
Cultivating Mentors: Workshop B

This 2-hour workshop focuses on *dealing with conflict* in an effort to equip mentors in the biological sciences with the skills to infuse their professional relationships and spaces with the *core mentoring principle of respect*, thus contributing to establishing a culture in which all members thrive and next generation leaders are nurtured.

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PROGRAM OUTLINE

Introduction (10 min)

Introduce self

Hi, my name is ____, and I _____ with _____. I'll be your facilitator today.

Introduce this project

This workshop is part of a 3 part series focused on improving mentorship and leadership in the sciences. It was developed in collaboration between UNC's BBSP and local interactive theatre for social change group, Theater Delta. While you don't have to take all 3 workshops to get something out of this one, they do add up to be greater than the sum of their parts. Today we'll talk about Handling Conflict. And, if you haven't already, we hope you'll check out the sessions on Giving and Receiving Feedback and Communicating Expectations in the Lab Environment.

Introduce the Format

Today our focus is on a few ways conflict might show up.

Optional Personal Connection:

If the facilitator has personal thoughts or connections to why this is important, they might give a little acknowledgement here:

As someone who _____, I'm particularly _____ to be a part of this discussion with you all.

And because this is an important topic, we're hoping to go a little deeper than just giving you a list of buzzwords or platitudes to deal with it. This will be interactive, because I know there's already a lot of wisdom on this topic in the room.

Over the course of our time together, we'll watch 2 videos of problematic scenarios; interact with the content by thinking of and practicing ways we might try to change the outcomes of these conflicts; and then we'll have a larger discussion about what this all brings up for us. Just a note about the videos: the scenarios you'll see were written based on composite responses to interviews from/in y/our field, so keep that in mind as you watch and think about what's worth discussing.

(ONLINE) Also—we will have a brief bio break at the one-hour mark!

(IN PERSON) Also—we will have a quick stretch break at the one-hour mark.

Grounding Intentions

To help us all get the most out of our time together, I want to propose some grounding intentions for the group:

1. **Stay present.** *Unplug from other conversations for this time. Turn off laptops and cell phones. Stay engaged to learn from what comes up in the group and within yourself.*

2. **Move forward/Move back.** Please bring your voice to the conversation and also allow space for other voices.
3. And finally, **lean into discomfort.** We're not just here to diagnose the problems of others, but to experience some change ourselves, so I encourage you to be self-reflective. This may lead to some discomfort, but that's okay! Learning and change cannot happen without leaving our comfort zones a little. The methods we use in these workshops are modeled around the idea of a "rehearsal for life." This means we may mess up a little here and there. This is expected. But as you/we know from y/our work, mistakes and even failure are an important part of the process.

Can I get some head nods that we're on board with these things? Anything we want to add or question?

Alternative Grounding Intentions

For groups that will be participating in all three workshops in a relatively brief time frame, it's worth considering alternative grounding intentions (see *Train-the-Trainer Session Five notes for more details*). Offering different grounding intentions for each workshop may equip participants with multiple options to incorporate into their own meeting practices. However, some participants may prefer the consistency of using the same grounding intentions for all three workshops, as these have been specifically chosen to support this material. Consider your audience carefully and trust your instinct.

Warm Up One: Baseline Body Scan (5 min)

Before we get going with our first exercise, I want us to try to align our minds and our bodies together, helping to ground us in this moment together. One way we like to do that is with breath and a body scan. Wherever you are, just get into a comfortable position. That may look like having both feet on the floor and your hands in your lap or by your sides. You can close your eyes if you like, but you don't have to. We aren't going into a meditation here - we just want to relax and notice our bodies. Starting with your feet, do you notice any discomfort? Tension? Try wiggling your toes and bring your attention to your ankles. Lift your ankles up and down, rotate them in a circle. Now notice your legs. Any tension? Move your attention up towards your trunk or torso. How does your stomach feel? Take a deep breath in and let it out slowly.

Let's keep going - notice your upper back and shoulders. Do you feel any tension? Try dropping your chin toward your collarbone, stretching your neck a little. Rotate your head side to side, up and down. Move your attention down your forearms, to your elbows, and now your hands. How are they feeling? Rotate your wrists and wiggle your fingers. Take another deep breath in and let it out slowly.

Alright, feel free to shake out anything that might still be holding some tension. What did you notice during that body scan? Were any parts of your body experiencing tension? How are you feeling now? [Affirm responses.] Excellent. Hold on to that. We're going to come back to a body scan later, but first, I want to invite you to move your bodies as you are able for our first exercise.

Warm Up Two: Values Clarification (10 min)

Give Opening Instructions

In the spirit of easing into the edges of our comfort zones, I want to get us all warmed up to the idea of getting involved, stepping in, or leaning in. So, you may have done something like this before, we're going to do a little values clarification exercise, to get us thinking about what we're arriving with around this topic of conflict.

To start, I'll ask you all to stand as you're able, and we'll establish that the center of the room, here is "neutral." This wall is "strongly agree" and the opposite wall is "strongly disagree." I'll read a series of statements and you can position yourselves according to how you align—or don't align—with the statement. After each one, there will be the opportunity to share why you are where you are, but that's not an obligation.

Online Alternative Instructions:

In the spirit of easing into the edges of our comfort zones, I want to get us all warmed up to the idea of getting involved, stepping in, or leaning in. So, you may have done something like this before, we're going to do a little values clarification exercise, to get us thinking about what we're arriving with around this topic of conflict.

OPTION A:

To start, I'll ask us all to position ourselves a similar distance to or from our screens so that our heads are all about the same size. Now remember where you are; we'll establish that this distance from the screen is "neutral." Moving closer to the screen indicates that you "agree" and moving away from the screen indicates that you "disagree." I'll read a series of statements and you can position yourselves according to how you align—or don't align—with the statement. After each one, there will be the opportunity to share why you are where you are, but that's not an obligation.

OPTION B:

Incorporate the use of online document collaboration, such as Mural or Google's Jamboard. Each participant creates or selects a "sticky note" style avatar and then moves their avatar according to the in-person instructions wherein the side of the room is equivalent to the side of the document. See "Resources" for links and examples.

Initiate the Activity

Any questions about the instructions? Okay, here we go. Agree, Disagree, or Neutral...

Statements:

- *I avoid conflict at all costs. (Ask a few people in different positions to explain their placement.)*
- *As a general rule, adults in a workplace can handle their own interpersonal problems. Bystanders shouldn't get involved. (Again ask for volunteers to offer their "why.")*
- *When conflict arises, it's best for an authority figure to remain neutral. (One more round of "why.")*

Debrief Warm Up (5 min)

So to state the obvious...it's complicated. Even without the details of a particular conflict, the very idea of conflict itself is complicated for us.

Maybe even name some of the major themes or differing attitudes that are in the room.

I want to say up front that this exercise and this workshop are not meant as a basis for judgment, but rather as an invitation for us all to start to take inventory of our attitudes toward issues that may arise, so we can each reflect on how we may want to stretch to work with what we've got.

We've all learned various responses to coping with conflict throughout our lives—and we've all got our reasons for those...Now in our respective roles, we have to take stock and ask if those responses are still serving us and those we are accountable to.

Video of Scenario Three: Conflict in the Moment (10 min)

Now, let's get into some hypothetical details that might help us go even deeper and practice.

[Play Video 1: *That's Not My Job*]

Leader's Note:

In this scene, the characters Ron and Natalie argue about the recent use (or misuse) of a microscope in the lab. However, the lab equipment featured in the video is a stereoscope, not a microscope. Consider letting your participants know this in advance so that it doesn't become a distracting flaw. Remind them (if needed) to focus on the way different lab members engage with one another and how this impacts lab productivity and climate.

Body Scan (5 min)

Okay, that was a lot. Before we dive in to talking about it, let's start by just taking a private moment to notice what even watching a situation like that stirs up in our own physical reactions. So I invite you to turn your attention inwards here and just check in. You might do a quick body scan, starting with your feet, and checking in with each part from there to notice what, if anything, is going on. Is there tension or energy hanging out in the body? Or the mind?

[After a minute]

Again, we're just noticing our reactions. No need to judge them.

To transition, let's take a deep breath in and out together. You might even stretch or shake something on the exhale. Ready?

Inhale.

Exhale.

Naming Notable Themes and Dynamics, Video Three (10 min)

Now, let's name what we saw at play in the video.

[Make a list of topics that arise for later. Consider using the optional *Graphic Organizer: Notable Themes* found under "Resources." This may be distributed individually to participants, projected onto a whiteboard, or screen shared during a virtual program. Also consider using Jamboard or other online shared document tool for virtual delivery.]

Leader's Note:

Remember this is just an overview. Participants may be eager to dive into discussion, so be prepared to gently redirect and focus on identifying the issues. Keep this to just 5 minutes.

If participants are reticent, try following up with these questions:

- *What are major themes and dynamics that stick out to you?*
- *And on the flip side, what didn't we see?*
- *Did anything in here feel particularly familiar or relevant? If yes, what? If not, why?*
- *If nothing changes, what do we think might happen next?*
- *What's at stake here?*
- *Assuming that we can't change the main participants in the conflicts, (Right? That would be too easy.) who else might be able to change this situation?*

Bio Break + Content Warning (5 min)

We're going to discuss this more after we add another hypothetical scenario into the mix. And before we do that, let's take 5 minutes to breathe, stretch and let what's happened so far sink in. Feel free to move around the room, get your water, say hello, but don't go far because we're coming back at ____:____. I'll give a heads up here, too, that our scenario after the break involves verbal description of sexual harassment, so if there's anything you need to do or any way I can support you in advance of that, please check in in whatever way feels appropriate.

Video of Scenario Four: Reported Conflict (10 min)

So the first scenario we saw showed a conflict in the moment. Our next scenario offers some different challenges.

[Play Video 4: *Keep Your Head Down*]

Body Scan (5 min)

Again, just take a minute here to notice what's happening with you internally.

[After a minute]

And let's take another deep breath in and out together. Inhale, and exhale letting something stretch, move, shake...

Naming Notable Themes and Dynamics, Video Four (10 min)

Now let's name what's going on in this scenario.

[Add to the previously generated list.]

- *What are major themes and dynamics that stick out to you?*
- *And on the flip side, what didn't we see?*
- *Did anything in here feel particularly familiar or relevant? If yes, what? If not, why?*
- *If nothing changes, what do we think might happen next?*
- *What's at stake here?*

Choose Scenario and Primer Discussion (5 min)

Which of these scenarios feels more urgent or most difficult to us as a group? Which one do we want to spend some time on?

[Guide the group to decide, vote if necessary. Once decided, pull up a still photo from the scene:

That's Not My Job: 2:25 (3 characters) or 3:53 (all four characters)

Keep Your Head Down: 5:21

Great. Now I'd like you to turn to a neighbor and take 2 quick minutes to have a primer conversation. Here's your topic: what should the P.I./Lab manager/other bystander do in this scenario? What advice would you give them?

Interaction: Advice/Forum Exercise (20 min)

Share Ideas

Okay, let's bring it back to one big conversation and see what we've come up with. Any good ideas?

During this portion, try to:

- Encourage people to think about what to say to all parties involved
- Redirect victim blaming
- Redirect conflict avoidance
- If necessary, ask “*who has power in this scenario?*” and “*what kinds of power?*”
- If take-away points [see “resources”] arise from the audience, lift these up especially

Initiate Role Play

If good ideas come up, ask if they would like to try them out in a role play/rehearsal for real life. *Who thinks they could portray Bryan/Natalie/Don/Ana? You're not alone here: the audience will give you strategies, and we'll see how this plays out.*

[Give volunteers a couple of minutes to play out the scenario with the suggested changes.]

Learn from Role Play

After a role play, ask the audience if that was realistic.

Follow up questions can include:

- *Was the trouble-maker too easygoing? Too harsh?*
- *Would it really happen that way?*
- *How else might it happen?*

Repeat the Process: adjust and try role playing again. It's the one time in life we actually get a do-over! Remind participants to stay curious during the process. It's not about discovering a "silver bullet" strategy; it's more about learning to anticipate consequences of different decisions and actually practice, with our bodies, different ways to engage and be present in conflicts.

Discussion (10 min)

So we've seen some scenes, reflected on our own reactions to conflict, named issues, asked questions, even practiced/discussed interventions...what's alive for you right now? What's sticking out?

[See also, *Resources: Learning Outcomes/Takeaway Points* for more discussion guidance.]

Leader's Note:

Remember to validate audience contributions more than judge or try to triage them. If helpful, remind participants there may not be simple "closure" at the end of the session and instead there will be opportunity to continue to wrestle with the issues.

Also consider taking another look at the Learning Outcomes and see if any of these could be applied to the scene your group did *not* choose to role play.

Closing (5 min)

We opened up a lot of big topics today...

[List a few from the lists of "Naming Notable Themes and Dynamics" after each video that did or did not get covered.]

and of course it wouldn't be realistic for us to imagine we could completely cover all of this in a couple of hours, but I appreciate that you all were present in this conversation, and I hope you all recognize your role in continuing it moving forward.

I encourage you to continue to reflect on the importance of staying present and proactive about conflicts that arise in your environments - especially where you experience social or institutional power. You'll be receiving resources and follow up in your email inboxes soon, and I hope to see you at one of our other sessions.

RESOURCES

Learning Outcomes/Takeaway Points

You Have a Role to Play

Be aware of the power of your position as a bystander and, potentially, a person of social and institutional authority.

Conflict Resolution Strategy

Basic Formula - you're already practicing key parts here today:

- Be Present and Proactive** (communicate expectations in advance, and notice when they're not being met—revisit these as a common goal)
- Recognize (what's happening, the power dynamics, preempt where you can)
- Name What's in the Room/What's Happening (tension, coercion, problematic behavior...if it's mentionable, it's manageable)
- Ask Questions (with care not to cast doubt on the story of a targeted party. Utilize perception checks: "I'm hearing/sensing/noticing _____...Am I missing the mark? Do you see it differently?")
- Collaborate on Solutions (creating buy-in, taking care to return power and agency to targeted parties who may have been violated)
- Plan to Follow Up (especially making sure a targeted party is safe from retaliation)

**There are added nuances and considerations for any situation, but especially sexual harassment and assault. Be familiar with institutional policies, and be proactive about creating structures (departmental) for them where you can in advance of conflict.

**See our 3rd workshop for setting and communicating expectations.

The Myth of Neutrality Enables Abuse of Power to Continue Unchecked

We may value ideas like "objectivity" and "neutrality," but in a social context in which people are not starting with equal footing, remaining "neutral" in an effort not to take sides, sides with the status quo and those in power by default. "Neutral" is not actually "neutral. Your silence/absence say a lot.

When in doubt, trust the experience and lived expertise of the person in the targeted, less powerful position.

Cultivating Mentors, Workshop B

This 2-hour workshop focuses on *giving and receiving critical feedback* in an effort to equip mentors in the biological sciences with the skills to infuse their professional relationships and spaces with the *core mentoring principle of humility*, thus contributing to establishing a culture in which all members thrive and next generation leaders are nurtured.

Introduction (10 min)

Grounding Intentions:

**Warmup:
Values Clarification**
(15 min)

Observations:

**1st Scenario:
Conflict in the
Moment** (25 min)

Naming Notable Themes and Dynamics:

Bio Break (5 min)

**2nd Scenario:
Reported Conflict**
(25 min)

Naming Notable Themes and Dynamics:

**Advice/Forum
Exercise (25 min)**

Discussion (15 min)

**Personal Summary
& Next Steps**

Extended Engagement

Continuing the Conversation

Workshop facilitators can continue the conversation with participants after the workshop concludes in a variety of ways. This toolkit includes 5 follow up suggestions that provide individual study and reflection resources. These may be sent in daily or weekly emails, as best suits the group. We suggest wrapping up with a lunch or open gathering to discuss the concepts and questions that resonate with participants.

- Follow up One: Privilege Inventory
http://www.cpedv.org/sites/main/files/oppresion_and_privilege_self_assessment.pdf
<https://uncw.edu/studentaffairs/committees/diversity/documents/privilege%20inventory%20-%20abbreviated.docx>

- Follow up Two: Crucial Conversations Part 1 (Managing Your Self)
<https://virtualspeech.com/blog/crucial-conversations>

- Follow up Three: Self Regulation During Conflict
Practice body scanning 3 times today and journal your observations.
<https://hbr.org/2015/12/calming-your-brain-during-conflict>
https://pac.cs.cornell.edu/pubs/CHI2018_RegulatingFeelings.pdf

- Follow up Four: Crucial Conversations Part 2 (Engaging Others)
<https://virtualspeech.com/blog/crucial-conversations>

- Follow up Five: Campus Resources
 - Campus Health Counseling
 - <https://safe.unc.edu>

Continuing the Conversation: Action Plan

Another way participants can continue the conversation after the workshop concludes is to develop an action plan (see next page for sample). Workshop B Takeaway Points are included on the back as “Actionable Practices” or possible goals. We suggest participants identify a mentor, partner, or small group to encourage accountability and progress.

Cultivating Mentors, Workshop B: Action Plan

Goal

Action Steps

Resources

Progress Check

Date:

Actionable Practices

You Have a Role to Play

Be aware of the power of your position as a bystander and, potentially, a person of social and institutional authority.

Conflict Resolution Strategy

Basic Formula - you're already practicing key parts here today:

- Be Present and Proactive** (communicate expectations in advance, and notice when they're not being met—revisit these as a common goal)
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**There are added nuances and considerations for any situation, but especially sexual harassment and assault. Be familiar with institutional policies, and be proactive about creating structures (departmental) for them where you can in advance of conflict.

The Myth of Neutrality Enables Abuse of Power to Continue Unchecked

We may value ideas like "objectivity" and "neutrality," but in a social context in which people are not starting with equal footing, remaining "neutral" in an effort not to take sides, sides with the status quo and those in power by default. "Neutral" is not actually "neutral. Your silence/absence say a lot.

When in doubt, trust the experience and lived expertise of the person in the targeted, less powerful position.

SCENARIO THREE: ACTIVE CONFLICT

(The lab, morning. RON [Black male] comes in and does something at the microscope only to discover something about it isn't right. NATALIE [white female] is working nearby, MICHAEL [white male] is also working close by and looks up from time to time.)

RON: What the--

(RON tries something else and that doesn't work either. He checks the sign-out sheet for the microscope, only to find that it's only got his name on it from the last time he used it. He lets out a sound of frustration.)

NATALIE: Do you mind?

RON: What?

NATALIE: It's kind of hard to work with you huffing and puffing over there.

RON: *(Starts to say something. Stops himself and tries to go back to his own work. Under his breath.)* It's hard for me to work when the microscope was used and not reset to its original settings. *(He makes another attempt to work with it and then gives up.)* Someone's...changed the brightness. I can't...I need to adjust the threshold of what I'm seeing...but the threshold adjuster window isn't even there. *(Long silence as he waits for a response from NATALIE.)*

NATALIE: What? Why are you complaining to me about it?

RON: Weren't you the last one to use it?

NATALIE: How should I know?

RON: Exactly. How would anyone know? It should be on the sign-out sheet, but no one has been filling it out but me. And I didn't leave it this way.

NATALIE: Ask Amrita if she can help you.

RON: Amrita is busy.

NATALIE: So am I.

RON: I saw you using this microscope yesterday.

NATALIE: I don't know what's wrong with it.

RON: So was it like this when you were using it?

NATALIE: I was able to use it just fine as it was.

RON: Then maybe you should take a moment and fix whatever you did.

NATALIE: I didn't do it. It was like that.

RON: Then, why didn't you report the problem? That's what the sheet is for.

NATALIE: Calm down about the sheet. This is not a big deal.

RON: It's a big deal to me when I need to be doing my work but instead I'm wasting time on technical difficulties.

NATALIE: Sorry, dude. That's life.

(RON tries to shake it off, but can't. He laughs to himself.)

RON: It's just...amazing. *(NATALIE ignores him during a long pause, he continues.)* So typical. You can't even be bothered to sign your name on a sheet.

NATALIE: Uggggh! *(Picks up the sign up sheet and signs it)* Here. Is this what you wanted?

RON: It's just common courtesy. Thinking of other people in a communal setting.

NATALIE: Oh please. Don't talk to me about courtesy. You're always leaving stuff—whenever you finish with the gel dock, you leave buffer alllll over the place and expect someone else to clean it up.

RON: What? That's maybe happened one time. And I was going to come back and clean it later.

NATALIE: You don't even notice--the guys never notice that the women are always getting stuck with the housekeeping in this lab. And I'm just expected to drop what I'm doing and scurry around cleaning and fixing things so you can do your work.

RON: I'm not asking you to support my work because you're a woman. We share space, we share equipment. You have to be aware of that and take responsibility for your part.

NATALIE: Don't tell me what I have to do.

RON: Why are you so rude to me? To me in particular? I've watched you. Other people ask you to do something, and you are never this rude. What is it?

NATALIE: Maybe it's the way you approach me, have you ever thought of that?

RON: *(Turning back to his work)* I think it's something else.

NATALIE: Oh?

RON: When I started in this lab, you thought I was the janitor.

NATALIE: What? No I didn't.

RON: You did. Or maintenance staff or something. You came up to me and told me there was a leak—the rain was coming in the window.

NATALIE: I don't remember that.

RON: You were much nicer to me then. When you thought you could treat me like I worked for you.

NATALIE: (*Overlapping*) Is that why you're ordering me around? /Some kind of punishment for some random misunderstanding because I didn't know who you were before I met you?

RON: (*Overlapping*) I'm not ordering you around. I'm asking you to do the little things we're all expected to do.

(*AMRITA [Indian/South Asian female], the lab manager, enters.*)

AMRITA: Okay okay okay okay. Please. Please. You two have to stop. Please. Or go somewhere else. Please.

(*NATALIE stalks off.*)

RON: Amrita, I can't get anything done with her here.

AMRITA: No one can get anything done when you're squabbling and bickering. What's the problem? The microscope? Move. Just let me do it. (*She starts adjusting the equipment.*)

RON: I'm going to get some air. (*Exits*)

MICHAEL: Ugh.

AMRITA: I know. It's ridiculous. Just be adults already.

MICHAEL: It's constant. Even when they're not sniping at each other, it's like you can feel it in the air.

AMRITA: I know. I wish they'd just go to Dr. Jansen or something.

MICHAEL: Well he's never even here.

AMRITA: I wonder why. So very fun to be here. But it's not *my* job to deal with this kind of thing. I'm here to do research, not...play lab mom.

SCENARIO FOUR: REPORTED CONFLICT

(ANA [Latina], a senior grad student comes to the office of KEN [white male], P.I., at the end of the day and taps on the door.)

KEN: Ana, hi, what's up?

ANA: Is this a bad time?

KEN: I'm just tying up some loose ends here before calling it a day. You on your way out?

ANA: No, no, I'll probably be here a while longer. I've been changing up my hours lately.

KEN: One of the benefits of this setting.

ANA: Yeah, I appreciate the flexibility.

KEN: So what brings you in?

ANA: Well, I don't want to cause trouble...

KEN: Uh-oh.

ANA: No, well, I wanted to let you know that I've been having difficulties lately. And maybe see if you have any advice or could help in some way...

KEN: What's going on?

ANA: I've been having a lot of problems working with Bryan lately.

KEN: Ah, yeah. He's a difficult personality.

ANA: He is. And normally I pride myself on being a good collaborator. I really try. I would say I could work with anyone. But it's been getting increasingly difficult.

KEN: Well, and you two are working closely together on this grant.

ANA: Right. Maybe too close. So I've been trying to change up my hours, arrange my schedule so I don't have to be in the same space with him as much, and when I do need to meet with him I try to make it so that there will be other people around, but it's still hard. And I don't work well like this. I'm making mistakes.

KEN: Here's the thing about Bryan. He's brilliant. He has a hard time because he's so brilliant. He isn't...easily understood. He doesn't compromise very well.

ANA: No he doesn't. It's pretty abusive.

KEN: That's a strong way of putting it, but maybe not off-base. But I thought you were one of the few people who were managing to get along with him.

ANA: Well I was managing okay for a while. He would walk over and say things like, “well, that’s a stupid way of doing things,” or ask me if I was a moron just if I had a different plan than he did, but I have a pretty thick skin, and it’s just how he is. And I knew he liked me...which might have been part of the problem. If we were alone in the lab, he would touch me a lot.

KEN: Touch you?

ANA: Just on my shoulder or arm, or sometimes my face. I don’t like that, but if it makes it easier to work with him, whatever.

KEN: Okay...

ANA: But...a few weeks ago, when we were leaving the lab, he asked me out to drinks, just the two of us. And I told him, ‘you know I have a boyfriend.’ And he got really mad. Like ‘I know you have a boyfriend, don’t flatter yourself. It’s just drinks.’

KEN: Okay...

ANA: And ever since then things have been...really tense. If he communicates with me at all, he’s really angry and kind of rough. The other day he grabbed my arm to move me aside...too hard. It made me really nervous, and it’s making everything really difficult, like I said.

KEN: Well...as a rule, I don’t like to get involved in personal matters in the lab like this. Spats and miscommunications.

ANA: Right.

KEN: Generally I trust you all to work these kinds of things out on your own.

ANA: I wouldn’t have said anything, but, like I said, it’s really affecting what I feel like I’m able to do in my work.

KEN: And there’s really nothing I can do. I mean, we all need Bryan to do our ChIP-seq. The reviewers asked for it.

ANA: I know.

KEN: And everyone on the grant needs him to remain a collaborator. The lab’s expected to be able to produce papers on this.

ANA: I’m not asking for you to...get rid of him or anything. I know that’s not realistic.

KEN: So what would you like me to do?

ANA: I’m not sure.

KEN: (*Exhales and rubs his face*) You know, unfortunately, this is just one of the tough things about this field. We can’t work in isolation. It’s just not possible. You’re going to have to find a way to make it work. I wish Bryan was (*chuckles*) a little more tactful, but I don’t think he’s going to change.

ANA: Yeah.

KEN: And I'm sure there are two sides to the story. You know, this is likely a tough time for him. He really needs to be publishing from this project to have some hope of landing a faculty position in the near future. The pressure's on.

ANA: Hm.

KEN: My advice is...just...keep your head down. Do your work the best you can, and try not to let him get to you. Likely his ego got a little bruised or you two misunderstood each other and he'll get over it sooner or later.

ANA: *(Pause.)* Okay. Thanks Ken.