

## **Appendix 1: Training scenarios for managing interpersonal conflicts**

*This document describes potential interpersonal conflicts that could arise between field team members during field research. We encourage research supervisors to use these examples as training exercises with field teams to prepare team members for navigating interpersonal conflicts. These are fictional scenarios and do not represent any particular persons, places, or institutions. Some of these scenarios include instances of discrimination, sexual assault, or other examples that field team members may have personally experienced. Prior to leading team discussion on these topics, supervisors should alert team members to the scope of the scenarios and acquire consent from all team members before using these scenarios in role-playing exercises.*

*These scenarios are intentionally challenging and are intended to build collegiality among team members and encourage team members to work together and understand each other. We provide a list of ‘considerations’ for field teams as they search for potential resolutions to these various kinds of interpersonal conflicts.*

**Scenario 1:** You are a team leader and you notice two team members are arguing over the proper use of field equipment. The argument escalates and Team Member #1 states that they are more knowledgeable about the equipment because they have many family members who are established field researchers and they do not have a mental disability. You interrupt the researchers and provide them the equipment protocol to resolve the argument on how to operate the equipment. What is your next course of action?

### Considerations:

- Is this type of interaction discussed in your team’s code of conduct?
- Was Team Member #1’s comment discriminatory? If yes, why? If no, why not?
- Do you have a private conversation with each team member separately, or a conversation with both team members together? What is important to communicate to each team member in those conversations?
- Should someone report this incident? If no, why not? If yes, who should report and to whom should they report to? Who should decide who reports this incident?
- Does Team Member #2’s identity and background affect your response? Why or why not? If you do not know the details of Team Member #2’s identity or background, does that matter?

**Scenario 2:** You, a team member, notice that your colleague, Team Member #1, always completes secretarial field tasks like sample labeling and recording data. Although Team Member #1 said at the initial team meeting that they wanted to learn specific skills

while in the field, they always agree to complete the same secretarial tasks each day. One morning, you suggest that team members should rotate task assignments so everyone gets a chance to participate in all field tasks. The team leader overrules your suggestion, stating that this is the most efficient way to collect data because Team Member #1 will slow the team down in any other task. What is your course of action?

Considerations:

- Does this decision reflect previously discussed rules and responsibilities for all field team members?
- Does the team leader's decision reinforce a "get-it-done-at-all-costs" field culture? What are the pros and cons of this philosophy?
- How does the power dynamic between you, a team member, and the team leader affect this situation?
- There could be alternative explanations as to why the team lead believes Team Member #1 would be inefficient at completing these tasks (lack of training, lack of experience, racism, sexism, etc.). How would your response change depending on the team leaders' reason?

**Scenario 3:** It is the tenth day in the field of a two-week field data collection trip that is far away from your home institution. Your team has lost time to adverse weather and malfunctioning equipment and so the team leader is trying to make up lost research time by extending the working day and taking fewer and shorter breaks. You, a team member, notice that you and your crew are ignoring many field safety protocols, which is putting everyone at elevated risk. You have a close relationship with the team leader, but you are feeling unsafe and exhausted. What do you do?

Considerations:

- Did your team discuss field research priorities and how you would handle unavoidable data collection set-backs?
- Is it unreasonable for a team member to request more or longer breaks?
- How do you navigate making decisions about setting priorities, modifying protocols, or reducing the study size in the event of delays?

**Scenario 4A:** You are a field team member working at a site five hours from your institution. When you and the team arrive and begin unpacking equipment, a neighboring landowner stops you and asks what you are doing. Team Member #1, who is a person of color, provides the team's permits and explains the research to the landowner. The landowner begins aggressively questioning the researcher. What is your course of action?

Considerations:

- How do you respond immediately to de-escalate the landowner's aggression?

- Once the landowner has departed, what do you say to Team Member #1? How do you ensure that Team Member #1 feels safe and supported?
- How does the team respond in the longer term? Do you continue using this research site? How do you record this interaction? Who needs to be alerted about the interaction?

**Scenario 4B:** The landowner finally leaves but Team Member #1 feels unsafe staying at the field site. Team Member #2 says that everything is now fine, that they feel safe because the landowner has left. Team Member #2 does not want to leave and pressures the team to continue with original field research plans citing their long drive and losing a whole day of research.

Considerations:

- Did your team discuss what would happen in the event that some team members want to leave while others want to stay? Who makes the final decision about this?
- Is forcing Team Member #1 to decide whether they will remain at the site to participate in research but feel unsafe, or to return home and miss out on field but feel safe an equitable solution?
- If the team decides to split up, does this decision reinforce a “get-it-done-at-all-costs” field culture? What are the pros and cons of this philosophy?
- What is the team leader’s responsibility here? Should someone have a discussion with Team Member #2 about their comments? What should that discussion entail?

**Scenario 5A:** You are part of a field team that is conducting remote field research and staying multiple nights at a small field station. On the third day, multiple team members are talking about how ‘wasted’ they are going to get that night. Team Member #1, who identifies as a woman, does not join in on the discussions about the party and is unusually quiet. Later that evening, Team Member #2, who identifies as a man, continually grabs Team Member #1 by the arm, pressures her to drink with the group, and calls her a ‘killjoy’. The next morning, Team Member #1 is very obviously upset and not speaking to anyone.

Considerations:

- Are there any ‘ground rules’ about alcohol consumption during the field research?
- Were there actions that could have been taken before the party to prevent what happened? Who should have acted?
- After the party, what actions should be taken? Who should act?

- Did Team Member #2 violate Title IX or other sexual harassment policies at your institution? If yes, what are the policies and guidelines for reporting?

**Scenario 5B:** As Team Member #1's closest friend on the team, you approach her and ask how you can help. In a private discussion, Team Member #1 reveals that Team Member #2 sexually assaulted her on a previous field trip. What would you do?

Considerations:

- How do you support Team Member #1 during the remainder of the trip?
- Whose decision is it to report Team Member #2's previous or most recent actions?

**Scenario 5C:** As the team leader (who was sleeping in a different cabin during the party), you approach Team Member #1 and ask if she wants to talk. You are a mandatory reporter for your institution, and you remind Team Member #1 of your responsibilities as a mandatory reporter. In this discussion, Team Member #1 reveals that Team Member #2 sexually assaulted her on a previous field trip. What would you do?

Considerations:

- Did Team Member #2 violate Title IX or other sexual harassment policies at your institution? If yes, what are the policies and guidelines for reporting?
- How do you provide for Team Member #1's safety for the remainder of the time you are in the remote location?