Activity 2: Practice Inclusive Discussion Strategies

Instructions:

5 minutes: First, <u>individually</u>, pick a strategy to practice and a scenario to practice it in (resources above). If there is a scenario you are not comfortable with your group discussing, please let your group know.

15 minutes: Next, <u>as a group</u>, each take a turn practicing your chosen strategy+scenario. Here are the steps:

1. **As a group, point out community guidelines**, if any, that are not being upheld in the current scenario.
    Note: only do this the *first* time your group looks at a given scenario

2. **Choose roles in the scenario**, with **Student X** being the person whose turn it is.

3. **Act out the scenario** until Student X applies the strategy of their choice.
    Note: if your group is not comfortable acting out the scenario, the person whose turn it is can also just talk about how they would apply their chosen strategy

4. **Brainstorm ways your group could respond** to the person who used the strategy that would make them feel valued, validated, and heard. The community guidelines - particularly those you identified in Step 1 - can be a helpful resource here.

Tip: To enter the conversation and apply your tool, it can help to first "pause" the discussion. You can do this by saying "pause", asking if your group to pause, or typing "pause" in the chat.

Scenario 1: The group is discussing implicit bias. **Student X** shares a personal experience, but then someone invalidates it.

Student 1: How do you even detect bias going on? I feel like it's really hard to tell when someone is being biased.

Student X: I think when you're experiencing it you can sometimes tell. When I was an undergrad, I often got the sense that my research advisor doubted my ideas more than those of his male students, and didn't consider them as seriously when deciding what directions to take on the project.

Student 2: Oh, I know that professor and they're so nice, I don't think they would do that! In general, I don't know if it's fair or productive to jump to conclusions.

Student X:

Scenario 2: The group is discussing work-life balance in the PhD program. You (**Student X**) notice that someone has stopped participating in the group discussion after a comment you made that, in hindsight, may have been hurtful.

Student 1: I sometimes worry that I don't deserve to be here because everyone works so hard, but I have health issues that require me to take a lot of days off. I sometimes wish other people worked less hours so I could have a fairer chance.

Student 2: I just work hard because I really love my work. I think that's pretty normal in a Ph.D. program.

Student X: Yeah, I think it's a personal choice. I also sometimes feel like people who take breaks slow me down.

Student 3: I think everyone is different though, and there are a lot of ways to succeed. What are some strategies you use to maintain work-life balance?
(Students 2, 3, and X continue discussing strategies, but Student 1 has stopped participating).

Student X:

Scenario 3: The group is discussing a mentorship program targeted toward a specific demographic of CMU PhD program applicants, about which Student 3 appears to disagree with the group. You (**Student X**) also disagree with them, but you notice that they're being ignored.

Student 1: I think having a mentoring program targeted toward certain demographics of PhD applicants could be really helpful.

Student 2: I agree, I think that's an awesome idea! Would we want the mentors to be similar to the kinds of students we're targeting?

Student 3: I don't believe in these kinds of mentorship programs that target specific groups, because I don't think personalized feedback should only be offered to only a select few.

Student 2: I mean, that's not really the point...

Student 1: Yeah, let's keep going. How can we recruit more people to mentor?

Student X: