

# Cultivating Healthful Environments In The Workplace

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## Introduction

According to Cooper (2017), incivility is described as deviant behaviour, including inconsequential and inconsiderate words and actions that are against the usual workplace norms and conduct. Incivility has an ambiguous aim of harming an individual through disrespectful behaviour. The intentionality of action is absent in incivility, hence separating it from other forms of mistreatment. Incivility in the workplace can be manifested in three forms; firstly the interpersonal category whereby uncivil action is directed straightly to an individual, second is cyber incivility which involves technological interactions such as text messages, emails, and social media communication. Last is the victimless incivility that may not be immediately directed towards a particular person.

## Understanding Incivility In Nursing

Almost everybody has experienced incivility in the workplace, whether from fellow workers, clients, or supervisors. Incivility has been illustrated to have deleterious effects not only on the victim but also on the general organizational structure. Understanding the issue of incivility within the nursing setup is vital in preventing the negative effects that could disrupt normal service delivery. Healthcare delivery is a vital element that needs a smooth operation. Health managers should understand the issue of incivility and prevent it in health facilities, hence reducing effects like employee withdrawal, lack of satisfaction and poor worker performance (Warrner et al., 2016). The issue of incivility in the nursing profession should be managed well to avoid it spiralling outside the organization, for instance, to a level that would prevent clients from receiving appropriate care.

According to Mikaelian & Stanley (2016), civility is a key component of professionalism, especially in the nursing field. The nursing code of ethics states the standards that, in a great way, encourage civility in the workplace. Understanding incivility is important for nurses since it encourages the formation of acceptable mechanisms for managing undesirable behaviours. The current society is well-informed and litigation-prone, hence the need for nurses to maintain civility and ensure professionalism. Nurses can be great ambassadors for healthy work environments since they cover the largest population of health workers.

Understanding the issue of incivility from a nursing perspective is important since a healthy working environment has become a priority in the health sector. Patient safety and needs can be addressed when the environment is free from incivility. The current working environments for nurses are

drastically changing with technological developments and complex procedures. These complex working environments with high workloads and life-death decision-making processes require that the nurses be protected from incivility. Any health facility requires effective teamwork to ensure correct patient outcomes; hence, a hospital setting must be away from incivility that could discourage teamwork performance (Logan, 2016).

## Impacts Of Incivility

Incivility has a negative impact on the working environment since when a person experiences it, they tend to respond in a manner that would alter the normal functioning of the organization. To individual incivility may lead to poor psychological functioning, lack of morale, and higher levels of employee burnout. In instances of incivility, creativity suffers since an employee would focus more on their safety and satisfaction rather than the development of the organization.

At the organizational level, incivility can lead to high employee turnover due to withdrawals, poor employee satisfaction, and a drop in performance. The organizational culture will completely deteriorate when incivility is entertained, employees will lack respect to their colleagues hence a lack of accountability. Teamwork would deteriorate in an environment filled with incivility since workers will be striving to accomplish their personal goals rather than organizational ones. Incivility may get out of hand when the victim plans to retaliate, thereby causing a spiral of uncivil acts that encourage hostility within and outside the organization. In adverse situations, incivility can result in violence that would cause harm to the victims.

People never like to acquire services from those they perceive to be uncivil, e.g. rude. This is common in the service industry, and for instance, in a nursing environment, clients will turn away and find other nurses who will provide them with proper care without acts of incivility. People like to be respected whether the service they are getting is free or paid for; hence, they will not encourage incivility. The nursing profession is well respected in society, and that is why people place nurses on a higher moral standard, expecting better services from them.

In this current generation, managing acts of incivility is expensive since a single incident can attract a lot of attention and effort. Dealing with incivility may require mending relationships, restoring client confidence, and settling scores that might have gone to the justice system. In relation to Abdollahzadeh et al. (2017), incivility in nursing can lead to medical errors, an increase in the cost of services, a reduction in patient satisfaction, and poor treatment adherence. Such outcomes can be stopped if nurses understand and tackle this issue of incivility.

## Incivility Scenario

During my internship, I came across an act of incivility in the health facility to which I was attached. A nurse who was in charge of the maternal child health (MCH) sector would easily lose her temper when

the patient did not do what she had asked them. In turn, she would, in a sharp tone, yell at the patient and make them do what she wanted. This case of incivility had a great impact on the patients who visited MCH. Patients used to fear the nurse, such that when she was on duty, others would not turn up for treatment for fear of being victimized. Although patients used strictly to follow what the nurse said, they did so out of fear rather than understanding. The working environment was also affected by the uncivil acts of the nurse. For instance, when shouting, there would be noise in the facility, and at times, the confidentiality of the patient would be at risk.

## Strategies For Creating A Healthy Environment

All well-structured organizations have workplace values and organizational culture that help them grow and work smoothly. Setting up value statements that help alleviate incivility in the workplace is vital in ensuring a healthy environment for all employees. All employees must be well informed of the organizational values and strive to work them out so that the organizational behaviour is set up. Workplace values are fundamental since they help hold everyone to the same standard. These values reduce incivility and create a great working environment by ensuring that people treat one another in a respectful and courteous manner (Warrner et al., 2016).

Well-developed communication and feedback structures are essential within an organization. All employees must feel safe when communicating anything important to their seniors or juniors. When being addressed, senior personnel must accept constructive criticism without feeling that they are being wrongly targeted. They can also request feedback for their personal development. Interpersonal skills are essential for proper communication since it helps in addressing people in the right manner and helps them understand the message. Behavioural change can only be achieved if there is proper communication and people are not victimized by standing for the truth. Speaking up against any form of incivility is crucial in making people feel accountable for their actions (Logan, 2016).

The proper organizational leadership structure is also significant in reducing incivility in the workplace. All those who are in positions of authority should portray leadership since it forms part of a good organizational culture. Leaders must hold themselves to a higher standard since they form a standard for those they lead. Leaders set the tone for the organization such that if they do not condone any incivility, then others will follow suit. Recognition of good behaviour is important while punishing uncivil characters will depict the seriousness of tackling the issue (Logan, 2016).

Warner et al. (2016) explain that training and development on organizational behaviour are essential in creating a healthy environment away from incivility. Behaviour is learned; hence, employees need to be informed and coached on behaviours that alleviate incivilities, such as self-control, self-awareness, and tolerance. Behavioural change is a process; hence, people who are used to being uncivil must be coached and allowed time to change.

## Specialty Track

My area of specialty is in health education, the first strategy proposed would first be educating health personnel on the aspects of incivility in the workplace. Health professionals must also be educated on their rights and the policies that prohibit any form of incivility. When employees know the policies protecting them, they will feel empowered and work without any fear. Educating employees on the aspects of teamwork is also an essential aspect of tackling incivility. When all the employees have been educated, an organizational culture that disallows incivility will be established, hence cultivating a healthy working environment.

Another strategy in my specialty track would be encouraging civility teaching to be included in professional ethics studies for all nursing students. Incivility must be handled when students are at nursing schools so that they nurture a value system that encourages civility. It is vital to acknowledge that some individuals who have a propensity for unethical behaviour are also within the nursing field, hence the need for this education. Current nursing students will, in the future, get jobs in various health facilities; hence, when they are taught about the issue of incivility, they will understand the value of creating a work environment that is free from prejudice.

## Conclusion

Incivility in the workplace can be described as a form of mistreatment despite the ambiguous intent that is involved. There are different strategies varying within the organization that, if implemented, could reduce the incidences of incivility. Some of the strategies may include improving employee communication skills, establishing high-quality leadership that prohibits incivility, and establishing and implementing organizational values and behaviours that encourage civility. From education as my specialty track, educating professionals and those in health institutions on incivility would be a vital aspect of my future professional practice. When health professionals understand the concept of incivility and how to dismantle it, they can establish a healthy working environment that is acceptable to all stakeholders.

## References

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