

The Book of
Solidarity



**WOMEN
OF COLOR
IN THE
ACADEMY**

“

Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing it possibly, without claiming it, she stands up for all women.

”

Maya Angelou

Comadrazo, a Spanish language term coined by the national group, **Las Comadres**, describes events that consist of **comadres** (homegirls) and **abrazo** (collective hug). This is what we hope that the **2024 WOCIA Conference** and this book is for all its participants.

With attacks on civil and human rights across the globe, and in the Academy, on practices and policies meant to correct past discrimination and marginalization, namely Affirmative Action and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) initiatives, women of color are facing greater challenges to their livelihoods while receiving less support. In spite of this, women of color are rising up, but most importantly, are joining together, in solidarity and all of the ways it can manifest: in joy, laughter, anger, sorrow, and rage to resist these attacks on our fundamental rights and our livelihoods. While this practice of solidarity has always been the source of strength and the way forward for women of color in the academy, acts of unity take on even more urgency now.

We hope that this professional development workbook provides you with the space to dream and give thanks, to connect, and to plan for future collaborations, so that our communities grow in strength and numbers. *Mujeres*, the time is always now. We encourage you to explore these activities both during and after the conference to reflect on your experience.

EXERCISE 1

Raising Awareness in Solidarity

In March, we witnessed dozens of Democratic women wear all white at the State of the Union Address. These congresswomen dressed in white to show solidarity for women's reproductive rights.

In your community, what issues are you passionate about that affect women of color? Make a list of 5 that are most urgent and relevant.

Choose one you feel is most timely to focus on. The first step in making a change is raising awareness. What can you do to energize the people in your community in solidarity and bring attention to this cause?

Who would you involve and how can you include them? List individuals who can help brainstorm and plan.

List 5 women of color-owned local businesses and organizations who may be interested in your cause to raise awareness within your community.

How can you use social media to bring people together and bring awareness to your cause?

Can students at your institution get involved? If so, are there specific student clubs or organizations you could reach out to?

Are there any nonprofits related to this cause? If so, write them below. Supporting such nonprofits can bring more solidarity and awareness.

EXERCISE 2

Write a Thank You Note to your Femtor

For this exercise, we want you to think of at least one Femtor^{1*} who has significantly impacted your life and write a thank you note² that you will then send to that person. To write an effective thank you note, we suggest that you do the following:

- 1. Think about and jot down how that femtor has impacted your life:** When have they listened to you? What wisdom and lessons have they shared with you? What challenges have they helped you navigate? When have they lifted you up and reminded you that you are the goddess that you are? Writing from the heart and highlighting the specific ways that they have supported you will make the note more sincere and genuine.
- 2. Acknowledge the time, effort, and energy that they spent supporting you.** Our femtors are busy and the fact that they took time out of their lives to support you is important. Acknowledge that!
- 3. Describe a specific time they supported you.** This could be giving you essential advice, providing important information, supporting you through a difficult time or just being a cheerleader!

¹ Yancey, S. (n.d.). *How to Find the Perfect Mentor or Femtor*. eWomenNetwork. <https://www.ewoennetwork.com/blog/ewomennetwork-1/post/how-to-find-the-perfect-mentor-or-femtor-33>

² Vora, S. (2021, December 21). *Do Thank-You Notes Still Matter?* The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/15/style/why-thank-you-notes.html>

*The mentoring of women by women to further their career and development prospects.

Here are some examples of Thank You messages:

I cannot express enough gratitude for your guidance and support. Your wisdom has been invaluable to me.

Thank you for being an incredible mentor. Your advice and insights have been instrumental in my personal and career growth.

OR

Mentors are like stars; you don't always see them, but you know they're always there. Thank you for guiding me.

Thank you for planting seeds of knowledge and wisdom in my mind and heart.

Thank you for being a mentor who nurtures dreams, fosters growth, and illuminates possibilities.

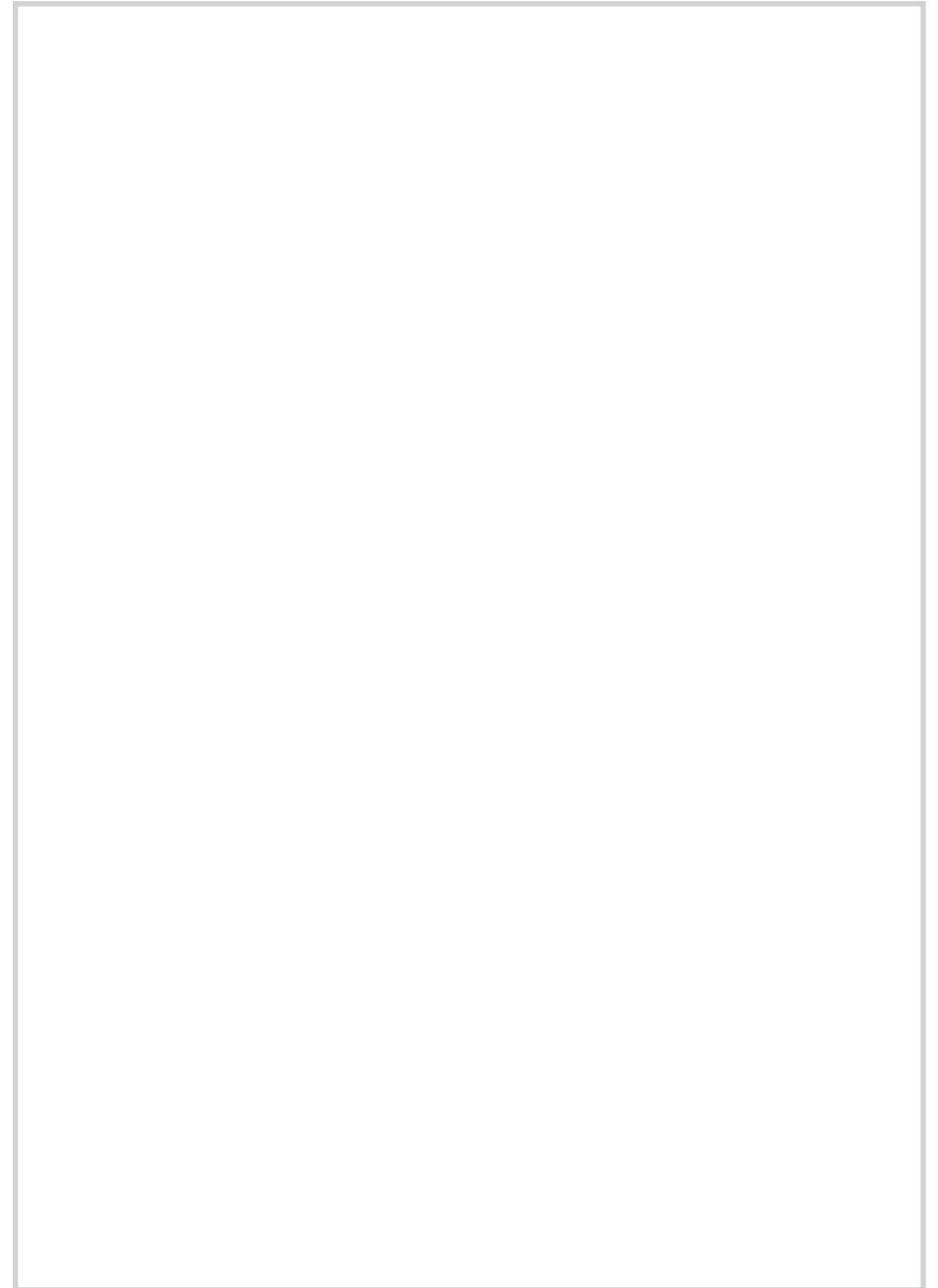
And even some humorous Thank You messages:

You're the espresso shot to my career: strong, impactful, and absolutely vital. Thanks for keeping me awake and inspired!

You're like a human highlighter, emphasizing the important stuff and guiding me through the maze of life. Thanks for making everything brighter!

Thanks for being the Yoda to my Luke Skywalker. You're a little less green but just as wise. May the Force always be with you!

Now write your own Thank You note draft below:



EXERCISE 3

Your Rose, Thorn, and Bud

Rose — A highlight, success, small win, or something positive that happened.

Thorn — A challenge you experienced or something you can use more support with.

Bud — New ideas that have blossomed or something you are looking forward to knowing more about or experiencing.

Take a few minutes to silently reflect on your rose, thorn, and bud. Fill in the areas at the right with your reflections.

Rose — What was a highlight today? How have you been successful? What are you most proud of?

Thorn — What was most stressful? Identify causes of difficulty. What made it hard to be successful?

Bud — What are you looking forward to? Describe opportunities for learning that excite you. What needs growth and nurturing?

EXERCISE 4

Creating Allies, Collaborators, Mentors/ees, Friends, and commUNITY!

Meeting and developing meaningful relationships with individuals who can become allies, collaborators, mentors, mentees, and friends takes time and effort. The following exercises can help you create community with future collaborators, mentors, and friends whether at the WOCIA Conference or at other future events!

MEET A STRANGER

Select someone in your network who you are interested in interviewing, gathering enough information so that you could hypothetically introduce that person to a 3rd party. Then introduce that person to another person to further build their network.

Supplies: None except instructions on each table or enter the chat for each room.

REVERSE FISHBOWL ACTIVITY

Write on a card an organization or program you subscribe/belong to or that you heard about that advances or enables WOCIA to thrive. Then give your table mates or breakout roommates the elevator speech about this organization.

Supplies: Cards, small fishbowl to collect these pieces of card, and pens.

PROFESSIONAL IMPROV

At the table/room chat, there will be a list of topics. Choose one and start a conversation, or ask for the other person's opinion for 3-5 minutes.

Supplies: Have a list of topics on the table.

- Faculty promotion
- Fellowships or sabbaticals
- Politics
- Women's health
- Health inequity
- Supreme Court decision on admissions
- Interprofessional collaboration, scholarly works: research, writing, etc.
- Globalization of education

CREATE YOUR QR BUSINESS CARD

Set up a station to help attendees create their own QR code that has their contact info including their LinkedIn address. Email the finished product to the attendee. Then they can upload or capture the image on their smartphones.

Supplies: 1-2 volunteers, a computer with wifi access, and attendees' email addresses.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This professional development workbook was conceptualized and created by the members of the 2024 WOCIA Conference Program and Materials subcommittee in collaboration with the ADVANCE Office of Faculty Development at Northeastern University and Beverly Yeager, Founder and Creative Director of The Design Wonder LLC. We are grateful for the inspiration and content from the following sources and the powerful words and ideas that embody the remarkable mentors who exemplify the true spirit of solidarity.

Noor Ali, Assistant Teaching Professor, Graduate School of Education, College of Professional Studies

Needa Brown, Assistant Teaching Professor, Physics; Program Director, Nanomedicine Program, College of Science

Valerie Hower, Associate Teaching Professor, Mathematics, College of Science

Tiffany Joseph, Associate Professor, Sociology and International Affairs; Graduate Program Director, Sociology, College of Social Sciences and Humanities

Isabel Martinez, Associate Professor, Sociology and Anthropology; Director, Latinx, Latin American and Caribbean Studies, College of Social Sciences and Humanities

Valeria Ramdin, Associate Clinical Professor; Director Global Health Nursing, DEI Lead Nursing, Bouvé College of Health Sciences

Sam Stokoe, Program Manager, ADVANCE Office of Faculty Development

Sheila Winborne, Teaching Professor, Religion, Philosophy and Religion, College of Social Sciences and Humanities

REFERENCES

Yancey, S. (n.d.). *How to Find the Perfect Mentor or Femtor*. eWomenNetwork. <https://www.ewomennetwork.com/blog/ewomennetwork-1/post/how-to-find-the-perfect-mentor-or-femtor-33>

Vora, S. (2021, December 21). *Do Thank-You Notes Still Matter?* The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/15/style/why-thank-you-notes.html>

