



**MENTAL
HEALTH
ACTION WEEK**



California
Community
Colleges
**HEALTH &
WELLNESS**



California
Community
Colleges



METTA Meditation:
For ourselves, our colleagues,
our students



Welcome & Introductions

Jacqueline Alvarez, Mental Health & Health Services Specialist at jalvarez@cccoco.edu

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Housekeeping



Chat and Q&A: Please utilize the chat or Q&A function to ask questions throughout.



Closed Captioning (CC): Closed captions are available. Click on the (CC) button to read live captions.



Meeting Materials: Slides and any follow up materials will be provided following the presentation.



Recording: We are recording today's session, and the recording will be made available on the website in the coming weeks.

About Your Facilitators

Dr. Monique Mendoza's unique combination of psychology expertise and diverse sector experience equips her with an unparalleled understanding of the complex dynamics in workplace violence prevention. She opposes industry scare tactics and prioritizes services that inspire confidence and resilience.

- Latina business owner of MM Psychology and Solutions, Inc.
- Former Director of Behavioral Threat Management Teams in Higher Education
- Licensed Psychologist, California for 12+ years



About Your Facilitators

Dr. Patrick Savaiano is a licensed psychologist and the Director of Behavioral Health and Wellness at Palomar College. Patrick is committed to social justice and multicultural frameworks as well as preventative services that reduce stigma and reach students who may not historically have had access to mental health services. Since joining Palomar College in 2019, Patrick has served as a core member of the college's Student of Concern team, providing regular consultation to campus partners regarding behavioral and mental health concerns.





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CRISIS DE-ESCALATION STRATEGIES: The Next Level of Support

Presented by Dr. Monique Mendoza and Dr. Patrick Savaiano
for the 2024 CCC Mental Health Action Week

Define Disruptive Behavior.

Describe the risk perception factors and communication errors that distort one's view of actual threats.

Understand critical components when responding to a request involving high emotion or demand.

Apply strategies to reduce the impact of vicarious trauma in the workplace



Learning Objectives

Disruptive Behavior Defined

**BEHAVIOR THAT INTERFERES WITH
THE FUNCTION AND FLOW OF
STANDARD BUSINESS PRACTICES.**

-
- Aggression toward office staff/fellow students
 - Directed threatening communication
 - Threats of violence
 - Unyielding argument or debate
 - Incessant email/other communication
 - Yelling in or out of the office space
 - Untimely talking or outburst
 - Engaging in content on a device others find disruptive



Differences observed since COVID

- **INCREASED RESISTANCE TO OBSERVING STATED PROCEDURES**
- **INCREASED STRESS/CONCERN ABOUT IN-PERSON INTERACTIONS**
- **INCREASED DIFFICULTY READING FACIAL CUES**
- **DECREASED INTERPERSONAL SKILLS FOR IN-PERSON INTERACTIONS**
- **DECREASED ABILITY TO INTERPRET NON-VERBAL CUES**



Verbal and Nonverbal Communication

Read the room

**ENTRANCE/EXIT
BODY LANGUAGE
TONE
APPEARANCE
LEVEL OF AGITATION
COMMUNICATION VARIANCES**

Why the reaction?

**FEELING HELPLESS
FEELING OUT OF CONTROL
LASHING OUT
NEGATIVE THINKING
ASSUMING MALINTENT**

What's the ask?

**FACTS OVER FEELINGS
IS THIS URGENT?
HOW ARE YOU RECEIVING
THE REQUEST?
WHAT ARE THE SUGGESTED
SOLUTIONS?
CAN YOU ACCOMMODATE
THE REQUEST?**





Let's Review

THE PUBLIC INTERACTION

Lydia enters the waiting area in a rush. She demands to speak to a counselor and, saying, “This is the third time I’m here, and no one will listen to me.” The front desk student manager asks her to sit in the lobby to await being met with. As Lydia waits, she talks loudly on the phone. Within 5 minutes, she approaches the front desk demanding to be helped, creating tension in the waiting area.





Risk Perception Factors

DISTORTED OR MAGNIFIED PERCEPTIONS OF RISKS KEEP US FROM TAKING ACTION.

**Does it
affect
me?**

**WE DON'T PERCEIVE RISK TO OTHERS AS
FEARFULLY AS WE DO RISKS TO
OURSELVES.**

**EX: SOMEONE YELLING THAT IS DIRECTED
TOWARD ANOTHER STAFF MEMBER**



Span of Control

**IF WE FEEL WE CAN'T CONTROL AN
EVENT'S OUTCOME, THEN WE ARE MORE
LIKELY TO BE WORRIED.**

**EX: UNPREPARED TO RESPOND TO AN
IMMEDIATE REQUEST.**



The Dread Factor

**THE WORST THE OUTCOME FROM A RISK,
THE MORE CONCERNED WE BECOME.**

**EX: “I’M GOING TO TELL YOUR
SUPERVISOR” VS “I’M GOING TO REPORT
YOU TO YOUR LICENSING BOARD.”**



Action over Inaction



**WHEN WE DEFAULT TO TAKING ACTION
BECAUSE THE CHOICE TO DO NOTHING OR
WAIT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE AN OPTION.**

**EX: WHEN A PERSON INSISTS ON
APPROVING A REQUEST THAT GOES
AGAINST A KNOWN POLICY OR
PROCEDURE.**

Risk Perception Factors

DOES IT AFFECT ME?

SPAN OF CONTROL

THE DREAD FACTOR

ACTION VS. INACTION






Let's Review

THE IN-PERSON INTERACTION

It's Friday, 4:00 PM. Adeem needs a signature from your office by 4:30 PM to submit his application, which is only provided via electronic submission. They insist they will not leave the office until they receive the signature. They begin to use your name and say they will report you to your supervisor for being unhelpful and rude.





Solution-based Communication:



Empathy | Options | Action

DEMONSTRATE EMPATHY

**USE NONVERBAL
COMMUNICATION
ASSURANCES**

OUTLINE OPTIONS

**CLEARLY STATE ACTION/
NEXT STEP**



Empathy Options Action



Let's Review

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Let's Practice

THE IN-PERSON INTERACTION

1.THANK LYDIA FOR RETURNING TO ADDRESS HER CONCERN.

1.“I’M VERY SORRY TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE IN OUR OFFICE.”

1.“I’M GOING TO CALL OUR COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT...”

1.“I’M CONFIDENT WE CAN HAVE SOMEONE COME DOWN AND TALK TO YOU WITHIN THE NEXT FEW MINUTES.”



WHEN IS IT OK TO REMOVE YOURSELF FROM THE SITUATION

Withdrawal from a situation for safety reasons is NOT a failure/job abandonment.

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR OWN NEEDS AND REACTIONS

We have individual ideas of safety and security when we feel threatened.

NOTIFYING THE POLICE

Identify other methods for methodical responses to an escalating incident.



Boundaries: Withdrawal is an Option

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Boundaries: Withdrawal is an Option



**AT WHICH POINT WOULD YOU
CONSIDER IT A BOUNDARY CROSSING?**



Let's Review

THE ONGOING DISRUPTION

Leslie is a student who has emailed you 10 times in the last 24 hours. Her emails are pages long and do not have a request. She says she will keep contacting your office until someone responds to her needs. When you arrive at work the next day, you become aware of three other colleagues who have received similar emails. In her latest message, she has CCed many local news outlets demanding legal action against your offices. Leslie notes that next time she stops by she will “really give it to the people that work there.”



Vicarious Trauma

INCLUDES “WITNESSING,” REFLEXING, AND INCURRING EMOTIONAL LABOR FROM DISCLOSURE OF TRAUMA.

- “Taking your work home with you”
- Secondary Traumatic Stress
- Compassion Fatigue
- Work Stress
- Burnout



SUPPORTING A CULTURE OF CARE

- Training and preparation
- Debriefing
- Scheduling regular support and supervision



BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION TEAMS

- MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM
- DEFINED BEHAVIORS OF CONCERN
- CLEAR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
- IDENTIFIED ESCALATION PROCESS
- ONGOING TRAINING FOR CAMPUS
STAKEHOLDERS



SPOTLIGHT: PALOMAR COLLEGE

MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM

- **REPRESENTATION FROM BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, CAMPUS POLICE, AND STUDENT LIFE AND LEADERSHIP.**
- **AD HOC MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO CONSULT WITH THE TEAM BASED ON ADDITIONAL AREAS OF EXPERTISE NEEDED TO PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT AND CONSULTATION ON ANY CASE.**



SPOTLIGHT: PALOMAR COLLEGE

- **MEET EACH MONDAY TO DISCUSS NEW STUDENTS OF CONCERN, UPDATE CASE INFORMATION, AND DISCUSS WAYS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS.**
 - **REGULARLY CONSULT ON CASES REQUIRING TIMELY ATTENTION.**





SUPPORTING A CULTURE OF CARE

- Training and preparation
- Debriefing
- Scheduling regular support and supervision





STEPS YOU CAN TAKE NOW

**DEFINE BEHAVIORS OF
CONCERN**

**CREATE CLEAR POLICIES
AND PROCEDURES**

**IDENTIFY ESCALATION
PROCESS**

**SCHEDULE AWARENESS
TRAINING FOR
STAKEHOLDERS**

Together, we...

Defined disruptive behaviors.

Reviewed risk perceptions factors that remind us to connect with facts over feelings.

Utilized Empathy | Options | Action to de-escalate interactions.

Shared strategies tailored for Community Colleges to create a culture of care.



QUESTIONS?





California Community Colleges

Thank you!

For any questions, please email Jackie at jalvarez@cccco.edu

www.cccco.edu