

Cultivating Mentors: Workshop C

This 2-hour workshop focuses on *communicating expectations and workplace culture* 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 dignity*, 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 Communicating Expectations and what that has to do with Workplace Culture. And, if you haven't already, we hope you'll check out the sessions on Giving and Receiving Feedback and Handling Conflict.

Introduce the Format

Today our focus is on culture and communicating expectations in our labs.

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; we'll interact with the content by asking targeted questions and discussing what comes up.

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?

Warm Up: Brainstorm (10 min)

Give Opening Instructions

In the spirit of gathering the wisdom of the room, let's make a quick list that will serve as a backdrop for our discussion.

Title a whiteboard/jamboard/flipchart: "That's Just the Way It Is..."

When you were entering into the sciences, what were some of the messages—either implicit or explicit—that you or people you know received about what it's like to work in this field? Just pipe in popcorn style.

Fill the list as a word cloud. Make sure you are getting both implicit and explicit examples.

Great. Now let's make one more list in the same style...

Title a new whiteboard/jamboard/flipchart: "Elements of Culture..."

"Culture" can be difficult to define, so what are some elements that make up what's experienced as "culture?"

If participants could use help defining elements of "culture":

- Prompt them to imagine they are traveling in a different country to "experience a different culture." What does that mean?
 - People will likely start with visible things: clothing, food, customs. Ask them to tease these out a little bit and think about those as the tip of an iceberg.
 - What's underneath? What's less visible?
- What about elements of workplace culture?
 - It might help to think of the things that are different between your research lab and, say, an investment firm, an arts nonprofit, an elementary school, or the setting of workplace TV show like "The Office," "Superstore," or "Grey's Anatomy."
 - How is effectiveness measured?
 - What emotions are appropriate to express or suppress? Who is our work accountable to?

This Leaders Guide includes an optional Graphic Organizer: Culture Brainstorm on page 9. You may choose to gather your participants in small groups and have each group use the organizer to come up with their own ideas to then share with the group as a whole. Or, you may choose to use the organizer independently to record the ideas and suggestions shared by the group for reference as you prepare for future training opportunities.

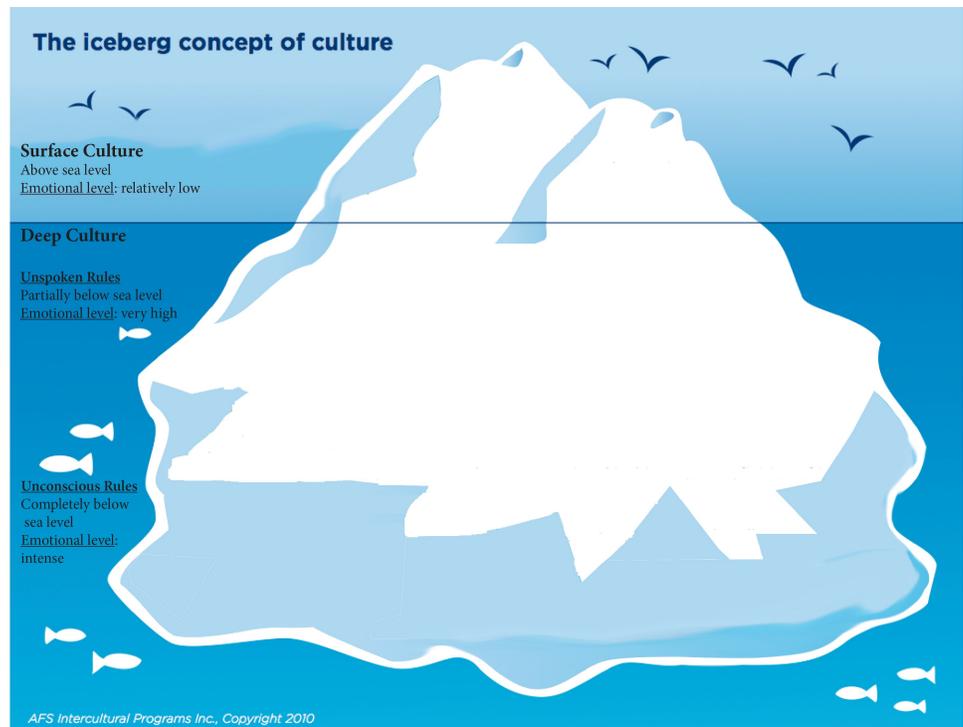
Debrief Warm Up (5 min)

Great. So we've got some awareness of what culture is. I've heard workplace culture compared to the smell of a place. When we're immersed in it everyday, we likely stop noticing it. A new person coming in will notice it more...but they might not be able to tell where it's coming from! Because this can just feel like part of the air we breathe, the practice of noticing and naming these elusive elements, like you're already doing, is important to being proactive to making sure our environments are truly healthy.

Some participants may be concerned that most of the ideas initially coming forward in the brainstorm are identifying or focusing on the negative elements of lab culture. A counterpoint may be that positive elements of culture tend to be highlighted more explicitly, and the secret or unspoken code is inherently more negative. Plus, it is the purpose of these workshops to improve what isn't working well. That said, try to make space to celebrate the positives, those elements that *are* working well.

Share Project Culture Iceberg Image with participants:

Here's a visual from PBS about the different levels of culture: surface, unspoken, and unconscious. How does this relate to what we're talking about so far?



You might pull out that (1) not only will your lab have these levels of its own culture, but (2) your lab is likely made up of people from differing cultures.

Video of Scenario Five: Communicating Expectations (10 min)

So how might these ideas show up in our lived spaces, and why should we care? Let's look at our first hypothetical scenario. Now, I'm calling this a hypothetical, because technically it is fictional, but again, these scenarios were developed from composite responses to interviews, so they are reflective of reality.

[Play Video 5: You Have to Put in the Time]

Interaction: Questions Only Questions (5 min)

Project a still image from the video [3:13].

Now, there was a lot in there. To help us go a little deeper here, I want us to start interacting with this video content by asking questions. A lot of times, asking questions is just as—or more—illuminating than the answers we might leap to, so we're just going to ask questions for now. Questions like:

- *Why did Erica choose this afternoon to stop by the lab for this?*
- *What was Whitney told when she was hired in the lab?*
- *What other questions do we have?*

Get the group to ask questions. Ask some of your own, too, to model that some questions can be furthered or flipped with other questions.

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

Now, let's name what's coming up for us here.

[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.]

Generate discussion or follow up with these questions:

- *What are major themes and dynamics that stick out to you?*
- *Did anything in here feel particularly familiar or relevant? If yes, what? If not, why?*
- *What's at stake here?*

Bio/Guided Stretch Break (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 ____:____.

Video of Scenario Six: Lab Culture (10 min)

So the first scenario focused a lot on work expectations in the lab, communicated or not, and this next scenario gives us a chance to consider some even more embedded cultural elements of a lab.

[Play Video 6: Hang with the Boys]

Interaction: Questions Only Questions (5 min)

Project a still image from the video [0:13 or 1:05].

Let's ask some questions of this scenario like we did before. What questions do we have?

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

Now let's name what's coming up for us around this situation and these questions.

[Add to the previously generated list.]

- *What are major themes and dynamics that stick out to you?*
- *Did anything in here feel particularly familiar or relevant? If yes, what? If not, why?*
- *What's at stake here?*

Primer Discussion (5 min)

So we've seen 2 scenarios and teased out some of the themes and questions they bring up for us. Before we open this up to a wider discussion, I'd like you each to turn to a neighbor and take just 2 minutes to have a primer discussion. Here's your topic: what's really important for us to be talking about regarding culture and communicating expectations in the lab?

Discussion (25 min)

Okay, let's bring it back to one big conversation and see what's alive for you right now? What feels really important?

Possible Large Questions:

- Where/when/why did these cultural expectations (refer back to the list we created at the beginning) originate?
 - Whom did they benefit and whom do they harm? What is the cost of not knowing?
 - Are they still serving us? If so, who?
 - What's encoded within ideas like "professionalism" and "prestige"? Where did those ideas come from and who do they fit?
- What are the costs of the status quo?
- What are the costs of not knowing the norms?
 - Who doesn't know?
 - Are we setting them up to fail by not telling them?
- How does the culture of the wider world or our field at large filter into the culture of our labs?
- **How did you learn the culture of the sciences and of your current workplace?**
 - How do you teach or communicate that to others?
 - Do you have a clearly defined integration or acclimation process? What do you think "onboarding" covers, and what is left out of that? What's a reasonable duration for integration, and how do you evaluate the efficacy of your process?
- What's the role of the PI in setting and maintaining workplace expectations?
 - How can they communicate those expectations?
 - What are the roles of others in this task?
- Acknowledge barriers: what makes it difficult to address and change culture?
 - How can we transform these barriers?
- Are there practices you've seen as really successful in your labs or in the labs of others in creating healthy culture?

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

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 ask you to be intentional about reflecting on the importance of actively considering how and what you and your lab culture communicate to the people inside and outside your sphere, and commit to taking actionable steps towards establishing intentional expectations. To support you in this, you'll be receiving resources and follow up in your email inboxes soon. [If this is not the last session, add: I hope to see you at one of our other sessions.] Thanks everyone!

RESOURCES

Learning Outcomes/Takeaway Points

Culture matters.

- Culture communicates expectations, power dynamics, and who/what is valued.
- Research shows that the climate of our STEM programs and lab environments impact critical thinking, knowledge circulation, persistence, career prep, and advancement indicators like publishing rates.

If we are not proactive about our culture, we default to the dominant culture.

- We do not work in a vacuum. Our workplace cultures are extensions of the wider culture of our society. What affects us out there affects us in here, too.
- For those privileged by the dominant culture, it may take deep questioning to discern whether the dominant culture truly aligns with your values.
- Consider the concept of “cultural humility.”

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.
- What we do can be explicitly and/or implicitly marginalizing or centralizing.
- Consider your social and institutional power.
 - Ask questions of your institution to determine what policies obstruct the kinds of things we talk about in trainings like this or in diversity trainings.

If it was built, it can be unbuilt and rebuilt.

Consider Your Culture

- Elements to consider proactively:
 - What are our shared and emphasized **values**? (ie: orientation to outcomes, people, tasks, the team, details, innovation, competition, collaboration, etc.)
 - How do we relate to hierarchy?
 - What is our distribution of responsibility and decision-making power?
 - What is our level of urgency?
 - How do we set and communicate priorities?
 - Are timelines and deadlines spoken or unspoken?
 - How do we define and track productivity?

- What is our attitude toward mistakes?
- Whose responsibility is it to get/give clarifying information?
- What are the non-negotiables for you, your team as a whole, and the individuals within it?
- Where are we living up to these values? Where are we not?

Communicate Expectations

- Candid conversations with leadership about these issues go a long way.
- Involve numerous members of the lab in the hiring process.
- Address the explicit and implicit expectations in the process of integrating new hires and acclimating them to the work environment.
 - Do you have a process for this? Who is involved? Is it given adequate time and resource? Is it an ongoing effort?
 - Note: the goal is to create an environment that can foster belonging and good work - not just to force assimilation that erases individual cultural differences and gifts.
- Leverage intrinsic motivation. (see Workshop A for more info.)
- Find ways to formalize shared values and expectations (in a document, in meeting structure, in regular conversations, etc.)

Connect the Dots

- Listen, foster social interaction, relate what happens inside the lab to what happens outside.
- Be explicit in your detailed asks of students. They may assume you know what's already on their plate. Have conversations to help them clearly understand and act on priorities.
- Also be clear about deadlines. Many times students are operating under the feeling that almost everything “should have been done yesterday” and the stress of perpetual deadlines takes a toll on productivity.
- If you run into barriers here, ask why. Take the time—community provides a sense of purpose, allows knowledge to flow, develops and retains valuable staff and perspectives. Be aware of the power of your position as a bystander and, potentially, a person of social and institutional authority.

That's Just the Way It Is...

Elements of Culture

Cultivating Mentors, Workshop C

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Introduction (10 min)

Grounding Intentions:

**Warmup:
Culture Brainstorm**
(15 min)

"That's Just the Way It Is"/Elements of Culture

**1st Scenario:
Communicating
Expectations**
(25 min)

Questions only Questions:

Naming Notable Themes and Dynamics:

Bio Break (5 min)

**2nd Scenario:
Workplace Culture**
(25 min)

Questions only Questions:

Naming Notable Themes and Dynamics:

Discussion (35 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 shared daily or weekly, 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: Cultural Humility
 - <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3834043/>
- Follow up Three: Cultural Iceberg
 - <https://pba.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/a353a4ba-cd56-4999-97dd-0e40e11a7211/iceberg-concept-of-culture-images-and-pdfs/>
 - Identify your lab's non-negotiable(s) and your shared, emphasized values.
- Follow up Four: Structure and Belonging
 - <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0209279>
 - Outline your onboarding process. Work with others in your lab (and colleagues in other labs) to identify best practices. Develop a new, improved onboarding plan.
- Follow up Five: Campus Resources
 - Develop your lab's "At a Glance" list of cultural expectations. Share this development process with the other members of your lab. Then share your list with other session participants for feedback and reflection.

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 C 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 C: Action Plan

Goal

Action Steps

Resources

Progress Check

Date:

Actionable Practices

Consider Your Culture

- What are our shared and emphasized **values**? (ie: orientation to outcomes, people, tasks, the team, details, innovation, competition, collaboration, etc.)
- How do we relate to hierarchy?
 - What is our distribution of responsibility and decision-making power?
- How do we set and communicate priorities?
 - Are timelines and deadlines spoken or unspoken?
 - How do we define and track productivity?
- What is our attitude toward mistakes?
- Whose responsibility is it to get/give clarifying information?
- What are the non-negotiables for you, your team as a whole, and the individuals within it?
- Where are we living up to these values? Where are we not?

Communicate Expectations

- Address the explicit and implicit expectations in the process of integrating new hires and acclimating them to the work environment.
- Do you have a process for this? Who is involved? Is it given adequate time and resource? Is it an ongoing effort?
- Note: the goal is to create an environment that can foster belonging and good work - not just to force assimilation that erases individual cultural differences and gifts.
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Connect the Dots

- Listen, foster social interaction, relate what happens inside the lab to what happens outside.
- Be explicit in your detailed asks of students. They may assume you know what's already on their plate. Have conversations to help them clearly understand and act on priorities.
- Also be clear about deadlines. Many times students are operating under the feeling that almost everything “should have been done yesterday” and the stress of perpetual deadlines takes a toll on productivity.
- If you run into barriers here, ask why. Take the time—community provides a sense of purpose, allows knowledge to flow, develops and retains valuable staff and perspectives. Be aware of the power of your position as a bystander and, potentially, a person of social and institutional authority.

SCENARIO FIVE: COMMUNICATING EXPECTATIONS

(WHITNEY [Black female], junior grad student, comes into the lab to find her PI, ERICA waiting for her at her workstation. Lab manager GRAY [white male] is working nearby.)

ERICA: Whitney. Glad you decided to drop in.

WHITNEY: What? I've been here.

ERICA: So have I, but this is the first I'm seeing of you.

WHITNEY: I...went to the bathroom. What's...is something wrong?

ERICA: I came in to check in and talk to the lab, (*checks her watch*) but I had to wait for you to get back from your break to do so.

WHITNEY: I'm sorry, I didn't realize we had a meeting scheduled.

ERICA: It wasn't on the schedule, but when I come in in the middle of the afternoon and the lab is like a morgue with nothing happening, I have to start asking more specific questions about why we aren't getting more done. Meanwhile, you're not here.

WHITNEY: I didn't think I was gone for that long.

ERICA: Well when I ask where you are, no one knows. And when I ask people about your work, I hear you've been gone a lot.

WHITNEY: What? No I haven't. I'm here. I'm here late. A lot.

ERICA: Gray tells me you're showing up after 10am several times a week.

WHITNEY: Yeah, I've started going to Zumba classes at the SRC a few mornings a week. It's part of my self-care.

ERICA: Wow. Sounds nice.

WHITNEY: Sorry, is there a problem with my work?

ERICA: I'm concerned about your work ethic. You need to communicate when you're not going to be here.

WHITNEY: Okay...that's good to know...How would you like me to do that?

ERICA: If you are going to be gone between the hours of 9 and 6, you need to ask.

WHITNEY: I...yeah, I can do that. I didn't know I was supposed to do that.

ERICA: Well I'm telling you now.

WHITNEY: Okay...so should I...it's just that, you're not here a lot of the time.

ERICA: It's a little different, Whitney. You report to me, okay? I have other duties, and my wife just had our second kid. I'm not at Zumba.

WHITNEY: I just meant to ask how you'd like me to communicate with you about this kind of stuff when you're not here.

ERICA: You can email me.

WHITNEY: Okay. I wasn't sure if you were reading emails.

ERICA: Just because I don't answer them right away doesn't mean I don't read them.

WHITNEY: Okay, good to know.

ERICA: And when I'm not here, you should be communicating with Gray.

WHITNEY: With Gray?

ERICA: Gray is the lab director.

WHITNEY: I know, I—I just...no one ever told me I needed to report to Gray like that. I didn't know.

ERICA: Again, I'm telling you now.

WHITNEY: Okay.

ERICA: And if you're taking a long break, maybe leave a note on your desk so we know where you are and when you left.

WHITNEY: Fine.

ERICA: (*Addressing the lab more broadly*) None of this should be happening. I shouldn't have to come in here like this and whip a bunch of trained scientists into shape. You all should be motivated on your own. If you really want your experiments to be moving forward, you have *got* to put in the time. Okay? We don't work in a bank. 9 to 5 isn't going to cut it. (*Turning back to WHITNEY*) And 10:30 to 5 definitely won't.

WHITNEY: But that's the thing, if I come in late, I stay late. I'm usually here way after 5. You're not here so you just don't see me.

ERICA: Well when you start reporting your hours we'll see.

WHITNEY: I work way more than 40 hours a week.

ERICA: If you wanted a 40-hour workweek, you've gone into the wrong field. I'm sorry to tell you.

WHITNEY: I don't mind the hours, but...the exercise classes really help me. Everything that's going on in the world--it's really triggered my anxiety. Those few mornings a week really make a difference for my mental health.

ERICA: I expect you to be able to manage that stuff and still show up when you're supposed to be here. Alright? You've got to learn to leave the outside world at the door and do your work.

WHITNEY: So you're saying I can't go to my Zumba classes anymore?

ERICA: *(Frustrated)* Submit the request to me in writing, copy Gray, and I'll think about it.

WHITNEY: Okay.

ERICA: Look, if it's that bad, if you're really having such a hard time, you need to be seeking professional support. Slacking off at work isn't going to help in the long run—it's just going to derail your career.

(WHITNEY shuts down and slumps into the chair at her work station, shaking her head. ERICA addresses the lab again.)

None of us has the luxury to be moving as slow as we are. Okay? I shouldn't have to be chasing after anybody. I don't have time. We need more papers coming out. Way more. By next week, I want everyone to send me a write-up of what they've done in the last 6 months. We need way better communication around here.

SCENARIO SIX: CULTURE IN AND BEYOND THE LAB

(It's about 6:30pm on a Friday, and CHRIS [white male] and BO [white male] are rounding up other members of their rather large lab to go out to drinks and dinner. ZANE [white male], KIRK [white male], and one other white guy walk up. ERIN [white female] is nearby. JAY [East Asian male] works nearby.)

ZANE: Where we going? The Tavern?

CHRIS: Yes! Y'all heading out?

ZANE: Yeah, you coming?

CHRIS: We'll meet you there, (*Glances around*) I'm just going to make sure everyone else got the memo.

KIRK: Alright. Be ready to catch up!

BO: Pickle shots?

ZANE: Pickle shots!

CHRIS: (*To ERIN*) Hey Johnston, you coming?

ERIN: Yeah, I'm coming.

BO: You gonna do a pickle shot with me?

ERIN: I don't know what that is, but I'm going to say no.

CHRIS: Come on, if you want to make it in this lab, you're going to have to hang with the boys and do at least one pickle shot.

ERIN: Is this something real or something you've made up?

BO: Oh it's very real.

CHRIS: (*To JAY*) Jay! Put down the slides, man, and come out with us for once.

JAY: I thought we were doing an outing next Friday.

CHRIS: Plans changed. It was on the lab slack. Come on, even Gerald said he'd come out for a bit.

JAY: Dr. Wing?

CHRIS: Yah. Dr. Gerald Wing, P.I. Met him?

JAY: Psh. Not lately. (*Looking at his work*) It's just...I've got to finish up here and pick up my daughter from gymnastics at 7:30.

BO: What's your wife doing? Can she get her this once?

JAY: Uh...maybe. I'll...uh...I'll call her.

CHRIS: Do it. We'll wait for you.

BO: Tell her to get a sitter and she can come, too. *(To CHRIS and ERIN)* Have you ever met his wife?

(ERIN shakes her head.)

CHRIS: No. What's she do again?

BO: Teacher I think, but I'm pretty sure she's only part time, so...

CHRIS: Oh, then what the hell? Why's he always using his kids as an excuse?

ERIN: Maybe he's trying to have a household with more equitable gender norms?

CHRIS: Womp womp.

BO: But she's Asian, too, right? I thought Asian women—

CHRIS/ERIN: Ooookay!/ Oh my God.

CHRIS: Watch out, Bo, you're going to get us canceled.

BO: *(Smiling impishly.)* What?

CHRIS: So, Erin, how was your first conference?

ERIN: Exhausting but good. I took a bunch of notes at the ethics panel. I've got a list of things I want to follow up on.

CHRIS: Have any good conversations? That's really the most important part.

ERIN: Um...a few I guess. One guy thought I was conference staff—

CHRIS: Wait—what?

BO: Why?

ERIN: I don't know. Maybe he didn't think I looked like a scientist?

BO: What were you wearing?

ERIN: I don't know, what everyone else was wearing? What, are you gonna say I was "asking for it?"

CHRIS: Were you in all black and carrying a clipboard and talking into your headset?

ERIN: You know how I love to do that. No, pretty sure it's because I'm a woman.

BO: So, maybe just don't wax your mustache next time.

ERIN: Hey!

BO: Or what is it you do? Bleach it?

ERIN: *(Not amused.)* Oh my God.

CHRIS: We're just trying to help you fit in, Johnston.

ERIN: Then another guy assumed I hadn't done my own research. That was nice.

BO: How do you know that?

ERIN: He interrupted me as I was talking and said, "Ah, you really need to put the scientist that actually did this work under the data that you're showing." Not if it's my poster and my work, jackass.

(BO's attention wanders back over to JAY)

CHRIS: *(Shrugs)* Were you nervous when you were presenting?

ERIN: I mean, maybe a little, but not really. Why?

CHRIS: Maybe you just didn't seem like it was yours.

(ERIN goes silent.)

BO: Did we get Jay in trouble over there?

CHRIS: Maybe he's getting an earful.

ERIN: I'm going to go ahead and go.

BO: 'Kay. We'll be over soon, Johnston. Be careful crossing the street.

CHRIS: Don't talk to strangers.

(ERIN waves at them without looking as she leaves.)

BO: You know, I try with her, but it's just like—I get nothing.

CHRIS: Yeah. Zero sense of humor.

BO: She's going to have a tough time making it in science.

(GERALD [male, any race] enters, briefcase in hand, zipping up his jacket.)

GERALD: Okay, guys, we still doing this?

CHRIS: Yeah, we were just waiting for Jay, but it looks like he's on kid duty. Again.

GERALD: Ah, yeah. And I've put a lot on him lately. I should probably see about bringing someone else into the pathogenesis project instead. Someone with a little more bandwidth.

BO: You want to walk over to the Tavern with us?

GERALD: No, I think I'll drive. I'm only making a brief appearance. See you there.