Communication: The art of consultation

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Basic Peer Leadership Training
Bethune College Student Ombuds Services
Sunday, January 22\textsuperscript{nd}, 2016
Consultation

What is a consultation?
What do *ideal* peer consultants do?
Features of an Ideal Peer Consultation

• Actively listen
• Ask questions to clarify the question
• Pinpoint the issue
• Present options
• Allow students to come up with a decision
Active Listening

As a peer leader, what can you do to show that you are actively listening?
Active Listening

- Paraphrase key points
- Ask open ended questions
- Frame questions in a positive, non-threatening manner
- Maintain eye contact
- Body Language
Body Language

Sit straight
Open posture
Lean forward
Eye contact
Relax
1. Student to CR: “I missed a couple of classes, and I’m behind on the latest chapters. Can you fill me in, and arrange for a time to teach me the material?”

2. CR: “What do I do with the student who is in a panic because she/he is behind and the assignment / test / deadline is coming up?”
3. What if a student is coming on to me?

4. What if a student is really angry about losing marks ‘because of what you told them’?

5. What if the student failed a midterm and is asking you whether they should drop the course or keep it?

6. A student comes up to you and asks: My major is biology and I am thinking about minoring in music. Should I do it?
As peer leaders seek to support the development of their mentees, the following sequence of questions can serve as a useful guide:

- **What?**
- **So what?**
- **Now what?**

By applying these questions, the emphasis is placed on prompting students to actively guide their own processes of discovery.
Sometimes the question is not clear.

Examples:

- I don’t understand this student’s accent
- The question is confusing or too big
  **I missed class will you please teach me everything?**
2. So what?

Negotiate Boundaries

➢ As a peer consultant, what kind of questions do you expect to answer in a consultation?

➢ Do you have to answer every question?
2. So what?

Present Options

➢ Refer to the Resources Module
(Familiarize yourself with all resources available on campus!)

➢ If you refer to your personal experiences, put a disclaimer forward and offer a lot of detail as to why your experience was the way it was

➢ Provide multiple options

➢ How would you like to feel when you walk away from a consultation?

➢ How do we make that happen?
Summary

- What? Clarify the question
- So what? Negotiate boundaries, Explain
- Now what? Closure
Take it or leave it …

- Peer Leaders and students share responsibility for setting the agenda
- Students remain the decision makers
- When it comes to information, opinions, suggestions, activities etc., leaders and students remain free to “take it or leave it” without the fear of reprisal or the diminishment of the relationship
Reflecting on your relationship

• When they don’t work well, it is important not to take it personally; sometimes a prospective leader and student just aren’t a good “fit”. Be ready to move on if need be.

• Don’t give up easily!
Let’s play!

Scenarios

Woody, every problem has a solution!
1. Student to CR: “I missed a couple of classes, and I’m behind on the latest chapters. Can you fill me in, and arrange for a time to teach me the material?”

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6. A student comes up to you and asks: My major is biology and I am thinking about minoring in music. Should I do it?
What did you learn?

Please jot down 3 things that you learned from this presentation
Thank You!

Any questions, comments or feedback?