


Dealing with Irrational Behaviors... Without Losing Your Mind

Mark Patterson, University Ombuds

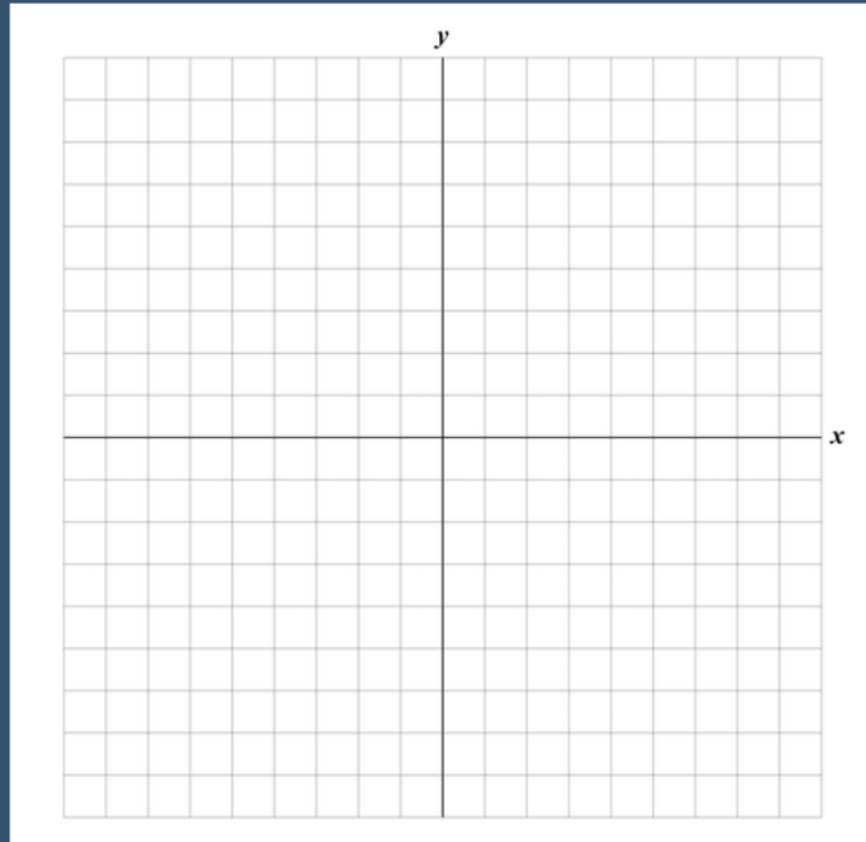
Preliminary Considerations

- Be sensitive to trauma
 - Mental health support may be appropriate
- Irrational *behaviors*, not irrational people
 - Respect is bedrock

How do you typically react to irrationality?

x = "empathy" left / "logic" right

y = "engage" top / "retreat" bottom



Scenario

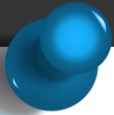
Prof Alex Finley, an associate professor in your Department, recently posted on a CSUCI-focused Instagram page that they are under threat for speaking out about election issues. The posting says “the University” is trying to force Alex to leave and asks for student support to fight back. You are surprised to see this posting, as you had just spoken to the Dean last week and she had said nothing about Prof Finley.



What's your first reaction in this situation?



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- Respect autonomy
- “With this info, what happened makes sense”
- Close the loop when possible
- Establish a future “handle” to reengage

Warm Up your “Curiosity Muscles”

- Suspend diagnoses
- What data would convince *you* (even if unlikely or impossible)?

Assess Data Objectively

- Observed actions
- Specific words
- Observed impact (self and others)



Reframe from their “Deep Why”

- Restart the film
- Step through the actions
- Invite a “re-take”... and the next scene

Narrow the Scene Scope

- Temporarily suspend the narrative
- Zoom in on specific action(s) or interactions frame by frame
- Walk *with them* through the frames

Ask “5 Whys”

- Pick a “frame”
- Assess their perspective with their help
- Contextualize broadly

Revisited

Scenario

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Story for illustration purposes only

You can't argue
people out of
paranoia. ... The only
solution is to **reduce**
the distrust and
anxiety that is the
seedbed of this thinking.

