

# WELCOME TO THE



Michigan  
Municipal  
Executives

2026 Winter Institute



# Strength Through Support

Maintaining Positivity & Friendship Throughout the Hiring Process

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# Why It Matters

- Public Hiring is Stressful
- Managers often navigate these processes alone
- **Goal**: Competition → Support & Resilience



## When was the last time you went through a hiring process?

1 year ago or less

1-3 years ago

3-6 years ago

6-10 years ago

10+ years ago

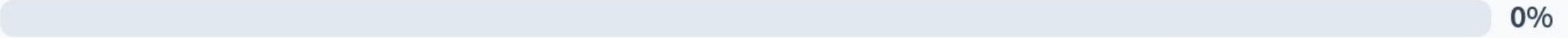


# When was the last time you went through a hiring process?

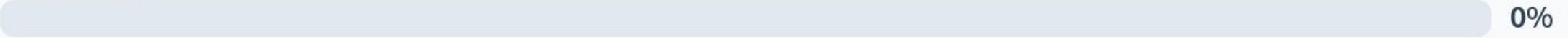
1 year ago or less



1-3 years ago



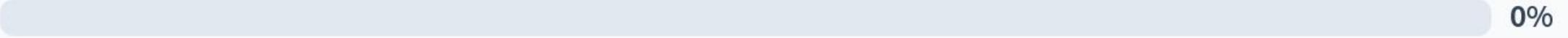
3-6 years ago



6-10 years ago

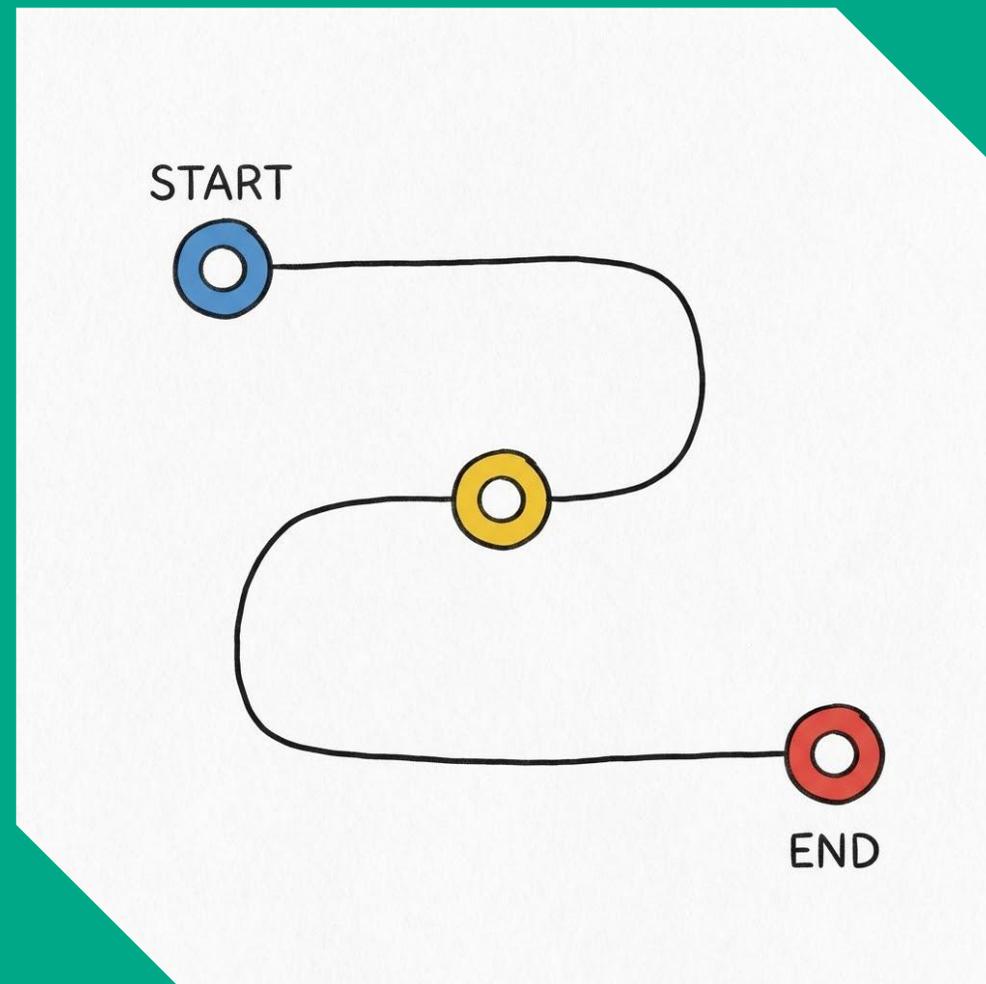


10+ years ago



# Session Roadmap

1. Key Stressors in Public Hiring
1. Rethinking Competition
1. Peer Support Strategies
1. Ethical Considerations
1. Personal Action Planning
1. Discussion and Q&A





# Key Stressors

Stressors can come in many shapes and sizes, with many falling into one of three categories: professional, personal, or peer-to-peer



# Key Stressors - Professional



- Current position - potential blowback from coworkers and council
- Lack of current position - pressure to find one
- Council expectations and the process itself
- Any others?

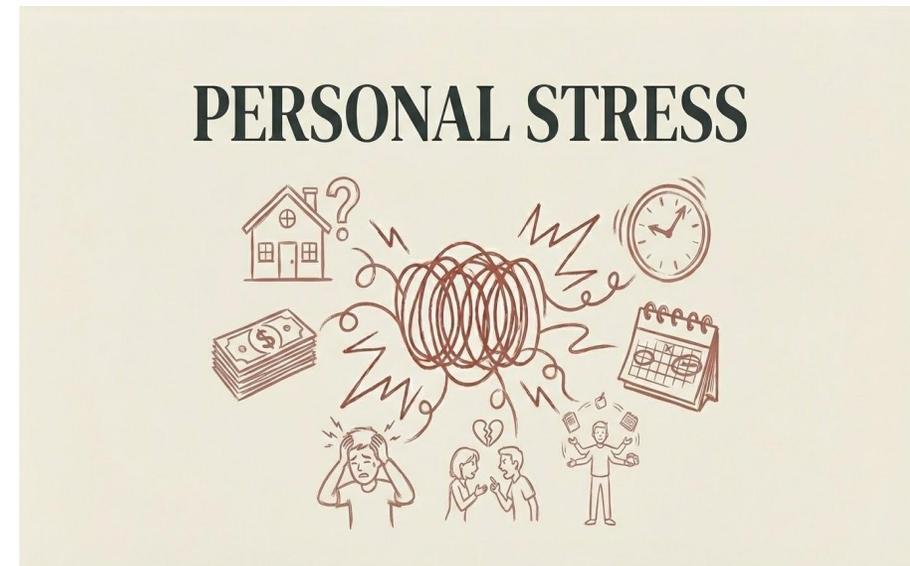
## PROFESSIONAL STRESS



# Key Stressors - Personal



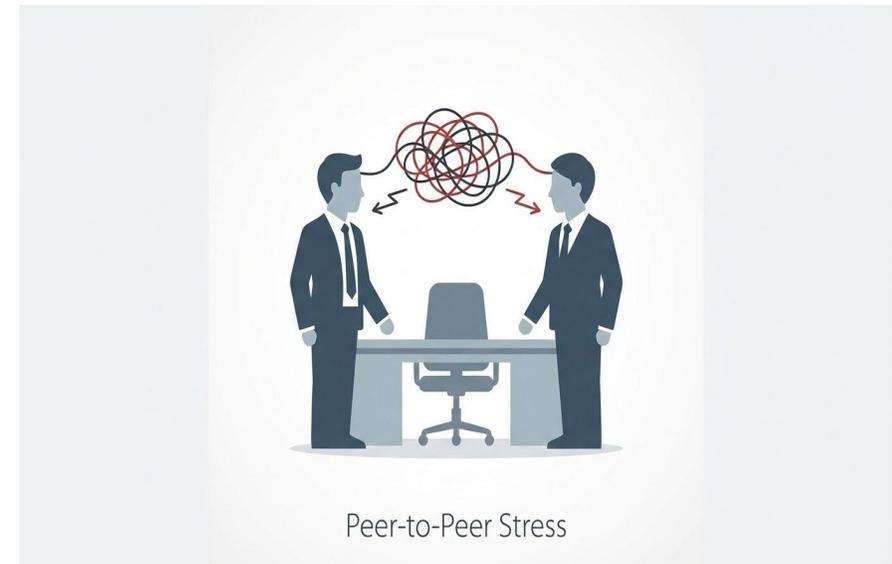
- Family complications
  - Potential disruption? Spousal needs? Aging relatives?
- Finances - does this decision make sense financially?
- What are the family implications in the community?
  - Gibraltar example
- Do you have a support system?



# Key Stressors - Peer-To-Peer



- Would you be following a friend who left on bad terms?
- Are you going up against a friend for the position?
  - What does that do to your friendship?





# Rethinking Competition

Framing the process in a healthy, productive, and collaborative way

What is most important to you when navigating a competitive hiring process? Integrity?  
Growth? Getting the job? Anything else?

Nobody has responded yet.

Hang tight! Responses are coming in.



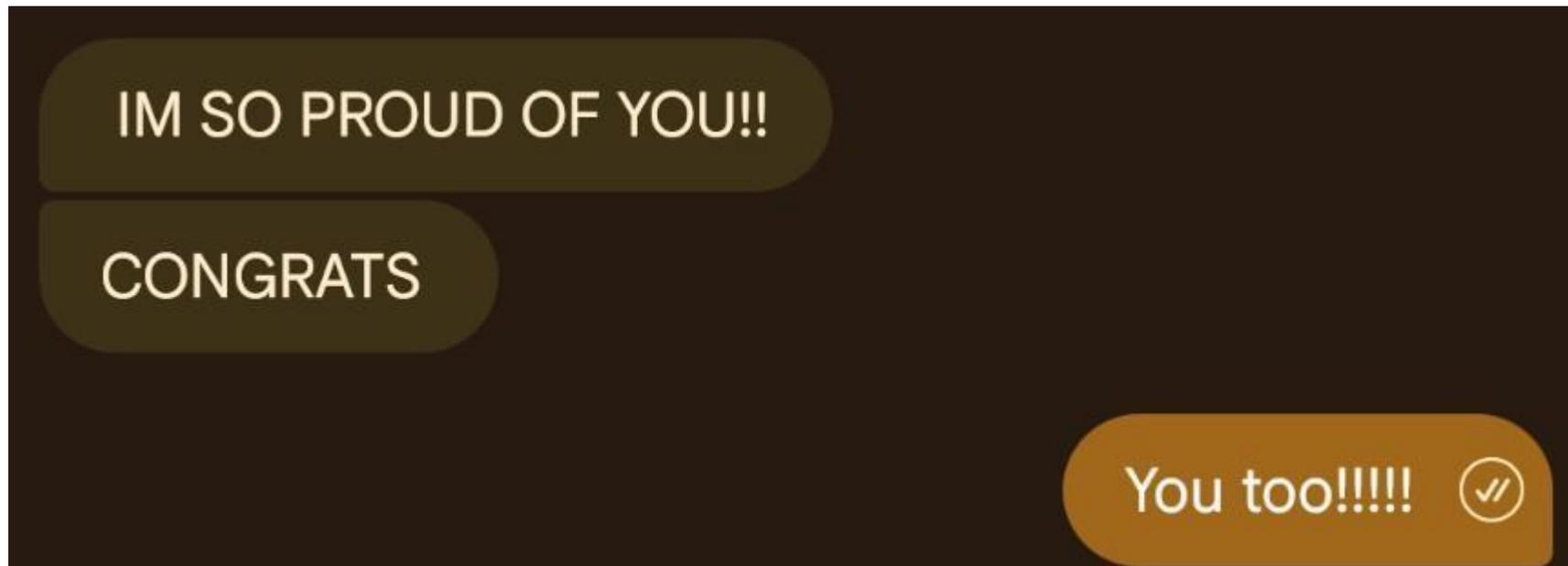
# The Warm-Up Room



# What Peer Support Can Do...



- There is tremendous power in something as simple as a text message



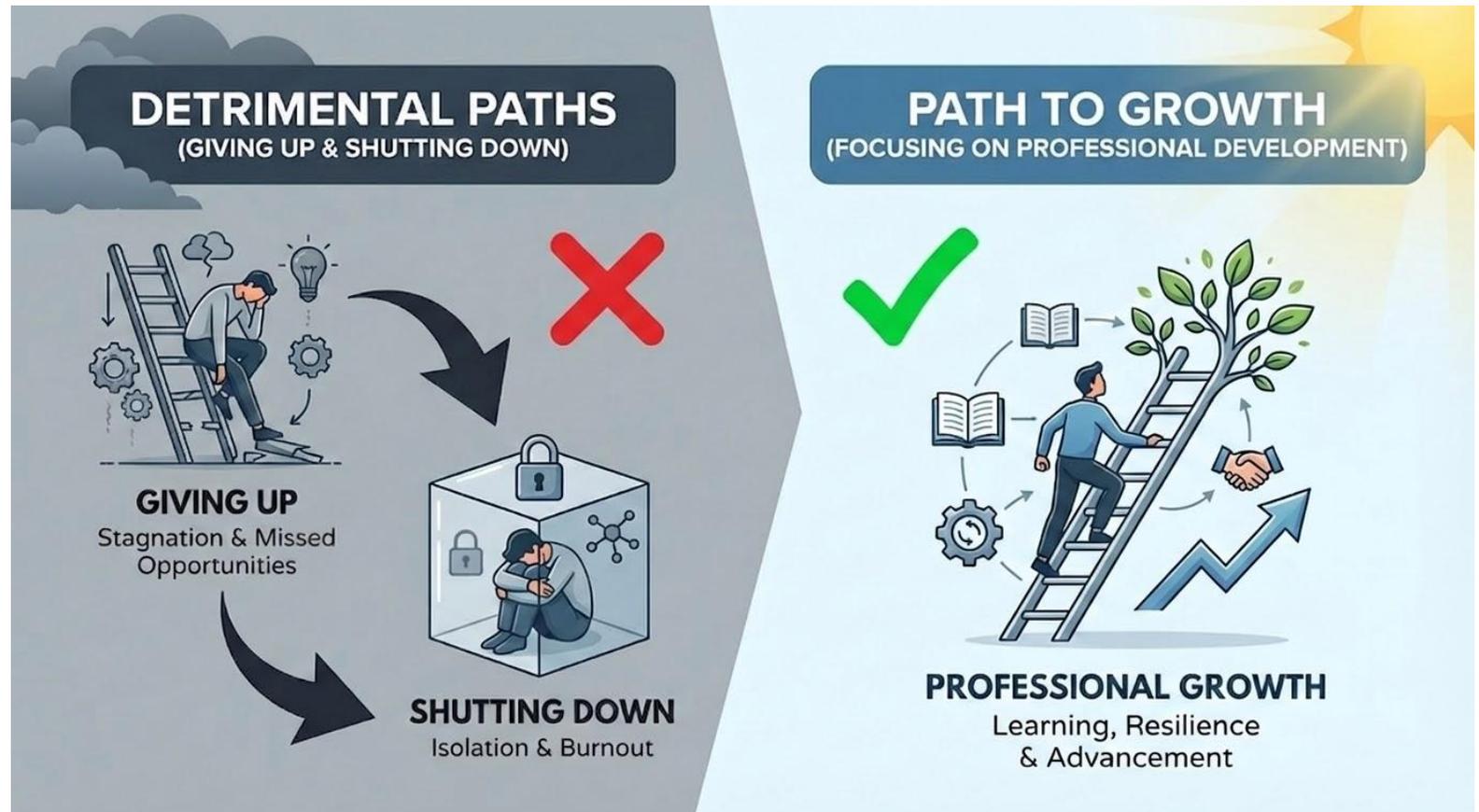
# Choices



- Give Up

- Shut Down

- ***Lean in and Grow***





# Peer Support Strategies

How we can all better support one another through challenging transitions

# Peer Support - Foundation



- Establish from the outset within yourself and to your colleague that you want what is best for both of you individually
- If it isn't the right fit for you, that doesn't mean it isn't the right fit for them
- You can be happy for them if they get the job
- You do not need to feel guilty if you get the job



# Peer Support - Boundaries



- Not everyone will want to receive/give this kind of support during a hiring process so, if needed, establish boundaries
- Remember that, after the process is over, this person is your friend and they need what is best for them
- Support can protect how we *feel*. Boundaries protect what we *do* during the process.

# Peer Support - Moments Matter



- Support through the process
- Send “good luck” messages before important steps in the process
- Vent to each other if need be (while staying within ethical boundaries)
- It depends on the relationship you have developed



# Peer Support - Collaboration



- Collaboration  $\neq$  Collusion
- Discuss the attributes of the community together. What challenges face the community?
- This is not a race to win: the community needs to be the right fit for the manager every bit as much as the manager needs to be the right fit for the community



# Ethical Considerations

Recognize ethical dilemmas when supporting others who may be competing for the same position.

## Where is the ethical line when communicating with another candidate during a process?

Nobody has responded yet.

Hang tight! Responses are coming in.



# Ethical Considerations - Grounding

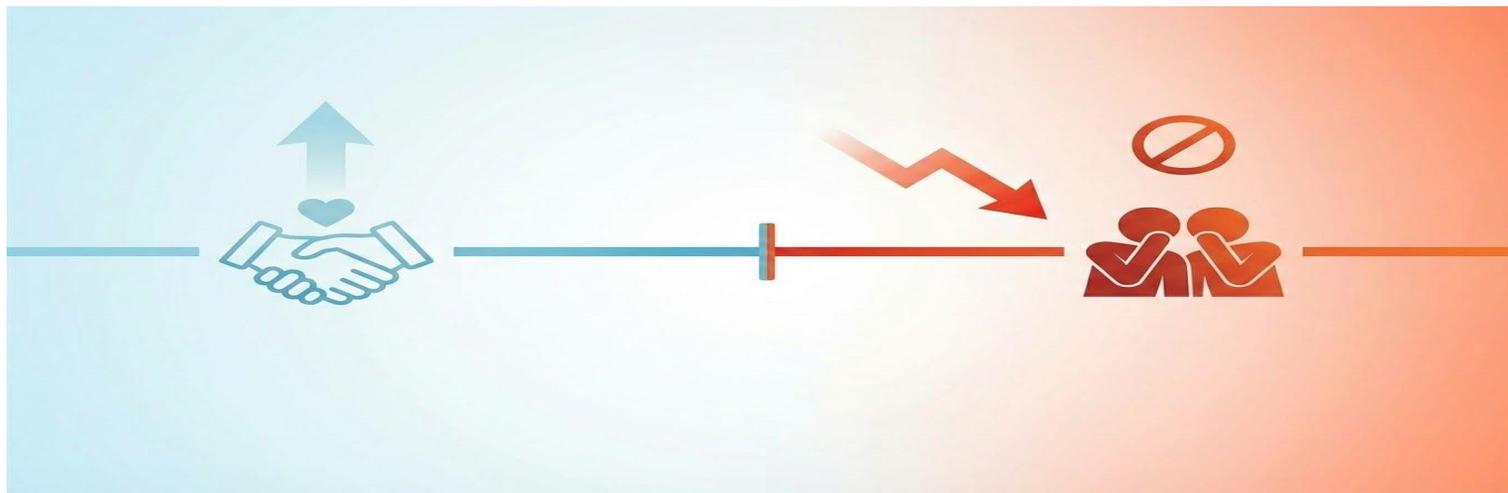


- ICMA Code of Ethics provides grounding principles
- Tenet 3: Boundaries
- Tenet 8: Purpose
- Tenet 4: Mission

— EST. 1924 —  
CODE OF  
ETHICS

# Ethical Considerations - The Line

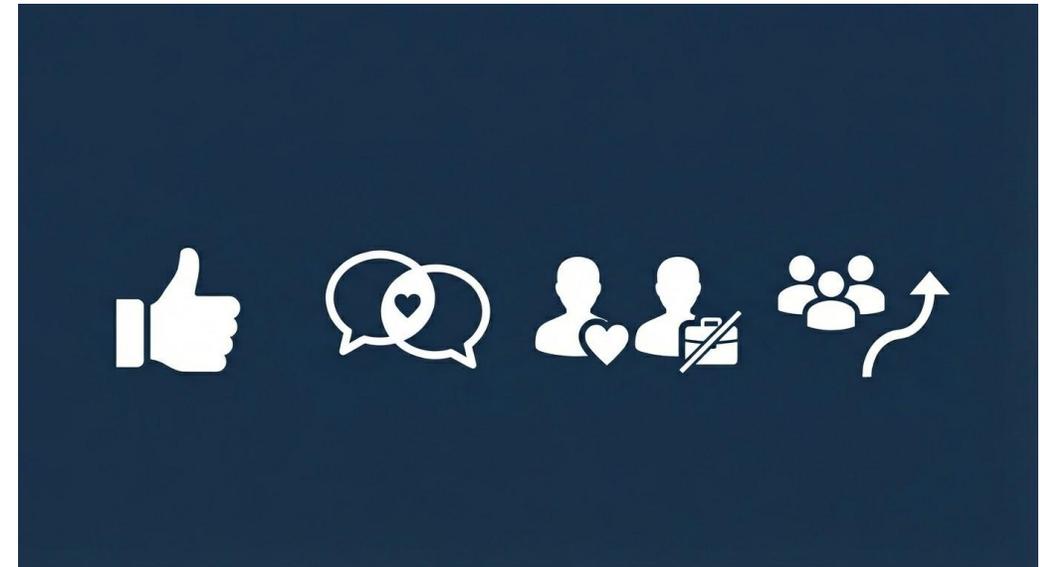
- Where do we draw the line? When does support start being unethical?
- When support crosses the line from influencing how a candidate feels to what they say and do in the process, that is when the line is crossed
- Collusion may get one of you the job, but it doesn't lead to success in the long run
  - Do not try to game the system together. Run your own race.



# Ethical Considerations - The Dos



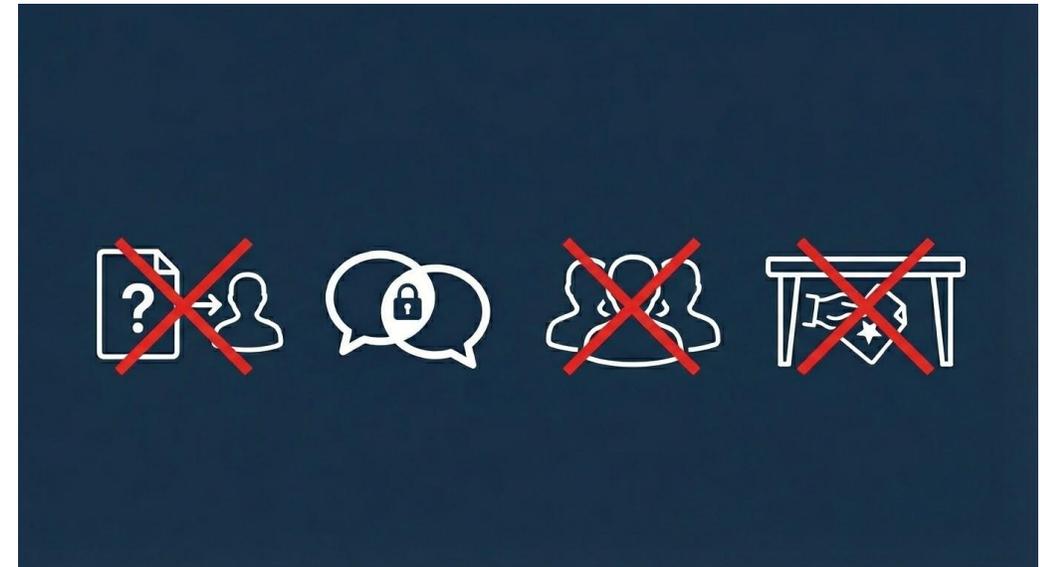
- Encouragement
- Emotional check-ins
- Talking about personal fit, but not professional
- General reflections on the community and process



# Ethical Considerations - The Don'ts



- No sharing interview questions or exercises
- Do not discuss strategy or messaging
  - This includes sharing planned answers or talking points
- No discussing other candidates
- No insider information or influence attempts





# Action Plan

What are you going to do to ensure you are being supported? To ensure you are supporting others?

# Mindset Check



- Where is your mindset right now?
- Fear v. Growth?
- Competition v. Community?



# Build Your Action Plan

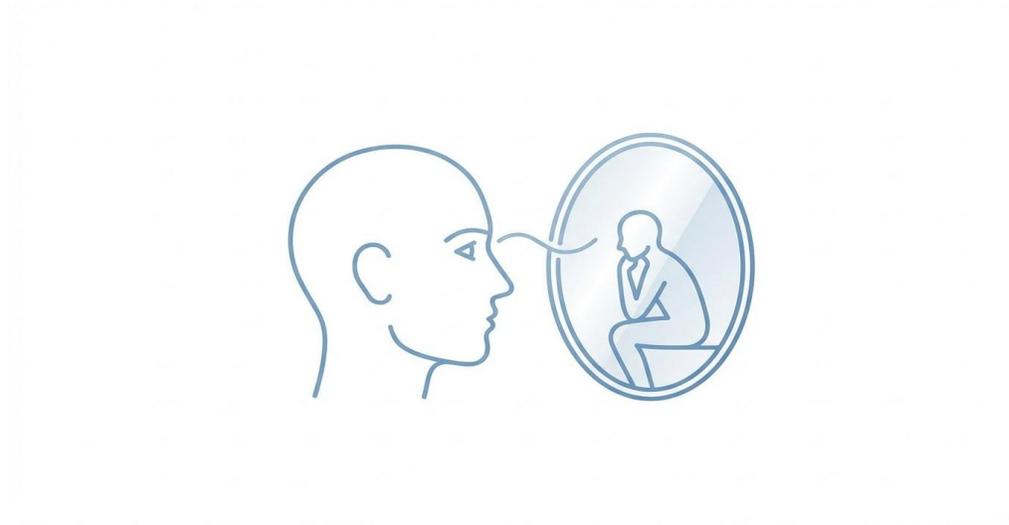


- Who are your peer supporters?
- How can you show them support? Do you have the capacity to offer support?
- What boundaries do you need?
- What stressors do you need to overcome?
- What can you do differently next time?

# Reflection



- Where do you want to focus your growth?
- What can you do today to begin fostering this environment of strength through support?



# Key Takeaways



- Hiring is stressful - it doesn't have to be isolating
- Peer support strengthens the profession
- Ethical boundaries protect everyone
- Growth mindset transforms the experience

# Discussion and Q&A



- What is one stressor you wish was talked about more openly?
- How have you seen peer support done well?
- What is one thing you would change about hiring in this field?
- If you could ask your colleagues for any type of support, what would it be?



# Thank You for Coming!

- Please connect with us!
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