

## MWI Ombuds Resource Feedback from Visitors

### ***What alternative actions would you have taken if your organization did not have an ombuds resource?***

"I would have suffered in silence / let problems brew without a productive framework for addressing them."

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"Stressed over it until it got worse."

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"I've been having this issue for a few years; typically, I would have to search for resources or discuss with people not in the institution (or the field). Resolving or acquiring the tools to address the situation had been unsuccessful until now."

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"I would have reacted in a more extreme and less appropriate manner without first discussing the situation with the ombuds."

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"I would have felt hopeless and unheard."

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"If this valuable resource was not available, I would feel very lost. It's hard, since there are obvious power dynamics within [an organizational] structure, so allowing to be in a space that is 100% detached and free from judgement is highly valued and appreciated."

"Sought private counsel."

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"I may not have done anything. I was hesitant to act on my concerns. The ombuds resource acted as a catalyst in helping me to take action."

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"I would have gone to the media."

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"I would have continued with my conversation but would not have readjusted my approach which could have caused the situation to escalate further."

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"I probably would not have said anything. I would have just kept it to myself."

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"Resigned."

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"Escalated the situation and burned as many bridges as possible."

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"I would not have been able to provide all the information my peer needed to make informed decisions, prepare for important meetings, and navigate a critical situation."

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### *The most valuable part of my work with the ombuds was:*

“[The ombuds] provided some great advice for negotiating differences of opinion and philosophy that really helped in our follow up meetings that allowed us to compromise and avoid conflict that likely would continue divisions in [our group].”

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“Having a sounding board to discuss things freely. As a manager and in a position where I don't have a direct peer, I don't always have a place to vent, process that isn't direct escalation to my manager.”

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“The most valuable part of my experience was the result. I was dealing with an ongoing issue for over a year. After contacting Ombuds, it took 3 weeks to resolve.”

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“Having a neutral party facilitate a conversation with me and my supervisor. It helped each of us to understand the other and slow the process down so we didn't make assumptions about the experience or intent of the other.”

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“Being able to speak with someone regarding confidential issues and discuss realistic options on handling the situation. The guidance I received and willingness to work with me until I felt comfortable to address the situation was extremely helpful and greatly appreciated. As I stated above, I was initially very hopeless that my situation could change or get better but that has now changed. Overall, I feel more confident in my abilities, and better prepared to handle tough situations.”

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“I am fully aware that my situation isn't exactly ideal and maybe partially (although unintentionally) self-inflicted. I was advised professionally and personally without feeling blame or shame and I really needed that.”

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“Finding my voice, knowing I can use it.”

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“Having a neutral third-party resource as a sounding board for work issues was invaluable to me. In my meetings with [the ombuds] he helped me to clarify the issues, identify my goals around them, and form an action plan to help resolve them. He helped me to sort out what I needed to change in my own behavior, in order to enact positive change in the workplace. He always took the time to thoroughly understand an issue before lending guidance, and reinforced my sense of agency around issues that at times seemed overwhelming. I left every meeting with a more positive attitude.”

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“Most valuable part is being able to share freely without fear of retaliation, reprisal, or fracturing working relationships with people involved, all this with the guarantee of confidentiality.”

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“It is hard to pick one. The fact that a confidential space existed where I could openly discuss my confusion or fear or anger without worrying that either I will be judged or my stories will get repeated and there will be repercussions was invaluable. The help I received in understanding what the next best action is was invaluable. The fact that I was empowered to address my concerns with confidence because I had run the issue by someone impartial outside the drama was invaluable. The help to build problem solving and communication skills that are useful long-term was invaluable.”

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“One of the most valuable part of my experience was having the certainty that the Ombuds understood I was not wanting to place blame on individuals but to untangle and navigate a situation. While there are personalities involved in the situation, it helped to have the Ombuds classify what was actionable, what was not actionable, what was in my control, what was not under my control.”

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### *General Feedback*

“The Ombuds was helpful, experienced, and emotionally intelligent far beyond my hopes. I appreciated his help tremendously and, though he isn't an employee directly, feel more seen and supported by my company because [my organization] afforded me access to his kindness and thoughtfulness.”

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“The entire process and conversation showed me how grateful I am to be part of an organization that really values the PEOPLE that work here and their opinions, emotions, and experiences.”

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“He truly listened to me and really went further than I had expected to help get some solution and light on my issue. I was terrified to even come forward, but he really made me comfortable with his discretion and his understanding. [The ombuds] really took my issue seriously. And when he said he was going to get on calendars and get the ball rolling he delivered - above and beyond! I was a little skeptical about the Ombuds at first, but I can definitely see the wonderful service the team provides to us...who are scared to step forward.”

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“The ombuds not only told me about potential resources, he actually reached out and contacted those resources on my behalf, described my situation to them in vague/anonymized terms, and then reported back to me about what they advised. [The ombuds] acted as a messenger before I was ready to contact any resources on my own, which made me feel much more comfortable to reach out to the resources later.”

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“I'm very grateful to [the ombuds] for listening, sharing different scenarios that she has experience with, and giving me tools to try to understand the other person's view of my issues. I appreciated her outlook that most people operate with good intentions, and I remind myself of that in touchy situations. I also totally dreaded having a facilitated conversation about my issues, even though that was the obvious next step, and I definitely would not have done it if I didn't trust [the ombuds] completely. The facilitated conversation reduced my issues and opened up communication with the person I was having issues with. I never thought that my situation could improve but it did, thanks entirely to [the ombuds'] guidance.”

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“This was a game-changer for me. The ombuds gave me the tools to have a fair, productive conversation with my manager. I felt that I was in a toxic situation and felt trapped. I had never been in a situation like that, so having the tools to understand that the way I was being treated wasn't right and how to handle conversations to keep it professional but to establish appropriate boundaries was critical. I felt like this was as close to crises as I have ever experienced, and having an unbiased third-party perspective really helped me in ways that are hard to put into words. I felt heard and felt safe to share without being concerned about retaliation. This service is amazing, and the ombuds was a consummate professional. I am forever grateful!”