Power of the peer:
Constructive responding to
unprofessional, difficult or hostile
behavior

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What brought you here?
What do you want to walk away
with from this session?

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Agenda

- Importance of bystanders
- Peer power
- Basic model
- Working the model
- Consulting for action

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Importance of bystanders

- Much problematic behavior occurs in the presence of others
  - "Everyone is a bystander" (nsvrc.org)
- Presence changes an interaction
  - Opportunity and power to influence
    - We can't **not** influence
    - "doing nothing" is an action and has influence

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Importance of bystanders

- Norms/ways of engaging are relationally developed & supported; co-created
  - Reinforce them with each other
- Social beings so what others think matters
- Intentional, thoughtful leveraging of presence & relationship
- Presumes constructive intention

(Lutgen-Sandvik & Fletcher, 2013; Paull et al,2012)

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Power of the Workplace Peer

- Relationship with colleagues/coworkers critical element in work env't
- Faculty and staff behavior and responses influence the institution's climate and culture
  - Responses to norm violation communicate what the norms are here
- Colleagues/coworkers are around more so than administrators/managers.
- Self-regulating profession – resistant to institutional regulation
  - Suasion vs coercion; collaborative vs regulatory
- Centrality of peer review

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Why peer action?

- Most focus on the target and actor – get stuck.
- Attention at level of policy and procedures - filtering down? How developed?
- "Management/administrative" response limited
  - Egregious/severe conduct – "line clearly crossed"; academic freedom and the institution
  - "Dancing along the line"
  - When behavior not "public"?
  - Motivating witnesses

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Why peer action?

- De-escalate situations early on – "not-yet-bullied" – colleagues are around more!
- Work env't as cooperative and civil – Collegiality?
- Community response - "Everybody's problem"; ownership and responsibility for env't is ours.
- Often seen as more credible than target
- Because it harms you, too!

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The task then is…

Embrace that we have influence and opportunity

Leverage this influence – our degrees of freedom

Act with *Intentionality* rather than incidentally

With *Consideration* of goals and consequences of involvement and specific actions

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Think of a time when you:

1. helped
2. did not help
What were the influences on your decision?

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Influences on taking action

- Ambiguity of situation/behavior
- Norm violation
- Visibility and severity of impact
- Resources to respond (target, witness)
- (Lack of) perceived legitimacy to act
- Identification or connection to others, institution
- Costs of responding – retaliation?
- Limited time/opportunity
- Did not want to embarrass self or others
- History of tolerance and code of silence
- Others/organization back me up? - policies

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Bystander Decision-making Model

1. **Notice**: Is this negative behavior?
   - "seeing" the behaviors - normalizing
2. **Assess**: Is this an "emergency"? Does it require action?
   - Impact and risk of harm?
   - Progression/escalation possible? Continuum
3. **Responsibility**: My responsibility to address?
   - Obligation?
   - Opportunity?
4. **Choose action (s)**: How should I engage or address?
   - Focus of action
   - Goal(s) for and consequences of action
   - Risks & benefits to other and to self
5. **Taking the action:** How to do it?
   - Skills & scripts
   - Confidence/efficacy

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Latane & Darley (1970)

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Notice & Assess
Step 1 & 2

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A scenario

- What are the behaviors that you see as problematic? Why?
- What are the behaviors that you do not see as problematic? Why?
- Irritating? Abrasive? Uncivil? Bullying?
- How might you respond?

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A scenario

- Faculty behavior

http://www.difficultdialoguesuaa.org/toxicfriday/thevideo

- Staff behavior

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BpDD49EJfYA&index=1&list=PLnJrCcfEygax9z6Nk1BEEOvC1kpNKdXU7

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Notice & Assess

- Challenge: Normalized – way things are; don't see
- Response: make it "noticeable"
  - Explicit articulation of norms
  - Value of being curious or mindful
  - Educating about what are problematic behaviors
    - Communication of (de)value (Dutton et al, 2012)
    - Good, bad, ugly and challenging
  - Educating about impact (harm) and progression
    - Cumulative effect of "minor" incidents
    - Power of exclusion and stigma

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Notice & Assess

- Challenge: What is a "problem" is contextually defined
- Response
  - Mission, policies, professional codes, laws
  - Academic culture.
  - Deontic justice – how people should be treated
  - Discussions with organizational members
    - Those who receive the grievances
    - Opportunity to change the norms

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Notice & Assess

- Challenge: Ambiguous social behavior
- Response:
  - Implications of "acting differently" – Good Questions!
    - **Would** outcome have been different? – Negative impact
    - **Could** the actor have behaved differently? Intent
    - **Should** the actor have behaved differently? – Norm violation

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Applying to scenario

- Consider impact, intent, and norm violation in assessing the situation
- Decision: problematic behavior? Does it require action?

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What looking at….

- High risk behavior for harm
- Low risk behaviors that if unaddressed may progress

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Academic culture: How others see it
(Fratzl & McKay 2013)

"Academics, however, given their **independence, individualized pursuits of research and teaching, and academic freedom**, are likely **more direct and confrontational** than professional staff..

….their **subculture, which encourages critique and debate**, can lead to a **higher frequency of accepted confrontation and at times individualized aggression**….

Academics assume they are fundamental to the organization's purpose, which feeds **their sense of importance and the demands they make of professional staff**.

In the "academic star" category, the highly accomplished academics, the stakes and self-importance are even greater…. They see themselves **as important and deserving of admiration**."

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Norms across roles

- Critique expected in academic engagement…may be experienced as unnecessary and distressing in interactions with others.
- Different modes of interacting for each group, e.g., academics, staff, students – staff work in cooperative and supportive roles; faculty in independent roles and use to critique and influence (Fratzl & McKay, 2013)
- Matching behaviors to relational context…norms of what is acceptable.

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Decide: My responsibility
Step 3

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More likely view as responsibility when…

- Victim resources – can they address it themselves?
  - Pre-existing relationship of the dyad – justification for behavior?
- Presence of others can be inhibitory except:
  - Action requires help of others
  - Only you can do what is needed.
- Identify with others or with org'n
- Connected/attached – friendship, group member
- Empathy and perspective taking
- Self-Interest – Just World Hypothesis
- **Normative obligation**
  - "We look out for each other"
  - Deontic Justice – moral responsibility

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Collective responsibility: Norms and actions

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Implications of failure to act
Skarlicki & Kulik (2004)

- Question own morality
  - Post decision justification – cognitively and behaviorally
- Relationship with target
- Future behavior affected
  - Habituation and desensitization lead to increased tolerance
  - Spillover effects to others in the social network
  - Development of an org'l climate that tolerates mistreatment – self-perpetuating

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Decide: What options(s)?
Step 4

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Scenario : What could bystanders do?

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Choosing action

• Goals – what want to have happen

• Focus – on whom and on what

• Opportunity for action - visibility, timing

• Risks and benefits

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Goals for action: What want to have happen?

• Name/identify inappropriate behavior so not ignored or glossed over
• Uphold a community norm/value; make clear not support this behavior here
• Communicate that behavior is unacceptable without embarrassing the offending person, save face
• Phrase concern/give feedback in a way that offending person able to hear it without being defensive
• Create an opening for discussion
• Protect someone from being hurt/offended or prevent further injury

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Goals for action: what want to have happen?

• Protect someone else from causing harm – something they may regret!
• Tension between people may be due to miscommunication and open dialogue may eliminate the misunderstanding
• Surface a concern that has been festering to prevent escalation into conflict or violence
• Enable an upset person to take a rational view of the situation
• Get help from someone better placed to intervene/not have skill or capacity to handle.
• Make those responsible for the unit know what is going on

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY Rowe (2014); White & Malkowski (2013)

Possibilities for action

Two decisions need to make:

1. Level of involvement - willingness to take action; how much involve self publicly
   • High - put self into episode
   • Low – involve but outside public eye
   • No involvement
2. Immediacy - in current situation or later
   • High - interrupt specific incident
   • Low - efforts to prevent future incidents

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY Bowes-Sperry & O'Leary-Kelly (2005)

Choices in responding
Involvement

	Hi Immed-Low Involvement	High Immed-High Involvement
Immediacy	• Redirect/distract actor from situation • Remove target from situation • Interrupt the incident • Change the topic/focus • Ask clarifying questions • Affirm the target – counter image • Use body language to show disapproval, e.g., silent stare • Process observation	• Tell actor to stop conduct • Name or acknowledge offense or issue • Publicly encourage target to report conduct • Get others to publicly denounce conduct • Offer another interpretation • Reinforce group norms
	Low Immed-Low Involvement	**Low Immed-High Involvement**
	• Talk to target about experience • Privately advise target to avoid actor • Covertly keep actor away from target • Advise target to report incident • Refuse to share gossip/rumor • Talk with others re how to respond	• Report actor formally – admin, supervisor • Accompany target when reports • Coach target in responding • Confront actor after incident • Work to develop/implement policies • Build the business case • Gather more information

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Adapted from Bowes-Sperry & O'Leary-Kelly 2005

Let's apply in some situations

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Specific situations

- Apply the 2X2 model to a specific situation from the list

- Generate as many different actions as you can for each one

- Identify the goals or desired outcomes that that each action is meant to address

- Which one(s) would you choose and why?

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An example

A coworker makes a joke involving an offensive stereotype during a meeting.

- In the moment
  - Ask a clarifying question
    - "What do you mean by that?"
  - Name or acknowledge an offense
    - "That's harsh/rude/offensive"
  - Use body language to show disapproval
    - Frown, clear throat, wide-eyed surprised look; get up and leave
- After
  - Talk privately to actor
    - "Look, I know you well enough to know you don't mean it, but someone could take offense or feel hurt".
  - Report the actor

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Considerations in choosing action

- Power of presence and subtle action
  - Power of "small things"
- Immediacy – prior preparation important
  - Sense of inappropriateness/unacceptability of behavior
  - Pattern of behavior so scripted a response for next time
- Involvement – cost and benefits

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Considerations in choosing action

- Specific incident vs pattern
  - Different goals and thus, focus of action
  - Likelihood of recurrence
- Acting on behalf of whom? – self or other
- Power of relationships – gives context/legitimacy for action
- Position power and access to resources
- Group responding
  - Limits on ostracism/shunning

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Considerations in choosing action

- Handy reminders, e.g., 4 Ds
  - Direct (step in to stop behavior
  - Distract (target or actor)
  - Delegate (get someone else)
  - Delay (check in, support the other)
  - 5th D - Document (record as happens)
- Mini-scripts & Backpocket phrases
- Multiple actions may be required

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Take action
Step 4

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Taking action: Some relevant communication skills

To effect these responses, need skill in interpersonal communication:

- Listening - gather information; help others "calm down"
- Assertion - respectfully & clearly state what are unacceptable and acceptable behaviors
- Problem-solving - identify the issues and work to solve them.

Bolton (1986).

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Assertion

Respectfully expressing your thoughts and feelings to another with the purpose of influencing the behavior of that person.

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Constructive feedback

1. Concrete specific description of the behavior

"When you _____"

2. Appropriate, accurate disclosure of your feelings about the person's behavior.

"I feel _____"

3. Description of the concrete and tangible effect of the person's behavior on you.

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" Because _____"

The really challenging one!

Talking to the actor:
Getting ready to talk

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Talking to the actor

- Prepare what you want to say:
- Opening: I wanted to talk with you about what happened the other day (own words)
- Assertion:
  - When you……..
  - I feel……
  - Because…..
  - I would like ……

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Taking it down a thousand….
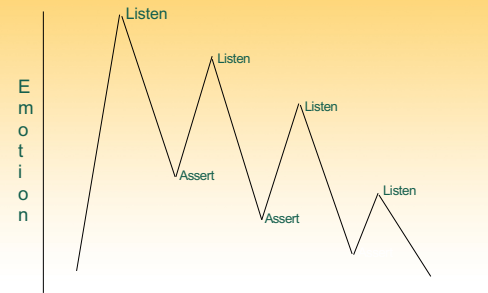
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Some steps

- Arrange a time and space
- Sufficient time for discussion
- Minimal interruptions
- Be prepared to listen
- Other may become defensive
- You need to understand his/her perspective
- Share your perspective
- Creates space for you
- Summarize and make plan for change

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Now let's try it on!

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Model to Guide Graduated Interventions

Adapted from Hickson GB, Pichert JW, Webb LE, Gabbe SG, Acad Med, Nov, 2007

Mandated Reviews

No Δ — Level 3 "Disciplinary" Intervention

Pattern persists — Level 2 "Guided" Intervention by Authority

Apparent pattern — Level 1 "Awareness" Intervention

Single "unprofessional" incidents (merit?) — "Informal" Cup of Coffee Intervention

Egregious

Mandated

Vast majority of professionals - no issues - provide feedback on progress

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Guide to graduated intervention
(see Vanderbilt CPPA Toolkit Sept 2013)

Single unprofessional incident → Informal "cup of coffee conversation" (collegial)

- raise the issues/incident
- actor's experience/explanation is sought
- highlighting the cost of the incident to those involved
- request discussion of different ways of responding and future action

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Guide to graduated intervention
(see Vanderbilt CPPA Toolkit Sept 2013)

❖ **Espresso conversation:** involve a respected higher up
Apparent pattern → Level 1 – "Awareness" intervention – more formal discussion with higher up
- note the pattern
- the costs
- the behavior must change – specific outcomes required;

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Guide to graduated intervention

Pattern persists → Level 2 – "Guided" intervention by authority

- Review prior interventions/discussions
- Note persistence and unacceptability of behavior
- Consequences for not changing – what would be the discipline?

No change → Level 3 – "Disciplinary" intervention

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Particular challenges in responding

- Longstanding situation – everyone is behaving badly; damage done
- Actor is a "star" – high performing instigator (Williams, 2013)
- When target plays a role
- Whistleblowing & Speaking Truth to Power
- Role of motivation and intent
- Managing retaliation

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A word on proactive prevention

- Primary (prevention)
  - Altering circumstances
  - Changing attitudes supportive of undesired actions – clarifying "firm management"
  - Institutional and dept'l environment procedures and practices
    - Communication protocol (Hoover, 2003)
  - Building strong relationships a priori

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Developing shared norms: Communication Protocol

- Provides a set of agreed upon procedures **that a department, team or unit creates** to promote productive outcomes to conflicts or complaints that arise between and among members of the group
  - Promotes informal problem-solving between people; not close doors to usual University resources and policies
  - May include guidelines for decision-making, based on the culture and norms of the department or unit

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Communication Protocol: Prompts

- If you have a concern or complaint that you would like to address with another member of your group, what will you agree to do?
- If you are the receiver of a complaint, what will you agree to do?
- If both parties make a good faith effort to resolve the problem but are unable to do so, what are the options?
- If one party initiates a conversation with a colleague about an issue with a third person in the department, what should the person approached do? What should they not do?

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Questions we should all ask…

- Am I aware of how I come across to my colleagues, students, staff and administrators?
- Do I ask for feedback on the way I behave?
- Do I pay attention to my own emotions while at work?
- Is my body language in tune with what I am saying?
- Do I join in when jokes are made at someone else's expense?

Rayner, Hoel, & Cooper (2001)

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Institutional level: Understanding own profile

- Describing climate and culture; **truly joint effort** (WHO 2010)
  - Mission and core values
  - Data driven; data collection
    - Surveys; focus groups; case studies
    - Relevant unit annual reports
    - Policies and practices reviews
- Sharing and discussing information with university members
  - What it means to them; making sense of the data
  - Multiple opportunities for input, discussion, and influence
  - Modeling the collaborative and inclusive climate you want

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Institutional level: Understanding own profile

- Identifying key areas of focus & action teams
  - Develop actions, implement, assess
  - Regular and accessible updates for campus
  - **Visible and meaningful action**

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Example: Data-driven and climate focused

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Example: Leadership and campus-wide effort

Human Resources

Policy: One answer among many

- Stop academic harassment/ bullying
- Repair/restore parties involved
- Protect academic freedom
- Preserve highest standards of teaching and scholarship
- Advance the mission of institution of higher learning
- Interface with other policies such as sexual harassment, racial discrimination, workplace violence, codes of conduct
- Challenges – awareness, reporting, and retaliation.

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Some examples of policies

- University of South Carolina, Columbia and regional campuses: Workplace bullying policy: http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/acaf180.pdf
- University of Wisconsin, Madison: Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policy: Faculty, Academic Staff, Staff Congress policies and HR website: https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/principles-and-policies/
- University of New Mexico: Respectful Campus Policy: http://policy.unm.edu/university-policies/2000/2240.html

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Institutional level

- Addressing structural influences
  - Role state stressors – overload, ambiguity, conflict
  - Reward structure; acknowledgement more broadly
  - Clarify procedures and indicators (subjective performance measures)
  - Mentoring and support resources

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Institutional level

- Education programming
  - About policy, procedures and responsibilities and relevant resources & offices
  - Dynamics of power
  - Acceptable and unacceptable behavior and why?
  - How respond to unacceptable behaviors; fostering and affirming exemplary behavior
  - Skill building – critique & argumentation, resilience, conflict management, stress management
 - Power of the peer – "see something, say something"

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Example:
Prevention through skill-building

Setting Expectations and
Resolving Conflict

Setting Expectations and Resolving Conflicts Between Faculty and Graduate Students

Program development and implementation are supported in part by grants from: The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (1997-1999) and the U.S. Department of Education's Find for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE) (1997-2000)
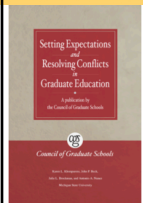
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Allons-y!

- 10th Doctor Who

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