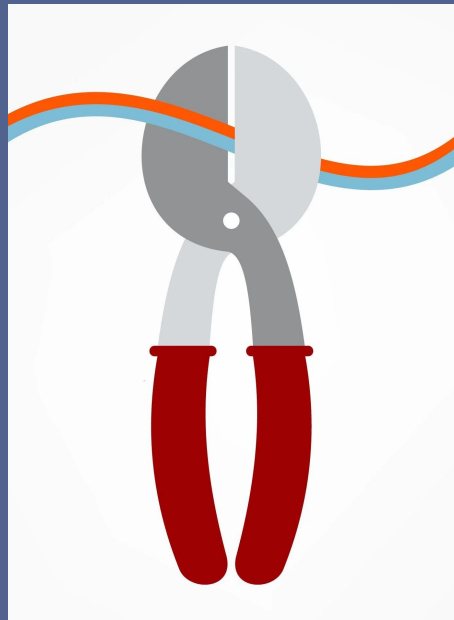


Defusing Disruptive Behavior



A Toolkit

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Introduction

Disruptive behavior is defined as that which creates an uncomfortable, hostile, or unsafe environment.¹

Are you new here? Welcome! If you are not familiar with the topic, I encourage you to review the video and/or the white paper before exploring this toolkit - it was designed for those who have some familiarity with the concepts upon which it was created.

I developed this “toolkit” based upon what I have learned researching the topic of disruptive behavior in healthcare education. A significant amount of research addresses the prevalence and effects of disruptive behavior in healthcare professions, as well. While there are some differences, there are thematic elements related to the causes, impacts, and interventions that I believe may be helpful to practitioners as well as to educators.

No matter how much evidence there is to support an intervention, context is key. The most successful approach in an academic setting may be a complete failure in the workplace, and vice-versa. Research in both environments has demonstrated that increasing awareness of disruptive behavior,²⁻⁴ improving communication skills,^{3,5} and improving coping skills/self-efficacy^{3,4,6} are effective in reducing its prevalence and impacts. Another tool is self-awareness; demonstrated to improve communication, interpersonal relationships, and conflict management,⁷ all key factors in reducing disruptive behavior.

It is my hope that you find something helpful here!

~ Jaymi

Recognition and Response

“What hurts the victim most is not the cruelty of the oppressor, but the silence of the bystander.” ~ Elie Wiesel

Have you ever been faced with disruptive behavior and wondered “How does that person keep getting away with (fill in the reprehensible behavior here)???”

Well...has anyone tried to stop it?

One approach introduced to address disruptive behavior points out the harm in bearing silent witness - being a bystander. Bystanders may not intervene due to fear of becoming a target or making the situation worse, lack of support from supervisors, lack of policies governing workplace behavior, and/or a lack of confidence. Sadly, these bystanders may experience the same negative physical and mental health impacts as the target just from observing the disruptive behavior.⁸

The suggestion? Be an “upstander.”

Upstanders support the person that is the target of the behavior by speaking up when they witness it and attempting to stop it. While direct intervention is admirable, it is not always necessary. Upstanders can set an example for others by refusing to participate in disruptive behaviors such as gossip, inappropriate jokes, rumors, cyberbullying, and microaggressions.⁸

At the organizational level, leadership support is critical. Tools that support upstanding in the workplace include establishing behavioral norms, zero-tolerance policies, positive role-modeling, and education about disruptive behavior.

The biggest takeaway? Offenders are more likely to cease disruptive behavior if witnesses intervene.⁸

Communication: The PAAIL Strategy

“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.” ~ George Bernard Shaw

One strategy for improving communication to reduce disruptive behavior is to use an evidence-based conversation framework, such as Preview, Advocacy, Advocacy, Inquiry, and Listen (PAAIL). This has been proven effective in both the workplace⁸ and in educational settings.⁹

The PAAIL Strategy:

- Preview: I'd like to talk to you about _____.
- Advocacy (1): I saw (or heard or noticed...) _____.
- Advocacy (2): I'm concerned because _____.
- Inquiry: I wonder what was on your mind at the time?
- Listen: Listen carefully and intentionally to the response.

PAAIL Scenario: During a team meeting, Tallulah, an experienced hygienist, made critical comments about the skills of Simone, a newly hired hygienist. There were 8 employees present, none of whom said anything. Two days later, Simone quits, leaving the office short-handed. The dentist is furious.

How could this have been addressed using PAAIL?

For this scenario, we will consider that Gemma, another coworker, decided to be an upstander and spoke to Tallulah...

- Preview: Tallulah, I'd like to talk to you about what happened in the meeting.
- Advocacy (1): I noticed that you were very critical of Simone.
- Advocacy (2): I'm concerned because this could impact our team.
- Inquiry: What are your thoughts about what happened?
- Listen: Gemma then listens carefully to Tallulah's response.

Codes of Conduct

Behavior is the mirror in which everyone shows their image.

~Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Codes of conduct have been shown to be an effective intervention for disruptive behaviors in both academia^{10,11} and the workplace.¹²

But.... where to start?

The most important aspect of any code of conduct is that it conveys the importance of creating and maintaining a psychologically safe environment. With this foundation, codes can be tailored to meet the specific needs of an organization while considering the target population. While the language may differ depending on the intended audience, it is important that descriptions of disruptive behavior be specific.

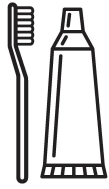
A code of conduct may or may not include consequences for violations. It may be posted in a highly visible place or require a signature (or both). Keep in mind that depending on the workplace, there may be a legal requirement for enforcing aspects of the code.

It is best to include the following:

- An introductory statement: The rationale for having the code.
- A list of specific behaviors of concern
- A statement about consequences for violation of the code
- A request for those who have witnessed or been the targets of these behaviors to report them, and to whom.

The following page includes suggestions for language which could be tailored to suit the needs of a code of conduct for students, employees, or patients/clients.

Sample Code of Conduct



Mental Dental University Code of Conduct



Our goal at Mental Dental is to ensure a safe, caring, and respectful environment for our students, employees, and patients. Our Code of Conduct helps ensure that we meet this goal.

As a student, employee, or patient, we ask for you to help by avoiding behaviors that are considered disrespectful, threatening, discriminatory, hostile, or otherwise offensive. Examples include:

- Comments about appearance, race/ethnicity, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, or other personal traits.
- Refusal to be treated by/work with another person based on personal traits.
- Harassment
- Physical or verbal threats
- Bullying/cyberbullying
- Words or actions of a sexual or vulgar nature
- Disrupting the learning experience or care of another student or patient.
- Taking photos or videos of students, employees, or other patients without permission.

If it is believed that you have violated this code of conduct, we will inform you and provide you with the opportunity to explain your point of view. ***Explain consequences here:*** Violations will lead to a required meeting with/report to/request to leave premises/etc.

If you have witnessed or been the target of any of the behaviors above, or others that make you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, please report it to **(xxx)** as soon as possible.

Self-Awareness

“Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves.”
~ Carl Jung

A few words on personality and behavior...

These terms are often used interchangeably but are not the same. Personality is the driving force behind behavior, it encompasses values and beliefs, and relates to how one thinks and feels.¹³ Behaviors are actions that are observable to others.¹⁴

Improving self-awareness may help prevent or defuse disruptive behavior in several ways, including:

- Providing insight into preferences that influence behavior¹⁵
- Promoting personal and professional development⁷
- Leading to more effective communication^{7,13}
- Improving self-esteem/self-efficacy⁷
- Improving interpersonal relationships and conflict management⁷
- Reducing behavior-based bias¹³

There are several tools available for personality/trait/type assessment. They have been proven extremely effective in helping one understand one's own behavior, as well as to understand the behavior of others. However, it is important to recognize some limitations – these are not “magic wands!”

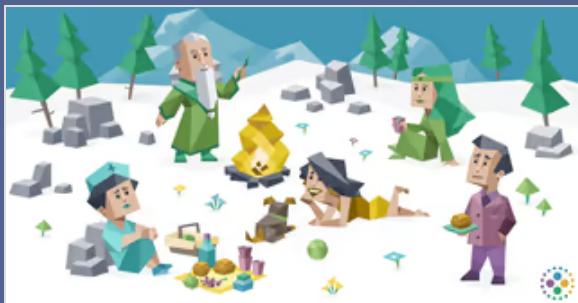
No one tool can provide a complete description of an individual, as it is not possible to measure every aspect of personality/behavior. All of the tools are meant to be used to identify both strengths and challenges, yet they have different theoretical underpinnings.

Please see the next page for links to some of these tools.

Self-Awareness: Tools

Keep in mind: Most traits/types are based upon a person's preference, or what is most comfortable for them, and there is no one "type" that is better than another. In addition, people do not always "act" within their "type" or "traits" – it is sometimes necessary to function outside of one's preference. Even those with the same personality type will likely have differences in behavior, as behavior is affected by environment and experiences.^{13,15}

Links to Free Tools (more detailed reports offered for a fee):
CLICK IMAGES to visit!



Free personality test, type descriptions, relationship and...

Only 10 minutes to get a "freakishly accurate" description of who you are and why you do things the way you do.

 16Personalities

16 Personalities

- Does not require an account to use
- Available in 30 languages



TRUITY

Truity

Free Personality Tests and Career Assessments

truity.com

Truity: DiSC, Big 5, Emotional Intelligence

Links to Tools that have a fee: **CLICK IMAGES to visit!**



Discprofile.com

Explore the world of Everything DiSC® and The Five Behaviors® – the best-selling personality...

 Discprofile.com



Proven Corporate Soft Skills Training...

tracom.com

True Colors Intl. | Global Consulting and Training...

The official website for True Colors International, a consulting and training company that helps...

 truecolorsintl.com

Official Myers Briggs Test & Personality Assessment

Take the official Myers Briggs test and personality assessment to explore career, relationship, and...

 mbtionline.com

In Summary

“I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

~Maya Angelou

Disruptive behaviors are prevalent in the learning environment, workplaces, and society.

To reduce their impact, it is critical that we are able to understand, identify, and defuse them before they take their physical and emotional toll.

To that end, I hope that this toolkit has provided you with something useful.

~ Jaymi



DisruptEDU is an online community dedicated to improving teaching, learning, and healthcare outcomes by reducing disruptive behaviors.

The goal of DisruptEDU is to raise awareness of effective interventions and connect professionals to inform and encourage future research.

Please consider joining the effort by sharing this information and/or following DisruptEDU:



DisruptEDU.co

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