FINDING YOUR VOICE: IN CLASSES AND YOUR DEPARTMENT & HOW TO MANAGE YOUR STRESS

Counseling and Psychological Services

2015

International Student Orientation
Introduction

- Why is this subject important?
- Workshop overview
What should we consider when communicating?

- Communication style

- Personal space = 2 to 4 ft (60 cm – 1.2m)

- Modes of communication:
  - Verbal
  - Nonverbal

- Power distance/Boundary
Common classroom expectations

1. Sense of competition – implicit/explicit and internal/external

2. Grades being important to overall academic evaluation

3. Mutual respect is CRITICAL!

4. Final grades based on more than just final exams
Participating in class discussions

- Discussion is a collective process
  - exploratory
  - unpredictable

- Don’t be afraid to voice your opinion
  KNOW yourself!!!
Participating in class discussions

- Prepare
- Listen

Organize your contribution:

- be as succinct and clear as possible
- avoid prefaces that undermine your credibility
Participating in class discussions

Respect other participants

- refrain from verbal insults or aggressive facial expressions
- respond to ideas NOT the person

Demonstrate openness and dialogue
Advisor-advisee relationships

- What is an advisor?
- What is a mentor?
Choosing the right advisor...

1. Choose a project that excites you

2. Consider their personality, supervision style and environment
   - Authoritarian
   - Coach
   - Laissez-faire
Choosing the right advisor...

3. Learn about things like typical amount of contact, expected schedule and work load

4. Learn about expectations such as publications & grants

5. Typical time spent to get the degree
Common student concerns about advisors

- Feeling as if I'm not a priority or they are not invested.
- He/she does not know or recognize me.
- Overly critical, does not provide support or guidance.
- Getting mixed messages and answers from different professors.
- Too many students per advisor, and can't have enough time with them.
Student responsibilities...

- Effort
- Careful planning
- Responsibility
- Honest communication
- Active interest
- Personal responsibility
Resolving issues with your advisor...

- Talk to others (friends, mentors, other graduate students)
- Think carefully about the pros and cons of the discussion
- Manage your stress effectively **BEFORE** taking any action
Resolving issues with your advisor…

- Schedule a meeting and discuss the details in person - (Do NOT discuss over email)

- Plan in advance what you want to say

- During the conversation:
  - use “I” statements
  - separate the person from the problem
  - LISTEN & UNDERSTAND!!!
  - Focus on the mutual gain
  - Reiterate what you have heard
When it gets to be too much...

Stress → Distress

What is distress?
Stress…a common reaction

- What is stress?
- What are some common stress reactions?
- How do you know you are stressed?
- Ways to combat stress
POSSIBLE SOURCES OF STRESS

- Academic
- Financial
- Social / romantic relationship
- Advisory relationship
- Family relationships/expectations
- Adjustment to graduate school
- Adjustment to Ann Arbor
- Identity changes and development
- Worries about future – career, job market, dissertation, publishing
- Navigating the “-ism’s” – prejudices and discriminations
EFFECTIVE STRESS MANAGEMENT

- Self-care
  - Eating
  - Sleeping
  - Exercising
  - Humor and Playful activities
  - Connecting/spending time w/ others IN PERSON 😊

- Deep breathing
- Meditation
- Visualization
- Progressive muscle relaxation
SEEK OUT THE SUPPORT!!

- **Know your resources**
  - CAPS, friends/family, colleagues, advisors, Dean of Students

- **Common barriers that makes it hard to seek help**
  - stigma, cultural taboo, pride, shame, embarrassment, shyness/anxiety
CAPS RESOURCES FOR MANAGING STRESS

- mitalk.umich.edu
- Wellness Zone
- Drop-in workshops
- Diverse set of counseling groups
- Individual counseling
- Urgent / Walk-in appointment (Counselor-on-Duty)
About CAPS

- Personal and CONFIDENTIAL
- Free for enrolled students
- Diverse and multi-disciplinary staff
- Wellness Zone – Drop in to relax
About CAPS

Top 5 student concerns:
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Self-esteem
- Academic role
- Relationship issues

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- Mon-Thur 8am-7pm; Fri 8m-5pm
- caps.umich.edu & mitalk.umich.edu
- 734-764-8312