

# Navigating Tough Conversations

Seedling Mentor Training  
November 2022



# Training Agenda

- ★ Welcome
- ★ Story Time
- ★ Navigating Tough Conversations framework
- ★ Breakout activity
- ★ Recap
- ★ Questions



# Poll

Do you feel ready to navigate tough conversations with your mentee?



# Story Time

One of the last conversations I had with my mentee last year, gave me insight as to why some conversations are hard to navigate with our mentees...





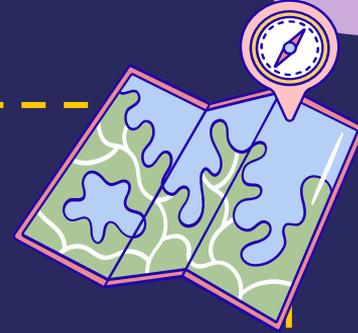
# What makes a conversation tough to navigate?

It's not necessarily the topic that's difficult, but the *dissonance* we feel when we become uncomfortable for our mentees and what they are going through.

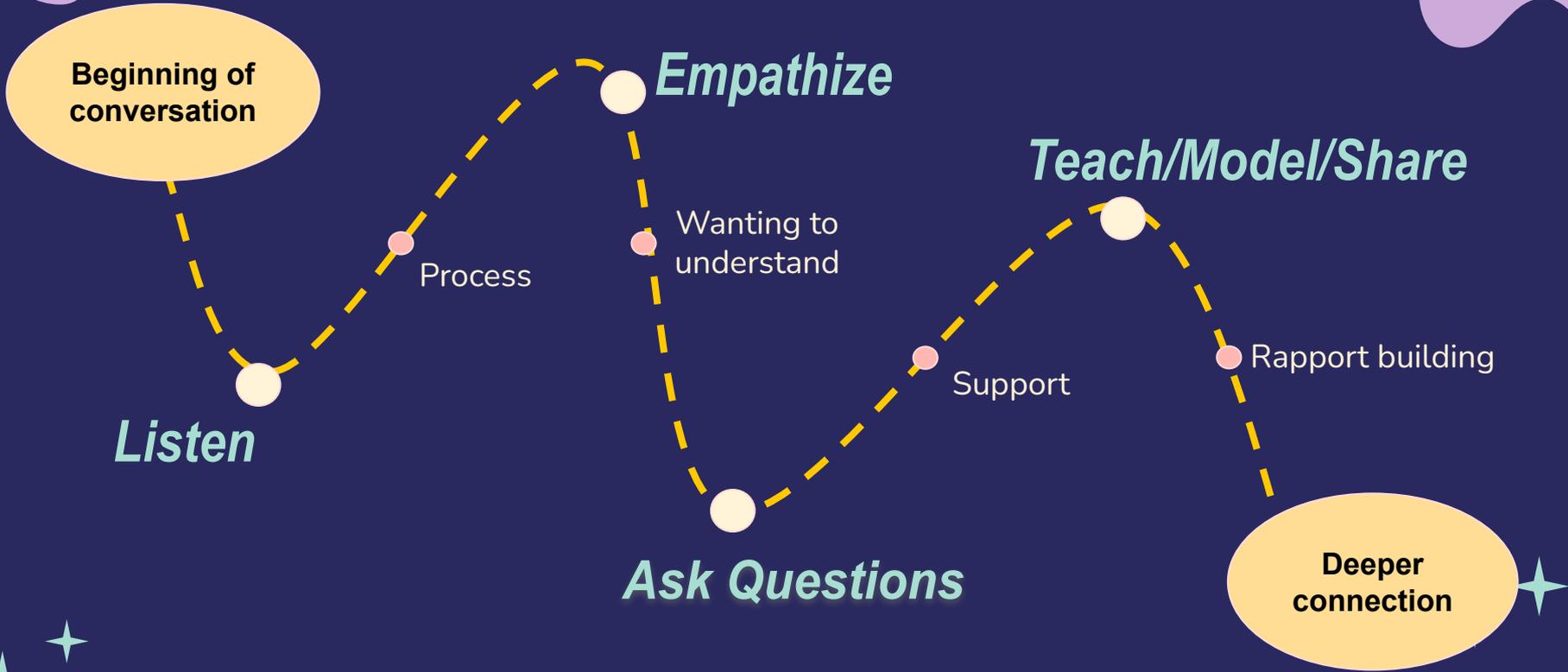


# What did I do to navigate this conversation?

Listen  
Empathize  
Ask questions  
Teach/Model/Share

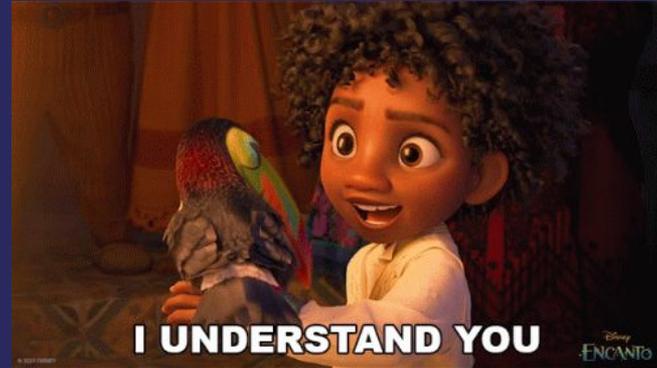


# Tough Conversation Road Map



# Listen and Empathize

- ✓ Active listening is key.
- ✓ Listen for how they feel.
- ✓ Validate their feelings.
- ✓ Let them know you understand.



Between actively listening and empathizing, we still have to process what we are hearing.

After listening and empathizing, you may want to gain more understanding, so you can follow up with asking open ended questions.

# Ask Questions

**Open ended questions  
can look like this...**

**What do you  
think about...?**

**How will  
you  
respond?**

**How did that make  
you feel?**

**Why do  
you think  
that?**

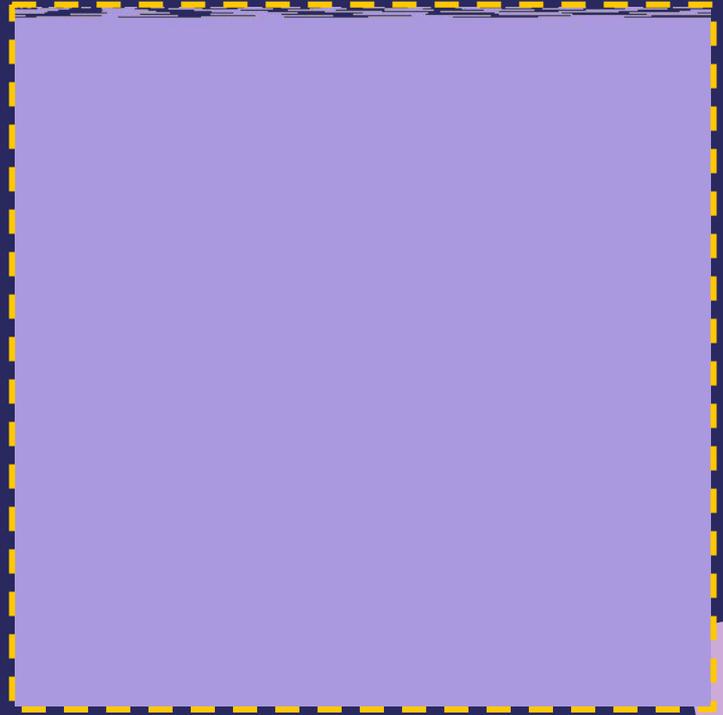
**Describe  
or tell me  
about...**



# Teach, Model, & Share

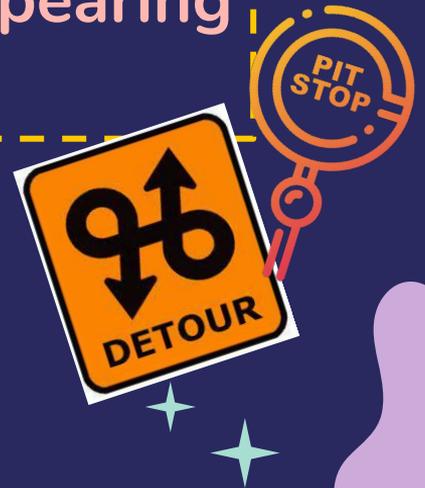
You can teach, model, and share:

- What you feel comfortable sharing.
- Age appropriate, keep their development in mind.
- Healthy and positive coping skills.
- A story that you think your mentee can relate to.
- Roleplay a scenario that conveys different ways to handle something.



# Detours and Pit Stops

Of course at times while navigating, you may have to take a detour or make a pit stop due to unexpected things appearing in your path.



# Detours and Pit Stops

Navigating tough conversations with your mentee, it's ok to take a detour if you feel uneasy about continuing the conversation and need to pivot.

Set a boundary.

Model respecting privacy.

Can we talk to the School Contact?

It's okay to say "I don't know."

You don't have to answer right away.

# Signaling SOS

## If your mentee makes an outcry of abuse:

- ❑ Don't try to make your mentee share more about what happened as it can re-traumatize them.
- ❑ Share with your mentee that their safety is your priority\*
- ❑ Texas has mandatory child abuse reporting laws. You must contact the Department of Family and Protective Services and file a report.
  - ❑ Let the School Contact and Mentor Director know, so they can help you navigate the process.



# Breakout Activity

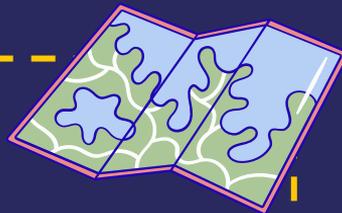
- ❑ Read the conversation scenario given to your group.
- ❑ Use the navigating tough conversations framework to discuss how a Seedling mentor could discuss the topic among your group.
- ❑ Groups have 8 minutes.

Listen

Empathize

Ask questions

Teach/Model/Share



# Breakout Activity Recap

**Have you experienced a tough conversation with your mentee?**

**How did you get through the conversation?**

**How did you feel after the conversation?**

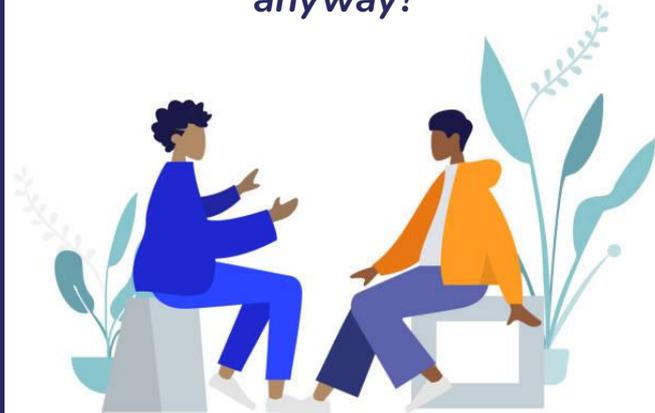
**How has your relationship with your mentee changed since the conversation?**

# Connection Marks the Spot



When our mentees decide to open up to us, they are signaling that they want to **connect** with us.

*Isn't that where we want to be anyway?*



# Looking Back Where We Started

## Looking back at where we started:

- ❑ Begin with active listening and empathizing with your mentee.
- ❑ Ask open ended questions.
- ❑ Teach, model, and share if the moment calls for it.

## Don't forget:

- ❑ You can take a detour or make a pit stop.
- ❑ Be aware when you need to signal SOS.
- ❑ Your Mentor Director can help you process what your mentee may share with you.



Questions?

