

**THEME: TEAM BUILDING**

**TITLE: CHECK-IN: GOOD NEWS/BAD NEWS**

## **OBJECTIVES:**

Leading Good News/Bad News as a standard check-in activity provides an opportunity for mentees to share both the good and not so good things that have occurred to them since the group last met. The good news gives them a chance to brag about themselves. The bad news can be a way for mentees to receive empathy and support (in the way of suggestions from other mentees).

## **Additional Tips**

- Using an exercise like this can put the “mentoring” into group mentoring, as it allows students to open up and become real about what’s going on in their lives.
- You have the option of using this exercise more than once (some programs choose to conduct this exercise every session).
- If mentoring groups are small, it could even be done each time the group meets. Also, it could be that large groups break up into smaller groups, and this will make the sharing process go faster.
- Should mentees describe problems or obstacles, mentors should refrain from becoming immediate advice-givers. Instead, ask other mentees what they would do if they were in that situation.
- If there is time, mentors can also share (but don’t go deeply into their own issues).
- Never force students to share.

## **Instructions**

1. Today we are going to do a sharing exercise called “Good News/Bad News.” Each day on TV or in the newspaper, we see both good news and bad, but this exercise is about our own good and bad news.
2. (Next, model the exercise by sharing your own good and bad news.) For example, “My bad news is that I forgot to water a couple of my house plants, and now I don’t know if they are going to make it. My good news is that I’ve been working out lately, and I really feel good.”)
3. Who wants to share next? (You can go around the circle sequentially, if you wish. As each mentee shares thank them for sharing. If you have a small group, you can ask mentees if they have questions for the mentee who just shared, as this can inspire interaction.)

4. (If a mentee has a specific obstacle, empathize with them. E.g. “That sounds rough.” Also, if appropriate, ask others in the group if they’ve ever been in a similar situation, what they would suggest, etc.)
5. (If a mentee shares something too personal say something like, “This sounds really important—I’d like talk to you more about it right after today’s session.” Also, report any concerns to the program manager—immediately!)
6. Thanks for sharing, everyone. It’s really good getting to know you better, and what’s going on in your lives.

### Debrief

1. How was that for everyone? Are you comfortable sharing in a group, or do you get nervous? (You can confirm that it’s normal to get nervous when speaking in front of others.)
2. Why is it important for us to share what’s going on with each of us, to share with others in the group? (Sample responses:
  - Get to know each other better
  - Begin to understand what we have in common with each other
  - Can support each other through difficulties
  - Share and celebrate successes
3. What is the most important thing to do when someone in the group is sharing? (Examples: Listen, look at them, nod your head to show you are hearing them, not talk while they are sharing, be respectful, etc.)
4. If someone in the group has a problem, what is the best way to support them? (There is no one right answer. Responses could range all the way from just listening, to showing empathy, to helping them find a solution to their problem.)