

00:00 [Elizabeth Finn] Oh, yup.

00:01 [Syeeda Rahman] Okay.

00:02 So, I'm just going to go quickly through the rules and goals for today.

00:09 And then, we'll pass it over to our speakers.

00:13 So, our goal today is to learn how to communicate effectively across cultures.

00:18 It's just really important especially in today's world to know how to do that properly.

00:24 And the goal for all of our sessions is to kind of give the students tools to be a successful organizer.

00:32 And then, our group rules just respect identifiers.

00:35 One might be mindful of other's time.

00:38 Step up step down.

00:39 And then, just have fun.

00:40 We really, really appreciate you guys being here and pass it over to Elizabeth.

00:52 [Finn] Yeah. Awesome.

00:54 So, oh I can never do these transitions.

00:55 I always struggle with them.

00:57 So, to reiterate, our goal today is to really bridge differences between communication skills

01:05 and learning those skills when working with people who come from different backgrounds

01:09 and different cultures in us and really being able to work together to create an inclusive coalition.

01:16 So, we have two speakers today.

01:19 Both are Suffolk alum.

01:21 And so, we have Destiny who will share his experience first.

01:26 He was the former Director of Constituent Service for the Mayor of Brockton.

01:37 then, also, he currently is the Corporate Partnership Associate at the Boston Medical Center.

01:44 So, I will let him take it away for until about 7:20.

01:49 [Destiny Ihenacho] All right.

01:50 Good evening, everyone.

01:51 My name is Destiny Ihenacho.

01:53 And I am, as Elizabeth said, I am a graduate of 2018.

02:00 My grad program was in political science.

02:02 And I really did enjoy my time there.

02:04 So, I hope that each and every one of you walk away with something tangible from Suffolk University.

02:11 One of the things that I must say in this time that we live in is you've got to be clear.

02:20 You've got to be concise, and you have to have a mission.

02:22 In order to achieve whatever you want to achieve whatever you put your mind to, it is achievable.

02:26 However, you've got to be direct.

02:28 You've got to know what you want.

02:31 And there are so many ways to communicate that to employers to networks, to potential partners, and whatnot.

02:49 I guess one thing I struggled with was just being able to be clear at the beginning and

02:55 whatever came my way in this sense of just trying to have that experience grow my experience.

03:00 I kind of just went with anything.

03:02 And it came to backfire upon me because they could see.

03:05 Employers could see people who have done it for a long time can see that you're...

03:08 They can sense the willingness to just do anything.

00:03 And, sometimes, it can be taken out of context.

03:15 For those of us who like to just learn, who want to grow our experience and everything

03:19 that we put our hands in, it can be taken out of context.

03:22 So, you've got to be mindful of how you present yourself and especially in today's world.

03:30 Boston isn't, and forgive me for saying this for those of us who love Boston and love it

03:37 dearly, but Boston isn't immune to racism or implicit racism.

03:42 So, for those of us that look like me, it's difficult especially when you're coming out

03:48 of school, you know that these odds are stacked against you.

03:53 That's why it's so important that I've learned and I've grown into that of just being able

03:56 to say, "This is what I want, and this is what I won't settle for.

03:59 This is what I'll set up for instead."

04:01 Being able to just know what that is, it takes time.

04:06 But when it comes, it will be very clear.

04:10 And I'll use an experience when I worked at the state house for a state rep.

04:15 I had just finished up my grad program at Suffolk University.

04:21 And I was excited I just jumped right into as an intern.

04:25 And one thing led to another through networking.

04:28 And people could see how passionate I was about constituent services about just being

04:33 able to talk to people in different districts and just kind of get their problems solved.

04:40 However, when it came time for negotiating for a salary, I didn't put up a fight.

04:47 And it became one of those things where they felt like I was just anything goes kind of guy.

04:58 But deep down inside, I had a mission.

05:00 Deep down inside, I said, "This is not where I really want to be."

05:04 But I had to finish school.

05:06 I didn't have that patience.

05:08 I didn't apply myself to other opportunities that I knew I deserved and that I knew that

05:13 I could get.

05:15 And part of that was just saying like, "Well, I'm going to walk into an office, and they're

05:18 going to think I'm a female because of my name," because it's real.

05:22 It's happened, and it happens.

05:25 They're going to not want to hire me because they're not able to say my last name.

05:30 It happens.

05:31 It has happened.

05:32 But after a while, you've got to be able to say like, for instance, when I get introduced

05:37 nowadays and people say Ihenaco or Enjaro.

05:39 I say, "No.

05:40 It's Destiny Ihenacho."

05:43 You've got to be firm.

05:44 You're not being rude.

05:45 You're just being firm.

05:46 You're being concise.

05:48 You need to know that you also too, you're looking for work.

05:52 You're looking for opportunities.

05:54 But at the same time, you deserve some atom of respect.

05:57 Nowadays, when they tell me like, "We could go far into the interview," and they'll say,

06:02 "We're offering you X, Y, and Z."

06:04 But I know I'm more qualified than that.

06:06 I know that I put my time into both my undergrad and my graduate program.

06:10 Therefore, I deserve X, Y and Z.

06:12 So, this is what I'm sticking to.

06:13 And, sometimes, you just got to walk away from an opportunity.

06:18 As much as it's going to be a great thing for you to grow that experience, you've got

06:22 to also put your foot forward.

06:24 You've got to put your foot down sometime and say, "No, this is what I'm worth."

06:28 And, sometimes, when you do take that role for those of us who come out of school, and

06:33 we need to pay bills immediately, help our family, I understand.

06:36 But sometimes, you've got to demonstrate what you're worth and ask your boss or ask your

06:42 employer and say, "Hey, I've been doing X, Y, and Z for two years now.

06:46 And I think I deserve a raise.

06:48 Sorry, I know I deserve a raise."

06:50 So, sometimes just being brave enough to walk up and say, "This is what I'm doing."

06:57 And again, in a time that we live in where people are so maybe a little sensitive about

07:04 having certain conversations because of what the backlash may be, what the result might

07:09 come out to be.

07:11 You've got to be brave soul and just find a medium to probably have that conversation.

07:19 So, my advice and from my experience is do not let excitement overrun you.

07:27 It sounds like a good opportunity.

07:30 But take the time to actually read, ask questions.

07:38 Ask questions.

07:39 Knowing what I know now, I would have asked much more questions during the interview process.

07:45 I would have asked, done my research a little bit more than just seeing what's on the internet.

07:52 Networking is very key.

07:56 And networking is a double-edged sword.

07:58 Let me explain why, because networking, yes, you grow your network.

08:01 But you get to also study other people's cultures.

08:05 You get to see how they really interact with you.

08:08 Certain words don't mean exactly what it comes out as.

08:14 So, just being able to understand what the language is, what they're truly trying to say, it really does help.

08:22 So, taking the time to just be patient.

08:25 The right opportunity will come.

08:28 Don't ever feel like you have to sell yourself short just because deep down, you may be desperate.

08:34 But at the same time, you've got to be more knowledgeable about what you're getting yourself into.

08:40 Study the body language.

08:43 Hear what they really say when they say certain things.

08:46 So, I could go on and on about that.

08:48 But for those of us who are just coming out of college who are looking to expound on our

08:53 opportunities, I definitely encourage you to take the time to study these different industries.

08:58 I definitely encourage you to hone yourself and just be proud of who you are.

09:05 Never let anyone underestimate you.

09:10 Don't sell yourself short because they can't say your name.

09:18 They can't look at you the same way they look at others.

09:20 I have left jobs behind because I was uncomfortable with the way I was being treated.

09:29 Now, in hindsight, should I had a conversation?

09:36 Probably.

09:38 Being able to say I'd like to have a conversation, for those employers or those people who are

09:44 your mentors, if they really want to, they will listen.

09:51 If they truly value you, they will change.

09:54 They will probably be shuffled the way things are done for your sake.

10:00 These things are things that I learned a bit late.

10:02 But I'm glad that they happen because I would not be able to talk about it with you all

10:05 as I am today.

10:07 So, I say all this just to say, "Be proud.

10:15 Hone your skills."

10:16 And for those of us who aren't sure what we want yet, it's okay to double dabble.

10:22 It is okay you.

10:23 Life is like a buffet.

10:25 You may like something that's not what it seems at first.

10:29 It's okay to walk away.

10:31 Don't let ever anybody tell you, "Well, your resume looks a little skimpy.

10:35 Why do you spend two years here?"

10:37 You don't owe anybody an explanation.

10:38 You don't even have to put it on your resume.

10:40 But you've taken that thing.

10:41 You've learned from there.

10:42 You've moved on to the next thing.

10:44 But as you go along, don't repeat the same things from your previous experience.

10:52 If it's something that led to a communication issue, learn from it.

10:57 Learn from it.

10:58 And, sometimes, different cultures may not...

11:02 They may not mesh.

11:03 You may misunderstand someone.

11:05 Sometimes, it's just good to go for a walk.

11:08 Nowadays, what I do is I say for example, "Hey, Elizabeth, that's your availability.

11:12 Is it okay if I just walk with you down to grab some lunch?"

11:18 And you're able to just have that one-on-one rather than being in a space where you're

11:23 calling someone out in the middle of the office because, sometimes, we have that tendency

11:28 to want to prove that we too can blow up.

11:35 Sometimes, it's not worth it.

11:37 But having that one-on-one conversation with that person you're having an issue with, having

11:42 one-on-one conversation with your mentors and your peers just to understand how would

11:48 they do it, it really does help.



11:50 So, again, I am going to leave you guys with this quote that I go by.

11:57 And I really mean it: "It takes a few seconds to say hello and forever to say goodbye."

12:03 And what it means to me is, sometimes, we come across people that we never knew how

12:09 they could change our lives be it for the better or for the worse.

12:12 So, never take any experience for granted.

12:15 Never take anything that you do and just say, "Well, I guess that was an experience."

12:22 Own that experience and use it to better yourself for the next opportunity.

12:29 Use that experience you've learned to teach the next person behind you so that people

12:35 don't make the same mistake you do.

12:38 And if you know you could be a mentor in your community, a leader in your community, these

12:42 keys that you have that you possess now, called experience, will open up doors for others.

12:48 So, I know I spoke all over the place.

12:51 But please feel free.

12:53 I don't know Elizabeth, I don't know Syeeda if you can put my contacts out there.

12:57 I'd be more than happy to connect with Suffolk alums or Suffolk students who are looking

13:02 to find different opportunities whether it be in the private sector, whether it be in

13:07 government sector.

13:09 I'd be more than happy to use my contacts just to see if we can open doors.

13:13 And I really mean that.

13:14 I spent some time in Washington DC.

13:16 I spent about four years in a non-profit which I still have a tight relationship called USPAACC,

13:23 US Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce.

13:25 I don't know.

13:26 Dupont Circle.

13:27 Great place to be if you're looking for any experience.

13:29 Please, use me as your availability.

13:33 And I'm more than happy to connect with anyone.

13:36 Thank you, all.

13:39 [Rahman] Thank you so much.

13:40 I don't know if you have time right now to take any questions or shall we come back later?

13:46 [Ihenacho] Oh, absolutely.

13:47 If there's questions, please, go ahead.

13:48 [Rahman] Okay.

13:49 Does anyone want to ask any questions right now?

13:53 I know I have one.

13:54 Feel free to drop it in the chat.

14:00 And so, my question is, for people in marginalized groups, how do you kind of gain that confidence?

14:10 How do you go about that because I've asked for a raise.

14:14 And I was lucky that it was a woman-owned POC company.

14:18 So, I felt very comfortable doing that.

14:20 But I don't think I would in other places.

14:23 So, yeah.

14:24 Can we answer for that?

14:27 [Ihenacho] It's a great question.

14:29 That is very good question.

14:31 So, like I said, I think it's about having confidence.

14:35 Having confidence.

14:36 And, sometimes, you've got to put it on the line.

14:40 And I really mean that.

14:42 You've got to put it on the line.

14:44 I've been doing this for a certain amount of time.

14:46 And I really do feel like I deserve a raise.

14:50 This is what I bring to the table.

14:53 And what I do, I wish I had it with me here, I have a portfolio of things that I do in an office.

14:58 I build it whatever I do.

15:00 It could be put in to get an Excel sheet because some companies value that.

15:05 It could be putting together a document that shows raise or appraisals or

15:16 whatever the case is.

15:17 It could be writing a speech.

15:19 It could be creating something for presentations for your boss.

15:23 Now, without you, you know that presentation would have been a flop.

15:29 You know that you put the work in, and you've been doing this for some time.

15:31 You know that you're reliable.

15:34 So, ask for it.

15:36.100 --> 00:15:40.949

And if they don't, again, I think they're missing the point.

15:40 And, sometimes, you've just got to just say, "Well."

15:44 Obviously, you've got to line yourself up with something first and just tell them like,

15:50 "I found something."

15:51 And just give them the reason, "This is not paying what I needed to be paying me for my

15:57 skills, for what I've gone through as a student or as a grad student and X, Y, and Z."

16:07 So, for me, I found it unsuccessful to bring up the issue of black and white.

16:14 It's your skills.

16:16 You've got these skills because no matter what, if you put it in a different skin, it

16:20 would still be the same issue.

16:21 That's just me.

16:22 I got a question here that says, "How do you go about networking?"

16:32 It's not easy because, sometimes, you've got to be very open to

16:40 discussions, having different characters to talk to.

16:42 You've got to just be willing to put yourself on the line and start off with the handshake.

16:47 Well, not a handshake nowadays.

16:49 But start off with just saying introducing yourself and saying, "Hey, my name is Destiny,

16:53 and I'm looking to have you as a mentor.

16:57 I really like what you..."

16:58 And, of course, you've done your research by this time.

17:00 "I see that you're in business for more than 25 years.

17:03 You've been an executive.

17:04 You've been in the C-suite business.

17:05 And I too want to see myself there.

17:08 Is there any way we could set up a partnership or a program.

17:13 Is there a program that your company has that I can volunteer my time to or just come around

17:19 so it does help?"

17:21 And, sometimes, you may just get a no.

17:24 You may get a no.

17:26 You may get a, "Oh, we'll be in touch."

17:29 But they'll never contact you.

17:31 If they do give you a card, it's goldmine.

17:33 Use it right away.

17:35 I'm talking like right away.

17:36 I'm talking within the hour.

17:38 We just met.

17:41 And I really liked our conversation.

17:43 Even though he didn't like it, but you want to be somewhere.

17:48 You've got this mission.

17:50 Reach out.

17:51 Just reach out and just given that your availability and say, "This is my time, I would like to

17:57 make sure that I learn from you.

17:59 What do you offer or who else could I talk to?

18:03 Could you open another door?

18:04 Could you introduce me to someone else that you think may be right up my alley?"

18:09 So, these are things that I've done, and it's worked out.

18:12 Sometimes, it's been a no-call, no-show type of deal.

18:16 I've been on Capitol Hill just waiting for them at their office, and they had to reschedule.

18:23 But you don't give up.

18:24 You asked the chief of staff like, "Hey.

18:25 So, since I'm here, is there another person I can talk to that could point me in the right

18:29 direction or X, Y, and Z or legislative aid or..."

18:33 Just yeah.

18:34 It's tough.

18:37 But it's doable because I'm talking from experience.

18:40 [Adam Westbrook] I have a quick question, Destiny.

18:42 And maybe this is building off of your previous answers now.

18:46 Something that I think can be really challenging for students is when they're doing community

18:51 work is building trust in different communities and kind of especially across communities

18:57 of difference.

18:58 And what sort of tips or what sort of ways have you found in some of your community work

19:05 that's been helpful to build trust in different kinds of communities?

19:09 Maybe, some of your work in DC or some of your work otherwise as well.

19:15 What kind of advice would you give students for building that trust?

19:20 [Ihenacho] Sure.

19:21 So, every everybody that you'll meet, Adam, I'm pretty sure if you and I sat down together

19:27 and talked, we'll have some similarities.

19:30 It could be we like the same type of ties.

19:33 It could be that we like coffee.

19:36 It could be that you like the Red Sox and I like the Yankees which is not true.

19:40 But it could be anything.

19:43 So, just taking the time just to listen, and you'll find it.

19:48 And for those of us who like constituent services, you understand when people talk, you'll figure out like, "Oh, wow.

19:55 Wow.

19:56 We have the same thing going on."

19:58 I can tell you during the time of COVID when it was at its height, I would get so many

20:03 phone calls at the mayor's office, "I don't have X, Y and Z.

20:06 I don't have this.

20:07 And I haven't been able to do this.

20:11 I can't eat.

20:12 I haven't been able to eat because I don't have any food."

20:16 There has been a time in each of our lives that we didn't have something that we weren't able to make ends meet.

20:23 Using that personal connection, using that personal that of yours, well, when I was hungry, what did I do?

20:31 Now, I have these resources that are disposable to me.

20:36 I can say, "You know what?

20:38 We have charity guilds as a provider or as a go-to resource.

20:52 But they can be overbooked and overwhelmed.

20:55 Where else would I go?

20:57 Where else did I go?"

21:00 I've gotten phone calls that, "Hey, I can't pay our bill this month."

21:07 And what do you do?

21:10 You can't give them a source that's over-stretched.

21:12 Hey, you talk them through it like, "Hey.

21:16 So, I don't have the resources right now.

21:18 We don't have the resource right now.

21:19 We've run out of funds for X, Y and Z.

21:22 However, let me make a phone call.

21:24 Let me see what I can do."

21:25 And, sometimes, making that phone call for them, putting them in touch with the person

21:31 who can actually help, it's everything.

21:33 So, to your question, Adam, it's really just taking the time to listen.

21:38 You'll find some type of connectivity with them.

21:41 You'll find something that links the two of you together.

21:44 Sometimes, it's the most odd thing in the world.

21:47 But there's something there.

21:49 Trust me.

21:50 [Westbrook] Awesome.

21:51 Thanks.

21:52 So, I heard you say, "Really, listen," and also maybe sharing a story about a personal

22:00 experience or showing a little bit of vulnerability can be a way to start to build that trust as well.

22:06 That's great.

22:07 Thank you.



22:08 [Ihenacho] No worries.

22:09 [Rahman] No worries at all.

22:10 Awesome.

22:11 Thank you so much.

22:13 Destiny's email is in the chat if anyone wants to reach out to him and contact him.

22:19 Destiny, if you want anything else out there, feel free to just drop it in this chat.

22:24 Thank you so much for talking about your experience.

22:26 We're going to pass it on to our next speaker, Lina.

22:30 [Lina Cañon] Awesome.

22:31 Thank you so much.

22:32 Thank you, Destiny, for all of that.

22:35 I echo everything that you just said.

22:37 So, my name is Lina Cañon.

22:40 These graphics here are just a little bit to show you about the work that I currently do.

22:46 So, on the right, we have the Nur Collective's Instagram which is my company that we've launched

22:51 to bring first-generation entrepreneurs the resources that they need to launch businesses.

22:57 And then, on the left or the bottom, you can see the Chica Project which is the nonprofit

23:02 where I'm the Associate Director.

23:05 And I am lucky enough that in both of my roles, I get to do cross-cultural communication in

23:10 many ways not just community building, but through social media, through personal relationships,

23:16 through the communities that we target.

23:20 And so, I'm a very interactive person.

23:22 So, I vibe off the room.

23:23 So, if you can turn off your camera, I would encourage you to because that will add to the vibe.

23:28 But if not, you can just send me snaps or whatever in the chat to keep the momentum going.

23:34 So, we can go to the next slide.

23:37 And what I have for you all is just a set of tips.

23:40 And then, after I kind of go through them, you can all ask questions.

23:44 And so, my first one is kind of the juice.

23:48 And the first one is knowing your audience.

23:51 I think in any scenario whether you are building a campaign or talking to anyone, you have

23:58 to ask yourself like, "Who am I talking to?"

23:59 Who am I trying to reach?

24:01 Do you know what that community feels like?"

24:03 If any of you are thinking of running for office or helping a campaign or volunteering

24:10 for a campaign, once you start doing that, it gets really specific to communities.

24:15 So, right now, we're going to have a big mayoral campaign happening.

24:20 We're going to have some district campaigns happening.

24:22 The biggest question is who are their audience.

24:25 What does Boston look like?

24:26 What does that Boston District look like?

24:28 And do we know that?

24:29 So, my first do is know your audience.

24:34 Next is have a team.

24:36 So, if you're the one that's thinking of running for office, it really does take a village.

24:42 So, you have to figure out.

24:44 As wonderful as you may be as an individual you cannot do it all yourself.

24:48 And this is something that I have learned even while doing my work that I am only as

24:53 good as the people that I surround myself with.

24:56 And so, who can support you in this, in your efforts to either volunteer or to run your

25:01 own campaign or to create relationships with your community?

25:04 The other thing that I found that is super beneficial from having a team is that you

25:08 don't know what you don't know.

25:09 People used to tell me that.

25:12 And I'm like, "That doesn't even make sense to me."

25:15 But now, I'm like, "Oh, I get it."

25:17 There is my vision, my tunnel vision.

25:20 There is my peripheral.

25:21 And then, there's what I have no idea that is even going on.

25:24 And that's where your team comes in because if you surround yourself with a strong and

25:28 diverse team that is also culturally sensitive, they'll be putting you on to the things that

25:33 you don't know.

25:34 One example of this is my co-partner in my business, is from India.

25:39 And I remember when we started having our company we were launching.

25:44 She was like, "Ramadan is coming up," all of these holidays that I had no idea what they were.

25:51 And I was like, "Hold up.

25:53 Let's have a conversation around this because this wasn't even in my vantage point."

25:56 I'm a first-generation immigrant from Colombia who had never been exposed to the Middle East

26:03 until I came to this country.

26:05 And so, again you don't know what you don't know, and it's really good to have a team that can support you in learning.

26:10 All right.

26:12 The next one is access.

26:15 And so, when you think about community building or when you think about reaching an audience

26:19 or making connections to some of the questions that came up today, is are you making the

26:25 communication that you have accessible, and that is something that is so important.

26:28 And even right now as I'm speaking, I'm wary of the fact that I didn't ask any of you who

26:34 spoke a different language, if you needed closed captions.

26:37 And that is something that is really important especially right now is to make sure that

26:42 all of your communication has access to all of the community.

26:47 You can't really say you're cross-cultural if you're not creating access for other cultures to see what you mean.

26:53 And so, that is also understanding the norms of a community.

26:58 What do native speakers use?

27:01 Are people proofreading the language that you are using?

27:04 Are you using captions in your videos?

27:06 Do you have representation in your social media and in your circle? One great example

27:11 of this was AOC who went on Instagram and was breaking down a bill that she had just

27:19 tried to pass.

27:21 And she was using common language, what I would say is common language.

27:25 Usually, when you watch C-SPAN or you see politicians speak, they're using language

27:29 that you're like, "Hold up.

27:30 I got to write this down," and go look it up later.

27:33 But the ability to be able to go on Twitch or whatever app you go to and just talk to

27:39 people normally and say, "Hey, this is what's going on."

27:42 This is what this bill is created access for so many people who would have been turned

27:47 off to that type of dialogue.

27:50 And then, my last do is always, always check your intention versus your impact especially

27:56 when it comes to cross-cultural communication.

27:59 Now, again, I'm from Colombia.

28:02 And when I say a certain word even in Spanish and my intention is to say the word as Colombians

28:08 know it, somebody from another Latin American country could read that very differently.

28:13 And so, it may impact them differently.

28:16 And I think there's been a big movement lately to really check ourselves when it comes to

28:21 intent and impact especially around culture, race, gender.

28:26 It doesn't really matter what you meant at the end of the day.

28:29 What matters is how that person felt and the impact that your words had on them.

28:32 So, it's really important for you to kind of check yourself.

28:37 Cancel culture is very real.

28:39 I'm sure a lot of you have seen it on social media, and it's really about if your intentions

28:45 are rooted in good and your vision, and your mission, you have to also ask yourself, "Am

28:50 I making people feel inclusive?

28:52 Is my intention showing up with the impact that I'm doing?"

28:55 So, a way to do that is start collecting feedback.

28:59 Did I make you feel this way?

29:01 Did I achieve my objective?

29:03 My intention was to have this be positive.

29:06 Was it positive?

29:07 And then, accept the feedback that they give you.

29:10 The other tip that I would say for intent versus impact is how are you addressing your

29:15 own biases?

29:17 And again, this has been a big conversation especially this past year.

29:21 But check yourself.

29:22 I think we all have internal biases, and you don't have to then go into an apology and

29:28 tell the world what your biases were.

29:30 But as long as you're constantly doing that work internally and with your team, growth

29:36 is really part of the human experience.

29:38 So, I think that smashes cancel culture.

29:41 So, I'm going to stop there and see if there are any questions about the dos before I go to the don'ts.

29:47 Okay.

29:48 Awesome.

29:49 Great.

29:50 So, a couple of don'ts.

29:53 Yeah.

29:54 We can go to the first one.

29:57 So, the first one is don't ever assume.

30:00 And there is that saying when you assume, you don't do a great job.

30:07 And it has been a lesson that I have learned over and over again even when I assume things

30:12 that I think are positive.

30:14 I'm assuming X, Y and Z about people, and that's a highlight.

30:18 But no, don't ever assume.

30:20 Don't assume anything about gender, about culture.

30:23 Don't assume anything about education.

30:26 And I cannot stress that enough.

30:28 I think the way to prevent yourself from assuming things is to always lead with questions.

30:34 Present yourself as an inquisitive person as a curious person and instead of saying,

30:40 "So what Latin American country are you from?"

30:42 You could say, "Are you from a Latin American country or where are you from?"

30:47 Even better.

30:48 Where are you from?

30:49 Again framing everything as a question rather than immediately pushing your assumption on

30:54 someone just opens so many doors and immediately creates a positive atmosphere.

31:01 This is something that me and my co-leader also talk about all the time which is she's learning about me.

31:05 And I'm learning about her, and we're both learning about our very different cultures,

31:09 and we constantly come back to the root value that is we are lifelong learners.

31:15 That is what we're doing.

31:16 You will never be a know-it-all.

31:18 There is no person in the world knows it all.

31:21 And so, one thing that we say is we are always a student, never a master.

31:26 And as we're learning, that also allows us to learn with humility and grace for each

31:30 other because, sometimes, especially right now when everything is so polarized, people

31:36 will hold you accountable for not knowing something.

31:38 There's Google.

31:39 You could have just Googled it.

31:41 But you have to show up with grace for people's learning and where they're at in their own

31:45 learning curve about other people's cultures.

31:48 My other don't is the isms, and it's kind of self-explanatory.

31:56 But if you're not conscious of it, be conscious of the isms which are racism, sexism, ageism.

32:01 And if you don't and haven't heard of these or don't know these, I highly encourage you

32:08 to look them up because it is something that you will face especially as college students and graduating.

32:14 You will face ageism.

32:15 And I think Destiny talked about this a little bit that people will

32:19 just think like, "Oh, this person is young and unexperienced."

32:21 And that is something you could say, "Hey, let's unpack that together."

32:25 I actually feel like I have a lot of experience.



32:27 And again, to what Destiny was hitting at, is own who you are and be able to dismantle

32:33 these isms that exist out there.

32:35 I think the other layer to isms is knowing the historical context of this country.

32:42 This country is very diverse.

32:46 I have never been to a country that has so many cultures represented within it.

32:51 Trust me.

32:52 It is truly, truly a "melting pot."

32:55 But with that comes historical context for every cultural group, and it is really important

33:01 that as you create your campaigns or your relationships or start building community

33:05 that you educate yourself on those historical contexts as well.

33:09 And I know right now, there's a really big movement about the Asian community and people

33:14 wanting to educate themselves and unearthing the history that we first, for so long, have

33:19 turned a blind spot to about the historical immigration of Asian into America and then the progression of Asian Americans.

33:29 And so, you don't want to wait for something like that to happen to educate yourself.

33:33 You want to be proactive.

33:35 And if you know your audience, you know what history books to tackle or what to Google.

33:42 My next don't is monoliths.

33:45 And I actually had to look up this word.

33:48 So, it's okay if you also have to look it up because people have been using this word a lot.

33:52 And I'm like, "What does it mean?"

33:53 But it does fully capture what I wanted to tell you all which is

33:59 that the human experience is not a monolith.

34:00 It is not one thing that's only made up of one thing.

34:04 The human experience is actually made up of many things.

34:07 It is super complex.

34:08 It is nuanced.

34:10 Culture is so nuanced and especially for our generation, culture is

34:16 constantly evolving and redefining itself.

34:18 So, that's something that we're doing with my company is we're redefining what it means

34:22 to be first generation.

34:24 And first generation usually people think, "Oh, it's the first person to go to college."

34:28 And if they don't think that, then they think, "Oh, it's the first person that immigrated here."

34:33 But the first-generation experience is so much bigger than that.

34:36 And the youth are redefining it.

34:38 They're saying, "Actually, I'm the first to leave a Mormon community.

34:42 I'm the first to come out as trans to my family.

34:45 I'm the first."

34:46 And that in itself encompasses first generation.

34:49 And so, as you acknowledge that the human experience is so nuanced, and that we can

34:55 redefine the terms that we use to speak with each other, you will find that you'll create

35:01 much more genuine relationships with your community, with your constituents, with whoever

35:06 you're trying to reach even when we try to categorize.

35:09 I think that's the other really big movement that's happening right now that whatever you

35:13 fill out, people want to know what's the diversity numbers?

35:17 Can you check off the ethnicity box, the race box?

35:20 And there is a really big movement about trying to as we categorize ourselves and own who

35:25 we are in our identity at the same time kind of break those barriers down and understand

35:32 that it's so nuanced, and that truly we're all really multicultural

35:37 and evolving to a truly multicultural society.

35:41 And then, my last don't is to own your biases.

35:46 So, don't hide from them.

35:49 Don't act like you don't have them.

35:50 We all absolutely do.

35:52 We live in this country.

35:54 We are living in 2021.

35:56 So, by default, we've got some biases.

36:00 And as long as you're working on yourself, you're staying honest to your mission.

36:03 You're staying connected to your truth.

36:06 And you're checking yourself being really honest with yourself.

36:10 And you have a team that holds you accountable that will really lead to success.

36:14 And I think an example of this recently that I wanted to share with you all is how to not

36:20 be afraid to do that for others when you see someone else make a mistake or say something

36:26 that is not culturally sensitive.

36:28 So, one of the examples is I was in a class recently where we were talking about HIV and

36:34 AIDS, and what happened in the continent of Africa when that came out.

36:39 And a lot of people started using the word poor countries when referring to this continent.

36:44 And it was a really huge learning opportunity because it could have gone so many ways.

36:49 There are so many scenarios of how we could have tackled that.

36:53 But the way that it was tackled was somebody said, "Hey, I want to encourage people to

36:58 use different wording because poor countries has this impact on me.

37:04 And here's an alternative that we could use."

37:07 And the way that was received was so beautiful.

37:10 The professor immediately apologized, acknowledged that her intent did not meet the impact that

37:17 it had, reworded the way that we were framing things and then later touched base with the

37:23 whole group about what a learning experience that was for everyone.

37:26 And so, that type of humility and the ability for somebody to say, "Hey..."

37:31 In the middle of a class with everyone watching was really brave but so necessary because

37:36 if they hadn't done that, we would have continued that conversation.

37:40 More people would have probably internalized that poor mentality and none of us would have

37:45 learned what we learned in that moment.

37:47 So, it is really important to own your own biases and check others as well in a gracious way.

37:54 So, those are the tips that I had for you all today.

37:57 And I'm happy to answer any questions about my work or the things that I shared today.

38:03 Oh, I see Elizabeth.

38:06 Okay.

38:07 What are some tips to check your own biases?

38:10 Yeah.

38:11 So, I think the way that I...

38:12 And, again, everybody's different because you have your own world,

38:16 and you are your own mind.

38:17 But for me, the first thing that I do is anytime that I've made an

38:23 assumption about somebody, I ask myself why I did that.

38:26 It's not enough to just make the assumption mess up and be like,

38:29 "Oh, sorry. I assumed that."

38:30 No, no.

38:31 You have to actually go back and do the work of why did I think that.

38:34 Why did my mind assume that?

38:37 And then, go down layers and layers of where that could have been, and it takes work.

38:42 The second thing that I would say about checking your own biases is

38:46 there are some really great resources.

38:48 And I can send a link after this.

38:52 I think it's Harvard that has an actual test that you could take.

38:56 And biases go both ways.

38:58 It could be that you have a preferred...

39:01 For example, when I took the bias test, I was more biased towards being overly nice

39:09 and overly catering to people who have disabilities.

39:12 And that's because I grew up around that.

39:14 And so, my biases are always like, "You're not making this accessible."

39:18 But again, that goes to the other way.

39:20 And then, there's the other bias where you just don't acknowledge

39:24 it at all because it's so much out of your sphere.

39:25 So, I recommend taking a couple of those tests to check your biases.

39:28 I recommend just asking yourself why did I assume that, constantly journaling, reflecting.

39:34 And then, the third one would be read.

39:36 There are so many great books out there right now depending on what bias you want to tackle.

39:41 I talked about disability bias.

39:43 But racial biases are really big.

39:45 Gender biases are really big.

39:47 And so, there is a lot of literature out there that you could read.

39:51 And that even just brings things to your peripherals,

39:55 and you're like, "I didn't even know that was a bias."

39:58 Book recommendations, yes.

39:59 Oh, my gosh.

40:00 I love that you asked that because I was just looking at a screenshot.

40:04 So, there's a couple of books that I would recommend.

40:07 The first is *Caste*.

40:10 And I can share a link to that as well.

40:14 But I love that book.

40:17 There's also *White Supremacy and Me* which has been a really big book about racial bias.

40:23 I can't really think of the top of my head right now about a socio-economic bias book.

40:29 But *There Goes the Hood* is a good one that talks about gentrification and can allow you

40:34 to kind of understand that issue.

40:36 But I'll put my contact information if you have a certain topic you want to read on.

40:40 I'm happy to pass on some resources.

40:44 [Westbrook] Lina, thanks for this.

40:47 I love these tips of do's and don'ts.

40:49 I'm kind of curious for the students on the call and the students who are going to be watching this later, you're a Suffolk alum.

40:58 And I know you are very active as a student.

41:01 What kinds of experiences could you encourage students to get involved with on Suffolk's

41:06 campus that could help them kind of develop some of these cross-cultural communication skills?

41:12 [Cañon] Oh, my gosh.

41:13 Absolutely.

41:14 So, I did the most while I was at Suffolk.

41:17 I was like, "I'm going to do it all," and that would be something that I highly recommend

41:21 try everything at least once.

41:24 Try everything.

41:25 I think because I was able to try everything at a very young age in college, I was able

41:31 to see what I didn't like and what I did like, and that was really, really beneficial which

41:36 was outside of my class, not even related to my degree.

41:40 So, I did the Center for Community Engagement.

41:43 I did Alternative Spring Break which that alone was an amazing experience because it

41:49 not only allowed me to go to El Salvador to understand a whole different country that

41:53 I continued going to even after graduation with that same professor and doing the same work.

42:00 There's where I found my passion.

42:01 But it allowed me to go to places like Denver who you would have never thought Denver.

42:05 What do you think about when you think about Denver?

42:08 But it was actually it had the highest rate of child homelessness, and that was a really

42:13 great again culture shock for me because I'm in Denver.

42:17 When I think Denver, I think wealth and hiking.

42:20 That's all I think about.

42:21 And so, it really allowed me to check that assumption.

42:24 Why did I assume that that's what Denver was?

42:27 And let me educate myself on the actual population.

42:29 I also got to go to Mississippi which was amazing.

42:35 And I also got to go to Texas which is where I experienced my first actual discrimination.

42:44 Here I am volunteering with Habitat having white people bring me food because I'm a volunteer

42:51 and simultaneously discriminate against me because at that time, I wasn't a citizen.

42:57 And so, in our prayer, they were like, "Let's thank God for citizens."

43:00 And again, it was such a cultural shock and a huge learning opportunity to understand what the south is like.

43:08 That was my first exposure because in Boston, we live in a little bubble.

43:12 And I don't know where our students are from.

43:13 But that was a really, really transformative experience.

43:16 So, highly recommend anything that allows you to travel.



43:21 One of my biggest regrets is not taking the Prague trip that Suffolk used to offer.

43:25 I don't know they still offer.

43:26 But any traveling outside of Boston that Suffolk offers, please take it.

43:31 Take it. Take it.

43:33 And then, the second thing that I would say is all of the student groups, it allowed me

43:35 to really, really, really meet different people.

43:40 Even things that I would have never tried, I was saying this to Suffolk students yesterday.

43:44 I didn't really ride a bike until I got to Suffolk and bought a bike and became the president of SU Bikes.

43:51 And I was like, "Who am I?"

43:52 But that also allowed me to establish a community that I would have never met.

43:56 All of these people who are commuting via bike to Suffolk, and they were so different from me.

44:03 But it was such a beautiful experience.

44:05 And again, we were able to bring our different cultures, and at the same time connect through

44:10 our own culture of biking which is amazing.

44:13 Same thing with the hip-hop dance group.

44:15 Same thing with the affinity group.

44:17 So, I would definitely say the diversity office was amazing.

44:21 I, again, Latina immigrant like super conservative life before Suffolk and being a part of the

44:30 diversity services office really allowed me to see what LGBTQ was and really allowed me

44:37 to immerse myself in that, own that, and become an ally.

44:41 One of the most recent learnings that I've had is that just because I think I'm an ally doesn't mean I'm an ally.

44:47 I am only an ally if the community deems me so.

44:50 And so, that was another really great learning experience that I had through all of the Suffolk extracurriculars.

44:58 [Rahman] Do we have any other questions?

45:05 Sorry.

45:06 I just cut you off.

45:11 I'm not seeing you right now.

45:14 But Lina, you do you have any sort of contact info that you'd like to pass along to the students?

45:21 You can put your information there as well in the chat.

45:23 [Cañon] Awesome.

45:24 Let me do that.

45:25 [Rahman] Thank you so much.

45:26 Thank you so much for being here.

45:27 That was an amazing, amazing stories.

45:28 I just love hearing that because that's what I'm passionate about as well.

45:32 So, I have a question to pose to you, guys, if you just want to type in the chat.

45:37 So, what did we learn is cross-cultural communication?

45:43 I'll wait a couple a minute more for people to start answering.

45:55 Okay.

45:57 Elizabeth said, "Building relationships and listening."

46:02 100%.

46:03 It's so important to build those relationships and to really listen to those people.

46:08 And when it comes to listening, it's not just what you may think in listening.

46:14 But listen to these undertones.

46:17 What are people really going through?

46:19 Pay attention to their body language.

46:21 I know Destiny said that as well.

46:22 So, pay attention to how they're reacting to certain things because, sometimes, people

46:27 don't want to say if they are offended by something just from my experience.

46:33 I know.

46:34 I haven't always been comfortable saying that either.

46:36 Okay.

46:37 So, Adam, "Educating ourselves in lead with questions being curious rather than assuming."

46:43 100, 1000%, that is an amazing definition.

46:47 Yes, don't assume.

46:48 Nothing is really a positive bias or positive assumption because I know from being part

46:55 of the American community and being South Asian, people were like, "Oh, you're supposed

46:58 to be just really good at math."

47:01 And it's like what's wrong with that.

47:03 But there is something wrong with it because you're putting this whole role on me that

47:07 I didn't even know that I needed to fill.

47:08 But now, I think I have to fill.

47:11 So, nothing is really a positive assumption.

47:14 So, just ask a question.

47:15 Be nice about it.

47:17 And most people are just willing to answer and educate you, things like that.

47:23 Mark says, "Be confident and know what you want."

47:27 Yeah, 100%.

47:28 Know you want to get out of the situation.

47:30 I know Destiny talked about that a lot.

47:32 Whatever experience you're going into, have an intention to set that.

47:36 And then, run with it because when you have an intention, you know exactly what goals

47:40 you're trying to fulfill.

47:41 So, yeah.

47:42 Awesome.

47:43 I love those definitions.

47:44 Let's move on to the next slide.

47:46 Okay.

48:00 So, what's the importance of cross-cultural communication?

48:06 We're talking about what it is.

48:11 But what does it actually accomplish?

48:17 And why is it so important in today's world?

48:21 I'll wait for people to put that in chat as well.

48:23 I'll start defining it.

48:24 And then, I'll start reading off the chat.

48:25 Oh, Elizabeth said, "You learn what you didn't know and needed to learn from others."

48:28 Yeah, definitely.

48:30 That's so important to recognize that you don't know what you need to learn a lot of  
48:35 times especially if you're from a certain background.

48:37 Being an immigrant myself too, I didn't know that certain biases existed because of the  
48:43 community I came from.

48:44 There weren't so many different cultures.

48:46 It was one culture.

48:47 It wasn't...

48:48 There weren't a lot of immigrants or anything like that.

48:52 So, I didn't know that I had to learn about other people's cultures and what other people  
48:56 go through.

48:57 I just had never experienced that.

48:58 So, yeah.

48:59 Just be open to thinking like, "I may have other things to learn."

49:03 Adam said, "To build inclusive communities where everyone actually feels welcome and  
49:08 able to active members of their community."

49:11 So, yeah.

49:12 People have to feel like they are included.

49:14 They have to feel like they can be active.

49:17 A lot of discrimination, people don't want to speak up about, and that hinders them.

49:22 They'll hinder their school ability.

49:24 I know.

49:25 I recently talked about Asian American racism at the school assembly.

49:30 And we talked about how some of the students because nothing was being done about the racism

49:35 they were facing, they weren't able to get their schoolwork done properly.

49:37 They were constantly thinking about those things.

49:39 So, think about what impact they will have on other people or changing your behavior

49:43 will also have on other people.

49:46 Let's move to the next slide

49:52 Okay.

49:53 Awesome.

49:54 So, these are some of the takeaways from today.

49:55 Anyone else, if you guys have any takeaways, feel free to drop in the chat or unmute yourself

49:58 after I just go over them.

50:00 But these are things you guys have said.

50:02 So, listen to understand.

50:05 When you're listening to someone, don't go into it in a defensive manner.

50:11 Listen to really be like, "You know what?"

50:13 I might have things to address here.

50:15 Let me listen openly," Even if it is hurtful.

50:18 And it sometimes can be.

50:20 I've been in a situation like that.

50:22 And I'm sure so, so many people have.

50:24 But if you take it and close off, and it's like, "That person thinks because I have biases,

50:30 I'm a horrible person."

50:31 That's not true.

50:32 They're calling it up because they care to call it up first place.

50:34 If I call you out, and you're someone close to me, it's because I care about you.

50:39 I want to learn from that situation.

50:41 So, don't close off in that way.

50:42 Listen to really take in what the other person is thinking.

50:45 And then, evaluate your behavior.

50:46 Avoid stereotyping.

50:48 So, when you're making posts or just communicating across different cultures, things like that,

50:54 don't immediately assume like, "I know this culture."

50:57 Let's use the math example again because it's really easy.

51:00 Oh, they like math.

51:01 Let me post these math things, and they're going to join this program or whatever.

51:08 Don't immediately just take whatever you've heard.

51:10 Just try to avoid that as much as possible because no one likes being stereotyped.

51:16 It's just harmful in the long run, just overall.

51:18 And then, respect differences.

51:23 Different cultures tend to go about things different ways.

51:28 So...I don't wear hijab.

51:33 But a lot of people that I know do wear hijabs.

51:36 Right now, there's a ban in France on hijabs.

51:41 And something that I always talk about is that respect those differences.

00:51:44 Just because you don't choose to cover your head, just because you don't choose to live

51:48 in that way does not mean that the other person did not.

51:51 So, don't assume someone is oppressed.

51:53 Don't assume what someone is going through because almost my parents are super religious.

51:59 But they've never forced me to wear hijab.

52:02 Everyone I know has never been like, "Oh, yeah.

52:04 I'm being forced to wear hijab."

52:06 I know there's people that have taken it off or chose to put it back on after they got

52:12 much, much older.

52:13 My own mom has worn it after she had me and much later than that, not before she was married

52:18 or anything like that, and she was never forced into it.

52:19 She chose that.

52:21 So, just to think about life in that way.

52:23 It's okay to have differences.

52:24 Differences are what makes us so great and able to share and learn from each other.

52:30 So, respect that other people will not live life the same way that you do.

52:34 Build self-awareness.

52:35 I know Lina talked a lot about that just reading books.

52:40 Googling.

52:41 Googling is so, so important.

52:42 I talk about this a lot.

52:44 And I'm like, "it's not my job as a POC or a part of marginalized groups explain to you



52:50 what I'm going through all the time."

52:51 You shouldn't always reach out to specific people and always be like, "You should talk

52:55 about this because you will get tired."

52:57 But Google does have a lot of resources.

52:58 A lot of different schools have resources.

53:00 Suffolk has offices where you can go to and learn about these things.

53:04 So, go to those people that are making themselves readily available.

53:07 Don't always just ask the one friend because they may be feeling really, really down.

53:13 They may be going through something talking about that issue.

53:16 It may be traumatizing for them.

53:18 So, just be aware of that Google issues.

53:21 Yeah.

53:22 And also, be flexible.

53:23 So, once you are called out, just apologize.

53:26 That's my main thing about that.

53:30 When I was doing that assembly, this was the most proudest moment I've ever had.

53:34 This kid, he reached out to me, private message me, and he was like, "When I was in

53:39 elementary school, I realized that I said a lot of racist things.

53:42 But I didn't know that those things were racist.

53:44 But I'm so, so sorry that I put this on you, guys, and put this on other people.

53:49 I'm going to work on that."

53:50 I didn't ask for an apology.

53:53 I never called him out to begin with.

53:55 I just was talking about different things people experience and how they can be racist.

53:59 But the fact that this person took that time as a high schooler to apologize to me privately, that just meant a lot.

54:07 So, think about that.

54:08 When you recognize that, you learn a new thing, and you recognize maybe I've been

54:11 biased towards this person, go reach out and apologize to them.

54:14 It'll make their day.

54:16 It'll help you a lot grow as a person, but also help them feel more safe around you as well.

54:22 And the last thing is ask questions.

54:24 We know Lina and Destiny, they're super open.

54:26 You guys can always reach out to them instead.

54:29 And we're here as Suffolk Votes Ambassadors as well.

54:32 And Suffolk has the office for inclusion and diversity.

54:37 So, also reach out to them and just ask questions.

54:40 If you don't know something, go and be like, "All right.

54:42 This is what I don't know.

54:43 feel like I've done something wrong or maybe I don't know what I'm doing wrong.

54:48 Help me."

54:49 And people will help you.

54:50 People are open to helping you.

54:51 They want to help you learn.

54:54 Yeah.

54:55 Awesome.

54:56 I see some things in the chat.

54:57 You learn what you didn't know.

55:00 Never mind.

55:01 Let's go.

55:02 Learn how to fish out the implicit messages.

55:06 Yeah.

55:07 Definitely think about the implicit messages.

55:08 And when you feel something's wrong, ask your peers.

55:10 Talk about it and be able to learn from the experience.

55:14 100%.

55:15 Talk to people.

55:16 Talk to your friends.

55:17 Talk to your family, anyone you feel comfortable with.

55:19 And Lina has put the implicit bias test from Harvard.

55:23 I definitely suggest everyone take that.

55:24 I'm going to go take that.

55:26 Thank you so much for that resource as well.

55:29 And yeah.

55:30 I hope you guys continue to learn.

55:31 And when you guys think about watching your own campaigns or being organizers to

55:35 take these lessons with you and use them to the best of your ability.

55:38 So, thank you guys so much for being here.

55:41 Thank you so much, Lina and Destiny for being here as well and speaking to our students.

55:44 We really, really appreciate you.

55:48 For our next program, just follow us everywhere at Suffolk Votes, and you can email us

55:55 at [suffolkcce@gmail.com](mailto:suffolkcce@gmail.com) or you can DM us.

55:57 We're pretty active on Instagram.

55:59 So, we'll get back to you, and thank you so much again for being here.

56:03 [Cañon] Thank you.

56:04 [Finn] Thank you, everyone.

56:05 [Westbrook] Thank you all so much.

56:06 [Ihenacho] Thank you for the opportunity, you guys.

56:10 Nice meeting each and every one of you.

56:11 Best of luck.

56:14 [Rahman] Thank you.