Conflict Management for Post Docs

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GROUNDRULES

• Authentic and strategic communication

• Responsible use of information after workshop
Sources of Conflict

- Scientific disagreement
- Bullying
- Workflow
- Competition for resources
- Misinformation
- Power imbalances
- Role/authority confusion
- Personality differences
- Inconsistency
- Inequities
- Negative emotion contagion
- Poor communication
- Assumptions about intentions
Price of Unresolved Destructive Conflict

• Decreased productivity
• Poor morale
• Wasted time and resources
• Dysfunctional relationships with colleagues
• Compromised research
• Reduced opportunities for teamwork, learning, synergy, change
• Stifling rules and regulations
• Career stagnation
Principles of Conflict Management

• Analyze the situation
• Understand your role
• Understand your legitimate and extraneous self interest
• Reframing
• Limit setting
• Seeking help when you need it
Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In

• Don’t bargain over positions
• Separate the people from the problem
• Focus on interests, not positions
• Invent options for mutual gain
• Insist on using objective criteria

By Roger Fisher and William Ury, 1991
Opening Dialog with a Problem Person

• Identify the difficult person(s)’s behavior
• What functions are being interrupted?
• What relationships are being damaged?
• Plan and practice your approach
• Choose the appropriate time and place
• Follow up with person if appropriate
• Determine what you can improve
• Accept feedback about yourself
About to scream?       Feeling stuck?
The Steamroller

• Bullies
• Quick to anger
• Intimidating
• Extremely judgmental
• Must maintain control
• Rigid
• Loud
The Backstabber

• Gossips and spreads rumors
• Takes credit for other’s work
• Blames others for everything
• Builds allies, then gangs up on others
• Identifies others’ limitations, uses it to their advantage
The Know-It-All

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- “Always right”
- Makes up details
- Arrogant and aggressive
- Condescending
- Refuses to consider others’ point of view

“‘I’m a know-it-all? Well, tell me something I don’t know!’”
The Zipper Lip

• Tight lipped (clams up)
• Won’t share ideas
• Gives one word answers
• Has limited eye contact
• No facial expressions
• Avoids involvement
The Naysayer and Faultfinder

- Drains others’ energy
- Complains about everything
- Specializes in problems, not solutions
- Craves negative attention
Why People Engage in Difficult Behaviors

1. Engrained patterns developed in childhood
2. Personal problems at home
3. Poor self-esteem
4. Repressed anger over past injustices
5. Feeling that no one likes them
Why People Engage in Difficult Behaviors, *cont.*

6. Unfair criticisms from teachers, supervisors
7. Lack of respect from peers
8. Resistance to change
9. Topics they feel unable to discuss directly
10. Job and resources do not meet expectations
## Focus on Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personality as Problem</th>
<th>Behavior as Problem</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Permission to dismiss them</td>
<td>• Possible for us to become more skillful in our responses</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Absolves us of any responsibility</td>
<td>• We stop rewarding behaviors we see as problematic</td>
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<td>• Rationalization for doing nothing</td>
<td>• We can ACT rather than REACT</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Keeps us in conflict</td>
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Where to Go

**Human Resources**
- Mark Bowman  x0634  DMS

**Office of Visa & Immigration Services**
- Robin Catmur  x3474  Acting Director

**International Office**
- Liz Bankert  x0983  Assistant Provost

**Employee Assistance Program**
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