

Bias Education & Support Team (BEST)

Students impacted by bias can seek support through the Bias Education and Support Team (BEST). BEST members will ensure that bias incidents are properly documented so the University can assess the campus climate on an ongoing basis. BEST members will provide follow-up training and educational opportunities when applicable. We can also explore options for informal resolution in collaboration with the student.

Role and Scope

The role of BEST is supportive and administrative. BEST members ensure student(s) who report their experiences of bias are heard throughout the process and understand available options.

BEST will validate students' feelings and provide information to assist in the following ways:

- Confidentially report concerns about behavior by a member of the University community
- Create a space for students to process their experiences and get support for their decision, even when their decision is not to proceed now
- Identify University resources for matters implicating the University's policies on Civil Behavior in a University Setting and/or Harassment, Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct
- Identify campus and community resources for education and other supportive services
- Coach students through difficult conversations and/or written correspondence
- Facilitate listening sessions and healing circles as the situation necessitates
- Provide educational workshops

At times, staff and/or faculty may reach out to BEST for consultation on student issues. BEST may offer recommendations, though the process is always intended to be student driven. Our primary mission is to focus on students' needs, particularly students with marginalized identities.

The scope of BEST does not include:

- Acting as a disinterested third-party
- Giving legal advice
- Mediating any contractual disputes
- Providing services for issues or matters pertaining exclusively to staff or faculty
- Engaging in educational conversations that we don't deem to be productive, based on assessment and consultation
- Acting in a role in lieu of appropriate University administrative response

Bias Education & Support Team

BEST is comprised of staff members from offices across the University, including Campus and Student Life, the Center for Identity + Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity Programs. BEST members receive extensive training on campus cultures, responding to bias and microaggressions, restorative and transformative practices, and conflict management.

BEST assists the University Dean of Students in documenting and reporting incidents that affect our students. Bias incident data is used to develop educational and outreach programs.

Bias incidents that can be addressed by BEST include any actions that are motivated by bias, even if they do not include the elements required to prove a hate crime or a violation of University policy.

BEST will assist students in determining whether a violation of law or University policy occurred, and will refer students to additional resources. However, BEST cannot initiate disciplinary action or impose sanctions.

See the list of **BEST members** (<https://csl.uchicago.edu/get-help/uchicago-help/bias-education-support-team-best/best-members/>). You may contact any member if you have questions regarding bias or a bias incident.

What is Bias?

Bias is a natural inclination for or against an idea, object, group, or individual. It is often learned and is highly dependent on variables such as a person's socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, educational background, gender expression, gender identity and religion. Biases can be conscious or unconscious – explicit or implicit. In addition, bias can be institutionalized into policies, practices and structures.

What is a Bias Incident?

A bias incident is any act that targets individuals or groups based on perceived or actual identity. To be considered a bias incident, the act is not required to be a crime under any federal, state or local statutes, nor does it have to violate University policy.

Report Bias

The University urges anyone who experiences or witnesses a bias incident to report it to BEST. If you are interested in reporting a bias incident, you can submit a **incident report** (https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofChicago&layout_id=9) or contact a **BEST member** (<https://csl.uchicago.edu/get-help/uchicago-help/bias-education-support-team-best/best-members/>).

How will BEST Respond to My Report?

For all reports containing contact information, a BEST member will contact the reporting person and offer a meeting to discuss the incident in detail and explore a plan for resolution. During this meeting, the reporting person can expect to obtain information about related University policies, procedures, and resources.

BEST may consult with other offices as needed to ensure a proper response. All campus entities will adhere to FERPA regulations when handling reports and information submitted via this website. If the matter is referred for further action by the Dean of Students Office or another appropriate campus entity, the processes for review and action are carried out with the same measure of individual protection.

For information regarding pursuing disciplinary or legal action against anyone subject to University policies, please see:

University's Policy on Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct (<https://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/university-policies/university-of-chicago-policy-on-harassment-discrimination-and-sexual-miscon/>)

BEST Workshops

Request a BEST workshop. (https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofChicago&layout_id=26)

Bystander Intervention for Bias

Bystander Intervention is recognizing a potentially harmful situation or interaction and choosing to respond in a way that could positively influence the outcome. Bystander intervention is a type of training used in educational institutions to prevent sexual assault or rape, binge drinking and harassment and unwanted comments of a racist, homophobic, or transphobic nature.

How to Have Difficult Conversations

Having any kind of conversation is an art and like any art, you need to practice acquiring the skill and ease in having dialogue that involves conflict. This session provides a series of action items to think about and practice before going into conversations. Participants will explore useful concepts, tips, and suggestions to help keep dialogue focused and flowing. This session will also include an opportunity for participants to respond anonymously to a series of questions related to group dynamics and things that facilitate/hinder communication.

Implicit Bias and Microaggressions

Implicit bias is described as thinking and acting negatively towards certain groups without conscious knowledge. Science shows that everyone has implicit biases and that these biases affect how we understand situations, make decisions, and behave. Participants in this workshop will learn how to recognize their own implicit biases, discuss how those biases may impact their decision-making and actions, and develop strategies for ensuring inclusive environments.

Structured Listening Session

This is an opportunity for members of the team to come together and share experiences, with an emphasis on racial and cultural identity, in hopes of deepening understanding, building trust, and moving forward. The session includes an activity where participants are invited to respond (anonymously) to a series of questions about personal experiences and overall team dynamics. The session will also include testimonials – brief remarks from any participants who wish to share their thoughts and feelings – following a debrief of the first activity.

Support and Resources (Including Confidential Resources)

For information regarding support services and additional resources, please consult any of the following:

- **Area Dean of Students** (<https://csl.uchicago.edu/get-help/area-dean-of-students/>)
- **Center for Identity + Inclusion** (<http://inclusion.uchicago.edu/>)
- **Center for Leadership and Involvement** (<https://leadership.uchicago.edu/>)
- **Dean-on-Call** (<https://csl.uchicago.edu/get-help/uchicago-help/dean-on-call-program/>)
- **Equal Opportunity Programs** (<https://voices.uchicago.edu/equity/>)
- **Housing & Residence Life** (<http://housing.uchicago.edu/>)
- **Spiritual Life Office** (<http://spirit.uchicago.edu/>)
- **Student Ombudsperson** (<http://ombudsperson.uchicago.edu/>)
- **Student Disability Services** (<http://disabilities.uchicago.edu/>)
- **UChicago CARES** (<https://equalopportunityprograms.uchicago.edu/cares-home/>)

The following are completely confidential support services:

- **UChicago Student Wellness** (<http://counseling.uchicago.edu/>)
- **Sexual Assault Dean on Call** (<https://csl.uchicago.edu/get-help/uchicago-help/sexual-assault-dean-on-call-program/>)

In case of an emergency or if a crime occurred, please contact:

- **University of Chicago Police Department** (<http://safety-security.uchicago.edu/police/>)

Bias incident data may be used to develop educational workshops and outreach efforts.

Related Links

[BEST Members \(https://csl.uchicago.edu/get-help/uchicago-help/bias-education-support-team-best/best-members/\)](https://csl.uchicago.edu/get-help/uchicago-help/bias-education-support-team-best/best-members/)

[Dean-on-Call Program \(https://csl.uchicago.edu/get-help/uchicago-help/dean-on-call-program/\)](https://csl.uchicago.edu/get-help/uchicago-help/dean-on-call-program/)

[Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct \(https://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/university-policies/university-of-chicago-policy-on-harassment-discrimination-and-sexual-miscon/\)](https://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/university-policies/university-of-chicago-policy-on-harassment-discrimination-and-sexual-miscon/)

[Equal Opportunity Programs \(https://voices.uchicago.edu/equity/\)](https://voices.uchicago.edu/equity/)

[Get Help \(https://csl.uchicago.edu/get-help/uchicago-help/\)](https://csl.uchicago.edu/get-help/uchicago-help/)

[Important Resources: Contact Information \(https://csl.uchicago.edu/get-help/important-resources-contact-information/\)](https://csl.uchicago.edu/get-help/important-resources-contact-information/)

[Report a Bias Incident \(https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofChicago&layout_id=9\)](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofChicago&layout_id=9)

[Report a Concern \(Well-being Check\) \(https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofChicago&layout_id=17\)](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofChicago&layout_id=17)

[Request a BEST Workshop \(https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofChicago&layout_id=26\)](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofChicago&layout_id=26)

[Sexual Assault Dean-on-Call Program \(https://csl.uchicago.edu/get-help/uchicago-help/sexual-assault-dean-on-call-program/\)](https://csl.uchicago.edu/get-help/uchicago-help/sexual-assault-dean-on-call-program/)

[University Policies \(https://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/university-policies/\)](https://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/university-policies/)

Campus and Student Life

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