

Session 3



California Community Colleges

Bias and Risk Perception Factors in Threat Case Management

Date: October 31, 2024 Time: 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Presented by: Monique Mendoza, PhD

Let's keep
connecting...



Add your name, title/role,
and college in the chat

Welcome and Introductions

Jacqueline Alvarez,

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Housekeeping



Chat and Q&A: Please utilize the chat or Q&A function to ask questions throughout.



Closed Captioning (CC): Closed captions are available. Click on the (CC) button to read live captions.



Meeting Materials: Slides and any follow up materials will be provided following the presentation.



Recording: We are recording today's session, and the recording will be made available on the website in the coming weeks.



Dr. Monique Mendoza

- Former Director of Behavioral Intervention Teams in Higher Education and a Trauma 1 Hospital
- Subject Matter Expert in Threat Management and Workplace Violence Prevention
- Licensed Psychologist in California for 12+ years
- Organizational Consultant focused on institutionalizing safe initiatives

During Session Two

- Outlined Methodical Case Intake
- Distinguished between FERPA and HIPAA to reduce silos across the campus
- Reviewed the integral roles CAREs and BITs in threat management
- Introduced steps to develop an internal BIT toolkit



POLL: Vote in Zoom or add your answer to the chat!

*What aspect of **threat assessment** do you find most **challenging**?*

Managing emotional reactions

Determining actual risk level

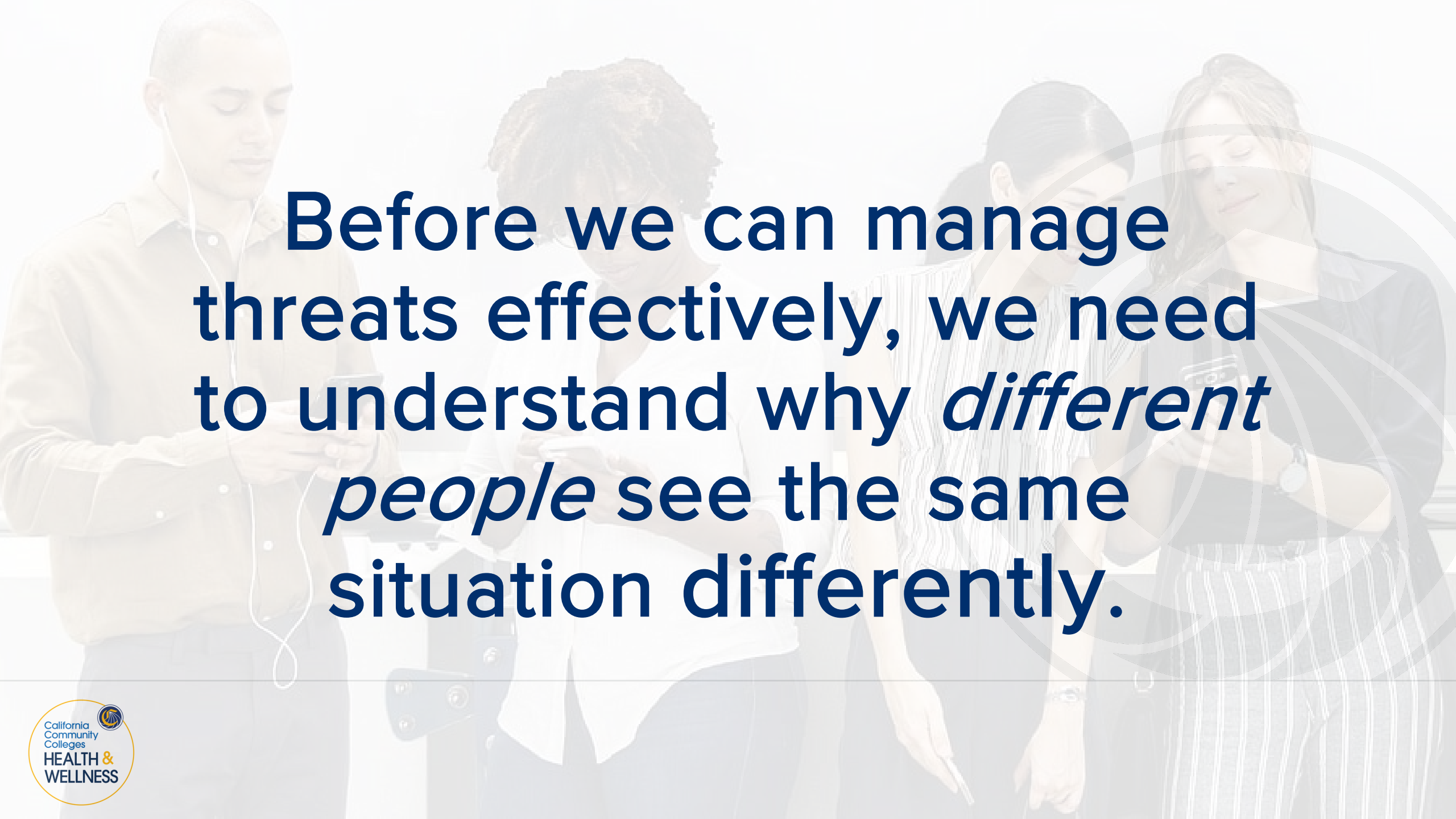
Dealing with conflicting opinions

Maintaining objectivity

Communicating decisions effectively

Objectives

- Describe the risk perception factors that distort people's views of actual threats
- Review cognitive biases that result in disagreement and escalation
- Understand critical responses when responding to a request with high emotion, demand, or disagreement
- Practice skills needed to be measured and effective when engaging in threat management

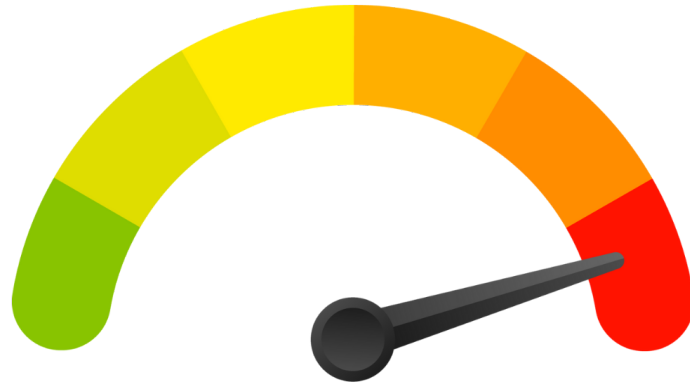
A background image showing four diverse young adults (two men and two women) standing and looking at their smartphones. The image is semi-transparent, allowing the text to be clearly visible over it. The text is centered and reads: "Before we can manage threats effectively, we need to understand why *different people* see the same situation differently."

Before we can manage threats effectively, we need to understand why *different people* see the same situation differently.

attacker threat outbursts
violen**ce**
fear mental health
school shooting
person of concern fear
Student in Distress
workplace violence
Harm to Self
active shooter
Harm to Others
threat actors lone wolf



threat actors lone wolf
Harm to Others



RISK

Perception Factors



Common Risk Perception Errors

- Availability
- Habit
- Prior Experience/Familiarity
- Media Influence
- Emotions/Feelings



In the Chat: Name a recent example of using a risk perception error in your decision making.

Risk Perception and our Response to Reported Incidents

- Work Stress
- Fear of standing out
- Incidents within an Incident
- Tunnel Vision
- Complacency
- Increased Distractions

POLL: Vote in Zoom or add your answer to the chat!

*Which are you most **vulnerable** to during the academic year?*

Tunnel Vision

Complacency

Increased distractions

Work Stress

Fear of standing out

Incidents within an incident

POLL: Vote in Zoom or add your answer to the chat!

*Which factor most **influences** your initial risk assessment?*

Recent similar experiences

Personal comfort when responding

Department protocols

Past outcomes

Media coverage of recent incidents



Risk Habituation

Gradual reduction in a heightened alert response to previous not-actualized dangers.

What are examples of Risk Habituation?

Rapid decision-making is vulnerable to error-ridden shortcuts

- Pressure, stressed, or being overloaded can increase errors our errors.
- We simplify our experience of the world to make it more **predictable** and **manageable** and to help manage new information, so it is aligned with old information.
- **Distorted perceptions** but seemingly helps us make decisions when confronted with **complex decisions**.

Campus Resource Center

An adjunct faculty member receives an email from a frustrated student who was recently placed on academic suspension due to multiple academic dishonesty violations. The initial email expresses concern about the student's future, but subsequent emails become increasingly hostile, with statements like "You'll regret ignoring me" and "I won't let you ruin my life." The adjunct faculty, who had a threatening encounter last semester, wants immediate police involvement. Their student affairs dean, reading the same emails, sees this as typical student worries requiring standard de-escalation.

Biases

Mental *errors* caused by our tendency to use simplified information processing strategies.



Biases: Individual Factors

- Personal experience
- Professional background
- Cultural influences
- Emotional state



Biases: Institutional Factors

- Organizational culture
- Resource availability
- Historical incidents
- Policy framework



Common Cognitive Biases that affect decision making

- Status Quo Bias
- Confirmation Bias
- Anchoring Bias
- Sunk Costs Effects
- Wishful Thinking

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*Which **cognitive bias** do you most encounter at work?*

Status Quo Bias

Confirmation Bias

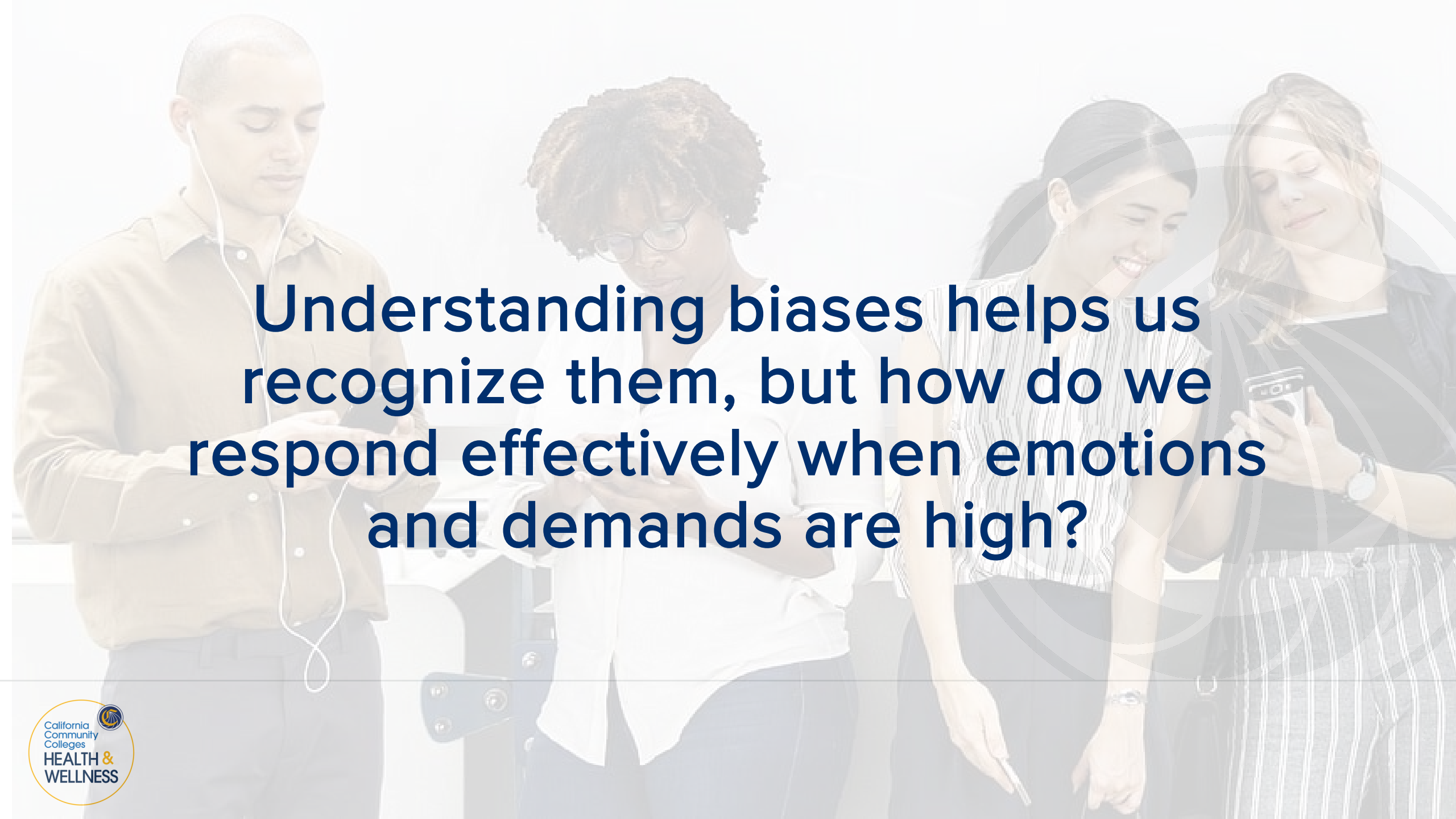
Anchoring Bias

Sunk Costs Bias

Wishful Thinking

Example: Campus Resource Center

- An anonymous social media account makes vague threats against the campus resource center.
 - This case was referred to the local campus safety/police department for review two weeks ago, and did not indicate credible sources or a need for follow-up.
-
- This week, students begin reposting the posts and tag the campus resource center
 - A faculty member reports the concerning posts and claims that they believe this is a student in their class, asks what is being done to address his behavior
 - Campus Resource Center is asking police to patrol 24/7.

A photograph of four young adults standing in a line, each looking at their smartphone. From left to right: a man with short hair wearing a brown shirt and white earbuds; a woman with curly hair and glasses wearing a white shirt; a woman with dark hair in a ponytail wearing a striped shirt; and a woman with long blonde hair wearing a black top and a striped skirt. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

Understanding biases helps us recognize them, but how do we respond effectively when emotions and demands are high?

Decision- Making Goal

Maintain logic
under pressure



Combat Risk Perception Errors and Cognitive Biases

- Methodical Case Intake
- Gather data from various sources
- Intentionally seek out data that both supports and discounts your view
- Define alternatives clearly

The status quo should never be the only option.

- For all decisions with a long history, verify that you are not considering options that are no longer valid

Specific Communication Techniques

1. Active listening and validation techniques
2. Clear boundary setting
3. Documentation clarity
4. Team communication
5. Resource referrals

What if we *disagree?*

1. Maintain neutral language
2. Document subjective vs. objective concerns
3. Share sensitive information appropriately
4. Manage disagreement professionally
5. Offer additional perspectives from leadership
6. Communicate decisions clearly



Casey

- A *third-year communications student* has shown **increasing signs of distress** over the past month.
- Academic advisor notes a **sharp decline** in attendance and assignment completion.
- The student recently posted **concerning comments** on their department's social media about "*making everyone pay attention*" and "*running out of options.*"
- The counseling center has had two brief interactions with the student, who expressed **feelings of hopelessness** but denied any specific plans of harm.
- BIT suggests continued monitoring, noting the student's willingness to engage with counseling and no direct threats.
- The academic department wants to place this student on *interim suspension*.

Empathy Options Action

1. Thank Casey for returning to address her concern.
2. “I’m very sorry to hear about your previous experience with a student?”
3. “I’m going to call our campus resource department...”
4. “I’m confident we can have someone come down and talk to you within the next few minutes.”

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Which area requires most **attention** in your threat management process?

Bias recognition and
management

Team communication
protocols

Response
standardization

Documentation
practices

Resource
coordination

Resources to **enhance** your BIT team

- **The BIT Bias Checklist**
- **Annual review and education**
- **Team role and function clarification**

A photograph of four students walking away from the camera on a paved path in a park-like setting. They are wearing backpacks. The image is overlaid with a dark blue filter. The text "Questions or Thoughts?" is centered in white.

Questions or Thoughts?

FINAL Session 4 | Cells and Circles: Strategic Communication in Threat Management

Date: November 14, 2024 – 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

In the final session, participants will learn how to manage internal and external communications during significant events. This session focuses on reducing fear, managing persons of concern, and reinforcing the BIT's role as a key resource during campus-wide incidents.

NEW WEBINAR | Protecting Students: Preventing Firearm Violence and Suicide on Campus

Date: November 20, 2024 – 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Don't miss this vital webinar on preventing firearm violence and suicide among college-age students. Join us to explore the profound impact on students and at-risk groups and learn practical intervention strategies for both individuals and communities. Gain insight into using legal protection orders effectively as a tool to prevent violence.

Register today:

https://bit.ly/GVRO_Registration



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Thank you!

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