Speaking Up
WiSci Lunchtime Seminar
accelerate your potential
Why are you here?

My aim is to support you to;

1. Grow the **habit** of having your say (and being heard)
2. Be able to stand your ground
3. Say “no” when you’ve always been the person saying “yes”
4. Negotiate outcomes that are more likely to help your career
Importantly…

“Be yourself; everyone else is already taken.”

-- Oscar Wilde
Always be yourself. Unless you can be a unicorn. Then always be a unicorn.
Delegations – who gets what?
• What would you do differently?
• What would you say?
• To whom?
• What difference would people see?
• What might be the impact?
Five key strategies:

1. Assertiveness
2. Avoid being caught off guard
3. Positioning an “opposing” idea
4. Choosing the change – and defusion
5. Reinforcing the new behaviour
Assertiveness…

• What is assertiveness?
  – Clear communication
  – Reasonable
  – Expresses self and situation
  – Respects self and others

• What strategies do you know?
Assertive Communication

• Be clear & keep it simple
  – No need to be defensive or apologetic
  – May use humor, charm, honesty
  – Repeat a message if they seem to have “not heard” you

• Avoid ambiguity
  – “I agree with… and I suggest we …”
  – “I’m uncomfortable with …. because…”
  – “I need xyz by tomorrow lunchtime”
  – “I’ll get back to you once I review my existing priorities”

• Recognise their challenge without taking it on
  – “That’s tricky, it’ll be hard for you to get both done.”
  – “I can’t do it, perhaps you could try xyz”.
Assertiveness, some tactics

• Don’t infer that your answer will be yes
  – Avoid encouraging body language, nodding, and encouragers “aha”
  – Avoid asking questions that indicate interest “when do you need that by?”

• Watch your subconscious messages
  – Stand up can signal this is not a sit-down chat
  – Interrupt, so they don’t get into the swing, have invested in bringing you up to speed

• If you sense a request is coming
  – “I can’t take anything new on today”
  – “I know you’re looking for someone to help you with xyz, I can’t, sorry.”
Avoid being caught off guard…

Be prepared!!

- Be able to support your case
- Have ideas to build win-win
Be able to support your case

- Know;
  - Your current priorities
  - Your existing workload and existing contribution
  - Competing timeframes
Have ideas

- Know your goals & how you could contribute in a way that is win-win
- Have ideas on how you could contribute differently
- Be prepared to offer positive ways to reallocate workload
- Have conversations to build support for your ideas
Sometimes it’s hard to put forward an alternate idea so that it is heard.

Three useful tips:
1. Check your mindset
2. Develop helpful framing
3. Respond to objections with exploration
Speaking to be *heard*

1. Check your mindset
   - Focus on the issue as the problem, not the person (be on the same side)
   - Look for what’s possible, that creates benefits for all (win-win)

2. Develop helpful ‘framing’
   - Use language that is neutral rather than emotive/blaming
   - Highlights connection with overall goals / strategy
   - Aspirational targets (eg “build alignment” rather than “avoid conflict”)

3. Respond to objections with exploration of what’s possible
   - Use questions to open up options;
     - “How can we make this happen?”
     - “What will make this worthwhile for you?”
   - Positive Phrases (rather than “but” and “not until”)
     - “I agree and …”
     - “Yes, as soon as…”
Personal reflection…

• What alternate viewpoints have you withheld due to a fear of speaking up?
• When have you had trouble standing your ground?
• Which strategies would have helped?
If you keep on doing what you've always done, you'll keep on getting what you've always got."

-- W. L. Bateman
Change can be uncomfortable

- Saying no can feel stressful / selfish / guilty
- It’s common to have repetitive, negative thoughts and feelings;
  - Anticipating the conflict
  - Imagining how the other party will react
  - Fearing them thinking less of you
  - Feeling sick, tense etc.
  - Thoughts like “I’m not good enough/lazy/stupid”, “I can’t change”, “it’s too hard” etc.
- In most cases, the thoughts and feelings are out of proportion to the issue
Negative thoughts and feelings
Defusion – get less caught up
Values driven behaviour

• ACT*, despite negative thoughts and feelings
  
  – Having strong feelings when you begin a new behaviour is normal, and a sign of change
  
  – **Accept** your feelings / thoughts, make room for them
  
  – The feeling or thought (eg fear) is not the problem, it is our belief about the fear
  
  – **Commit** to meaningful, values driven behaviour

* ACT – Acceptance & Commitment Training (Steven Hayes / Russ Harris)
If you were to speak up…

• What outcomes would be worth the discomfort?

• What feelings might come up?

• What negative thoughts might arise?

• What actions will you take?
Strategy 5:
Reinforcing & habit building

Practice & Experiment

Reflect & Plan
Speaking up...

Putting it into practice;

1. Assertiveness
2. Avoid being caught off guard
3. Positioning an “opposing” idea
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