



Episode 24: "Behavioural Insights Careers and Community"

with Maja Niksic, Program Manager of Harvard's Behavioral Insights Group, and Jaclyn Lefkowitz, Co-President of Harvard's Behavioral Insights Student Group

Maja Niksic and Jaclyn Lefkowitz are our first duo interview! Maja's perspective as program director of Harvard's Behavioral Insights Group and Jackie's perspective as co-president of Harvard's Behavioral Insights Student Group combine perfectly for our discussion about careers and community. Maja and Jackie discuss different BI career pathways as well as resources and advice for the journey. They also share how valuable it has been to develop and participate in a BI community to learn with and from, especially when we're all learning and working virtually.

Transcript:

KIRSTIN APPELT, HOST: Welcome to this edition of Calling DIBS. I'm your host, Kirstin Appelt, Research Director with UBC Decision Insights for Business and Society, or DIBS for short. Today, we're calling DIBS on Maja Niksic and Jaclyn Lefkowitz.

Maja is the Program Director for the other BIG, Behavioural Insights Group at Harvard Kennedy School. Not to be confused with our local BC Behavioural Insights Group, within the BC government. And Jackie is a graduating Master of Public Policy student at the Harvard Kennedy School, Co-President of the Behavioral Insight Student Group and a former Associate at ideas42, one of the leading Behavioural Insights, non-profit consulting firms.

I met Maja through joint work on professionalizing the practice of applied behavioural science, and I was immediately in love with her insightful perspective and the calm approach she brought to the table. So I really wanted the chance to learn more and meet more of her team. So I'm really thrilled to have the chance to talk with both Maja and Jackie today. So welcome to the podcast, Maja and Jackie.

MAJA NIKSIC, GUEST: Thank you. Thank you for having us, Kirstin.

JACLYN LEFKOWITZ, GUEST: Excited to be here.

APPELT: And I'll just have each of you start by telling us a little bit about yourself. So, Maja, let's start with you.

NIKSIC: Sure. Thank you. Thank you again for having us. As you mentioned, my name is Maja Niksic, and I am the Program Director of the Behavioral Insights Group. In my previous life, I worked at Goldman Sachs in New York for about six years, and before that I was studying chemical engineering. So as you can tell, I had an interesting career path leading into behavioural insights. And I think you got us thinking about, "Well, what about your interest in behavioural science and when that began".

For me, it was nearly a decade ago. I was religiously going to this Woman of Wall Street conference that was annually hosted by Deutsche Bank. And in 2012, the theme of the conference was making your impact and advancing the economic power of women. And one of the women that was on the panel was Professor Iris

Bohney, our Academic Dean. So I think this is the time when my love for behavioural science and behavioural insights began, and that sort of let me through, not so straightforward journey, to Harvard Kennedy School and to this role, but delighted to be here and delighted to have an opportunity to talk to you and your students. And with that, I'll pass it on to Jackie.

LEFKOWITZ: Great. Thank you, Maja. So as you mentioned, I'm Jackie Lefkowitz. I am a current Master of Public Policy student at Harvard Kennedy School, Co-President of the Behavioral Insight Student Group. And my focus is how we can apply behavioural insights to design better policies, programs, products for social good. So I've been working in this field for about seven years now on projects related to both consumer finance and health care in the US and abroad.

And I'd say my interest in this field started back in high school. I actually took a class on psychology and just was immediately captivated. I knew it was what I wanted to go into. So I studied psychology. And in college, I was more focused on consumer behaviour and marketing. I think at that point, applying behavioural science to public policy wasn't as common of a field and I really fell upon ideas42. They came to recruit on campus, really loved the mission. And that's when I learned about all the other ways that you can apply behavioural insights. So I joined them right after graduating, stayed for five years, and then made my way to the Harvard Kennedy School.

APPELT: I love that your two experiences are so different in the past, but now you've ended up in a very similar place. And that's one of the things I really love about behavioural insights, is seeing everyone's journey and how we all bring our own perspectives to the table. So as we've already mentioned in our little neck of the woods here in the Pacific Northwest, BIG is synonymous with BC BIG. But Harvard's BIG was the original and first behavioural insights group and is still a major leader in the field that we all look to. So Maja as Program Director, can you tell us more about BIG?

NIKSIC: Sure, I will be delighted to. So in 2013, BIG was founded by Iris Bohnet, who I already mentioned, And Max Bazerman, both faculty at the Harvard Kennedy School and Harvard Business School. Today, the Faculty Director of the Behavioral Insights Group is Professor Todd Rogers and BIG brings together Harvard's outstanding group of decision research scholars, behavioural economists and other behavioural scientists who are focusing on their energies on how decisions are being made both by leaders and individuals.

We are driven by the belief that improving the quality of our leaders' decisions is one of the core levers we possess to improve the world. And that can obviously have an array of changes and it can influence improving education systems, health, reducing discrimination, protecting the environment, etc. And Jackie could tell you a little bit more about Behavioral Insights Student Group of which she is a Co-President.

So in addition to faculty, we have around 52 faculty members and counting across the entire university. And we'll talk about that a little bit more later, Harvard is deeply decentralized. But here at the Kennedy School at BIG, we're trying to foster that sense of community. So we have Behavioral Insights Student Group. We also have a significant number of alumni who are part of our group. So as well as a significant number of governments and other nonprofit and private organizations that are using behavioural science and applying it for public good, and we host a variety of different programming throughout the year. And with that, I'll pass it on to Jackie to tell us a little bit more from the student perspective. What does it mean to be a part of BIG?

LEFKOWITZ: Yeah. So probably as no surprise, the Behavioral Insights Student Group is the student offshoot of the Behavioral Insights Group. And speaking of that decentralization, the student organization itself lives within Harvard Kennedy School, but we have students from all different schools and programs across Harvard.

And it's really a way to pull people together, help with that knowledge sharing, with education, see who else is interested in this area and build relationships amongst those students.

So throughout the year, we put on different types of events like webinars. We have coffee chats. A lot of it is on both learning about behavioural science, careers in the space, networking, and we have a leadership team that's really been growing, I'd say, while Zoom University has had its downsides, it's let us grow in some really incredible ways. And I think we're now up to probably somewhere between 20 and 30 people on the leadership team that are really excited about this work and innovating and thinking about how we could continue to grow our footprint in this now virtual environment.

APPELT: That's really amazing to hear about the growth you've had. And, of course, being from UBC, which has its own decentralization issues, that sounds very familiar to me, our own group is also spread against a number of sub schools and divisions. And I know the art of convening those folks is no small task, so that I'm glad you're able to do that work and bring people together, whether it's students, faculty or other folks.

And one of the topics I'm most curious to hear about today is the neat work that BIG has been doing to support BI careers and helping students find careers and adjust their careers and move their careers forward. I know for our students, many of them are keen to go in deeper in BI directions, so it's a keen topic for them as well, so can you tell us a little bit about the BI Career Expo that BIG does?

NIKSIC: Sure. I can get started on that one. So I would say in the fall of 2017, my predecessors, Abby and Shabil all organized the first inaugural Behavioral Insights Career Expo. And it has evolved significantly over the last couple of years since I've been in the role. And of course, with pandemic, you know, it has transformed even more in the virtual sense. So the main idea behind Career Expo is to bring our students to all the employers that we have relationships with, and they come from public, private, governmental domains.

And our students also, as you mentioned, they come from a variety of backgrounds and also they're on different journeys within Harvard. Some are undergraduates who don't have any prior professional experience or doctoral students, on the other hand, who are studying behavioural economics. And so we're trying to put together an event that is purposeful for an entire spectrum of students who are interested in behavioural science or hearing about it for the first time, as well as the employers that we have relationship with, and who are looking to hire Harvard students.

So in addition to creating that network and that sort of connection between students and employers, there is also a piece around having a conversation about what is happening in the field, where the field is going. So every year we either have a keynote speaker or a panel. So that's another pillar of our expo, to give students a sense of what the field is about, where it's going. And also to give them an opportunity to network with a variety of the employers that have relationship with BIG.

And so, for example, this year we had a panel on the future of behavioural science, or the next decade of behavioural science. And then the second panel, we had a conversation around applied behavioural science domains and transferability of skills across domains. And this year, we brought around 30+ organizations to our virtual campus. And some of them were, you know, traditional hardcore behavioural insights organizations like BIT, like ideas42. But we also brought World Bank. We brought some new organizations like International Rescue Committee that hasn't come to any of our events before. So I would say that that's sort of the overarching mission of the expo from our perspective.

APPELT: That sounds like such an amazing event. I am impressed at the number of different groups, again, the art of convening is something that you all do so well. And it's it really provides a lot of opportunities for

learning. So I'm curious, and either one of you can take this one, where do you see opportunities for students with BI experience? Are there specific types of roles or sectors that you see being the biggest opportunities?

LEFKOWITZ: I can jump in here, so, really, I think it's something that the private sector started out with, you know, with consumer behaviour and marketing. But there are so many opportunities exploding within the nonprofit and the public sectors as well, and across all domains ranging from areas that I was in, consumer finance and health care to environment and sustainability, to criminal justice and so on. There is a ton of opportunity. And as a student that was out on the job market just a couple months ago, there is a ton of demand by employers.

And one pattern that I've been seeing is this move from perhaps concentrating in consultancy, So, again, like Behavioural Insights Team and ideas42, which have a large footprint in the field. Now, a lot of these companies and governments, nonprofits are looking to establish their own teams. They've really become interested, perhaps they've done a few consulting opportunities with these agencies and now are looking to bring people in-house. And there's a real opportunity for entrepreneurial students to pitch to these organizations why these roles are valuable and actually start up, do that more entrepreneurial route of starting up these teams within these companies and organizations.

NIKSIC: Yes, and I think that's a great point, Jackie, and will take us to our next conversation about the BIG incubator. And I would also add that from our perspective, there are students who will pursue specifically BI careers, behavioural insights careers, post-Harvard. That's why they came to Harvard to begin with, to be able to transition into that. But we also want students to leave Harvard and leave their experiences that they had at Behavioral Insights Group with just using behavioural insights as an option in their career on a project. So it doesn't necessarily have to be a complete transition, in a completely new career.

And this is the specifically why we bring variety of organizations to come and talk to us. And this year we gave them a three-minute pitch to tell us how they're using behavioural science. And it really varies based on the organization that we brought in. So there is a variety of perspectives that we're looking to bring in and variety of options for students to see how this can be applied and how those skills can transfer as they move throughout their career. So it's not a stationary thing and it's not fixed. It's very, very fluid. And we want to give students that exposure and that insight with our Expo.

APPELT: Yeah, I think that's a really important point is that, like you said, it's not a career path. There's multiple different career paths. And for some BI will be really focal. For some, it's another set of tools that they're adding to their toolkit that they'll pull out occasionally or more or less frequently depending on the role. But when we introduce students to behavioural insights or folks to behavioural insights, we often say how BI can be used in any role, then sometimes we get very focused on BI being the role. And then it's really important to remember, go back to that earlier message that BI could be used in most roles. So maybe continuing on that thread a little bit, what do you see as some of the rewards of careers that are either focused on BI or adding BI to the career?

NIKSIC: I'm going to let Jackie, our expert here, spent a solid amount of time at ideas42, take this one away.

LEFKOWITZ: Thanks, Maja. What do I find rewarding? So from the BI consultant in perspective something that I love is just watching the transformation that a partner goes through throughout the course of a project. And this is working with them to really get a better understanding of the context of their challenge, uncover the barriers, help them build solutions, teach them about experimentation and how they could use that in their organizations. And I think a lot of times we will focus on what is the outcome of that experiment? Are we

getting significant results? Are we seeing that positive impact? But really, the whole journey is quite rewarding.

And seeing the excitement and the enthusiasm and all the knowledge that the partner gets along the way is something that I really enjoy. And being able to mentor and teach these partners about these tools is it's something maybe I'm just coming in to do one particular project with them. But now, they have the tools to apply this to other challenges that they face later on, on their own. So that's something that I really love about this consulting role.

APPELT: That's great. I think that really speaks to something we've talked about off and on throughout the course and then other episodes, which is that the behavioural science community feels like one where there is really this open spirit of learning and sharing. And so folks are really eager to pay that forward and continue to share and teach others. And I think that's really one of the things that makes the field so rich, is partnering with all these groups and adding their perspectives in. And I think I find that very rewarding myself as well. So, of course, even though it's a very rewarding career path or set of career paths, there are, of course, challenges. Are there any key challenges you see to BI careers?

LEFKOWITZ: Definitely, I think following on your last point, this is research and experimenting and things you try don't always work. And setting those expectations upfront with the partner that this isn't the silver bullet. We might not get the solution right away, but it is about the journey and iterating over time. That is something that can be quite challenging and finding the right partner, the right organization that understands and has bought into that process and is willing to try different things, knowing that there is the risk that it might not work out. I'd say that is a key challenge.

In addition to the ambiguity, I think in in the behavioural science world, you'll be dropped in to a new context and have perhaps it's just days or if you're lucky, weeks or months to really delve into the context and understand what exactly is going on. What are the dynamics of this particular organization in their context? But it's definitely not straightforward. And there's a lot of work upfront even just to define the problem that you're working on and that the ability to work in an ambiguous environment is one that's quite challenging but super important for those in applied behavioural science.

APPELT: And that's even without a pandemic going on to add in other layers of ambiguity and uncertainty. I really like what you brought up about experimentation and how often with partners there's a bit of a fear of a failure, fear of experimentation. And when we do get non-significant results or things that feel like failure, it can be disheartening. But really, we have that to have that reminder of that takeaway message that that's why we experimented so we can fail small rather than failing big. If we had just rolled it out on a nationwide scale or large scale without that experiment, that would have been a much worse outcome than doing a trial and having that small failure, which is really a success, because now you know what doesn't work?

I think the students right now are doing their own data collection on capstone projects, and some of them are starting to get hints of maybe not having the results they hoped for. So I think it's a really important time for them to hear that message. So thanks for raising that. And going back to the career search part of things, are there career resources that you recommend for students, specific career advice you tend to give?

NIKSIC: I think the main message here is to get involved, especially here at Harvard. And I can say specifically for Harvard Kennedy School, there is a lot of FOMO happening. There's so much activity, whether that's when we are, you know, on the actual campus or in a virtual campus. A lot of things are happening. There's a lot of distraction and competing priorities. So I would say definitely listen to your hearts and, you know, carve out time for those interests and commit to it.

So a lot of students who have interests in behavioural science, a lot of times they decide to join Behavioural Insights Student Group. And the way we operate is very, very engaging. The students work directly with me. We set the agenda for that particular semester. We decide who we want to bring in. What important, what kind of programming we want to develop. So it's very direct experience, which is really, really unique. I would say for other students who are on campuses that there is an equivalent of BIG maybe start your own behavioural insights group or equivalent. Quite frankly, a lot of times students do reach out to us and they love our programming. So definitely get engaged, number one.

I always tell students try to arrange those office hours. I also have a lot of prospective students reaching out to me all the time. They're following our curriculum now that is mostly virtual given the pandemic. So I love talking to current students, prospective students, understanding what their interests are. A lot of times organizations are reaching out to me about potential opportunities. And, you know, if you are not engaged and if I don't have an opportunity to meet with you, if you don't come to any events, it's really hard to make that connection. But if I know what you're interested in, a lot of times, you know, something will happen the next week and I can make that connection, and that happens over and over again. So I would say those are the type of things that I encourage students to do.

In addition, you know, leverage LinkedIn, leverage being affiliated with BIG as an opportunity to reach out to a faculty member for maybe a research type of opportunity or use BIG as an opportunity to reach out to someone on LinkedIn. And I am always more than more than happy to make any warm introduction, get students introduced to any particular employer or a faculty member that is in our network. So those are all valuable resources. But number one, I think it's that mindset, the attitude of, you know, wanting to be a part of something and staying persistent and pursuing those goals and committing to them. This is a huge one for me.

APPELT: Sounds like we need to hire a Maja. Jackie, do you have any thoughts to add there?

LEFKOWITZ: Yes. So it sounds like your students are doing this capstone project, and for me, something that is extremely valuable is to get out in the field, particularly when you're still a student. And in that relatively safe environment, and actually test out and practice applying some of those insights. I think something that was a shock for me, even though I had studied psychology upon graduating and I go into ideas42 and having a partner come to me with this really high level policy challenge. And I just was responsible for running with it and figuring out how to apply the insights in a concrete way. That was a steep learning curve.

And being a student is a great time to take on a field project on a pro bono basis and really get that practice in applying the tools in the real world. I'd say that is something that is super important and adds to your personal portfolio as you get ready to graduate and think about whether you're just applying the tools in perhaps, not necessarily a behavioural scientist role, that you're just bringing it in. Or if you're going into specifically a behavioural science role, getting that getting that project experience will be valuable either way.

APPELT: Yeah, I think that's a really good point, because I think one thing that's different with behavioural insights compared to some other fields is that so much of it is based on skills and skills you can't just get from the book, is that repeated practice with them and practice not just in a lab setting, but with real partners and real world data, real world partners. And so I think that's a great, great piece of advice. And so maybe that real world connection is a great way to try to segway into the other big piece that we wanted to hear. I guess BIG in multiple meanings there. So in addition to the more career specific work, BIG also has this incubator program. And I'd love to hear about that program and how that works.

LEFKOWITZ: Yes. So, the BIG mentoring program, say we started to come up with this idea last year, we had noticed that there was a gap in the education and programming and events that we had where there were many opportunities to learn about the behavioural science principles and what the different barriers and biases were, what different solutions were. And a lot of students were coming out of those classes really wanting to bring this back to their organizations and not knowing the entrepreneurial skills. "How do I actually bring this back? How do I get the buy in that's necessary. Convene the right stakeholders. Who do I need on my team to do this work? What does it actually look like to bring this back to an organization? What's the business plan that I'm going to set forth?". So that was the need that we saw that we wanted to fill through BIG mentoring.

And we launched in August of 2020. We did a pilot in the fall semester, put it together quite quickly. And the idea is we are catering to Harvard students and alumni that are interested in building behavioural design teams, teams loosely speaking, it could be a team of one, one person applying these tools, but people that wanted to start these within social enterprise, nonprofits or their governments for public good. That was one thing that we wanted in our applicants, people that really wanted to make a social impact with these tools. And we had a really overwhelming response. And in applications received over 30 and accepted 10 into the program. Because of the demand, we actually wound up creating a second cohort of students as well just to connect them so that they felt like they had a community and a network. And I think that's a learning that we'll take forth next year.

But for those in the mentorship program, we paired them with faculty mentors that they met with about once a month. They could use that mentor to get expert advice, perhaps on a particular project, or maybe it's more on the business strategy of the team they were setting up. And we set up webinars and small group discussions with practitioners that either had started teams on their own or were working in teams. And that was less of teaching about behavioural science, more of the 'how I built this' component of the behavioural science teams. And the last really important element of the program consisted of cohort meetings.

So we gathered these entrepreneurs really to meet, again about once a month just to discuss their progress. What were the challenges that they were experiencing? Maybe they had issues getting buy in or perhaps wanted advice on a pilot project that they were running. And that was something that we found the participants really loved, because this can be a very isolating role. If you are the only one in an organization that's trying to really spearhead this work, and it could feel like you're quite alone, and maybe that there's no one else that's working on this, like you're swimming upstream. And to have this group of other people that are facing similar challenges, they really valued.

APPELT: That sounds really amazing, and it's similar to what we're hearing from our capstone students or the certificate students working on their capstones is when you start getting in on a project, you get a bit siloed and having a chance to come back together and share the successes and challenges is hugely valuable. Maja, did you have any thoughts to add there?

NIKSIC: Yeah, that was something that was really, really surprising to us when we were listening to some of our alumni before we launched the program, because this has been in the works for a little while and we couldn't quite get it right initially. But I had a lot of people come to my office and sort of this expressed a sense of isolation and a little bit of sort of fear around "How do I go about this, you know, about to, you know, go back to Chile. And I'm supposed to be running this newly started nudge unit, and I am freaking out. Help me.". And a lot of times, you know, students are leaving Harvard, all of their access is going to be revoked, and there's that sense of panic. And so we really wanted to create a space to, like, reconnect and have an ongoing dialogue.

Both Jackie and I are hoping and we'll talk about that little bit later, you know, how much we want this to continue. We just finished the pilot, but we recently talked to Todd is also running his executive program once or twice a year. And we joined them for lunch and had an overwhelming number of people in the breakout room listening about the incubator. And they were all wanting to sign up and be a part of this. So we're creating that sense of community and the sense of holding for people who are facing extreme amount of pressure, extreme amount of complexity. And we're seeing that especially in the COVID era. So how are we able to be a resource and add value to our students? A lot of our students are amazing.

And Jackie, we'll talk about her project here in a second, you know, she was also part of the incubator, she was running it with me, but she was also a participant as well. But it's a tremendous opportunity to allow us to create, again, I'm talking about access as well, for someone to say, "Hey, I'm a part of this BIG mentoring program, my faculty advisor is Cass Sunstein, are you able to have a conversation with me about X, Y, Z?". It really allows them to pace the work, allows them to get access into the rooms that maybe would have been hard to do if they weren't sort of having that connection with us. So we were really, really amazed with the impact that we had in such a short period of time.

LEFKOWITZ: One more thing also that's come into mind on the benefit of the program, that was a bit unexpected, people saw it as a great commitment device. I think the strategy of starting these teams often is to do a proof of concept project, and which we could have a whole conversation just on that, the pressure to produce positive results and have the success of your team hinging on that experiment, is a tough challenge. People spoke about how it was difficult to pull yourself out of that state of tunneling on the pilot project and think more long term again about the business strategy and the plan for this team. And this incubator program was that commitment device that they needed to take a step back, think high level and do some of that stakeholder analysis of "Who do I need to talk to in the organization to make sure that I can build a sustainable and impactful team? What are the resources that I need to get?". So that was another benefit that that came out from the participants.

And to talk a bit about my experience then, a perfect example of user testing, being a participant and in the pilot program. And I had partnered with a local hospital in the area that's part of the Mass General Brigham System, formerly Partners system. And this is a good example as Maja mentioned, a lot of organizations would reach out to her directly as the program director for BIG saying, hey, we have a project, could we get some support from student or faculty on it? So this particular hospital happened to reach out.

And they had two different goals. One was a proof of concept project related to end of life care. And they had rolled out this really amazing program to help their providers have serious, honest conversations with patients that were appropriate, yet these are obviously really difficult conversations to have. And they weren't seeing a lot of movement in terms of providers documenting these conversations in the electronic health records. So that was the project that they wanted to start with. And more broadly speaking, they had an internal champion that really wanted to look into starting a behavioural design team internally within the hospital. So it was a really exciting project to get involved in and one that is still actively going. We should be launching our pilot in about a month. And it's gotten a lot of traction, system wide throughout Mass General Brigham, and they're now actively having discussions about "What does the future of this informal behavioural design team look like? How can we formalize it? Where is it going to live within the organization?". So the wheels are definitely turning and really positive progress throughout the course of the incubator.

APPELT: That's such a great example. And I think so many of the things you brought up there have been kind of bouncing around in our heads, too. So maybe we can continue to learn from BIG as one of the leaders in the space and borrow some of your ideas. I'm noticing that we are getting a bit short on time and we've already touched on community a lot. But I thought I'd ask, are there any pieces of what you see as valuable about the

BI community and the future directions for the BI community that you hope it takes that we haven't yet hit on?

LEFKOWITZ: Maja do you want to jump in first?

NIKSIC: Go ahead, Jackie.

LEFKOWITZ: One thing that was pretty enlightening for Behavioural Insights Student Group this year, particularly given it, it was such a different year being virtual. I think we saw the potential of where we could bring the group in and branching out, particularly with the career expo. We market it through the newsletter, which isn't exclusively a Harvard audience. So the word was really getting out about this expo and other students from all different universities, all different programs we're reaching out and asking if they could attend. And that is something that we hadn't necessarily foreseen. But in this new environment is a new possibility. And it's something that we can continue to think about. How do we open our doors, bring in those other students and foster community that way? Whereas before that wasn't really possible, or at least we had been thinking at that scale.

NIKSIC: Yeah, yeah, definitely. I think this year shifted so much for us. And as Jackie mentioned, in the past, we have a lot of organizations reaching out to us, you know, wanting us to be their alchemist, and solve all the world's problems. That happens, you know, at least once a week. But and also organizations and individuals were reaching out to us before asking us could you live-stream your event, like we want to be a part of your external community, extended community, rather. And it was a bit of a technical challenge for us. And then when we have gone virtual last year, when the pandemic started, we were able to really get a sense of what that broader behavioural insights community feels like. And we were able to open our doors in ways we have never been able to do before.

And, you know, we are sitting on a couple of missions. You know, we want to be able to bridge the gap between research and applied behavioural science. We want to be able to create and build more capacity for alumni if they're looking to work and incubate some of these nudge units in their governments or organizations. We're also focused on having this sense of like global partnership and engagement because, you know, there's so much going on right now. Democracies are struggling to reduce the influence of misinformation. There is polarization. People are also feeling isolated. And there's a lot of uncertainty and stress happening in this environment. So, you know, we definitely see behavioural insights as the tool for leaders, for people to improve the world, and especially in these unprecedented times and that sense of community and that sense of access to BIG is really, really important. So we will continue on this mission on bridging the impacts of worlds of practice and inspire students, alumni, broader community to use behavioral insights for a powerful collective change for the better. That is our hope when it comes to that sense of community.

APPELT: Yeah. That's such a powerful message. I really love that. And, you know, we've had some of our own experiences with some silver linings of the pandemic being, like you said, that ability to expand access. But I really like that hopeful twist you put on at the end of behavioural insights being part of some of the solutions and ways to make positive change coming out of the pandemic. So I'll just ask one final question, which is if you have a message, a final message for our BI practitioners in training, and I'll pass it over to you first, Maja.

NIKSIC: As I said on the note of community, reach out to me any time, hopefully, as a part of this podcast, you'll also have a way of contacting us, reaching out to us. Follow us on Twitter. Our handle is HarvardBIG. And good luck with all of your endeavors. And, you know, we're here and we want to continue to build and foster this community in the future. Thank you so much for having us today, Kirstin.

APPELT: Thank you. Over to you, Jackie, for a last message.

LEFKOWITZ: Sure. I'd say one message, particularly for those who are about to enter this field. It can be intimidating, but something that was empowering for me was accepting that you're not always going to know the solutions upfront. But you now have the tools and a framework for thinking about how to break down really complex challenges, whether it's public or private sector or nonprofits. And trust that process. Be patient with it. Go through it. It's going to take some time. Eventually you'll wind up at some solutions. It might not be your first test, but you will get there. And again, there could be power when you are the one that's sitting at the table and saying. I don't know the answers right now, but I trust that I can ask the right questions to help get us there.

APPELT: I love that and again I think that's just very well timed to where the students are in the process right now. So I think that's a perfect message to close. And just from my perspective, it's been so fun and interesting to chat with you both about BI careers and community, which are two subjects very near and dear to my own heart. So I think our listeners are really going to enjoy this and hopefully be inspired to continue to develop their own BI careers and further engage with both of you and the larger BI community. So thank you, Jackie, and thank you, Maja. And thanks to our listeners for joining us for another episode of Calling DIBS.
