

Case Studies

Case 1

In a university course, a group project is assigned to a team of four students. The project is complex and requires a deep understanding of the subject matter. Mia, one of the team members, finds herself struggling with the material. As a result, her contributions to the project are less substantial compared to her peers. The other team members notice Mia's challenges.

Discussion:

1. If you were Mia, what would you do and why? If you were the team leader, how would you respond to Mia's situation? **You may consider the strategies for conflict resolution and fostering a supportive teamwork environment; and the balance between being compassionate and maintaining academic outcomes.
2. How would team members' reactions towards Mia, whether inclusive or exclusive, impact the overall dynamics and performance of the group? Discuss the potential short-term and long-term effects on both Mia and the team.
3. Reflect on a time when you were in a similar situation as either Mia or one of her team members. Would you react differently now?

Case 2

Daniel hates speaking up in groups, because he worries that his ideas aren't good enough to share. So, Daniel often chooses to stay silent and go with the flow in group discussions and projects. This semester, Daniel had a very challenging group project and today was their first group meeting. Daniel, as always, didn't speak up, and the team leader Jenny noticed.

Discussion:

1. How did Jenny notice Daniel's struggles in speaking up in the group? Try to specify the behaviors Daniel might have displayed.
2. If you were a team member of Daniel, how would you feel, and what actions would you take upon observing Daniel's reluctance to speak up?
3. Reflect on a time when you were in a similar situation as either Daniel or one of his team members. How could you respond to the situation with compassion?

Case 3

Amy and Kelvin are classmates and have worked together before. This time, Amy was paired with Kelvin again in a group project, and they quickly decided among themselves the content they're writing and the work allocation. As the deadline approached, Amy realized that Kelvin still hadn't started working on his part and responded less and less to her messages.

Amy was anxious whether they could finish their work on time, so she repeatedly texted him to check on his progress. Yet, Kelvin didn't respond. On the presentation day, Amy realized that Kelvin still hadn't done his work, so she immediately worked on Kelvin's part and went on presenting without him.

After the presentation, Amy was angry and texted Kelvin on how irresponsible he was to the entire group. Yet, Amy later knew Kelvin couldn't complete his work because of family issues.

Discussion:

1. If you were Amy, how might your reactions to the situation have differed if Kelvin told you he couldn't finish his work in advance? Please also discuss in what ways Amy can adjust her communication with Kelvin to foster a collaborative dynamic.
2. What are the possible reasons that Kelvin did not tell Amy what happened? If you were Kelvin, how could you cultivate a more open line of communication?
3. In what ways can compassion be incorporated in this situation? Try to consider both Kelvin and Amy's perspectives.
4. Reflect on a time when you were in a similar situation as either Amy or Kelvin. How did you navigate the challenges you faced, and what insights did you gain from it?

Case 4

In a university group project, there is a groupmate named Alex who exhibits domineering behaviors. Alex constantly monopolizes group discussions, talks excessively, and displays a high level of pride in his own ideas and contributions. To avoid argument, the group members ignore Alex's behavior and allow him to continue dominating the discussions, despite feeling intimidated and overwhelmed. Some groupmates then showed a lack of active participation, and the group's dynamics became more and more imbalanced, resulting in a loss of diverse perspectives.

Discussion:

1. If you were a team member in this scenario:
 - a. How would you interpret Alex's behavior? What cues might lead you to perceive it as domineering or otherwise?
 - b. How could you foster a more inclusive and collaborative environment within the team while ensuring that diverse perspectives are valued?
2. Considering Alex's continued dominance even after other members have expressed compassion for him, what alternative actions can be considered to address his behavior while maintaining a supportive atmosphere within the group?
3. Reflecting on a time when you have experienced or witnessed a similar situation in a group project:
 - a. How was it handled (e.g., ignoring or addressing the domineering behavior) and what were the consequences?
 - b. (If wasn't addressed) How do you think the outcome would have been different with a more proactive approach in promoting equal participation and diverse perspectives?