GWC Virtual Mentoring Guide - Session 5

Advocating for Yourself

Session Overview



- Ice Breaker [5 mins]
  - What three adjectives would you use to describe yourself?
  - Reflect on "How could your next job serve you and your career aspirations?"
- Session Goals + Warm Up [10-15 mins]
  - Describe what advocating for yourself means
  - Share examples and discuss ways to advocate for yourself in the workplace
- Sticky Conversations [25-30 mins]
  - Mentees practice starting and engaging in a conversation with a manager about one of the following topics: workload, communication styles, or learning curve
  - Receive and apply feedback from peers on their mock conversation
- *Optional* Spotlight on Soft Skills [5 mins]
  - Highlight the soft skill of *Stress Management*
  - Share workplace experience around the soft skill
- Next Steps [5 mins]
  - Review the next steps with mentees, as found in their student workbook, and allow them time to ask any follow up questions
- Extension Activities [if time allows]
  - Practice framing situations using the S.T.A.R. method for interviews.
  - Introduce potential interview question for mentees to consider

Session Goals

As a cohort, our goals for this session include...

- [ ] Describing what advocating for yourself means
- [ ] Sharing examples and discussing ways to advocate for yourself in the workplace
- [ ] Practicing starting and engaging in a conversation with a manager about one of the following topics: workload, communication styles, or learning curve
- [ ] Receiving and applying feedback from peers on mock conversations

Ice Breaker *5 mins*



To start off the session, ask mentees "What three adjectives would you use to describe yourself?" Everyone shares either by unmuting or through chat.

Share with mentees to keep these words in mind. While at work, it's important to remember your value and that you are more than just your job description. Creating conversations with your employer around your needs is important, so today's topic is advocating for yourself.

Next, tell mentees to reflect on the question "How could your next job serve you and your career aspirations?" They do not have to share, but ask mentees to keep this question in mind throughout the session.

Session Goals + Warm Up *10-15 mins*



Session Goals

Introduce the goals for today:

As a cohort, our goals for this session include...

- ☐ Describing what advocating for yourself means
- ☐ Sharing examples and discussing ways to advocate for yourself in the workplace
- ☐ Practicing starting and engaging in a conversation with a manager about one of the following topics: workload, communication styles, or learning curve
- ☐ Receiving and applying feedback from peers on mock conversations

Warm Up

Introduce today's main activity by asking mentees what comes to mind when they hear the term "Advocating for Yourself." Have they heard of this phrase before? How does it make them feel?

What is "Advocating for Yourself"?

1. As a cohort, come up with a shared definition. You can use the definition by MasterClass as a guide:

   > "Self-advocacy means taking the initiative to communicate your needs and wants to others in order to support your overall well-being. By advocating for yourself at work, for example, you can develop a plan to achieve your goals."

2. Share your own experience(s) advocating for yourself. This can range from setting boundaries to dealing with a situation you were uncomfortable with.
3. Ask mentees if they have ever had to advocate for themself, at school, at work, or anywhere else. Ask them to share other examples of advocating for yourself.
4. To help frame the conversation, ask mentees to rate themselves on a scale of 1 to 5 on how comfortable they feel advocating for themselves when they run into a challenge. Take a moment to acknowledge all the different comfort levels, and emphasize that advocating for yourself can be uncomfortable at first, but with practice they can master it in no time!

Sticky Conversations *25-35 mins*



Small Group (15 mins)

Before going into breakout rooms, explain that in pairs, mentees will practice starting a conversation around one of three different situations concerning workload, communication styles, or learning curve. After one mentee has presented their response, the other mentee will think of possible counters or conversation points this could lead to. They will switch and repeat after five minutes, then come back to the larger group to reflect.

1. Mentees will choose one of the following situations to respond to. In their breakout room, each mentee will choose a different option.
    - Option 1 - You have a part-time internship while taking classes. As final exams approach, you feel overwhelmed trying to balance your classwork and internship work.
    - Option 2 - During a team meeting, you notice your manager using language that makes you uncomfortable. There doesn't appear to be reactions from other coworkers, but you notice your manager using the same language throughout the workplace.
    - Option 3 - You are given a task your manager assumes you are familiar with, but you have no prior experience and are a bit lost on how to get started. Your manager expects you to complete the task by the next day.
2. Mentees take two minutes to think about how they would respond to the option they chose. Their workbook contains tips on how to respond.
3. One person shares their response with their partner.
4. Both mentees reflect on the questions in the workbook together for the chosen situation.
5. After 5 minutes, the other partner shares, and both mentees reflect on the questions in the workbook for the other partner's situation.

Whole Group Share Out (10 mins)

After closing the breakout rooms, reflect on the experience by following the guiding questions below. During this time of self-reflection, it will be useful to use wait time for mentees to take a moment to process their experience. We define wait time as intentionally holding silence for a specific period of time, typically 20-30 seconds for each question. Embrace the awkward silence!

1. Ask mentees to describe how the experience of advocating for yourself felt in one word. Mentees go around and unmute themselves to voice their word.
2. Ask mentees why advocating for yourself is an important skill to practice.
3. Ask mentees if there were any questions, concerns, or curiosities that popped up during their partner work.



Optional Spotlight on Soft Skills *5 mins*

Focus on Stress Management

As a wrap up to this conversation, explain how employers look for what are commonly known as "soft skills" when interviewing candidates. When using strategies to balance their professional and personal life, mentees are practicing the soft skill of developing *stress management*.

Mentors should share their own experiences with this soft skill, showcasing how having stress management skills positively impacted you or a colleague's professional growth. Explain how you have highlighted this soft skill when interviewing for a role or how you look for this quality when interviewing potential new hires.

Next Steps *5 mins*



Review the next steps with mentees, as found in their student workbook, and allow them time to ask any follow up questions:

- [ ] Make sure you have our next session on your calendar!

Optional Follow Up Work for Mentees:

- [ ] Pay closer attention to your work habits and preferences so you can better advocate for yourself! This includes your boundaries, communication styles, work style, and learning style.
- [ ] Practice framing challenges you've had professionally or academically for an interview. Try using the S.T.A.R. Method.
- [ ] Practice sharing a response to the following potential interview question:
  - [ ] Describe a stressful situation and how you handled it. Thinking back on it, would you have done anything differently?

Mentors, please make sure to complete your session recap form!

Extension Activities [*optional*]

If time allows, consider building the following optional extension activities into your session time:

Talking about Situations in Interviews

Organizations often ask questions to gauge how you deal with difficult situations. One framework to answer these questions is the S.T.A.R. Method. Ask mentees to think of a challenge they have faced professionally or academically and what they did to face and

overcome the challenge. Remember, mentees have the S.T.A.R. outline in their Student Workbook to guide them.

Interview Question Prep

Continue the conversation around the soft skills focus of the day, stress management. Ask mentees to individually think of a time that they demonstrated stress management skills and how they might respond to the following interview question:

- ➔ Describe a stressful situation and how you handled it. Thinking back on it, would you have done anything differently?

Mentees may want to record their sample response in their workbook or practice their response following today's session.

Resources:

- ➔ Student Workbook, Session 5
- ➔ The STAR Method of Behavioral Interviewing