Communicating Effectively in Academic Advising

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Overview
In this Web Event, our team of five “Best of Region” presentation winners will share their insights on important aspects of communication that are essential to quality academic advising. Our Region 10 team, Denée Janda, Megan Stephenson, and Debbie O'Neill, will consider how nonverbal communication influences advisor-advisee interactions, contributing to the quality of their relationship. Our Region 1 team, Jessica Karner and Melissa Jenkins, will consider what happens when the trusting relationships developed between advisor and advisee lead to the sharing of sensitive information. These combined teams will discuss how advisors can demonstrate caring to their students by becoming aware of how we communicate with our advisees. They will provide practical tips for implementing effective communication techniques and strategies.

Pre-Webcast Activity Suggestions
View recordings of previous NACADA Webinars on this topic:

- Significant Conversations: The Art and Science of Communication in Transformational Advising
- Breaking Bad News: Delivery Techniques that Help Students Make Good Alternative Choices

Find URLs to these and other NACADA recordings at http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Events-Programs/Events/Web-Events/Digital-Recordings.aspx

Post-Webcast Activity Suggestions
Lego Activity Video from the Region 1 Presentation Team - http://tinyurl.com/Lego-for-Communication (or http://bentley.mediacore.tv/media/full-lego-video/embed_player?embed_token=01_dyxizmYd7C57TNHLO2qG2O2_enCtetDKFu4sz0LOczWLhpzEunuSQ6VvbLXNkTZ5ZH0ZBMWzYDycGm5017g)

Case Studies from the Region 1 Presentation Team (see following pages)
Notes from the Region 10 (University of Colorado-Boulder) Presentation Team

Important Definitions/Concepts/Theories -

- Expectancy Violation Theory (Burgoon, J. & Hale, J., 1988) - when expectations are violated, we are surprised. The way(s) in which we respond to expectancy violations depends on reward value (what we expect to get from the relationship).
- Communication Accommodation Theory (Giles, H., Coupland, N., & Coupland, J., 1991) - developed to understand how or why people shift their communication toward or away from the style of the person with whom they are interacting
  - Convergence - communicating in a similar fashion; powerless individuals are more likely to do this with the communication style of powerful people
    - Mirror other person's vocabulary, accent, speech rate, grammar, voice etc.
    - Match other person's gestures, mannerisms, dress, hair, etc.
    - Often based on attraction, charisma, credibility and motive
  - Divergence - communicating differently from the other
    - Works in opposite direction to convergence
    - Speaks and gestures differently from other person
    - Can be based on disdain for other person (or their behavior) and desire to remain different from them
- Nonverbal Communication refers to any communication that is not verbal (the words themselves): gestures, eye contact, personal space, touch, time, vocal effects, etc.
- Functions of nonverbal communication:
  - **reinforcement** - the NV message repeats the verbal message: waving while saying goodbye
  - **contradiction** - the NV message contradicts the verbal message: saying "I'm fine" in a sad tone of voice; Sometimes NV Comm. prevails over verbal comm. - when verbal and NV contradict one another, we believe the NV comm
  - **substitution** - the NV message fills in for the verbal message: nodding instead of saying 'yes'
  - **accentuation** - the NV message accents what is said: smiling broadly while saying 'thank you' or talking quickly when excited about something
  - **regulation** - using NV communication to regulate interactions (turn taking): we look at the person we think will speak next

Types of nonverbal communication

- **Paralanguage** emphasizes how words are spoken as means of expressing thoughts and feelings.
- **Kinesics** is communication through body motions, either a single part of the body or the body as a whole.
- **Eye Contact** is the primary nonverbal way of indicating engagement, interest, attention, and trust/truthfulness
- **Proxemics** has to do with the study of our use of space and how various differences in that use can make us feel more relaxed or anxious. It includes both personal and physical space.
- **Chronemics** is the study of the use of time. It includes speed of talk, duration of turns at talk, the overall percentage of "talk time" individuals utilize, punctuality, and willingness to wait for others.
- **Haptics** refers to our use of touch to communicate. For example, people shake hands as a greeting in mainstream U.S. culture.
- **Dress** (formal vs. casual) can convey power or knowledge/expertise.

Discussion Questions/Thoughts to Ponder:

- Do you know what messages you are communicating to students by your use of eye contact?
- Have you noticed that your students’ eye contact varies by culture?
- Have you ever misinterpreted someone’s use of eye contact? Or vice versa?
● What messages are you sending to students and/or colleagues through your use of chronemics?
● What strategies have you used or could you use to bridge people of monochronic and polychronic cultures?
● How can judging our students’ use of chronemics or jumping to conclusions impact our relationships with students?

Top Ten List of Things to remember about Nonverbal Communication (in no particular order!)
1. Eye contact is the primary nonverbal means of indicating engagement, interest, attention, and involvement; therefore, understanding the meaning behind eye contact in other cultures is imperative if we are to communicate effectively with students from non-dominant cultures and conversely it can be important for us to educate them on the dominant culture’s expectations if it feels appropriate.
2. Along with eye contact, avoid distractions. If you are not fully focused on whomever you are trying to connect with, s/he will notice that you are not completely engaged in the conversation. This sends the message that you don’t care.
3. We often make judgments of people based on time-related cues and behaviors. While it is important for advisors to understand how students of different cultures value or make use of time before we judge the meaning behind their behaviors, it can be helpful and important for advisors to educate students from non-dominant cultures on the importance of understanding how the dominant culture values time.
4. When verbal and nonverbal messages contradict one another, we believe the nonverbal over the verbal. Nonverbal communication is powerful!
5. We view the world through our own field of experience and culture. Our use and interpretation of nonverbal communication is impacted by culture and our past experiences.
6. One cannot not communicate.
7. Remember that non-verbal signals can be misread. Think about a person's overall demeanor, it’s far more telling than a single gesture viewed in isolation.
8. Having good non-verbal communication skills are exactly that: skills. To be good at anything, it must be practiced.
9. Remember that this is a two-way street. You’re not only reading your students, they’re reading YOU. If students or others often respond to you in ways you don’t expect, step back, maybe even videotape yourself to identify behaviors you might not be aware you’re doing.
10. Communication convergence (similar communication) both maintains positive self-identity and makes the other person more confident -- a win-win for advising interactions!

References and Recommended Resources

Communication and Listening Skills Resources in the NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources: http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Communication--listening-skills-resources.aspx


Communicating Effectively in Academic Advising


Case #1- Alcohol Abuse

The student center is a hive of activity as students rush in to escape the arctic vortex temperatures threatening the region and make their way to the dining hall or to any of the other student affairs offices that call the student union home. Situated perfectly between the café and the grand staircase, your advising table is drawing a lot of attention from students as they stop to ask questions of you or your colleagues. Even those who are only trying to stealthfully grab some of the candy or free Advising Center swag that is strewn across the table are introducing themselves and listening to the brief review of services that are offered in center. As part of a new effort in your office to get advisors to leave the Center and bring advising to the students, you could not be happier with your first initiative.

During a lull in student traffic, most of your co-workers head to the on-campus Starbucks to grab caffeine pick-me-ups and you start to replenish the various brochures and resources that had run low. As you do so, you hear your name being called from across the cavernous lobby and can see your advisee Caitlin enthusiastically waving at you. As you return the wave, Caitlin says something to her friends who proceed to the exit without her and she runs over to the table to see you.

“I’m like so glad I saw you here, I so need to make an appointment,” she nearly yells. “There are like a million things that I need to talk to you about... oh my God, I can’t believe that you are here, I never see you like outside the office!” Caitlin seems overly energetic and is quickly distracted by all of the giveaways on the table. As she stuffs mini Snickers and Advising Center highlighters into her pocket, you note that her rumpled clothes have the all too familiar look of someone who went to bed in the same clothes they went out in.

“Caitlin...” you start to say, but before you could explain that she needs to call the office to schedule an appointment, she abruptly turns and leaves just as quickly as she came. As she does, the unmistakable smell of alcohol is left in her wake. And it is strong. Did she miss her 9:00 am class that morning, you think, or did she go there smelling like a distillery? In the dozen or so times that you have met, you do not remember her ever being that gregarious. Maybe seeing you in the student center and not the office is why she acted different than you remember but you are still concerned that she reeked so badly of alcohol.

After another rush of students, the lunch hour slows down and you and your colleagues decide to pack up the table and leave. As you tighten your scarf around your head, you see Caitlin on a couch by the fireplace in the student lounge seemingly staring off into space. You wonder if you should stop by and see how she is doing.

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**It is now time to choose your own adventure. Please choose one of the options below, discussing as a group which you would most like to do.**

If you decide to stop and talk and check in with Caitlin, open envelope 1.

If you decide not to stop, open envelope 2.

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**Envelope 1**

Deciding that you should at least check in with Caitlin to make sure that she is ok, you tell your colleagues to go on without you and enter the student lounge. As you approach Caitlin, you notice that her eyes are shut, her mouth open, and she is softly snoring. Just as you think about whether or not you should wake her, her eyes dart open. “Hi,” she says, much more subdued than your last interaction and she seems to be trying to acclimate herself to the surroundings.

**Envelope 2**

As you walk past the lounge, you notice that Caitlin’s eyes are actually shut and that she is soundly asleep in the warm lounge, her mouth open, softly snoring. A group of students across the way are laughing and even at a distance you can tell that they are mocking the sleeping woman. “Is that Caitlin?” your colleague asks and you can’t help but feel embarrassed for her.

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**It is now time to choose your own adventure. Please choose one of the options below, discussing as a group which you would most like to do.**
After allowing her to pull herself together a bit, you discreetly explain that you were on your way out and saw her sitting there and that you wanted to just check in to see how she was doing, that she didn’t seem herself.

Sensing your concern, Caitlin straightens up and assures you that she is doing ok and explains that she is just now crashing after being up all night working on a paper. “Other than that,” she says, “things are going fine though I do need to sit down with you and talk some things over.”

Even though you did not smell any alcohol at that moment, the look on your face must have conveyed your skepticism about the academic all-nighter that Caitlin was describing. “Ok, she says sheepishly, I was out too late for my best friend’s 21st… but I WAS doing homework prior to going out. I’m just feeling a little a little under the weather and I’m hoping that sitting here will help the nausea pass so that I can get to my next class, I already missed my first two.”

As you look down at the obviously hung over Caitlin, you think about what, if anything, to do next.

Looking around at the other students in the lounge, you figure that this was probably not the spot to have a heart to heart

Discussion Question:

How comfortable are you addressing behavioral concerns that may or may not be taking place outside of the academics concerns that advisors most commonly engage in?

It is now time to choose your own adventure. Please choose one of the options below, discussing as a group which you would most like to do.

If you decide to wish Caitlin well and head back to your office (she already seems to be paying for her misdeeds), open envelope 3.

If you decide to continue your discussion, open envelope 5.

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<td>(It is one Week Later)</td>
<td>Deciding that you should at least check in with Caitlin to make sure that she is ok, you tell your colleagues to go on without you and enter the student lounge. As you approach</td>
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<td>As she promised, when you arrive at work the following Friday, Caitlin has scheduled an</td>
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appointment with you at 10:00 AM and later that morning, you grab her file from the drawer so that you can be prepared for your meeting.

As you flip through Caitlin’s degree audit and the notes from your previous meetings, her steady academic decline seems even more pronounced. A junior pursuing a degree in business, Caitlin had earned a 3.6 cumulative GPA through her first three semesters. Since moving on to campus, however, her grades have worsened and she has failed three different classes, two of which are required business core courses.

You think about how to address both her grades and the condition she was in when you saw her last when Caitlin knocks on your door. She is out of breath and dressed for much warmer weather with only a light hoodie over her flannel pajama pants. “Sorry, I just woke up and had a heart attack when I realized we had an appointment today.” If Caitlin did just wake up, then she likely missed her Friday classes once again. More importantly, if her bloodshot eyes were not enough of a sign that she is again intoxicated, the pungent smell of alcohol is seeping through her pores.

**Discussion Question:**

Over the course of a year, students may present themselves in offices or at other school events reeking of a variety of odors from Alcohol or Pot to extreme body odor. Other than airing out your office after they leave, what, if anything, is that another appropriate action for the academic advisor?

her, you notice that her eyes are shut, her mouth open, and she is softly snoring. Just as you think about whether or not you should wake her, her eyes dart open. “Hi,” she says, much more subdued than your last interaction and she seems to be trying to acclimate herself to the surroundings.

After allowing her to pull herself together a bit, you discreetly explain that you were on your way out and saw her sitting there and that you wanted to just check in to see how she was doing, that she didn’t’ seem herself.

Sensing your concern, Caitlin straightens up and assures you that she is doing ok and explains that she is just now crashing after being up all night working on a paper. “Other than that,” she says, “things are going fine though I do need to sit down with you and talk some things over.”

Even though you did not smell any alcohol at that moment, the look on your face must have conveyed your skepticism about the academic all-nighter that Caitlin was describing. “Ok, she says sheepishly, I was out too late for my best friend’s 21st... but I WAS doing homework prior to going out. I’m just feeling a little a little under the weather and I’m hoping that sitting here will help the nausea pass so that I can get to my next class, I already missed my first two.”

As you look down at the obviously hung over Caitlin, you think about what, if anything, to do next.

Looking around at the other students in the lounge, you figure that this was probably not the spot to have a heart to heart.

**Discussion Question:**

How comfortable are you addressing behavioral concerns that may or may not be taking place outside of the academics concerns that advisors most commonly engage in?

It is now time to choose your own adventure. Please choose one of the options below, discussing as a group which you would most like to do.

If you decide to wait until your advising meeting to discuss your concerns (she already seems to be paying for her misdeeds), open envelope 3.

If you decide to continue your discussion, open envelope 5.
Though it is not the most ideal setting, you do decide to sit next to Caitlin and quietly speak with her about your concerns. As you gather your thoughts, you think about her experience on campus and your prior advising sessions, her steady academic decline seems even more pronounced. A junior pursuing a degree in business, Caitlin had earned a 3.6 cumulative GPA through her first three semesters. Since moving onto campus, however, her grades have worsened and she has failed three different classes, two of which are required business core courses.

**Discussion Question:**

Over the course of a year, students may present themselves in offices or at other school events reeking of a variety of odors from Alcohol or Pot to extreme body odor. Other than airing out your office after they leave, what, if anything, is that another appropriate action for the academic advisor?
Case #2- Assault

As you watch your last appointment walk out of the office, you let out a long breath and glance at look at the small clock on the corner of your computer screen. 12:06 it reads and, almost on cue, your stomach makes a noise confirming that it is lunch time. Other than a few swigs of coffee, the cold remnants of which sits in your mug on your desk, you have not had a minute of down time to even check your email never mind think about grabbing a snack.

It is registration time and for the last three weeks you have been meeting with students from the time you arrive in the morning until the very end of the day when you are trying to get out the door. Though you generally love this time of year, mercifully, it is coming to an end.

With only 24 minutes until your next appointment arrives, you listen to hear if the waiting room is still overrun with last minute procrastinators, but all you hear is the light banter between your work study student and the department secretary. Perfect. Realizing that this is your one and only chance to take a break, you make a bee line for the office refrigerator to grab your lunch.

As you head back to your office, you can hear your phone ringing and the caller id indicates that it is the front desk. Maybe your 12:30 is early? Your stomach protests but you pick up the phone anyway as you lay your lunch and beverage on the desk.

“There is a student out here that would like to see you. She says she had an appointment on Monday that she missed” the student employee explains in a quiet voice that indicates she is trying to be somewhat discreet. You quickly try to think about who it may be since there are few no shows during registration but are coming up blank. “Who is it,” you ask almost as quietly and quickly go through your Outlook calendar. Before she can answer, you assume she must be talking about Katie Jones. Katie did have an appointment on Monday and for the first time since you have met her a couple of years ago, she failed to make an appointment.

This may not have stuck out if it was any other student, but you and Katie have gotten to know each other quite well and she is an extremely professional young woman who would have let you know if she was not going to make an appointment. As you predicted when you met her at orientation, Katie quickly became a leader on campus and was well known by faculty, staff, and students alike. Besides, you think, as you once again look at your computer clock and see that it is now 12:11, her registration is today and she was one of those students who always sought out advising before registering for her courses.

Discussion Question:

How do you handle situations when students arrive in the office to see you without appointments?

It is now time to choose your own adventure. Please choose one of the options below, discussing as a group which you would most like to do.

If you decide to tell your student employee to send Katie down and try to meet with her for the remaining 19 minutes before your next meeting, open envelope 1.

If you decide to tell your student employee to ask Katie to return at 4:00 when you can see her, open envelope 2.

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<td>You hang up the phone, open your sandwich, and take as big a bite as possible while simultaneously attempting to unscrew the top of your drink. You swallow without really tasting anything and follow that with a long swig of your drink. As you wipe your mouth with the back of your hand, slightly</td>
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<td>With registration over for the day, your last few appointments were quick check in meetings with probation students and you squeeze in some time to respond to the avalanche of emails that have arrived over the last several hours. At 3:55 you notice that Katie is waiting in the lobby and you head out to greet her and take her back to your</td>
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embarrassed by how famished you are, you can see Katie making her way down to your office. She is uncharacteristically dressed in sweats, a college sweatshirt, and her hair pulled back with a headband.

You take another sip of your drink, wrap up your sandwich, and push both to the side of your desk as Katie takes a seat. Though you normally chat for a few minutes, Katie dives right into the meeting, something you don’t mind since you do have limited time to meet.

“Thanks for meeting with me”, Katie says as she rummages through her backpack for her materials. “I register in an hour and I was freaking out. I am so unprepared this semester. I don’t know, oh and also, I apologize for missing our meeting on Monday…”

Katie continues to talk in rapid, rambling sentences and you put up your hand in the universal stop motion and though she is not looking directly at you, she starts to slow down. “Hold on,” you say, “I thought it was strange you didn’t come in the other day but I am glad you are here now. How are you doing?”

You notice that Katie is avoiding eye contact with you and you see tears starting to well up in her eyes. Clearly, something is not right. You take a quick peek at your computer and you see that your 12:30 has checked in.

“What wrong?” you ask and for what seemed like a few minutes, though was probably only a few seconds, Katie just whimpered softly. She grabs the tissue you offer and looks at you with tear stained cheeks. “I dunno,” she says. “I know you have another appointment waiting, it’s just…” With that she outright starts to cry. After a few more minutes of prodding she manages to pull herself together with a big breath. “I’m fine” she starts to say; however, she can’t help but laugh a little bit since she realizes that her crying seems to indicate otherwise. “Sorry, I probably seem like some sort of crazy person but I gotta concentrate on registration. “Are these classes ok?” she asks, showing you the perfectly planned schedule.

As always expected with Katie, it is a perfect schedule with all the correct courses listed and you quickly tell her that everything looks good as your notification goes off again indicating that your next appointment is waiting. Katie, though, looks incredibly upset.

office. As you approach the seating area, you see Katie absentmindedly going through the student newspaper and you can’t help but notice that she is uncharacteristically dressed casually with sweats, a college sweatshirt, and her hair pulled back with a headband.

Though she is normally full of energy, Katie quietly returns your greeting and silently walks with you to your office.

“Thanks for meeting with me, Katie says as she rummages through her backpack for her materials. “I registered an hour ago and I was freaking out, I am so unprepared this semester. I don’t know, oh and also, let me apologize her missing our meeting on Monday…”

Katie continues to talk in rapid, rambling sentences and you put up your hand in the universal stop motion and though she is not looking directly at you, she does just that. “Hold on,” you say, “I thought it was strange you didn’t come in the other day but I am glad you are here now. How are you doing?”

You sense that Katie is avoiding eye contact with you and see tears starting to well up in her eyes. Clearly, something is not right and you take a quick peek at your door and wonder if you should close it.

“What wrong?” you ask and for what seemed like a few minutes, though was probably only a few seconds, Katie just whimper softly. She grabs a tissue you offer and looks up at you with tear stained cheeks. “I dunno,” she says. “I know you have had a long day, it’s just…” With that she outright starts to cry and after a few more minutes of prodding she pulls herself together with a big breath. “I’m fine” she starts to say but can’t help but laugh a little bit since her crying seems to indicate otherwise. “I probably seem like a crazy person but I gotta concentrate on my classes. Are these classes I registered ok, she asks, showing you the perfectly planned schedule.

You know right away that it is, as always, a perfect schedule with all the correct courses listed and quickly tell her that everything looks great.

“Is something wrong Katie,” you ask again and more silence follows.

“I can trust you, right? she asks, finally looking right into your eyes with a look that tells you that this is probably serious. “If I tell you about something that happened to me, can it stay between the two of us?”

Discussion Question:
**Discussion Question:**

With tight schedules and back and back appointments, how do you balance working with students who need more time and the need/desire for you to stay on track with your appointments?

**It is now time to choose your own adventure. Please choose one of the options below, discussing as a group which you would most like to do.**

If you end your meeting with Katie, walk out with her, and take your next appointment, open envelope 3.

If you call the front desk and let them know you will be running behind and ask Katie what is wrong, open envelope 4.

If you tell Katie you are concerned about her but would like her to return at 4:00 when you can talk, open envelope 5.

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**Envelope 3**

Katie seemed satisfied with your affirmative response regarding her schedule and starts to quickly pack up without the usual banter that usually happens between the two of you. Before you walk her out, you let her know that if there is anything that she would like to talk about that she should not hesitate to let you know. “Thanks,” she says, “I’ll be fine.” You smile warmly and walk her out and call Patrick in.

The next morning:

With registration concluded, you now have your first half hour open and you use this time to read emails that have been accumulating. You notice an email from Katie and since you were concerned yesterday, you open it right away:

Thank you very much for squeezing me in yesterday. I did end up registering and everything worked out find. THANK YOU!!!!

You mentioned that we could talk and I wanted to see if you were free later today. I have no classes after 11 am so let me know.

Also, if I tell you something about me, can it stay between the two of us?

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**Envelope 4**

“Give me just a second,” you say to Katie and pick up the phone and ask your student worker to let your next appointment, Patrick, know that you are running a little late. You can hear her relay this message through the phone and as you would expect Patrick was just fine with the delay. With that out of the way, you turn your attention to Katie.

“Is something wrong Katie?” you ask again and more silence follows.

“I can trust you, right? she asks, finally looking right into your eyes with a look that tells you that this is probably serious. “If I tell you about something that happened to me, can it stay between the two of us?”

**Discussion Question:**

What is your philosophy about confidentiality in advising?

**It is now time to choose your own adventure. Please choose one of the options below, discussing as a group which you would most like to do.**

If you assure Katie that everything she says to you will remain confidential, open envelope 6.
**Discussion Question:**

What is your philosophy about confidentiality in advising?

**It is now time to choose your own adventure. Please choose one of the options below, discussing as a group which you would most like to do.**

If you assure Katie that everything she says to you will remain confidential, open envelope 6.

If you tell Katie that what she tells you will, as always, generally remain private but that you cannot guarantee confidentiality, open envelope 7.

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| With registration over for the day, your last few appointments were quick check-in meetings with probation students and you squeeze in some time to respond to the avalanche of emails that have arrived over the last several hours. At 3:55 you notice that Katie is waiting in the lobby and you head out to greet her and take her back to your office. As you approach the seating area, you see that Katie still looks disheveled. Though she is normally full of energy, Katie quietly returns your greeting and silently walks with you to your office. “Is something wrong Katie?” you ask again after an awkward silence and only more silence follows. “I can trust you, right? she asks, finally looking right into your eyes with a look that tells you that this is probably serious. “If I tell you about something that happened to me, can it stay between the two of us?” **Discussion Question:**

What is your philosophy about confidentiality in advising? |

You assure Katie that anything she says here will remain confidential, letting her know that the most impactful advising relationships are those that are built on trust. “I can tell that something is really bothering you,” you say. “I know, obviously there is,” she replies, “and you’re the staff member I know best here.” Katie takes a deep breath and grabbing another tissue, tells you that she has been sexually assaulted. While a million different thoughts swirl around your head, you allow for there to be some silence and Katie continues her story. She tells you that the assault took place this past weekend. She left an on-campus party and returned home with a classmate when the assault happened. **Discussion Question:**

Keeping in mind that you have guaranteed confidentiality in this case, how would you handle this situation in the short term? Over the long term?
You let Katie know that while nearly everything she tells you is, in fact, kept confidential that you are not able to guarantee it in all circumstances. This is especially true if her safety or the safety of others is at risk.

You can tell that she is not happy with this answer and you can see her literally weighing whether or not she wants to share what is on her mind.

“I can tell that something is really bothering you,” you say gently.

“I know, obviously there is,” she replies, “and you’re the staff member I know best here.”

Katie takes a deep breath and grabbing another tissue, tells you that she has been sexually assaulted. While a million different thoughts swirl around your head, you allow for there to be some silence and Katie continues her story. She tells you that the assault took place this past weekend. She left an on-campus party and returned home with a classmate when the assault happened.

**Discussion Question:**

Keeping in mind that you have guaranteed confidentiality in this case, how would you handle this situation in the short term? Over the long term?
Case #3- Self Medication

You try not to laugh, but it is way too hard to preserve the straight face that you are desperately trying to maintain. It is Monday morning and you could not have a better student appointment to start the week with than your student, Conor D’arcy. Smart, funny, hard-working, and friendly, Conor has been your advisee since he was a first year student and over the past four years, you have helped him navigate the typical trials and tribulations of modern college life. His first year transition to your institution was not the smoothest, academically or personally, but he was quickly able to adjust with a little more discipline and better decision-making. Certainly, you have played an important role in this and your frequent meetings that were at one time mandatory have continued throughout his tenure. It has been especially rewarding that you have been able to see Conor grow from a recent high school graduate to a competent young man on the cusp of graduating with his bachelor’s degree.

As Conor updates you on crazy escapades he has been on since you last met, he continues to feast on a half dozen Hershey Bars that he placed on your desk when he first entered your office. “I’m starving,” he declares in a gregariously loud voice. As he continues to inhale the chocolates, he notices your look of shock and defend himself, “I never ate yesterday since I was at the library all day.” He goes on to explain that hasn’t been to bed in the last two days but that he could not be happier with how much he has gotten done. “You would be so proud of me,” he boasts, I was never able to concentrate like this my freshman year."

Though you are certainly proud of Conor, you are slightly concerned. While you have seen a lot of positive changes, you have noticed that he has been more stressed than ever before. You attributed his weight loss to the stress of being a senior and all the issues that this brings, but now that he is in front of you, he just isn’t acting right.

Discussion Question:

How comfortable are you with confronting students about concerns that you have about them? What are some strategies for advisors when initiating difficult conversations?

It is now time to choose your own adventure. Please choose one of the options below, discussing as a group which you would most like to do.

If you decide to confront Conor and share your concerns, open envelope 1.

If you decide to not say anything and instead monitor things over the next few weeks, open envelope 2.

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<th>Envelope 1</th>
<th>Envelope 2</th>
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<td>During a break in his story, Conor offers you the last few squares of his chocolate and when you decline, he promptly stuffs it into his mouth. You take this silence to really size him up and you are certain that in addition to starting to look gaunt, his eyes are red and his lids are puffy. Undoubtedly, this is from the lack of sleep. Taking advantage of this intermission, you share with Conor that you have become increasingly concerned about him and wanted to check in to see how he was doing. He seems a bit taken aback with your concern. “I’m actually doing great,” he says. “I am on track on have the most academically successful semester yet.”</td>
<td>During a break in his story, Conor offers you the last few squares of his chocolate and when you decline, he promptly stuffs it into his mouth. You take this silence to really size him up and you are certain that in addition to starting to look gaunt, his eyes are red and his lids are puffy. Undoubtedly, this is from the lack of sleep. You decide that you will monitor him for a little while and make a mental note to check in with him the next week. Before you could send your follow-up email, you learn from one of your student workers that Conor had been taken out of his residence hall by EMTs over the weekend. Rumors suggest that the RA called campus police after Conor was displaying a number of concerning behaviors including confusion, hallucinations and panic attacks.</td>
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“That’s great,” you say earnestly, “but I have noticed that you have been looking incredibly run down as of late and...”

“Ohhhh” Conor interrupts. He explains that after returning from his internship this summer, it was clear that he needed to buckle down and take school more seriously. “I knew that working there was what I wanted to do and I needed a good senior year, he says. I always thought I had trouble concentrating...I wasn’t hyper or anything, I just have a hard time in classes sometimes. My buddy gave me some of his Adderall and it has been amazing. I stay on task and can work for hours, days really.... Without the Adderall I failed one class....I began to take Adderall again and saw a huge improvement.

**Discussion Question:**

How do you respond to this admission from Conor?

Studies show that the use of Adderall and other self-medication on college campuses has risen dramatically. What is the climate on your campus?

To your surprise you notice a recent email from Conor linked to an old email chain between the two of you. In the email Conor shared that he had been taking Adderall for quite some time and that he had a bad reaction over the weekend:

I always thought I had trouble concentrating...I wasn’t hyper or anything, I just have a hard time in classes sometimes. My buddy gave me some of his Adderall and it has been amazing. I stay on task and can work for hours, days really.... I don’t think I’m addicted.....I just can’t imagine not taking it since I tried to stop before. Without the Adderall I failed one class....I began to take Adderall again and saw a huge improvement.

**Discussion Question:**

Studies show that the use of Adderall and other self-medication on college campuses has risen dramatically. What is the climate on your campus?

How can/should an advisor handle situations where a student discloses self-medication?
Communicating Effectively in Academic Advising

In this Web Event, our team of five “Best of Region” presentation winners will share their insights on important aspects of communication that are essential to quality academic advising. Our Region 10 team, Denée Janda, Megan Stephenson, and Debbie O’Neill, will consider how nonverbal communication influences advisor-advisee interactions, contributing to the quality of their relationship. Our Region 1 team, Jessica Karner and Melissa Jenkins, will consider what happens when the trusting relationships developed between advisor and advisee lead to the sharing of sensitive information. These combined teams will discuss how advisors can demonstrate caring to their students by becoming aware of how we communicate with our advisees. They will provide practical tips for implementing effective communication techniques and strategies.

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Communicating Effectively in Academic Advising

Denée Janda
Advising Director, College of Arts & Sciences

Debbie O’Neill
Academic Advisor, Department of Communication

Megan Stephenson
Advising Director, College of Arts & Sciences

University of Colorado-Boulder

Paul Watzlawick’s First Axiom of Communication

One Cannot Not Communicate

Paralanguage
Emphasizes how words are spoken as means of expressing thoughts and feelings.

Eye Contact
The primary nonverbal way of indicating engagement, interest, attention and trust/truthfulness.

Chronemics
The study of the use of time

Proxemics

The study of our use of space
- Personal
- Physical

Things to think about

- Communication is a skill that requires effort and practice
- Culture influences communication
- Be cautious of misinterpreting behaviors
- Engage in self-monitoring

I'VE LEARNED THAT PEOPLE WILL FORGET WHAT YOU SAID, PEOPLE WILL FORGET WHAT YOU DID, BUT PEOPLE WILL NEVER FORGET HOW YOU MADE THEM FEEL.

-Maya Angelou
Communicating Effectively in Academic Advising

Melissa Jenkins
Assistant Director
Office of Academic Services/Academic Advising Center
Bentley University

Jessica Karner
Advisor for Academic Support and Technology
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

NACADA WebEvents

Impetus

“Academic Advising at its very best is a supportive and interactive relationship between students and advisors... the value of the one-to-one academic advising relationship to students’ success cannot be underestimated”

-Charlie Nutt


Leggo Activity

- Directions
  - In groups of 2, arrange seats so that you are sitting back to back
  - 1 person will act as the builder
  - 1 person will act as the project manager
  - The project manager must guide the builder into creating an exact duplicate of the Lego structure that they have been given
LEGO Activity

Debrief

• What was your reaction to the activity?
• What, if anything, did you find difficult?
• What were some successful strategies?
• How can this experience inform our own communication strategies?

Communication Theory

Why do we misunderstand each other?
Why do we have conflict?

Interpretation Intent

Communication Theory

All Knowledge

Advisor’s Interpretation

Student’s Interpretation

Theory to Practice

All Knowledge

Academic Probation
- Students must earn a 2.0 to be in good standing
- Minimum GPA results in a guide for successful academic progress
- Failure to earn minimum results in probation
- Additional sanctions can be imposed

Advisor’s Interpretation
- Opportunity to identify struggling students
- Opportunity to work on skills have developmental conversations and connect with resources

Student’s Interpretation
- Arbitrary number
- In danger of sanctions
- On the Dean’s radar
- Work harder

Meaningful Conversations + Common Interpretations = Solutions

- Real danger of suspension
- Work on skills
- Connect with resources
At different institutions, the terms “advising,” “counseling,” “advisors,” and “counselor” are used for different functions and persons.

By their very nature, advisors and counselors experience considerable overlap in their responsibilities.

Advising v. Counseling

Advisors support students in forming and clarifying meaningful educational plans that are compatible with their personal goals:

"I am no longer sure I want to major in pre-med..."

Advisors may include:

- Informational
- Explanatory
- Developmental
- Mentoring
- Counseling

Purpose

- Informational: Clarification
-Explanatory: Insights
-Developmental: Growth
-Mentoring: Pinpoint

Problem

- Content: Information Procedures Options and values
-Mentoring: Devise resolution

Focus

- The information
- The institution
- The student
- The person

Modification of student's behavior

Length of each contact (minutes)

- 5‐15
- 15‐30
- 30‐60
- Varies; many contacts are made

"This summer I want to take a course at college by my house. Can you tell me how I can transfer the credit back?"

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Advising v. Counseling

When advisors determine that students’ problems are beyond their expertise and referral is necessary.


QPR Theory for the Academic Advisor

- Ask clarifying questions to determine what the students need
- Persuade the student to accept help
- Refer the student to the proper resources


Communicating Effectively in Academic Advising

Panelists:
- Denée Janda, Advising Director, College of Arts & Sciences, University of Colorado-Boulder
- Megan Stephenson, Advising Director, College of Arts & Sciences, University of Colorado-Boulder
- Debbie O’Neill, Academic Advisor, Dept. of Communication, University of Colorado-Boulder
- Melissa Jenkins, Assistant Director, Office of Academic Services/Academic Advising Center, Bentley University
- Jessica Karner, Advisor for Academic Support and Technology, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

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