



Transcripts of audio clips from “[Creating space for connection](#)”

Be real: I was a little bit sad that we wouldn’t be able to do this in person in Baltimore. Because actually I really love conferences and I love traveling, and I’ve been to Baltimore before but never for an academic conference. So, you know, I was kind of sad about that. What I do appreciate is that there was space made for that and that Keshia mentioned it. That way, we didn’t just act like ‘Oh, it’s not that big of a deal.’

Walk the talk: Honestly—and I’ve said this to a lot of my cohort members—seeing the trust that the NPC has with each other being exhibited, and the camaraderie and the support of one another, it was very clear that the culture is something that is worked upon and maintained, as well as the relationships between the members, is what really shone to me. And that allowed me to feel a lot safer to kind of show up and be present.

Care for the whole person: I had never heard a group give permission to look away from the screen. And as someone that’s a mental health clinician, I think that’s really important because we can’t connect on a deeper level if our bodies aren’t feeling grounded and supported, and if our eyes aren’t rested enough. And just having that invitation, which started things out, I think was really quite lovely.

Creating space for connection: The way that the NPC actually created an online space for us to connect and really feel like we know each other, I think was really quite masterful. I didn’t want to pry myself away from Zoom, which is really not something that happens all the time!

Exploring values: The moment I definitely knew that, like, oh my gosh, these are my people is when we did the values activity and you all had us consider, you know, what are our most important values. And the first few values of my cohort members were compassion and empathy. And, in my work and in my personal life, those are some really, really important values to me. And the values, as we continued along, just got richer and deeper.

Sharing stories: It really was lovely to connect with the other scholars and to meet them and to hear so many overlaps with our stories. So many of us being first generation, often immigrants, often people of color, folks that came from a low-income background, so many of our experiences were quite similar.

Connecting more widely: I think there’s something really magical about the fact that we are joining in community, not just with our sort of cross-section of our cohort but also cohorts one, two, and three. And that felt like we were joining part of that legacy. And, as I’m sort of talking about that out loud, that makes me think, you know, what will cohort four—what will we leave for cohort five and six, so that we can sort of continue the chain of being generous and thinking of those that will be coming after us?

Having fun together: It was so much fun to do it online with folks and looking at different screens, because I had not danced on Zoom with a lot of other people. I’ve done it by myself, you know, celebrating someone else getting something special. But that was so connecting and it really kind of elevated the mood.