



THE UNIVERSITY of
NEW MEXICO

Ombuds Outlook — March 2017
Ombuds/Dispute Resolution Services for Faculty
<http://ombudsfac.unm.edu>

Mediation Training for Faculty

Congratulations to all those faculty members that completed the four day mediation training series:

Ronda Brulotte
Shandra Burton
Laura Hall
Aeron Haynie
Steven Meilleur

Megan Merchant
Lana Merewether
Andrea Polli

Lori Proe
Veena Singh
Craig Timm
Claudia Valdes
Frances Vitali

We extend a very special thank you to our guest trainer **Cynthia Olson** for her facilitation and expertise.

And lastly we wish to thank our mediation coaches for their time and support:

Jonathan Bolton
Cris Elder
Mark Emmons

Mary Harris
Jon Lee
Margaret Menache
Josh Pando

Laurie Schatzberg
Lindsay Scott
Andrew West

Workplace Anger

Geddes' dual threshold model of anger is a useful sociocultural framework to interpret both expressions of anger and reactions to them in the workplace.

This workshop will explore why we get angry, and it will use the model to understand the nature of workplace anger, and in particular the thresholds for anger in the UNM settings, and whether they can and should be 're-set'.

Presented By:

Jonathan Bolton MD

Associate Professor, Psychiatry

Director, Office of Professionalism, Health Sciences Center

Day/Date: Wednesday, March 22, 2017

Time: 12:00—1:30 PM

Location: Dane Smith Hall
Room 231

RSVP: Jean Civikly-Powell, Ombudsperson for Faculty
jcivikly@unm.edu

Impact of Anger on Workplace Relationships and Environment

Damage Control After an Office Showdown

Workplace conflict can come in many forms from subtle tensions to outbursts of anger. Sue Shellenbarger, in her award-winning column in *The Wall Street Journal*, addresses the negative as well as the positive outcomes of workplace conflict. “Fallout can harm morale - or boost problem solving: here’s how to recover.”

She specifically discusses “showdowns,” loud public conflicts between colleagues. Though these types of conflicts are rare, it is important to understand that such angry outbursts negatively impact workplace productivity and relationships. Citing research from Georgetown University, she highlights that *witnessing* conflict in the workplace usurps cognitive resources and disrupts workplace dynamics (Porath & Erez, 2007). Even though these disruptions can be emotionally charged and difficult to address, it is important that workplace conflict is resolved since lingering negative emotions towards colleagues can escalate problems and make them even more difficult to address, let alone fix.

Not all conflict ends badly. Shellenbarger provides examples of how conflict leads to more positive outcomes when emotions are clearly identified. The arguers can then refocus attention on shared goals and long term outcomes. Anger and conflict can ultimately allow existing problems to emerge and be identified, so long as those in the argument allow themselves to step back and “cool off.”

In summary, the next time you find yourself in a conversation that is heated or seems to be headed in that direction, this would be a good time to stop and take a break. Return to the conversation when you have had a chance to “cool down” and more adequately assess your emotions.

Porath, C. L., & Erez, A. (2007). Does rudeness really matter? The effects of rudeness on task performance and helpfulness. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(5), 1181-1197.

Shellenbarger, S. (2013). Damage control after an office showdown. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887324665604579081710415312196>

Anger management techniques you might try

when you’ve taken a break from an angry and or heated conversation

The next time you find yourself in a heated conversation at work, consider these anger-reducing strategies from Girdano Dusek and Everly’s *Controlling Stress and Tension*:

1. Walk away from the conversation and agree to reconnect at a later time.
2. Use some relaxation techniques like eyes closed deep breathing exercises.
3. Develop some self-talk coping statements to help you stay calm, for example “honey catches more flies than vinegar” “relax and breathe” or “ I don’t need to get angry here.”

Girdano, D. A., Dusek, D. E., Everly, G. S. (2013). *Controlling stress and tension*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Prepared by: Andrew West, Graduate Assistant, Ombuds/Dispute Resolution Services for Faculty, 2017.