Where do you draw the line? A leader’s role in personal safety, boundaries, and bystander intervention

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Overview

• About harassment and violence
• Working in public spaces
• Bystander intervention strategies
• Setting and maintaining boundaries
• Going forward
Harassment and violence

• Who is targeted?
  • Potentially anybody
  • Disproportionate effects on marginalized identities

• Impact
  • Psychological/emotional
  • Financial/social
  • Missed educational and career opportunities
  • Quality of life

• Group members vs. strangers

• Leadership responsibility
Working in public spaces

• The problem:
  • Uncontrolled environments
  • How do you experience public spaces?
  • What about your students and colleagues?

• Recommendations:
  • Pre-trip planning discussion(s)
  • Communication plan
  • Emergency response plan
  • Code words or signals (situational awareness)
  • Boundary-setting statements you can practice in advance
  • Brief and debrief

Safe fieldwork strategies for at-risk individuals, their supervisors and institutions

As a result of identity prejudice, certain individuals are more vulnerable to conflict and violence when they are in the field. It is paramount that all fieldworkers be informed of the risks some colleagues may face, so that they can define best practice together. Here we recommend strategies to minimize risk for all individuals conducting fieldwork.

Amelia-Juliette Claire Demery and Monique Avery Pipkin
Activity: Working in public spaces

Choose
• Choose one of your field sites, trips, or activities

Identify
• Identify a personal safety concern

Plan
• Outline a safety plan your group can use

To do
• Add this to your to-do list
Bystander Intervention

• Why intervene?
  • Likely to improve the situation
  • Reduces trauma
  • Responsibility

• What to ask before you decide to intervene?
  • Safety
  • Consequences
  • Personal agency

• Barriers to intervention?
Bystander Intervention

- Direct
- Distract
- Delegate
- Document
- Delay
Activity: Bystander Intervention
Boundaries

• Types of boundaries and examples
  • Physical space, bodily autonomy
  • Verbal boundaries
  • Acceptable/unacceptable behaviors
  • Social injustice, bias, discrimination
  • Domains of life

• Benefits of clear boundaries
  • Setting expectations

• Risks of not maintaining boundaries
  • Consider: Why do people push our boundaries?
  • What comes next?
  • Burnout
Boundaries

• Why do we sometimes find it difficult to set (and maintain) boundaries?
  • We want to help people
  • Taught to be “nice”
  • Cultural factors
  • Don’t want to offend or damage a relationship
  • Past experiences
  • Power dynamics
  • Hard work to enforce

• The leader’s role: Setting a good example
Strategies for setting and maintaining boundaries

• Recognize a challenge
• Prepared phrases
  • Practice them
  • Agreements within your group
  • “I” statements, “it” statements, “you” statements (Kim Scott & Trier Bryant, Just Work & Radical Equality)
• Cite a personal policy
• Don’t overexplain (it’s not a negotiation)
• Broken record strategy
• Buy more time to answer
Activity: Boundaries

Choose a space in which you are a leader

Reflect: Are there opportunities for you to set an example for your group?

Plan: Decide on an action to take after this conference

To do: Put this on your task list today
Further thoughts?
Resources and Further Reading

Training opportunities:
• iHollaback/Right To Be
• Defend Yourself
• Your campus Title IX office or CARE program
• Building a Better Fieldwork Future

Further reading:
• Safe fieldwork strategies for at-risk individuals, their supervisors and institutions (Demery & Pipkin 2021)
• Just Work (organization). Trier Bryant and Kim Scott
• Just Work: Get Sh*t Done, Fast and Fair (book). Kim Scott
• The Gift of Fear: Survival Signals That Protect Us From Violence (book). Gavin DeBecker