

# Advocacy and Conflict Resolution

**Kyla Turpin Ross**

*Assistant Vice Provost for Advocacy and Conflict Resolution  
Office of the Provost*

**David Anderson**

*Assistant Director of Advocacy and Conflict Resolution  
Graduate and Postdoctoral Education*

# Advocacy and Conflict Resolution – The Team



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Education

# What resources are available?

- **Consultation:** Seek guidance on dispute resolution and Institute policies and procedures.
- **Mediation:** Engage with a trained facilitator to informally resolve disputes between parties.
- **Training:** Request a workshop on how to productively navigate conflict and resolution.
- **Coaching:** Collaborate with a thought partner to advance your personal and professional goals.

<https://provost.gatech.edu/reporting-units/advocacy>

# What are common sources of conflict for research scientists and postdocs?

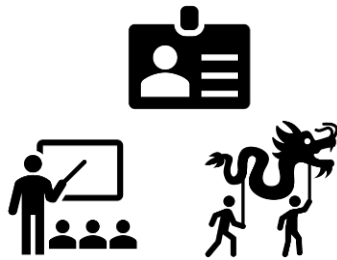
- Authorship or attribution
- Institutional policies and procedures
- Interpersonal communication
- Intellectual property
- Milestones
- Performance evaluations
- Professionalism
- Research progress
- Work expectations
- Work-life integration
- ...and many more

# Reflection

Think of a recent conflict or negotiation that you have experienced. During or after...

- How did you feel emotionally?
- How did you feel physically?
- How did you act?

# Managing, Leveraging, & Mitigating Conflict



**Thought Worlds**  
Different perspective  
and experiences



**Perceptual Gaps**  
Different  
Understanding of the  
Problem



**Cognitive & Affective  
Integration**  
Bridging gaps



**Conflict Episode**  
Effectively expressing  
and managing  
conflict

# Conflict: Positive and Negative Effects

## POSITIVE EFFECT

Facilitates idea generation and creativity

Avoids groupthink Identifies problems

More thorough search and deliberation

Increases productivity

## NEGATIVE EFFECTS

Detracts from cohesion

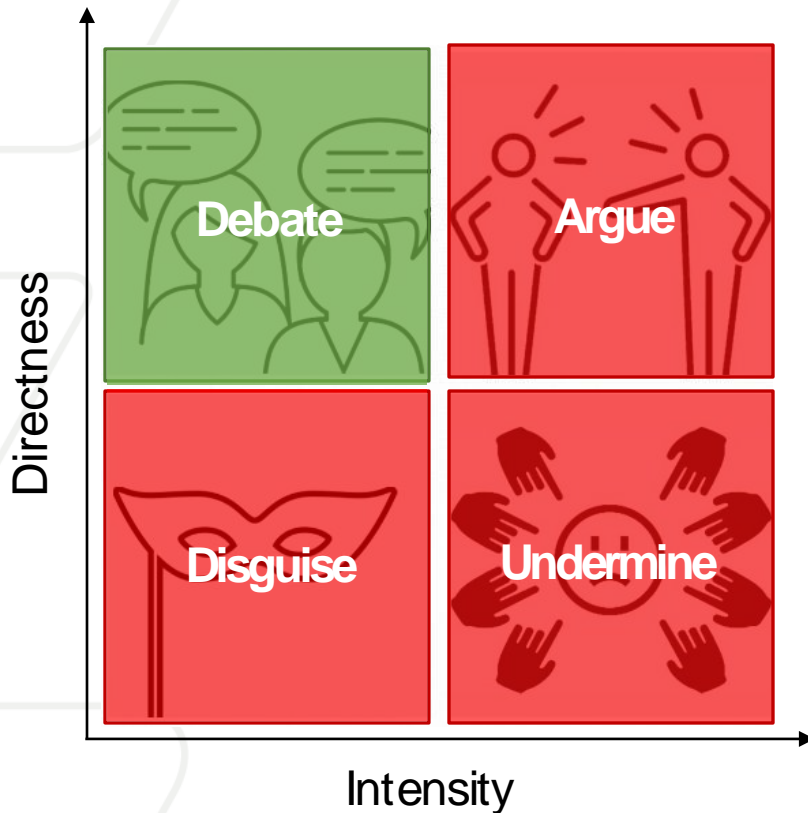
Decreases group satisfaction

Increases team stress

Reduces productivity

How do you get the benefits of conflict and leave the negative effects behind?

# Conflict Expression Matters!



## Debate

Contentious points are clear; calmly presented

- ▼ Conflict Spirals
- ▲ Information
- ▼ Negative Emotions
- ▲ Positive Emotions

## Argue

Clear disagreement, evokes defensiveness

- ▲ Conflict Spirals
- ▲ Information
- ▲ Negative Emotions

## Disguise

Ambiguous reason why there is conflict

- ? Conflict Spirals
- ? Information
- ? Negative Emotions

## Undermine

Dismissing, Teasing, Complaining

- ▼ Conflict Spirals
- ▼ Information
- ▲ Negative Emotions



**Dialogue is only possible when people feel psychologically safe**

Source: Patterson, K. (2002). *Crucial conversations: Tools for talking when stakes are high*. Tata McGraw-Hill Education.

# Crucial Conversations: Maintain Safety

## COACHING OTHERS



- **“Learn to look”** for signs that psychological safety is at risk
- Actively listen
- Get curious
- **Separate facts from stories**

# Negotiation: Interests vs. Positions

## POSITIONS

- *What* they say they want
- Demands
- Things they will/won't do
- Subjective wants

## INTERESTS

- *Why* they want it - motivations
- Concerns
- Fears and aspirations
- Objective needs

The key to effective negotiation is to **understand** and **align interests**.

# Some Practical Advice

- Model behaviors that promote psychological safety and positive well-being
- Familiarize yourself with [student and employment policies](#)
- Attempt to resolve matters informally and at the lowest possible level, whenever possible
- If you suspect a policy violation, refer to the appropriate contact:
  - **Student** – [Ron Mazique](#) (Office of Student Integrity)
  - **Faculty/Postdoc** – [Kyla Turpin Ross](#) (Office of the Provost)
  - **Staff** – [Jarmon DeSadier](#) (Georgia Tech Human Resources)
- Refer members of your unit to resources ([Employee Assistance Program](#) or [Division of Student Life](#)), as needed

# Be part of the solution...with us!

- Ask for help and resources
- Be proactive whenever possible
- Consult with us on challenge cases
- Identify gaps and challenge areas
- Invite us to your units (info and/or trainings)
- Share your ideas for solutions

# Resources

- **Georgia Tech Resources:**
  - [Georgia Tech Expectations of Advisors and Advisees](#) (from course catalog)
  - [Effective Practices in Graduate Advising](#)
  - [Individual Development Plans \(IDPs\)](#)
  - Your own mentors
- **Books:**
  - **"Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking when Stakes are High"** by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, and Al Switzler
  - **"Dare to Lead: Brave Work, Tough Conversations, Whole Hearts"** by Brené Brown
  - **"The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth"** by Amy Edmondson
  - **"The Five Dysfunctions of a Team"** by Patrick Lencioni



# Thank you!

# Questions?

Email: [advocacy@gatech.edu](mailto:advocacy@gatech.edu)



Feedback Survey

