DISARM

Recognizing the importance of first impressions and the need for creating a safe, welcoming environment for students. Be aware of differing student identities and how this might influence the disarm process.

Definition:
- “To overcome or allay the suspicion, hostility or antagonism of”
- “To win the confidence of”

Key Features:
- Key Feature 1: Warm Welcome
- Key Feature 2: Safe and Comfortable Environment
- Key Feature 3: Appropriate Self-Disclosure
- Key Feature 4: Appropriate Non-Verbal Behavior

Important Advisor Behaviors:
- Check your website – make sure you have a picture (preferably one that makes you look friendly) and a blurb about you that tells your students a little bit about who they can expect to meet. Consider including your identities and pronouns.
- Sit in the chair your advisees sit in to get an idea of what they experience when they are in your office
- Decorate your office in a personal way – let your space tell your students something about you, your identities and what is important to you.
- Meet your students at the door.
- SMILE!
- Call your students by the name they prefer/indicate.
- Clarify any student names you are unsure of to ensure the pronunciation is correct.
- Use inclusive pronouns, until/if the student clarifies (wait for the student to share if they choose).
- Use small talk – it will help students know you are interested in more than just their class schedule.
- Watch your body language; make sure it is open and relaxed.
- Critically reflect on any unconscious bias you may have regarding the student.

Potential Questions:
- Can you believe how cold it is now? When is spring going to come?
- So what is the highlight of your day so far?
- I got an email from an old friend this morning! It was wonderful to hear from her. Do you keep in contact with friends from home?
- I’m thinking of going for a walk on campus this afternoon. What is your favorite spot on campus?
- How was your weekend?
- What has been the highlight of your week so far?
- I am in search of a great book to read, any suggestions?
- My family is coming into town this weekend and I cannot decide where to take them to eat. What’s your favourite spot to eat around campus?
- Do you have a roommate, and if so, how is that going?
- Did you go to the game last week?

Critical Reflection:
- What are some unconscious biases we may have about students?
- What are some unconscious biases students may have about us?
- If they are unconscious, how do we work to be more aware of them?
- Can you think of a time when either you have recognized a bias you have had towards someone else, or that someone has had towards you?
- How can Appreciative Advising help us address our own biases and students’ biases?
DISCOVER
Utilize positive open-ended questions to draw out students’ interests, strengths, and passions. Listen to each answer carefully before asking the next positive question. Recognize that the student is the expert in their own lived experience.

Definition:
- “To see, get knowledge of, learn of, find, or find out; gain sight or knowledge of (something previously unseen or unknown)”
- “To notice or realize”
- To identify (a person) as a potentially prominent performer”

Key Features:
- Key Feature 1: Effective Open-Ended Questioning
- Key Feature 2: Attending Behavior and Active Listening
- Key feature 3: Strengths Based Story Reconstruction

Important Advisor Behaviors:
- Ask positive open-ended questions, and Listen! Listen! Listen! Listen!
- Take mental (or physical!) notes of your student’s strengths, skills, passions, and accomplishments.
- Use personal stories when appropriate, but remember the session is about your student.
- Get comfortable with silence; taking a minute to think things over is ok.
- Treat your students as if they are full of potential.
- Don’t judge. Students who feel judged won’t share.
- Be mindful of diversity and multi-cultural issues and how this may influence you assessing the situation.
- Be authentic.
- Affirm what your student is saying – knowing you understand will help your student feel at ease.
- Consider the historical context of your institution/student types, etc. and reflect on how this may influence student experience.

Potential Questions:
- How do you spend your time when you are not in class?
- Tell me about your favorite subjects… what do you like about them?
- What is one thing that makes you happy every day? Why does it elicit that happy response?
- What university experience has surprised you the most?
- Tell me about the support system in your life, who do you turn to for advice and guidance?
- What is your definition of success?
- Since coming to __________, what’s something you’ve accomplished that you are proud of?
- What obstacle have you overcome and how did you do so?
- What are you passionate about?
- What subject in high school did you most enjoy?
- Who is your role model? Why? What qualities in them do you hope to emulate?
- What types of course assignments have you enjoyed the most?

Critical Reflection:
- How might our habits/routines/assumptions/biases keep us from discovering more about our students?
- What opportunities might we be missing, particularly if we are running our own agenda?
- How might our students be defined by a single story?
- What role does intersectionality play when hearing student stories?
DREAM

Help students formulate a vision of what they might become, and then assist them in developing their life and career goals. Consider how identities may influence (positively or negatively) student’s dreams.

Definition:

- “An aspiration; goal; aim”
- “A condition or achievement that is longed for”

Key Features:

- Key Feature 1: Creating Powerful Images
- Key Feature 2: Framework for Dreaming
- Key Feature 3: Make Purposeful Connections between the Dream and Discover Phases

Important Advisor Behaviors:

- Listen purposefully – dreams are personal and important and they deserve your full attention
- Make connections between skills, passions, and accomplishments of your advisees and what they are sharing as dreams for their future. Take note of congruencies or incongruences.
- Encourage students to be open to possibilities – dreaming is not about choosing the most realistic path or path of least resistance, it is about putting into words what your student truly wants in life.
- Remind students that there is more than one right answer. If their dream is to be creative and not work behind a desk 8 hours a day there are many ways to make that a reality. Encourage students not to settle for the first thing that comes to mind. Explore!

Potential Questions:

- If money and time were not issues, what would you want to major in?
- Have you considered study abroad or an internship while you are here? If you could go anywhere where would it be?
- Where do you want to be personally and professionally in 20 years? Why?
- If you could get paid to do one thing for the rest of your life, what would it be?
- How do you want people to remember you?
- What does your ideal future look like?
- When you were younger, what did you want to be when you grew up?
- What is one thing you always wanted to do but didn’t really think you could?
- If you had no limits/could ignore reality/were independently wealthy, what would you do?
- What would you do if you knew you would not fail?
- What kind of people do you want to work with?
- What is your ideal working environment?

Critical Reflection:

- How might student identities and/or social location impact their ability to dream?
- How may our own biases and lived experiences impact how we work with students to Dream?
- Consider how social contexts may influence student’s ability to dream.
- Be continuously conscious of how to accurately identify what is and what is not oppression.

DESIGN

Help students devise concrete, incremental and achievable goals. Highlight a change oriented approach.

Definition:

• “To prepare the preliminary sketch or the plans for (a work to be executed)”

Key Features:

• Key Feature 1: Teach Students How to Make Decisions
• Key Feature 2: Positive Feedback and Encouragement
• Key Feature 3: Be Aware of the “Curse of Knowledge”
• Key Feature 4: Making Effective Referrals

Important Advisor Behaviors:

• Explain technical information in easy to understand language. If your students can’t understand what you’re saying you won’t get very far.
• Avoid confusing acronyms. You may use them every day, but your students don’t
• Teach your students how to make decisions. This is not a natural skill for everyone, especially when it comes to big decisions.
• Let your students ultimately be the decision makers, after all, they will have to live with the decisions that are made.
• Make referrals when you need to — you don’t have to know everything.
• Be positive! Students will appreciate your confidence in their ability to make/execute decisions.
• Consider the hidden curriculum and how this may be a barrier for students.
• Critically reflect on referrals and what may or may not resonate with students based on their social location.

Potential Questions:

• What can you do today to bring you one step closer to your goals?
• Identify people in your life who can help you reach your goal.
• What resources might you use to meet your goals?
• What are some strengths you have that you can utilize to achieve your goals?
• What skills do you need to develop?
• Who can help you along the way to your future?
• What challenges do you expect you will face?
• How can we help you achieve your goals? How can I help you stick to the plan toward your goals?
• What kind of experiences can you get now to help you reach your goals?
• How will you know you’ve achieved your goals? How will you measure success?
• Who in your life is supportive of your goals?
• Would you like to take a course just for fun/information/self-fulfillment?
• How do you see your courses/program of study leading to achieving your dream?
• What do you need now to realize your goals?
• What preparation is needed to achieve your academic goals?

Critical Reflection:

• How might privilege impact the advising conversation?
• When might we assume that our students have the full picture when perhaps they just see the pieces?
• How does the notion of power and privilege affect design?
• Question any assumptions and norms that you or the student may have.
DELIVER

The students follow through on their plans. The advisor is there for them when they stumble, believing in them every step of the way and helping them continue to update and refine dreams as they go. Consider what resources might resonate best with students based on their identities and social location.

Definition:

- “To produce or achieve what is desired or expected”

Key Features:

- Key Feature 1: Motivate and Energize Students to be their Best
- Key Feature 2: Engender Academic Hope
- Key Feature 3: End the Conversation Well
- Key Feature 4: Follow Up

Important Advisor Behaviors:

- Review what you have accomplished in this advising session so far with your student.
- Review the student’s responsibilities and your responsibilities and the deadlines you have co-established for meeting these.
- Establish a communication plan. Decide the best way for your student to contact you to keep you updated.
- Encourage your students to contact you with any problems, questions, or concerns.
- Identify things that motivate your students and discuss how they will intentionally seek out those things to keep them going.
- Reiterate your confidence that the students can accomplish their goals.

Potential Questions:

- What resources on campus are helping you achieve your goals?
- Since our last meeting, what concrete steps have you taken to meet your goals?
- What roadblocks have you hit and how have you dealt with them?
- How will you know you’ve achieved your goals? How will you measure your success?
- How are you going to celebrate achieving your goals?
- What can you do/are you doing to reenergize yourself when you get off track?
- How you (or do you need to) reevaluate your goals?
- What has been most helpful in terms of motivating you to keep going?

Critical Reflection:

- Consider both internal and external motivation and the facts they play in student success.
- Help students to reflect on the identities of those that support them and how they can address any gaps.
- Have you considered your power, privilege and social location and how it may impact your actions and/or advice?

Don’t Settle

The advisor challenges the student to proactively raise the student’s internal bar of self-expectations. Also an opportunity for the advisor to consider how to be more intentional in centering students in the advising conversation.

Definition:

- “To discontinue moving and come to rest in one place”
- “To move downward; sink or descend, especially gradually”

Key Features:

- Key Feature 1: Support and Challenge
- Key Feature 2: Raising the Bar
- Key Feature 3: Virtuous Cycle

Important Advisor Behaviors:

- Review your students’ accomplishments with them and celebrate what they have achieved.
- Draw on the rapport you already have established so your students know that you believe in them and that you support them.
- Draw upon that sense of support to challenge your advisees to think about “what is next?”
- Help your students to raise their internal bar of expectations, to believe that they are capable of even more.
- Consider how you can challenge your own professional growth and areas you may need to delve more into.
- Ensure that the student is the one who establishes their internal bar and not where you think it should be set.

Potential Questions:

- You have done great so far, but what is one thing you could do even better?
- What would happen if I challenged you to be the best you that you could possibly be? What would you need to do differently?
- What does it mean to you to raise your own internal bar of expectations?
- If you gave 110% what do you think you could accomplish?
- What have you done particularly well? Could you have improved upon that?
- What would you consider to be a reasonable challenge?
- Tell me about something that you didn’t think you could accomplish, but did…
- What is something that you would like to do even better?

Critical Reflection:

- Consider how you can promote anti-oppression actions at an institutional or systematic level.
- How does your advising pedagogy promote critical reflection?