

### The Price of Incivility: Addressing Disrespect in the Workplace

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### Overview

- Characteristics, frequency, and spread of incivility in professional organizations
- Incivility and rudeness as an ethical challenge
- The "price" of incivility and rudeness in the workplace
- Understanding and addressing incivility
- Establishing a civil workplace culture



## Incivility in Professional Organizations

### A Definition – Workplace Incivility

"Low intensity deviant behavior with **ambiguous intent** to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviors are characteristically **rude and discourteous**, displaying a lack of regard for others."



**NOTE:** Intent is not part of the definition. Incivility is defined by the target.

Holm 2015

### Common Characteristics of Incivility

- Condescending language
- Interrupt others
- Targeted jokes
- Hostility
- Efforts to criticize or embarrass others
- "Scare tactics" or indirect threats
- Raised voice, shouting



Clark 2017; Launer 2016; Bradley 2015, Roberts 2011

### Common Characteristics of Incivility

- Demeaning body language
- Efforts that marginalize targets
- Attacking knowledge, skills, integrity
- Removing or withholding resources
- Lack of action – failing to share information, refusing to help, ignoring
- Can escalate to bullying



Clark 2017; Launer 2016; Bradley 2015, Roberts 2011

### Common Characteristics of Civility

- Ability to discuss differing viewpoints, beliefs, approaches without hostility, abuse, or personal attacks
- Respectful behavior and language
- Listening, nonjudgmental, open minded
- Direct and clear communication
- Affirmation of contributions and ideas



Clark 2017; Launer 2016; Bradley 2015, Roberts 2011

### Isn't Incivility just part of the job?



#### NORMAL PART OF THE JOB?

- Strongly associated with organizational/group norms
- Seen as "rite of passage" or "hidden curriculum"
- Seen part of "weeding out" process
- Targets considered "over sensitive" or "entitled"

#### BUT WHAT ABOUT....?

- Results in pressure to conform
- Creates unrealistic expectations of work requirements
- Reduces productivity, morale
- Drives turnover, burnout, career changes

Porath 2015

### The "Nice" Deficit?

Violating social rules without consequences may increase perceived power

"Nice" people are:

- perceived as less competent
- perceived as weak or overly conforming
- less likely to be seen as leaders
- less influential
- perceived as too accommodating



Porath, 2015

### Civil = Respectful, Warm, Competent

Degree of civility accounts for 90% of positive or negative impressions of others

Civility attracts people, fosters loyalty, expands influence

Civil work environments have higher retention of staff

Civil work environments foster higher skill levels and self-confidence



Porath, 2015, D'Ambra 2013

### Civil = Respectful, Warm, Competent

Staff are:

- 73% more likely to want to do well for a civil supervisor/ manager
- 55% more likely to be engaged at work in civil work environment
- 59% more willing to share information with civil people
- 72% more likely to seek advice from civil people



Porath, 2015, D'Ambra 2013

### Incivility and Rudeness as an Ethical Challenge

Nursing, Dietetics and IBLCE codes of ethics include:

- Obligation and responsibility to act in a manner consistent with maintaining civility and respect
- Safeguarding patient, co-worker, and personal safety



Clark, 2107

### Adverse Outcomes of Incivility - Work

- Reduced cognitive performance
- Impaired diagnostic thinking and dexterity
- Reduced collaboration
- Reduced help seeking
- Lack of sharing or dismissal of important information
- Increased mistakes and mistreatment



Launer 2016, D'Ambra 2013, Bradley 2015, Clark 2017

### Adverse Outcomes of Incivility - Personal

- Poor relationships/behavior
- Stress disorders
- Poor health and exhaustion
- Burnout, low morale
- Drug use, drinking
- Sleeping problems



Launer 2016, D'Ambra 2013, Bradley 2015, Clark 2017

### Attributed Costs

- Adverse patient outcomes (errors and accidents)
- Staff turnover
- Absenteeism (extended leave)
- Medical Costs
- Lower productivity
- Management, supervision costs
- Lawyers fees



Clark 2017, Launer, 2016

## Understanding and Addressing Incivility

SOURCES AND MOTIVATION

### A View of Workplace Orientations

*What's your balance?*

- Status
- Certainty
- Autonomy
- Relatedness
- Fairness



The balance of these orientations can influence interactions at work

Rock, *Your Brain at Work*, 2002

### Traditional Conflict Styles



### Motivation for Incivility

- Conflict style- competing, avoiding
- Exert control, establish power
- Perceived as workplace “norm”
- Retaliation, sabotage
- Stress, crisis response



Holm 2015

### Factors Associated with Workplace Incivility

Supervisors’ behavior can create culture of incivility



Holm 2015

### Spread of Incivility



- More likely to be uncivil in the afternoon if targeted in the morning
- More likely to be uncivil at work if targeted by co-worker
- More likely to be uncivil at home if targeted by supervisor
- Poor personal outcomes associated with being targeted by co-workers and observing supervisor incivility

Holm 2015

### Barriers to Addressing Incivility

- Lack of administrative support
- Legal ramifications
- Lack of time and resources
- Intermittent and ambiguous nature of incidents
- Experience can be subjective
- Emotional toll of confronting problem and aftermath



Authement 2016, Roberts 2011

### Building Professional Relationships

- Building resilience
- Communicating in conflict situations
- Making a plan



### Protective Factors for Targets

- Personal resilience and ability to cope with stress
- Positive social support
- Background and experience
- Communication/conflict management skills



### Building Resilience in the Workplace

- Clear policies, guidelines, and paths to express concerns
- Mentoring (if part of positive culture)
- Training and specific preparation
- Organizational norms, rules, standards
- Administration plays a big role!



### Organizational Standards (example)

- Foster a work environment that promotes respect, communication and collaboration
- Maintain personal and professional integrity
- Establish and maintain respectful interactions with all team members
- Support direct communication among all team members
- Recognize and affirm contributions



### Communication in Workplace Conflict

- Speak with clarity and strength
- Do not absorb or reflect emotions
- As needed, delay any communication until you have emotional control and a plan to address the issue(s)
- When you are ready, be **specific** about the behavior/issue to be discussed – “Yesterday, when you...”
- Supervisors: It is best to act immediately to address staff behavior whenever possible



### Speak with Clarity and Strength

- Expect respect and be respectful
- Demonstrate you are listening and really listen
- Maintain balanced, relaxed posture
- Don't apologize before you make a point
- Don't phrase statements as questions
- Don't raise your voice



Don't expect you'll change the other person, just your interactions

### Making a Plan



### 7 Steps to Negotiate Conflict

1. Take the time to identify your specific goals
2. Clarify the issue in terms of *future voluntary* behavior
3. Decide to address the conflict
4. Arrange a time to discuss the issue
5. Negotiate/Discuss the issue
6. Agree on future action
7. Follow through on the agreement

Michael Dues

### Other considerations

- Being blind-sided (no one can react in an ideal way)
- Discomfort can be hard to overcome
- Some situations require administrative intervention
- Some situations require a "full stop"



## Establishing a civil workplace culture

### Roles and Responsibilities: Administrators

- Organizational policies must reflect a culture of respect and emphasis on safety
- Policies and procedures must be clearly disseminated and supported
- Respectful communication and conflict management skills must be included in training
  - Include behavior standards in reviews



D'Ambra 2013

### Roles and Responsibilities: Staff

- Demonstrate clear, respectful, and direct communication with team members
- Refuse to participate when prodded, actively reject marginalization of others
- Stay aware of increased risk for being uncivil after being targeted and take steps to avoid spread
- Increase skills through training and rehearsal



D'Ambra 2013

### What Can You Do?

- Stop the spread
- Prepare for possibilities - avoid being blind-sided
- Build your own resilience
- Create space between actions and your response – take the time to make a plan
- Acknowledge and apologize for your own mistakes
- Advocate for change



### Questions??

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Thank you!!