

# Using Our Experiences and Communication Skills to Help Froshies Succeed

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redefine THE POSSIBLE.

Bethune College Basic Frosh Leader Training  
Bethune College Council and Student Ombuds Services  
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# Puzzle Time:



In your groups, complete the puzzle on your table as quickly as you can.

# Puzzle Lessons (Part 1):



- What was your experience completing the puzzle?
- What were the challenges? How did you overcome them?
- Why were you successful in overcoming them?

# Reflection Exercise



- The successes and challenges you had as a York student
- The positive and negative experiences you had as a York student
- Someone who has had a great impact on you as a student

# The Benefit of your Experience:



How might your  
experiences benefit an  
incoming student?

# The Benefit of sharing your Experience:



- Navigating the system
- How and where to get help
- How to get good grades
- How to make meaningful connections
- How to talk to faculty
- How to make the most of classes
- Knowing the language and culture of university<sup>6</sup>

# Puzzle Lessons:



What would you say if I told you that  
none of the puzzles were/are  
incomplete?

# The Pitfalls of sharing your Experience:



What are the drawbacks to imparting  
our own experience to others?



## The Pitfalls of sharing your Experience:



- What worked for me may not work for others
- **Academic rules change from year to year**
- Can come across as patronizing
- Not about us! The focus should be the student
- We make assumptions and have biases
- We pass along our baggage and close off what might be valuable avenues for our students

# A word on boundaries



- One short story...

## *The Parable of the Butterfly*



# The Parable of the Butterfly



A man found a cocoon of a butterfly. One day, a small opening appeared. He sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through the little hole. Then it seemed to stop making any progress. It appeared as though it had gotten as far as it could, and it could go no further. So, the man decided to help the butterfly. He took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily, but it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings. The man continued to watch the butterfly because he expected that, at any moment, the wings would enlarge and expand to be able to support the body, which would contract in time. Neither happened! In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shriveled wings. It never was able to fly.

# The Parable of the Butterfly



What the man, in his kindness and haste, did not understand was that the restricting cocoon and the struggle required for the butterfly to get through the tiny opening were nature's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings so that it would be ready for flight once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon.

- **What is the moral of this story?**
- **How does this apply to the context of Peer Leadership?**

# Part 2: Communication

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Basic Peer Leadership Training  
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# What? So what? Now what?



- As peer leaders seek to support the development of their mentees, the following sequence of question can serve as a useful guide:

**What?**

**So what?**

**Now what?**



- By applying these questions, the emphasis is placed on prompting students to actively guide their own processes of discovery



## 1. **What?**

Active listening

Clarify the question

## 2. **So what?**

Negotiate boundaries

Present options

## 3. **Now what?**

Closure

# 1. What? Active Listening



- Body language
- Paraphrase key points
- Ask open ended questions
- Frame questions in a positive, non-threatening manner
- Maintain eye contact



# 1. What? Clarify the Question



Sometimes the question is not clear.

Scenarios:

- I don't understand this student's accent
- The question is confusing
- The question is 'too big'
  - Is my program hard?
  - How can I do better in school?

## 2. So what?



- As a peer consultant, what kind of questions do you expect to answer in a consultation?
- Do you have to answer every question?

## 2. So what? Negotiate Boundaries



- What do I do when I don't know the answer?
- What do I do if a student is coming on to me?
- What do I do with the student who just doesn't 'get it' or is not into your explanation?
- What do I do if a student is asking inappropriate questions?

## 2. So what? Present Options



- Refer to the Resources Module  
(Familiarize yourself with all resources available on campus!)
- If you refer to your personal experiences, put a disclaimer forward and offer a lot of detail as to why your experience was the way it was
- Provide multiple options

## 2. So what? Present Options



- If needed, then refer student to another FL or an organization within York
- If the student is dealing with a personal issue during Frosh Week, refer them to the O-Chair/President
- Allow the student to come to their own decision

# 3. Now what? Closure



- You are a Leader for many students and you must continue with your responsibilities

# Consultation Framework



- Clarify the question
- Negotiate boundaries
- Explain
- Closure

# Take it or leave it ...



- Frosh Leaders and students share responsibility for setting the agenda
- Students remain the decision makers
- When it comes to information, opinions, suggestions, activities etc., leaders and students remain free to “**take it or leave it**” without the fear of reprisal or the diminishment of the relationship



# Reflecting on your relationship



- When they don't work well, it is important not to take it personally; sometimes a prospective leader and student just aren't a good "fit". Be ready to move on if need be.
- Don't give up easily!



# SCENARIOS !



➤ Please write down 3 things you learned