Improve Relations with Difficult Co-workers

Ian Wallace, PhD, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
Ingrid Williams, EdD, Director of Human Resources

March 12, 2015

Outline

- Introductions and goals for today
- Workplace Safety
- Common Concerns
- Sources of Common Concerns
- Coping with difficult co-workers
  - Before a concern
  - In the heat of the moment
  - After an Encounter
  - During an ongoing concern
- Recourse: What are your options?
  - Informal, Ombuds, HR consult, formal complaint

Introductions and goals

- Ian
- Ingrid
- Participants

Cal Maritime – Workplace Safety

- CMA is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for students, faculty, staff and visitors. This goal is required by a framework of law and regulation, and moreover, by ethical and leadership values that are consistent with the University mission. Executive Order 1039, California State University Occupational Health and Safety Policy, recognizes Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) as an integral function of the California State University. Pursuant to the Executive Order the campus president designates a campus EH&S program administrator with authority to develop and maintain campus health and safety programs. These programs are designed to mitigate risk of injury or illness that may arise from work related activities. The programs assign responsibility to various campus entities who collectively implement procedures and practices to identify and correct hazards, and provide appropriate communication and training in conformance with the Cal-OSHA Injury and Illness Prevention Program (CCR, Title 8, section 3203) and other applicable State and Federal requirements.

- From Cal Maritime HR Web site: http://www.csum.edu/web/hr/workplace-safety

Common Concerns

- Bullying
  - "Workplace Bullying is repeated, health-harming mistreatment of one or more persons (the targets) by one or more perpetrators. It is **abusive conduct** that is: Threatening, humiliating, or intimidating, or Work interference — sabotage — which prevents work from getting done, or Verbal abuse
    - From the Workplace Bullying Institute
  - Stopbullying.gov
    - Verbal bullying is saying or writing mean things.
      - Teasing, Name-calling, Inappropriate sexual comments, Taunting, Threatening to cause harm
    - Social bullying, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships.
      - Leaving someone out on purpose, Telling other children not to be friends with someone, Spreading rumors about someone, Embarrassing someone in public
- CMA has no workplace bullying policy
- Impact
  - Individual: Physical, psychological, social
  - Organization: turnover, absenteeism, litigation
- Solutions
  - Name it
  - Self-care
  - Expose the bullying to those responsible for the work environment (boss and HR)

Common Concerns

- Negativity and discourteous behavior to Hostile Work Environment
  - Negativity and discourteous behavior
    - Sense of "walking on eggshells"
    - Cultural differences
      - Microaggressions: everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership – Derald Wing Sue
    - Gossip
  - Are you in a "hostile work environment"?
    - Society for HR Management: "Sexual or other discriminatory conduct that is so severe and pervasive that it interferes with an individual's ability to perform the job, creates an intimidating, offensive, threatening or humiliating work environment or causes a situation where a person's psychological well-being is adversely affected."
    - US Equal Opportunity Commission – Discrimination
      - Age, disability, equal pay/compensation, genetic information, harassment, national origin, pregnancy, race/.color, religion, retaliation, sex, sexual harassment,

Common Concerns

- Your Boss
  - Hierarchy and abuse of power
    - Requests to

Common Concerns

- Know your buttons and who pushes them
  - Self-awareness
  - Connected to early attachment (family)
  - Pet peeves
  - Personality clashes

Sources of Common Concerns

- Individual
  - Personal matters, personality, performance concerns
- Interpersonal
  - Competition, perceived threats, group cohesion
- Departmental and/or Organizational climate
  - Response (or adaptation) to change in system, no shared goal
- Societal factors
  - Recession and layoffs, stress and worry

Coping with Difficult Co-workers: Before a Concern
(not in anticipation of one)

- Build your self-esteem

- Manage stress

- Take care of basics
  - Sleep, diet, moderate substance use
- Develop effective work relationships

Coping with Difficult Co-workers: In the heat of the moment

- Emotional regulation
  - Breathe
  - Walk away if you need to
- Notice where you are
  - Is this a good place to have this conversation

Coping with Difficult Co-workers: Following an Encounter

- Pause, take a breath, get some fresh air
- Don't act on first impulses
- Talk it out
  - Trusted supports
- Consider your options

Coping with Difficult Co-workers: During an ongoing concern

- Daily reminders
  - Affirmations, prayer, coping
- Separate your work from your concerns
  - Block time to address concerns

Recourse: What are your options?

– Recourse for concerns

- Informal
  - Assertiveness, confrontation, communication
- Ombuds program (Brig)
  - 9 people
- HR consult
  - contractual
- Formal complaint

Recourse: What Defines a Satisfactory Resolution?

Recourse: What are Your Options?

- Informal Approach
  - Assertive communication
    - "Being assertive means expressing your thoughts, opinions, feelings, attitudes and rights in an open and honest way. When you're assertive, you stand up for yourself, while still respecting others. At work, assertiveness involves balancing getting what you need with being respectful of the needs and rights of your coworkers, subordinates, and supervisors."
      - From

Recourse: What are Your Options?

- Informal Approach – Communication
  - Passive
    - Tends to give in to other people's wishes while forgetting their own needs and wants.
    - Has a difficult time saying no to people.
    - Has a hard time making decisions.
    - Has a hard time maintaining eye contact.
    - Avoids confrontation at all costs (e.g., not speaking up when a co-worker pronounces your name wrong).
  - Aggressive
    - Tends to be concerned only for their needs at the expense of others' needs.
    - Has a tendency to lose their temper.
    - May make decisions for other people.
    - May shout or use bully techniques to get their way.
    - May continue to argue long after someone has had enough.
    - When angry, may call others names or even use obscenities.
    - May openly criticize or find fault with others ideas, opinions, or behaviors.
    - Uses confrontation to get what they want.
  - Assertive
    - Concerned with both their needs as well as other people's needs.
    - Able to express themselves with other people.
    - Able to respond in a respectful manner when there is a disagreement.
    - Able to ask for help.
    - Confident and able to make decisions.
    - Able to appropriately say no to people/places/things they do not want.
    - Responsible for their own feelings/behaviors/thoughts.

Recourse: What are Your Options?

- Ombuds Program
  - The **Cal Maritime Ombuds Program** enhances the university environment by providing an informal, confidential, neutral, and independent avenue for resolution of University-related concerns, conflicts, or disputes which are not covered by collective bargaining agreements or cadet regulations. This voluntary program offers early availability for dispute-resolution outside of traditional formal grievance process.
- Disputes and concerns are heard by a Dispute Resolution Facilitator (DRF) who is an impartial, trained, full-time member of the campus community. The role of a DRF is to listen, receive, and provide information to involved parties, provide informal facilitation between parties when requested, and such other functions normally within the purview of the Ombuds Program.
- A DRF:
  - listens and is non-judgmental;
  - respects the concerns of all sides and remains impartial;
  - facilitates communication between individuals or groups;
  - provides a safe and confidential place to talk – everything is confidential, to the extent allowed by law;
  - answers questions and directs parties to appropriate resources;
  - helps to objectively analyze the situation, and identify and evaluate options for resolution; and
  - provides important feedback to management by reporting issues and trends while maintaining confidentiality.
- All questions and requests for assistance should be directed to the Director of University Affairs at 707-654-1788

Recourse: What are Your Options?

- HR Consult

What are Your Options?

Formal Complaint Process

- **Executive Order 1096**: Systemwide *Policy* Prohibiting Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation Against Employees and Third Parties and *Procedures* for Handling Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation Allegations by Employees and Third Parties.

- Complaint Form For Discrimination/Harassment/Retaliation Complaints.

- **Executive Order 1097**: Systemwide Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Against Students and Systemwide Procedure for Handling Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation Complaints by Students

Exercises

Protected Employment Categories

- Race
- Color
- Religion
- National Origin
- Age
- Pregnancy
- Political Affiliation

Sex Including Gender

Sexual Orientation

Ancestry

Genetic Information

Physical/Mental Disability

Medical Condition

Marital Status

Next Week

March 19th Reducing Binge and Problematic Drinking (ATOD Member)

This presentation will cover the more common but less obvious impacts of binge drinking. From relationship quarrels to procrastination to avoiding painful emotions, participants will learn and discuss ways to overcome unhealthy drinking.

-

3/26   Suicide Prevention: QPR (Kate Kimble, Director of Housing) *

4/2   Resilience and Grit as Stress Management (Commandant Staff) *

4/9   Counselors on Cruise-2014 Report *

* Qualifies for ELDP Credit

Resources

- Cal Maritime
  - HR: http://www.csum.edu/web/hr/home
  - Ombuds program: http://www.csum.edu/web/about/ombuds
- Bullying
  - Workplace Bullying Institute
    - http://www.workplacebullying.org/
  - StopBullying.gov
- Assertiveness
  - National Center for PTSD
    - http://www.va.gov/vetsinworkplace/docs/em_eap_assertive.html
- Society for Human Resource Management
  - http://www.shrm.org/pages/default.aspx