Bad Apple Behavior
(slides adapted from Michael Mateas)
Upcoming deadlines

- **Friday (Jan. 24): team assessment reporting**
  - Due by midnight
  - Report on team activities this week
  - Be sure to use team assessment tool created by Brandon

- **Friday, January 31: End of Sprint 1**
  - 9 days left in Sprint 1

- **Saturday, February 1 (also February 22)**
  - Game critique session
  - Starts 10am
  - Come prepared to give a 5 minute presentation including game demo
  - Location to be announced
  - Required, please see me if you need to be excused.
    - Excusable: Employment, previously planned family event, previously planned club or sports event, previously planned doctors appointment
Bad apple behavior

- Bad apple behaviors on the part of a single team member can effect the behaviors and effectiveness of an entire team

- Will Felps, a social science researcher, created teams in experimental settings, and found teams with a bad apple performed 30-40% worse

- Bad apple behavior
  - Jerk
  - Slacker
  - Depressive Pessimist
Material on bad apple behavior

- This American Life interview, episode 370: Ruining it for the Rest of Us

- A paper with background social science research on bad apple behavior:
  http://liberalorder.typepad.com/the_liberal_order/files/bad_apples_rob.pdf
The jerk

- Violates social norms
  - Puts down other people’s ideas
  - Unfairly criticizes other people
  - Shuts down other people while they’re talking
  - Makes jokes at other people’s expense
  - Talks negatively about other people behind their backs
The slacker

- Withholds effort
  - Regularly doesn’t come through on tasks
  - Free rides, taking credit for or enjoying the fruits of the work of others
  - Has a “who cares” attitude about the group project
  - Doesn’t take on risks or responsibilities
  - Doesn’t contribute adequate time to project
The depressive pessimist

- Frequently displays negative emotions about group
  - Pessimistic about project
  - Frequently complains about project
  - Frequently expresses anxiety, irritation, insecurity
  - Awkward interpersonal style
Mechanisms for group contagion

- **Additive Defensiveness**
  - The more negative inter-team interactions, the more defensive behaviors build up over time, interfering with team effectiveness.

- **Spillover Effects**
  - Seeing others act antisocially lowers inhibitions about behaving similarly.
  - As coping resources are expended, leads to misplaced aggression.
  - Mood contagion – group members come to develop mutually shared moods and emotions.

- **Sensemaking Effects**
  - People seek to make sense of being treated badly by talking to others to make sense of the situation.
  - One way to make sense of the situation is to distance oneself from the group.
Negative members’ effects on team

- Motivation – “…having a negative member in the group will decrease motivation through the processes of lowered efficacy, distraction (e.g. gossiping, affective rumination, mood maintenance) and de-identification.”

- Creativity and Learning
  - Creativity requires a safe environment.
  - In inequitable situations (slacker), motivation to contribute to shared pool of ideas is decreased.
  - Negative feelings have a chilling effect on individual creativity.
  - A sense of threat causes reversion to stereotyped behaviors.

- Cooperation
  - Cooperation requires “depersonalized trust” and a positive expectation that interpersonal risks can be assumed with reasonable confidence they won’t be betrayed.

- Two types of conflict
  - Relational conflict – this is bad, leads to disruption and distraction
  - Task conflict – this is good, can lead to enhanced social responsibility, higher decision quality, clarification of mental models
Some bad apple behaviors

- Covert slacker – subverts transparency management mechanisms like SCRUM
- Not showing up for meetings (“I don’t care. Your time isn’t as important as my time.”)
- Not knowing what the rest of the team is doing. Shutting down during SCRUM.
- Namecalling by calling someone a slacker.
- Personalization of disagreements – turning a task conflict into a relationship conflict.
- A regular pattern of not caring about disrupting other people’s productivity, e.g. constantly breaking the build and not changing your behavior
- The isolationist – willing to shine on their own tasks, but don’t care about helping others
- Showing off – using jargon when the level of precision isn’t needed
- Lack of commenting even after a group discussion about code comment standards for the team
Resolving bad apple behaviors

- Not stepping up and letting team members know you’re in trouble.
- Setting expectations for meetings (team-level, not necessarily bad apple)
- Disagreement over goals (team-level leadership)
- Major design changes that are not communicated to rest of team, and/or not approved by rest of team
Yet more bad apple behaviors

- Playing games while other group members are working
- Fiddling around on computer (IM, browsing) while others working
- Regularly derails group meetings
- “The project will never work” but not provide solutions
- Not grabbing tasks from board unless harassed
- Not engaging in group creation of sprint tasks
- Always making excuses about why work not done
- Not deigning to inform group of actions, give justifications
- Regularly doesn’t spend time on or finish individual tasks
Options for dealing with bad apple behaviors

- Motivational intervention – change the behavior
  - Talk about issues
  - Rewards and punishments
  - *This is the one we want to make work*

- Rejection
  - Eject bad apple from group
  - Minimizing contact with bad apple
  - Removing responsibilities that require interaction with others

- Defensiveness – the option that doesn’t work
  - Withdrawing
  - Lashing out
  - Withholding effort
  - *This is the route by which the bad apple spoils the group*