

SESSION 6 DELIVERABLE: SAFETY PLAN

WHOI's Interdisciplinary URGE pod determined that given the variety of research groups, as well as the diversity of field experiences they encounter, it is preferable not to recommend specific rules that all research groups should adopt, but rather a set of topics that every research group should discuss in the development and iteration of their safety plans and codes of conduct. We further agreed that open lines of communication within a research group are prerequisite to safety and inclusivity. Guidelines should not be delivered from the PI to the research group as a passive audience. Instead, any code of conduct should be developed to reflect the values of the group, with all members fully engaged for their input, and revisited at regular intervals as the group's composition changes. To that end we submit the following topic template as a basis for development of a safety guide and code of conduct for research groups at WHOI (and is adaptable to other institutions).

WHOI Policies

- WHOI policy: <https://www.who.edu/HR/harassment>
- APO policy: <https://www.who.edu/what-we-do/educate/apo/reporting-concerns/>
- Code of Conduct policy:
<https://www.who.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Code-of-Conduct-Policy.pdf>

Field/Remote work

What to discuss: Risk assessment prior to field excursion - what are the safety (physical, social) hazards to be aware of before going into the field? What is the communication/check in plan for conducting work in remote, potentially dangerous areas? Who is working together? What are the site specific risks or concerns that lab participants may be concerned about (especially in regard to race, gender, gender identity, accessibility issues, religion). These plans and discussions can include creating a checklist based on discussions with people previously in the field; field personnel working in teams and small groups; safety trainings; and a debrief following field excursions to discuss what went well/what needs to be improved upon.

Why it's important to safety and inclusion: Before going to a new (or even sites that have been previously visited) planning ahead to understand the safety risks will both help plan for potentially unsafe scenarios, and shed light on what to expect for field members. Some sites may be riskier for some members of the team more than others (e.g., increased potential for harassment), and these discussions and forward planning could help mitigate those risks, and increase the safety of the team.

Harassment

What to discuss: What are the policies at the institution for reporting harassment? What to do if you are harassed in the field/lab? Who do you talk to in the lab/department/institution?

Why it's important to safety and inclusivity: Lab members should feel that they will be supported if harassment occurs and what the steps to take so as not to experience harassment again in the future.

Reporting information

What to discuss: Lines of reporting accidents, incidents, and harassment in the lab, field, or cruise setting.

Why it's important to safety and inclusivity: Shared expectations of safety develop when full reporting information is shared in advance of research activities.

WHOI Confidential Reporting:

Employee and Student Assistance Program (ESAP):

800-648-9557 **KGA** offers free, confidential consultations, counseling and targeted referrals at no cost to you. Contact the ESAP 24/7 at: 800-648-9557 or visit www.kgreer.com and enter company code: WHOI

WHOI EthicsPoint confidential hotline: 866-868-0920; www.ethicspoint.com

Accessibility

What to discuss: How can the group accommodate members' different capabilities (mobility, audio/visual, cognitive, psychological, etc) in the lab or in the field?

Why it's important to safety and inclusivity: Not all lab members experience academic/research/field spaces in the same way. This can lead to barring members from participating in field excursions, or lab events.

Credentialing

What to discuss: When should lab members wear or carry identification showing their affiliation to the Institution? When should they travel with explanations of their research activities on letterhead? How can they access these materials? Who gets business cards, and how might they be used?

Why it's important to safety and inclusivity: There are discriminatory ideas of who "looks like" a scientist, and who belongs in what spaces. People of color often experience more scrutiny on campuses, with law enforcement, and moving through airport security.

Research and travel expenses

What to discuss: What expenses related to a group member's work are reasonable to paid out of pocket and reimbursed, and what expenses should be paid directly by the Institution or PI? What are reasonable timeframes to expect reimbursement? What resources can a group member access when paying out of pocket is a hardship?

Why it's important to safety and inclusivity: There are often large income disparities within lab groups depending on career stage, individual and family resources, familial commitments, etc. Financial resources should not be a barrier to a person's participation in research activities, nor should it influence safety (safe transportation to field sites, safe lodging accommodations, or access to personal protective gear, for example).

Alcohol

What to discuss: What are the expectations around group member behavior with colleagues when alcohol is involved? How can lab socializing be inclusive to non-drinkers?

Why it's important to safety and inclusivity:

Drinking, even outside of the work space and outside of normal work hours, is never an excuse for bad behavior with colleagues and students. Drinking is a big part of geoscience culture in many settings, but people who abstain from alcohol may miss out on teambuilding and networking if most activities are centered around drinking.

Outreach obligations

What to discuss: What expectations are there for group members to be active in outreach, service, equity, diversity, and inclusion work, etc? How are these activities considered in a group member's performance?

Why it's important to safety and inclusivity: Service, outreach, and equity work may be performed disproportionately by women and people of color. A PI and their lab group should have clear expectations of time spent on these activities versus their core research and the degree to which these efforts are supported and evaluated as part of their overall lab contributions.

Accountability

What to discuss: What happens when the code is violated? What processes will be invoked if there is a safety issue or incident?

Why it's important to safety and inclusivity: Understanding the steps to take, and that steps will be taken - will encourage communication, as well as comfort that steps will be taken to ensure future safety and inclusivity.

Expectations on time/availability

What to discuss: Are the specific times that lab members are expected to be physically in the lab? Are there hourly expectations?

Why it's important to safety and inclusivity: Being clear about time and availability expectations will ensure lab members and PIs respect each other's time - and temper expectations that one or the other will always be available. It also provides a space to discuss expectations for other time commitments - for example if lab members have familial obligations.

Mentorship:

What to discuss: What are the expectations of the mentor, and the mentee? Who else to go to/or where else to go to find support (for research and/or emotional support like a thesis committee, or on-campus affinity groups)?

Why it's important to safety and inclusivity: Increasingly it's apparent that students/early career scientists benefit from having multiple mentors. A PI can help facilitate this by encouraging members to find support from multiple sources, which will broaden the support base of mentees, as well as help mentees find different mentors that will help increase their feeling of belonging (e.g., through affinity groups). Helping lab members identify other mentors/groups can provide some of the resources needed to create mentoring networks.

Mental Health

What to discuss: What are the resources at the institution to help maintain mental health?

Why it's important to safety and inclusivity: Science and academia are hard - it can be isolating, there's a lot of uncertainty, and navigating academia can be stressful and lead to challenges of the mental health and well-being of lab members. PI's can help navigate or provide information on channels within the institution to help maintain the well-being of their lab members.

Mental health resource at WHOI:

Employees can receive free and confidential support from KGA at **800-648-9557** or by email at **info@kgreer.com**. You can find additional resources on our website, **kgreer.com**