

How Woman Can Win:

Expanding Access and Scope of Negotiation Training for Women

Zoë Ellen Williams

Master in Public Policy Candidate, Expected Graduation May 2021
Harvard Kennedy School of Government

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Client Organization: Women's Foundation of Boston

Clients: Ami Danoff, Christina Gordon, and Caroline Kung

Faculty Advisor: Professor Hannah Riley Bowles

Seminar Leader: Professor Dara Kay Cohen

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JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT



Big Sister Association
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This policy analysis exercise paper reflects the views of the author and should not be viewed as representing the views of the Women's Foundation of Boston, the Big Sister Association of Greater Boston, nor those of Harvard University or any of its faculty.

Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
Introduction	5
Methodology.....	6
Chart 1: Educational attainment among women in Boston compared to pilot participants	8
Findings	9
Literature review.....	9
Qualitative research on barriers women in Boston face in negotiations	13
Chart 2: Barriers many women experience in career negotiations	14
Design of pilot training curriculum	14
Chart 3: Participant responses on ingredients for success in a negotiation.....	16
Recommendations and Next Steps.....	17
Chart 4: Recommendations to the Women’s Foundation of Boston	17
Acknowledgements.....	23
Appendices.....	24
Ethics and Transparency Statement	25
Background	26
Table 1: Organizations offering negotiation training to women	26
Summary Statistics on Negotiation Training Participants	28
Table 2: Interview participant job description.....	28
Table 3: Training registration responses, <i>N=50</i>	28
Table 4: Pre-training survey responses, <i>N=29</i>	29
Pilot Curriculum	31
Feedback Survey Responses	32
Data Analysis Techniques.....	32
Table 6: Coding Responses– Description and Examples.....	34
Bibliography	35

Executive Summary

The value of women’s work is not always recognized. Boston has one of highest gender wage gaps in the US. Women in Boston are paid 8% less than men are for the same jobs, and women of color have the greatest disparity in wages. On average, Latina women in Boston earn 45 cents for every dollar white men earn, and black women earn 49 cents.¹ Women face unique barriers in career negotiations around pay, promotions, and schedule flexibility that contribute to the gender wage gap.

Negotiating skills can help women communicate the value of their contributions in the workplace. From negotiating the salary for a first job to arranging a return to work schedule after maternity leave, negotiation skills help women achieve their career goals. Women and girls around the world are learning how to negotiate staying in school longer, earning higher salaries, and self-advocating for promotion. While negotiation skills alone cannot close the gender wage gap, they can help women identify and take advantage of opportunities to achieve their goals.

Many women do not have access to quality negotiation training. While the City of Boston offers free negotiation training for women, the curriculum is focused narrowly on pay. More comprehensive trainings, which are more effective at helping women succeed in negotiations, are cost prohibitive for most women.

The goal of this policy analysis exercise is to understand whether increasing access to career negotiation training advances women’s economic empowerment. Economic empowerment is the “*capacity of*

women to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth processes in ways that recognize the value of their contributions.”²

The Women’s Foundation of Boston is the client for this research. The Women’s Foundation of Boston is a nonprofit that creates and funds projects that support the economic empowerment of women in Boston.³ This research will help the Women’s Foundation of Boston determine if it will invest in negotiation training programs for women.

I conducted this project in two stages.

In Stage 1, I investigated how negotiation training helps women overcome barriers in career negotiations, asking the following questions:

1. What barriers do women face in career negotiations in Boston?
2. What type of negotiation training is the most effective for women?

In Stage 2, I piloted a negotiation training in Boston and measured the impact, asking:

3. Does negotiation training improve performance in career negotiations?
4. Does the impact of training vary based on personal characteristics (e.g., by industry, income level)?
5. How could negotiation training programs scale to other locations and demographics?

Key findings of this research are:

- **Women can face three main barriers in career negotiations:** lack of negotiation skills, fear of backlash, and uncertainty about what is negotiable.

- **Women are more successful in career negotiations when they are trained to:**
 - Consider a broader scope of their career goals than pay,
 - Seek mutually-beneficial agreements, and
 - Know whether they are negotiating for something typical, a special exception, or an innovative change.⁴
- **Our negotiation training pilot improved women's proficiency in negotiations.** The training also increased women's confidence in negotiations, helped women achieve their career goals in negotiations, and spurred women to share what they learned with others in their networks.
- **The training was effective across a diverse group of women.** More research is needed to understand the impact of training on hourly workers and the intersectional barriers that women face.

- **Train-the-trainer's programs are the most effective way to scale the impact of the training** to more women and girls in Boston.

The three main recommendations for the Women's Foundation of Boston are:

- **Fund negotiation training** for women and girls who otherwise are not likely to have access (e.g., low-income women and those without college degrees)
- **Share career negotiations research** with other organizations supporting women and girls
- **Advocate for policies** that remove barriers to women in career negotiations and economic empowerment more broadly

Introduction

Negotiation training is an emerging tool to advance women's economic empowerment around the world.

The World Economic Forum found that negotiation is one of the top ten skills needed to succeed in the future workforce.⁵ Negotiation skills are helping women and girls stay in school longer in Zambia,⁶ get fairer investment contracts for small businesses in England,⁷ reach peace agreements in Afghanistan,⁸ and improve their lives in many other ways. From corporate leadership programs in the United Kingdom⁹ to school-based negotiations training for girls in Mali¹⁰—women are bolstering their negotiation competencies to be more economically empowered.

Economic empowerment brings value to women, families, businesses, and society.

Families benefit when women are fairly compensated for their work—as women are the primary earners in 40% of households with children.¹¹ Drawing from a larger talent pool also improves performance and productivity in organizations. When women are well represented in leadership, company profits and share performance can be close to 50 percent higher.¹² Furthermore, robust female participation in the labor force improves development outcomes and increases women's representation in government and quality of policy making.¹³

Massachusetts was the first state to provide free negotiation training to women. To increase access to negotiation training, the State of Massachusetts and the City of Boston partnered with the American Association of University Women (AAUW)

to offer free negotiation training to women. In 2015, Boston set the ambitious goal of training half of the city's working women—85,000 women—in negotiations by 2021.¹⁴ While Boston has trained nearly 10,000 women in training since 2015, the city is not on track to achieve its original goal.¹⁵

Boston's free negotiation training curriculum narrowly focuses on pay, and more comprehensive trainings are cost prohibitive for most. Women tend to perform best in negotiations when they consider their entire career goals (e.g., career trajectory), rather than pay alone. Unfortunately, the AAUW trainings focus on *salary* negotiations, rather than incorporating broader career goals like promotions.¹⁶ Professional negotiations programs that incorporate more comprehensive career negotiation topics are available online, but most are time intensive and cost thousands of dollars. See Table 1 in the appendix for a list of available negotiation trainings for women.

The Women's Foundation of Boston wants to understand if expanding access and scope of negotiation training improves the economic mobility of women. To answer this question, I conducted research in two stages. First, I researched barriers that women face in negotiations, investigated if trainings can address those barriers, and then designed a curriculum using that research. Second, I piloted the training with women who may otherwise not have access to negotiation training and measured the impact.

This project measured **how negotiation training impacts women's economic empowerment** and investigated how that effect might vary based on personal characteristics. This paper shares my

findings about **what barriers women face** in career negotiations and **what type of negotiation training can help women** reach their career goals. The paper concludes with **recommendations for how the Women’s Foundation of Boston could use negotiation training** to advance women’s economic empowerment.^a

Methodology

Stage 1: Investigate barriers women face in negotiations and design training to overcome them

I began this project by conducting a literature review on women’s career negotiations. I defined “career negotiations” as a problem-solving process that involves some trade-offs for purposes of achieving career advancement.¹⁷ The review covered the gender wage gap, gendered expectations and experiences in negotiations, and negotiation training designs for women. I referenced literature across different cities and countries and looked for evidence among workers with varying degrees of education and wealth.

Harvard Professor Hannah Riley Bowles guided this research, bringing her expertise on how gender influences career negotiations. At Harvard Kennedy School, Prof. Riley Bowles chairs the Management, Leadership, and Decision Sciences Area and co-directs the Women and Public Policy Program. Her current research focuses on women’s leadership advancement, examining situational barriers and

individual strategies to see how negotiation is a micro-mechanism of inequality.¹⁸

After conducting a literature review, I selected a host for the pilot negotiation training. I conducted interviews with leaders of the Women’s Foundation Boston and her partner organizations^b to gauge interest and fit for the pilot. The criteria I used for a good fit was that their members had access to remote learning, were likely to benefit from and participate in the training, and were not vulnerable to research during the pandemic.

I selected the Big Sisters Association of Greater Boston as our partner organization for the pilot—and included their employees and volunteers as participants. Big Sisters had already moved their operations online and their employees and volunteers were not considered vulnerable populations. A benefit of working with Big Sisters is that mentors could use information they gained in the pilot to train their Little Sisters on negotiation concepts.

Next, I interviewed interested participants about their experiences with career negotiations and goals for the training. I sent a survey to affiliates of Big Sisters to assess interest in participating, and invited women to an interview prior to the pilot. The objective of interviewing participants was to understand barriers they faced in career negotiations so that I could design the training to address those issues. I interviewed 22 women between November 2020 and January 2021. See appendix for a description of interviewee’s professions (in

^a This paper refers to cisgender women (i.e., assigned women at birth), as available research primarily uses a binary sex categorization, limiting

inferences that this research can make for trans women and non-binary individuals.

^b Including Project HOPE, Big Sister Association of Boston, EMPATH, and Dress for Success.

Table 2) and a list of interview questions (in Data Analysis Techniques).^c

Using information from interviews and literature reviews, I designed a three-hour virtual negotiation training pilot for women. Interview responses informed which simulations I used in the pilot and which areas of the negotiation curriculum we focused on to ensure the pilot was most relevant and useful to the participants.

Stage 2: Pilot negotiation training and measure impact

We launched the negotiation training pilot on a Saturday in January 2021. I helped coached the session, along with Prof. Hannah Riley Bowles and experienced facilitator Florangel Suero. We offered the training for free to ensure access and conducted the training virtually for safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. The 30 women who participated in the training were employees and volunteers with the Big Sisters Association of Greater Boston, primarily under the age of 35 and early in their careers. Summary statistics on the participant demographics are included in the appendix.

I evaluated the negotiation training pilot in three ways: through feedback surveys, participant interviews, and negotiation simulations before and after the training.

First, I gave participants time at the end of the training to submit a feedback survey. Participants were asked whether they found the training relevant to their careers, if they would recommend the training to a colleague, whether the training was the

right length, and to provide any other ideas they had for improvement.

Second, I invited participants to be interviewed by the Women’s Foundation of Boston about their experience in the training. The CEO of the Women’s Foundation of Boston interviewed five participants from February through March to assess whether they had applied or shared learnings from training. In addition, we will send participants a follow-up survey 6 months afterwards to ask if they have applied any skills gained in the workshop to advance their career goals.

Third, I compared participants’ negotiation proficiency before and after the training through a pair of simulations. At the beginning and end of the pilot, we gave participants a negotiation case and asked them how they would recommend the protagonist prepare for and approach the negotiation. Then evaluators scored their recommendations based on whether they included strategies that help women succeed in career negotiations—like reducing ambiguity and seeking mutually-beneficial agreements. A full description of the scoring methodology and examples of participant responses are in the appendix section on Data Analysis Techniques.

For the last phase of the project, I analyzed options for recommendations. I investigated how the Women’s Foundation of Boston and her partner organizations could fruitfully incorporate evidence from the negotiation training pilot into their existing work that promotes economic empowerment among women in Boston.

^c I kept participants names anonymous for their privacy.

Addressing bias and limitations in the research

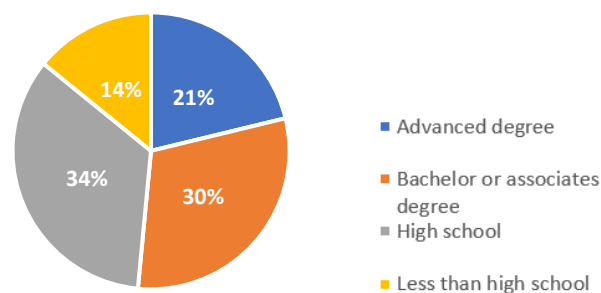
The biggest limitation of this research is in addressing intersectional barriers to negotiations (across class, ethnic, racial, socio-economic, and other dimensions) due to the small sample size of the researched population (n=30). In addition, since this is not a randomized control trial, we do not know how participants would have performed in a negotiation (or if they would have attempted to negotiate) in the absence of the training.

Since the pilot participants were self-selecting, participants may not be representative of the broader population. For example, participants may have a different level of commitment to learning negotiations or a unique type of experience in negotiations compared to other women in Boston. Pilot participants had much higher educational attainment compared to the general population of women in Boston. In Chart 1, you can see that in Boston, 21% of women have an advanced degree and 25% have a bachelor's degree,¹⁹ compared to the pilot, where 55% had an advanced degree and 45% had a bachelor's degree.

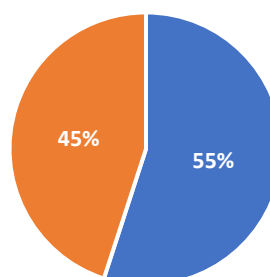
In addition, pilot participants likely started the training with a higher negotiation proficiency than the general population. 72% of the pilot participants reported to have some exposure to negotiations, and about half of the participants stated that they considered themselves to have an average level of experience in negotiations (only 1 participant believed she had an above average experience, the remaining considered themselves below average).

Chart 1: Educational attainment among women in Boston compared to pilot participants

Education of Women in Boston



Education of Pilot Participants



Similarly, interviewees were self-selecting and may not be representative of the entire pilot participant group. Since I interviewed almost all pilot participants prior to the training (22 of 30), the pre-pilot interviews were likely representative of the group. But this could have been an issue for the post-pilot feedback interviews, since only 5 of 30 volunteered to provide feedback through an interview. It is possible they may not represent the average experience in the training. However, this limitation is mitigated by the high completion rate of written feedback surveys (28 out of 30 participants submitted).

The design of the training may have also had limitations based on the gender of the coaches and the virtual format of the pilot.

Because the pilot negotiation training coaches and participants were women, participants did not have the opportunity to simulate a negotiation with a male counterpart. This may limit the applicability of the training to settings where participants are negotiating with a male. Lastly, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic required the training to take place remotely via Zoom. The remote environment has two implications. First, it is unclear whether practicing negotiations virtually will translate to in-person negotiations. Women that work remotely will also have career negotiations in a virtual setting, but this may not continue in the future. Some research shows that performance varies based on setting (e.g., in person, on the telephone, virtually).²⁰ Second, the performance of the January 2021 pilot training may not be replicable in future negotiations trainings that use this curriculum in an in-person setting.

Findings

Stage 1: Investigate barriers women face in negotiations and design a training to overcome them

Literature review

What barriers do women face in career negotiations?

Career negotiations serve three main purposes for women: navigating their career advancement, overcoming gendered barriers to their growth, and claiming leadership.²¹ However, most research on the gender dynamics of career negotiations focus on pay since it is the most easily

measured outcome.²² Studies on pay negotiations show that women are less likely than men to negotiate their salaries²³ and have a lower success rate in getting a pay increase even when they ask.²⁴

Gender disparities in pay negotiations begin with a woman's first job offer, when she is less likely than her male

counterparts to ask for a higher wage. By not negotiating her starting salary at her first job, a woman could make half a million dollars less in earnings over the course of her career.²⁵ Women may negotiate the terms of their job offers less often because they are expected to be more accommodating and face a higher social cost for negotiating compared to men.²⁶ "Social costs" means that people want to work with women less after seeing them negotiate. But emerging research on the gender dynamics of negotiation investigate women's experience in negotiations beyond pay—to include non-standard working arrangements and growth opportunities.²⁷

In addition to pay, women also face barriers in negotiating their career growth.

This is important because the difference in career trajectory between women and men is the biggest contribution in the gender pay gap.²⁸ Women are 18 percent less likely than men to be promoted from an entry-level position to manager.²⁹ Common myths that justify the discrepancy in promotions is that women are less capable candidates for leadership, do not want more responsibilities, or are less likely to advocate for themselves.³⁰

These myths about women's slower career trajectories are not supported by evidence.

First, women leaders are consistently ranked as *more* competent leaders than their male counterparts.³¹ Second, women

are just as interested in getting promoted as men are—in fact 90% of the women I interviewed said that they wanted to learn how to negotiate a promotion, but many were unsure how to do so. Lastly, multiple studies show that women are now asking for promotions as often as men.^{32,33}

Work-family conflicts are a common barrier to women’s career advancement.

When women have children, they are likely to spend more time out of the workforce. In contrast, having children increases men’s time in the workforce.³⁴ When women want to stay in the workforce after having a child, some women attempt to negotiate flexible working arrangements to accommodate childcare.³⁵ On the flip side, men tend to be more hesitant to negotiate flexible work arrangements because childcare is considered “feminine.”³⁶

Women also face more difficulty in advancing in male-dominated hierarchies when they have a non-traditional background.

When women have different qualifications than men who traditionally rise through the ranks (e.g., lack of combat experience in the military), evaluators may consider them to have “lack of fit” for a promotion.³⁷ Similar to how men feel more hesitant to negotiate flexible work arrangements, both genders can face barriers in career negotiations when taking on counter-stereotypical roles.

The uncertainty that women experience in career negotiations also contributes to lower rates of women’s promotions.

Uncertainty about what is negotiable, how to negotiate, or who to negotiate with can increase anxiety and lower leverage in a negotiation. Evidence shows that uncertainty inhibits women’s willingness to negotiate their pay^{38,39} and decreases

likelihood of a successful salary negotiation.^{40,41} If women lack access to the same social support networks that men have—such as mentors and sponsors at work—they are more likely to face uncertainty in a negotiation. Access to social networks can vary by class, race, sexual orientation, and other factors—so not all women face the same barriers to social networks.

Minority and low-income women are particularly disadvantaged in negotiations.

When someone is perceived to be “lower status,” they can face more backlash for attempting to negotiate. Women can mitigate this risk of backlash by signaling higher status when negotiating (e.g., by mentioning credentials and experience).⁴² But some women are systemically denied rights that would increase their perceived status. For example, women who work in domestic services in the US lack union organizing rights,⁴³ but international research demonstrates that increases in collective bargaining gives domestic workers leverage (and can help close the gender wage gap).⁴⁴ More research is needed to understand how negotiations skills can help women who have less power in a career negotiation—and mitigate the greater risk of backlash they experience.

What strategies help women succeed in career negotiations?

The good news is that women are just as likely as men to succeed in career negotiations under the right circumstances.

One experiment showed that women achieved the same outcomes in negotiations as men did in a context where people were *explicitly* told that negotiation was expected.⁴⁵ These findings imply that women are not bad negotiators

by nature, but they can face greater challenges when navigating different social expectations compared to men.

Women achieve the most success in career negotiations when they:

1. Consider a broader scope of their career goals than pay (to include role and schedule flexibility)
2. Seek mutually beneficial agreements
3. Know whether they are negotiating for something typical, a special exception, or an innovative change⁴⁶

First, negotiation trainings that go beyond salary are more likely to help promote women's success and create systemic changes that remove gendered barriers.⁴⁷

For example, negotiating the ability to manage staff or choose your team could enable women to hire more representative candidates that draw from a wider talent pool. Consider the benefit of negotiating inclusion riders into Hollywood contracts—if women filmmakers were not given the authority to choose their cast, it would be difficult to make a more inclusive show.⁴⁸

Negotiation trainings for women should take into consideration that negotiations often take place on multiple fronts. Women might have to negotiate with their partner or parents to manage domestic responsibilities while also negotiating for a new position at work. Research from economics and sociology on intrahousehold bargaining demonstrates that negotiations over the allocation of domestic labor at personal level influences labor force participation at the professional level. Negotiations experts Hannah Riley Bowles and Kathleen McGinn recommend taking a “two-level-game” perspective, where

women sequence their personal and professional negotiations.⁴⁹

Second, women are more likely to achieve a positive outcome in a career negotiation when they can show how their request also benefits others.

People who approach negotiations seeking mutually beneficial agreements are less likely to experience retaliation—but this is especially important for women. “Relational accounts” can help women demonstrate that what they are asking for is in the best interest of the organization. For example, Sheryl Sandberg said during her salary negotiations at Facebook, *“This is the only time you and I will ever be on opposite sides of the table”* to indicate how she valued being part of the team and would use her negotiating skills to help the organization if hired.⁵⁰ To make mutually beneficial proposals, it is important for women to prepare for negotiations by learning their negotiating counterpart’s interests and positions.

Third, it is important for women to know what type of request they are making.

Hannah Riley Bowles recommends that women early in their careers know whether they are in an “asking, bending, or shaping” career negotiation.⁵¹ Each type of negotiation requires a different strategy to communicate the legitimacy of their request. When women request something that is standard for someone in their role at the organization (e.g., market rate salary for a new role), they are in an “asking” negotiation. When attempting to request an exception to the standard practices (e.g., work-from-home at an in-person company), women must adopt a “bending” negotiation strategy. Finally, a “shaping” negotiation is when women propose a creative new idea that would transform the organization (e.g., starting a new project). In bending and

shaping negotiations, it is particularly important for women to demonstrate how their requests are in the best interests of their employer.

Can training help women overcome barriers in career negotiations?

Negotiation training can increase women’s likelihood to ask and achieve her goals in a negotiation. While negotiation training alone cannot close the gender pay gap, it can help women identify and take advantage of opportunities for raises, promotions, and greater flexibility in their work schedule. Negotiations researcher Eman Elshenawy has found that negotiation training can improve performance in negotiations, and proficiency increases with the length of the training.⁵² Leigh Thompson, a negotiations professor at Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, says that negotiations best practices can give women at least a ten-percent improvement in negotiations.⁵³

Negotiation training for women can increase confidence in self-advocating. In the summer of 2020, Hannah Riley Bowles found that her negotiation training for under-represented women pursuing careers in technology and engineering gave women confidence that they can overcome challenges of pursuing counter-stereotypical career goals.⁵⁴ The City of Boston’s negotiation training for women achieved a similar outcome: *“In addition, an important and unexpected finding is the degree to which the workshops resulted in an increased sense of confidence and self-esteem, making visible the importance of this factor in facilitating women’s actions to improve their pay and employment status”*⁵⁵ An area for future research is how

negotiation trainings impact cognitive and emotional mindsets beyond skill development.

Women who have received negotiation trainings share their new skills and confidence with other women in their networks. AAUW cites ripple effects after their trainings: *“The workshops also generated a sub-cohort of women interested in supporting other women in their own workplaces and beyond through their roles as co-workers, supervisors and mentors.”*⁵⁶ The impact of negotiation training can reach women beyond the initial cohort of women trained.

It is important to note that training women to use the same strategies that work for men in career negotiations can backfire. When women take on an assertive “masculine” style of negotiations, people may be less likely to hire them⁵⁷ and evaluate them more harshly.⁵⁸ Rather than training women to replicate the negotiation styles that work for men, trainings should incorporate research on the gender dynamics of negotiation to help women confront the unique challenges that women face in career negotiations.

Future research is needed to understand whether women who are paid hourly or have less education would benefit from a negotiation training. Research shows that women with higher status, or a perceived higher position of power, tend to perform better in negotiations. Conversely, when *“women of presumed low status behave as if their status is high, people are likely to react negatively and punish them.”*⁵⁹ A curriculum tailored to less educated and lower income women may need to teach women how to create a perception of higher status (e.g., by communicating

successes in previous employment), but there may be limitations for how much these skills will improve negotiation outcomes.

Qualitative research on barriers women in Boston face in negotiations

Women in Boston have a wide range of skill level and success in negotiation—ranging from no experience to considerable competence and success.

I interviewed 22 pilot participants about their experiences with negotiations and their goals for the training. The women shared with me stories of negotiations that went well and ones that they wished had gone better. Although some women had gained negotiating skills in their first few jobs, almost everyone missed an opportunity to ask for a raise or promotion at some point early in their careers. Women shared a range of challenges that they faced in career negotiations—which mirrored the barriers that women faced in the academic literature. See Chart 2 for a summary of the three main barriers women faced in career negotiations.

First, about half of the women lacked essential negotiation skills and strategy. A few did not consider their negotiating counterpart's point of view and instead appealed to personal reasons for a career goal (e.g., justified a request for a higher salary by noting an increased cost of living). Others went into negotiations without preparing or researching to better understand what was negotiable. When asked how she prepared for her most recent career negotiation, a medical student responded, *"I didn't necessarily go in prepared, knowing all the facts, I just assumed it will come to me when the time*

*arose... and that put me at a disadvantage."*⁶⁰

Importantly, there were many instances when women did not compare their options in a negotiation to their alternative (e.g., competitive job offer at another company). However, many women did demonstrate proficiency in negotiations—about half of women prepared well for their negotiations or compared their options to an alternative.

Second, most women had experienced or feared the social cost of career negotiations.

"Social costs" means that people want to work with women less after seeing them negotiate.⁶¹ Among the women that I interviewed, over half said they had worse relationships after a negotiation or did not negotiate because they worried about how it would be received. They had heard about or experienced gender discrimination in negotiations. Many worried that asking for a raise would defy the cultural values of their organizations where service is emphasized (e.g., non-profits, education, healthcare, and the service industry). A server at a restaurant said, *"It is hard to talk about money in my industry because places don't want someone who is worried about the money, because they say it is a labor of love and the experience is well worth it."*⁶²

A few women said they were uncomfortable negotiating because they felt a need to please others and avoid conflict. One woman had prepared extensively for a career negotiation but was unable to ask for a raise in her annual review. *"It is really hard to say what I think is fair when the other person might not see it the same way,"* said a chemical engineer I interviewed.⁶³ Some said they let opportunities pass because they were

intimidated by older employees (both male and female) who were their negotiations counterparts. Another woman noticed she could only ask in an apologetic way and wanted to find the courage not to apologize for advocating for herself.

Third, some women did not negotiate because they did not know their value or what was negotiable. As I saw in the research, when women lack access to the social networks that men have, they are more likely to face uncertainty about how and what to negotiate. Participants wondered whether getting a raise or a promotion was realistic and did not know

how the negotiating process would work. One woman told me she questioned whether she would be worth receiving a higher wage.

Some women were unsure about the financial constraints of their employers, especially in non-profits and during the COVID-19. One woman reflected on her last negotiation, *“It is hard to know whether I could have asked for more because of the pandemic.”*⁶⁴ A few women were unable to identify opportunities to negotiate and most waited for opportunities (e.g., an annual review) rather than seeking them proactively.

Chart 2: Barriers many women experience in career negotiations



1. Participant 4. Virtual interview. December 2021.

2. Participant 15. Virtual interview. January 2021.

3. Participant 14. Virtual interview. December 2021.

Design of pilot training curriculum

I used evidence-based research on negotiation training and interview responses to design the pilot curriculum. The objective of the training was to help women overcome barriers they face in negotiations. I designed the curriculum to teach mutually beneficial self-advocacy

from Hannah Riley Bowles’ negotiation framework. She uses strategies that she has found mitigate backlash against women for negotiating.⁶⁵ Since most training participants were in their twenties (58%), we adapted the framework for women early in their careers.

Participants prepared for the pilot by reading a handout on the negotiation

framework. We modified the handout from the Career Negotiation Coaching Program Tips for Career Negotiations in the COVID-19 Crisis—which was written for students seeking employment in 2020—and incorporated examples that were relevant to the pilot population.⁶⁶ See the appendix for a copy of the Negotiation Framework Handout.

The training utilized multiple formats to keep participants engaged throughout the three-hour virtual workshop. We used plenary lecture, breakout group discussions, polls, and multiple forms of negotiation simulations. See appendix for details on the Pilot Agenda and Teaching Guide.

The pilot began and ended with negotiation simulations. We gave participants the opportunity to advise a woman on how to prepare for and approach an upcoming career negotiation. These interactive simulations helped participants practice preparing for a negotiation. In addition, the pre- and post-training simulations helped us measure if the participants' negotiating proficiency changed over the course of the training.

After the initial negotiation case, the participants simulated a three-way coalition game to practice finding a deal that would offer them the best deal.

Hannah Riley Bowles adapted the game from *The Art and Sciences of Negotiation*, which teaches that *“what you might demand from one coalition depends on what you can add to that coalition and what you potentially could obtain elsewhere.”*⁶⁷ The game illustrated the concepts of soft and hard power in negotiations and alternatives to an agreement. See the appendix section on

“Three-Way Case: Negotiating Department Funding” for more details on the case.

In total, the interactive workshop included three negotiations simulations, as well as a “fishbowl” demonstration of a career negotiation between two course facilitators. I also offered individual office hours to participants after the training if they had questions about the curriculum or how to apply it in their personal careers.

Stage 2: Pilot negotiation training and measure impact

The pilot negotiation training had a positive impact along all three measures of impact: simulations, surveys, and interviews.

Participants increased their negotiation proficiency during the training. Comparing participant's performance in simulations at the beginning and end of the workshop, independent evaluators measured an average increase in performance of 34%. (see appendix for more detail on Data Analysis Techniques). Participants took away lessons on how to strategically prepare for their next negotiation—by planning, building support, and leveraging relationships. See Chart 3 for a word cloud of lessons students highlighted at the end of the workshop.

Pilot participants are already applying and sharing the skills that they learned. Out of the 5 women that volunteered for a feedback interview with the Women's Foundation of Boston, 3 had already applied the negotiation skills they learned in the training. 80% of the women had shared lessons from the training with their network, including their partners, sisters, and friends. I also spoke informally with two

women after the training, and one shared that she used the principles to secure a \$10,000 salary increase.

All participants recommended the training.

In an anonymous feedback survey following the training, 100% of participants said that they would recommend the workshop to a colleague or a friend. One participant said the training *“definitely gave some perspective on where my personal weaknesses are, and also highlighted where I’m not alone in those weaknesses in negotiation.”* The appendix includes a full list of comments from the participants on the training.

Participants felt the content was relevant to their career goals.

71% of participants said the training was very relevant to their careers, and the remaining participants said that the training was somewhat relevant. Two trainees recommended we provided more specific tips for strategies during the negotiation (e.g., best form of communication and language to use). Another participant wanted us to include negotiation strategies outside of career (e.g., rent, car buying).

The pilot was about the right length for most participants. 50% said that the workshop was the right length, while 21% said it could have been shorter and 29%

wanted a longer training. Among the third of participants that wanted a longer session, participants recommended increasing time to read cases, respond to simulations, and ask the course coaches questions.

The pilot negotiation training increased confidence of some participants to self-advocate. The participant who was inspired by the training to ask for a higher wage said, *“The most powerful element of the training was to be in a room of women encouraging each other to negotiate. It made me feel like it was standard.”* This outcome mirrors findings in academic literature that negotiation training for women can increase confidence.

Initial results of the pilot indicate that negotiation training is relevant to women of all races, as 38% of the training participants were women of color (see appendix for full summary statistics on participant demographics). Unfortunately, we were unable to assess how the impacted varied across other dimensions—such as industry and position—because we did not have a large enough sample size. However, Hannah Riley Bowles has seen initial positive results in her recent work teaching negotiations skills to low-income college students in Boston.⁶⁸

Chart 3: Participant responses on ingredients for success in a negotiation



Recommendations and Next Steps

Career negotiation training dovetails with the focus areas of the Women’s Foundation of Boston: promoting women and girls’ economic empowerment, education, and leadership.⁶⁹ There are three potential strategies for how the Women’s Foundation of Boston could use the findings from this research project—listed from lowest to highest reach of impact. First, they could support expanding access to career negotiation training to lower-income women, younger girls, and those who work in the non-profit sector in Boston. Second, the Women’s Foundation of Boston could share these findings with other organizations interested in financing programs that advance women and girls’ economic empowerment—in Boston and other cities and countries. Third, they could

work with targeted partner organizations to advocate for policies that remove barriers for women in career negotiations. This section will go into more detail about these three potential strategies for the Women’s Foundation of Boston.

I evaluated options based on evidence they increase the likelihood that women will succeed in career negotiations. I examined whether the policy options would help women overcome the barriers that I found women face in negotiations: lack of essential negotiating skills, fear of social cost in a negotiation, and lack of information about what is negotiable. I also considered how the interventions would increase access to women who otherwise might not be able to gain negotiation training.

Chart 4: Recommendations to the Women’s Foundation of Boston

	Increase proficiency in negotiations skills	Reduce risk of social cost in a negotiation	Identify opportunities to negotiate
Fund grants for negotiation trainings at more partner organizations (reaching women without college degrees, working in the non-profit sector, and with low-income)	✓	✓	✓
Share career negotiations research and curriculum with other organizations supporting women and girls	✓	✓	✓
Share best practices for policies that remove barriers for women in career negotiations		✓	

Recommendation 1: Fund grants to expand access to career negotiation training to more women and girls

The Women’s Foundation of Boston could finance negotiation training with more partner organizations to reach women and girls with the biggest economic disadvantages—women without college degrees, girls from low-income households, and women working in non-profits. The most scalable method for financing trainings at partner organizations would be to fund a “train-the-trainers” program, where each organization could send a negotiation trainer to learn how to coach the curriculum.

The first option for funding grants is to target women without college degrees. Labor economists estimate that 30 million American workers without four-year college degrees have the skills to move into positions that pay 70% more than their current wages. The key is convincing employers to rethink how skills are measured—so negotiating skills are essential for this population. However, it is important to note that employers frequently require a four-year college degree for 74% of new jobs in the US—so institutional filters also need to change before candidates will have the opportunity to negotiate.⁷⁰ The Women’s Foundation of Boston could start by financing career negotiation training at the following three partner organizations that serve low-income women in Boston:

Organizations serving low-income women

Organization	Description
Budget Buddies	Pairs low-income women with personal financial coaches to support them

	becoming more economically self-sufficient
Dress for Success	Empowers women to achieve economic independence by providing a network of support, professional attire, and the development tools to help women thrive in work and in life
EMPath	5- year program to advance women’s economic mobility out of poverty

The second option for funding trainings is to begin earlier, with low-income girls at schools and mentorship programs. The Women’s Foundation of Boston could work with some of the below existing partner organizations:

Organizations for low-income girls

Organization	Description
Big Sister Association of Greater Boston	Mentorship program for women and girls
Esperanza Academy	A free independent middle school for girls from low-income families
Girls Inc. of Worcester	Programming that supports girls’ economic empowerment
Invest in Girls	Gives financial literacy programming to girls to make finance an accessible profession
Mother Caroline	Free private school for low-income girls

Academy and Education Center	
Our Sisters' School	Free private school for low-income middle schoolers
Strong Women Strong Girls	Mentorship program for women ⁷¹

The third option for funding negotiation training is focusing on women who work in in the non-profit sector.

Negotiation training could be particularly useful in the non-profit sector because it can be more difficult to determine what is negotiable given financing constraints. Many of the pilot participants worked in the non-profit sector and had difficulty negotiating because they were not sure what was negotiable, and they felt negotiating was counter-cultural for service-oriented organizations. The Women's Foundation of Boston could fund grants for negotiation training with its two established programs that train current and future leaders in non-profits:

Organizations for women at non-profits

Organization	Description
Women in Nonprofit Network (WIN)	Network for women CEOs and executive directors of local nonprofits
Young Women's Leadership Program (YWLP)	Yearlong training program for women who are future nonprofit leaders

Recommendation 2: Share career negotiations research with other organizations supporting women and girls

The Women's Foundation of Boston could share this research with its existing foundation partners who might be interested in financing career negotiation training for more women in Boston.

This option could increase access to negotiation training while incurring a lower cost to the Women's Foundation of Boston. The Giving Circles Summit Venture is a good fit for negotiation training because they convene philanthropic organizations to raise awareness of opportunities to give to organizations that serve women and girls. The Red Sox Foundation—the official charity of the Boston Red Sox—has a track record or supporting similar work, as they helped establish WIN to increase the share of philanthropic giving directed to Boston women and girls.

The Women's Foundation of Boston could also work with the City of Boston and AAUW to update its curriculum to include coaching negotiations centered on career and life goals—rather than just salary. The impact of this work would extend beyond Boston to other US cities where AAUW offers free online negotiation training to women, such as New York City. More directly, the Women's Foundation of Boston could share the curriculum with other women's foundations around the US—from Atlanta⁷² to Chicago⁷³ and from NYC⁷⁴ to California.⁷⁵

Recommendation 3: Advocate for policies that remove barriers for women in career negotiations and economic empowerment more broadly

Negotiation training for women is not a silver bullet that tears down all barriers to women’s economic empowerment in Boston. Achieving economic mobility should not solely be placed on women alone. The final section of this paper discusses policy options that would create more equitable organizations where women have the same chances as men for career advancement. The Women’s Foundation of Boston may want to consider working with partner organizations to advocate for systemic change in tandem with supporting women’s training. Negotiation training for women is one tool to help promote women’s economic empowerment, but there are many other tools that may have a higher return on investment.

The Women’s Foundation of Boston could work with partner organizations to advocate for system-level changes that increase women’s capacity to negotiate—through legislation (e.g., requiring employers to disclose gender pay gaps) and corporate policy changes (e.g., non-retaliation clauses for negotiating salary). Partner organizations that might be interested in negotiation policies include the Boston Girls’ Empowerment Network (BGEN), which advocates for public policy that supports girls’ development, and Project Hope, which advocates for just public policies which strengthen families.

Local and state governments are already working to promote women’s economic equality in the area. Massachusetts implemented new equal pay legislation in

2018 that prohibits employers from asking employees about their current salary and protects employers who are working to increase transparency and close the gender wage gap.⁷⁶ The law also prevents employers from prohibiting employees from talking about their wages and protects employees from retaliation.⁷⁷ The city of Boston is also working with employers to collect wage data and assess company policies and tackle things like equity and unconscious bias in the workplace.⁷⁸

However, more policy reform is needed to promote women’s economic empowerment. Harvard economist Claudia Goldin argues that caregiving policies and extending the school day could have the greatest impact on women’s economic empowerment, since women are disproportionately caregivers.⁷⁹ However, Goldin warns that some policies that seek to close the gender wage gap can backfire—such as requiring maternity leave (rather than parental leave) would make it more expensive for employers to hire women than men—so careful design of the program is needed.

Protecting organizing rights is also important to removing barriers for women-dominated professions like domestic workers to advocate for their interests. Removing the exemption of domestic workers from federal labor laws would enable more low-income women to self-advocate.⁸⁰

More organizations need to acknowledge women’s perspective on gender equity and recognize the business case for women in leadership. Men have different perceptions than women about gender equity in their workplaces. The majority of men (63 percent) believe that their company is

already doing enough to improve gender diversity, while only 49 percent of women hold that opinion.⁸¹ Given that disparity, men are less likely than women to prioritize new initiatives for achieving gender equality. Male leaders need to start paying attention to the women’s perception—that most companies could be doing more to advance gender equality—because organizations thrive when women can negotiate a position at the top.⁸²

There are at least three more steps employers should take to remove barriers to women in career negotiations:

Firstly, organizations should standardize how negotiations occur during the hiring and promotion process, by either explicitly stating that negotiations are or are not standard procedure. Some technology firms have removed the ability for anyone to negotiate a job offer to promote pay equity.⁸³ Although eliminating salary negotiations does eliminate gender pay disparities, it could also make hiring more difficult for some employers.⁸⁴ Another option for employers is to explicitly state in job offers that the contract is subject to negotiation.

Companies could also make consideration for a promotion a default. The structure of an opt-in system discourages women from participating in promotion review process.⁸⁵ Research shows that moving to an opt-out policy does not result in negative consequences on performance, monetary payoffs, or well-being, as measured by reported anxiety.⁸⁶ Organizations could increase transparency about the salary ranges for different positions, as some women are less connected than men are (particularly in male-dominated industries) and therefore lack access to the same

information about what is negotiable.⁸⁷ Employers could also offer negotiation training that is informed by research on the gender dynamics of negotiation.

Secondly, employers should change or eliminate their self-evaluation processes, as women are harsher on themselves than men in self-evaluations. Since women discount positive feedback about their abilities, managers could provide extra feedback to women employees, which can help bolster their confidence in contributing and advocating for themselves.⁸⁸ Employers could also have women reflect on their prior performance rather than compare themselves to peers. One experiment showed that women and men are equally willing to compete against their own past performance, while women are less willing than men to compete against others.⁸⁹

However, changing the self-evaluation process to encourage women to self-promote at the same rate as men is unlikely to make substantial changes, as the gender gap in self-promotion persists even when men and women are fully informed with objective data on how well they performed.⁹⁰ Alternatively, employers could eliminate the use of self-evaluations in consideration for promotion.

Thirdly, employers should work to close differences in pay caused by childcare responsibilities, which fall disproportionately on women. It is common for full-time employees to make more than double what a part-time worker is paid for half the amount of work. This “non-linearity” of salaries based on hours worked contributes to the gender pay gap. Economist Claudia Goldin found that professions with more interchangeable workforces (e.g., pharmacists) have more

linear wages across the number of hours worked.⁹¹ Employers could identify opportunities to workers more interchangeable—so that caregivers that want to work fewer hours can be paid proportionately for their work.

Companies could also promote changes in gendered social expectations through policies that encourage shared household and caregiving responsibilities (e.g., by offering paid or mandatory paternity leave). Offering flexible work schedules can also benefit both the employee (by enabling them to be with their family during critical times) and the organization (by increasing employee satisfaction and retention).⁹²

Finally, organizations adopt policies that prohibit retaliation for employees who attempt to negotiate work arrangements to accommodate work-life balance.

Next steps

The Women's Foundation of Boston should begin by asking its existing partner organizations if they want to host negotiation trainings for their members. For interested groups, the Foundation could fund a "train-the-trainers" program with negotiations coaches from Harvard Kennedy School to teach our pilot curriculum.

Meanwhile, I will follow up with pilot participants in June 2021 (6 months after the training) to assess the longer-term impact of the training on women's negotiation proficiency and economic empowerment and share those findings with the Women's Foundation of Boston.

In the summer of 2021, the Women's Foundation of Boston could begin working with another second year policy students at Harvard Kennedy School to conduct further research on the impact of negotiation training on women who are paid hourly or have intersectional forms of marginalization (e.g., by nationality or sexual orientation).

This spring I will send a proposal to the Mayor's Office for Women's Advancement for sharing our negotiation training curriculum with more women in Boston. I will also send policy recommendations for employers to the Boston Women's Workforce Council. If successful, both follow-on projects are an opportunity for the Women's Foundation of Boston to spread its reach to new partners in the city.

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above and beyond to share her knowledge on the gender dynamics of negotiations and experience training negotiation skills—both with me and women who participated in our negotiation pilot.

Thank you to Florangel Suero for her help designing the pilot teaching guide and facilitating the negotiation training.

I also appreciate the contributions of Blanka Soulava and Javier Munoz, who evaluated participants' performance in negotiations simulations.

Finally, I would like to thank the women who I interviewed for this project and who gave their time to engage in our negotiation training pilot.

Appendices

Ethics and Transparency Statement

This research is covered by the Memorandum of Understanding for the Career Negotiation Coaching Program (CNCP) with Hannah Riley Bowles, which gives Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. The program also covered funding to hire an additional coach for the workshop. The research is also funded by a stipend of \$2,000 from Harvard's Women and Public Policy Program (WAPPP).

We conducted our research remotely to eliminate risk of transmitting COVID-19. Interviews were conducted via Zoom or telephone calls. I de-identified data of interviewees and reported only anonymous quotations and summary statistics of aggregated data on pilot participants.

Before conducting interviews, I obtained consent using the following prompt:

“Thank you for volunteering to talk to me today about your goals and your background. I will be designing the curriculum for the Big Sisters Negotiation Workshop in January, and I am conducting these calls to inform the curriculum for the negotiation training to ensure that it is relevant and useful to you. Any information that you provide to me in this call will be anonymized and combined with other participants’ information. I will be taking notes during our conversation, do I have your permission to use information you share in this call to inform my research?”

Background

Existing negotiation training resources available to women in Boston

Negotiation training is one of Boston’s tools for reducing the gender pay gap. The other tools in the City’s multi-pronged approach are encouraging and supporting employers who commit to closing the gender wage gap and passing legislation that advances pay equity.⁹³

The State of Massachusetts and the City of Boston partnered with AAUW to offer free negotiation training to women. The American Association of University Women (AAUW), a national nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the empowerment of women in the workforce, plans to train 10 million women in the US in salary negotiations programs by 2022. Out of the 100,000 participants that AAUW trained in 2018, 60% successfully negotiated within six months after training.⁹⁴

In 2018, Boston planned 150 workshops at 15 community colleges, aiming to reach 5,000 workers.⁹⁵ Nearly half of the women studied after the training in the first year of the program said they used the skills they learned in the workshops to negotiate higher pay or a competitive starting salary at a new job.⁹⁶ Following Massachusetts’ lead, New York City launched free salary negotiation training programming for women in 2019.⁹⁷

Table 1: Organizations offering negotiation training to women

Organizer	Location	Content	Cost
American Association of University Women (AAUW)	Boston ⁹⁸ , other Massachusetts locations ⁹⁹ , nationwide, and online ¹⁰⁰	Salary negotiation	Free
Berkeley University	Online ¹⁰¹	Negotiation for self	~\$5,000
Consensus	In person—facilitated at organizations in groups ¹⁰²	Negotiation for self and organization	Payment required for training workshops (quotes available for organizations to train employees)
Common Ground Seminars	In person—facilitated at organizations in groups ¹⁰³	Negotiation for self	Payment required for training workshops (quotes available for organizations to train employees)
Cornell University	Online ¹⁰⁴	Negotiation for self	~\$3,600 - \$7,200
Negotiating Women Inc. ¹⁰⁵	Online	Career negotiation	Free tips; payment required for training (quotes available)

			for organizations to train employees)
Northwestern ¹⁰⁶	Online	Salary Negotiation	~\$1,400 - \$6,200
Udemy ¹⁰⁷	Online	Negotiating for self	Free 45-minute video

International examples of how negotiation skills advance women's economic empowerment

International organizations are already sharing negotiations skills to empower women and girls inside and outside career organizations. For example, some private sector companies in the United Kingdom teach negotiation skills in leadership track programs for women.¹⁰⁸ Negotiations can also empower women outside of professional contexts—especially those in environments that have strong cultural traditions of obedience and reciprocity—by increasing their agency.

Particularly important—negotiations skills can help girls advocate for themselves to stay in school and increase their educational attainment. Negotiation training for teen girls in Zambia improved educational outcomes.¹⁰⁹ This is particularly critical in the context of COVID-19, which disrupted education for 1.5 billion students in the spring of 2020 and could push 20 million more secondary school-aged girls out of school after the pandemic. Suadela, a negotiations skills training program based in Mali, is now teaching girls self-advocacy skills for education and health rights.¹¹⁰ In patriarchal settings where the scope of women's power is very limited, there could be narrower but significant applications of negotiation (e.g., advocating for partner's use of contraception).

International applications for negotiations extend to many arenas and areas for women. The Land Policy Initiative—a collaboration between the United Nations, African Development Bank, and the African Union Commission¹¹¹—is training smallholder farmers in negotiation skills to ensure that investment deals are sustainable and beneficial to African communities including women.¹¹² Women entrepreneurs are seeking out professional growth trainings on negotiations to run small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in East England.¹¹³ After the passage of new minority rights legislation in Croatia, Romani women negotiated their new status in society.¹¹⁴ The inclusion of women in peace negotiations in Afghanistan is critical to achieving long-lasting peace in the region.¹¹⁵ In Norway, negotiations help skilled migrants to get their education and experienced recognized by prospective employers.¹¹⁶

Summary Statistics on Negotiation Training Participants

Table 2: Interview participant job description

Participant #	Job description
1	Development associate at a non-profit
2	Experienced social services worker
3	Higher education administrator
4	Entry-level non-profit employee
5	Cyber security engineer
6	Team leader at a non-profit
7	Computer engineer for technology firm
8	Sales worker for an insurance company
9	Server in the restaurant industry
10	Management consultant
11	Marketing professional in real estate industry
12	Director at a non-profit
13	Public health professional
14	Technology professional for a pharmaceutical company
15	Scientist for biotech firm
16	Human resources professional in a non-profit
17	Program manager for healthcare provider
18	Chemical engineer for a manufacturer
19	Account manager for retailer
20	Manager at a non-profit
21	Administrator at a non-profit
22	Medical student

Table 3: Training registration responses, $N=50$

Current employment status	N	%
Full-time employed for pay	42	88%
Part-time employed for pay	3	6%
Full-time student	1	2%
Part-time student	3	6%
Volunteer	2	4%
Other	1	2%
Looking for paid employment	2	4%

Age	N	%
23-29 years old	28	58%
30-44 years old	19	40%
45-54 years old	1	2%
Types of career-related negotiation topics of interest	N	%
Pay (e.g., salary, benefits, bonus, equity)	47	98%
Role (e.g., promotion, authority and responsibilities, developmental opportunities)	43	90%
Workload (e.g., hours, location, travel)	36	75%
Other (e.g., work and family, mentoring others in negotiations)	26	54%

Table 4: Pre-training survey responses, *N*=29

Self-reported level of experience as a negotiator (1 = no experience, 3 = average, 5 = very experienced)	N	%
1	6	21%
2	8	28%
3	14	48%
4	1	3%
5	0	0%
Types of experience in negotiation participants had	N	%
Work experience	20	69%
Course(s)	3	10%
Coaching	3	10%
Training programs	1	3%
None	8	28%
Racial or ethnic identity	N	%
White	18	62%
Asian / Pacific Islander	5	17%
Hispanic or Latino	4	14%

Black or African American	3	10%
Native American or American Indian	0	0%
Relationship status	N	%
Single	22	76%
Married or with long-term partner	7	24%
Caregiving responsibility for one or more children	N	%
No	26	90%
Yes	2	7%
Unanswered	1	3%
Level of educational attainment	N	%
Bachelor's degree	13	45%
Master's degree	15	52%
Doctorate	1	3%

Pilot Curriculum

Hannah Riley Bowles' four-step framework for career negotiations:

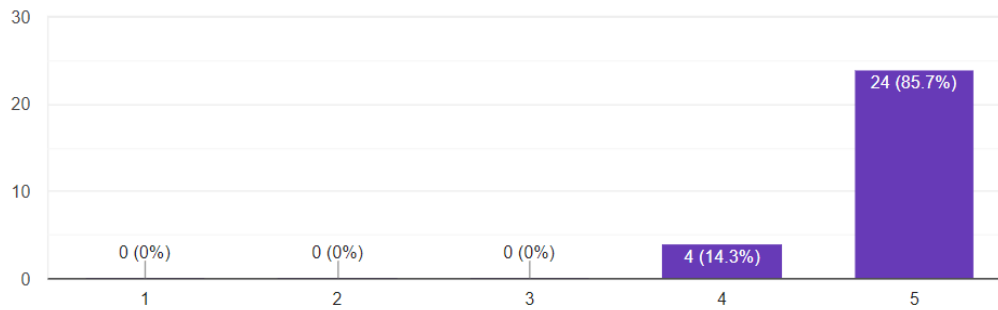
- 1) Consider your **career goals**.
- 2) Understand **what you are negotiating** for.
- 3) **Reduce ambiguity**. Understand you and your negotiating counterpart's interests and alternatives. Other researchers on the best practices for negotiations for women include reducing ambiguity about how to negotiate (Leigh Thompson recommends women "find the script or write the script and make it work for you").¹¹⁷
- 4) **Enhance your negotiations through relationships and your relationships through negotiations**.

Contact Zoe Williams at zoe_williams@hks.harvard.edu for more details on the curriculum.

Feedback Survey Responses

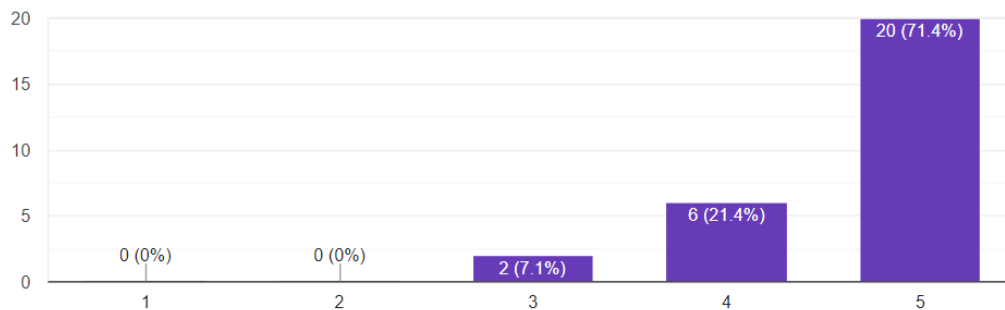
I would recommend this workshop to a friend or colleague.

28 responses



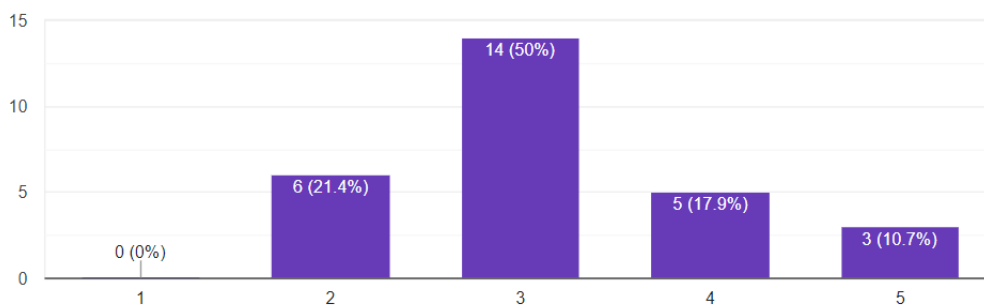
How relevant was the material to advancing your career aspirations? (1 being not relevant, 3 being somewhat relevant, and 5 being very relevant)

28 responses



How did you feel about the length of the negotiations training? (1 being too short, 3 being about right, 5 being too long)

28 responses



Data Analysis Techniques

Big Sister affiliates received an invitation to participate in a negotiation training and were asked if they would be willing to be interviewed for 15-30 minutes about their experience in career negotiations and what they are looking for in a negotiation training.

Questions for participant interviews before the training:

- Tell me about why you are interested in taking a negotiation training.
- What are your goals for the session?
- Tell me about the last time that you remember having a negotiation. How did you prepare? How did it turn out?
- Tell me about your current job.
 - Is there anything that you would like to change about your job?
 - Who decides whether those changes can be made?
 - What opportunities do you see in being able to negotiate those changes?
- What worries you the most about negotiations? What do you want help with in your negotiations?

Questions for participant interviews following the training:

- Was the Big Sisters Negotiations Training relevant to advancing your career aspirations?
- Can you give a specific example of something that was relevant and useful that you learned in the training (e.g., a strategy, tactic)?
- What is one way you have used the information since the training (or plan to use the information)?
- Did you share anything you learned in the training with someone else (e.g., a colleague, friend, mentee)? If so, what did you share, and was it useful to them?
- Do you have any suggestions for how the Negotiations Training could be improved?

Methodology for measuring performance in pre- and post- negotiation simulations

Half of the participants were given “Case A” at the beginning of the training and “Case C” at the end. The other half were given “Case C” at the beginning and “Case A” at the end. This methodology reduces concern that changes in participant’s performance in the negotiation simulations could be caused by a difference in difficulty between Cases A and C. Instead, changes in performance should be attributable to the training.

Hannah Riley Bowles and I developed a framework for evaluating performance in the negotiation simulation using the principles that we covered in the training. See Table 6 for the measures that we used to measure proficiency in negotiation simulations. For each dimension, evaluators scored responses with “0” if the participant failed to address that dimension in their response and a score of “1” if their response did include that dimension. A wider range of point system was not used to avoid false precision (as the participants had a limited amount of time to respond, they did not have enough detail to create a wide range of performance).

I recruited independent coders with experience in negotiation coaching to evaluate participant responses following the training— Blanka Soulava and Javier Munoz. I trained coders using the Angel Case to score sample responses into the framework in Table 6, selecting a binary score of 0 or 1 for whether or not the response mentioned those dimensions. Before proceeding with data from the training, I measured whether the independent coders performed 90%+ correctly on the training data.

After training two independent coders, I shared de-identified data with coders to score participant responses to Cases A and C. Responses to the cases were anonymized and reordered, so evaluators did not know whether the respondent had responded to a case with or without training. I then aggregated and averaged their scores, which ranged from an average performance improvement of 24% to 43%.

Table 6: Coding Responses– Description and Examples

In the participant's response, was there....	Description	Example of Yes (=1)
Discussion of positions and underlying interests?	Considering the motivations of the protagonist (e.g., non-monetary gains, such as work experience; both long-term and short-term goals) and the negotiating counterpart	“She really cares about getting work experience, so prioritize building good relationships over getting a raise in the summer”
Discussion of alternatives to agreement or zone of possible agreement (ZOPA)?	Considering what other options the protagonist and her negotiating counterpart have; trying to shape the counterpart's perception of her alternatives	“Tell her manager that she has another job offer” “Ask your employer if there are other candidates for the position”
Discussion about understanding what the protagonist is negotiating for?	How is what she negotiating for related to existing standards (e.g., typical, special exception, innovative change)?	“Look up the market rate of salaries for the position in that geographic area”
Discussion of sources of ambiguity?	Seeking knowledge or clarity about negotiating counterpart, how to negotiate, or what is negotiable; attempting to reduce that ambiguity	“Research the company's public financial statements to understand whether a raise is feasible”
Discussion of enhancing the negotiation through relationships?	Seeking information, advice, support, or advocacy from others	“Talk to the prior intern about her salary”
Discussion of how to find mutually beneficial solutions?	Considering others' perspectives, particularly how they will recognize negotiation attempts as legitimate and in their interest	“Explain how your skills relate the job description”

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