Inclusive Community of Practice meeting, October 25th
“Mindful Mentoring”

In this session, we discussed the scenarios included in this document. Each breakout room took a different scenario and answered questions about the mentoring relationship.

To add more ideas, please send to becca.ciancanelli@colorado.edu

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Everything’s Clear scenario

- What are the disconnects that you see between the mentee’s experiences & perspectives of the mentor and mentor’s experiences and perspective of the mentee? Can you see where the next meeting might go badly?
  - There is a disconnect between what is causing the “annoyance”.
  - Student fears to admit a lack of competency, and the Professor is frustrated that the student isn’t communicating a lack of understanding
  - The student wasn’t ready for the learning, but the Professor didn’t inquire before teaching
  - Scenario feels very transactional -- doesn’t provide space for vulnerability

- What does vulnerability look like for the mentee in this next meeting, given that it is in an academic space?
  - Mentee ‘protecting’ mentor with excuses
  - Needing to name if they are ready to talk/learn
  - Having to discuss learning environment that works best for them

- What does vulnerability look like for the mentor in this next meeting, given that it is in an academic space?
  - Need to initiate the mentoring space - norm setting, definition of relationship, communication style/strategy, conflict resolution framing

- What can they both do to make the meeting a safe space for vulnerability to show up?
  - Seek to set ground rules
    - What helps to learn best?
    - How can we communicate well?
  - Checking in about how ground rules are being followed
Race & Culture Shock scenario

- What are the disconnects that you see between the mentee’s experiences & perspectives of the mentor and mentor’s experiences and perspective of the mentee? Can you see where the next meeting might go badly?
  - Don’t have a similar perspective, and the mentor truly doesn’t understand the situation or mentee experience.
  - Potential whiteness prevent comfort in discussing race and campus culture because they do not need to interact.

- What does vulnerability look like for the mentee in this next meeting, given that it is in an academic space?
  - Being honest about his social experience and specifically on dating which he talked on heavily. Shame interacting with his mentor is a barrier to making progress and highlighting where he can grow.
  - Being honest about the effect on his academics, not necessarily immediately but in regards to his retention.

- What does vulnerability look like for the mentor in this next meeting, given that it is in an academic space?
  - Overcoming his whiteness to be able to have a comfortable and honest conversation.

- What can they both do to make the meeting a safe space for vulnerability to show up?
  - Candidness and openness, being vulnerable and asking questions on being open to listening. Although the mentor has to take the initiative.

Quitting scenario

- What are the disconnects that you see between the mentee’s experiences & perspectives of the mentor and mentor’s experiences and perspective of the mentee? Can you see where the next meeting might go badly?
  - Mentor acknowledges loneliness (individual is the focus), mentee describes isolation (environment is the focus).
  - Meeting may go badly due to misalignment of experiencing loneliness vs isolation.
  - Mentor’s metrics reinforce individualism, mentee’s metrics focus on collective.
  - Mentor could approach with curiosity instead of assumptions about problems.
(desire to fix rather than understand)

○ White supremacy culture, even with non-white identities, people still adapt to the cultural norms

● What does vulnerability look like for the mentee in this next meeting, given that it is in an academic space?

○ Expressing discomfort in a culture that doesn’t make space for it

● What does vulnerability look like for the mentor in this next meeting, given that it is in an academic space?

○ It is vulnerable to admit you don’t know in academic spaces
  ■ “What if what I’m about to hear is true?” and “What if I can’t fix it?”
  ■ What can they both do to make the meeting a safe space for vulnerability to show up?

○ Look for newness instead of grasping for familiarity

Gender Bias scenario

● What are the disconnects that you see between the mentee’s experiences & perspectives of the mentor and mentor’s experiences and perspective of the mentee? Can you see where the next meeting might go badly?

  ○ Miscommunication/intercultural communication; Misperceptions of reputability
  ○ Breakdown of trust; Lots of assumptions being made
  ○ Power dynamic that prohibits clear communication; Assumption of shared experience

● What does vulnerability look like for the mentee in this next meeting, given that it is in an academic space?

  ○ Vulnerability + healthy boundaries; Reclaim their narrative to define what is ok and not ok for them
  ○ Vulnerability = speak truth; Conversation has to happen in a safe space
  ○ Self-advocacy; Shouldn’t have to manage up

● What does vulnerability look like for the mentor in this next meeting, given that it is in an academic space?

  ○ Humility: Tell student that this is a safe space, Stay curious; Open to receiving feedback from the student; Not getting defensive; Growth mindset
  ○ Willingness to have been wrong; Ask more questions than giving answers or talking; Gentleness; Check assumptions that they made about the student and the situation
• What can they both do to make the meeting a safe space for vulnerability to show up?
  ○ Clarify space and what that means before the meeting; Confidentiality