

ENOHE 2014: Preconference Workshop

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Developing and Maintaining Ombudsman Skills

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Description

Ombudsmen in higher education come from a variety of backgrounds, into new and different work. How do they prepare to do this work? What are the skills needed to do this work? How to maintain and advance their skills? In this session, we will consider different approaches to the professional development of ombudsmen in higher education.

Welcome. The purpose of this session: to consider approaches to the professional development of ombudsmen in higher education.

Assumptions:

We are learning together.

Self-care

Privacy and confidentiality

Exercise I: Sociogram "Who am I? My origin and skills"

- Where do you come from?
Far <=> near; East – West - North – South
- What is your Background? Law, Psychology/Social Work, Other?
- Skills: How content are you with your skills as an ombudsman:
Best practice – Improvement possible – Beginner
- Do you have a systematic approach to improve your skills? Yes/No

Summary: Examples of approaches to improving ombudsman skills:

- Law (training)x
- Mediation training
- University courses for complaints handling & ombudsmen (England & Wales)
- Annual ombudsman classes – summer course (Spain)
- Complaints forum (Scotland)
- Conference workshops and topic specific sections, such as mental health (Canada)
- Adoption of Principles of Good Practice (England & Wales)

Exercise II: Introductions

- A. In pairs, interview your partner.
- B. Introduce your partner.

Summary: Useful knowledge or valuable skills that participants bring from previous experience to this work:

- Knowledge: About an institution, About the Industry (HE); Regulations and guidelines.
- Skills: Analytical skills; Language and communication skills (writing, listening, communicating through technology); Helping skills; Process skills (mediation)
- Content areas: Dynamics of conflict management; Multiculturalism; Mental health; Sexual harassment and assault; Ethics and research
- Best practices.
- Connecting with other ombuds

Exercise III: Individual

What do you do now? What are your job duties? Where did they come from?

What are the principles that guide your work?

What are the principles that guide you? Where did they come from?

Summary: Principles that guide the work

- Justice
- Social Justice
- Fairness
- Equity
- Multipartiality
- Proportionate
- Objectivity
- Neutrality
- Confidentiality
- Legality
- Independence
- Informality
- Understanding
- User focused
- Consistency
- Delivering improvement

Exercise: Case consultation (pairs)

Presentation: Reflective learning and criteria for effective peer case consultation (slides)

Summary: Case consultation

- Listserv, intranet, facebook
- Meetings (national, regional) and (annual, three-times/year)
- Case consultation (ad hoc, occasional, regular)

Wrap Up and Conclusion

Resource:

Brown J, Wohl JS. "Peer Case Consultation For And By Ombuds in Higher Education".
Journal of the California Caucus of College and University Ombuds, 2012.
<http://journal.calcaucus.com/journal-2013.html>