



Ombuds Office

How to be Non- Defensive

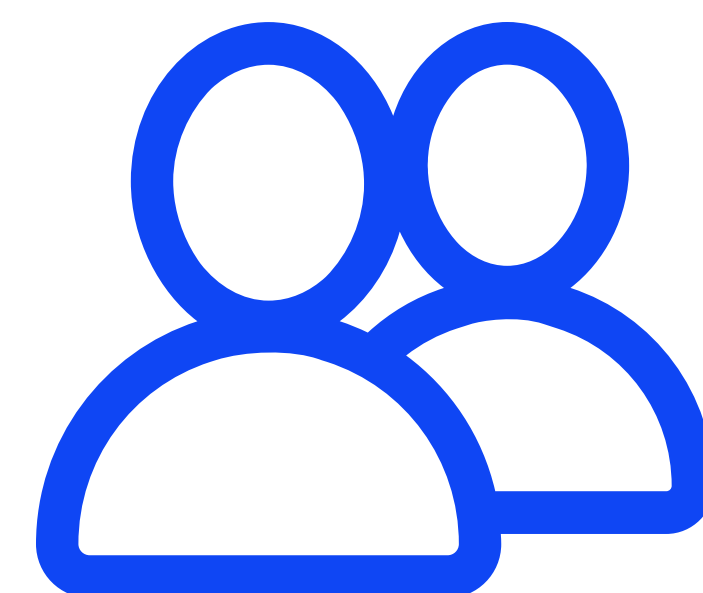
Keep the lines of communication open by responding non-defensively.

Set yourself up

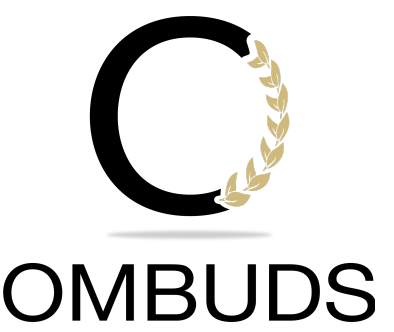
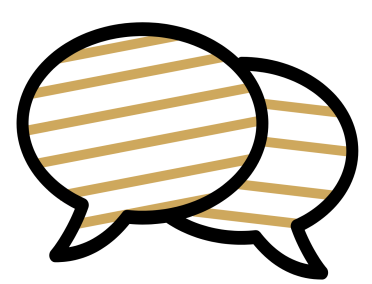
We are all attendants to the greater community at CU. We all have a responsibility for each other's experiences on campus. Ground into your mindset and intention to help you remain non-defensive.



Mindset & Attitude:
you are an attendant
of the community.



Others' struggles and their understanding of their struggles are more important than your answers or reactions.



Plan and Prepare

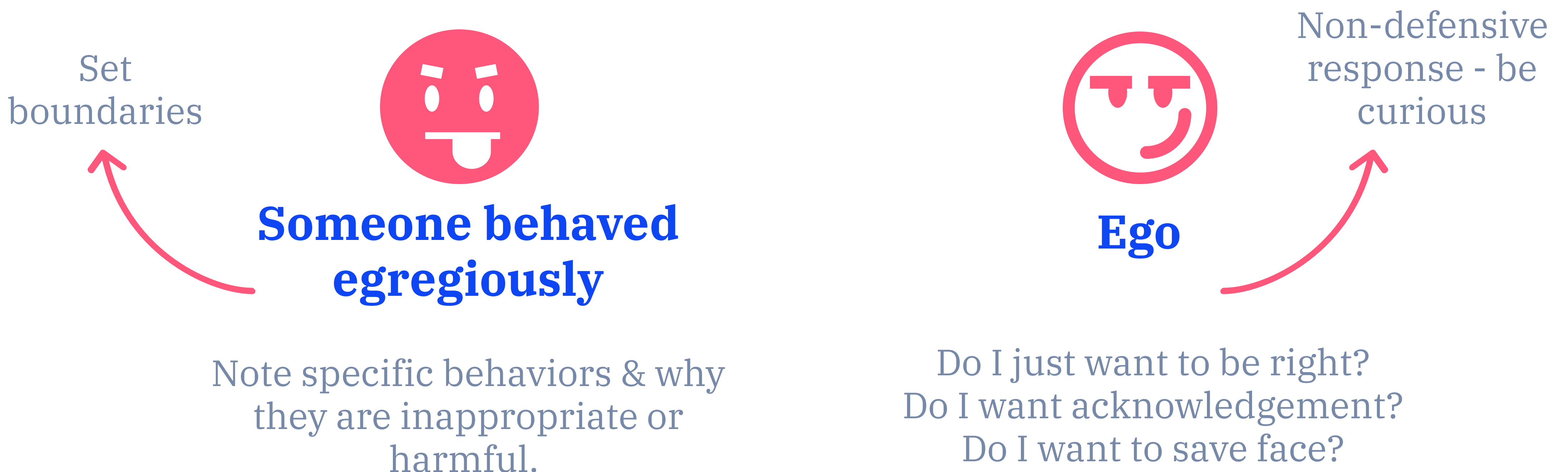
It is hard to know what to do in the moment, especially if you are caught off-guard. Practice phrases and questions you can say instead of reacting defensively. Use the examples on the right or enter some of your own phrases here:

Non-defensive responses

- “Tell me more about why you say/think that.”
- “I think I need to hear more about what you are thinking.”
- “I’m curious, what leads you to ask that question?”
- “That is helpful to hear. What do others think?”
- “This is important to hear. I need a moment to really process what you’re saying.”
- Reflect what you are hearing:
 - “That is really important to you.”
 - “This seems to be really upsetting you.”
- *(Only after you have gathered more information)* “Are you curious about my reasoning for this suggestion?”

Be non-defensive? Or stand up for yourself?

All too often it is our bruised egos that tell us we need to stand up and defend ourselves, not an indication of harm or hurt. Consider where your motivation to be defensive is coming from before you respond.



**A bruised ego can be seen as a gift. It is an internal signal to engage in non-defensive responses... to get curious.*