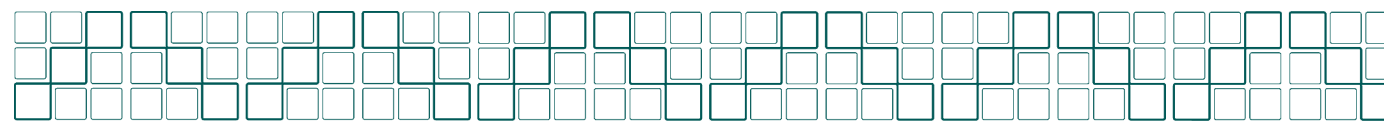


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# Culture Change in the NIH Intramural Research Program

**Dr. Sharon L. Milgram, Director NIH OITE**  
**[Sharon.milgram@nih.gov](mailto:Sharon.milgram@nih.gov) // [www.training.nih.gov](http://www.training.nih.gov)**

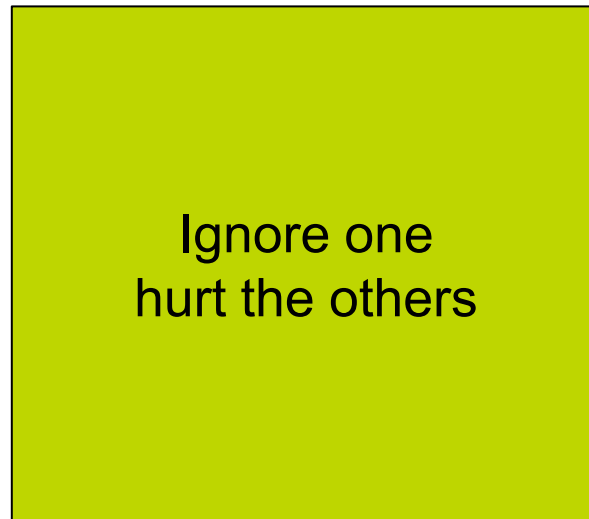




# It Is All Inter-Connected

Resilience  
Well-Being  
Mental Health

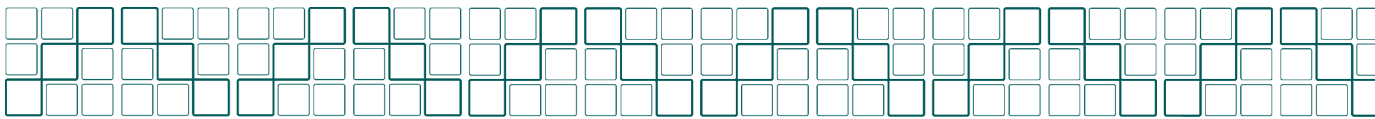
Affinity groups  
DEI training  
Allyship training



Civility Program  
Mentor Training  
RCR-related Activities

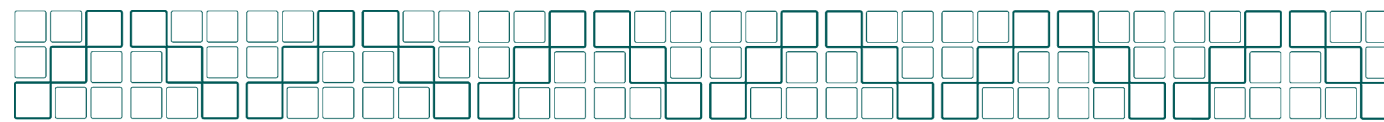


Career Development  
Leadership Training  
Pedagogy Program



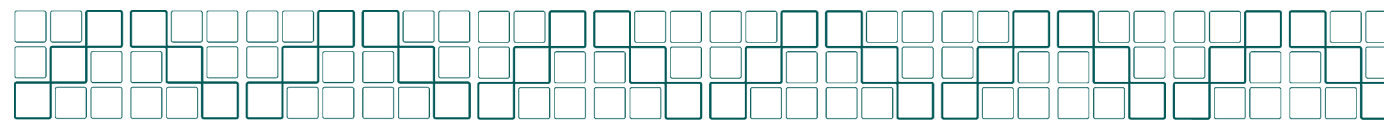
# Six Underlying Principles

- Focus on fostering trust and boundary setting in and out of the research group
- Build a culture of life-long learning, in many areas
- Articulate clear messages and micromessages
- Commit to iterative policy development, checks and balances, carrots and sticks
- Provide additional support to emerging mentors or mentors under stress
- Involve all stakeholders in a culture of shared-responsibility, while acknowledging power differentials and emphasizing the role of leadership



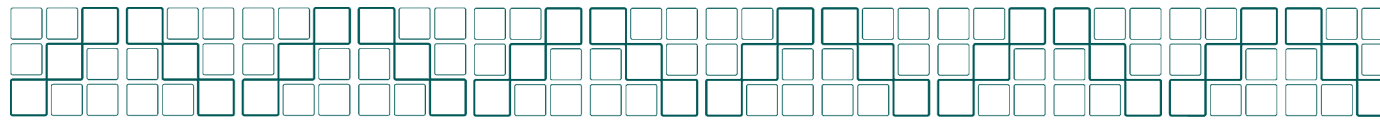
# Promoting Healthy Relationships

- For trainees
  - Becoming a Resilient Scientist (Summer and Fall)
  - Your Rights and Responsibilities as an NIH Trainee
  - Toolkits for professional and mentoring success
- For PIs // other research supervisors
  - Raising a Resilient Scientist series (started in February)
  - An introduction to mentoring in the NIH IRP
  - Toolkits for professional and mentoring success
- Individual advising, coaching, and supported discussions to help resolve issues
  - To address specific issues and more broadly to improve relationships
  - Trying to get away from “shuttle diplomacy”

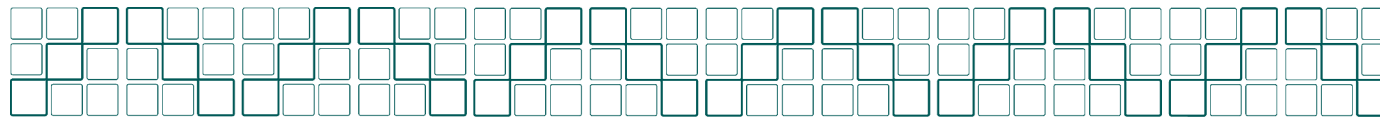


# OITE Wellness and Resilience Program

- Workshops and series
  - Resilient Scientist series and small groups (trained program ambassadors)
  - mental health webinar series each spring
- Small group resilience/wellness activities
  - meditation and journaling skills groups (on-going)
  - skill and support groups (new toolkit topics monthly)
  - Thriving Thursday / Wellness Wednesday / Fun Friday
  - Monthly wellness events (laughter yoga, Zumba, Improv, etc.)
  - affinity group lunches and social activities
  - special events in response to current events as needed
- Individual well-being advising; referrals to outside providers who know our community
- Consultations and limited well-being advising for faculty/research staff
- Campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of caring for ourselves and others
  - I am.....; I Believe....., I Take Care of myself by....



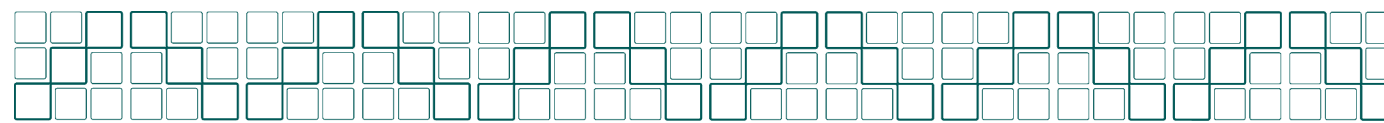
# You Can't Address What You Do Not Know



# OITE Climate Assessment

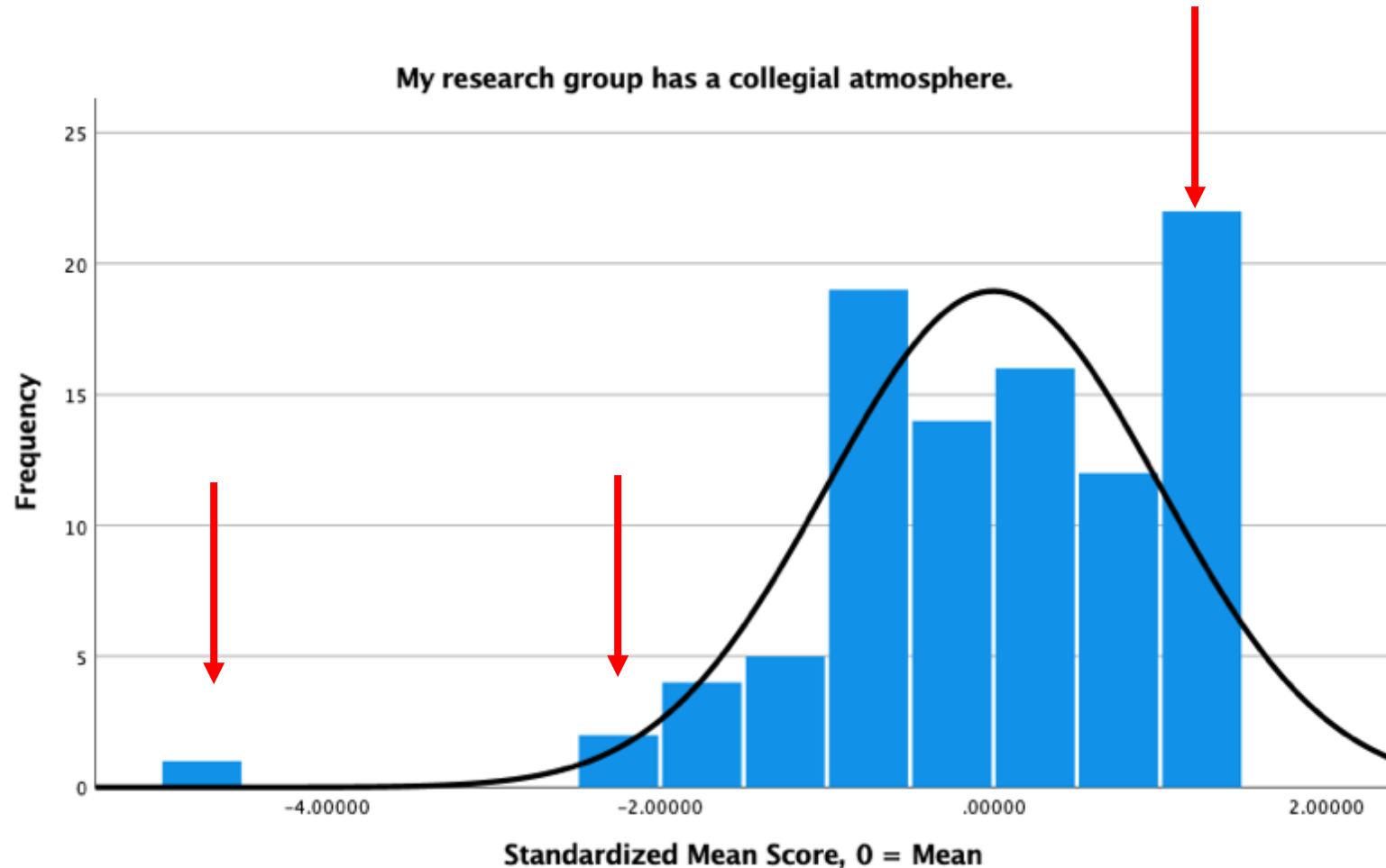
- ☐ Overall lab environment
- ☐ Overall lab working conditions
- ☐ Sense of belonging in research group
- ☐ Witnessing bullying in research group
- ☐ Experience bullying in research group
- ☐ Sexual Harassment in research group
- ☐ PI's conduct (respectfulness)
- ☐ PI's approachableness
- ☐ Sexual harassment by the PI
- ☐ Witnessing bullying by the PI
- ☐ Experience bullying by the PI
- ☐ Mentoring – Providing career opportunities
- ☐ Mentoring – Providing scientific guidance
- ☐ Overall, PI experience
- ☐ Overall, NIH training experience
- ☐ Hours worked on average
- ☐ Weekends/Holidays worked on average
- ☐ Pressure to work on evenings, weekend, holidays
- ☐ Ability to take sick or personal days
- ☐ Occupational depression score

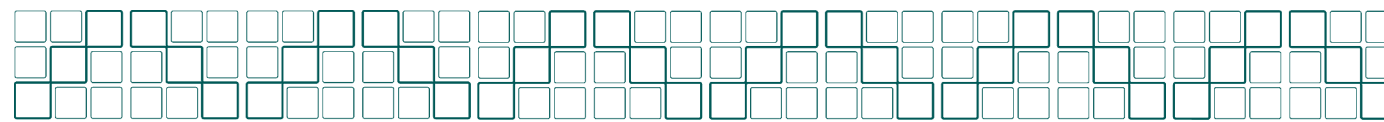
~700 trainees, >11 ICs/Branches



# What the Data Look Like

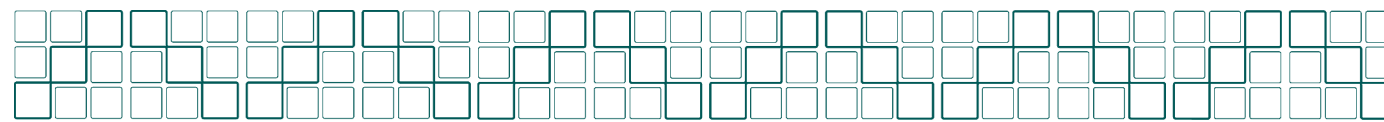
- Example : My research group has a collegial atmosphere.





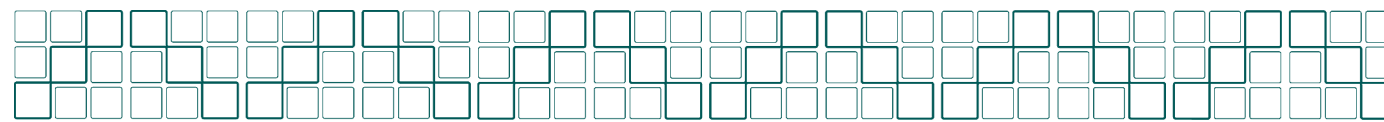
# Some of the Lessons Learned

- The PI's ability to resolve conflict in a calm manner is a significant negative predictor of bullying/harassment in research groups
- Incivility is a learned skill; when the PI bullies/harasses individuals, members of the group are more likely to bully/harass each other
  - People treated poorly as trainees may inadvertently treat their trainees poorly
- Things that correlate with higher rates of occupational depression:
  - toxic work environments
  - healthy environments where people tend to (substantially) over work
- Several mentoring functions strongly associate with positive group cultures; in particular, when the PI **explicitly**...
  - supports career/professional development activities
  - supports trainees to expand their research network
  - has career conversations with trainees (with important boundaries and knowing how to refer)
  - addresses personal (and broader) issues while maintaining boundaries and knowing how to refer
- Interventions can make a (very big) difference



# My Daily Leadership Musing

I hope I am a part of the solution..... I am also a part of the problem. I think this is true for all of us.



# OITE Open-Access Resources

- Becoming a Resilient Scientists (Summer and Fall offerings)
- Raising a Resilient Scientist (happening now; tapes available)
- Mental Health and Well-Being of Biomedical Research Spring Series
- NIH Career Symposium (in a few weeks)
- Join the NIH OITE info listserv: [https://www.training.nih.gov/sas/\\_20/426/](https://www.training.nih.gov/sas/_20/426/)
- OITE on YOU TUBE <https://www.youtube.com/c/NIHOITE>
- Resilient Scientist evaluation is available as a preprint: <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2023.05.02.23289388v4>