2023-2024

CLIMATE HANDBOOK

Duke
UNIVERSITY

PSYCHOLOGY &
NEUROSCIENCE
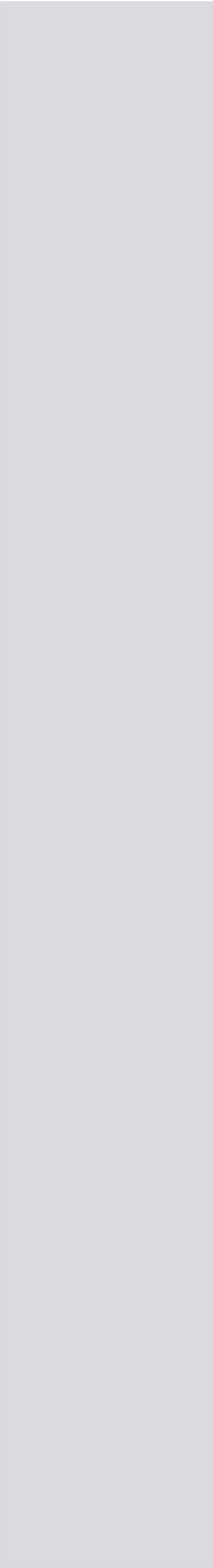
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PURPOSE

This document intends to promote a supportive community while embracing the spirit of accountability and transparency. We belong to a broad community, whether defined in terms of research interests or personal backgrounds, and we gain and learn when we listen to different perspectives. Enclosed, we have shared departmental and university-wide aspirations for our community, to help us to do our best work and to support others in achieving the same. We cannot completely fulfill our scientific and educational mission as a department without a respectful and professional climate. An essential component of excellent science and teaching is a firm commitment to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. As a department of Psychology & Neuroscience (P&N) community we agree to self- reflect, engage in discomfort, stretch as scientists and professionals, and seek opportunities for conversation and growth. We agree to create an environment that actively supports the humanity, dignity, and safety of our staff, students, and faculty.

To this end, our aspirations and current collective commitments regarding departmental climate are enclosed within. This is a working document that will be regularly updated based on feedback and guidance from community members and experts. This document is expressly intended as an aspirational and values statement for our department. Accordingly, it does not address broader policy regulations that might be covered by the Faculty Handbook, Duke Human Resources, or the legal system.

STATEMENT OF VALUES

P&N supports a climate that facilitates personal and career growth, **welcomes and includes all backgrounds and viewpoints, and supports its community.** We share Duke's values of respect, trust, diversity, discovery,and excellence. We also recognize that concrete steps are needed to implement those values within our community. Through this climate statement, we outline our shared commitments as P&N faculty, staff, and students to supporting one another professionally and with respect. We are collectively committed to fostering a community where all members can thrive by:

• Modeling positive behaviors
• Communicating concerns to others
• Taking steps to improve our practices
• Signaling respect for others through mindfulness of our language and behaviors

Our shared values guide our interactions with the members of our community, all activities within our laboratories and classrooms, and all times wherein we represent Duke and/or P&N in other settings.

Creating a supportive climate within our department and in our work with other departments and collaborators is critical to our mission. To be effective, we are collectively committed to creating an environment that is inclusive and diverse and a space where individuals are encouraged to retain their uniqueness and can feel a sense of belonging no matter their background or identities, including but not limited to: race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, ability status, socioeconomic status, veteran status, immigration history/status, cultural upbringing, and age. Our commitment to a positive climate requires a commitment to equity. As a department, equity means that our faculty, staff, and students can experience the same level of success, no matter their starting place. Our department pledges to foster growth in each member of our community's understanding of how differences in individual identities predict inequitable outcomes, and we commit formally to using equity as a lens to examine disparities.

As an institution, Duke University has pledged its commitment to diversity and inclusion, stating formally through the Office of Institutional Equity:

"Our collective success depends on the robust exchange of ideas—an exchange that is best when the rich diversity of our perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences flourishes. To achieve this exchange, it is essential that all members of the community feel secure and welcome, that the contributions of all individuals are respected, and that all voices are heard. All members of our community have a responsibility to uphold these values."

COMMUNICATION

We value respectful communication and support conversation. Effective, mindful, and respectful communication is essential. We adopt the following principles for effective communication:

- **Professionalism.** As a community, we value professional communication that treats others with dignity, recognizes the value of diversity, and seeks to understand others' perspectives. These values extend to communication via social media channels. We aspire to navigate disagreements respectfully using communication that avoids bullying, harassment, and intolerance. We support those who come forward to report instances in which these principles have been breached (see *Reporting Concerns* below).

- **Respect for work-life balance.** As community members we all value personal privacy, as each of us has non-workplace responsibilities and/or a desire to maintain boundaries between our personal and professional lives. Our communication with department members appropriately respects those setting boundaries. We expect an understanding and supportive rapport.

- **Consideration for others' time.** As members of this community, we all have many responsibilities that pose demands on our time. A healthy climate includes respect for others' time by maintaining appropriate length and frequency of communications and meetings, and by keeping communications as timely as possible to ensure a reasonable timeline for responses to requests. We will communicate to others when to expect lengthy delays in responding, and do not expect our colleagues at any level to immediately respond outside of work hours (e.g. weekends and holidays).

- **Constructive feedback.** We agree to share feedback about work products or behaviors mindfully and constructively with a goal of supporting our colleagues in their own work. Likewise, we are committed to reducing traditional power dynamics by being open to feedback in any hierarchical direction. That is, trainees or staff may have constructive feedbackto offer related to the management styles of supervisors or faculty. We agree as a community to be open to receiving this feedback with an open mind and without retaliation.

- **Accessibility.** As community members we agree to be accessible to our colleagues and trainees through professional communication channels during typical work hours. Mentors and trainees should discuss how they each prefer

to communicate and find modes of communication that work for all parties (e.g. Slack, text, email; changes in preferred communication mode can always occur and are best relayed through clear direct communication). We are mindful that what some see as supportive practices (e.g., frequent short texts outside of work hours) might be seen by others as an imposition (e.g. relative to official channels like Duke email or texts during work hours only). We all agree to be adaptive and respectful in our access to each other, keeping in mind our other valued principles of respect for work-life balance and consideration for others' time.

- **Awareness of Audience.** As community members we note that social media means that our communications may reach a much broader audience than originally intended. Such communications also are more permanent and searchable than other communications. Information posted on social networking sites may be considered and evaluated as to how it reflects your professionalism, so we encourage you to be thoughtful about what you share.

These principles guide our interactions with all community members at all levels and spaces, including one-on-one interactions, lab spaces, group meetings, classrooms and other public settings. We encourage open and respectful exchanges at departmental events, such as colloquia, that ensure participation by all attendees. We are committed to fostering a convivial atmosphere for social communication that encourages an open exchange of ideas and promotes conversation and reflection.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

We prioritize diversity, equity and inclusion in all our community members and in all decisions we make that impact the community. Our efforts began with the P&N Task Force on Diversity, Inclusion, and Climate in June 2020. The task force was created to mobilize P&N toward constructive, accountable actions that create a diverse and inclusive department, and a climate supportive of our community members' personal and professional goals. Because many of these goals aligned with those of the Clinical Anti-Racism Group, P&N's current focus is on expanding the Anti-Racism group to encompass all areas of the department.

- **Respect.** We recognize that we each join this community with distinct experiences, backgrounds, cultural expectations, and viewpoints. With this recognition comes an acknowledgement that the social standards of our community have been historically set and dominated through the lens of the privileged straight White male majority. Whether intentional or not, this precedent leads to the very real capacity to marginalize or disenfranchise our community members who are currently and have been historically under-represented in science. These include, but are not limited to, racial minorities (including Black, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and bi- or multi-racial individuals), individuals of Hispanic ethnicity, women, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, individuals of lower socioeconomic status or first generation college students, immigrants, and individuals with disabilities. We collectively agree to recognize this reality and be mindful of our roles in perpetuating these systems as we all strive to respect each other no matter our unique backgrounds and identities. As a community we are mindful of cultural differences in expectations and behavior and will integrate and accommodate differences in perspective and style without forcing assimilation.

- **Responsibility.** Through our actions and expectations, all members of our community take responsibility for promoting the inclusion and equitable partnership of our fellow departmental citizens. Inherent in this responsibility is the recognition of power dynamics that may be built on majority viewpoints. As individuals in positions of power (e.g., instructors, advisors, supervisors) we agree to take this responsibility seriously and to use our privilege and access to empower others in an equitable and inclusive way.

- **Accountability.** Concerns may be communicated in good faith to departmental leadership without fear of retaliation. This includes, for example, concerns about power dynamics or a sense of inclusiveness. If a community member does not feel comfortable expressing a concern directly to the Chair or Associate Chair, they should contact the Ombudsperson. The graduate school offers a useful interactive guide if you are unsure what to do in a particular situation; it can be found at: https://projects.gradschool.duke.edu/reporting/

- **Support.** We agree to keep each other informed about institutional resources for supporting diversity initiatives for trainees, staff, and fellow faculty and will connect individuals to those resources as needed.

- **Engagement.** To promote and support the diversity among our staff, students and faculty, the department will actively engage in efforts toward diversity, inclusion, and equity in our community. These values will factor into our recruiting

and hiring practices, and we will seek additional opportunities to support under-represented trainees through fellowship programs. We will also adopt reinforcement models that harness and recognize the diversity within our department, for instance by including climate-promoting responsibilities in staff portfolios and recognizing mentoring and committee service activities that foster diversity, inclusiveness, and equity.

MENTORING & SUPERVISION

Effective mentorship not only improves the quality of our research and teaching programs, but also promotes the career development of many members of our community. This section highlights our aspirations for supportive mentorship of students, postdoctoral fellows, and post-baccalaureate researchers (collectively called "trainees"). We value holistic approaches to guiding trainee growth across all domains of their career development, from the research and classroom settings to supervision of

teaching assistant (TA) instruction and other professional skills, such as those necessary for success in clinical internships, grantsmanship, and scientific communication. These same principles apply across mentoring roles when working with TAs, while serving as a committee member, or in any other interactions with trainees. Key principles of effective mentoring include:

- **Respect.** We strive to create a collegial atmosphere in which mentors and trainees are all valued members of the community and partners in supporting our missions.

- **Responsibility.** Through their actions and expectations, mentors are responsible for promoting the trainee's career goals. Requests that are not directly related to the trainee's current projects may be appropriate (e.g., a trainee may help set up equipment in a laboratory or may guest-lecture in a course). Mentors and trainees are expected to work together to establish expectations for meeting deadlines, and consider external (e.g. department leadership's) guidance about the appropriateness of such requests and deadlines.

- **Openness.** We value open and effective lines of communication between mentors and their trainees. Mentors should not only offer constructive feedback but also listen to trainee concerns.

- **Boundaries.** We espouse respect for privacy and the maintenance of appropriate personal/professional boundaries in a mentor-trainee relationship. Trainees are free to decline without penalty personal requests that are unrelated to their professional development or the mission of the university.

- **Accountability.** Concerns about mentorship or other issues may be communicated in good faith to the mentor or to other community members, without fear of retaliation. Similarly, the mentor may communicate to departmental leadership when trainees are not meeting expected goals and deadlines.

- **Support for well-being.** We fully support trainees in their overall well-being. We recognize that there are times when physical or mental health barriers impede performance. We will provide open channels of communication for trainees to voice their well-being concerns, and mentors or departmental leaders will connect trainees to available resources as needed and will be flexible in adjusting expectations accordingly. Relevant wellness-related campus resources are listed at the end of this document.

A climate of collegiality does not imply that all members of our community have the same sort of roles and responsibilities. Faculty members assume the overall responsibility for determining the research directions of their laboratory (e.g., topics to be studied) and the methods for pursuing that research (e.g., tools or software used). Those responsibilities mean that they may become the final arbiter in situations that impact their lab operations.

Engagement of trainees in departmental decision making. In support of our goal to create a collegial professional environment, we will provide a means for trainees to contribute their voices to discussions about departmental functions. For example, we will:

- Provide opportunities for trainees to meet with faculty candidates and to send comments to search committees

- Open a portion of faculty meetings to a graduate student observer who can advocate on behalf of their fellow students on departmental matters

- Solicit trainee feedback on departmental programs and policies through town halls and other communication with departmental leadership

- Consider how changes in policy decisions impact trainees with appropriate explanations and opportunity for feedback prior to implementation

PROFESSIONAL / PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

We value a professional community governed not only by social norms and good practices but also by explicit policies set by [DukeHuman Resources](). Yet, we also recognize that our community members are connected via social relationships that may extend outside of their professional interactions and that may persist after they depart Duke. There are many legitimate reasons for such interactions; as examples, data collection on a project might occur over a weekend (e.g., for child participants) or at a field site (e.g., for a community-based or global-health project). Expectations for those sorts of projects should be conveyed with sufficient advance warning to allow trainees or other project members to make arrangements for any personal conflicts (e.g., childcare responsibilities).

To balance those social relationships with professional responsibilities, we adopt the following principles:

- **Social engagements are a welcome but optional aspect of participating in our community, and we advocate for personal requests/relationships that do not undermine professional goals/relationships.** Social interactions outside the workplace are valued by many members of our community. Community building is important for a healthy work environment, and we encourage members of the department to get to know other people in our community outside of one's own lab. Social networking fosters professional and personal development, whereas social isolation can have harmful consequences to work productivity and mental health.

  Nonetheless, community members are free to decline to participate in ancillary activities that fall outside the scope of normal professional responsibilities. We expect that community members, particularly those who serve as mentors or who are in other positions of power, understand when social interactions may pose risks for our professional climate. For instance, requests for repeated social activities outside of typical weekday business hours can interfere with personal/family time, and those planning such events are encouraged to consider social pressures on potential attendees. Some members of the community may have legitimate reasons to opt out of certain social interactions, and these individuals should not be penalized or disfavored for not participating in them.

Social interactions that are of a personal and transactional nature (e.g., babysitting, pet sitting) are particularly problematic, since they can be difficult to decline. Similarly, interactions that involve drugs or alcohol can be problematic due to potential power dynamics and social pressures involved; our department culture expects that alcohol should be consumed in moderation (and illegal drugs should not be consumed at all) in any professional or social setting where there could be power differentials. We encourage the parties involved to consult with department leadership if any concerns regarding power dynamics may conceivably arise in the context of such requests or relationships.

- **Openness helps maximize inclusion and minimize favoritism.** Our climate benefits from a spirit of openness and inclusion that extends to our social interactions. Although it is not always possible to engage all members of the community in social activities, planning these events should take into consideration whether particular members of the community will feel left out. Social events that involve individuals at different career stages (e.g. faculty members inviting graduate students to a party) can lead to impressions of favoritism or social pressure, especially when some are excluded.

- **Conflicts of interest or deviations from best practices should be declared.** Regular interactions that are off-campus or at atypical hours should be communicated in advance to departmental leaders. Expectations for TAs outside of regular hours need to be explicitly stated and agreed upon in the course's TA contracts. Other conflicts should be discussed with departmental or university leadership as appropriate. Guidelines regarding intimate and sexual relationships are governed by Duke's Consensual Relationship Policy and/or Appendix Z of the Faculty Handbook. However, given P&N's oversight of a doctoral program in Clinical Psychology accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA), P&N elects to follow a more restrictive guideline for within-department relationships. P&N adheres to APA ethics section 7.07, which states that "Psychologists do not engage in sexual relationships with students or supervisees who are in their department, agency, or training center or over whom psychologists have or are likely to have evaluative authority. (https://www.apa.org/ethics/code).

REPORTING CONCERNS

A healthy and supportive climate depends on effective communication, not only for reporting problems but for helping reinforce and model positive behaviors. Channels of communication need to be open and thus available to anyone in the community, flexible such that the same people can discuss a variety of topics, and parallel so that community members have different options for reporting their concerns and recommendations. Key channels for communication include:

Speaking directly with the target of concern. Many issues can be worked out via direct conversation; for example, someone may not be aware of how their actions are being perceived or of a harm they are causing. Misunderstandings do arise in academic settings, especially given the inherent multi-tasking involved in the workplace and given that many communications occur via email or second-hand sources. We value a community where any member feels comfortable speaking directly to any other member, regardless of rank, in order to clarify meaning or intent. A first line of resolving potential conflict is to simply speak directly to the other community member, and we expect all members of the community to be open to such interactions. If someone feels uncomfortable raising an issue with a community member directly, they can solicit help with initiating such conversations from departmental leadership, mentors, or other peers. We recognize that this will not be possible in some circumstances, either because of the nature of a concern or because of a social/professional relationship. However, in many cases, respectful and frank discussions can improve situations without requiring external intervention and should be the initial default approach to resolving an interpersonal issue.

Reaching out to other members of our community and university.
- Any member of our community can convey any concern to the **Chair** or **Associate Chair** at any time; all concerns will be heard and considered respectfully. Concerns that cannot be communicated to the departmental leadership may also be communicated directly to the **Dean of Natural Sciences** or the **Dean of Social Sciences**.
- Graduate students may also reach out to the **Director of Graduate Studies** or **Associate Director of Graduate Studies**, or to the **head of their graduate training area**. If appropriate, graduate students are also encouraged to talk with their research advisor or a committee member for guidance. The

- **Associate Dean of the Graduate School** can also be a thoughtful resource for many concerns.
  - Staff may also talk to their **immediate supervisor** or the **departmental business manager**, as well as refer to the **Duke Human Resources Policy**
  - **Manual.**Concerns about another community member's well-being may be discussed with **Blue Devils CARE: Anytime Telehealth for Students** (for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows), with the **Personal Assistance Service**(for faculty and staff), or with **Duke Reach** (for students).
  - Questions about scientific ethics or conflicts of interest may be discussed with **Duke's Office of Scientific Integrity**.
  - Concerns about institutional issues including but not limited to discrimination, harassment, and misconduct may be communicated with the **Office of Institutional Equity** (OIE), which can also provide confidential assistance for problems related to sexual harassment or misconduct.
  - Finally, P&N will work with the **OIE** and the **Office of Faculty Advancement** to create a brief training program for supporting members of our community who raise concerns. Each year, those community members who participate in that program – whether faculty, staff, or students – will be identified on the departmental website as resources for communication.

> The graduate school offers a useful interactive guide if you are unsure what to do in a particular situation; it can be found at :
> https://projects.gradschool.duke.edu/reporting/

Will my concerns be kept confidential?

For many conduct or climate issues, actions can be taken to improve a situation without compromising confidentiality – and our community members should strive to protect confidentiality whenever requested. However, confidentiality may not be possible to guarantee in some situations, whether because the concern would identify a complainant, because the issue would involve mandatory reporting, and/or because the situation requires immediate action by a department official. Regardless of whether confidentiality can be guaranteed, retaliation for reporting a concern or relaying someone else's concern is prohibited.