

Breaking Stereotypes & Building Boundaries in STEM

a presentation for the STEM Circuits for December 2021
hosted by the Chicago Women in STEM Initiative



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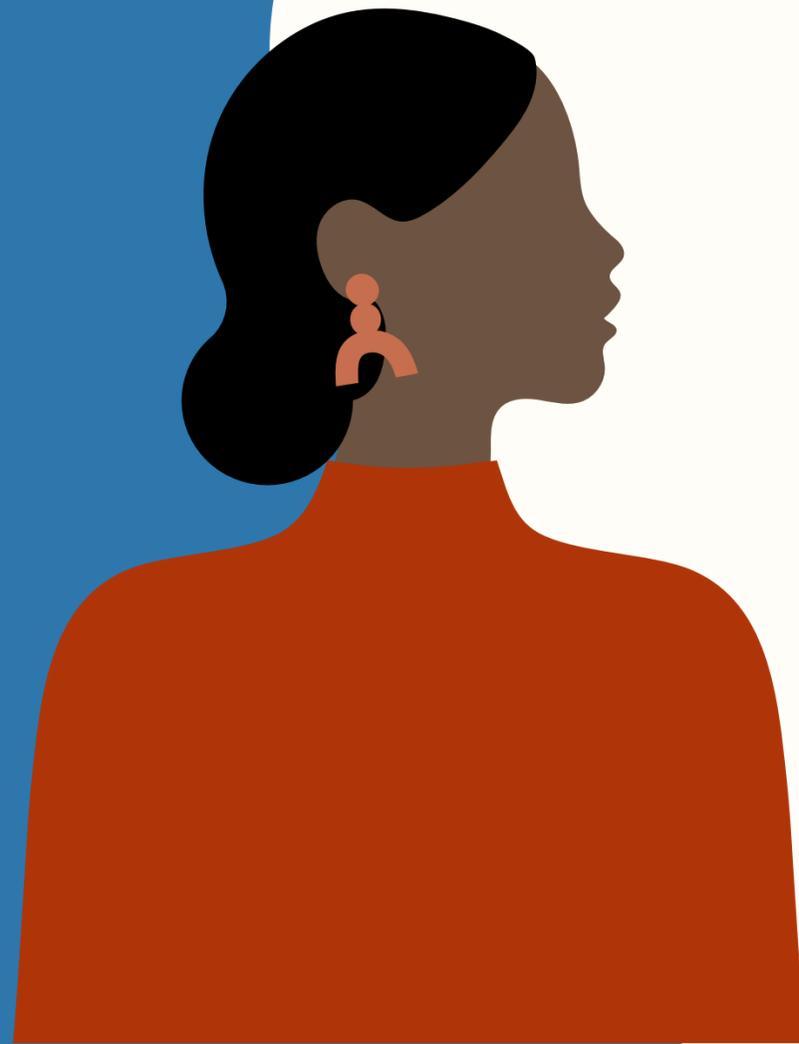
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Date: December 9, 2021

Time: 5:30pm - 7:00pm

Agenda



Aims and Objectives

- Introductions
- The experience of Womxn in STEM
- Terms and Concepts
- Setting Boundaries
- Barriers to setting boundaries
- Practice and Discussion
- Helpful things to say
- How to set boundaries during the break

About the speakers & the Counseling Center at UIC



Yuri Kim
(she/her)



Adriana Sanchez
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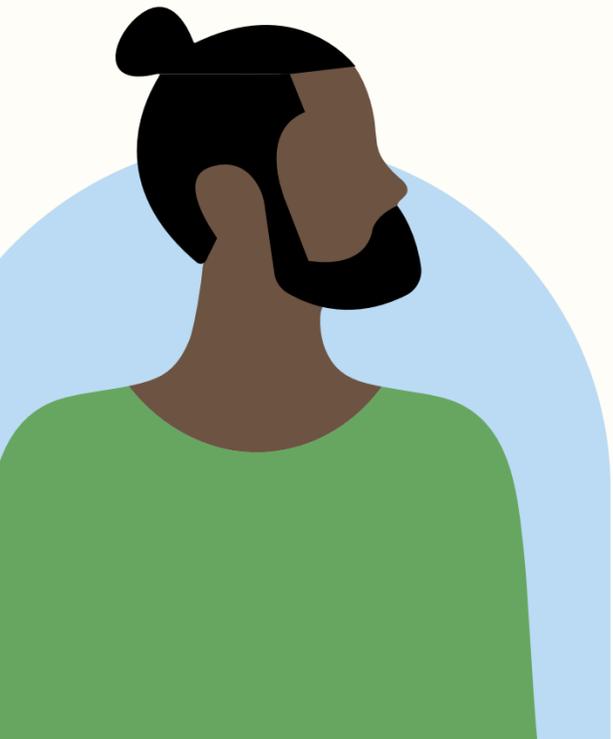
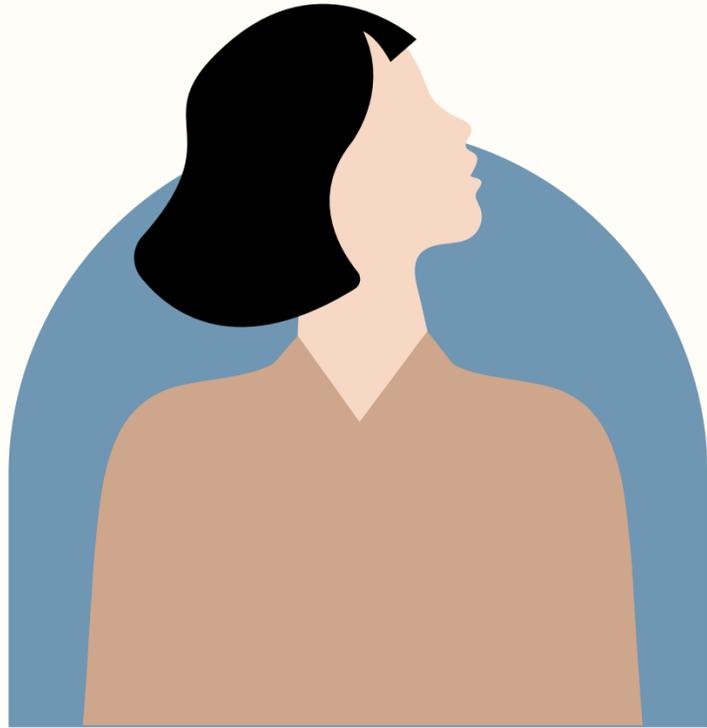
Womxn in STEM:

Outperforming yet Undervalued

In a recent study of undergraduate college students, researchers found that women are outperforming men while simultaneously experiencing gender bias.

Women's failures tend to be attributed to internal characteristics and abilities.

The negative impacts of gender bias in STEM fields may lead to decreased sense of belonging and interest in participating in STEM.



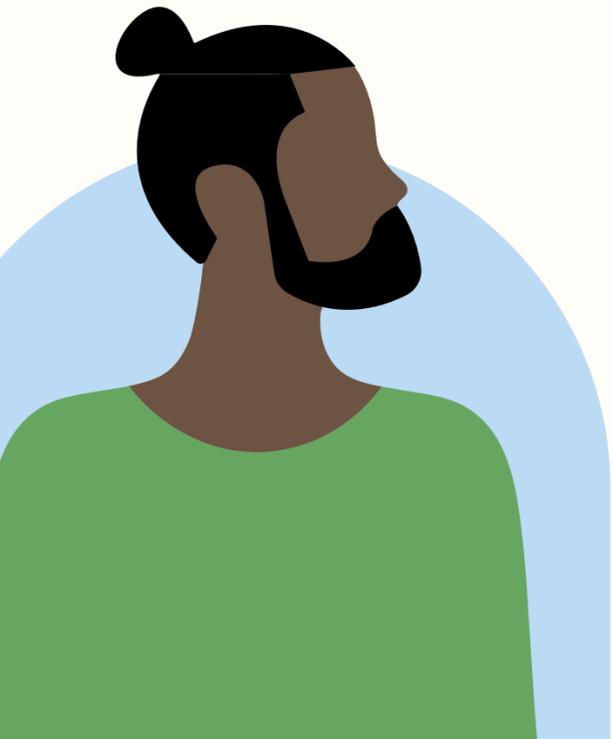
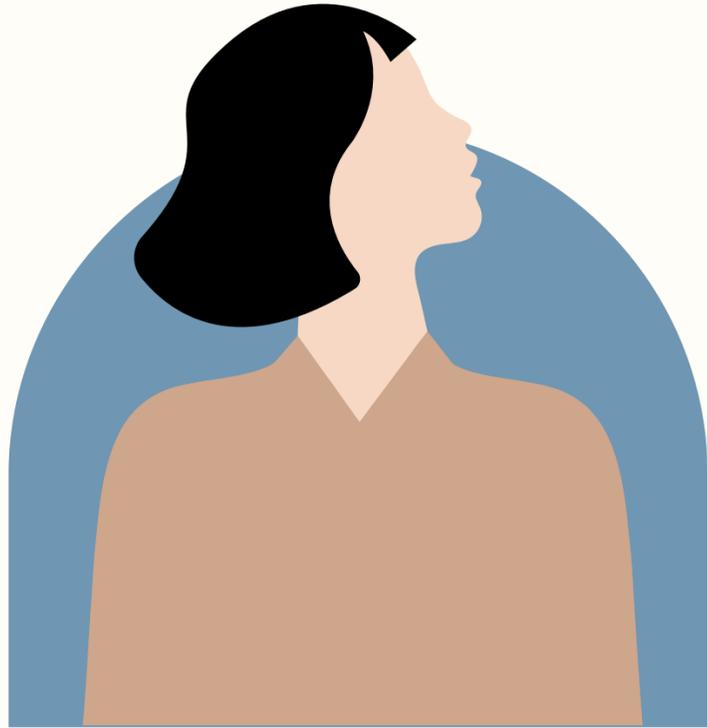
Womxn in STEM:

Outperforming yet Undervalued

What does that say for womxn who have successfully entered into the STEM field at the graduate and professional level?

What messages have you heard regarding your identities as a womxn? As a womxn in STEM? About work ethic and obligations? Boundaries?

How do your own experiences align with or differ from these experiences of undergraduate womxn in STEM?



Terms and Concepts

Assertiveness incorporates:

- Respecting others' rights while respecting your own
- Communicating effectively, directly, and with confidence
- Setting boundaries

Boundaries: limits you can set on what you will accept of another person's words or actions

- Learning how to say "no" and accept "no" from others
- One might not realize their boundaries until they've been crossed
- Follow-through is what counts



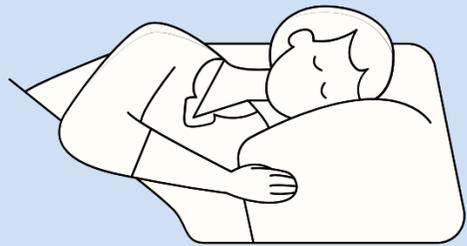


Decreased motivation and/or interest in things you were once interested in

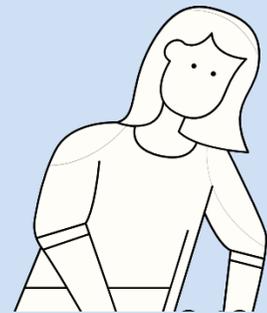
Have you felt any of these?



Prioritizing others' needs above your own



Eating or sleeping too little or too much



Having low energy



Compromising v. Sacrificing



Feeling resentment or frustration



Feeling Stretched for time

Setting Boundaries

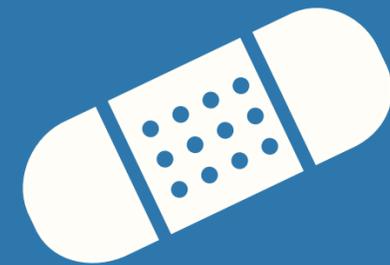


Honor your values

What is important to you?
What aspect(s) in your life need
more attention?
What can improve the quality
of your life?



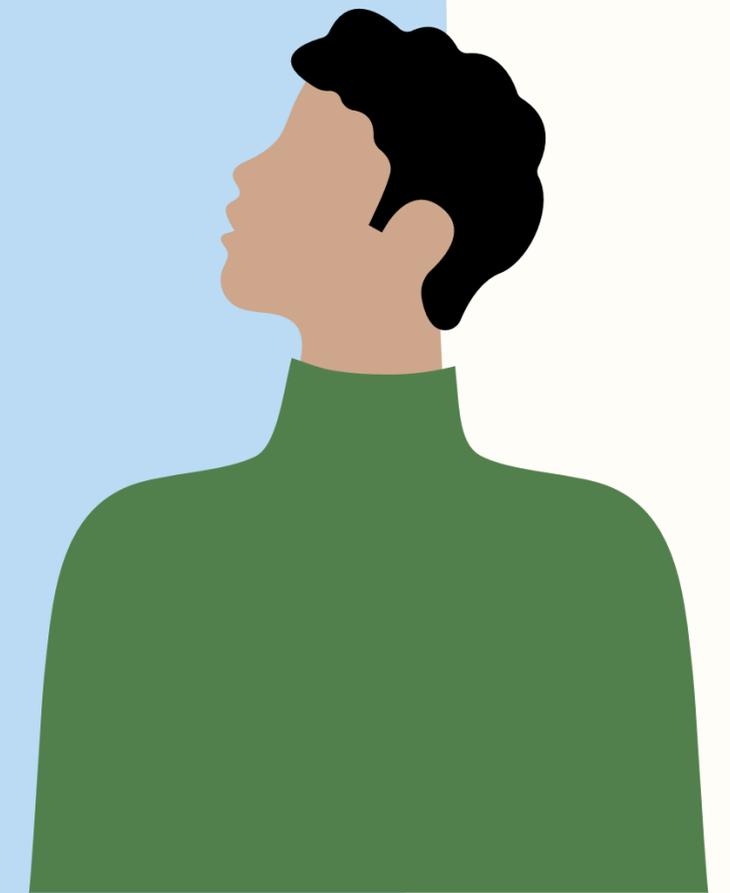
Acknowledge your
skills, strengths,
contributions, and
value!



Forgive yourself on
your growth in
setting boundaries.
It's okay to mess up!

What are your experiences with boundary-setting based on your identities and roles as womxn in STEM?

Discussion



Barriers to Boundary Setting

- Fear of rejection
- Fear of confrontation
- Guilt
- Unfamiliar with how to set healthy boundaries
- Safety concerns



Let's practice setting a boundary!

Scenario 1

You are visiting family over the holiday. Family begins asking how your school work/research is going and the "what's next" question. You're uncomfortable responding, how might you set a boundary here?

Scenario 2

After some late nights, you decided to not open email after 6 pm. A few days later your boss asks why you were unable to respond to an urgent email last night (sent at 9 pm). How might you communicate a boundary that you set for yourself to your boss?

What you might say:

Scenario 1

I am not comfortable answering that question at that moment.

Scenario 2

I like to be effective and intentional when I am at work and need to switch off once I leave the office so that I am able to come back to work the next day fully recharged.

What setting boundaries might sound like:

Say what you need: "I need time to think about this. I will get back to you on ____."

Saying no: "I appreciate you sharing this opportunity with me, but unfortunately I cannot take advantage of this opportunity/I am prioritizing ____ at this time." or just "No."

Say how you feel: "Please don't _____. It makes me feel _____." "When you're consistently late, I feel disrespected."

Don't feel obligated to answer: "I am not comfortable sharing that information. That information is personal." "Thank you for sharing this...I'll consider it and will let you know when I make a decision."

How can you implement these boundaries during the break?

Start setting boundaries in relationships where you feel safe.

What are ways to work around power dynamics with supervisors and advisors?

What are your protected spaces and time over the break?





Questions & Reflections?

Contact the Counseling Center for more information on brief individual therapy, outreach opportunities, group therapy, couples therapy, and workshops!

website: <https://counseling.uic.edu/>

phone: 312-996-3490

References

Bloodhart B, Balgopal MM, Casper AMA, Sample McMeeking LB, Fischer EV. Outperforming yet undervalued: Undergraduate women in STEM. PLoS One. 2020;15(6):e0234685.

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