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Advisor Intervention Training: Diversity and Culture of Inclusion

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Advisor Intervention Training

Diversity and Culture of Inclusion

Stephen Secules, Darryl A. Dickerson, Maimuna Begum Kali, Nivedita Kumar, Bailey Bond



CELL-MET



WELCOME

CELL-MET

BIOLOGY

ENGINEERING

Creating human heart tissue
that is functional and clinically
significant

Growing a diverse workforce
to tackle next generation
challenges

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Diversity and Culture of Inclusion

Diversity and Culture of Inclusion Goals

GOAL 1. Diversity

To expand diverse participation at all levels within CELL-MET creating pathways into engineering.

GOAL 2. Inclusion

To create and maintain a culture of inclusion within CELL-MET and at our institutions.

- Our success depends on graduate student success
- “Advising relationships and social supports are important.” (Bork and Mondisa, 2022)
- “Critical events may seem small and/or expected to faculty but may be big and/or unexpected to graduate students because they catalyze the impact of other issues.” (Zerbe et al, 2022)

- Graduate students as experts on their own experience.
- Graduate student experience as a crucial aspect of creating a culture of inclusion.
- Experiences can differ by group. Some students may feel well supported in a department while others do not.

- We interviewed students in departments associated with CELL MET.
- Students named a number of challenges: unsupportive advisors, inequities in lab tasks, unfair labor policies, etc.
- We anonymized student interview data to protect participants but utilized the scenarios to create today's workshop content.

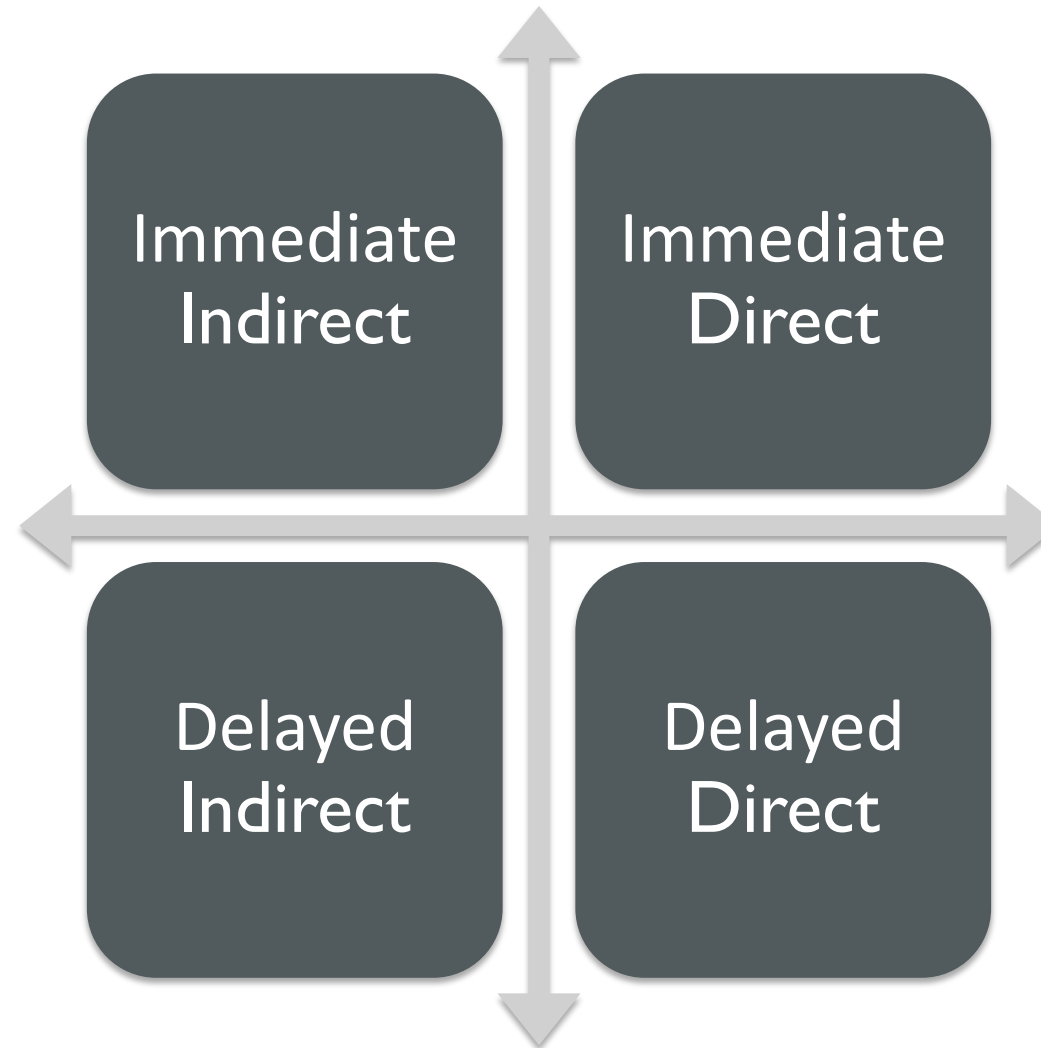
We heard issues related to:

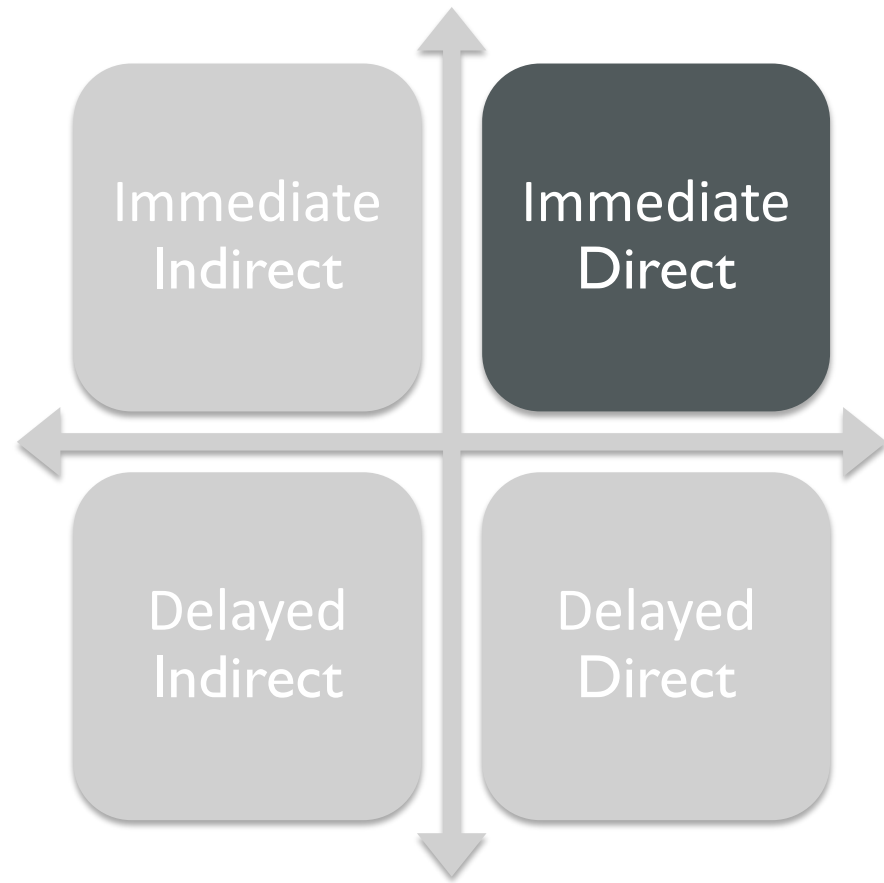
- Mental health
- Gender bias
- Discrimination
- Microaggressions
- Bullying
- Poor working conditions
- Lack of sympathy and understanding



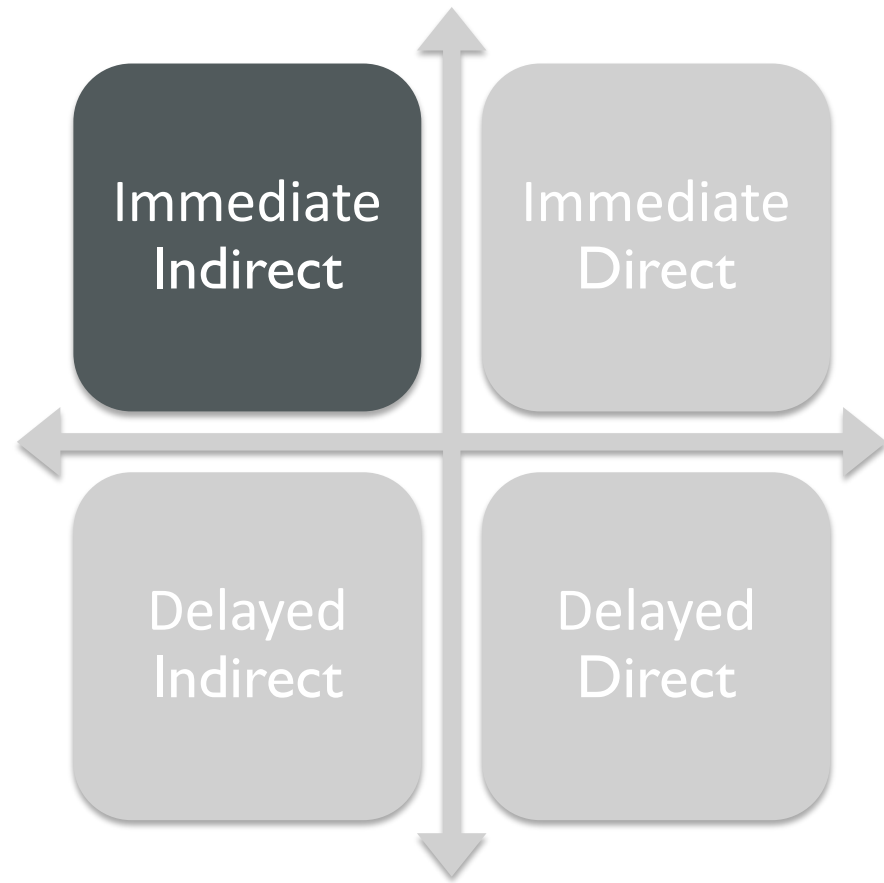
- Advisors have significant power to impact a lab and university culture
- Advisors also have to react to specific student actions and circumstances in which they do not have complete control.
- Advisors can set policies, encourage supportive interactions, disrupt problems, and respond to student concerns.
- Advisors can perpetuate a culture of inclusion or exclusion.

1. Take in information
2. Interpret information
3. Take responsibility to improve the situation
4. Decide on appropriate action
5. Act

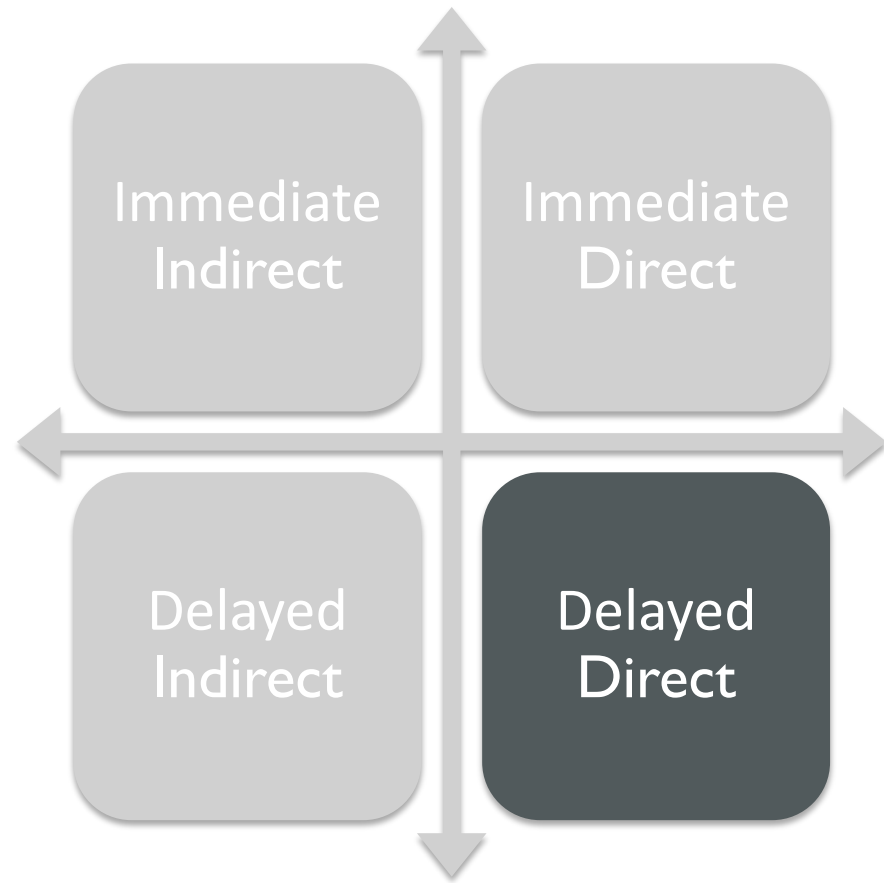




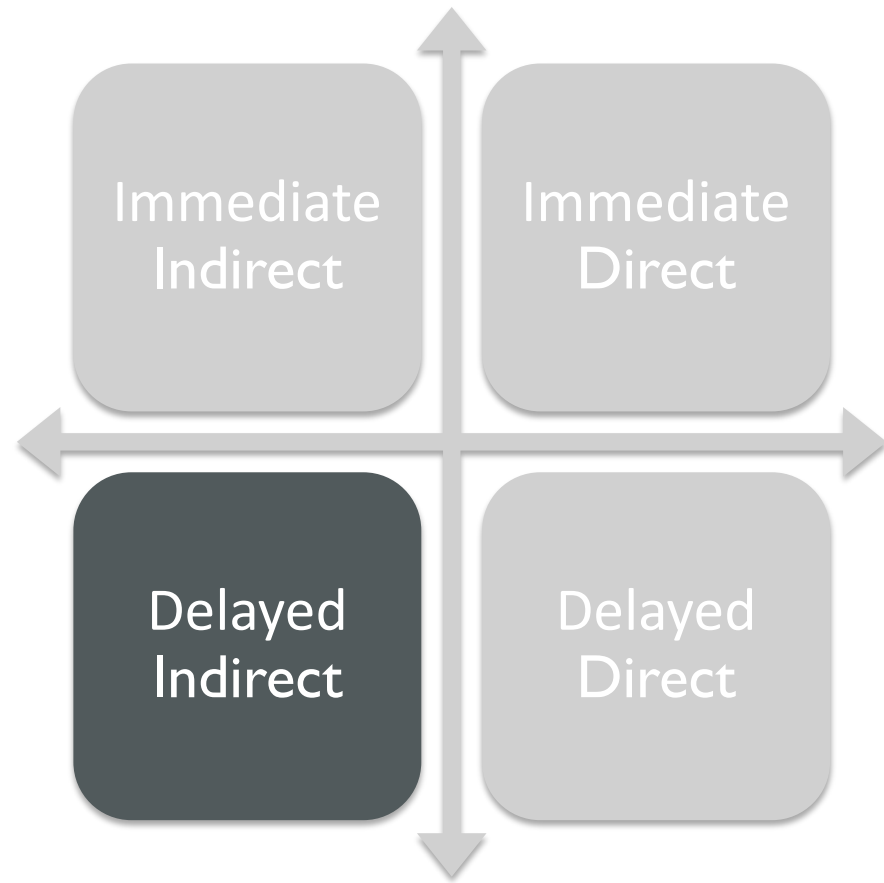
- Express disapproval immediately when a problem occurs
"I don't like hearing that kind of language."
- Name the action and the problem with it
"I've noticed only men speaking so far and I'd like to make sure we all get a chance to speak."
- Appeal to lab or community norms
"I want everyone in our group to respect each other's culture and religion."
- Proactively express intentions of support
"It's very important to me that you all feel respected and supported."



- Change a group interaction without naming it
"Sasha I don't think I've heard from you yet." [If only men are speaking.]
- Be responsive and caring to needs expressed
"I am so sorry to hear you are going through that."
"I can tell everyone's feeling a bit stressed today."
- Change the subject from a problematic one
"Ok let's get back on track here."



- Set a new policy in lab
"Going forward, we are each going to present for a set amount of time and raise hands to offer feedback."
- Chat with an individual offline / later
"I didn't want to call you out in front of the group, but I didn't like the way you acted during that meeting."
- Create change in broader system
Go address grad student issues with university systems.



- Shift a problematic interaction later, without naming it
Model correct pronoun usage after incorrectly used.
- Follow up with an individual who you know may be struggling
"How is your mother doing after her surgery?"
"Is everything ok? You've seemed a bit sad during the meeting today."
- Ask students for ideas on how to improve things

SCENE I: LAB GROUP

- Dr. Smith is going to have a weekly lab group check in. He is joined by his four graduate students: Adil, Tamim, Maya, and Keith.
- Imagine yourself as an additional faculty member in the lab group who is listening (but not speaking at the moment). What do you notice about the lab group and what might you have wanted to intervene or change?

LAB GROUP NOTICING

- What were some problems you noticed in the scene you just saw?
- Why do you think those problems occurred?
- How do you think they made the participants feel?

LAB GROUP INTERVENTION

- If you were sitting in the room as a faculty member, what would you say? How could you have helped that meeting go differently?

LAB GROUP IMMEDIATE INTERVENTION

- Brainstorm as a small group how you could intervene:
 - Immediate Direct (name and challenge what you see)
 - Immediate Indirect (shift a pattern without naming it)
 - Delayed Direct (wait until the meeting is over, follow up with someone, set a new policy)
 - Delayed Indirect (be responsive when someone expresses concerns)
- Come up with 3-5 interventions you want to try and add in the script.
- Nominate a representative or two who will act them out for you as additional faculty in the scene.

ADVISING REQUESTS

- You are going to see one of two email exchanges between a grad student and an advisor.
- Grad student makes a request, advisor responds.
- Questions to consider:
 - What are the challenges the advisee is expressing or experiencing?
 - What are some problems with the advisor's response?
- After you discuss as a group each member of Tables 1 and 2 will come up individually to try an advising intervention.

ADVISING REQUEST #1

An email exchange between Dorothy, a graduate student, and Dr. Chen, her advisor:

Hi Dr. Chen,

I wasn't able to make as much progress in the lab this week. I've been having issues with my health insurance again-- I think that same issue happened again when my contract changed between your grant projects. When I went to pick up my meds after surgery, the pharmacy said, 'You have to pay for this out of pocket because you don't have insurance coverage.' I was on the phone all day with my insurance. I'm so sorry I don't have more to show this week, I feel terrible.

Dorothy

Dorothy,

Are you sure the issue is with your contract changing? You might have forgotten to sign a form or something. If you're sure it's the department's mistake, you should contact Julianna about it, I'm not responsible for entering student contracts.

As for your research progress, please prioritize your work this week. You were out last week and we need to get back on schedule with the project deliverables.

Dr. Chen

ADVISING REQUEST #2

An email exchange between Saima, a graduate student, and Dr. Chen, her advisor:

Hi Dr. Campbell,

I hope you're well. I just wanted to ask whether I could have time off to fly out of the country to visit my family for Ramadan next month. I know it's important that I put in work towards my dissertation proposal, but I've been working very hard and I haven't seen my family in two years. I wondered if it was ok to take that time off.

Saima

Saima,

This request comes at a particularly busy time our lab's work this semester. You're funded by my grant and cost me \$55,000 a year. You already get vacation time when the university is closed for winter break, I really need you working and making progress the rest of the academic year. Maybe your family should come visit you instead?

Dr. Campbell

- As an advisor, you have power and responsibility to help support graduate students and create an inclusive culture.
- You don't have complete control. You can only do our best to respond and help create the culture we want to see.
- Making a mistake is ok, processing and following up over the long term is fine.
- Be proactive, not just reactive.



CELL-MET

Thank You

CELL-MET Advising Intervention Training
February 16, 2023 3:15-4:00pm

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Culture of Inclusion, Graduate Student Experiences
3. Advising as Intervention Process

Advisor Intervention Process

- Take in information
- Interpret information
- Take responsibility to improve the situation
- Decide on appropriate action
- Act using a specific strategy

4. Advising Action Framework (see back)
5. Lab Group Scene (Immediate Intervention)
6. Advising Requests (Delayed Intervention)
7. Concluding Thoughts

Immediate Indirect

- Change a group interaction without naming it
"Sasha I don't think I've heard from you yet." [If only men are speaking.]
- Be responsive and caring to needs expressed
*"I am so sorry to hear you are going through that."
"I can tell everyone's feeling a bit stressed today."*
- Change the subject from a problematic one
"Ok let's get back on track here."

Immediate Direct

- Express disapproval immediately when a problem occurs
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Delayed Indirect

- Shift a problematic interaction later, without naming it
Model correct pronoun usage after incorrectly used.
- Follow up with an individual who you know may be struggling
*"How is your mother doing after her surgery?"
"Is everything ok? You've seemed a bit sad during the meeting today."*
- Ask students for ideas on how to improve things

Delayed Direct

- Set a new policy in lab
"Going forward, we are each going to present for a set amount of time and raise hands to offer feedback."
- Chat with an individual offline / later
"I didn't want to call you out in front of the group, but I didn't like the way you acted during that meeting."
- Create change in broader system
Go address grad student issues with university systems.

Lab Group Meeting

4 students: Tamim, Maya, Adil, and Keith, are sitting around a table in Dr. Smith's lab.

Keith: We sure stayed late last night.

Maya: Yeah, in the lab until 2 am on a Sunday.

Keith: And now our lab group's weekly meeting at 9am? I hate this.

Adil: I'm here on a visa, and I need this job to stay. I just do whatever is asked of me.

Dr. Smith hurriedly walks in.

Dr. Smith: Ok, time for our lab group check in. Tamim, can you take notes?

Tamim looks annoyed but gets out her notebook.

Dr. Smith: First let's review our tasks from last week.

Adil: Well I've been focused on preparing for our guest lecture to Clemson, so I haven't been updating the task log.

Dr. Smith: That's fine, I need you focused on the guest lecture. It will bring a great profile to our work.

Keith: I have some new results from the experiment on tissues with self-organizing capillaries. I can show you later in the meeting.

Dr. Smith: I don't know how it can take *this long* to get significant results, but we'll see what happened this week. Maya?

Maya: I've had a lot to do this week with emailing about the new equipment requests, updating figures for Adil's guest lecture, and proofreading our website. I'd really like to start thinking about my first cardiac microtissue experiment but I haven't had time to unfortunately.

Dr. Smith: Maya, you've really got to think about being more efficient with your time, like Adil. Tamim, have you been helping Maya with the lab maintenance?

Tamim: I have, but I'm not sure it's working well to have only Maya and me cleaning the lab. I need to work more on my paper reviews, they are overdue.

Dr. Smith: Oh of course, but you and Maya are the best at cleaning, plus Adil has such important work to do this week.

Maya and Tamim exchange uncomfortable / frustrated glances.

Maya: Keith could you help?

Dr. Smith: [Ignoring Maya.] Ok let's get to reviewing the progress from those who *do* have work to show this week. Keith, you mentioned you wanted to share some experimental results.

Keith: Yes, here you go.

Keith hands around paper with his results.

Keith: Ok so this graph is showing the higher force output from tissues with self-organizing capillaries. It's still rough but I'm curious what you all think.

Dr. Smith: Ahha, this is interesting. Adil what do you think?

Adil: The pattern is indeed interesting. It could represent good oxygenation.

Dr. Smith: Good point. Maya, what does it mean for the graph to represent good oxygenation

Maya pauses a few seconds.

Maya: I'm not sure. Maybe it means there's a good connection...between the 3D printed vessels and ~~capillaries~~.

Dr. Smith: [Interrupts Maya] Come on Maya, you're a second year, how can you not be sure?

Adil: It clearly means there's a strong connection between the 3D printed vessels and the self-organized capillaries.

Dr Smith: Exactly right. Maya, maybe you should get help from Adil on these things, he's been doing this work since he was in grade school so he has a natural intuition. Keith, you can run some follow up tests this week and show us again. Since Maya doesn't have anything to show us this week, Tamim why don't you go next?

Tamim: Ok, well, I've been trying to formulate my next project. This chart is a synthesis of ~~what I saw across~~

Adil: [Interrupts Tamim] Wait, I think the x-axis is mislabeled.

Tamim: No, er... I-

Dr. Smith: It absolutely is. Tamim, these are sloppy mistakes. You should have learned how to label your axes in undergrad.

Dr. Smith looks at their phone.

Ok, I'm getting pinged about my next meeting now, so we'll have to continue this discussion next week. Maya, can you please email maintenance again and check with the vendor about the new equipment order. Once it's all taken care of, I'll sign. But, we really need that in to begin the experiment I need for my grant project.

Maya, Keith, and Adil walk away. Tamim hangs back. Dr. Smith types on the computer.

Tamim: Dr. Smith, could I ask you something?

Dr. Smith: What is it?

Tamim: Well, I've been seeing a counselor for the past few months, and she noticed I struggle a lot after lab group meetings and our 1-1 conversations. She says I get so fixated on the negative feedback and what I'm doing wrong. She suggested we have a one on one conversation to talk about it.

Dr. Smith: Ok, but I don't have much time in the next few days. Talk about what exactly?

Tamim: I don't know if there's any way you could focus more on how I can improve (and not just what I'm doing wrong).

Dr. Smith: Well, I don't know how that would work. This is my advising style. I can try to be more aware since you're apparently so sensitive. I'm just sorry you're so unsure of yourself.

Tamim says nothing.

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