

# Welcome to Networking Strategies

We will start in a couple minutes. While you wait:



✓ Please mute (for now)



✓ Turn on subtitles (Note: REV's logo appears as "LIVE" on the top left corner of Zoom. This session is not being recorded.)

- Hover your cursor over the Zoom toolbar at the bottom of your Zoom screen
- Click on the three dots in the bottom right corner. Select "Show Subtitles"



✓ Display your name

- Hover your cursor over the square with your name and click on the three dots in the top right corner
- Use the "Rename" function to display your preferred name



✓ In the chat (centre, bottom of screen):

- Name, department, what you hope to gain after today's workshop?

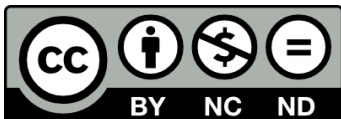
# Networking Strategies



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STUDENT  
LIFE

Career Exploration  
& Education



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# Land Acknowledgement

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

# Access Check

We understand access to be a shared responsibility between everyone in this space. We strive to create an accessible space that reduces the need for you to disclose a disability or impairment for the purposes of gaining an accommodation. In doing this together, we strive to welcome disability, and the changes it brings, into our space. ([AODA Office](#), *University of Toronto*)

- **What do you need to engage in this virtual space today?**
- **Are there any access needs we could address as a group to support your engagement?**

# Equity Statement

The Division of Student Life at the University of Toronto is driven by a mission to “enrich the university experience *for and with* students by fostering learning, growth, connections, community, and support” ([Student Life webpage](#), 2021).

Career Education seeks to do this through a commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, access, belonging and reconciliation as we navigate career conversations and skill development, while simultaneously recognizing that career education is limited by its grounding in a Euro-Western worldview.

- **What is one thing we can each do today to contribute to an equitable and inclusive space? (*Please reflect privately; this will not be shared.*)**

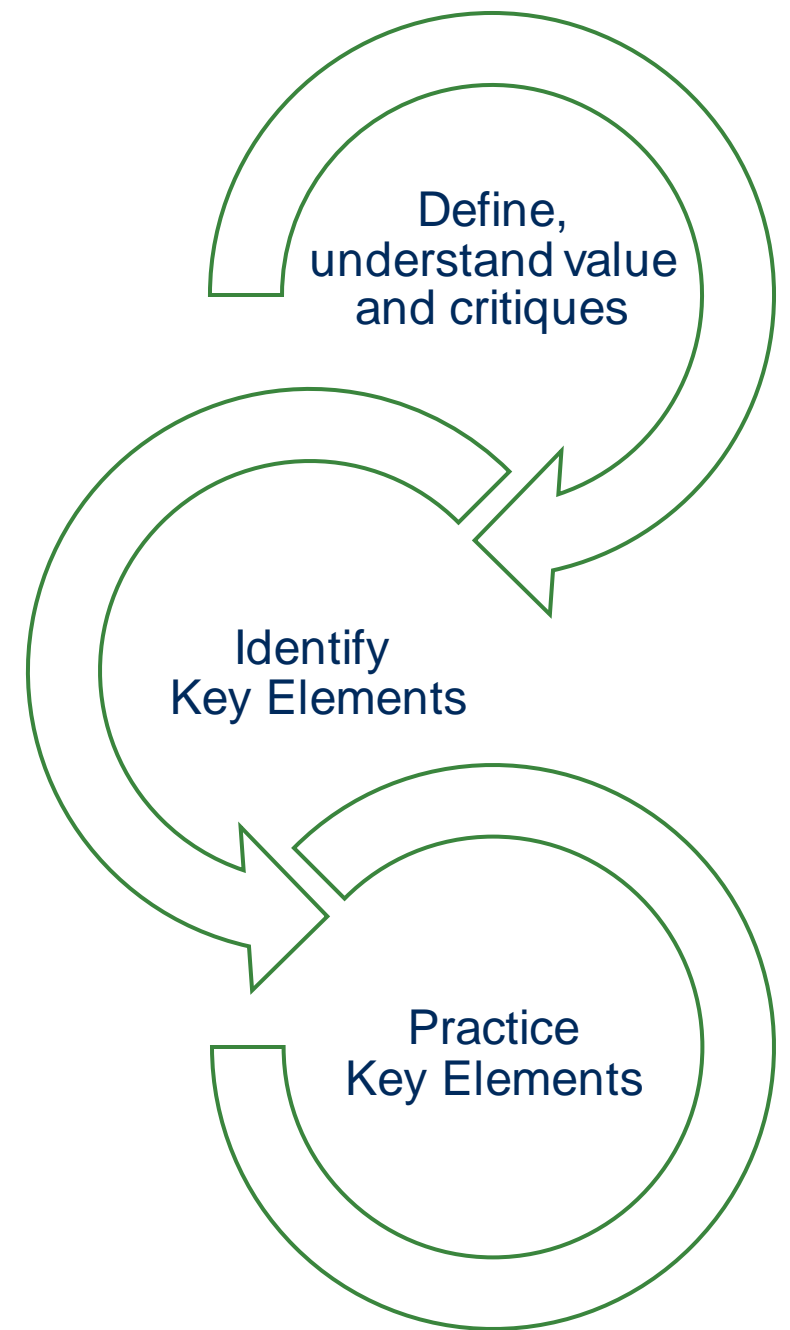
# Forms of Engagement

**In this workshop, you can expect to engage through the following formats and mediums:**

- Optional sharing on-mic and/or in the Chat
- Discussion questions and open Q&A (via Chat or on-mic, your preference)
- Two Breakout Rooms
- Short activities for personal reflection
- One Poll

# A Plan for Our Time Together

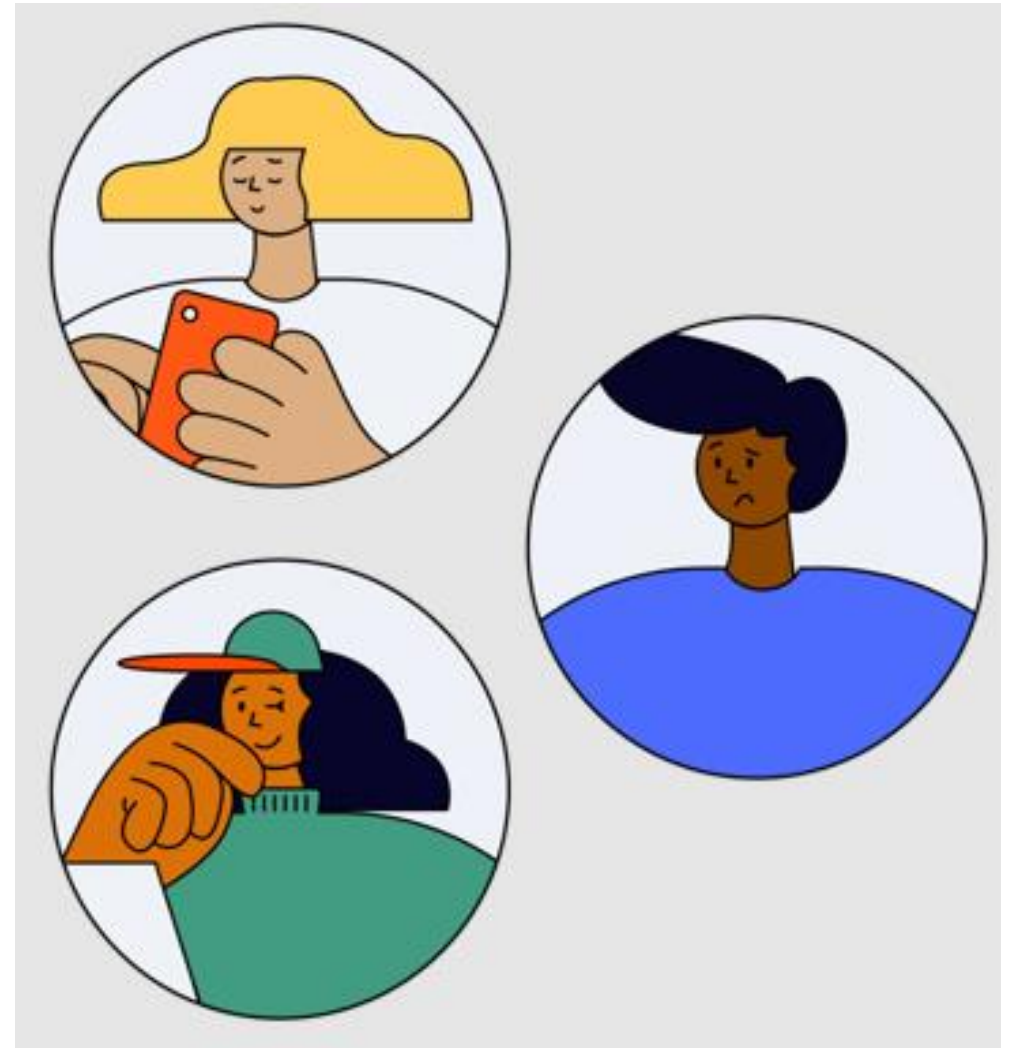
- ✓ Define networking and understand the value, importance and critiques of networking for career exploration and job searching.
- ✓ Identify key elements of reaching out to professionals, including the preparation and research required to articulate relevant skills, interests, and thoughtful questions.



Up Next: Networking Makes Me Feel...

# Networking Makes Me Feel...

- Comfortable and confident
- Stressed and nervous
- Curious and excited





# Making it Easier: Shifting Mindset



**Share in the chat box:**

Has networking ever felt easy? When? What made it easy for you?

1. **Focus on learning:** discovery, curiosity, new ideas
2. **Identify common interests:** research, explore common experiences
3. **Reflect on what you can offer:** perspective, advice, endorsement, gratitude
4. **Link to higher goals:** what larger motivations do you have?

Source: [Harvard Business Review, \*Learn to Love Networking\*](#)

Up Next: Let's Start Connecting

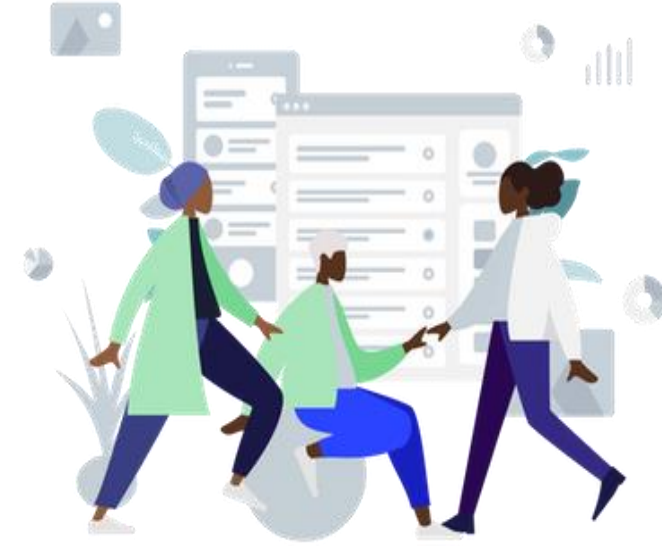
# Let's Start Connecting!

## ACTIVITY:

You will be moved into breakout rooms of 3 - 4 ppl for 5 mts.

In your breakout rooms:

1. Introduce yourself (Name, pronouns if you choose)
2. Get to know each other and **find 3 THINGS IN COMMON** (amongst your whole group).
3. Designate one person to share those three things (with permission) upon returning to the main room.





01

# **What is Networking & Why is it Important?**



# Networking is...

...a supportive system of sharing information and services among individuals and groups having a common interest.

✓ authentic connections

✓ two-way interactions

✓ thoughtful conversation

✗ schmoozing

✗ exploiting others for personal gain

? getting a job

# The Value of Networking



1. Learning new knowledge relevant to your interests
2. Gaining connections, mentors, and referrals
3. Inviting happenstance encounters
4. Increasing comfort and confidence via practice

# Critiques of Networking

1. Networks **tend to be homogenous**, especially for white people
2. The **scheduling of networking events is often limiting** for those with caregiving responsibilities
3. There is often a **double-standard in the way that individuals are perceived when they network**, based on their identity and social location.
4. The **culture of professionalism** is often rooted in wealthy, white, and male cultural norms.
5. **There is a network extroversion bias** in Western cultures



# Acknowledging Barriers to Networking

- **Networking can feel uncomfortable and awkward at first, but it is very much part of the job search process in Canada**
  - Consider this re-frame: networking is about connecting with people who have similar interests and values to you
- **Some folks may be job searching in areas where they have no pre-existing connections**
  - Begin networking with people already in your circle (professors, university staff, peers, friends) and expand out (I.e., friends of friends)
- **The culture of professionalism is often tied to wealthy, white, male norms**
  - Consider building your community of support (network) with people who have shared values and/or lived experience, so that you can show up authentically
- **Networking can be anxiety-inducing, especially for neurodivergent folks and people with disabilities**
  - Consider "gentle networking", like asking questions over email instead of in-person
- **Timing can be difficult for folks with caregiving responsibilities or those balancing work and school**
  - Consider reaching out over email, LinkedIn or using other asynchronous strategies!



02

## **Types of Networking & Where to find people**



# Types of Networking



## Formal

- Informational interviews
- Networking events, conferences
- Job fairs, employer events

## Informal

- Social events
- Clubs / societies / hobbies
- Random chance meetings

While the above might be considered as “in-person” forms of networking, much of the above can take place virtually.

There are also additional avenues for networking that are exclusively online.

**Share in the chat:**

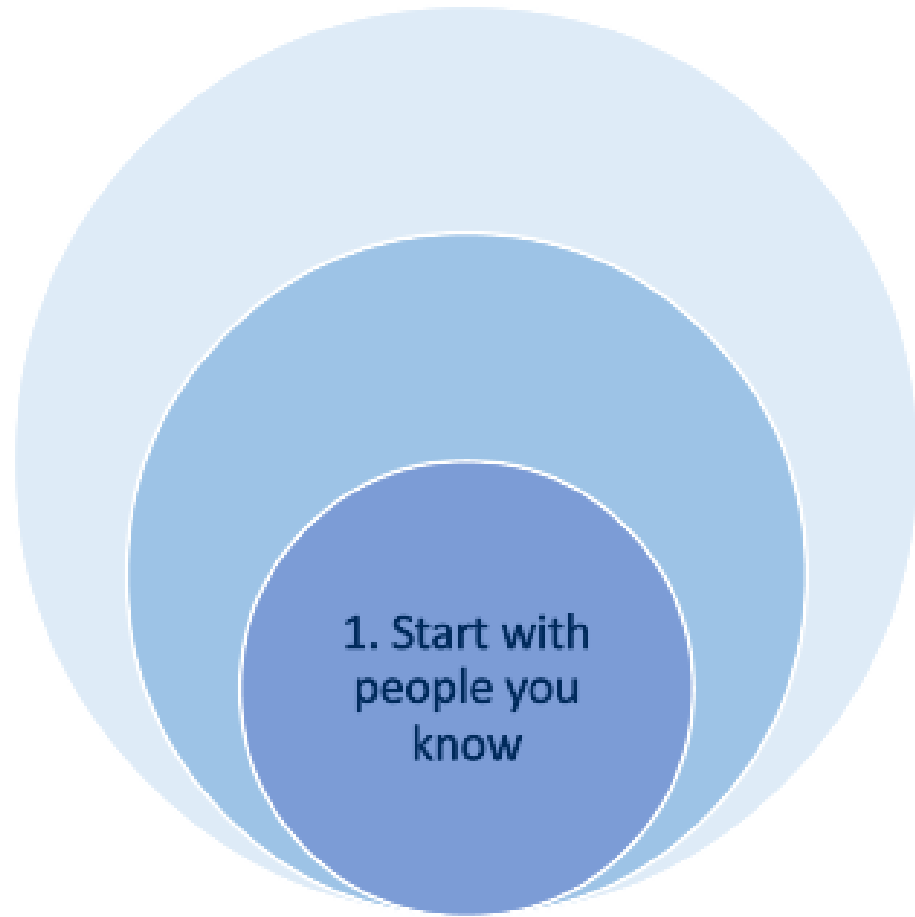
**What types of networking have you engaged in? Which ones worked well for you?**



# Online Networking – making connections

- Informational Interviews via **video** (Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp, FaceTime etc) or phone
- Instant Chat (Microsoft Teams, etc)
- Email exchanges
- Online Events (workshops, conferences, career fairs, meet-ups etc.)
- Building an online presence (LinkedIn, online portfolios, websites, Twitter, Instagram, etc)

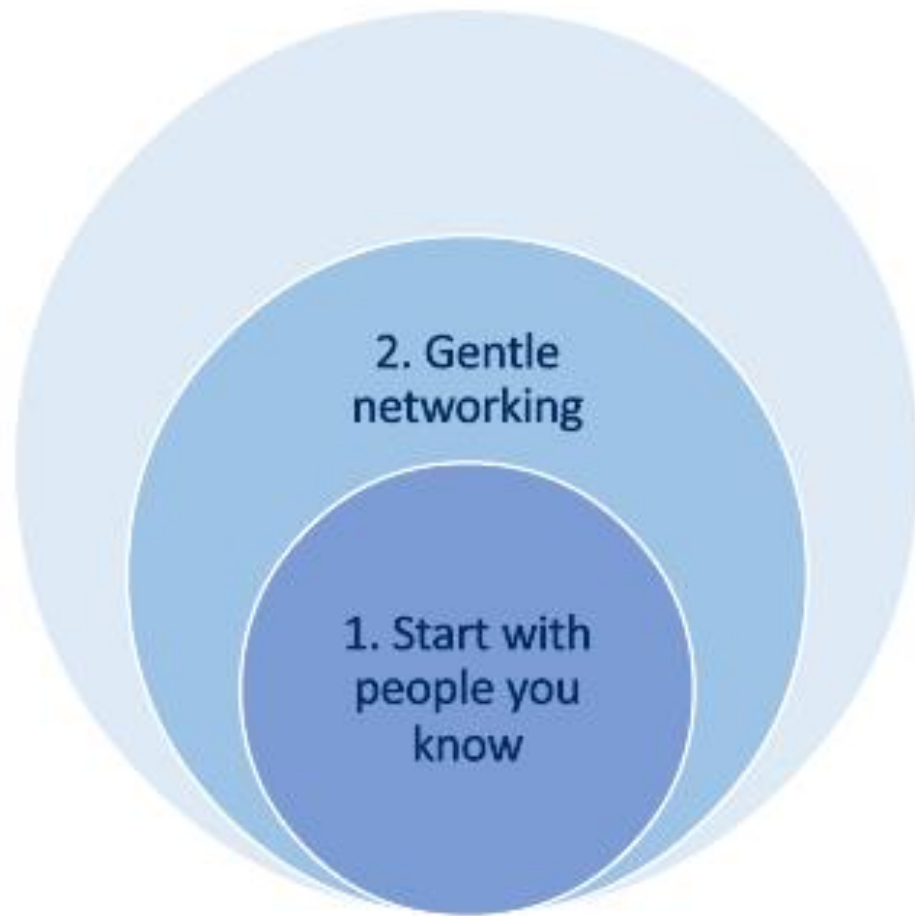
# Finding Connections: Step 1



## Start with people you know

- Connect with friends, family, colleagues, peers, professors, Teaching Assistants (etc.)
- Look at your **current community** around you:
  - Class
  - Student Clubs & Organisations
  - Neighborhood

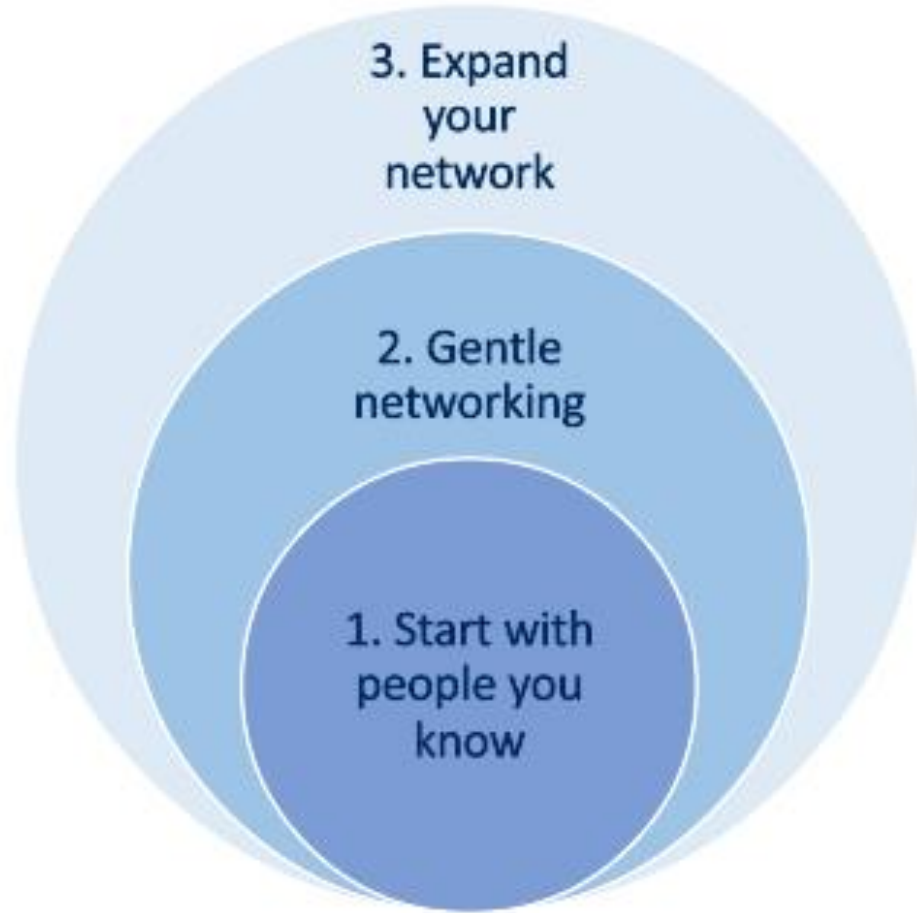
# Finding Connections: Step 2



## Gentle Networking

- **2nd degree connections:**  
Request introductions (virtual/in-person) from your friends, family, peers, professors, Teaching Assistants, colleagues (etc.)
- Reach out to **acquaintances** you've met at events, previous networking contacts, summer jobs, volunteer opportunities etc.
- Send an email, connect on LinkedIn, other virtual requests (etc.).

# Finding Connections: Step 3



## Expand your network

- **Request informational interviews** - U of T alumni – [U of T Hub on Ten Thousand Coffees](#), Alumni Finder & Groups on LinkedIn
- **Cold contact** people online (social media, email)
- **CxED Events & Resources:** Join Alumni Chats, [Job Shadowing Program](#), Employer Information Sessions, Job Club, Dream Job Academy
- Reach out to **Faculty, Research Community, Special Interest Groups (SIGs), Conferences** (See Appendix A for further resources)

# What is an Informational Interview?

“One-on-one coffee chat with a professional in a particular role, field, industry, or sector”

“Opportunity to gain career or industry clarity from an ‘insider’”

## Why do people agree to informational interviews?

- They’ve benefitted from them in the past themselves
- They enjoy talking to and meeting new people
- They recruit regularly or are actively recruiting



03

# Key Ingredients



# Four Key Ingredients for Networking

## Know Yourself

- Reflect on your academic, personal, and professional experiences.
- What skills and stories might you share with others? What are your goals? How can you best communicate the above (elevator pitch)? What do you already know? What are you hoping to find out?
- (See Appendix A for further prompts)

## Find Your People

- Who might have some answers, information, or insights? How might you connect with them? How have you connected with people in the past?

## Prepare

- Do preliminary online research on the organizations, industries, and individuals that you're interested in. Review your current application documents and online presence

## Practice, Practice, Practice!

- Networking is a skill; like any skill, you get better with practice.



# Introducing Yourself (Your Elevator Pitch)

- An elevator pitch is a brief, persuasive introduction to yourself to spark an interest in who you are, something you've done, and your goals (30-60 seconds).
  - Who you are
  - Something you've done (explain what you offer, key skills and experiences)
  - Goals / Call to action

Additional tips:

- Know your audience and make it conversational
- Pace yourself
- Practice, practice, practice!



Up Next: Developing Your Elevator Pitch

# Developing Your Elevator Pitch (5mts)

## (articulating your skills & goals)

On the worksheet (link in the chat box) write down **three relevant things about yourself** that you'd like to share when meeting someone for the first time (use point form).

Consider sharing:

- **Education** – qualifications, course of study, specialism, areas of interest
- **Something you've done** that demonstrates your skills, experiences, interests in this field (school, paid/unpaid employment, co-curricular activities) or a notable achievement
- Your **job / career goal**



ACTIVITY

Up Next: Networking: Let's Practice!

# Networking

## Let's – Practice! (7mts)

- In breakout rooms, practice having an introductory conversation, using your “elevator pitch”
- Make sure everyone has a turn to speak
- Listen and learn from others



04

## **Reaching Out – Making & Maintaining Connections**

# Maintaining Your Online Presence

1. Find out where the community you want to engage with spends their time online.
  - *could be LinkedIn, but it might be GitHub, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, message boards, blogs, etc.*
2. Create a profile that is comparable to other professionals in that field
  - *E.g., comparable photo, appropriate use of industry-specific keywords, and completing required profile fields.*
3. Be active! Ask questions, comment, share, engage, etc.



# Reaching Out: Core Components

- 1. Show empathy and awareness of busy schedules**
- 2. Be clear and speak to a shared interest**
  - It should be evident via subject line and message text why you are reaching out to them and why they are an ideal person to speak with.
- 3. Briefly describe your background and aspirations (elevator pitch)**
- 4. Be specific and flexible in your request**
  - Clear ask – a 30m meeting
  - Suggest times and mediums (e.g., Thursday next week via Zoom) with an openness to connect at their convenience

# Message Format & Sample

**[Subject line]** Informational Interview Request

**[Greeting]** Dear/Hello Full Name (First name only is also culturally acceptable)

**[First Paragraph]** *Empathy + build a connection (shared background/interests) + how you found them.* Hope you're well. My name is \_\_\_\_ and I am a student studying / graduating with \_\_\_\_ at UofT. I have experience/ accomplishment \_\_\_\_, and am in the process of exploring / planning a career in \_\_\_\_\_. I was given your contact information from \_\_\_\_\_.

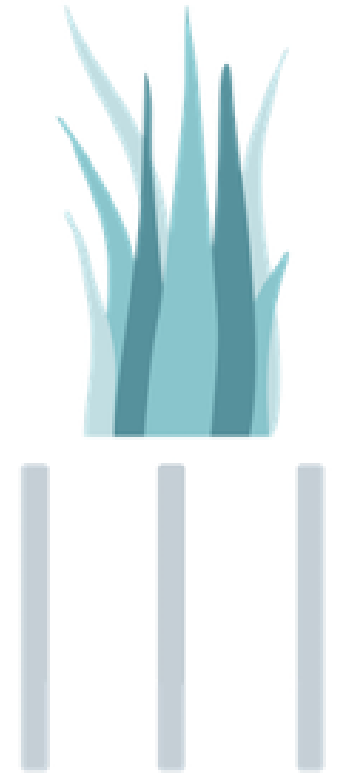
**[Second Paragraph]** *Explains why you are reaching out – how you would benefit from their expertise, and what your specific request is.* I noticed that you graduated with \_\_\_\_ and have built your career in \_\_\_\_\_. I'm looking for insights on how the industry/role has is adapting to the current climate, particularly \_\_\_\_\_. I was wondering if you would have 30 minutes for a Zoom or phone call, perhaps sometime next week? I'm available \_\_\_\_\_. Please let me know either way and thank you for your time.

**[Formal Close]** Sincerely, \_\_\_\_

# Before the Meeting

For your virtual or phone meeting to go as smoothly as possible, remember to:

- **Prepare your questions (and answers!)**
  - Good networking goes two ways – the person you're meeting may have questions about you, your goals, etc.
- **Test your tech** – audio, video, internet connection, phone
- **Dress appropriately and be mindful of your surroundings**
- **Keep essentials close by.** Examples include a notepad (digital or physical) to take notes, some water, a charger for your device





# Networking Questions

| Types of Networking Questions                  | Examples   |
|--|--|
| <b>Career Path &amp; Training</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What has your career path been like? What was the most unexpected learning that happened along the way?</li><li>• Where do you see this field in 5 years?</li><li>• If you could do it all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself?</li></ul>  |
| <b>Current Position &amp; Responsibilities</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What skills have you found essential for success? What would you recommend I do in order to build this skill competency?</li><li>• Could you tell me about one main challenge of this position?</li></ul>  |
| <b>Working Conditions</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What kind of professional development opportunities exist?</li><li>• What kind of supervision did you have starting and what kind do you have now?</li><li>• In your opinion, what is the most important equity, diversity, inclusion and access initiative the company has undertaken in the past year?</li></ul> |
| <b>Career Advice</b>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What advice do you wish you had while you were starting out?</li><li>• What other jobs or fields would you suggest I try out?</li><li>• Is there anyone else you think I should speak with?</li></ul>  |

Up Next: Practice Crafting Thoughtful Questions



# Maintaining Your Network

## **Follow-up within 24 hours**

- Thank contact for specific information (e.g. information about the ABC internship program), provide any information that they requested (if applicable), and ask to connect on LinkedIn/other platform if you haven't already.

## **Quality over quantity**

- After initial follow up, you don't need to stay in touch with everyone you speak with. Keep folks updated if you've followed through on something, share articles etc. relevant to your conversation, stay in touch by engaging occasionally via social media (liking posts, congratulations on career milestones)

## **Deepening a relationship**

- If there is mutual benefit to staying in touch, ask to set up another or regular meetings, being mindful of their schedule and availability.



Up Next: Future Actions



# Future Actions

- Engage in self-reflection to better know yourself, find your people, and build your online presence.
  - Use your imagination and resources to vision your next best steps for networking, and then think about how you can make that happen!
- Set concrete goals for (re)connecting with people.
  - Reach out to your one networking contact this week!
  - Craft thoughtful questions to support this interaction!
- Additional support:
  - Book a virtual appointment with a Career Educator
  - Attend another online workshop (*Dream Job Academy, Industry Spotlights, Alumni Career Chats, Job Shadowing*)

# Thank You – Q & A



## To ask a question:

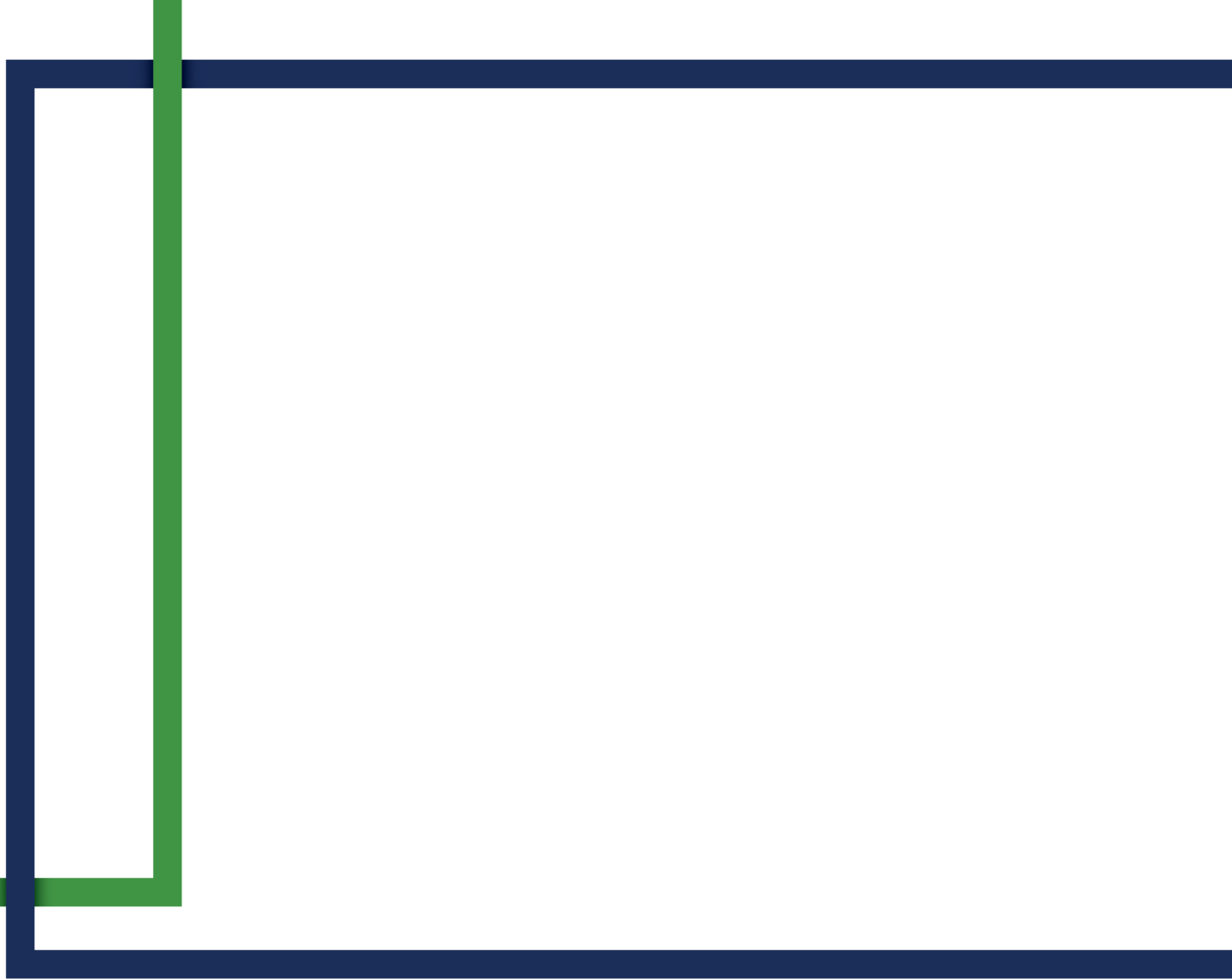
- ✓ Unmute
- ✓ Turn on your video if you like
- ✓ Use the chat



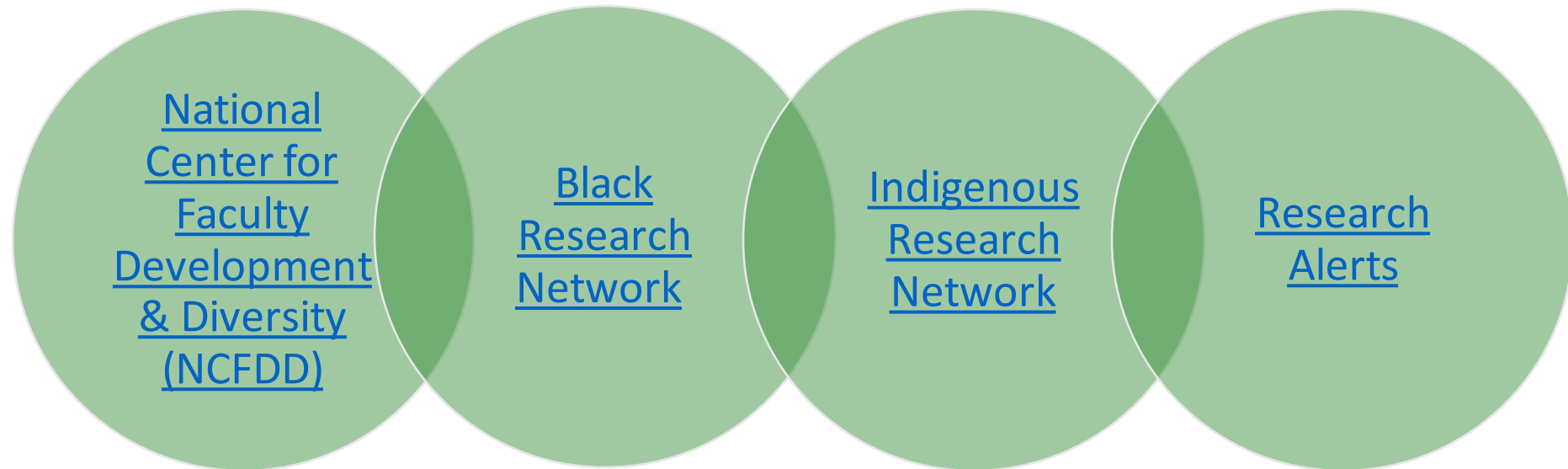
## Before you leave:

- ✓ In the chat, share:
  - ✓ What has been your key take-away from today's session?

# Appendix A



# Connecting with Research Communities



*The University of Toronto is a leader in research and innovation, with significant impact both locally and globally. Our outstanding research scholars are committed to understanding and solving the challenges that face us today - and look forward to what is possible for the future.*

*- Research & Innovation, 2022*

# Know Yourself Activity

## Think about:

- What interests do you have?
- What are some valuable experiences?
- What are your skills and strengths?
- What are your goals or your vision for the future?
- What do you want to learn more about?

**Reflect on what makes you unique**, the skills and strengths you bring as a professional, and what you would want to share with contacts.





# Student Life Online

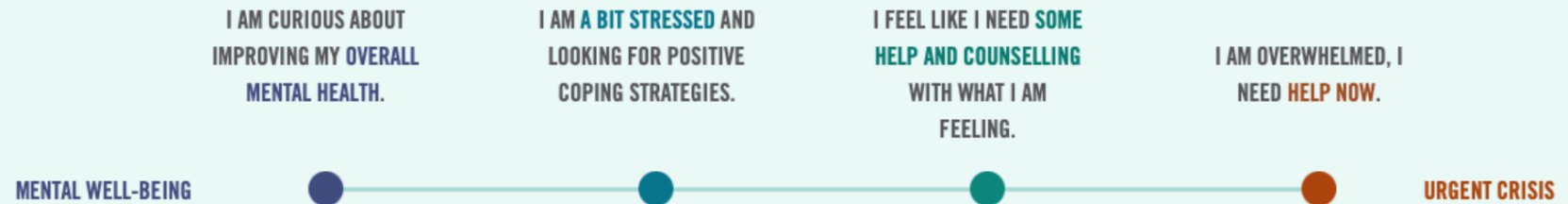
- Find answers to [Frequently Asked Questions](#) regarding **Student Life programs and services** during COVID-19
- Find [answers to frequently asked questions](#) about coping with **stress, residence, help for international students and safety abroad** from the Office of the Vice Provost, Students.

# Be Well

- U of T My SSP: Call **1-844-451-9700** or **001-416-380-6578** (outside North America) or download the app at the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play](#). Immediate counselling support is available in 35 languages and ongoing support in 146 languages.
- [Good2Talk Student Helpline](#): Call **1-866-925-5454**. Professional counseling, information and referrals student helpline for mental health, substance use disorder, and well-being.
- [Anishnawbe Health Toronto Mental Health Crisis Line](#): Call **416-360-0486**

# Seeking Mental Health Support at the University of Toronto

## SEEKING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO?



No matter where you are on the mental wellness continuum, from being proactive about your well-being, to feeling stressed and needing urgent help, U of T is here to support you.

**We want to empower you to find the resources you need to feel and do your best. We have two new tools to help you.**

# Navi & Mental Health Resource Hub



An anonymous chat tool that can respond to specific questions and direct you to helpful resources. Check out Navi if you want help on specific topics, like test anxiety or roommate issues, or if you're simply feeling stressed but don't know where to start.

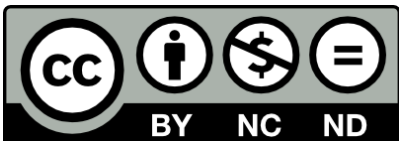
Look for the Navi icon on many U of T websites or visit **uoft.me/navi**.

## MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCE HUB

A website where you can browse programs and services on all campuses, build a personal tool kit of apps and resources or explore the stepped care model of service.

**mentalhealth.utoronto.ca**

If you are in crisis, visit  
**uoft.me/feelingdistressed**  
or call/visit My SSP at  
**1-844-451-9700** or **uoft.me/myssp**



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