
Handling conflict

19a: Difficult Conversations: A Framework to Strengthen Communication and Conflict Resolution Skills in our Communities

Ryan Smith (United States of America)

Offering presentations to your campus community can be a great way to engage in conflict resolution in a proactive way, and on a broader scale. It also provides a way to promote your office and work. The model presented in *Difficult Conversations* (Stone, Patton, and Heen 1999) presents an accessible way to engage with communication and conflict resolution skills. It also provides a shared language that groups on campus can utilize in building conflict skills and resilience. I will share this model and discuss how I incorporate it into workshops and presentations for students and staff.

Presenter(s):

Ryan Smith: Assistant University Ombudsperson at Michigan State University in East Lansing Michigan, in the United States. He holds an MA in international development and a doctorate in higher education, both from the University of Denver. His research interests include historical and comparative analyses of ombuds, conflict resolution, and educational systems.

19b: Complaints on Complaints: Higher Education Ombuds and the Issue of Reprisal

Carolyn Brendon (Canada)

This session will consider the issue of reprisal in relation to Ombuds practice: How are Ombuds uniquely positioned to reduce this barrier to coming forward with a complaint; what are best practices to objectively appraise and inform visitors of the risk of reprisal when providing dispute-resolution advice and assistance; and, in what circumstances should Ombuds investigate and make recommendations when reprisal is alleged to have occurred. Further, this session will also consider systemic and policy recommendations to enhance the ability of individuals to seek recourse for unfair decisions or actions without putting their education and future careers in jeopardy.

Presenter(s):

Carolyn Brendon: University Ombuds for McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, a role she has held since 2003. She holds a law degree from Osgoode Hall Law School, an M.A. from McMaster University, and an Honours B.A. from York University. Her certifications include the FCO-Osgoode Certificate in Essentials for Ombuds, as well as Adjudication for Administrative Boards, Agencies and Tribunals; Advanced Investigations; and Human Rights: Theory and Practice. She is the president of the Association of Canadian College and University Ombudspersons (ACCUO) and a board member for the Forum of Canadian Ombudsman (FCO).