Graduate mentorship and mental health

AUDREY GILES, PHD
FULL PROFESSOR

1 CONTEXT
Complex issue, people, and time
No single approach or solution

2 EXPECTATIONS AND TENSIONS
Mentor ----- Supervisor
Thesis devotion ----- Food and rent
Process ----- Outcome
Comfort ----- Discomfort
Fairness ----- Skill, need, luck
Healthy ---- Unhealthy (profs and students!)

3 STARTING
Ask how people are doing
Ask what you can do to support
Normalize struggle but fight inequity
Make use of resources

4 LEAD WITH KINDNESS
Ask how people are doing
Ask what you can do to support
Normalize struggle & anxiety but fight inequity
Honest: focus on the deed not the doer
No one is perfect
Cultivate community (first drafts, mock defence)

5 TIPS
Talk about mental health often
Direct toward services
Seek accommodations (extra funding, time, leaves )
Timelines and accountability (both ways)
Use progress reports (e.g., each semester)
Encourage and share activities outside academia

6 COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS
Let’s have more of them!