*

Open conversation

## Learning Labs



# Lots of practice today!

- Everyone arrives with a different level of comfort and prior experience
- Lots of practice today!
- Practice builds confidence



# Agenda

- Settle in
- Story share practice
- Round robin practice
- How do I open up the mentoring space?

# Story Share: an opportunity

*The best parts of the sessions were where we got to watch videos and discuss them after. It allowed us to see just how similar and different our thought processes were and the different perspectives in which we stood.*

- Mentee from 2020 pilot

# Agenda

- Settle in
- Story share practice
- Round robin practice
- How do I open up the mentoring space?

# Invite to participate: round robin



Each participant is invited to share:

*Mentor: "X, Would you be willing to share what resonated for you? Or you can pass if you'd like."*

# Valuing voices: synthesize & reflect back

- Rather than comment after each person shares, hear back from the group first.  
*"Thank you for sharing."*
- Highlight themes/commonalities or note contrasts/differences  
*"I'm hearing that all of you \_\_\_\_"*  
*"I noticed that some of you \_\_\_, while others of you \_\_\_\_."*

# Invite to participate: don't force



*Mentor: "X, Would you be willing to share what resonated for you?"*

Student: Pass.

*Mentor: "X, we need to hear from you. Come on, please share."*

# Invite to participate and offer to come back



*Mentor: "X, Would you be willing to share what resonated for you?"*

Student: Pass.

*Mentor: "Sure, let me know if you want me to circle back to you."*

# Agenda

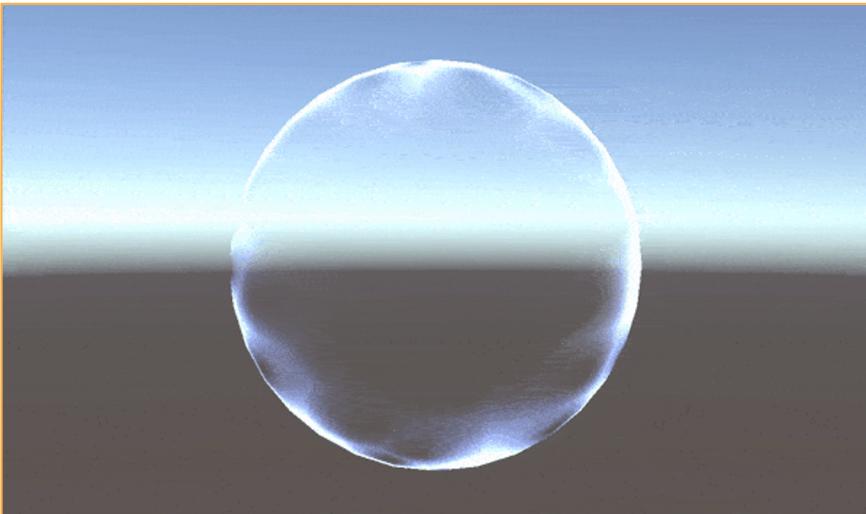
- **Ground rules;  
Reflection**
- **Story share practice**
- **Round robin practice**
- **How do I open up the  
mentoring space?**

# Open the Space

*I think the best part of this experience was getting to hear responses from other CS students: it's very nice to find out that others are experiencing the same thing as you, and maybe feeling the same problems.*

- Mentee from 2020 pilot

# The mentoring program is its own special space.



We can try to **optimize** the space:

- By **who** participates
- By **how** participation is valued
- By how we **model** and **steer** the conversation

The mentoring space can and should support belonging.

In this space, we invite participation.  
We want **all voices** included.

## How?

- Group Polls
- Pair-share (with active listening)
- Round robin (with option to pass)
- Practice step up, step back.



## Why?

When someone shares (and others listen), they feel their voice is important + they belong.

Settles, I. H., Cortina, L. M., Stewart, A. J., & Malley, J. (2007). Voice matters: Buffering the impact of a negative climate for women in science. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 31*, 270-281.

Sometimes people need an invitation.  
*Mentors create a space where all voices are invited **and** people can pass if they wish.*



<b>What it <u>doesn't</u> look like:</b>	<b>What it <u>could</u> look like:</b>
"X you need to go next. It's your turn."	"Sure, we can come back to you. Let me know if you want to share later."
"You are too quiet. We need to hear from you."	"X, would you like to share next?"

# Scenario from self-guided work

The student asks, “I’m curious. Do you all use Microsoft Visual Studio Code? I’m planning to write an extension for cloud computing with Azure.” A couple others join in, and your co-mentor (who is very familiar with VS Code and the Azure platforms) dives into the technical questions. Since your co-mentor is the one responding, you have been scanning to see if the cohort looks engaged. You notice that some of the students are completely silent and one looks very confused. Then a student privately messages you to say:

“I’m starting to really doubt if I should have participated in this program; I have no idea what we’re talking about.”

While you are glad that this conversation was sparked by curiosity, you are now worried that the jargon in the space is now excluding people.

## You suggested...

"Write back or say 'Oh don't worry. There's been plenty of times where I have felt lost.'"

Empathizing

## You suggested...

"Since the message was sent privately, I would reach out to the person to engage with them one on one. I would also call out to my comentor to take a moment to explain to me and the rest of the group what the technical terms are—since I need a refresher too. Thereby demonstrating to the group that it's ok not to know everything and also to ask questions."

Modeling

# You suggested...

Ask the student what they are interested  
in and offer to meet with them.

Connecting

## You suggested...

“Can I just pause this discussion for a bit? I just want to make sure we are staying on topic...Does anyone have anything else to share about this Vim activity?”

Pausing

You suggested...

Private message my co-mentor to shift gears.

Bridging

## You suggested...

"Wow I love the enthusiasm that people have for this topic! No worries if you have no idea what we are talking about. In the interest of time, I also think that this would be a great topic for continuing the discussion offline. What do you think?"

Bridging  
(via a time check)

Sometimes mentors need to **steer**. Mentors can bridge to a new topic, so different topics get airtime.



**What it doesn't look like:**

"Ok that's enough jargon.  
Can we change the topic?"

**What it could look like:**

"Hey co-mentor, I'm doing a time-check.  
Could you offer a follow-up conversation for  
those interested in cloud computing at another  
time? I'd love to grab some time to discuss  
hackathons next."

# Take away messages

## Invite participation

- Include as many voices as we can
- Allow people to pass and/or circle back to people

## Steer the topic

- Try a “time check” strategy in your sessions to shift gears
- Co-mentors can help!
- Mentoring toolkit offers opportunities to open mentoring conversations

# Bibliography

O'Meara, K., Griffin, K. A., Nyunt, G., & Lounder, A. (2019). Disrupting ruling relations: The role of the PROMISE program as a third space. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 12(3), 205–218. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000095>

## Abstract

*Applying the concept of ruling relations—everyday norms, assumptions, logics, and social interactions that structure people's everyday lives (Smith, 1999)—to STEM underrepresented minority (URM) graduate student experiences provides a unique and important way to understand how inequality can be integrated into the graduate student socialization process. We used an ethnographic case study approach to understand the challenges URM students experience in STEM graduate programs and how an NSF-funded program called PROMISE, created to support the retention and advancement of URM students, countered these ruling relations. We found that students experienced isolation and a lack of community, an environment that stressed individualism and competition, and hierarchical structures in their STEM departments that made them question whether they belonged and could succeed. The PROMISE program opposed these ruling relations by operating as a "third space" for graduate participants, a space that was neither work nor home. This "third space" was experienced as neutral territory where hierarchy was de-emphasized and there was a critical mass of other URM STEM students with whom to find community, affirmation, and support. As a "third space," the PROMISE program fostered different rules of engagement—community, affirmation, and egalitarianism—which ran counter to participants' experiences in their home department. The article concludes with recommendations for practice. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2019 APA, all rights reserved)*

Settles, I. H., Cortina, L. M., Stewart, A. J., & Malley, J. (2007). Voice matters: Buffering the impact of a negative climate for women in science. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 31(3), 270–281. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.2007.00370.x>

## Abstract

*The current study examined whether women scientists' perceptions of voice moderate the impact of poor workplace climates on job satisfaction and whether effective leadership and mentoring promote women's voice. Survey data were collected from 135 faculty women in the natural sciences. The results from multiple regression analyses indicated that negative (e.g., sexist, hostile) departmental climates were related to lower job satisfaction. However, voice interacted with climate, such that women who perceived that they had more voice in departmental matters showed higher levels of job satisfaction than those who perceived having less voice. An additional regression indicated that mentoring by other women (but not men) in academia and effective departmental leadership were positively related to women's sense of voice. Theoretical and practical implications for the retention<sup>40</sup> and success of women in male-dominated fields are discussed. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2016 APA, all rights reserved)*

Holmes, M. H. Jackson, J. K., Stoiko, R. (2016). Departmental dialogues: Facilitating positive academic climates to improve equity in STEM disciplines. *Innovative Higher Education*, 41, 381-394.

## Abstract

*This exploratory qualitative study examined faculty responses to a collegiality-building process called Dialogues. The process used a series of discussions and activities to guide faculty members toward a common, mutually beneficial goal, while changing patterns of interaction. The responses revealed how faculty members experienced collegiality-building practices, including individual reflection, small group discussions, idea generation and prioritization, and consensus-building. The study examined faculty responses within STEM departments. We conclude with recommendations for encouraging inclusive and participatory departmental norms and behaviors in order to promote a positive departmental climate, which is crucial to achieving equity in all disciplines of the academia.*

Kim, S. & Krishna, A. (2017). Communication or action? Strategies fostering ethical organizational conduct and relational outcomes. *Public Relations Review*, 43, 560-567.

### Abstract

This study identifies organizational factors that influence corporate governance and formulation of public relations strategies for public engagement. This study explores intertwined relationships between public relations strategies and organizational factors. A total of 22 qualitative interviews were conducted with a diverse pool of communication consultants. Results show that the two public relations strategies, bridging and buffering, are frequently observed and linked with key factors such as size, organizational culture, environment specificity, and strategic orientation. Implications for future public relations and corporate governance research are discussed.