

Code of Conduct and Incident Response workshop

Introduction

Group intros and warm-up

10-15 min

Start by introducing the trainers and assistants. Cover venue details like bathrooms and coffee.

Set expectations: we're going to be talking about some difficult topics today. You don't have to talk about your personal experiences with these issues or justify your feelings in any way. Please be kind to each other. We're going to do some group exercises and discussions, but we won't force you to do anything outside your comfort zone. Let us know what you need to help you participate. We appreciate your feedback so we can make the workshop better each time.

If it's a smaller group (up to 10-12 people), go around and say names/pronouns and what each person hopes to learn today.

For a larger group, encourage people to turn to someone next to them and share names, pronouns, goal. Give the group a few minutes for this.

Outline the topics we'll be covering: how codes of conduct work, how to take a report of a CoC violation, how to respond to incidents, and how to be responsible to your community

Why we're here today

Full group discussion

What's a code of conduct?

What's the goal of having a code of conduct and incident response plan?

Possible answers: To stop problems. Create safety. Manage a large group. Make people feel welcome.

Part of what a code of conduct does is mediate between people in your group who have more privilege and those who have less. **What's privilege, and what does it mean to have it?** Privilege gives us social and economic advantages over each other. It allows us to do less work for the same rewards.

What are some examples of privilege we might have? Try to identify something for race, gender, sexuality, economic status, physical ability, country of origin, housing status. [If someone says they don't believe privilege is real, kindly tell them this is not the right workshop for them.]

If privilege gives some people advantages over others, oppression does the opposite. **What actions make people less able to participate or feel welcome?**

Could include: microaggressions, inappropriate “jokes”, talking over or ignoring people, unwanted touching, harassing comments ...

Let's keep these things in mind as we learn how to use our codes of conduct.

What makes a code of conduct effective

Lecture/discussion

Required elements:

- a statement of intent reflecting community values such as diversity, equal participation, safety
- a list of inappropriate behaviors
- a list of particular groups or personal characteristics that are most likely to be targeted by these behaviors
- actions that will be taken if the Code of Conduct is violated
- the scope of the policy (who does it affect, when, and where?)
- contact information for responsible parties such as the project maintainers or conference organizers

Optional elements:

- lists of expected or encouraged behaviors for participants
- reporting guidelines that explain what to report, detailed steps for reporting, and steps organizers will take in order to assess and respond to a report about Code of Conduct violations
- a revision history or “last updated” date
- resources such as medical emergency phone numbers, crisis line numbers, other services or websites for crisis response and victim support, anything that will support people whether or not they decide to make a report

Hand out other CoCs to evaluate for small group discussion.

Discussion questions:

- Where does each of these elements appear in the sample policy?
- Does this Code of Conduct meet our requirements?

- Why or why not?
- Would you feel welcome in this community?

BREAK

Learning about microaggressions

Lecture/practice

Hand out microaggressions sheet.

Microaggressions are by far the most common thing you'll deal with as part of your code of conduct. Microaggressions are a type of statement or action that excludes someone because of who they are. They're often done by people who don't realize the impact of what they're saying.

Microaggressions reflect unconscious bias. Casual questions can "out" information it isn't safe for people to share, such as immigration status or being trans.

Discussion: **Why is this a microaggression? Who does it affect? What is the impact on the person who hears it?**

Demo response with the group — split into two sets for large groups. Say a microaggression, and ask the group to respond with a phrase from the handout.

Emphasize that we don't argue with the logic of the microaggression, we refute it as an appropriate thing to say in this space.

Incident Response

Lecture

Hand out Incident Response plan template.

An incident response plan will give us a system to handle problems from microaggressions to bomb threat. An incident can be anything that disrupts the intended functions of your group or event.

In order to make effective use of this plan, we need to have a response team. **Who belongs on that team?**

Consider

- Training: do the people have sufficient knowledge and experience?

- Availability
- Diverse representation

3-5 people works best, but a larger group can rotate.

Flip through the example incident plan so participants understand the structure.

Explain the roles that are described (volunteer, staff, responder) and what actions each takes.

Reporting

Practice

Review the reporting process for Stumptown Syndicate. Demo taking a report with another trainer — talk through the checklist “how to take a report”.

Hand out reporting forms and example incidents. *Explain each item on the form.*

Break into small groups and practice. Return to large group to discuss. **How did it go?**

Questions?

Pay attention to the group’s discussions in case they need more info or support.

Discuss pros/cons of different options for collecting and retaining this information.

- Paper forms have limited access and you can shred them afterward.
- Signal allows for secure messaging groups.
- It’s helpful to have phone numbers and email addresses for people to submit reports, but you need to control access and retention of information
- For events, consider summarizing the result of the report and related decisions and shredding or deleting all initial report materials and identifying info for reporters
- Think about how long you need information: until the next event? Two weeks after the incident is resolved? Have a policy in place

Stand up and take a deep breath!

BREAK

Handling incidents appropriately

Lecture/discussion

Talk through the decision matrix in the sample IR plan. Ask participants to decide where the incidents from the reporting practice fit into this grid. For each one, discuss possible responses.

Hard problems: give examples of ways that incidents become more complicated or difficult to resolve. Discuss options for handling, and how it affects the community or group.

- Persistent repeated harassment toward attendees, presenters, organizers
- Interpersonal/intimate partner violence
- Crimes and legal processes
- Other things that we haven't personally handled: active shooter, terrorism, environmental threats (tornado!), unwelcome law enforcement

Discuss handling safety requests from affected participants. Be receptive but aware of your limits.

Remember: disagreement is okay! Conflict can be a sign you're working very hard to make good decisions. Talk through it in good faith to find solutions you can all accept.

Community accountability

Being accountable means:

- You communicate what you expect from your community
- You share how you'll handle incidents and make decisions about what to do
- You listen for problems that don't get reported

Discussion: what steps will you take to be accountable by sharing your code of conduct plans with your community?

Why do things not get reported?

- You need to build more trust through open communication about how you'll handle safety and privacy
- You need people who reflect those affected by problems
- You aren't taking action as needed when things are reported
- You aren't listening

Discussion: are there reasons people might currently not share concerns with you?

Sometimes what you need to do for your community goes beyond what most people may be comfortable with, such as when you kick someone from the group for marginalizing behavior you can't publicize for safety reasons. Your response team needs to support each other and follow a consistent process, or these situations will undermine your ability to maintain the code of conduct.

Review your process and readiness periodically. Figure out what's working and what you need to change. Do better each time.

Discussion: planning a retrospective. (let's talk about how the class went too)

- What worked well?
- What didn't work?

- What can we do better?

Be kind to yourself. (Talk about secondary trauma.)

Ways to get help:

- Talk to us and other organizers
- Use the crisis line
- Seek regular therapy and support when you're dealing with difficult and traumatic situations
- Take time off

Questions/wrap-up/thanks

Make sure to tell people where they can find more info i.e. on safetyfirstpdx.org

Also tell them how to get involved with the group (invite them to the Slack).