Room Assignments

Assignments:
- Room 1: Kara - Scenarios 1 & 3
- Room 2: Emily & Eliida - Scenarios 2 & 4
- Room 3: Kait - Scenarios 3 & 5
- Room 4: Hannah - Scenarios 6 & 4
- Room 5: Esther - Scenarios 5 & 6

Case Studies

Please write your response to your assigned case study below

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Scenario 1: Two Harvard students are friends who often complain to each other about difficulties in the lab. One of the students, a man, tells the other about an awkward encounter he had with a researcher at another institution. While the researcher was helping the student with a project, he joked, "Women just can't do science like we can." The Harvard student was uncomfortable, but didn't respond to the researcher. He asks his friend, who is a woman, what he should have done in that situation. The female student wants to talk about these issues, but also feels hurt by what the researcher said and a little disappointed in her friend. Discuss.

Room 1:
Ways to respond in the moment:
　　"What did you mean by that?"
　　"No, I don't share that opinion"
　　Introduce a pause to the conversation so you can think of a response - even just saying "wait" to give yourself a minute to think

Ways to respond in the aftermath:
　　Go back later in the conversation, once you've had the chance to process and think of how you want to respond
　　Send an email/text to the researcher afterwards to express your opinion about the comment they made, to make it clear that you find it inappropriate

Discuss this encounter (anonymized) with peers or colleagues - turn it into a conversation, outsource possible responses, learn from each other, get practice in discussing harmful scenarios explicitly in a professional, supportive context

In a future encounter with the researcher, mock or confront their previous inappropriate comment - make it clear that you remember what they said and disagree

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Scenario 2: A few community members, all men, are chatting and hanging out in the lounge over lunch. One of them makes a joke about how they all needed to watch what they say or they could get accused of sexual harassment in the workplace. Another person speaks up to say it's not okay to joke about that. The one who made the joke replies, "It's okay, there aren't any women in the room. Don't worry about it." Discuss.

Room 2:
- This scenario has been played out directly in the HUCE lounge; comments regarding women being "less good" Earth scientists, and particularly, geologists, than men
- These scenarios aren't fictitious - these are experienced harms that exist in our department's culture
- How do we catch potentially problematic events like this, even before we can call them out?

Feelings
- Hard to speak up in the moment
- Jarring because the jokes can be so offensive
- Defensiveness

Actions
- Follow up with female colleagues afterwards
- When a female colleague speaks up, they can be humiliated if the response is overly defensive

- A bystander who overhears can act to speak up on behalf of the first person who spoke up so that the situation is made more clearly inappropriate
- Recognize when you've said something that made others uncomfortable and be open to learning why instead of defending your comments
- Bystanders speaking up 1:1 might help get a less defensive response.
- Report the incident to the DIB committee
- "What do you mean by that? Can you elaborate?" (calls attention to the insensitive comment)
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Scenario 3: You overhear some of your white peers talking in the lounge about fellowship/grant applications. Two of them are talking about what to put in the statement of broader impacts. One is concerned that they aren't doing enough outreach, but the other replies, "Don't worry about it! Just say you're going to help underrepresented minorities in STEM. That's what I did. They don't actually check if you're doing anything." The first speaker is concerned and expresses wanting to have real broader impacts in the field. The other person responds, "The science is what really matters. You don't need to waste your time on this other stuff." Discuss.

Room 3:
3 subproblems:
- Bystander role
    - How to respond?
        - Anecdote of why does matter
        - Hard to respond, is this my place?
    - Balance of moral responsibility and power dynamics
    - Give options of how to be involved, engage with person who wants to be doing outreach and ignore the other person
- The actual statement
    - Lack of genuineness
    - How science engages with under-represented communities can be harmful
    - "White savior" mentality
- Reality of funding
    - Broader impacts often ignored in funding decisions
        - Change culture?

      ○   What about people who are introverts?

Raises how does EPS/ESE engage in outreach?

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Scenario 4: You are in a meeting with a mix of staff, students, and faculty. A student of color has spoken a few times, but keeps getting interrupted by a white senior member of the department. You notice the student sharing glances with a peer each time it happens. You begin to feel uncomfortable, and suspect that others are as well, but no one in the meeting has spoken up. What do you do, either during the meeting or afterwards?

Room 2:
- This exact scenario has been witnessed in the EPS department that was very offensive: a POC department member was continuously interrupted whilst providing important context to a discussion.

Actions
- Thank the interrupter, then direct the conversation back to the person who was being interrupted
    - This is most effective coming from a faculty member or person with higher power status!!!
    - Brings awareness that this someone was being interrupted

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Scenario 5: You're at the coffee machine chatting with a graduate student. The student's advisor frequently asks them to work on the weekends, and gets mad if they don't finish something by Monday morning. Their comments have become increasingly belittling like

"you'll never be a successful scientist if you want to have weekends to yourself" and "you don't deserve to be at a top institution if you aren't serious enough to sacrifice your weekends." The student feels like they are letting their advisor down and questions whether they are being unreasonable to want weekends off. Discuss.

Room 5:
- Thoughts? What would you say if you observed that convo? How do we avoid this happening?
- AGW: SEAS this happens - set standards for faculty expectations - talk to faculty about standard vacation policies? Can you students go away for two weeks each year/semester? Those policies are distributed through all students once decided, when exists, helps administrative staff so they can more effectively advise students
- EPS/ESE procedures:
    - Contract covers students with benefits for vacation and personal days (Ted is a resource for contract/union info)
    - EPS has some leniency
    - 20-hr limit for academic work
- EW: Create expectations documents for people's labs - distribute those to students who visit / are incoming -
- AGW: young/incoming faculty don't know anything about those things and we have to introduce them to it for faculty who are onboarded; some come from industry and have different standards
- ML: Union requirements should bepart of onboarding page
- AP: Kara/some others are up to ½ faculty who have implemented expectations documents - PIs should put it on the front of their website, not hidden in the background so folks don't have to dig deep to find it
- Pressuring students to do a lot of work - treatment that PIs received as grad students - at MIT they said that expectations were that if grad students were not working 50 hours / week that they were not meeting expectations!
- EJ:International students - against policy - no more than 40 hours / week with everything combined
- CJ: document w/ jxm group / documents in general with expectations - are they revisited? ** really good idea! Even if you don't have new students

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Scenario 6: An act of racial violence has been in the news all week and large protests have broken out across the country. You talk about the events with your friends, but are struggling to find ways to have similar conversations with your coworkers, including your peers, supervisors, and supervisees. How could a graduate student approach their advisor? How could an advisor approach their research group? How could a graduate student or an advisor approach the department?

Room 5:
- ML: Have done in the past - group meetings often coopted by convos about racial violence/other social justice issues - we go thru papers abt climate change disproportionate impact on certain groups - students also present their own research. E.g., what happened in Atlanta - move presentation to next week, have it as a space to talk, here's a useful article, feel free to participate or not - group meeting is a space for these conversations
- TA: Appreciate the effort - holding space - making things inclusive, let grad students know that before these issues come up that group is thinking about time off / know that the workspace is helpful and understanding beyond the direct questions of the research
- AGW: Admin experience - do callouts in newsletter pointing to resources if you need to talk, navigating SEAS sessions every 2 weeks - that type of topic will come up
- AP: Legitimizing - climate in which it is legitimate to be strongly affected by these types of news events, your work lif/ balance is something that is supposed to be in your own control, not dictated by hourly/daily regime that a regular job would dictate. Legitimize people's experiences - it's ok to take time off for emotional healing, use a different time to get work done as long as you make sufficient progress - faculty: embrace idea of your student as someone who is entrusted with being invested in their own best decision making, some other day some other hour
- EJ: statements put out by dept does mean a lot for ppl in those groups - it is impactful and students do appreciate those statements - helps to acknowledge it, in the past the pain felt invisible

Room 4:

- Similar to many things that have happened over the past year. (N.B. Following our group's discussion guidelines, these notes are anonymized.)
- Initial thoughts: what is the role of the department and research groups in acknowledging national events, particularly events of racial violence?
- This came up in a recent town hall meeting. Not sure if this needs to be the role of a research group. If people want to have conversations about significant tragedies, that's fine, but people shouldn't feel the need to bring up national events in group meetings.
- An experience from the past year that differs from that point: during an optional group meeting, the meeting was devoted to discussing an incident of racial violence. It was an opportunity to connect with coworkers in a different way, more significant for

current events, and everyone had a reading that they read and presented on at the next meeting. It was optional but very beneficial. It was either the faculty member who brought it up or a natural part of the discussion in an earlier meeting, and then a meeting was arranged to discuss it further.

- Group members are part of a support structure: if you are part of a community, it's a good thing to feel comfortable going to your advisor if you are uncomfortable with something. It's not good to force people to be in a space they don't want to be in, regardless of the reason (so it's good for it to be optional), but it's good to make sure everyone has a support system and an open line of communication if needed.
- It was really odd to be attending group meeting while watching part of the Twin Cities burn after George Floyd's murder. The meeting was proceeding as if nothing was going on while a huge national movement was going on. People feel safe and welcome and included in groups in different ways from person to person, so it could be good to develop general guidelines about how to make the community a welcoming and inclusive place.
- Different things can hit home for you depending on your personal background, and it can be hard to discuss things in a group setting if they are very emotional for you. So it is important not to require that people share (especially sharing personal experiences e.g. family dynamics etc.)
- important to make sure that people have a support network while also not requiring people to participate in conversations they aren't ready to have
- Can't put too much of the onus on the individuals who are struggling to lead these discussions
- Working on a similar issue: when events come to the surface, try to begin meetings by making a statement about what's going on in the world, and volunteering whether it is having an effect on capacity to function and do a normal workload / be fully at a job; you can open the door for a discussion, but acknowledging initially that it might affect your capacity for work is a good thing
- Saying something at the beginning of the meeting could make a lot of sense for group meetings that usually begin with announcements. It could be possible to clarify guidelines for making those statements instead of asking graduate students to reach out every time they want a statement to be made. Similarly, it is tricky to set guidelines for what events are deserving of a departmental email, but it might be good to have general guidelines on that as well.
- It can be difficult to make "value judgments" on what rises to the line. You can get fatigue with lots of emails e.g. from figureheads at Harvard about national events that are about national events and have many paragraphs but don't say much. On the other hand, it's weird for something major to be happening (e.g. siege on the Capitol) and not to receive a communication about it.