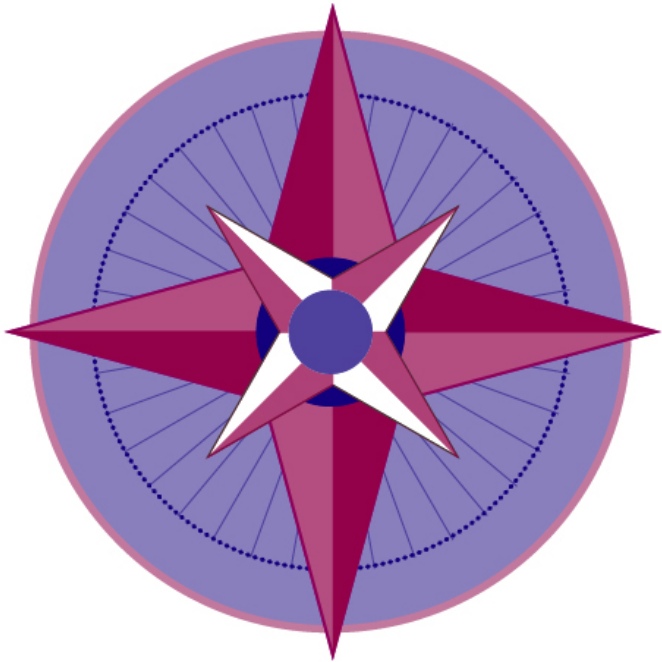


Practical Skills for Emerging Scholars II: Navigating Interpersonal Boundaries to Support Excellence in Science



Abstract:

Different people have different values, and this can introduce conflict. Mastering the skill of distinguishing between observation and interpretation reduces the likelihood that your words will put another person on the defensive. This creates more opportunities for all parties to remain curious about each other's perspectives and needs and keeps critical lines of communication open. In this practical workshop, you will practice applying the boundary-setting skills that you developed in Setting Personal Boundaries to the art of maintaining healthy interpersonal and working relationships. You will explore how language can foster both connection and disconnection and how your values interact with others' values. You will learn how to set your teams up for success by proactively preventing conflicts and collaboratively resolving existing ones.

About the speaker:

Dr. Melodie Kao is a radio astronomer who studies substellar magnetism, including the magnetic dynamos operating in brown dwarfs and exoplanets as well as the physics of extrasolar aurorae. Dr. Kao received her SB in physics at MIT, her PhD in astrophysics at Caltech, and she currently holds a NASA Hubble Postdoctoral Fellowship at Arizona State University. As a graduate student, Dr. Kao identified a set of key personal skills for every emerging scholar to hone that helped her and her peers thrive scientifically. She nicknamed these skills the "Scientist's Personal Toolkit" and aims to integrate the intentional development of the Toolkit skills into formal scientific training programs for all emerging scholars.

Worksheets from workshop will be available at: www.melodiekao.com

Please feel free to add to, make use of, and distribute these tools for yourself and your mentees.

If you have any feedback, I would love to hear it at: mkao@asu.edu

Needs Inventory

Connection

Acceptance
Affection
Appreciation
Belonging
Cooperation
Communication
Closeness
Community
Companionship
Compassion
Consideration
Consistency
Empathy
Inclusion
Intimacy
Love Mutuality
Nurturing
Respect / Self-respect
Safety
Security
Stability
Support
To know and be known
To see and be seen
To understand and be understood
Trust
Warmth

Physical Well-being

Air
Food
Movement / exercise
Rest / sleep
Sexual expression
Safety
Shelter
Touch
Water

Honesty

Authenticity
Integrity
Presence

Play

Joy
Humor
Imagination

Peace

Beauty
Communion
Ease
Equality
Harmony
Inspiration
Order

Autonomy

Choice
Freedom
Independence
Space
Spontaneity

Meaning

Awareness
Celebration
Challenge
Clarity
Competence
Consciousness
Contribution
Creativity
Discovery
Efficacy
Effectiveness
Growth
Hope
Learning
Mourning
Participation
Purpose
Self-expression
Stimulation
Understanding
To matter

Identifying what we need: What are our emotions telling us?

Conflict happens when we realize that we don't feel well in some way – for instance, when we feel annoyed. One of the most important things that our emotions tell us is if we have a fundamental human need that isn't currently being met.

- For each situation below, identify which classes of needs are not being met, and write down some specific needs from those categories that aren't being met.

What am I currently tolerating?	Which classes of needs are not being met?						
	Connection	Physical Wellbeing	Meaning	Honesty	Play	Peace	Autonomy
1. I'm worried that my professor doesn't like me / think I'm good enough.							
2. I'm worried that I'm not creative / smart / productive / fill in the blank enough.							
3. I'm not sleeping/resting enough.							
4. Urgent tasks keep crowding out high priority but non-urgent tasks.							
5. I put myself down with negative self-talk.							
6. I worry that if my work isn't perfect, then it's not good enough.							
7. I'm scared of making the wrong decision.							
8. I'm getting pulled in many directions by others' needs.							
9. I'm worried about failing.							
10. I compare myself a lot to other people.							
11. I'm worried that people will laugh at me / put me down if I say what I really think.							

Feelings Inventory

Affectionate	Excited	Blissful	Afraid	Aversion	Uninterested	Exhausted	Heavy hearted
Compassionate	Amazed	Ecstatic	Apprehensive	Animosity	Withdrawn	Lethargic	Hopeless
Friendly	Animated	Elated	Dread	Appalled	Disquiet	Listless	Melancholy
Loving	Ardent	Enthralled	Foreboding	Contempt	Agitated	Sleepy	Unhappy
Open hearted	Astonished	Exuberant	Frightened	Disgusted	Alarmed	Tired	Wretched
Sympathetic	Eager	Radiant	Mistrustful	Dislike	Creeped out	Weary	Tense
Tender	Energetic	Rapturous	Panicked	Hate	Discombobulated	Worn out	Anxious
Warm	Enthusiastic	Thrilled	Petrified	Horriified	Perturbed	Off	Cranky
Engaged	Giddy	Peaceful	Scared	Hostile	Rattled	Strange	Distressed
Absorbed	Invigorated	Calm	Suspicious	Repulsed	Restless	Unsatisfied	Distraught
Alert	Lively	Clear headed	Terrified	Confused	Shocked	Pain	Edgy
Curious	Passionate	Comfortable	Wary	Ambivalent	Startled	Agony	Fidgety
Engrossed	Surprised	Centered	Worried	Baffled	Surprised	Anguished	Frazzled
Enchanted	Vibrant	Content	Annoyed	Bewildered	Troubled	Bereaved	Irritable
Entranced	Grateful	Equanimous	Aggravated	Dazed	Turbulent	Devastated	Jittery
Fascinated	Appreciative	Fulfilled	Dismayed	Hesitant	Turmoil	Grief	Nervous
Interested	Moved	Mellow	Disgruntled	Lost	Uncomfortable	Heartbroken	Overwhelmed
Intrigued	Thankful	Quiet	Displeased	Mystified	Uneasy	Hurt	Restless
Involved	Touched	Relaxed	Exasperated	Perplexed	Unnerved	Lonely	Stressed out
Spellbound	Inspired	Relieved	Frustrated	Puzzled	Unsettled	Miserable	Vulnerable
Stimulated	Awed	Satisfied	Impatient	Torn	Upset	Regretful	Fragile
Hopeful	Wonder	Serene	Irritated	Disconnected	Embarrassed	Remorseful	Guarded
Expectant	Joyful	Still	Irked	Alienated	Ashamed	Sad	Insecure
Encouraged	Amused	Tranquil	Angry	Apathetic	Chagrined	Depressed	Leery
Optimistic	Delighted	Trusting	Enraged	Bored	Flustered	Dejected	Reserved
Confident	Glad	Refreshed	Furious	Cold	Guilty	Despair	Sensitive
Empowered	Happy	Enlivened	Incensed	Detached	Mortified	Despondent	Shaky
Open	Jubilant	Rejuvenated	Indignant	Distant	Self-conscious	Disappointed	Yearning
Proud	Pleased	Renewed	Irate	Distracted	Fatigue	Discouraged	Envious
Safe	Tickled	Rested	Livid	Indifferent	Beat	Disheartened	Jealous
Secure	Exhilarated	Restored	Outraged	Numb	Burnt out	Forlorn	Nostalgic
			Resentful	Removed	Depleted	Gloomy	Wistful

Communicating with accurate observations.

How we try to change (“fix”) the situations that we tolerate can impact ourselves and our communities / teams. One useful skill is to learn how to accurately describe how you’re feeling.

1. For each statement below, circle it if you have said it or thought it at some point.
2. For each one that you circled, write down more accurate emotional descriptors using the emotions inventory on the right.

What am I tolerating?

I actually feel....

1. I feel betrayed.	
2. I feel misunderstood.	
3. I feel attacked.	
4. I feel taken for granted or unappreciated.	
5. I feel like I don’t belong.	
6. I feel unseen.	
7. I feel unsupported.	
8. I feel provoked.	
9. I feel disrespected.	
10. I feel helpless.	
11. I feel alone.	
12. I feel like you don’t care about me.	

How well do we set our community / team up for success?

A lot of times, we unconsciously create a conflict-oriented dynamic by injecting judgement into how we frame a situation or talk to other people rather than accurately describing both how we feel and what is occurring. For this non-exhaustive list of common situations that we can encounter when working in a community or on a team:

1. Circle the statements that you are tolerating right now or have in the past when working with other teams. Note how you feel.
2. Select two statements that particularly resonates with you and identify the separate components of your stories.
3. Identify what you and your team/community would be saying yes to if the team as a whole decided to say no to this toleration.

What story am I currently tolerating?

I feel....

1. I feel like my friend uses me for emotional support all the time.	Great	Neutral	Crappy
2. I feel like I'm getting pulled in many directions by my teammate's needs.	Great	Neutral	Crappy
3. I feel like teammate is annoying.	Great	Neutral	Crappy
4. I feel like no one listens to me, or I'm bad at speaking up and being heard.	Great	Neutral	Crappy
5. I feel like I don't get enough space (physical, mental, emotional).	Great	Neutral	Crappy
6. I feel like I have too much work.	Great	Neutral	Crappy
7. I feel like my teammates think I'm not smart enough or that I'm holding them back.	Great	Neutral	Crappy
8. I feel like I am or will let down my team.	Great	Neutral	Crappy
9. I feel like don't fit into the team.	Great	Neutral	Crappy
10. I feel like my teammates aren't considerate of me.	Great	Neutral	Crappy
11. I feel like my teammates aren't supporting me or they're ignoring me.	Great	Neutral	Crappy
12. I feel like people don't acknowledge my contributions.	Great	Neutral	Crappy

Example:

My story / interpretation:

I feel like my teammates aren't considerate of me.

The event:

My team scheduled group work during times that don't work well for me for the last three assignments.

My emotions:

*Frustrated
Annoyed
Stressed out
Mad*

My unmet needs:

*Inclusion, Respect
Belonging, Community
Cooperation, Choice
Consideration*

If we stop tolerating this, then we/I will be available to...

Make full use of everyone's strengths and help each other finish our work faster and understand the material better.

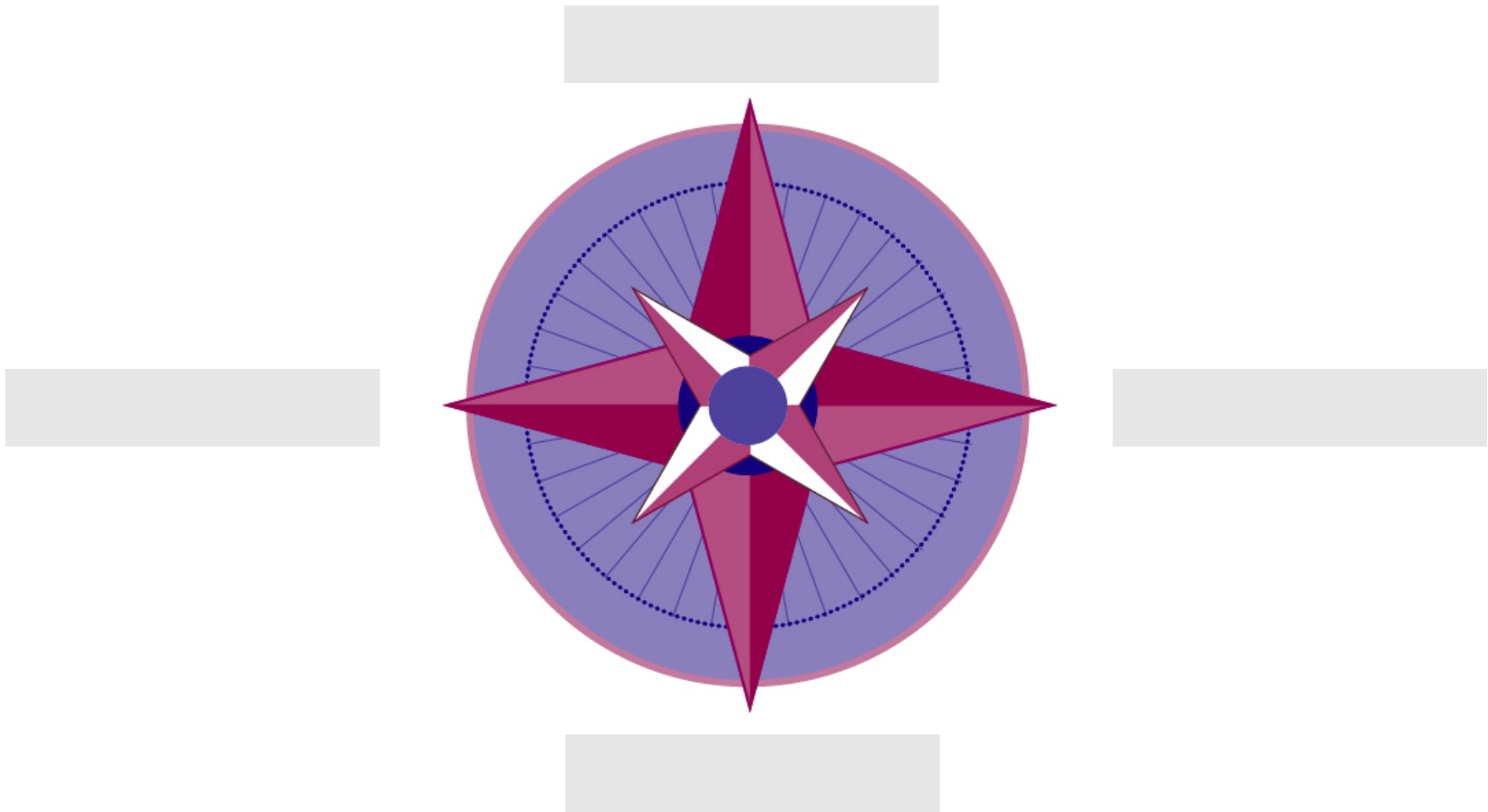
My story / interpretation:	
The event:	My emotions:
	My unmet needs:
If we stop tolerating this, then we/I will be available to...	

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Our Team Values Compass

Not everyone shares the same values, which can introduce conflict. One way to grapple with this tension is to develop a set of values that all community members agree to uphold. This effectively increases your arsenal of values to use when setting boundaries; you can draw from both your own values and your team values. Work with your teammates to identify your team's core values in this Values Compass.

1. Reflect on and write down why these values are important to you.
2. Describe what upholding these values looks like to you. Then, share with your teammate(s) so that the whole team can learn what the same team values can look like to individual team members.



How well do we cultivate our team?

Label the right columns with your personal and team value. Check the box under each value if tolerating that situation would not uphold that value.

	Which values are we not upholding?							
	Team	Team	Team	Team	Personal	Personal	Personal	Personal
1. Expending more emotional energy on my teammate than I currently have.								
2. Prioritizing my teammate's needs while not prioritizing mine.								
3. Getting distracted by my teammate's habit that I think is annoying.								
4. Struggling to speak up or thinking that I am not heard on my team.								
5. Not getting the space (physical, mental, emotional) that I need.								
6. Feeling overwhelmed by my responsibilities for the team.								
7. Worrying about what my teammate thinks about me.								
8. Fearing that I will let down my team.								
9. Jokes / banter that I am uncomfortable with or that I think don't include me.								
10. Scheduling group work time that doesn't work well for me.								
11. Not getting the support that I ask for from my teammates.								
12. Struggling to get visibility for my work.								

Collaboratively cultivating your garden: Be firm with your intentions and flexible with your form.

- 5 min:**
1. Select one situation that you are tolerating.
 2. **Be firm with intention:** Identify which value (team/personal) you want to uphold while collaborating with your partner to improve the situation.
 3. **Be flexible with the form of your expectations:** Brainstorm at least 5 different ways that you can uphold your intention while improving the situation that you are tolerating.
 4. **Collaborate:** Ask your partner for suggestions for at least 2 more ways that you can uphold your intention while improving the situation.

I am tolerating:

My intention is to connect to this value:

Collaboratively cultivating your garden: Be firm with your intentions and flexible with your form.

- 5 min:**
1. Write down the situation that your partner is tolerating.
 2. **Be firm with intention:** Identify which value (team/personal) you want to uphold while collaborating with your partner to improve the situation. The value that you select does not have to be the same as your partner's value.
 3. **Be flexible with the form of your expectations:** Brainstorm at least 5 different ways that you can uphold your intention while improving the situation that your partner is tolerating.
 4. **Collaborate:** Ask your partner for suggestions for at least 2 more ways that you can uphold your intention while improving the situation

My teammate is tolerating:

My intention is to connect to this value:

Boundaries-Based Conflict Management Framework

Recognize/ Evaluate

1. Name the conflict in a way where all parties can agree.

"I feel/felt _____ emotion(s) _____ when _____ event (when, what) _____, ..."

2. Name what each person needs.

"...because I need _____ unmet needs _____."

3. Paraphrase each other: iterate until both parties agree with the paraphrasing!

"What I'm hearing you say is that you feel/felt _____ emotion(s) _____ when _____ event (when, what) _____, because you need _____ unmet needs _____."

This key step ensures that each person is seen and heard. Paraphrasing can be hard because we may instinctively put a "spin" (or interpretation) on the situation. Paraphrasing gives each person the chance to correct the other if anyone is misinterpreting what the other person said. After paraphrasing, check with each other to ensure that they agree with the paraphrasing. Iterate until all are satisfied that they are on the same page.

Define Boundaries

4. Set your intention: name the value that you want to uphold.

"I want to be/have _____ value _____ while we work through this together."

5. Name your priorities.

"If we worked together to find a solution that works for both of us, I would be more able to _____ a personal priority _____, and we would both/all be more available to _____ a personal team priority _____."

Build Boundary Collaboratively

6. Brainstorm various expectations/forms of upholding **both** people's intentions/values.

These ideas should be ones that can improve the situation. It can be fun to do this brainstorming together.

7. Each side has an opportunity to make a specific request.

"Would you be willing to _____ expectation/form that can satisfy both people's intentions and needs _____?"

8. Iterate: Be firm with intention and flexible with form.

Because we are firm with intention and flexible with form, we recognize that a request is not a demand, and we have to be ok with no. Continue to iterate through various expectations/forms until you find something that works for everyone, or you can respectfully agree to disagree.

Synthesis: Apply boundary setting skills to collaboratively approach a conflict.

Now that you've practiced all the component skills of the Boundary Cycle, let's explore how they apply in a conflict scenario.

1. Review the situation below. Then, using your imagination, follow the Boundaries-Based Conflict Resolution Framework below to re-write or role-play a dialogue between you and your friend.

Situation:

Your roommate normally lets you borrow their stuff. Every time they borrow your stuff, you worry that they will damage or lose what they borrowed. Nevertheless, you feel bad asking them not to, since they are so generous. Plus, they rarely borrow your stuff. You decide not to make a big deal about nothing. One Friday, you come home to find that they have borrowed your new sleeping bag for a weekend backpacking trip without first asking you. You are really annoyed, because you finished your homework early and wanted to camp in the Superstitions.

When they return, there is a tiny tear in it that they patched up neatly with Tenacious Tape. Seeing that tear makes you really angry, and you yell, "I feel like you're not being respectful when you borrow my stuff without asking! What if I needed it this weekend?" They get upset and say, "I feel like you're not being fair -- I let you borrow my stuff all the time, so why aren't you ok with me borrowing your stuff?"