

Welcome to our Session! Before we begin, please join our presentation and respond to this question: How do you define belonging?

The Belonging Blueprint: Retaining Students Through Connection

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What word comes to mind when you think of belonging?



What is our role in helping students feel like they belong?

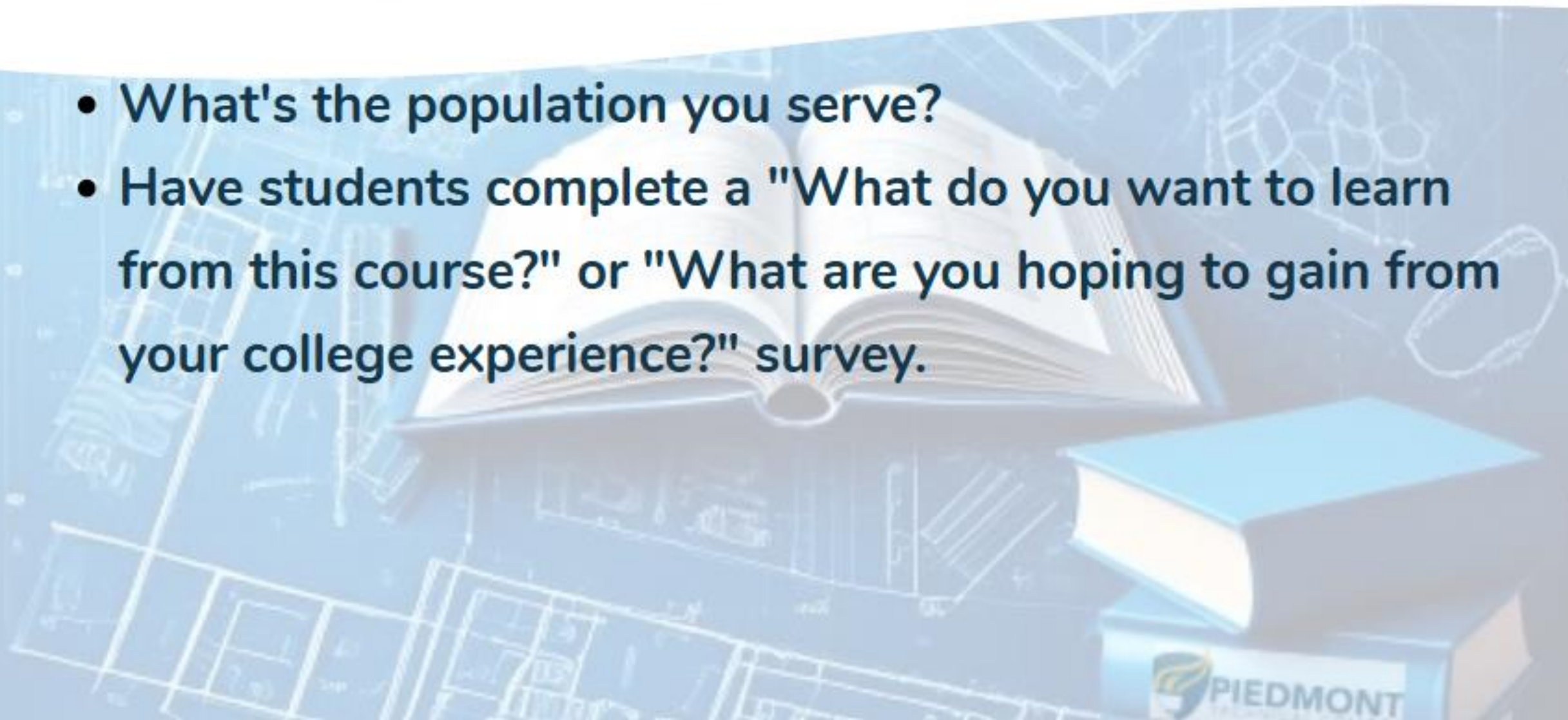


Your Approach



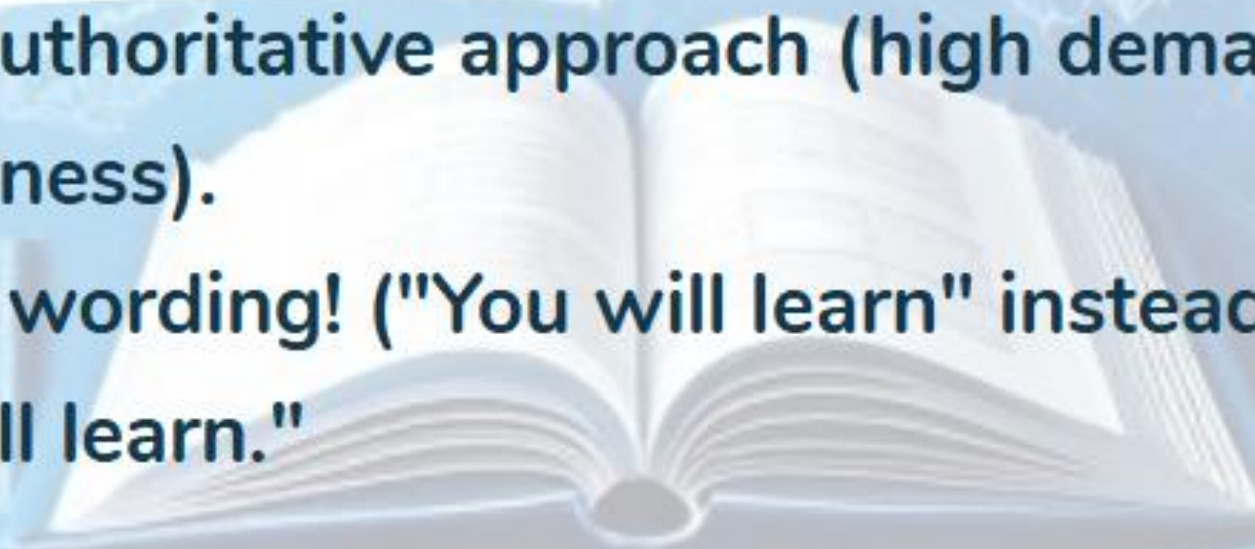
Know the Needs of Your Students

- What's the population you serve?
- Have students complete a "What do you want to learn from this course?" or "What are you hoping to gain from your college experience?" survey.



Know the Needs of Your Students

- Taken an authoritative approach (high demand = high responsiveness).
- Watch the wording! ("You will learn" instead of "The student will learn.")



Use of Technology

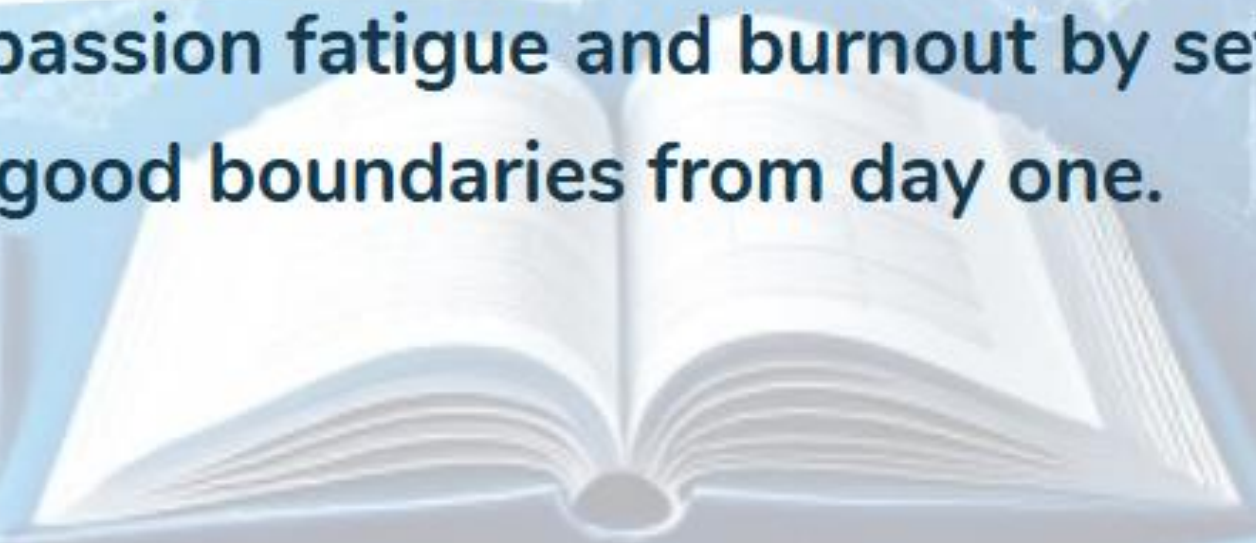
- Use your CRM to reach out to students throughout the semester.
- Use Intelligent Agents (like in D2L) for students who have not completed coursework or logged in to send an email saying you are here for them and want them to succeed.
- Make the messages personalized for the student by using "strings." (For example, "Hi, Sara" instead of "Hi student.")

Practical To-Dos



Self-Care and Boundaries

- Avoid compassion fatigue and burnout by setting and sticking to good boundaries from day one.



Eliminate Barriers

**Don't put the desk in
between you.**

**Don't put the podium
between you.**



Leave the Decision Making to the Student(s)

If a student has some autonomy and ownership of a decision, they may experience more drive and motivation to find success.

- Recognize that students have lives outside of the college.
- Allow them to be in the driver's seat of their education.
- Set up courses with flexibility.
- Request input from students about classroom structure, etc.
- Include dropped grades.

Stop Assuming!

Recognize that every student is entering your office or classroom with a different level of expectation and understanding of college.

- Avoid using college "lingo".
- Avoid using acronyms.
- Check in with students when talking with/teaching them to ensure understanding.

Normalize Challenges and Struggles

- **Acknowledge Reality:** Everyone faces challenges and struggles. It's a natural part of the learning and growth process.
- **Promote Openness:** Encourage students to share their experiences and seek support without fear of judgment.
- **Highlight Resilience:** Emphasize that overcoming difficulties builds resilience and character.

Create an Inclusive and Safe Space

- **Foster Respect:** Ensure that every voice is heard and respected, regardless of background or perspective.
- **Encourage Participation:** Create opportunities for all students to participate and contribute in meaningful ways.
- **Support Diversity:** Celebrate diversity and promote an environment where everyone feels valued and included.

Conduct a "Belonging Temperature Check"

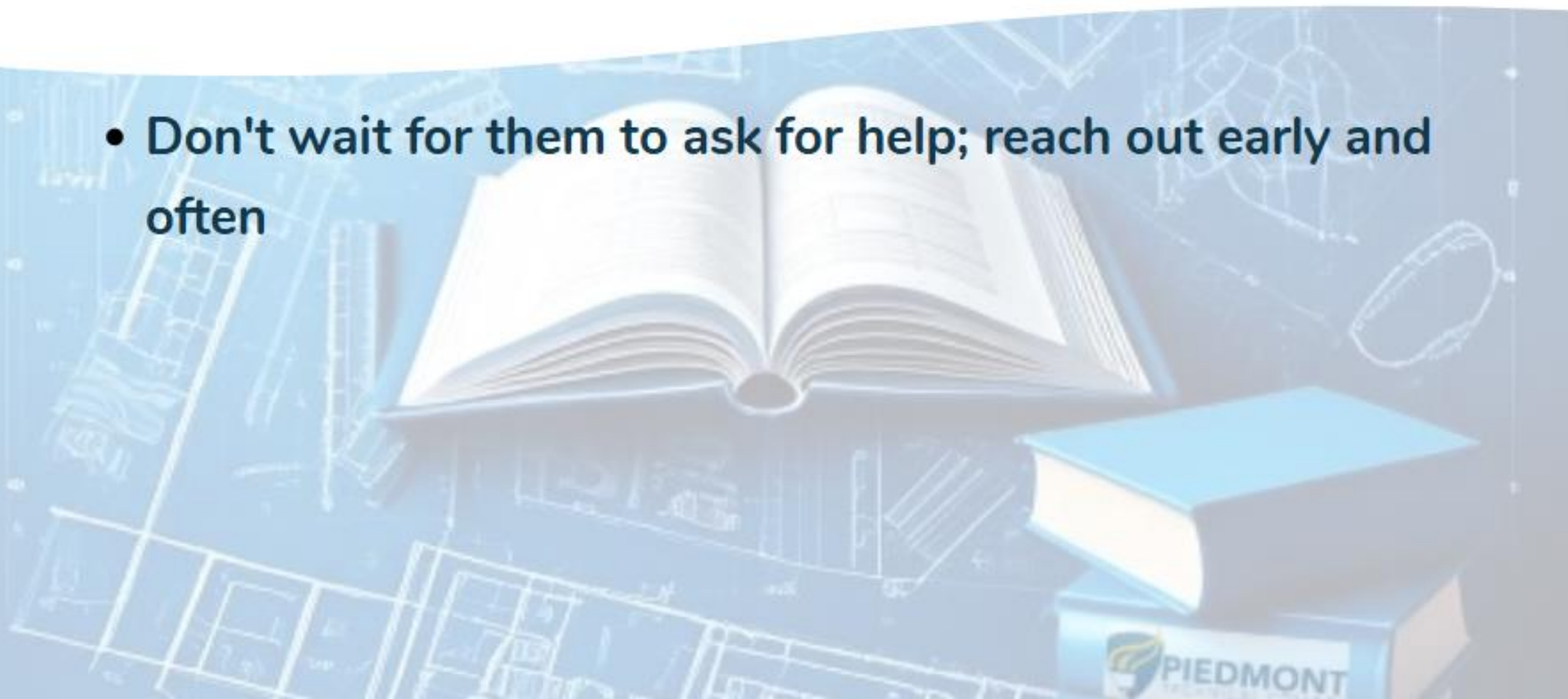
- **Regular Check-ins:** Implement regular surveys or feedback sessions to gauge students' sense of belonging.
- **Act on Feedback:** Use the feedback to make informed changes and improvements to the campus environment.
- **Identify students in class who haven't made connections and create groups to foster belonging**
- **Reach out to students often**

Communication



Don't WAIT!

- Don't wait for them to ask for help; reach out early and often

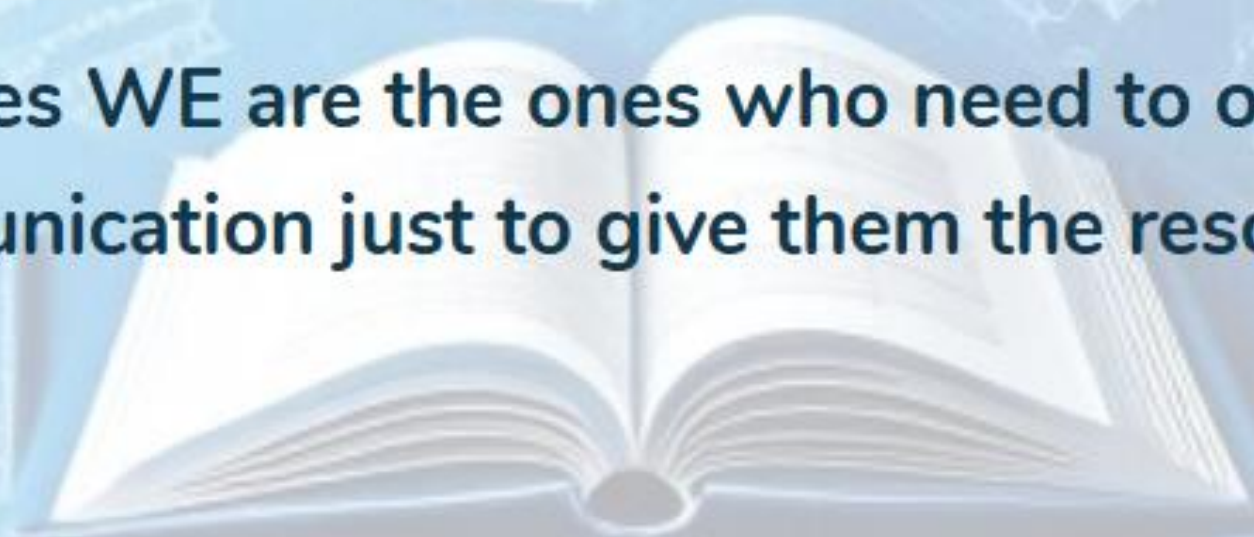


Consistency is Key!

- Be vulnerable - share your own struggles about your experience as a student (but have boundaries)
- Be an active listener (don't listen to respond).

Open Communication

- Sometimes WE are the ones who need to open the line of communication just to give them the resources they need!



Q&A



Thank you for attending our session!



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Please feel free to reach out to
us with questions or for
resources!



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