Complaint

“To be heard as complaining is not to be heard. To hear someone as complaining is an effective way of dismissing someone. You do not have to listen to the content of what she is saying if she is just complaining or always complaining.”

*Sara Ahmed

*(Feminist writer/Independent Scholar)
Emotion, Trauma & Conflict

- Conflict is about relationships.
- Trauma affects relationships.
- Trauma impacts collaboration & follow-through.

Conflict Narratives & Biographies

- Conflict has a life of its own.
- Responsibility to speak?
- Narratives have power!
  - Many ways in which it is constrained.
  - Role of presence.

Power, the Environment & Conflict

- University structure/system impacts
- Institutional Trust
- Physical Space
Small Group Discussion

Reflect:

- How have you historically managed conflict?
- What are your reservations re: engaging in conflict?
- What is your conflict style?

Empathy

- Universal human need to be deeply understood
- Being completely present with “what is alive” in another from moment to moment
- Not following our judgements
- What is it:
  - Acceptance
  - Appreciation
  - Understanding
  - Non-judging
  - Agreement
Jackal vs. Giraffe

- **Jackal**
  - Defensive/Accusing/Justifying
  - Guilt/Blame/Anger
  - See others as “enemy”

- **Giraffe**
  - Connecting & Understanding
  - Focus on Feelings & Needs
  - Equality & Mutuality
  - See others as Human

Nonviolent Communication

- Judgements
- Observation
- Feelings
- Needs
- Requests
Practice:
NVC Dancefloor

Practice:
Scenarios

Scenario #1

*A fellow advisor comes to you to talk. Two of her advisees who share leadership responsibilities in the major's student organization, Nicole and Destiny, have not been getting along. For the first week or so, their relationship seemed fine, but then one day about two weeks into the semester, Destiny shared that Nicole had vocalized her support for Trump in the 2024 election. Destiny, who is a DACA student, said she now feels uncomfortable co-leading the organization with Nicole. She said that Nicole didn't know that she is a DACA student, and Nicole's parents feared that the question of her immigration status had been raised. Nicole also didn't really know how to handle the situation and that it has been a big deal. The colleague asked if you had any advice on what to do.*
Scenario #2

Jason walks in the door to your office, one day and just starts talking. While you aren’t expecting him, he says that he has been looking for you, or someone to complain to for a while. He wasn’t vaccinated against COVID-19, and neither was anyone else in his family. He had chosen to attend school, anticipating in-person classes. He had contracted COVID last year, and his physician shared that he did not need to be vaccinated. After thinking it over, Jason decided that he would get the vaccine in order to attend. Jason’s family did not agree with this decision and threatened not to pay for him to attend. After some time, his family finally relented. Jason feels as though his relationship with his family has suffered, and he partially blames the university for this circumstance. Although Jason received a vaccination, he feels angry and upset that he was forced to do so before he felt ready.

Some next steps

• Identify your conflict skills, and the skills of those around you
• Don’t be afraid to ask for help
• Identify opportunities for further training and development
• Continue to develop your skills

Questions?

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References


