

# Code of Conduct Incident Response Training

**Please change your Zoom name  
to include your pronouns  
(if you're comfortable sharing them)**

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Otter Tech LLC  
sharp@otter.technology

Introductions:

Name

(Optional) Pronouns you use

What events or communities  
you enforce a Code of Conduct in

# Vocabulary

- Code of Conduct incident
- Reporter
- Reported person
- Third party witness
- Incident Responder



CC BY U.S. Army Africa

# Agenda

- Incident responder duties
- Taking an incident report & paired practice #1a
- Evaluating a report
- Following up on a report & paired practice #1b
- Taking an incident report practice #2a
- Group report evaluation
- Following up on a report practice #2b

# Ground Rules



CC BY Steve Johnson

- This is a safe(r) space
- If you are asked to stop, you will stop
- You may leave at any time
- Be open to new knowledge
- Acknowledge different lived experiences

# Incident Responder Duties

- Takes incident reports
- Protects reporter privacy
- Assesses the situation
- Finds additional help
- Resolves the incident
- Responds to those impacted
- Documents the incident



CC BY Open Knowledge

# Common Reporter Needs

- + To be heard
- + To be respected
- + To feel safe
- ~ To create meaning
- To be "right"
- Justice or vengeance



CC BY painteverything

# Acknowledging Reporter Emotions

- "You felt (emotion) when (behavior)."
- Example: "**You felt** scared **when** they raised their voice."
- Softening the directness:
  - "So you felt..."
  - "It sounds like you felt..."
  - "I'm hearing that you felt..."

"Nonviolent communication"  
by Marshall B. Rosenberg, PhD



# Common Reporter Emotions

- Repeating themselves
- Becoming flustered
- Talking fast
- Judgment words
- Anger
- Mistrust



Emotion CC BY 2.0 Osamu Kaneko

# Handling Privacy Concerns

- Multiple options to protect privacy:
- Report will be confidential
- Anonymous report
- Escrow report
  - Document report
  - Act after second report
  - Delay response to protect privacy of 2<sup>nd</sup> person
  - Don't mention multiple reports



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# Taking an Incident Report: **LASER**

Before: Ask if they want to go to a quiet, private place  
(or encourage them to use private message/video chat)

- **Listen** and summarize
- **Acknowledge** emotions with "You" statements
- **Seek** assistance or resources as needed
- **Ensure** everyone is safe
- **Report** or **Respond** to the incident

After: Get contact info. Evaluate reporter privacy. Thank the reporter.

Instructor modeling  
taking a report

# Practice Receiving Reports

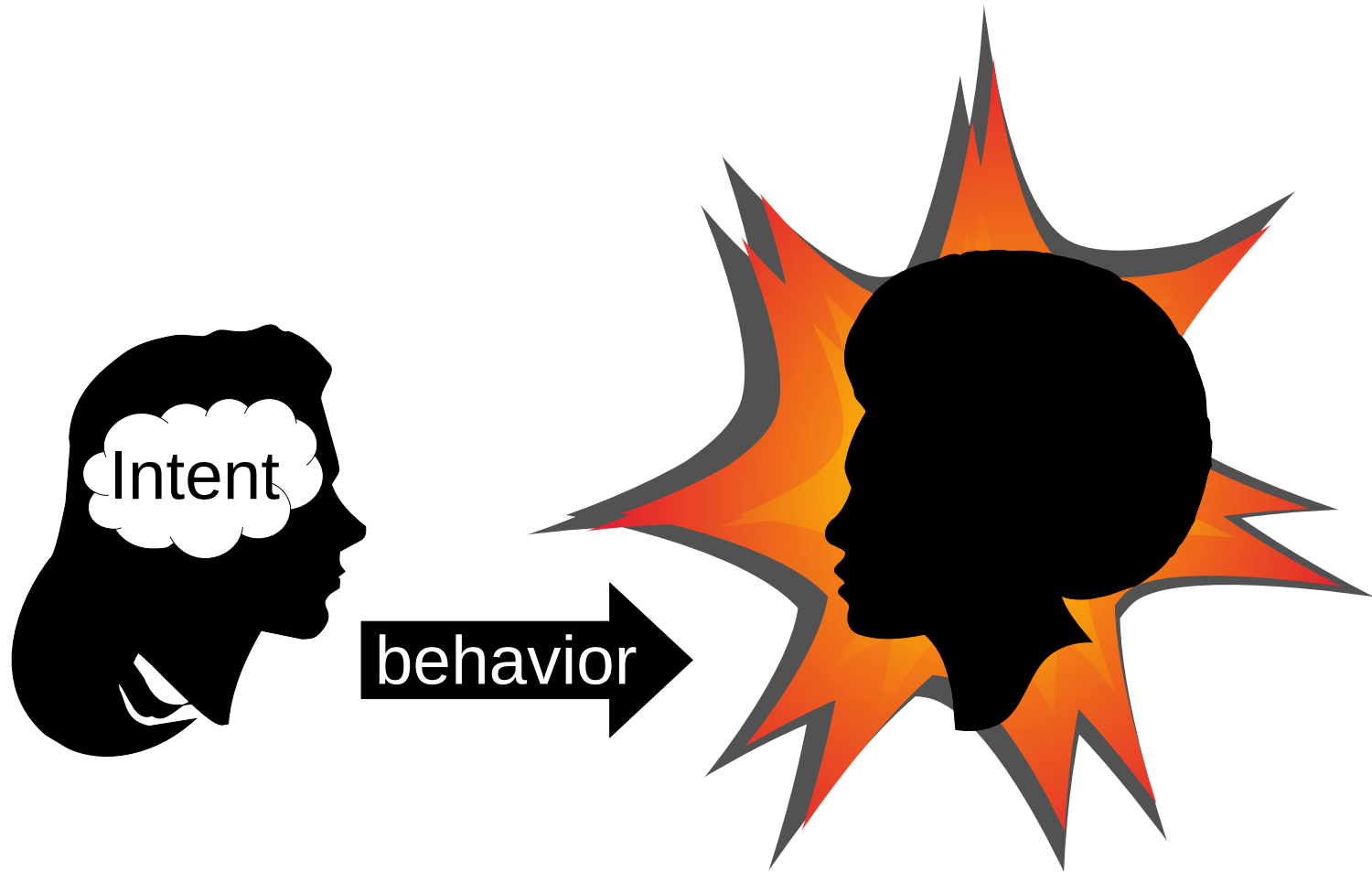
# Discussion

- For the incident responder:
  - What was hard, complex, or complicated?
- For the reporter:
  - What did the incident responder do well?
  - What techniques did they use?
  - Any effective phrases?

# Bias in Receiving Incident Reports

- Record the behavior & impact
- Don't use "judgment" words
- Watch yourself for defensiveness
- Be cautious about empathy for reported person

# Intent vs. Impact





# Intent is Not Magic

- Action or inaction has impact
- Good intent still causes harm
- Harm causes strong emotions
- Goal: Stop the behavior
- Ensure reported people understand their impact
- Allow reporters to express their emotions



CC BY Fabricio Zuardi  
(modified)

# Microaggressions: Constant Inequality

- Harm caused because your identity is not considered "the default"
  - e.g. disability, race, gender
- May happen daily
- Invisible to the "default" identity
- Death by 1,000 paper cuts



CC BY Andrew McGill

# Personal Conflicts

- Not all conflicts will be a Code of Conduct violation
- Communication breakdown
- Is this a pattern?
- Know emotional and verbal abuse behaviors:  
<http://outofthefog.website/traits/>



CC BY Martha Soukup

# False Reporting: Power Dynamics

- What does a reporter have to lose?
  - Safety
  - Mental health
  - Career
  - Financial support
- What does the reported person have to lose?
- How likely is it the reporter will lose?



CC BY Adam Lehman

# Review All Reports Carefully

- Microaggressions & sexual harassment are under reported
- Examine the power dynamics
- Be cautious of when power dynamic is reversed:
  - "racism against white people"
  - "sexist discrimination of men"
  - other "reverse-isms"



CC BY Adam Lehman

(Break)

Following up on  
Incident Reports



# Evaluating Risk

	Low Risk	High Risk
Low Impact	<p>Microaggression in conversation</p> <p>Microaggression in private message</p>	<p>Repeated borderline incidents</p> <p>Pattern of verbal or emotional abuse</p>
High Impact	<p>Racist or sexist joke during presentation</p> <p>Inappropriate joke on a public channel</p>	<p>Ongoing harassment or stalking</p> <p>Online harassment campaign or doxxing</p>

# Deciding Response

Low Risk

High Risk

Low  
Impact

Issue warning

Monitor and document  
patterns of behavior,  
warn or temporary ban,  
remove from leadership

High  
Impact

Reprimand, removal  
of offensive material

Public response from  
staff or organization

Coordinated planning

Additional resources

Reach out to others



# Before Speaking to a Reported Person

- Write down:
  - Their behavior and impact
  - A behavioral modification plan
  - Consequences for their behavior (?)
- What will happen if they don't agree to modify their behavior?
- Who can they appeal the decision to?

# Common Emotions for People who have been reported

Emotion	Action
Anger	Defensiveness
Fear	Denial
Humiliation	Blame shifting
Anxiety	Seek reassurance
Disgust	Self blame
Abandonment	Manipulation

# Following up with the reported person: **BIRDS**

Go to a private place / private message or video chat

Have an exit plan. Bring another responder if a ban is likely.

- State what their **Behavior** was without judgment words
- State the **Impact** on the reporter or community
- Allow the reported person to **Respond**
- **Don't** reassure or allow the reporter to be contacted
- **Set** a behavioral modification plan

Offer to relay any apologies

Practice:  
Following up with  
the Reported Person

Instructor modeling  
following up with  
a reported person

# Discussion

- For the incident responder:
  - What was hard, complex, or complicated?
- For the reported person:
  - What did the incident responder do well?
  - What techniques did they use?
  - Any effective phrases?

# Following up after an incident

- Try to talk to everyone impacted
- May need a public statement
- Whisper networks exist
- Document the incident
- May need to notify volunteers

# Advanced Topics



# Systemic Inequality

- Collective lack of action
- Biased harmful policies or systems
- Negatively impacts marginalized groups
- Example: No 'religious symbols' policies
  - Must choose between a headscarf & education/jobs
  - 2x more Muslim girls don't go to secondary school in France
  - Source: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/06/03/how-will-austrias-new-headscarf-ban-affect-muslims/?noredirect=on>

# Dealing with Unwelcome Attendees

- “You aren’t permitted to attend the conference”
- Don’t provide details
- Ask them to leave
- “This is a private venue”
- Get onsite help
- Report for trespassing
- Know your local trespassing laws



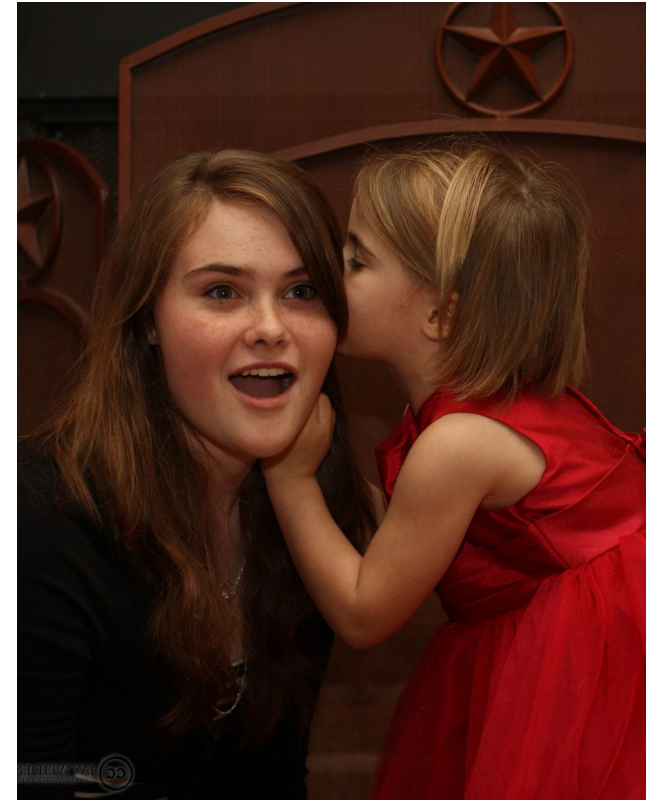
CC BY Mike Mozart

# Dealing with Weapons Policy Violations

- “Weapons are not allowed at our conference”
- Ask them to leave
- Come back without the weapon
- Do not argue, be firm
- Ask staff, response team, security to help
- If there is a safety risk, call 911

# Conflicts of Interest

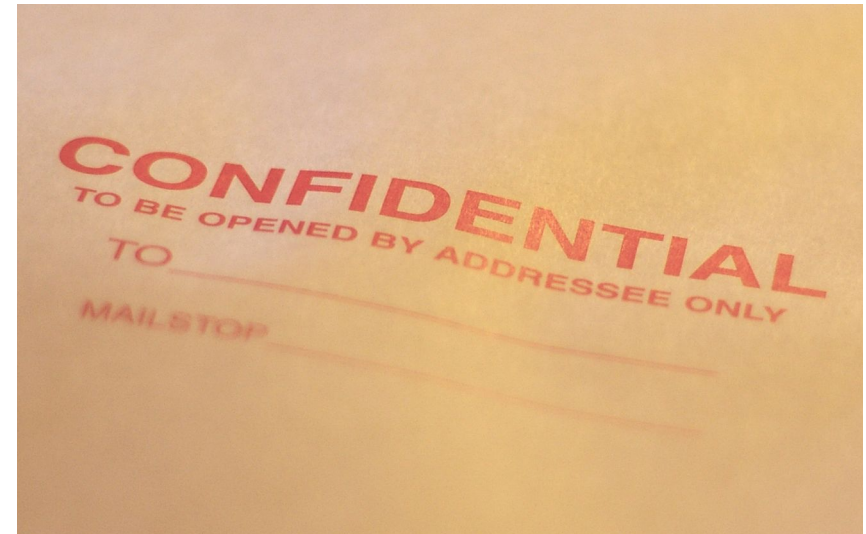
- Is anyone a friend or coworker?
  - conference staff or volunteers
  - incident response team
  - papers committee
  - sponsors
- Review leadership positions for potential leaks:
  - other incident responders
  - volunteers & staff
  - papers committee
  - board members



CC BY Jay Weldenbach

# Confidentiality Issues

- Reporter fears retaliation
- NDAs & severance
- Police Investigation
- Limit incident docs access
- Ask around (discretely)
- Often multiple incidents
- Other grounds to dismiss



CC BY Casey Marshall

# Known Harassers

- Not just internet trolls
- Stalkers do show up
- Power plays & disruption
- Have a mitigation plan
- Strict confidentiality plan
- Ensure attendee safety



CC BY Paul VanDerWerf