Deliverable - Safety Plan

Education is essential but action is also imperative for achieving the objectives of URGE. Therefore, each URGE topic is paired with deliverables for individual pods to draft and share. This deliverable is a safety plan, whether you work in a laboratory or in remote field settings. Consider spaces in your organization as well as in the broader geosciences that have barriers to access for people of color. Much of the attention on this topic has been regarding field work but this also applies to spaces closer to home, e.g. a Black graduate student walking home late from lab work may be more likely to be stopped and questioned by police. Consider that Black, Brown, Indigenous, and other people of color will face different challenges from one another.

**Deliverable**: Develop and publish a safety plan specific to your pod (lab, university, organization). This safety plan should include a code of conduct as well as a process for reporting violations, as covered in your Complaints and Reporting Policy deliverable from Session 2. Outline training resources that are available and requirements for antidiscrimination, bystander intervention, and de-escalation training. For field work, include a racial risk assessment of sites, a pre-departure checklist of discussions within the field team, procedures for documenting incidents in the field, as well as additional required or supported training. This safety plan can (and should be) a work in progress that is revisited and refined.

1. Summary of Pod Discussion

   - **Ten simple rules for building an antiracist lab**
     - Relevant ideas: talk about racism! Champion ERG’s to help organize, our office is our scientific home
     - “How can we fix systems and scale-up if our own house is not in order?”
     - Role of PSW could be to talk about Racism in safety guidelines

   Provide additional support to BIPOC staff to ensure safety in science spaces

   - **Promoting inclusion in ecological field experiences: Examining and overcoming barriers to a professional rite of passage**
     - Challenges of field study: remote, away from supervision, unknowns, working alone
     - Fieldwork can be a pathway to building an identity as a field scientist.
     - SEES: Bystander intervention training could be used to prepare the office/team to step in and identify microaggressions or diffuse safety situations
     - Hard to modify the location of work sometimes
Over the water and swimming training – accommodate your employees in every situation.

- Collectors, Nightlights, and Allies, Oh My! White Mentors in the Academy
  - What are the experiences of BIPOC USGS employees or student contractors with white supervisors and/or leaders?
  - How can we build cultural competency? Sharing intergenerational stories, can we share something related to our cultural background? PSWs can share events, initiatives, to build USGS Cultural Intelligence.

2. Safety Plan
   a. Code of Conduct (Session 2) – link here
   b. Reporting Process (Session 2)
      i. Reporting Harassment – link
      ii. Reporting Discrimination - link
   c. Mandatory USGS Training:
      i. Discrimination and Whistleblowing in the Workplace (No FEAR Act)
      ii. Prohibited Personnel Practices and Whistleblower (PPP) Training
      iii. Anti-Harassment/EEO/Diversity
      iv. Safety Orientation Trainings (job/role dependent) - link
      v. Annual Ethics Training
   d. Non-mandatory USGS Resources – comments/suggestions from PSW URGE pod are noted in italics
      i. JHA for dealing with hostile public – selection of scenarios and procedures (last modified 2/23/18 full document link may be internal-only)
         1. Pre-departure: Be aware of radical or strong political groups operating in the area. Familiarize yourself with any controversial issues or illegal activities in the area you will be working. Be able to briefly explain the necessity for the data collection you are charged with. Formulate a plan for dealing with hostile people that includes avoidance or calm, deliberate departure from their presence. While planning the field schedule and are aware of known hostile activities, the supervisor can check with appropriate law enforcement agency for known issues or to report any incident. The Supervisor must make a decision if it is necessary to conduct the site visit. Program emergency numbers (auto-dial) on the cell phone. *Should keep record of sites where hostile encounters have occurred, maybe adding a warning to site description. Is the area known to have documented conflicts involving racial tension and discriminatory practices (ie “sundown town”)? Include a Racial Risk Assessment for field sites. Should be policy that staff do not go to these sites alone.
         2. Driving into potentially hostile situation: Be alert. Watch for threatening behavior. Stay in the vehicle with doors locked. If the situation is suspicious and/or not safe, leave the scene at once.
Report any threatening behavior to your supervisor and/or the local authorities depending on the severity of the situation.

3. **Walking into a potentially hostile situation:** Be alert. Watch for threatening behavior. Be courteous and respectful. Do not argue or threaten potentially hostile people. If you are at all uncomfortable, turn around and leave the scene in a calm, deliberate manner. Contact your supervisor and/or the local authorities and report any threatening behavior.

4. **Being approached by hostile person(s):** Stay calm. Listen attentively. Be courteous, patient and respectful. Do not become angry and argue with or threaten the person. Maintain eye contact. Try to calm the person down by using a soothing voice and non-threatening body language. Keep the situation in your control. If they ask you to leave, do so. Contact your supervisor and/or the local authorities and report the incident. *Discussion should be had, or scenario added to address possibility of hostility or harassment coming from law enforcement (ie. being stopped by police while you’re doing job – what support or recommendations are offered by the USGS??)*

5. **Dealing with verbal abuse:** Stay calm. Be courteous, patient and respectful. Do not become angry and argue with or threaten the person. Maintain eye contact. Try to calm the person down by using a soothing voice and non-threatening body language. Keep the situation in your control. If possible, signal a co-worker or supervisor that you need help. Report the incident to your supervisor and/or the local authorities.

6. **Dealing with physical violence:** Stay calm. At the first sign of physical violence immediately back away. Protect yourself by trying to escape to a safe area. Do not challenge or try to subdue the assailant. The best defense is to get away. Report the incident to your supervisor and the local authorities.

7. **Dealing with a weapon:** Stay very calm. If possible quietly signal for help. Maintain eye contact. Stall for time. Keep talking but follow instructions from the person with the weapon. Don’t risk harm to yourself or others by trying to be a hero. NEVER grab the weapon. Watch for a safe chance to escape to a safe area. Report the incident to your supervisor and the local authorities.

ii. **USGS SEES: A Peer-led, Open Source Bystander Intervention Workshop** *PSW URGE pod recommends that this training be mandatory for all USGS Centers and field offices.* -link

1. Raise awareness of barriers to helping
2. Raise awareness of behaviors that can help
3. Increase attendees’ motivation and desire to help
4. Help attendees develop skills and confidence when responding to various levels of harassment
5. Ensure the safety and well-being of attendees
iii. USGS Information Sheet: Personal Safety in Field Environments - link

iv. Safety and Health Management Intranet Site – Internal USGS Access Only - link
   1. Report accidents/incidents: fillable form link
   2. Safety Inspections, audits, JHAs
   3. Helpful Links
   4. Regulations and references
   5. Library/reading
   6. Specialized & Hazards
   7. More training resources

v. Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution Office (CADR) - link provides impartial and confidential assistance to USGS employees seeking to improve and/or resolve workplace issues and concerns. Services are for all USGS employees and managers and include:
   1. Confidential Consultation
   2. Mediation
   3. Facilitation
   4. Conflict Management for Teams
   5. Conflict Coaching
   6. Climate Assessment
   7. Cooperative Problem Solving (Self-Help)
   8. Conciliation
   9. Training and Workshops

vi. Annual Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Pledge - link *PSW

URGE Pod feels that this pledge should be highlighted more often across the USGS and we should be asking employees to voluntarily take this pledge as part of regular annual safety training. We also recommend that employees be required to acknowledge receipt of the USGS Code of Conduct on an annual basis.

I pledge to:

1. Strive to eliminate all forms of prejudice, discrimination, and harassment within my organization.
2. Not remain silent when I witness or experience rude, unprofessional, dismissive, unwelcoming, or abusive, bullying behavior(s) that can have the effect of diminishing an employee’s workplace experience and impeding the establishment of a respectful and inclusive workplace in DOI.
3. Take proactive steps to model behaviors that establish a respectful and inclusive workplace in my organization.
4. Recognize discrimination can be the result of any personal characteristic unrelated to job performance, such as, but not limited to: age, disability, pregnancy, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race or religion.
5. Educate myself continually on equity, diversity, and inclusion, share my knowledge with my colleagues, and implement best practices where practicable.

6. Listen actively and seek to understand the experiences of employees or colleagues who are members of underrepresented groups at DOI.

7. Lean on the ODICR team and other EEO and Diversity and Inclusion practitioners across DOI for encouragement, courage, and sound advice, and actively seek to be held accountable to all aspects of this pledge.

8. Assume responsibility for equity, diversity, and inclusion in the organization I lead or am a part of and hold myself and others accountable.

9. Share this pledge with at least one other DOI leader or colleague.