Notes from the Civility Playbook: Addressing Conflict and Challenging Conversations

Idaho Perinatal Project Winter Conference
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Graditude
Idaho Perinatal Project
Special Shout Out
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Learning Objectives
Describe the impact and consequences of incivility in academic and healthcare settings
Discuss evidence-based strategies to address conflict in healthcare

Background and Definitions

What is Civility?
Authentic respect for others requiring time, presence, engagement, and an intention to seek common ground. Clark & Carnosso (2008)

What is Incivility?
Rude or disruptive behaviors which often result in psychological or physiological distress for the people involved—and if left unaddressed, may progress into threatening situations [or result in temporary or permanent illness or injury] (Clark, 2009, 2012).
Continuum of Incivility

Disturbing, annoying, irritating behaviors

Aggressive, potentially violent behaviors

Low Risk  High Risk

Disruptive Behaviors  Threatening Behaviors

Behaviors range from:

- eye-rolling
- sarcastic comments
- bullying/ethnic slurs
- intimidation
- physical violence
- tragedy

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Rationale for Fostering Civility

"Little Murders"

Foreword by Warren Bennis

"The Cost of Bad Behavior: How Incivility is Damaging Your Business and What to do About"

(Pearson & Porath, 2009)

Bookends of Civility

The Joint Commission Sentinel Event Alert

(Issued July 2008 — Effective January 2009)

Health care is “high-stakes, pressure-packed environment that can test the limits of civility in the workplace.”

Rude, uncivil behavior among health care professionals poses a serious threat to patient safety and the overall quality of care.

All accredited health care organizations need to create behavioral codes of conduct and establish a formal process for managing unacceptable behavior.

Boards of Nursing: Sanctions for Academic Incivility

In one state, a nursing program was cited for incivility and required to develop a defined set of expectations, interventions, strategies and written policies “to improve the culture of academic civility.”

The program was also required to produce evidence of a “respectful, confidential, positive and productive academic environment and improved student-faculty relationships and communication to ensure student success.”

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**Incivility often occurs when people are:**

- Stressed
- Rushed
- Overworked
- Fatigued
- Hungry

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**Impact of Incivility on the Organization**

**Negatively Impacts**
- Recruitment and Retention
- Morale and Collegiality
- Job Satisfaction—Intent to Leave
- Relationships and Teamwork
- Patient Care and Safety
- Quality of Services
- Organizational Culture
- The ‘Bottom Line’

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**Healthy Workplaces**

- A lived vision, mission, shared values and norms
- Ethical leadership; trust between leaders and employees, employees viewed as assets
- Physical and emotional safety
- Positive recruitment and retention
- Competitive salaries and benefits
- Reasonable workload

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**To establish and sustain a civil, healthy work environment**

- High morale, job satisfaction, and esprit de corps
- Respectful and fair treatment of employees
- Policies to address incivility and to promote civility
- Respectful communication and shared decision-making
- Teamwork and collaboration
Healthy Team Relationships

Trust
Mutual respect [civility]
Consistent and visible support
Open, honest communication
Commitment to co-workers

Teamwork is the most statistically significant predictor of quality as perceived by patients, families, staff, and physicians. EC Murphy

CIVILITY: Lifeblood of a Healthy Work Environment

LEADERSHIP: Heart of a Healthy Work Environment

P.E.A.K. Leadership to Foster Civility
Principled
Ethical
Authentic
Kind

Self-Reflection: The Leader in the Mirror

Authentic Leadership Requires Self-Awareness
Knowing and understanding:
Our strengths and areas for improvement
Our impact on others and the organization
Reflecting upon:
Our core values, identity, emotions, motives, and goals
Who we really are at the deepest level

Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009

“Inquire Within”
Ken Blanchard – The Heart of a Leader
Let us be silent, so we may hear the whisper of the gods
Ralph Waldo Emerson
Seek an accurate reading of our own civility—then check it out with others—requires a courageous and candid capacity to give and receive constructive feedback
Self-Assessment
Clark Workplace Civility Index

Ask yourself, do I, the majority of time (80-85% or more)...

- Assume goodwill and think the best of others
- Include and welcome new and current colleagues
- Communicate respectfully (e-mail, telephone, face to face) and really listen
- Avoid gossip and spreading rumors
- Keep confidences and respect others’ privacy
- Encourage and mentor others
- Avoid abusing position or authority
- Use respectful language (no racial, ethnic, sexual, gender, religiously biased terms)
- Attend meetings, arrive on time, participate, volunteer, and share the work
- Avoid distracting others (misusing media, side conversations) during meetings

Scoring the Clark Workplace Civility Index

Add up your “Yes” responses—score your ‘civility index’

18-20 (90%)—Very civil
16-17 (80%)—Moderately civil
14-15 (70%)—Mildly civil
12-13 (60%)—Barely civil
10-12 (50%)—Uncivil
Less than 10—Very uncivil

Mentoring and Coaching

Positive Role Modeling
I aspire to become the person my dog believes I am

Source Unknown

Intentional Advancement of Civility and Collegiality

Raising Awareness

Sunlight is the best disinfectant

[Louis Brandeis; US Supreme Court Associate Justice]

Organizational Trust, Ethical Leadership, and a Culture of Civility

“If your foundation is laid on shifting sand, you may build your house, but it will tumble down” Florence Nightingale

Measure Organizational Culture, Climate, and Civility

• Perform assessment using empirical measures
• Pre and post-test assessments
• Determine the strengths and areas for growth
• Implement Action Plan for civility and collegiality

Assemble a Civility Team

Members: Trusted and Empowered to:
Craft a compelling vision of the future
Develop and implement a ‘Civility’ Action Plan
Establish **Unambiguous** Vision and Mission Statements, Statements of Shared Values, and Behavioral Norms

**Statement of Shared Values**

*Example*

- Excellence
- Caring
- Integrity
- Respect [Civility]
- Accountability
- Social Justice

Implement Confidential Policies, Guidelines, and Reporting Protocols

*Direct and Effective Communication*

_We must communicate openly and intentionally work together to create a culture of civility._

“The believe we can change the world if we start listening to one another again. Simple, honest, human conversation…a chance to speak, feel heard, and [where] we each listen well… may ultimately save the world.”

Margaret Wheatley 2002, 2009

**The Imperative of Communication**

*Top 10 Sentinel Events: Communication as Root Cause*

- Elopement — 88.8%
- Delay in treatment — 86.8%
- Infant abduction — 81.3%
- Maternal death — 81.3%
- Peri-natal death/injury — 76.5%
- Operative/postoperative complication — 69.8%
- Wrong-side surgery — 67.4%
- Medication error — 66.9%
- Restraint-related event — 61.1%
- Suicide — 60.4%

TJC cited in Woods, 2010
Principled Conflict Negotiation

- Separate the people from the problem
- Focus on interests instead of positions
- Generate a variety of options before deciding what to do
- Insist that the result be based on objective standards/criteria

*Getting to YES* (Fisher & Ury, 1981)

Conflict

If managed well, conflicts contribute to a robust and stimulating intellectual learning and/or work environment.

If ignored or poorly managed, may lead to incivility and in extreme cases, escalate to violence.

Approaches To Conflict Resolution

- **Avoid**—Withdraw from or suppress a conflict
- **Accommodate**—Place other’s interests above one’s own
- **Compromise**—Each party is willing to give up something
- **Compete**—Satisfy one’s own interests, regardless of the impact on the other party—‘winning at all costs’
- **Collaborate**—Each party genuinely wishes to satisfy the concerns of all parties [win/win]—‘Getting to Yes’

CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS

A discussion between two or more people when stakes are high, opinions vary, and emotions run high.

We have essentially three choices about CC—
- Avoid them
- Face them and handle them poorly
- Face them and handle them well

Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, & Switzler (2002); VitalSmarts, Southam Consulting, 2010

Reflect, Probe, and Commit (or not)

Ask yourself:
- What do you really want for yourself?
- What do you really want for others?
- What do you really want for the relationship?

To respond or not to respond:
- If I do not respond, what is the worst thing that can happen?
- If I do respond, what is the worst thing that can happen?
- If I respond, will it contribute to the things that matter most to me?

If you choose to respond, prepare wisely

Consider how you may have contributed to the problem... this may help you develop an understanding of the other person’s perspective.

The clearer we are about our goals, the less we’re controlled by fear and the more empowered we are to act.
Create a Safety Zone

- Attend to logistics — consider deferring to the other party
- Agree on a mutually beneficial time and place to meet
- Choose a quiet place without interruptions
- Before the meeting—prepare and de-stress
- Third person may be invited by either side to mediate
- Co-create ground rules (norms) and establish goals

The Conversation

- Assume an open and welcoming posture
- Maintain eye-contact
- Objectively describe each person’s perspective of the issue
- Speak directly and respectfully
- Avoid covering up or ignoring your part in the problem
- Avoid exaggerating others’ role in the problems
- Listen carefully, do not interrupt, stay focused
- Avoid being defensive, judgmental—and do not ‘correct’

The Conversation (continued)

You may not agree, but seek to understand

- Seek a win-win resolution and end with clear expectations
- Be sure each person is clear on how to resolve the issue
- Agree on who is going to do what by when
- Make a plan to follow up and evaluate progress

Then What?

- Stop Talking About it
- Find the Lesson
- Avoid Negative People
- Surround yourself with people who have the qualities you admire and wish to emulate

Self-Care and Stress Management

- Work/Life Balance

The Stress of Incivility Changes Us
Dr. Regina M. Benjamin, MD, MBA
USA Surgeon General [Former]

Thank You ❤️

CIVILITY

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