Intended Audience

* Senior staff in paraprofessional staff meetings
* Hall Council advisors in executive board meetings
* ILO advisors in executive board meetings
* Student leaders

Learning Outcomes

***Through participation in this training session, students will be able to:***

* Identify what constitutes a “meaningful relationship”.
* Identify past and current connections and determine what aspects of the relationship that make it meaningful to them.
* Understand that meaningful connections are individual and there is no “fit all” equation to create them.
* Be confident in their ability to create relationships with others that are authentic and meaningful.

Sharing Content

*Much of this content will be shared in a lecture that is provided by the facilitator. The facilitator should be prepared to speak in front of the group and share the detailed information about “Building Meaningful Relationships” as written in the lesson plan and supported by outside, peer-reviewed resources. Students will be encouraged to think individually and only share their thoughts if comfortable. There will be opportunity for group discussion before and after certain activities.*

Exercises and Activities

***Aspects of the lesson that include group interaction and or engagement are as followed:***

* Engage in a large-group introduction
* Create group expectations for the space in order to foster a Brave Space
* Watch Rita Pierson’s TED Talk, “Every Kid Needs a Champion” and participate in large-group discussion
* Fill out individual note cards about feelings of value and meaningful connections
* Fill out the “Notes and Reflection Worksheet” and participate in a “think-pair-share” small-group discussion

Assessment & Follow-Up

*Assessment of content will be determined through continuous informal and observable assessment by the facilitator. Through observation, the facilitator will determine if participants are engaged and understanding the content being presented.*

*Through the activity, participants will have the opportunity to take part in an active discussion about building meaningful relationships. This is part of informal assessment. Participants will also take a moment at the end of the activity to individually respond to written prompts about the activity content. They will then have an opportunity to share their overall thoughts with the group, if desired after a “think-pair-share” activity.*

***Activity Preparation- Facilitator Only (Time: 15-30 Minutes)***

***Before beginning the lesson/activity complete the following:***

1. Read the entirety of this lesson plan
2. Review the following resources and become familiar with the content
   1. **Watch** the TED Talk “Every Kid Needs a Champion” by Rita Pierson
   2. **Read** KeithEdward’s article, “The Trouble with Ground Rules and Safe Space”
   3. **Read** Harvey Deutschendorf’s article, “7 Key Habits for Building Better Relationships”
3. Determine who your audience is. Think about how you may need to adjust the messaging of this lesson to create the most meaningful experience for the group.
4. As the facilitator, prepare all needed materials for the activity and determine the purpose of the meeting. Ask yourself, what do you want the participants to get out of this activity?

Needed materials:

* Device to share the TED Talk
* Notes and Reflection Worksheet
* Note Cards
* Pens/Pencils

\*\*Once all these tasks are completed, reflect on your own personal experience when constructing meaningful relationships with others or an entire community of people. This will be helpful when introducing the activity and making meaningful connections with the group.

***Section 1: Group Introductions (Time: 5 Minutes)***

*Take some time to ensure the group knows each other.*

**Depending on your audience, ask to share any of the following:**

* Name and pronouns (if safe to do so)
* Year in school
* Major/Area of Study
* Where is Home?
* What do you plan to get out of this session?
* What position they hold
* What organization they are part of

If this is a group that already knows each other try to go a level deeper in your introduction. Consider an ice breaker or random question to help them learn more about each other. (e.g., share with us something fun about your name. For example, you could tell us why your family choose it, or what significance it has to you or others).

***Section 2: Expectations (Time: 10 Minutes)***

*As the lesson progresses, the group will be asked to participate in large and small group discussions. It is important that the group creates a “brave space” so that the environment created by the group is conducive to learning.*

**What is a “Brave space?”**

“Brave Space” is a term used within higher education. It sets the expectation that the environment created in any workshop, session, or learning space is “brave.” Students have the right to share their opinions and perspectives. As explained by Keith Edwards, “to be brave means being vulnerable, being authentic, and speaking our truth… and to being open to others bravely sharing their experiences so that we all may learn and grow.”

For more detail about the term “brave space” read the rest of Edwards article “The Trouble with Ground Rules and Safe Space” listed in the resources section of this lesson.

**Talk with the group about laying some ground rules in order to create a “Brave Space” for the discussions. Work with the participants to understand some key aspects of a space that allows for growth:**

* What is said here, stays here. What is learned here, leaves here.
* Use “I-Statements” and speak from your own experiences
* Do not share others’ stories without them knowing and giving permission
* Vulnerability with boundaries

***Section 3: Dig a Little Deeper (Time: 10 Minutes)***

*Have the group watch Rita Pierson’s TED Talk “Every Kid Needs a Champion.” Once you have finished watching the TED Talk as a group, initiate a small-group discussion. Use the prompts below as they are ordered and written below:*

**Prompt 1:** Now let’s talk about this as group, what are your general feelings or thoughts about this video?

*\*Facilitator Note- This should be an open discussion and does not necessarily need to be related to the content covered in this lesson. If you notice the group is struggling to initiate conversation, share this note with them. Also remind them that this is a brave space and that all thoughts are welcome. Possibly share your thoughts about the video (i.e., I thought it was interesting how she gave the child a +2 instead of a -18. It made me think about how we report progress).*

**Prompt 2:** Our session today is about building meaningful relationships. So why do you think I had you watch this video?

*As the group responds, document their answers. Some things you want the group to notice/take away are listed but not limited to the following. (Arrowed points are “must say” for the purpose of this lesson).*

* *The group will identify that this is a teacher but that this can be related to the idea of building meaningful relationships.* 
  + *You can build relationships with others in any environment and with any age. Point out that* ***relationships are individual****. Person-to-person or person-to-group. They vary depending on the individuals.*
* *The teacher has an individual relationship with the students, in addition to having a meaningful connection to the whole class.*
* *As a teacher and a leader of the classroom, she makes her students feel valued*
  + *How do we know this?*
  + *The way she documents progress and the way(s) in which she talks to/about them. She sees them not as children, but a group of young people eager to learn more.*
  + *The students trust her.*

***Section 4: Personal Note Cards (Time: 25-30 Minutes)***

*For this section, make sure that each participant has a note card and a writing utensil.*

**Part 1:** As the facilitator, start this section by referring back to the term “value.”

*We’ve mentioned the idea of “being valued” and are beginning to think about how this impacts the relationships we build with others. On your own, choose one side of the notecard to write down what you believe is needed to make an individual or group of people feel valued. I encourage you to pull from individual experience by utilizing an example of when you have felt valued in a group setting. Think about a time when you felt valued either in a physical space or relationship. There are no correct answers. This can be bulleted or fully written, it is up to you. (Take a minute or so to do this).*

**Part 2:** Transition the group into thinking about past and current relationships that they deem meaningful.

*Now that we’ve done that, I want you to turn the notecard over. On this side I want you to write down a person, place, or community in which you believe you had a meaningful connection with. Again, there are no right answers. (Take a minute or so to do this).*

**Part 3:** When the group is done. Ask them to think about how the two sections of this activity relate to one another. Prompts can be said as followed:

*I want you all to think about the people, spaces and communities you’ve written down. What things do you have written about feeling valued that you see reflected in these relationships?*

**Part 4:** End with a final thought, a connection to everything that has been discussed above.

*When you are working on build meaningful relationships with others or within any community or environment, I want you to think about what is needed to ensure that they feel valued. Then think of how you can provide it as a leader.*

**Part 5:** Share with your neighbor what it is you think it means to be valued within a relationship. Explore with each other how different people value different aspects of a meaningful relationship.

***Section 5: Improving Our Skills (Time: 20-30 Minutes)***

*For this section the facilitator will provide the group with actions one can take to better the ability to form relationships with others. This will be very helpful for those in the group who feel as though they do not have the skills required to create meaningful relationships.*

**Share the following information with the group:**

*Start by asking, Now, I want you to reflect on your own for a second. Do you think of yourself as someone who can easily form meaningful relationships? Yes or No. If yes, what are some skills you use to build them? If no, I want you to determine why? And what skills you need to gain in order to feel more confident.*

*As stated earlier, there is no “perfect formula” when building relationships with others. They are individual, and the needs of each relationship will vary from person-to-person and person-to-space. There are some skills, however, that can be used in any situation to make you feel more confident in your ability to foster authentic relationships.*

1. Become a great listener

2. Ask the right questions

3. Pay attention to the whole person/community

4. Remember things that are important to others

5. Be consistent and manage emotions

6. Be open and share when the time is right

7. Be genuine, confident, humble, trustworthy, positive, and fun

*(Deutschendorf, 2015)*

*\*Facilitator Note- These skills are listed in Harvey Deutschendorf’s article, “7 Key Habits for Building Better Relationships”. It is recommended that you read through these skills with your group. As you go through the webpage you can state each skill and then provide a summary for the group as needed.*

***Section 6: Conclusion and Reflection (Time: 10-15 minutes)***

*To wrap up this lesson, start by asking the group if they have any questions about specific content that has been covered.*

Students will participate in a “think-pair-share” reflection.

* Start by having the students individually respond to the two questions listed in the Notes and Reflection Worksheet portion of this lesson.
* Give students roughly 5 minutes to respond to the prompts, this is the “Think” portion of the reflection.
* Next, ask the students to turn to a neighbor and discuss what they wrote. This will be the “pair” portion.
* And finally have the group come together for the “share” portion in a large-group discussion.

**Notes and Reflection Worksheet**

1. Pick two of the following skills and brainstorm how you could use them to build meaningful relationships. (Try to think of specific situations that you may experience here on campus).

* Become a great listener
* Ask the right questions
* Pay attention to the whole person/community
* Remember things that are important to others
* Be consistent and manage emotions
* Be open and share when the time is right
* Be genuine, confident, humble, trustworthy, positive, and fun

2. What is one thing discussed today that you will take with you? Why?

**Resources**

Deutschendorf, H. (2015). 7 Key Habits for Building Better Relationships: *Fast Company.*

<https://www.fastcompany.com/3041774/7-key-habits-for-building-better-relationships>

Edwards, K. (2013). “The Trouble with Ground Rules and Safe Space: *Leadership, Social*

*Justice Education.* <http://www.keithedwards.com/2013/02/12/the-trouble-with-ground-rules-and-safe-space/>

Pierson, R. (2013). Every Kid Needs a Champion: *TED Talks Education.*

<https://www.ted.com/talks/rita_pierson_every_kid_needs_a_champion?language=en>