Challenging connections at work:
What to do when things go bad

Loraleigh Keashly
Dept. of Communication
Wayne State University
October 2016
l.keashly@wayne.edu
I find it useful whenever I go to speak to an organization to look at their website and see what they are telling others about who they are. In terms of the U of Michigan, the Campus Commitment is a powerful statement about the U Mich community and how people within that community are to be treated and considered. Statements like this are important as touchstones for assessing whether what you or someone else is experiencing is consistent with what is espoused by this commitment. In essence, you can utilize this commitment to “hold the institution’s feet to the fire” when something happens.
Agenda

- Power of connections
- Framework for action
- Working with some situations
Much has been written and studied about the influence of leaders on the climate and culture of an organization or institution. Much less attention has been paid to the influence of the “rest of us”, i.e., other organizational members. There are more of us and thus, our opportunities to influence what happens around us is profound. We influence those around us more than we realize. We need to recognize these opportunities and intentionally and thoughtfully exert this influence.

My assumptions

* **WE** are key influences in the organizational climate and culture – how we behave and RESPOND influences what happens
  * Be proactive, deliberate and intentional about these responses
  * Work is inherently relational – thus connections matter; others are important
  * Dignity and worth are non-negotiable
  * Little things make a big difference
Let’s talk connections

* high quality connections (The Good)
  * respectful engagement
  * task enabling
  * trusting
  * play
  * energize, support, buffer, protect

* corrosive connections (The Bad & the Ugly)
  * undermine, demean, dishearten, diminish, devalue
  * can be violence to the spirit

(Dutton, 2003)

The U Mich Campus Commitment places collegial connection and relationships more broadly at the center of the university. A framework I have found helpful is the one proposed by Jane Dutton, Ross School of Business, University of Michigan about High Quality Connections. These connections are characterized by respectful engagement, task enabling, trusting, and play. They are the connections that energize, support, buffer, and when needed protect. Corrosive connections are the ones that undermine, demean, dishearten and any other “d” word you could think of. They can suck the life/soul/spirit out of us. While we talk about them here as those ongoing relationships, these concepts also apply to one-shot and brief encounters, e.g., the person in the elevator, or while striding across campus. A very powerful example is the work of Kip Williams on ostracism. In one study, he wanted to see how the briefest “eye contact and smile”, would affect how connected students felt to their university. He had two confederates walk through campus and either make eye contact/smile with a person coming toward them or “look through them”. The second confederate was 100 or so meters behind the first and would stop the subject with whom the first had connected or not and say they were doing a survey of campus life. What they found was even that brief connection or not connection significantly influenced students’ sense of connection to the institution. Small things matter and often below consciousness...so we can be deliberate and thoughtful about how these small acts can make a big difference.


Corrosive connections: The bad and the ugly

We have many names for the kinds of corrosive connections at work.
This is the basic model of considerations for taking action. It comes from the literature on how bystanders make decisions about whether and how to respond to situations. It involves someone first actually seeing the behavior. If particular behavior has become normalized (people always call each other names or interrupt each other in meetings), then we may not “see” it any more. If this is what lots of people do, then we often think of it as what we do here — “rough-and-tumble” politics of academe; culture of critique and debate. A challenge here is that behavior may become normalized that really should not be happening, e.g., personal attacks; undermining others. When normalized then a behavior has to stand out in some way. If it is unusual, it will stand out...if you have been in a department where even in angry people do not raise their voices, and now you have a member who does, that will draw your attention. Or we may indeed see it but it does not seem to be problematic (no one seems to get upset about it?) or it is part of how we do business. What practices or policies or expectations are there where these behaviors may seem contradictory? Caution here re our assumptions such as smart people are abrasive; that is how faculty are:

Assuming one gets to the point that the behavior(s) is perceived as problematic, then we need to decide whose responsibility is it to respond to it. I would argue we each have responsibility for some action, even if that is notifying those we think are best suited to address it. Once we see our responsibility, we need to consider what options we have available (ranging in level of risk for ourselves and others, including visibility) and consider that, within the broader context of power, to take action. And then we need to choose an action, implement it and evaluate if it had the influence we had wanted. Often several actions are involved as we get feedback regarding from prior actions.
Noticing and Assessing:
Steps 1 & 2
This diagram depicts the handling of challenges and conversations with each other from constructive and lively engagements to uncivil, misconduct (counterproductive, demeaning, destructive) to conduct that breaches laws and to criminal activity. Our focus in this workshop is on uncivil conduct and misconduct (specifically, bullying and mobbing).
In a study my colleague, Joel Neuman and I did with VA regarding stress and aggression in the workplace, 67% of employees indicated this as the most frequently occurring behavior. In a study of a university, we found that over half of the employees (faculty, staff, and administrators) indicated this was the most frequently occurring behavior.
Incivility

Low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others. (Andersson & Pearson, 1999)

Incivility – norms of workplace respect – this is where I think we run into differences about what the norms are. For faculty, the culture of critique and debate, of being faculty in the env’t and of shared governance, create the space for faculty to be challenging, critical, argumentative (in the sense of critiquing and challenging positions), to believe that knowledge and “truth” or narratives are revealed by grappling with and inquiring about them. Academic freedom provides the context within which we can do this. Other contexts will be uncomfortable with such directness and tenacity. So faculty “content” is pretty wide and another “how” (or form) is much broader than for other groups such as university staff and administrators. These differences in relational norms and expectations for behavior may result in a sense of being treated inappropriately and disrespectfully by another.

See CAUT interpretation of AF and what that means for conduct.

Displaying lack of regard for others is about the impact of these behaviors....the actions appear to have been undertaken without consideration of the impact on others or in considering what others might think or have to offer.


Experiences/exposure to bullying in universities
- 1/3 self-identify as being bullied in previous 12 months; **40-50% witnessed it**. (Keashly & Neuman, 2013)
- Equally likely to be coworkers or higher ups
  - Faculty (2008) - 63% colleagues & 26% higher ups
  - Frontline staff - 41% coworkers & 50% higher ups
  - Faculty only (2009) – 72% colleagues (55% sr faculty)
  - Critical nature of relationship and tie to org’ l structure
- Single vs multiple actors (mobbing) - 57% in 2 university studies identified more than one actor
  - Faculty (2008) – 2X more likely to be 3 or more actors (mobbed)
  - Frontline staff – 1.5X more likely be a single actor
- Duration
  - 50% report bullying longer than 3 years


### Challenging but not bad or ugly

* People not getting along  
* High performance standards  
* Corrective feedback – constructive, fair  
* Expression of conflicting opinions  
* “Direct” and “indirect” communication  
* Techniques such as irony, satire, hyperbole, conjecture, and refutation

I think it is important to make distinctions among the challenging behaviors as that influences the nature and type of responding that would be more or less effective. The situations and behaviors above may well be challenging but they are not the bad and ugly ones of bullying and mobbing. This is not to suggest that they are not difficult in their impact and in how to deal with them, they often are.

*“Many academics hold strong opinions. This is a characteristic of a profession of experts. Many academics may also occasionally express their opinions in ways that are abrasive. There is a very broad consensus in the profession that they must not be penalized in any way for how they express their opinions, unless the expression infringes on the rights of others.”* (CAUT report on David Noble)
Let’s work a situation:

* What are the behaviors that you see as problematic or difficult? Why?
* What are the behaviors that you do not see as problematic or difficult? Why?
* Continuum of conduct – Annoying? Abrasive? Uncivil? Bullying?
* How might you respond?

See handout from session
A scenario

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BpDD4qEJYAI&index=1&list=PLnJrCcEygaxq6NkrBEEOvCkspNKdXU7

This scenario is about the behavior of one colleague towards another. This comes from the Dept of Labor, Province of Saskatchewan in Canada. Saskatchewan.ca

Click on the link in the slide above and as you watch it, think about the questions on the previous slide. There are also other scenarios that you may find useful such as the one with the boss. You will find the link to the other scenarios on the youtube page for this one about coworkers.
To give you a flavor for the different kinds of behavior that can be problematic, I have provided the framework by Rodriguez-Carballeira et al 2010. What is important to remember is that often people have more than one type of behavior directed at them and the behaviors are often done repeatedly and persistently. Such exposure creates difficulty in responding by the person targeted, in essence disabling their ability to cope. Thus, while individual behaviors may not look like much, when they are patterned with others and persistent, they can be quite damaging.

### Categories of behavior
Rodriguez-Carballeira et al 2010

- **Isolation** – restricting interaction with others and/or seeking physically separating from others, seeking to marginalize or exclude
- **Control and manipulation of information** – selecting and manipulating info, lying, interfering with info transmission
- **Emotional abuse** – offensive actions and expressions aimed at attacking, injuring and sneering at person’s feelings and emotions
  - Intimidation and threats
  - Disrespect, humiliation and rejection of the person
Categories of behavior
Rodríguez-Carballeira et al 2010

- **Control- abuse of working conditions** – intervening or acting negligently in work env’t and work conditions in order to upset person as they attempt to perform tasks or put their health at risk
  - Obstructionism
  - Dangerous work
- **Professional discredit and denigration** – discrediting and denigrating person’s professional reputation and standing, belittling his or her knowledge, experience, efforts, performance etc.
Categories of behavior
Rodriguez-Carballeira et al 2010

- **Devaluation of the role in the workplace** – undervaluing the importance of the role of the person, unjustifiably relieving the worker of their responsibilities or assigning useless, impossible or clearly inferior task to person’s category in the organization.
This is what we know from the research is what is it that hurts people. As I noted in the prior slide, persistent and repeated behaviors directed at a person can wear them down. Many times there is a pattern of negative behaviors and a progression from indirect and covert to more overt and direct behaviors, i.e., an escalation of the negative behavior. The power differential between the actor(s) and target(s) can be pre-existing (e.g., boss to subordinate) or they can develop over time such that one person becomes disempowered and unable to respond to defend themselves. Another assessment of what are problematic behaviors is whether they violate a sense we have of how people should be treated. Overall, it is the cumulative communication of devaluing that wears away and undermines an individual leading to increasing harm.
Hospital cleaners: Connection between work and value
Dutton et al 2012

Acts of devaluing
* Not recognizing the person’s presence
* Communicating disgust or disdain
* Communicating distrust
* Making person’s job more difficult
* Communicate negative info to person, e.g.,
  complain about work

Has this ever happened to you at work?
How did it feel?

This study by Jane Dutton and her colleagues focused on hospital cleaners experience with other people in the hospital. They were able to identify the kinds of behaviors that the hospital cleaners felt communicated that they were not important, that they were worthless. These acts of devaluing can occur in any workplace.
Just as actions can communicate devaluation, so can they communicate that the other person is valued, relevant and important.
We know it when we see (feel) it: Impact!

"People may not remember exactly what you did or what you said, but they will always remember how you made them feel."

“I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” – Maya Angelou

“People are disturbed not by things but by the view they take of them. They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.” – Carl Buechner

These quotes capture the ongoing nature of the communication of value or devalue and the impression it leaves on others. We know it when we feel it.
Decide: Responsibility
Me????? You??? Everyone???
?:
Step 3
Influences on taking responsibility

* 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?
* Did not want to embarrass self or others
* History of tolerance and code of silence
* Others/organization back me up? - policies

What we know from the research! People are more likely to take action if they believe the victim can not respond effectively and if they as witnesses have the ability, knowledge and skills to do something. The more ambiguous the behavior or situation, the more challenging it is for a person to discern if it is a problem and thus, whether something needs to be done. People are less likely to help if time or opportunity to respond seems limited, e.g., it happened too fast. Part of teaching a range of action responses is to help people understand that doing something after the fact can indeed be helpful, i.e., there are no real missed opportunities. People are often concerned about embarrassing themselves or the other person…there are actions that are more subtle so that one can “save face” if they read the situation wrong. The other part is that for many people, knowing that you wanted to help is viewed positively by them. Fear of retaliation is a great and often very real concern. Hostile work env’ts are not supportive of people getting involved and taking action. People are more likely to do so if they are in higher power position vis a vis the actor, or if they believe higher ups will support the actions. Even for someone who is “lower power” in the organization, if they are viewed as good citizens, ones who always do their job and do it well, then others are more likely to listen to them and view their actions as more appropriate. Being from outside can also reduce the risk of retaliation.

Organizational backup is a huge influence. It ties into the overall climate and culture of the organization. Typically this is captured in the policies and procedures of the organization. But it is not enough to have these policies. They need to be available (i.e., employees know about them, as do those in the chain of responding), they need to be implemented (through training and education of all org’l members, plus actual use of procedures as articulated) and they need to be effective (employees’ perceptions are important here; evidence of processes being utilized and followed fairly, people being held accountable and consequences being delivered and carried out). Not having policies or having policies that are perceived to be ineffective or window dressing, can be damaging to the organization’s reputation with its members and with the public. The best policy development is done with full collaboration of all stakeholders and designed to fit the needs of the members and the organization.
To have reached this point in your process, where you have recognized you are responsible for taking action, then if you do not, you run the risk of these potential costs... just in case you needed another reason to take action.

- Cognitively you will try to justify your non-action by reducing perceived harm, holding the target responsible, or convincing yourself that nothing you can do will make a difference
- Behaviorally, you may try to publicly blame target, distance yourself from the target or realign with the actor, running the risk of behaving badly yourself and engaging in mobbing.
Decide: What option(s)?
In essence, the ways in which climate and culture are developed is through our behaviors and how we influence others in their behaviors. Given that premise, I love this summary of ways of changing (influencing) behavior with an eye towards reducing problematic behaviors AND promoting the kinds of behaviors that facilitate and support respectful and inclusive environments and relationships. These strategies are listed in decreasing order of effectiveness. Mary Rowe, the founding ombudsman for MIT put this together.

### Influencing behavior

1. Reinforce and reward good behavior
   * is inconsistent with, and blocks, the (bad) behavior.
2. Reinforce good behavior
   * role-modeling from senior people (indeed from all of us)
   * performance reviews
   * other forms of acknowledgement – often the small stuff
3. Punish bad behavior
4. "Name" what is good behavior and bad behavior – policies?
5. Ignore bad behavior (and good behavior)
6. Reward bad behavior
7. Alternately reward and punish bad behavior — this may cast it in concrete forever

*used with permission from the MIT Ombuds Office, MIT 10-215, Cambridge, MA 02139*
When consciously considering how to influence others to alter or continue their behaviors, there are 5 elements you need to consider. I gave you a more detailed handout in your package on this.
The choice of our action will be dependent upon our goal for taking the action. What is it we want to accomplish? When we have clarity about why we want to do something, it helps us choose action(s) that are likely to help us make that happen.
Choosing an action

* Two decisions need to make:

* 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
* Immediacy - in current situation or later
  * High - interrupt specific incident
  * Low - efforts to prevent future incidents

Bowes-Sperry & O’Leary-Kelly (2005)

This is from the work of Lynn Bowes-Sperry and Anne O’Leary-Kelly on what observers of sexual harassment do. They argued there are two main decisions a bystander makes when they decide they have responsibility for taking some kind of action...how visible or public they will be and when they will do it.
when there are behaviors that you want to be stopped. What options do you have as a bystander/witness? I imagine that many of you did not realize that some of these "little" actions can actually change a dynamic or challenge someone’s actions and often without great risk to you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hi Immed-Low Involvement</th>
<th>High Immed-High Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Redirect/distract actor from situation</td>
<td>• Tell actor to stop conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Remove target from situation</td>
<td>• Name or acknowledge offense or issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interrupt the incident</td>
<td>• Publicly encourage target to report conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Change the topic/focus</td>
<td>• Get others to publicly denounced conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ask clarifying questions</td>
<td>• Offer another interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Affirm the target – counter image</td>
<td>• Reinforce group norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use body language to show disapproval, e.g., silent stare</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Process observation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Immed-Low Involvement</th>
<th>Low Immed-High Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Talk to target about experience</td>
<td>• Report actor formally – admin, supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Privately advise target to avoid actor</td>
<td>• Accompany target when reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Covertly keep actor away from target</td>
<td>• Coach target in responding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advise target to report incident</td>
<td>• Confront actor after incident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Refuse to share gossip/rumors</td>
<td>• Work to develop/implement policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Build the business case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Gather more information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Bowes-Sperry & O'Leary-Kelly 2005
In thinking about what you could do to affirm the kinds of behaviors you want (as we are building high quality connections), here are some possibilities that get opened up when you consider your timing (immediacy) and how visible (to others) you want your action to be.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Hi Immed-Low Involvement** | • Orient to the person  
• Ask relevant questions  
• Affirm the person or their ideas  
• Use body language to show approval |
| **High Immed-High Involvement** | • Tell person to continue their behavior  
• Name or acknowledge the behavior/achievement  
• Publicly praise the person  
• Get others to publicly acknowledge |
| **Low Immed-Low Involvement** | • Privately praise the person  
• Advise person to talk about their accomplishment  
• Praise person to others |
| **Low Immed-High Involvement** | • Report person formally – admin, supervisor  
• Publicly acknowledge in the form of commendation  
• Work to develop/implement policies  
• Build the business case |

Adapted from Bowes-Sperry & O’Leary-Kelly 2005
I provided a handout of a number of situations that you could consider and identify what types of actions might be of value to achieve the goal(s) you have for getting involved.

Now let’s identify actions in the situations
Small group work

* Take one of the situations
* Identify the problematic behavior(s)
* What do you want to be different? What is your goal?
* How might you respond as
  * The person on the receiving end?
  * As someone who witnesses it?
  * If you are the person engaging in the action?
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
  * Use humor (with care)

* 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

Here is an example using one of the situations. Note the range of possibilities you have as a target and as a bystander.
So to this point, we have explored a great range of possibilities for specific actions. These are some general principles to keep in mind. Do not underestimate the power of being there (presence) and how that changes or influences a situation or dynamic. Also, do not underestimate the power of subtle action. Now for some subtle action can be seen as passive-aggressive. Perhaps, if the intent is to harm one or other party. However, subtle actions are often lower risk actions and thus for someone who is feeling worried about retaliation, or feeling uncertain what to do, a “small” action such as changing the topic in a hostile conversation, distracting, can create breathing room to figure out what is going on and thus, what other actions may be necessary.

The issue of immediacy (now or later) highlights the value of prior preparation. Being clear with yourself about what is inappropriate or unacceptable behavior in your work context, means you will identify earlier on and thus be prepared with a response or action. If this is a bullying situation (patterned behavior), you will have time to script a response as you know there will indeed be a next time. Understanding the costs and benefits to you and others of various actions is part of the calculus. What resources do you have that you can leverage or draw on in your responding? Are you known as a thoughtful and fair minded person? That suggests that others would be open to sharing their experiences and hearing your thoughts, i.e. Good old referent power.

Finally, shunning…this is a powerful action and its effects can be dramatic. They can also be debilitating to the one shunned and can be disruptive to the work evn’t and the accomplishment of work that requires us all to do our jobs in order to meet our own and the institution’s goals. So this needs to be considered very carefully and as an action much further down the path than early on, i.e., after other actions have failed to change the situation. There also needs to be a way to end the ostracism, i.e., the person being shunned needs a sense that it is tied to specific actions that if changed will result in the lifting of the ostracism. As you can see this is tricky and can backfire.
Action: So how do I do it?
The following slides highlight a skills based model of communication and problem solving. This is from Bolton’s (1986) People Skills book. I believe that these skills are fundamental to engaging effectively in the actions that we have explored.

### 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 and what you expect.
- **Problem-solving** - identify the issues and work to solve them.
Assertion

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

When you need to talk about what is going on.
Assertion

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.

   “Because _______”

When you need to talk about what is going on.
Add these elements when you are requesting a change in behavior.

Constructive feedback

4. Pause for discussion – other shares perspective; gives explanation

5. Description of what you would like to be different

“I would like……...
The really challenging one!

Talking to the actor
Getting ready to talk

Take one of the scenarios and prepare yourself for talking directly to the actor about what you have seen.
Talking to the actor: The challenging one!

- 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 ........
When we tell someone that we have issues with their behavior and we want it to change, it is not unusual no matter how good you are at being assertive that people may become defensive. Your best strategy in such a situation is to actively listen to what they have said, ensure you communicate to them what you heard them say and when they say “yes, you got it”, then you can respond with your assertive request regarding the behavior. Sometimes you will need to go through this cycle a few times before the other person is able to really talk with you about your request. So be patient. However, if they look like they cannot “take it down a thousand”, you may need to shift your goal to ending the interaction with them and removing yourself from the situation so you can contemplate next steps.
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
- Envision other strategies with the other
- Summarize and make plan for change

This is a good overview of the process to getting yourself ready and then engaging with the other person around their behaviors.
Amy Cuddy’s work on how our body language can shape who we are and who we become. The research is solid and strong that this feedback loop between body and mind is powerful. The “power pose” (top picture) has been linked to increased confidence and lessened anxiety when one does it for two minutes prior to entering a stressful or evaluative experience, e.g., job interview. Check out her Ted Talk...very informative. Yet another tool for your toolbox on managing the messages you send and how you see yourself.
Now let’s try it on!
Many of the actions/options we have discussed and the scenarios we have used, have you intervening or responding to something that is currently occurring or has occurred. What we would like is for many of these situations not to have occurred, which means proactive or preventive action. Here are some examples of what would be preventive steps. Regarding altering circumstances, if you know that meetings are the prime place for an actor or actors to engage in these behaviors, you may want to use a structured agenda and/or Roberts’ Rules of Order to prevent the opportunity for the behavior or the escalation of behavior. Changing attitudes that support these difficult behaviors may involved discussions of what is appropriate behavior and in the case of faculty, what is academic freedom, how that contextualizes what is appropriate behavior and also talking about what behavior is not covered by AF. Another strategy is to develop policies and procedures that set the frame for interaction. For example, Department Communication Protocols can be developed collaboratively by the members of a department. This involves discussion of how people want to deal with differences and conflict, how they want to be approached if the issue is with them, how they could respond if asked by others to become involved. This is a process of making explicit what is often implicit; of sharing expectations and mutually developing a shared set to facilitate more constructive engagement with each other.

Finally but perhaps most fundamentally, I believe it is important to build solid relationships with others in your environment so that should something difficult or harmful happen, you and the other have a context for interpreting that behavior. For example, if I raise my voice to a colleague, the fact that they know me as someone for whom that is not typical, they are more likely to give me the benefit of the doubt because it is unusual. If the only contact people have with you or others is when things are bad or difficult, they only have that to interpret what is happening.
Talking together: The great workplace

* Whole group/dept/team conversation
* How do we want to be here?
* Understanding our experiences
* When we have worked well
  * What was happening at the time

Much of this presentation has focused on the various actions we do that influence our own and others’ behaviors. Much of what we do is implicit or not “visible”. Here we are going to make our norms and expectations explicit through conversation with one another about how we want to be together in this place. What are our expectations and the “rules of engagement” we want to follow?
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

This is a very specific tool for either addressing conflictual climates that have developed or in an effort to establish constructive climates to reduce the likelihood of destructive confrontation and discussion. This comes from the work of Larry Hoover (2003) at University of California, Davis. Maureen Brodie, ombuds at University of California San Francisco has developed this further with a trainer’s guide for this discussion. This is an explicit discussion among members of a unit of how they want to handle challenging issues.
These are the types of questions that are explored and the results of which are utilized to structure the protocol. This specific set of questions comes from Tom Sebok, Director of the Ombudsman Office at U of Colorado – Boulder.
Questions we should all ask...

* Am I aware of how I come across to my coworkers, supervisors, students, 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)

These questions remind us to be cognizant of how we are with others and how our behaviors may contribute to a difficult situation.
Allons-y!

- 10th Doctor Who

Loraleigh Keashly
l.keashly@wayne.edu
The following 5 slides are some gifts for you. They focus on what to do if you are on the receiving end of negative and hostile behaviors.

What if it is happening to you?

Getting clear and taking care

(Dutton, 2005)

* Label what is happening to you (Naming)
  – Conflict, incivility, bullying?
* Enlist support from other coworkers
  * If possible, reduce dependence on other (Bound & Buffer)
* Enlist support from family and friends
* Engage in outside activities that build self esteem (Buttress & Strengthen)
Deciding what to do
(Target & transform; a negotiation perspective)

* Clarify own needs
* Get information about the other’s needs
* Think through alternatives to engaging with the other.
* Sources of power and influence you have and the other has:
  – Positional - reward, coercion, legitimate
  – Personal - expert, referent, informational
  – BATNA - Best alternative to a negotiated agreement

Reward power refers to ability to control resources or other things that another values; Coercive power is the ability to punish another; Expert power comes from having specialized knowledge and experience that others do not have but they need; Referent power comes from relationships you have with others in the system, more specifically how well liked and respected you are by others. Informational power captures the influence you have when you have information critical to others achieving their goals. BATNA is a term from negotiation. You are in your strongest position to negotiation, i.e., influence others to get what you need when you have a strong and viable alternative (Plan B), should the other not want to negotiate or you are unable to get what you needed from themm.
The success of confronting (speaking directly to) the actor depends upon timing and your own sources of power. If this is one early on (i.e., the not-yet-bullied phase), then you have the resources and strength to take them on. The Crucial conversations model is a thoughtful approach for addressing inappropriate behaviors with someone early on. However, if bullying has become established, your power and ability to respond have been undermined, and you would be vulnerable to them utilizing the conversation to continue to undermine and demean you.

It is vital that you do not retaliate. To the extent that others are not aware of what is going on, your retaliation is often the first time they are aware and you can get labelled as the problem. Also, by retaliating, you can fuel an escalatory spiral that will consume your energy and you in the process. Sometimes, we need to get others to help us.
Record date, time and what happened; witnesses and outcome of event. Remember number of behaviors/events, frequency and patterning can reveal bullying. This is important affirmation for you for your experience and it will be useful information should you decide to take the situation to others.
Happening to you

• Report disruptive behavior to person identified in workplace policy, supervisor or HR
• Consider outside consultation with a union representative or an employment lawyer
• Leaving the job may be the only option in light of significant health risks.

If the people you take it to, do not take action then proceed to next level of management if concerns minimized.
And what if you are being accused as being aggressive or bullying someone else? Here are some suggestions.

**Accused?**

Take it seriously

- Listen carefully
- Don’t be defensive
- Take time to reflect
- Use of silent witness (another set of eyes & ears)
- Consider accusations rationally
- Ask what behavior (s) prefer
- Apologize genuinely for offense
- Request a third party to help with conversation

If false, take to higher up

(Rayner, Hoel, & Cooper 2002)
Some references

* Cormier, G. (2014). Positive workplace behavior: Civility on a continuum. Presentation for the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University. gcormier@fas.harvard.edu
Specific references

* Rowe, M (2014). Some notes on peers and bystanders within organizations with respect to behaviors seen to be unacceptable. Unpublished manuscript, MIT.