



Association of  
Title IX Administrators

# Informal Resolution Foundations for Higher Education

Training and Certification Course

# WELCOME!

- Please log in to your ATIXA Event Lobby each day to access the course slides, supplemental materials, and to log your attendance.
- The ATIXA Event Lobby can be accessed by the QR code or visiting [www.atixa.org/atixa-event-lobby](http://www.atixa.org/atixa-event-lobby) in your internet browser.
- Links for any applicable course evaluations and learning assessments are also provided in the ATIXA Event Lobby. You will be asked to enter your registration email to access the Event Lobby.
- If you have not registered for this course, an event will not show on your Lobby. Please email [events@atixa.org](mailto:events@atixa.org) or engage the ATIXA website chat app to inquire ASAP.





Strategic Risk  
Management Solutions



Any advice or opinion provided during this training, either privately or to the entire group, is never to be construed as legal advice or an assurance of compliance. Always consult with your legal counsel to ensure you are receiving advice that considers existing case law in your jurisdiction, any applicable state or local laws, and evolving federal guidance.

# Course Introduction



The primary focus of this course is to introduce practitioners to Informal Resolution and its application to Title IX and allegations of sex- and gender-based discrimination.



Practitioners will learn about the variety of structural and policy decisions that need to be made when implementing an Informal Resolution process.



Our goal is to provide practitioners with a deep-dive into the applicable foundational elements and considerations regarding whether and how to implement Informal Resolution options.

# Content Advisory

The content and discussion in this course will necessarily engage with sex- and gender-based harassment, discrimination, and violence and associated sensitive topics that can evoke strong emotional responses.

ATIXA faculty members may offer examples that emulate the language and vocabulary that Title IX practitioners may encounter in their roles including slang, profanity, and other graphic or offensive language.

# Note on Vocabulary

- Title IX resolution processes specifically address sex- and gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence
- Common alternative resolution processes focus on opportunities to reduce “conflict” or resolve a “dispute”
- Use of existing alternative resolution terminology is not meant to diminish the reality of sex- or gender-based misconduct

# Informal Resolution and Title IX

# Title IX and Equity

- Title IX is a gender equity law
- Equity refers to the understanding that not all individuals have access to the same resources and opportunities
  - Equity focuses on providing support and resources to reduce disparities in access to the education program
  - Title IX seeks to remedy the inequities sex and gender discrimination create
- Institutions may determine their own Informal Resolution processes
  - Processes must be equitable in execution and access



# Title IX: Scope

## Title IX

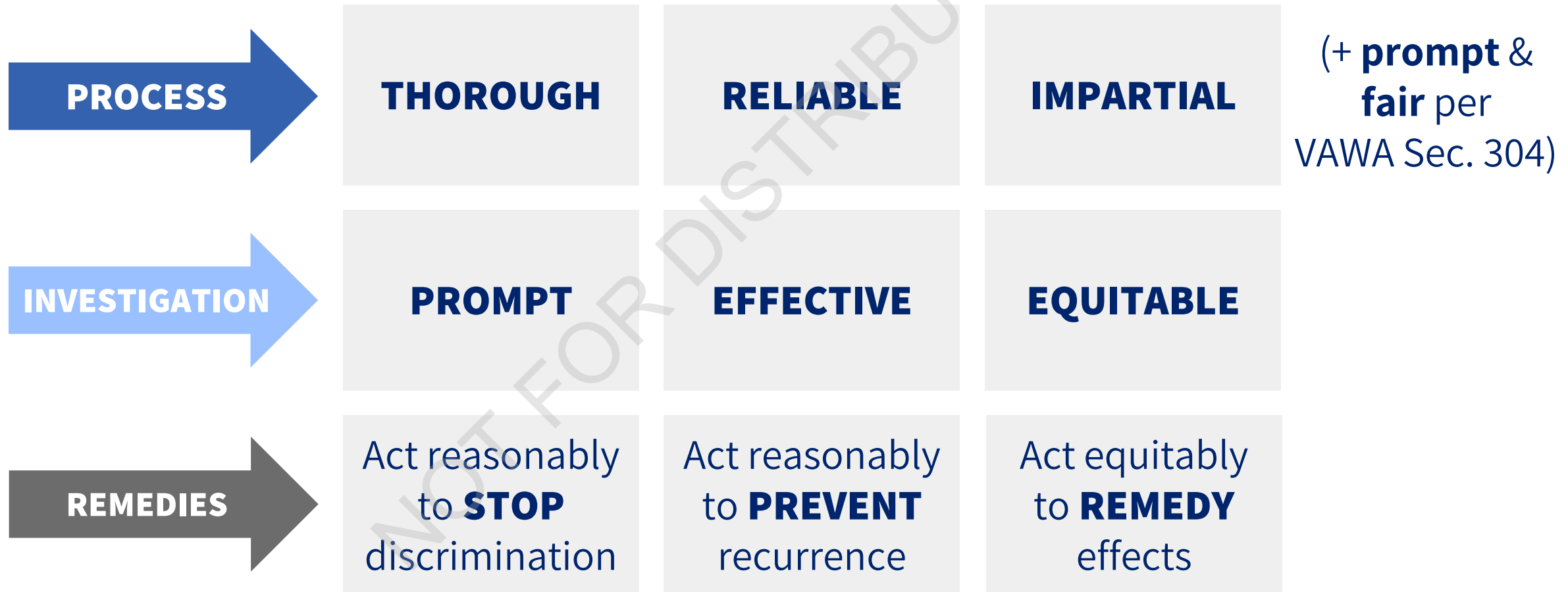
### Discrimination

- Sex-Based Discrimination
- Program Equity

### Harassment

- Quid Pro Quo
- Hostile Environment
- Sexual Assault
- Dating Violence
- Domestic Violence
- Stalking
- Retaliation

# The IX Commandments



# Historical OCR Informal Resolution Guidance

- OCR does not define Informal Resolution (IR)
  - Uses alternative resolution as an undefined synonym
- Human resource departments have long used forms of Informal Resolution such as mediation and arbitration
- OCR Guidance
  - 2001 Revised Sexual Harassment Guidance (rescinded)
  - 2011 Dear Colleague Letter (rescinded)
  - 2017 Q&A on Campus Sexual Misconduct (rescinded)
  - 2020 Title IX Regulations
  - 2021 Title IX Q&A (updated 2022)

# Regulatory Requirements



Formal Complaint



Written Notice



Voluntary Participation

# Informal Resolution Overview

# ATIXA's Informal Resolution Framework

ATIXA's Framework contemplates three categories of Informal Resolution.

**1**

**Supportive  
Measures Only**

**2**

**Accepted  
Responsibility**

**3**

**Alternative  
Resolution**

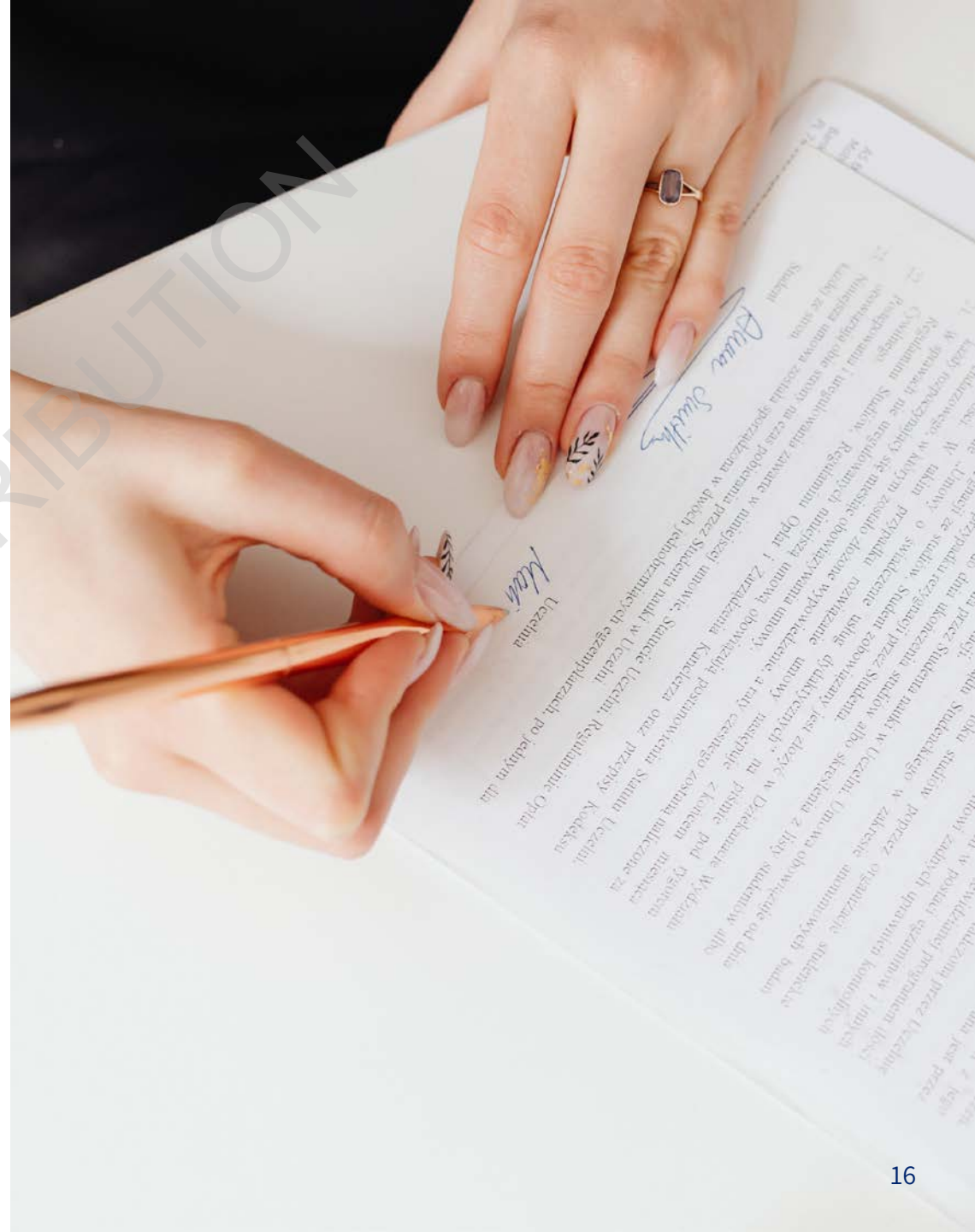
# Supportive Measures Only

- Title IX Coordinator (TIXC) resolves the report by providing the Complainant with remedies and supportive measures
- Formal complaint not required
- Respondents are typically not involved unless a supportive measure directly involves or impacts them



# Accepted Responsibility

- Respondent accepts responsibility for violating policy and accepts the recommended sanction(s), ending the grievance process
- Accepted Responsibility may allow, but does not require, the parties to communicate directly about the complaint with the assistance of a third-party facilitator



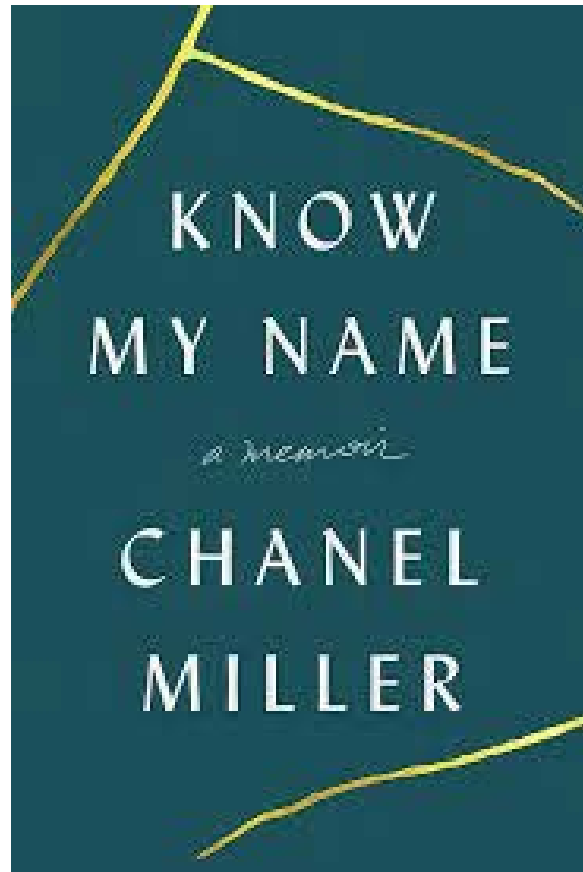


# Alternative Resolution (AR)

- Parties agree to resolve the complaint through an AR mechanism such as facilitated dialogue, mediation, or restorative practices
- AR may allow, but does not require, the parties to communicate directly about the complaint with the assistance of a third-party facilitator



# **Discussion: Informal Resolution Goals and Foundations**



“When society questions a victim’s reluctance to report, I will be here to remind you that you ask us to sacrifice our sanity to fight outdated structures that were designed to keep us down. Victims do not have the time for this. Victims are also students, teachers, parents, who can’t give up work or education...It is not reasonable to casually demand that victims put aside their lives to spend more time pursuing something they never asked for in the first place...**This is about society’s failure to have systems in place in which victims feel there is a probable chance of achieving safety, justice, and restoration** rather than being retraumatized, publicly shamed, psychologically tormented, and verbally mauled. The real question is not, *Why didn’t she report*, the question is, *Why would you?*”  
(emphasis added)

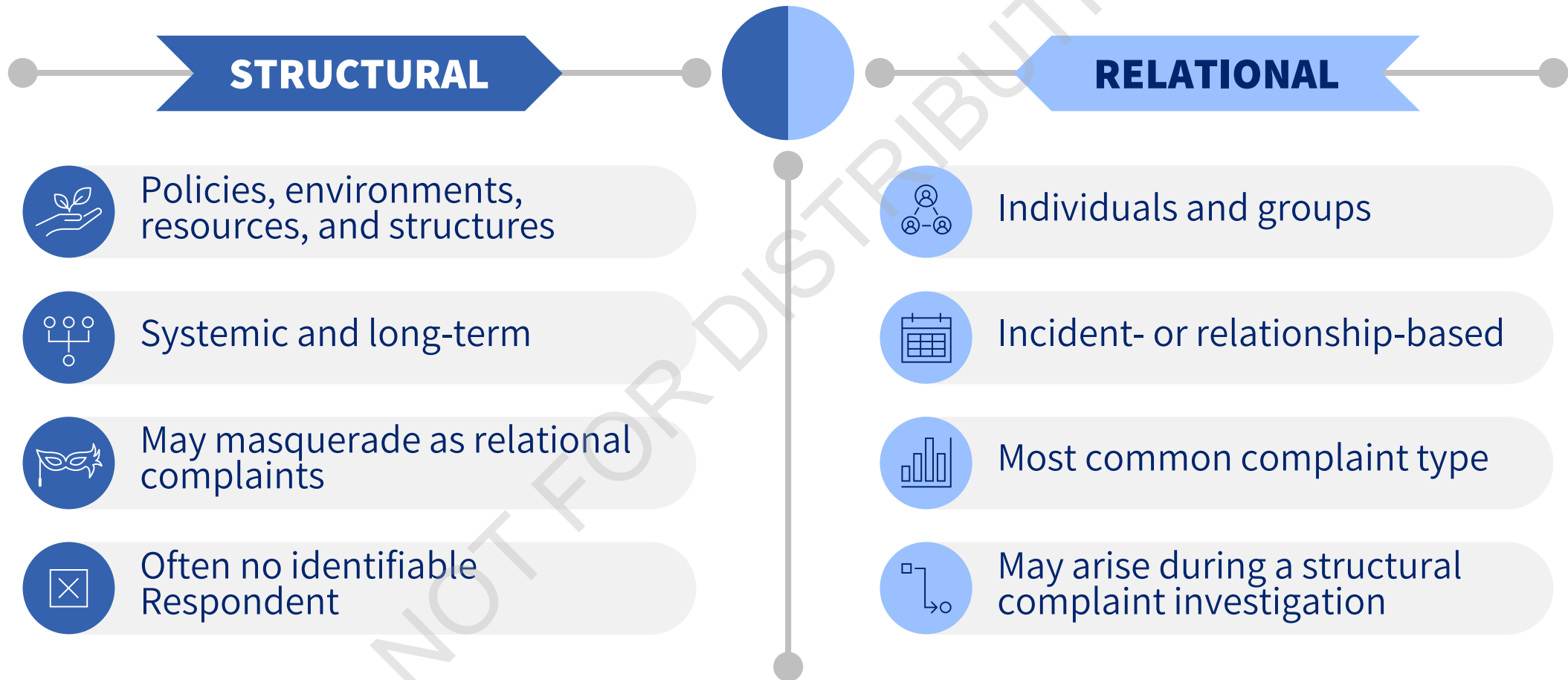
# Informal Resolution Goals

- Restore educational access
- Empower choice and agency over the resolution
- Identify and address parties' and community needs
- Address past harm
- Prevent future harm
- Create space for communication and understanding among parties, if desired

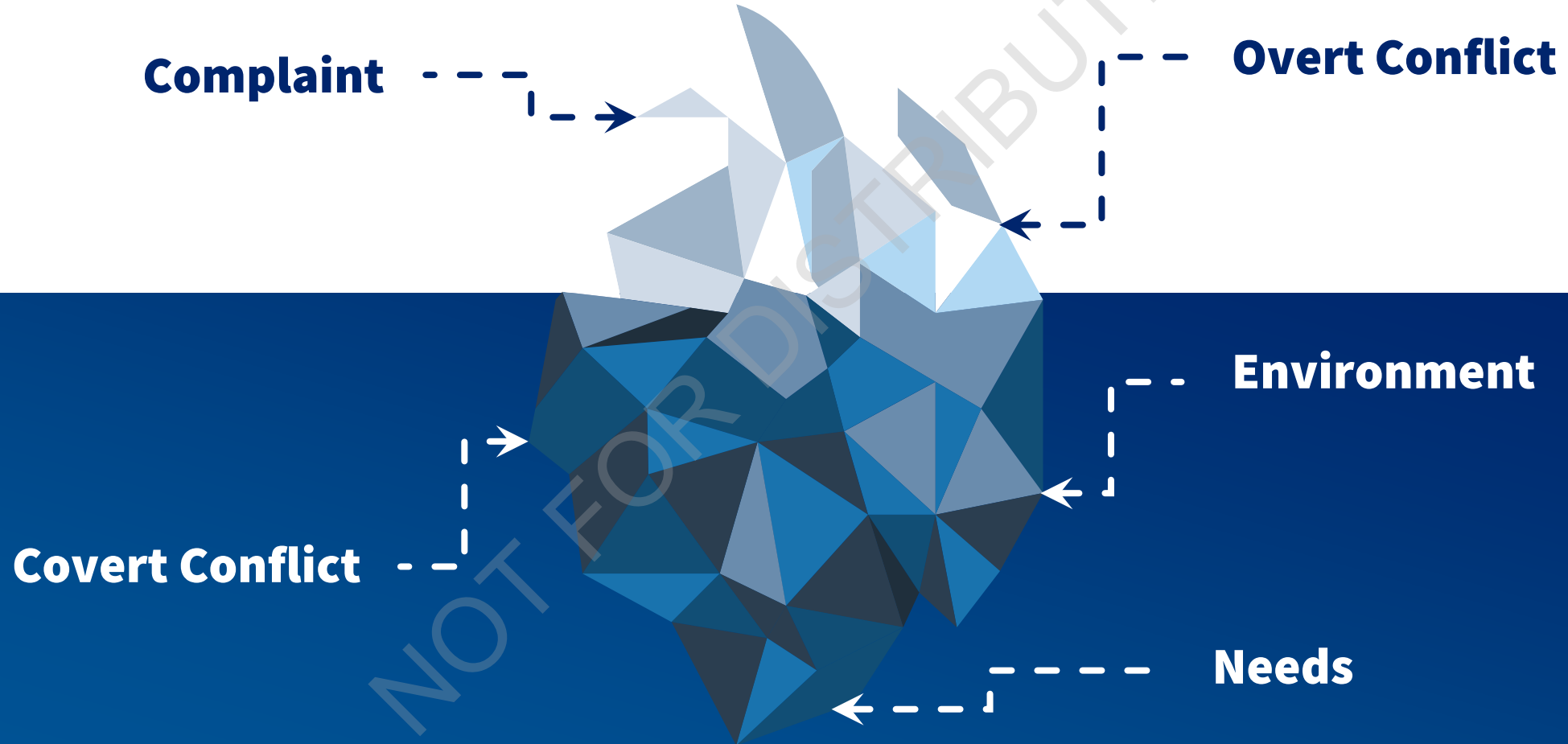
# Informal Resolution Foundations

- Safety (physical, psychological, and emotional)
- Focus on needs
- Mutually serving
- Intentionality
- Informal ≠ casual
- Presence
- Meet parties where they are
- Pre- and post-process support and resources

# Types of Complaints



# Complaints and Conflicts



# Sources of Conflict

- Conflicts are a sign of unmet needs
- There are three root causes of conflict

**1**

**Power and  
Control**

**2**

**Care and  
Connection**

**3**

**Respect and  
Recognition**



# Contextual Considerations

- No one-size-fits-all approach to IR
- Not all structures will fit the unique circumstances of sex- and gender-based misconduct complaints
- Policies and processes should be designed with a variety of complaints and parties in mind
- IR within an educational institution is inherently different than community agency processes

# **ACTIVITY: Introduction to David & Andrea**

# Initial Contact

David has been referred to the Title IX Office by the Office of Student Conduct. He shared that his ex-fiancé Andrea (also a student) has repeatedly contacted him after their relationship ended, including leaving notes on his vehicle on campus that stated, “This is not over;” approaching him after classes; appearing at his off-campus residence; and multiple phone calls and text messages demanding that he speak to her. Andrea has also asked his friends where David is and has shown up at off-campus locations where they are hanging out based on their Instagram posts.

David explains that he has repeatedly asked Andrea to leave him alone and not to contact him. But she will not comply with his requests. He believes Andrea is having a hard time letting go of their relationship, and he is now seeking your help to resolve the situation.

**What steps would you take upon hearing this information from David?**

# Informal Resolution Application

# General Application Information

- IR can take place at any point before a final determination is made
- May offer IR for incidents that:
  - Meet the regulatory definition of Title IX sexual harassment
  - Fall under another policy
  - Do not yet rise to the level of a potential policy violation
- IR is **optional** and may be offered in a variety of forms

# Title IX Sexual Harassment



# IR Within the Title IX Regulations

- Formal complaint required
- Cannot be used for allegations of employee-on-student misconduct
- Alleged conduct must meet regulatory sexual harassment definition if proven and have occurred in the United States
- Complainant must be participating or attempting to participate in education program or activity
- Respondent must be a student or employee
- Facilitator must be free of bias and conflicts of interest
- Facilitator must have appropriate training
- Records maintained for minimum of **seven** years

# IR Outside the Regulations

- Formal complaint not required
  - ATIXA recommends a written statement or complaint
- May address alleged policy violations and behaviors that would not violate policy but are impactful
  - Non-sexual-harassment civil rights complaints
  - Sexual harassment falling outside the TIX regulations
- Complainant does not have to be affiliated with institution
- Respondent must be a student or an employee
- Recommend same facilitator neutrality and training expectations
- Records maintained per institutional policy



# IR for Relational Complaints

- Can be effective way of addressing relational complaints for parties and impacted community
- IR for Parties
  - Resolution focuses on the parties
  - Empowers choice
  - Needs-based
  - Honors privacy similar to the Formal Grievance Process
  - Focuses on ensuring educational access and restoration

# IR for Impacted Groups and Communities

- Some incidents have a far-reaching impact on a larger group
- Opportunities for IR to address gaps that may exist between individual and community harm
- Considerations
  - Are the involved parties agreeable?
  - Are the involved parties present?
  - Do the power dynamics allow for voluntary choice?
  - How expansive is the impact?

# IR for Structural Complaints

- No specific Respondent
- Individuals in current roles are not always the same individuals who wrote/implemented the discriminatory policy/practice
- Can necessitate facilitator with positional authority within the institution
- Two-phase resolution
  - Remediating the immediate complaint
  - System/policy/environmental change

# Timing

- IR may be implemented prior to, in lieu of, or following a Formal Grievance Process
- Institutions determine whether an investigation should proceed or be paused while IR is attempted
  - Jurisdiction over Respondent
  - Party and witness availability
  - Evidence availability
- Timing may inform IR structure or options that may be available

# Common Off-Ramps for IR

**Any party may request to pursue an IR at any point prior to a final determination**

**Intake Meeting**

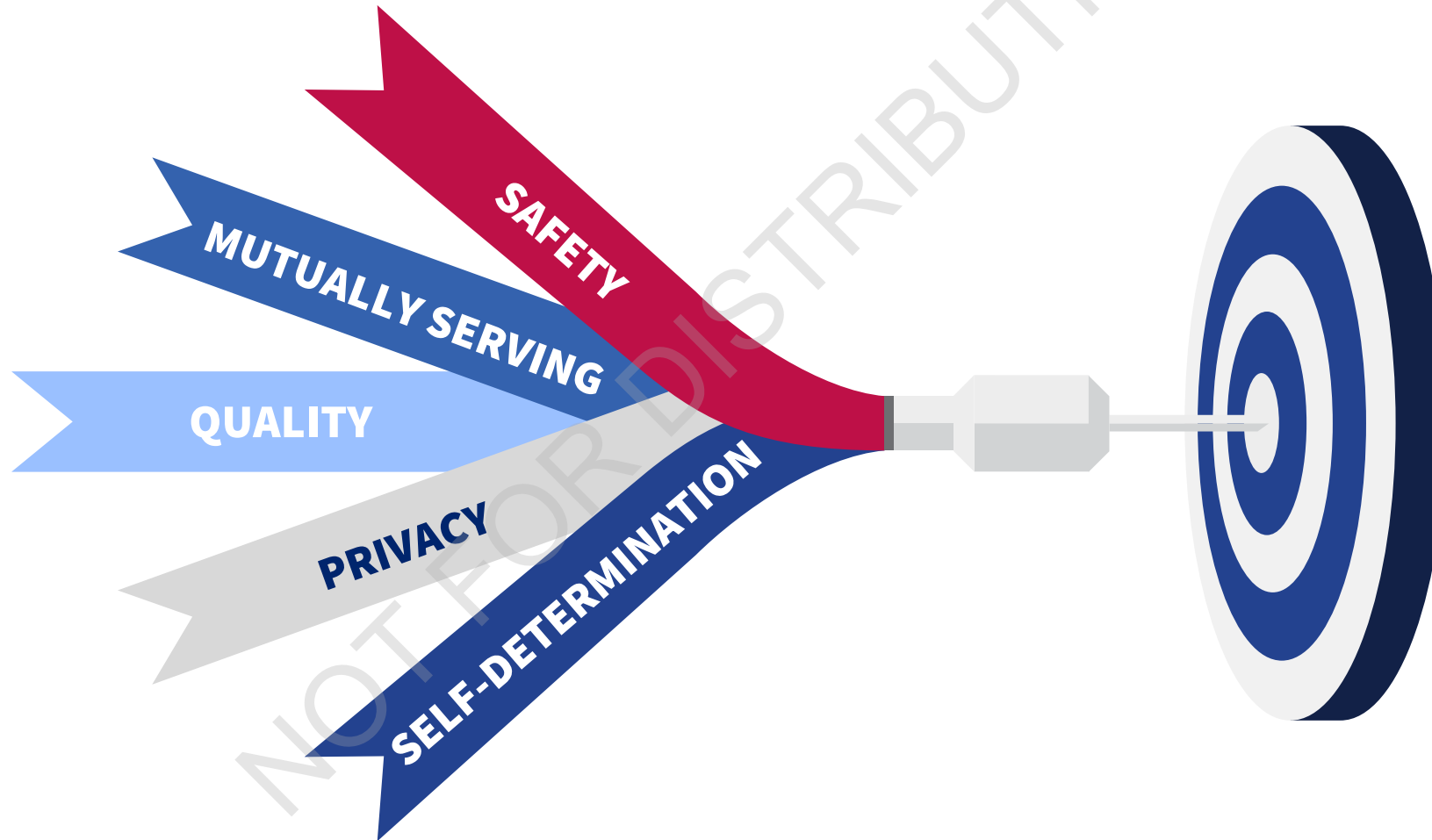
**First Respondent Meeting**

**First 10-Day Report Review**

**Final Report Review**

# Determining Availability & Appropriateness

# Key Values



# Considerations for Appropriateness

- Not all complaints are appropriate for IR and not all parties are ready to participate
- Not all forms of IR are appropriate for all circumstances
- Factors to consider:
  - History of emotional, physical, or sexual violence between parties
  - Power imbalances between parties
  - Potential to jeopardize safety or well-being
  - Situations involving minors harmed by adults
  - Party or parties not sincere or acting in good faith



# Informal Resolution Structures & Implementations

Cross-Cultural Considerations

# Culture

“[A] set...of rules for being in the world...[and] shared cognitive approaches to reality that distinguish a given group from others.”

Adler, Nancy & Jelinek, Mariann. (2006). Is “Organizational Culture” culture bound?. Human Resource Management. 25. 73 - 90.



# Cross-Cultural Considerations

“

Culture eats  
strategy for  
breakfast.

”

Peter Drucker  
Management Theorist

- Practitioners need a thorough understanding of institutional culture and needs
- Culture is learned and adaptable
- People tend to defend and protect their culture
- People are often oblivious to the unique customs of their own culture

# Cultural Competence

Awareness of one's own cultural beliefs and values and how they may be similar to or different from other cultures

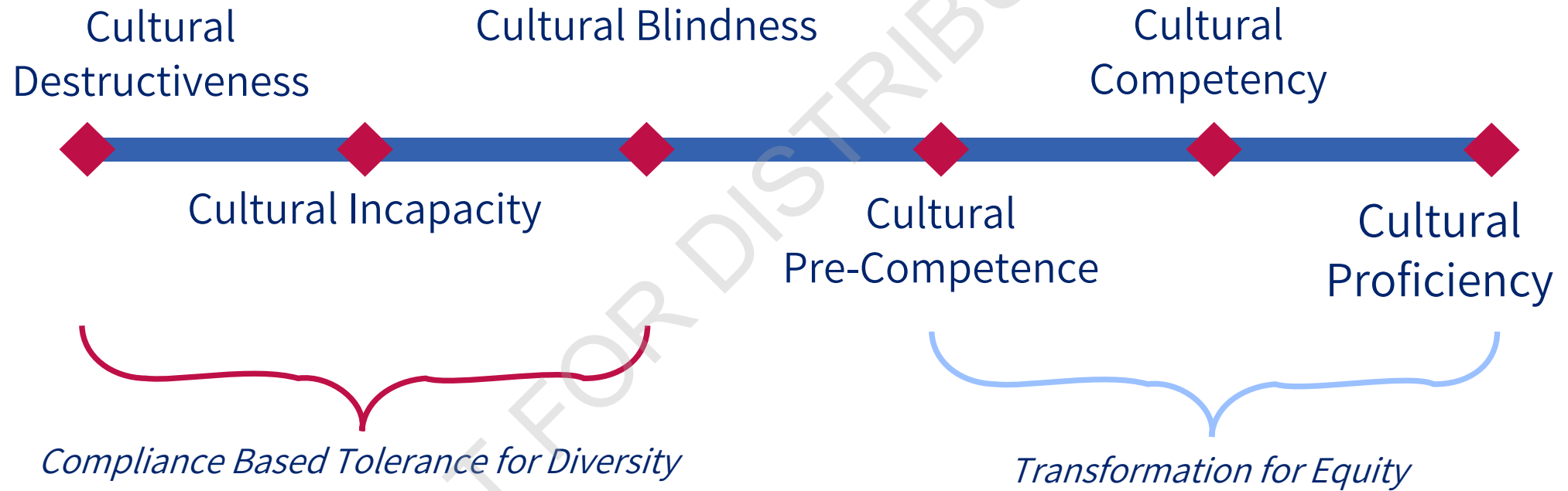
## Individual

- Awareness of one's own worldview
- Developing positive attitudes toward cultural differences
- Willingness to accept and respect cultural differences
- Gaining knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews
- Incorporating knowledge into interactions across cultures

## Organizational

- Defined values and principle
- Behaviors, attitudes, policies, and structures that allow support effective cross-cultural communication
- Capacity to acquire and apply cultural knowledge
- Managing dynamics of difference
- Adapting to cultural contexts

# Cultural Competence Continuum



# Cultural Competence Stages

1

## **CULTURAL DESTRUCTIVENESS**

Attitudes, policies, structures, and practices within a system or organization that are destructive to a cultural group

2

## **CULTURAL INCAPACITY**

Lack of systemic and organizational capacity to respond effectively and efficiently to the needs, interests, and preferences of culturally and linguistically diverse groups

3

## **CULTURAL BLINDNESS**

Expressed philosophy of viewing and treating all people the same

# Cultural Competence Stages

4

## **CULTURAL PRE-COMPETENCE**

A level of awareness of an institution or organization's own strengths and weaknesses in order to effectively respond to culturally and linguistically diverse populations

5

## **CULTURAL COMPETENCE**

A demonstration of acceptance and respect for cultural differences

6

## **CULTURAL PROFICIENCY**

Culture is held in high esteem and is the foundation that guides all organizational practices and endeavors

# Trauma and Culture

**A trauma-informed approach refers to the manner in which an institution thinks about and responds to those who have experienced or may be at risk of experiencing trauma.**

- Anyone can experience trauma and reactions vary from person to person
- Culture influences how an individual interprets and assigns meaning to trauma
- Practitioners must understand trauma-informed practices in relation to cultural differences
- Trauma-informed institutions have a culture that incorporates a thorough understanding of trauma-informed principles and practices
- Offering IR is one way to move toward trauma-informed practices



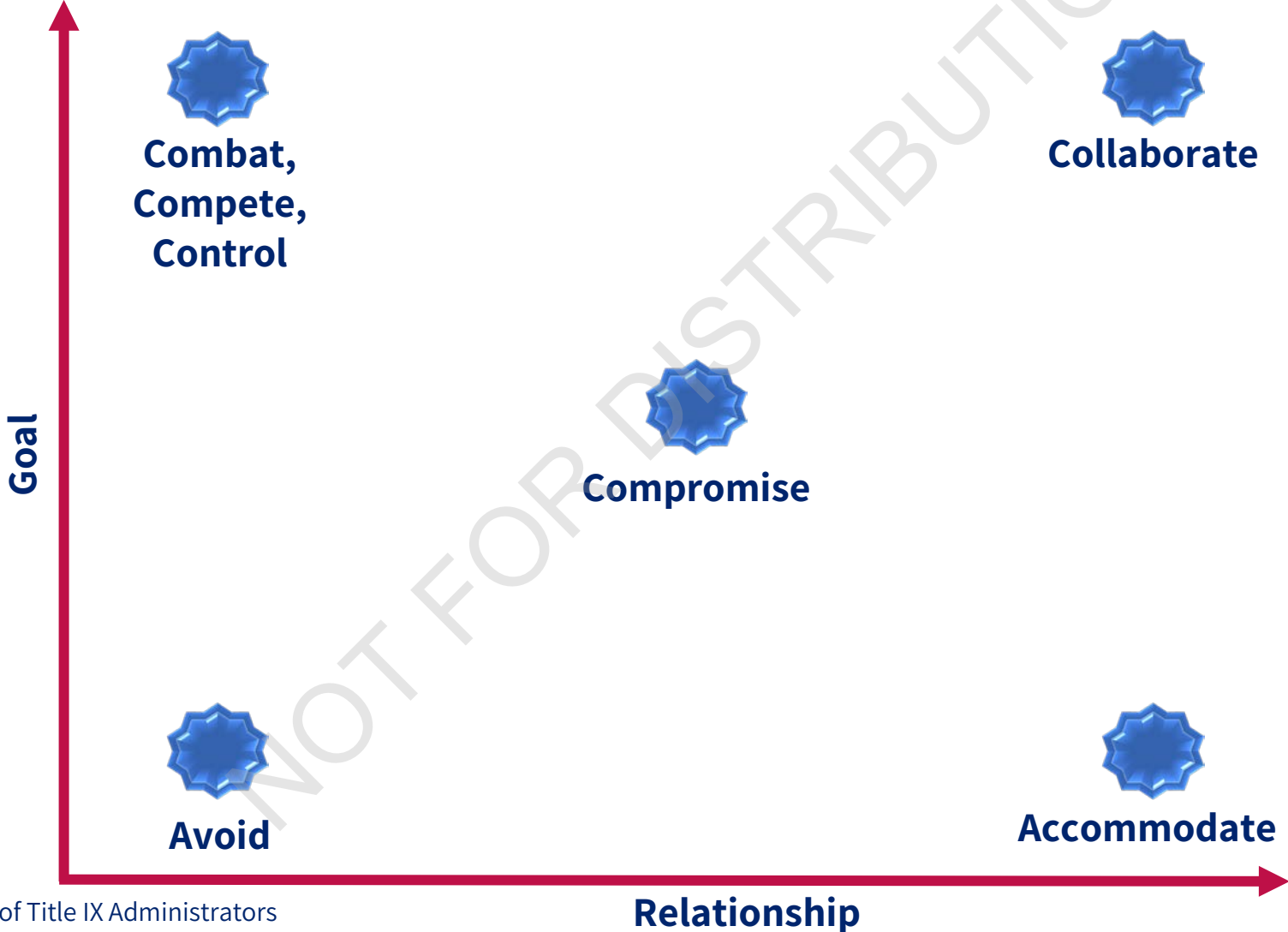
# Dynamics of Sex- and Gender-Based Violence

- Culture affects how individuals view and experience gender-based violence (GBV)
- GBV occurs across many different types of relationships
- Relationships, and the power dynamics of those relationships, have an enormous impact on what strategies will provide the most effective responses
- Cultural aspects that may influence how GBV is experienced and viewed include:
  - Spoken and unspoken rules about behavior
  - Bodily autonomy
  - Fear, shame, and evaluation
  - Laws
  - Religious beliefs

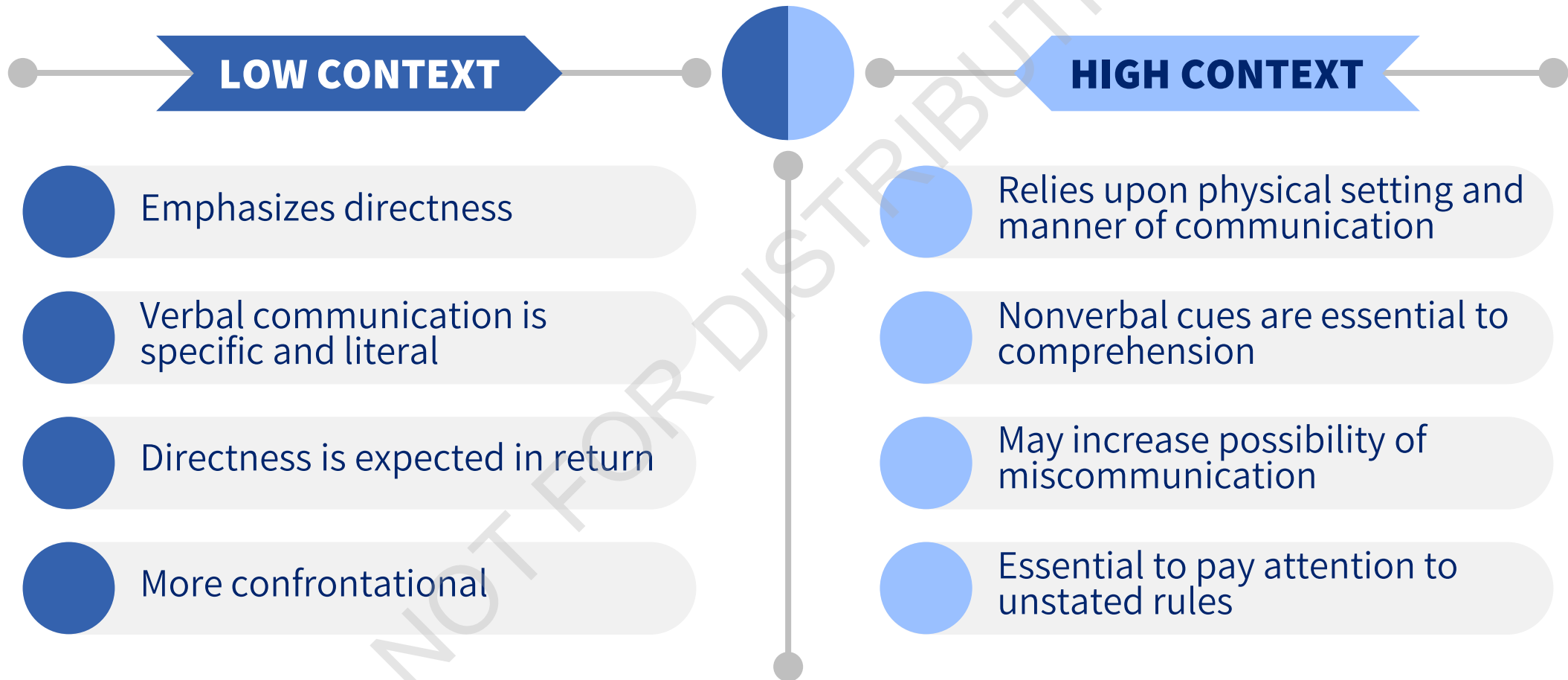
# Culture and Conflict Resolution

- Cultures are embedded in every conflict because every conflict arises within human relationships
- Affects the ways we name, frame, blame, and attempt to tame conflict
- Influences how individuals engage in conflict resolution

# Approaches to Conflict Resolution



# Context and Communication



# Culture and Contracts

- Not all cultures view negotiations and contracts the same way
- Institutions should be cognizant of this if implementing IR processes seek to reach an agreement



# Power and Privilege

- **Power:** right or ability to govern, rule, or strongly influence people or situations, including determining who will have access to resources
- **Privilege:** refers to the unearned benefits given to a member of one social group as a result of the systemic targeting or marginalization of another social group
- Many IR mechanisms require parties to share power rather than use power over others
- Power and privilege can impact the way parties view the facilitators' perceived identities in relation to their role

# Intersectionality

- Framework for understanding how aspects of a person's identities contribute to various disadvantages and privileges
- Recognizes that identity markers do not exist independently, and each informs the others
- How one travels the world
- Some identities may be more salient than others depending upon context



# Intersectionality

## **RACE**

Often a dominant identity when navigating systems

## **GENDER**

More salient for gender diverse individuals encountering lack of knowledge or understanding

## **ABILITY**

Ability status often diminished based on intersecting identities

## **ETHNICITY**

Can create a feeling of being siloed into one group or another

## **SEXUALITY**

Often more dominant for males than females



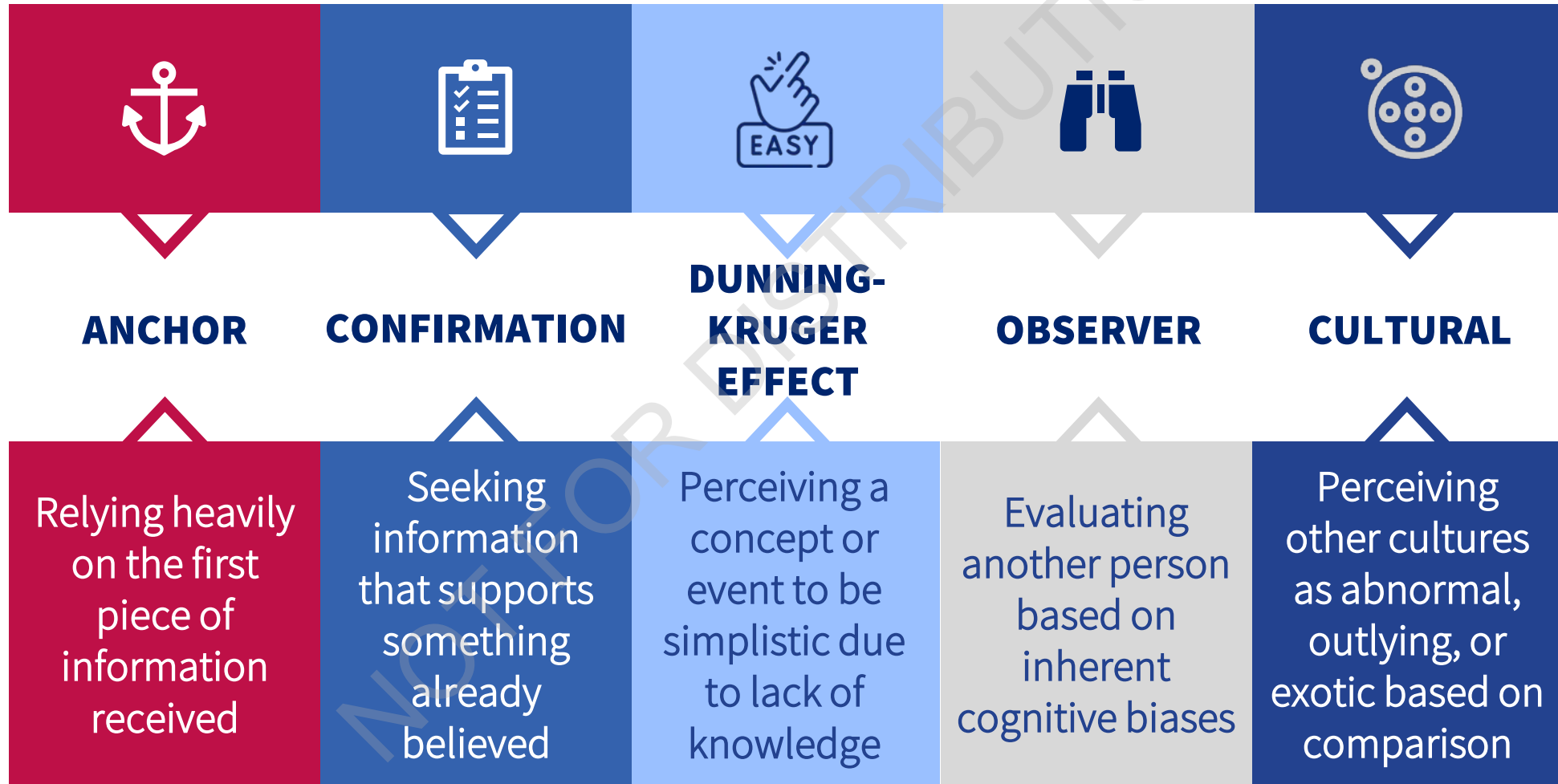
# What is Bias?

- A preference or tendency to like or dislike
- A cognitive process
- Can be a systematic error in our thinking process
- Mental shortcuts
- A thought process developed over time through repeated personal experience
- Implicit or explicit
- Can be intentional, but generally unintentional

# What is Bias?

- Formed from stereotypes, societal norms, cultural experiences, expectations of the people around you
- Can affect our perceptions of Complainants **and** Respondents
- Common pre-conceptions about Complainants and Respondents
- Can affect our perceptions of others within the process or associated with the process

# Types of Bias



# Common Bases for Implicit Bias

- Ability
- Age
- Citizenship status
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Gender Identity/Expression
- Health status
- Marital status
- Mental health status
- National origin
- Parental status
- Physical attributes
- Race
- Religion
- Sexual orientation
- Socioeconomic status

# ATIXA's Informal Resolution Framework

# Supportive Measures Only

- Institutions have been offering this response for years
- Formal complaint not required
- Complainant declines to pursue Formal Grievance Process
- TIXC works with Complainant to determine reasonable and appropriate supportive measures
- May not adversely impact the Respondent

# Supportive Measures Agreement Example

- Outlines specific supportive measures to be implemented

## Example:

- Title IX Coordinator will contact Dr. Simmons (ENG 4301), Dr. Gaines (MAT 2205), and Dr. Lyles (POL 3700) to request they work directly with Complainant regarding academic adjustments appropriate to their courses for the Fall 2023 term. Complainant will be cc'ed on e-mails and is encouraged to work directly with faculty to make specific arrangements.
- Title IX Coordinator will work with Office of the Registrar to facilitate a late withdrawal from HIST 2011 without academic or financial penalty.

# Accepted Responsibility

- Respondent accepts responsibility for policy violation(s) prior to final determination
- TIXC, Complainant, and Respondent agree to sanctions/corrective actions
- No appeal process if all parties agree on IR terms
- Facilitation foundations and appropriate documentation are core to this process
- Document parties' decision to not pursue Formal Grievance Process



# Signed Resolution Agreement Example

- Respondent accepts responsibility for violating the Sexual Harassment policy by repeatedly making unwelcome sexual comments to the Complainant in person and sending sexual content to the Complainant via text message between March and September 2023
- Respondent agrees to attend sexual harassment training provided by Human Resources by December 15, 2023
- Respondent agrees to have no contact with the Complainant unless it is expressly work related
- Respondent will be placed on employment probation for a period of one calendar year

# Alternative Resolution

- Umbrella term that can encompass any mechanism used to resolve a formal complaint that is not supportive measures only, acceptance of responsibility, or the Formal Grievance Process
- May or may not result in formalized agreement between the parties and institution
- Should always include intake, preparation, facilitation, and closure phases
- Five common conflict resolution mechanisms
  - Conflict Coaching
  - Facilitated Dialogue
  - Shuttle Negotiation
  - Mediation
  - Restorative Practices

# Conflict Coaching

- Party, usually the Complainant, works one-on-one with a trained facilitator
- Discuss the behavior they want to address
- Explore strategies for addressing the behavior directly with other party
- Often includes role-playing practice



# Conflict Coaching

## STRENGTHS

- Prevents low-level concerns from escalating
  - Empowers parties and builds conflict resolution skills
- 

## CHALLENGES

- Relies on one party's version of the events
  - Dependent upon initiating party's willingness to engage
- 

## CONTEXT CUES

- Pre-existing relationship
  - Low-level conduct
  - Respondent struggles with social cues
- 

## BEHAVIORS

- Unwelcome communication
- Lingering or lurking
- Repeated requests for dates

# Facilitated Dialogue

- Parties engage in direct conversation about incident/conflict
- Use the assistance of a mutually serving facilitator
- Focus on providing space and framework for communication versus finding agreement





# Facilitated Dialogue

## STRENGTHS

- Allows for dialogue without pressure to reach an agreement
  - Easily adaptable to in-person or virtual settings
- 

## CHALLENGES

- May leave parties feeling the situation is unresolved
  - Can easily turn into debate rather than dialogue
- 

## CONTEXT CUES

- Parties open to direct interaction
  - Conduct may not rise to the level of a policy violation
  - Goal of perspective sharing and increasing understanding
- 

## BEHAVIORS

- Offensive or hate speech
- Hosting/supporting controversial speakers or events
- Not respecting boundaries

# Shuttle Negotiation

- Third-party facilitator acts as a go-between for the parties
- Takes several conversations with each party before resolution is reached

NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION



# Shuttle Negotiation

## STRENGTHS

- Allows for resolution without direct interaction
  - Flexible to accommodate different communication preferences
- 

## CHALLENGES

- Relies heavily upon facilitators accuracy and skill
  - Often does not address underlying feelings and needs
- 

## CONTEXT CUES

- Parties do not want or are restricted from direct communication
  - Goal of sharing perspectives and reaching agreements
  - Parties have ongoing relationship/overlap in education, social, or employment
- 

## BEHAVIORS

- Sexual harassment
- Dating or domestic violence
- Sexual exploitation



# Mediation

- Structured process where mutually serving facilitator fosters an environment of open communication between parties with an intention of reaching an agreement
- Facilitators tend to follow facilitative and/or transformative mediation models for Title IX complaints
- Mediators tend to keep their own views of the conflict hidden



# Mediation

## STRENGTHS

- Seeks to address short- and long-term issues
  - Structured to facilitate developing a tangible agreement
- 

## CHALLENGES

- Assumption that both parties contributed to causing the matter being mediated
  - Not appropriate for matters with unresolved power imbalances
  - Often results in compromise; no party is fully satisfied
- 

## CONTEXT CUES

- Parties willing to be in the same space
  - Limited or no power imbalances
  - Flexibility about what outcome may result
- 

## BEHAVIORS

- Sexual harassment
- Sexual exploitation
- Structural complaints

# Restorative Practices

- Commonly designed as a circle process with a mutually serving facilitator
- May take the form of conferencing or an exchange of statements
- Focuses on identifying:
  - Who was harmed
  - How they were harmed
  - Respondent taking accountability for causing harm
  - Parties determining how Respondent can best repair the harm



# Restorative Practices

## STRENGTHS

- Provide Complainant opportunity to be heard and have questions answered
  - Allow parties to work collaboratively to determine how harm and relationships can be repaired
- 

## CHALLENGES

- Cultural shift for Respondents to take accountability
  - Require highly skilled and experienced facilitator
  - Often time-intensive for preparation and facilitation
- 

## CONTEXT CUES

- Respondent is taking accountability for causing harm
  - Desire to repair a pre-existing relationship
  - Openness to listening to others' experiences and perspectives
- 

## BEHAVIORS

- Sexual exploitation
- Stealthing
- Hazing

# Transformative Practices

- Focuses on addressing issues of injustice and oppression
- Practices are gaining popularity in circumstances in which the community wants to take responsibility for resolution

## Strengths

- Provides means to address community impact beyond involved parties
- Often focuses on harmful behaviors outside of policy scope
- Useful for responding to structural complaints

## Challenges

- Intentionally takes place outside system/policy, which prevents institution from being able to ensure the behavior has been stopped, prevented, and remedied

# Alternative Resolution Process



# Who Should Facilitate?

- Institutions have discretion to determine who can serve as an IR facilitator
- ATIXA recommends:
  - Facilitator pool
  - TIXC does not serve as a facilitator
- Institutions may contract or hire external facilitators
- TIXC will need to determine appropriateness of facilitator preference requests from parties

# Intake

- First step in process
- Best facilitated by the person or pair running the process
- All parties need to participate in individual intake sessions

## Intake Session Goals

- Build rapport
- Evaluate emotional, mental, and physical safety for participation
- Ascertain motivation and goals
- Explain AR process and manage expectations
- Identify support resources for parties
- Determine what would prevent continuation of process for each party



# Facilitator Reminders

- For most parties, this is a new process
- Provide reference materials for parties after the intake meeting
- Facilitator's goal is to make the process or action easier for parties
- Do not take parties' actions personally
- Avoid making assumptions and challenge assumptions the parties make

# Positions, Interests, and Needs

**P**

**Positions:** specific demands; a chosen stance; a solution a upon which a party has decided

Example: “I want the Respondent suspended”

**I**

**Interests:** underlying motivations, hopes, concerns, desires, or worries that led a party to their position; what helps a party choose their solution

Example: “I don’t want to have classes with the Respondent”

**N**

**Needs:** what a party actually must have

Example: safety

# Intake Meeting Structure



**GATHER PARTY'S PERSPECTIVE**



**EXPLORE POSITIONS, INTERESTS, NEEDS, AND FEELINGS**



**ASCERTAIN PARTY'S MOTIVATION**



**ASK WHAT CANNOT BE SHARED WITH OTHER PARTY**



**DISCUSS PARTY'S GOALS**



**OBTAIN WRITTEN CONSENT**

# Evaluation Frameworks

- Pay attention to cues indicating whether a party is in a conducive mental and emotional state for Alternative Resolution participation
- Assessing readiness and amenability for Alternative Resolution is both an art and a science
- Three example frameworks:
  - The 10 D's of Opposition
  - Four Levels of Accountability
  - ATIXA's 1P2P Framework

# 10 D's of Opposition



**DEFLECT**



**DIVIDE**



**DELAY**



**DULCIFY**



**DENY**



**DISCREDIT**



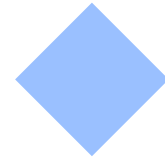
**DISCOUNT**



**DESTROY**



**DECIEVE**



**DEAL**

# Four Levels of Accountability



# ATIXA's 1P2P Framework

Checklist outlining considerations for determining appropriateness and parties' preparedness for Alternative Resolution

## Considerations:

- Parties' amenability to AR
- Likelihood of resolution
- Parties' motivation
- Civility
- Results of violence risk assessment
- Emergency removal implications
- Complaint initiation
- Facilitator skill
- Emotional investment
- Rationality
- Parties' goals
- Resources

# **ACTIVITY: David and Andrea Part II**



# Intake with David

David explained that he started dating Andrea in high school, and they came to college as a couple. During their sophomore year, David proposed, and Andrea accepted. They moved in together in an off-campus apartment for their junior year. However, at the end of their junior year their relationship became strained, and they started arguing on a regular basis. David shared that he decided to end the relationship over the summer and moved into an apartment with friends. David stated that he does not want to have any further contact with Andrea and there is no reason she should be continuing to contact him (i.e. no shared children, pets, property, etc.). He requests a No Contact Order and is considering whether to file a formal complaint.

# Conversation with Andrea

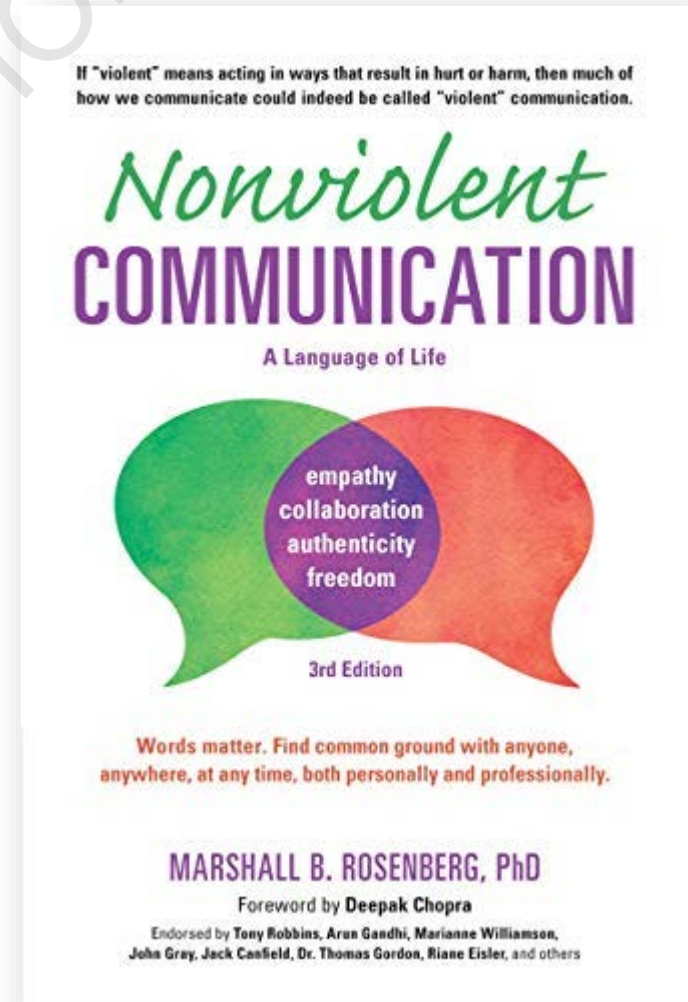
Andrea provides similar information regarding the history of her relationship with David. She explains that when they were together, she consented to allowing David to take nude photographs of her multiple times. Andrea has heard a rumor that David still has the photos and has commented to mutual friends that he plans to post them online. Andrea has been trying to speak to David about deleting the photos, but he refuses to answer or return her calls or speak to her in person. Although Andrea was not happy about the relationship ending and would be open to rekindling things with David, all she really wants at this point is for David to delete the photos.

# Preparation Meetings

- Number and structure of preparation meetings depends on Alternative Resolution mechanism and parties
- Facilitator should go into each meeting prepared with what they want to achieve during the meeting
  - Alternative Resolution can take unexpected turns and facilitators should not plan for a particular outcome
- Parties may not get to a place where they are ready to interact

# Nonviolent Communication (NVC)

- Method of communication claimed to increase empathy and improve quality of life
- Four stages include:
  - Observations
  - Feelings
  - Needs
  - Requests/Offers



# Additional Preparation Questions

## Complainant

- What would you like the Respondent to learn as a result of this incident?
- What would help you feel confident that this behavior will not happen again?
- Do you want to be able to have contact with the Respondent following this incident?
- What did you need in the moment that the incident was happening?

## Respondent

- What do you think you need to learn as a result of this incident?
- Are there any underlying issues that contributed to your choices and behaviors that need to be addressed?
- What would help you feel confident that this behavior will not happen again?

# Facilitation

1

## Opening

- Introductions
- Process explanation
- Guidelines/ground rules

2

## Connection and Communication

- Exchange of information between parties
- Reflections and responses

3

## Developing Agreements

- Requests and offers
- Negotiation
- Expectations for non-compliance

4

## Closing

- Conversation recap
- Review and finalize any agreements

# **ACTIVITY: David and Andrea Part III**

# Positions, Interests, and Needs

## David



I want Andrea to leave me alone



We aren't in a relationship; there is no reason for us to communicate



Space, independence

## Andrea



David needs to delete the photos



He has no reason to keep the photos and I don't want them being shared

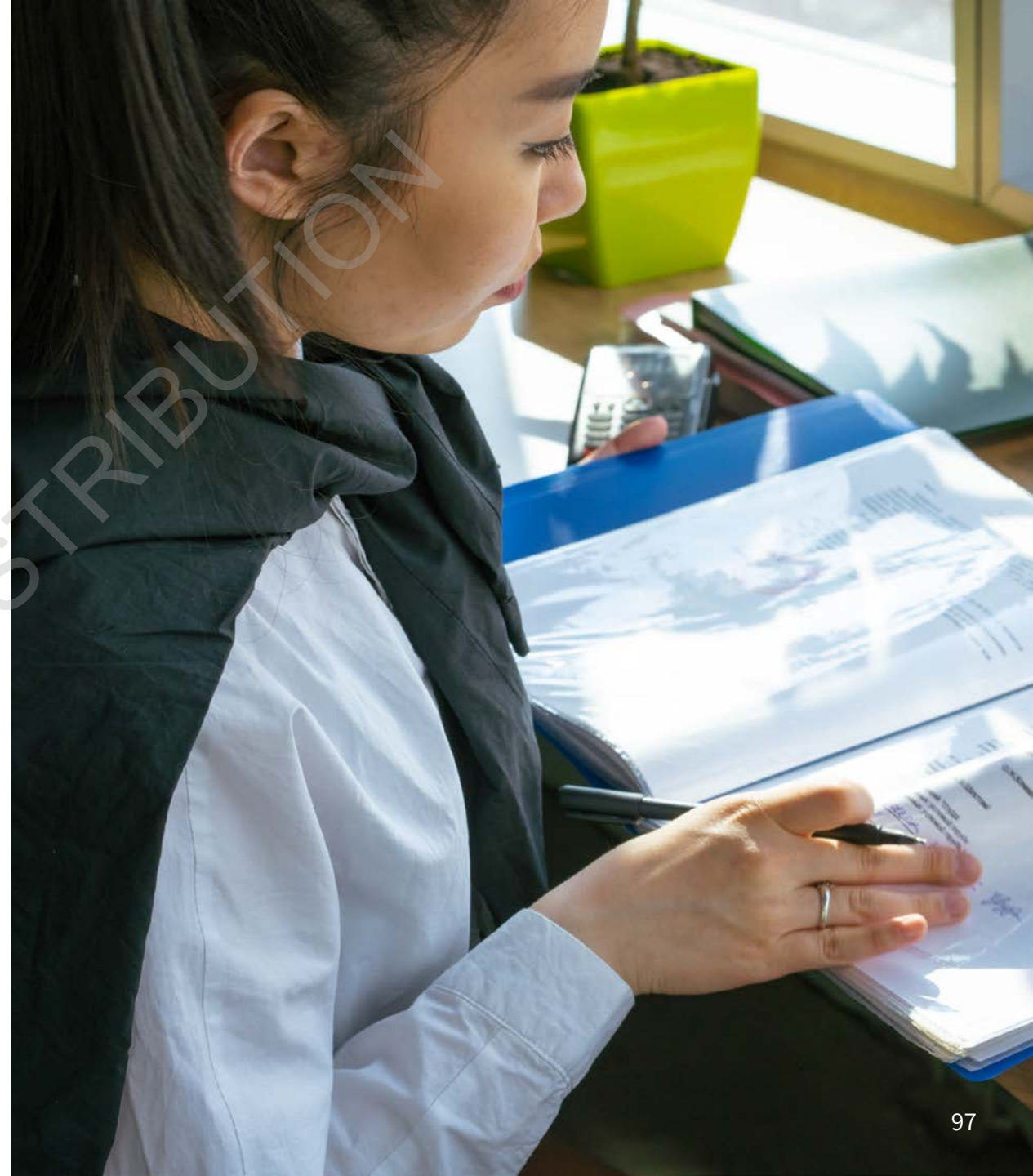


Integrity, cooperation, respect



# Process Closure

- Involves responsibilities for TIXC and the facilitator(s)
- ATIXA recommends the TIXC approve any agreements before they are finalized
- Process closure includes:
  - Written agreements
  - Follow-up with the parties
  - Facilitation debrief
  - Documentation



# **Institutional Support for Alternative Resolution**

# Interest and Openness

- Identify existing conflict/alternative resolution processes at the institution
- Determine if there are community-based resources in the area
- Consider whether the institution's culture and speak to support for AR processes

# Involving Stakeholders

- President
- Executive Team/Cabinet-level Administrators
- Legal Counsel
- Title IX Coordinator
- Clery Act Compliance Coordinator
- Prevention/Sexual Health Educators
- Human Resources
- Faculty/Staff
- Student Conduct
- Residence Life
- Student Activities
- Student Government
- ADA/Section 504 Coordinator
- Campus Safety/Law Enforcement
- Faculty/Staff Senate
- Unions

# Program Proposal

- Understand the process to submit new program ideas at the institution
- Consider proposing a pilot

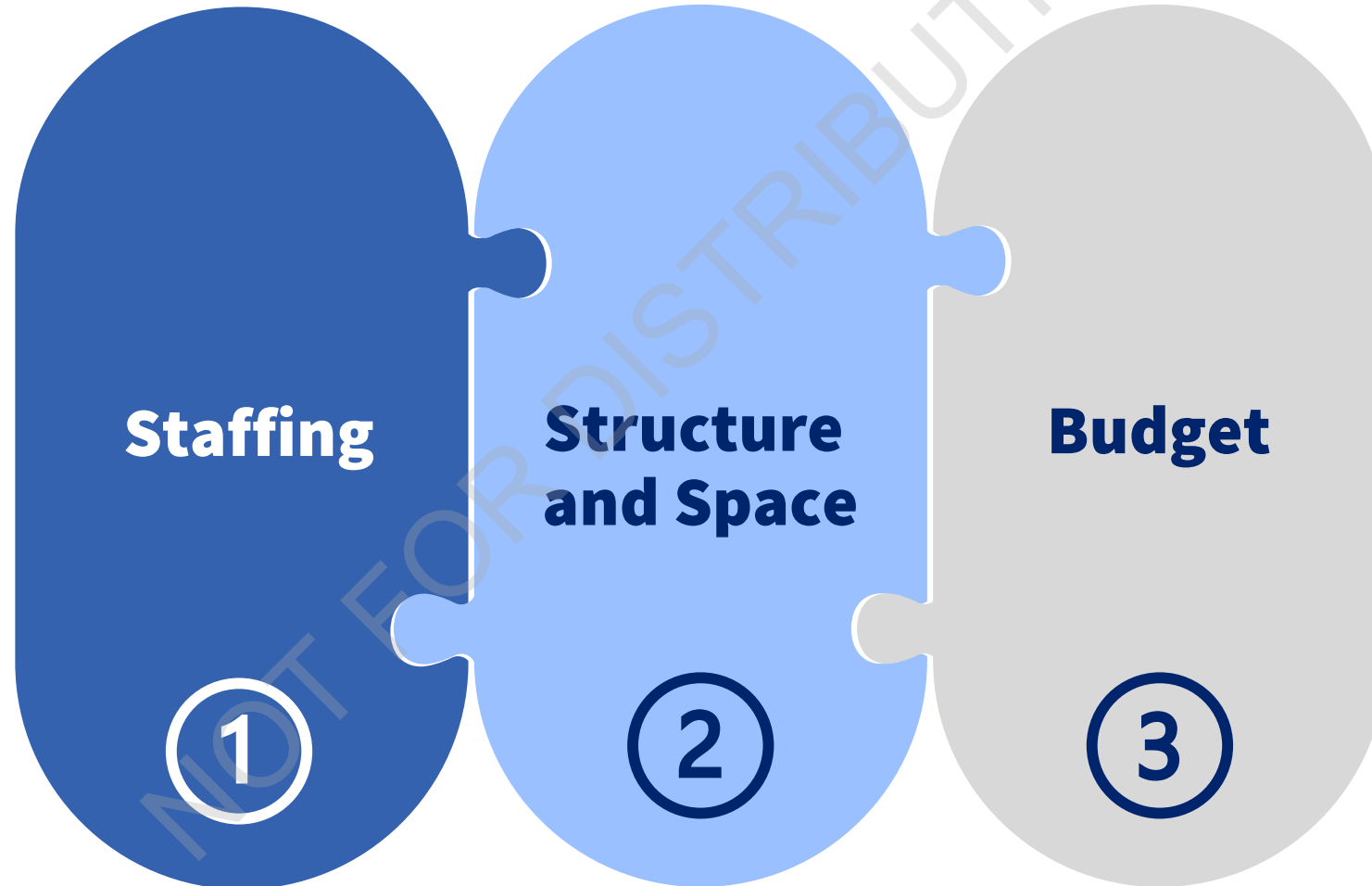
## Formal Proposal

- Cost, resources, human resource analysis
- Space allocation
- Policy changes
- Benchmarking data

## Informal Proposal

- General information gathering
- Meeting with stakeholders
- Find champions

# Resource Considerations



# Policy Considerations

- Determine if institutional policy allows for AR
  - Permissiveness
  - Deal breakers
- Determine whether institutional support exists for AR and to review/amend policies
- Know your institutional processes to review/amend policies
  - Process
  - Approval
  - Legal counsel review

# Training Considerations

Scope

Training  
Costs

Time

Ongoing  
Training



# Process Considerations

# Setting the Tone

**Practitioners need to consider the tone they hope to set for IR in their process**

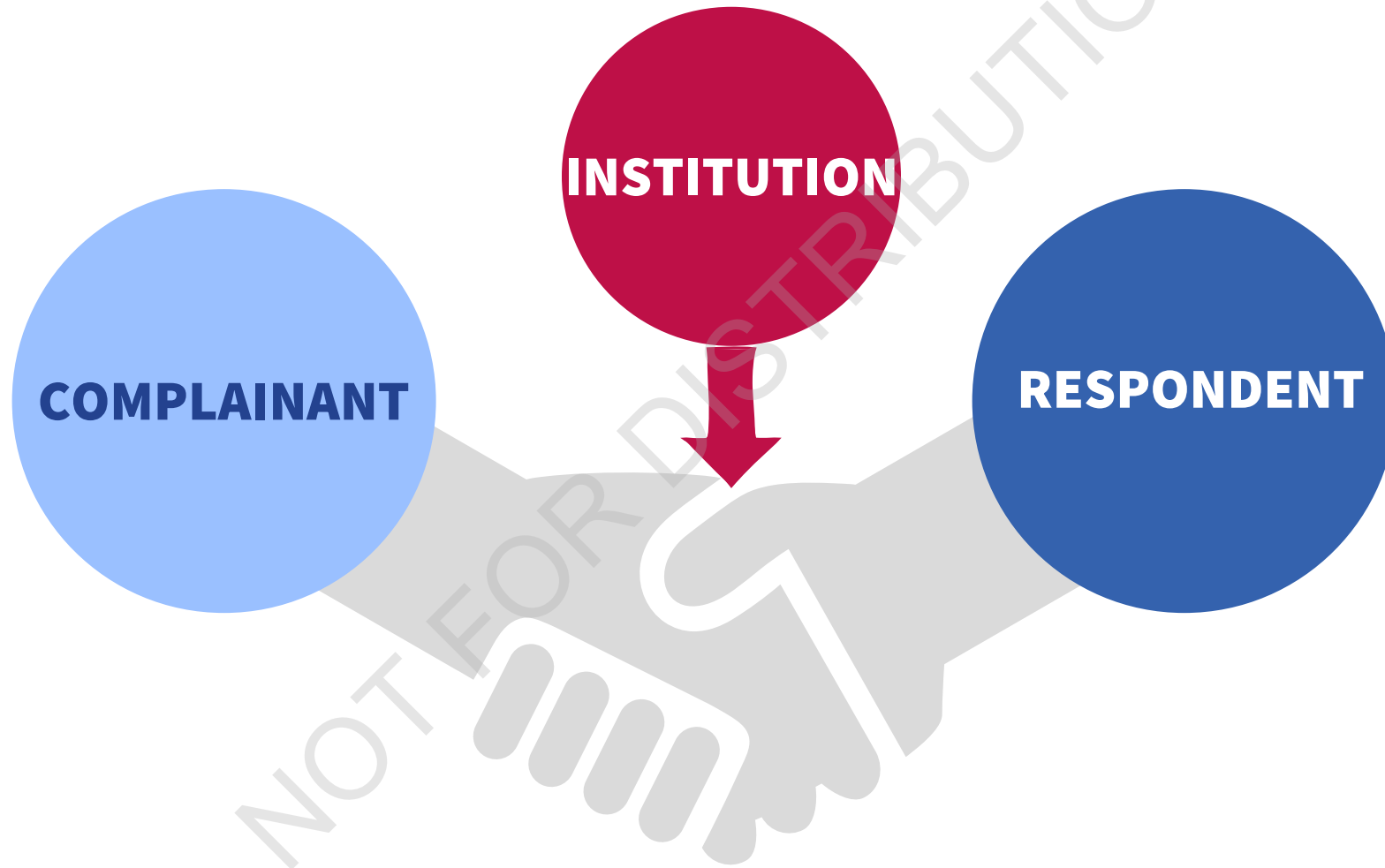
- Participant experience from intake through resolution
- Policy language
- Print and web-based materials
- Presentations and training
- On- and off-ramps
- Structural complaint resolution mechanisms

# Facilitation Structuring

- Institutions need to determine which of the IR and AR options they will offer
- Identify and train facilitators
- Determine the types of complaints the school will resolve with internal vs. external facilitators



# Three-Party Model



# Process Structure Considerations

- ATIXA recommends the TIXC have authority to disapprove a proposed resolution
  - Responsible for ensuring equity within a complaint and across complaints
  - Requirement to stop, prevent, and remedy
- Institutions need clearly defined deal breakers
- Accurate understanding of the support and comfort level in applying alternative resolution to in Title IX complaints

# Confidentiality vs. Privilege vs. Privacy

**1**

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Those who receive reports from students (and sometimes employees) and need not report to the TIXC

**2**

## **PRIVILEGE**

A legal obligation, such as an attorney giving advice in an attorney/client relationship or clergy providing pastoral advice

**3**

## **PRIVACY**

Only disclosing the allegations to those who need to know, but cannot guarantee confidentiality

# Privacy Considerations

- Who is invited to participate?
- Non-Disclosure Agreements
  - All parties sign?
  - Advisors
  - How to address a violation of the agreement?
    - Violation by non-affiliated parties?
- Mandatory Reporting
  - Abuse of minor/elder/person with a disability
  - Threats of harm to self
  - Threats of harm to others

# Advisors

- Institutional policy determines if Advisors are permitted during IR
- Assess whether institutional policy allows Advisors in other similar processes
  - Full participations/representation vs. limited role
  - Representative for institution
- Only primary parties should be permitted to have Advisors in circle or community processes
- Clearly explain Advisor role and expectations in published policy/procedures and first Advisor interaction



# Notetaking

- Facilitators often take notes to help all participants track issues and agreements during the IR process
- Institutions must determine if facilitator notes are maintained, and if so, by whom and how



# Documentation: Resolution Agreements

- Once approved by TIXC: clear communication regarding what is required of parties, if anything
- Complaint File Documentation
  - Formal Complaint
  - Communication with the parties
  - Signed participation agreements
  - Rationale for how the school's response is not deliberately indifferent
  - Verification of any action items completed or pending
  - Memorialize any confidential/non-confidential understandings established
- Document sufficient details to allow for an evaluation of a possible pattern in the event of a future complaint

# Information Admissibility in Formal Grievance Process

## Institutional choice to allow information from an AR to be used in the Formal Grievance Process

- A flexible approach allows institutions options and sets expectations with parties involved in each complaint
- Respondents may hesitate to participate without some assurance that information they share won't be used against them in another venue
- Confidentiality agreements/NDAs and/or information sharing expectations can be part of the agreement to participate
- Carve out for “admissions” about one's own conduct vs. a blanket statement covering all information discussed in IR

# ATIXA's Recommended Policy Language

**“Under circumstances approved by the TIXC, the parties may agree, as a condition of engaging in Informal Resolution, that statements made, or evidence shared, during the Informal Resolution process will not be considered in the Formal Grievance Process unless all parties consent.”**

# Record Retention

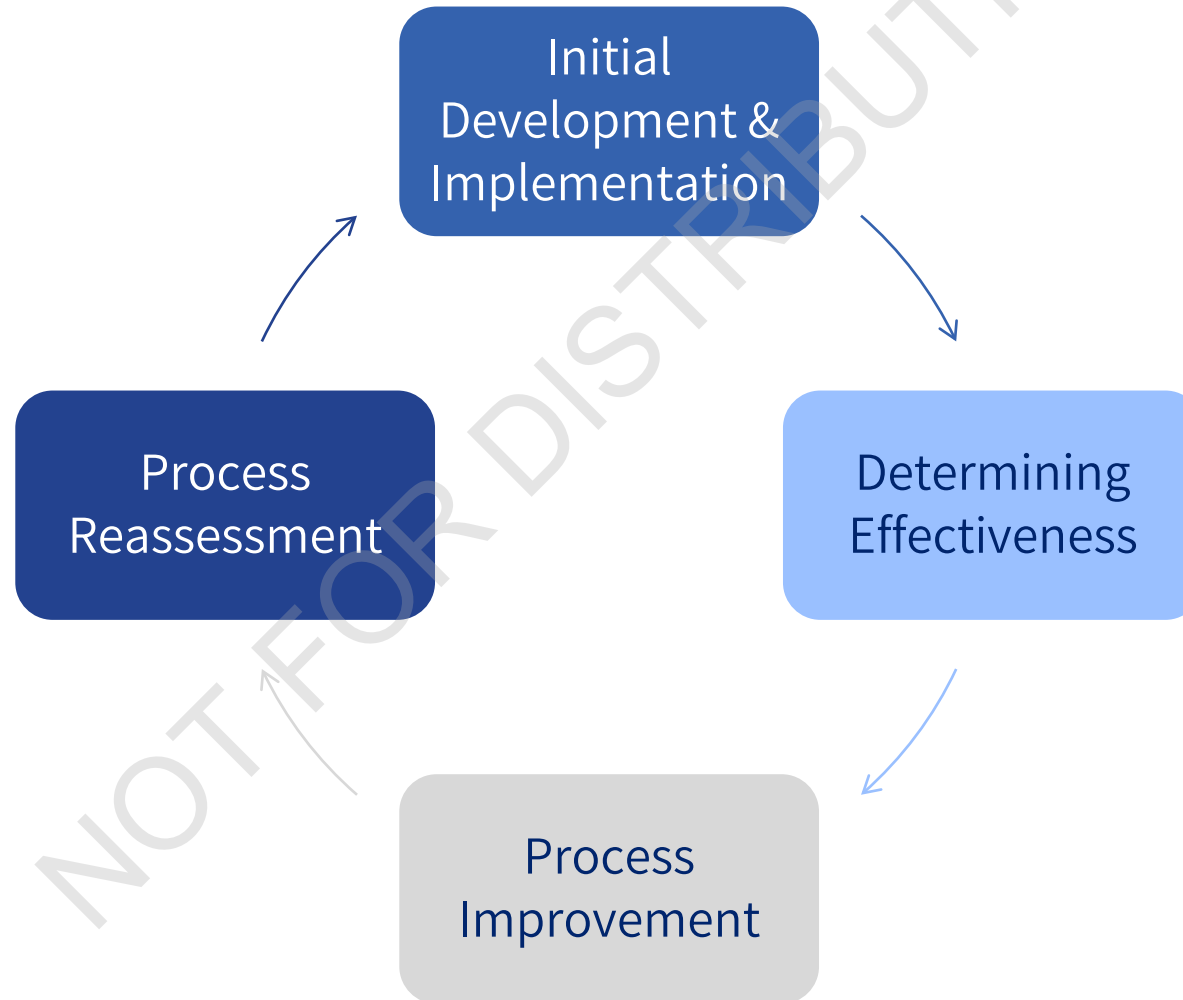
- Title IX complaints and associated information must be maintained for a minimum of **seven** (7) years
  - Informal Resolutions are part of this recordkeeping requirement
- Schools need to determine:
  - Who maintains records
  - How records are retained
  - Whether to create and maintain recordings of AR meetings
  - Whether parties may request to review or amend records
  - Protocol for releasing records as requested and permitted by law

# Unsuccessful Resolution

- Facilitators or TIXC should meet with the parties individually to discuss why AR was unsuccessful
  - Gauge ability and willingness to revisit outcome and continue AR process
- Refer the complaint back to the Formal Grievance Process to resume or start as appropriate
  - Complainant has option to withdraw the complaint
- For unapproved proposed resolutions, TIXC must provide a rationale

# Assessing Effectiveness

# Life Cycle of a Program





# Determining Effectiveness

- Demonstrate IR effectiveness through qualitative and quantitative data

## Qualitative Data Sources

**Parties**

**Facilitators**

**Stakeholders**

- Post-facilitation surveys
- Informal check-ins
- Formal closure interviews

# Determining Effectiveness

## Quantitative data for benchmarking and trend analysis:

- Recidivism rates
- Retention rates
- Adherence to agreements
- Number of complaints eligible for IR compared to the number that chose IR
- Successful vs. unsuccessful IR
- Process length for IR vs. Formal Grievance Process
- Staff time spent per complaint on IR vs. Formal Grievance Process

# Process Improvement

Data collection will inform improvements for a variety of areas:

- Facilitator training and education
- Staffing and resource allocation
- Process/policy updates
- Community awareness
- Benchmarking best practices



# Process Reassessment

- **Self-Assessment** completed by individuals within the TIX office
- **External review** conducted by consultants or peer reviewers with substantive experience and expertise in IR
- **Internal review/audit** conducted within the institution but not the TIX office
- Benchmarking best practices
- Complaint statistics and program data

**Questions?**

NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION



Association of  
Title IX Administrators

LIMITED LICENSE AND COPYRIGHT. By purchasing, and/or receiving, and/or using ATIXA materials, you agree to accept this limited license and become a licensee of proprietary and copyrighted ATIXA-owned materials. The licensee accepts all terms and conditions of this license and agrees to abide by all provisions. No other rights are provided, and all other rights are reserved. These materials are proprietary and are licensed to the licensee only, for its use. This license permits the licensee to use the materials personally and/or internally to the licensee's organization for training purposes, only. These materials may be used to train Title IX personnel, and thus are subject to 34 CFR Part 106.45(b)(10), requiring all training materials to be posted publicly on a website. No public display, sharing, or publication of these materials by a licensee/purchaser is permitted by ATIXA. You are not authorized to copy or adapt these materials without explicit written permission from ATIXA. No one may remove this license language from any version of ATIXA materials. Licensees will receive a link to their materials from ATIXA. That link, and that link only, may be posted to the licensee's website for purposes of permitting public access of the materials for review/inspection, only. Should any licensee post or permit someone to post these materials to a public website outside of the authorized materials link, ATIXA will send a letter instructing the licensee to immediately remove the content from the public website upon penalty of copyright violation. These materials may not be used for any commercial purpose except by ATIXA.