Conflict in the Ivory Tower
Strategies to Prevent and Address Faculty and Administrator Incivility

2019 ATI Nurse Educator Summit
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Greetings and Gratitude!

Objectives
- Describe a brief overview of civility and incivility in nursing education.
- Review findings from empirical studies related to faculty and administrator incivility.
- Discuss best practices to foster civility and healthy work environments in nursing education.

A crucial measure of our success in life is the way we treat one another every day of our lives.
— P.M. Forni

Defining Key Concepts

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

- Collaboration, collegiality, and teamwork
- Treating others in a professional and respectful manner
- "Stepping up" (serving on committees, helping colleagues, sharing the workload)
- Constructive, supportive, and professional relationships
- Taking collective responsibility for the work that needs to be done

Collegiality does not imply blind or mindless conformity or absence of dissent
Cipriano, 2011, 2013

Workplace Aggression

Incivility, Bullying, and Mobbing

It's not only what we do... but what we don't do

Workplace Incivility

A range of lower intensity acts of aggression (including failing to take action when action is warranted) which may result in psychological or physiological distress for the people involved. And, if left unaddressed, may spiral into more purposeful efforts to harm another and/or into more threatening situations.


Workplace Bullying

Repeated, persistent, targeted pattern of abusive behavior designed to intimidate, degrade, and humiliate another. Usually characterized by a person asserting power over another.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (cdc.gov/niosh)

Workplace Mobbing

Repeated, persistent, targeted pattern of abusive behavior designed to intimidate, degrade, and humiliate another. Usually characterized by a person asserting power over another.

Detrimental Impact of Incivility

- Low morale, low productivity, high turn-over, and early retirement
- Increased absenteeism, tardiness, 'presenteeism'
- Diminished quality of work (especially of once highly productive people)
- Lack of meaningful participation in governance activities
- Working at home more than usual
- Increased isolation—flying under the radar
- Increased illness and health issues

(Crawford et al., 2017; Porath, 2016; Clark, 2013, 2017; Cipriano, 2013; Twale & DeLuca, 2008)

Faculty and Administrator Incivility Study

PURPOSE
Using A Mixed Methods Design
Examine perceptions of faculty and administrator incivility in nursing education and explore ways to address the problem

Clark, 2013; Clark, Olender, Kerski, & Cardoni, 2013

Research Questions
- Extent of the problem
- Contributing factors to faculty and administrator incivility
- If and why faculty avoid addressing incivility
- Effective ways to foster civility and healthy work environments

Results and Findings
**Respondents:** 588 Nursing Faculty and Administrators

**67.4% Incivility Moderate to Serious Problem**

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**8 Themes Identified**

**Qualitative Narrative Content Analysis**

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**Berating, Insulting, and Allowing [Verbal and Non-Verbal]**
- Rude, insulting, demeaning remarks/gestures: Often in front of others
- Often occurred in faculty and committee meetings where the behavior was tolerated, ignored, and allowed to occur
- Screaming, fist pounding, door slamming, throwing items, putting fist through wall

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**Setting-up, Undermining, and Sabotaging**
- Intentionally undermining, sabotaging, setting others up to fail
- Using improper channels or questionable methods [e.g. blind copied e-mails] to subvert, misrepresent, or undermine others

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**Power Playing, Abusing, Colluding**
- Power plays, abusing position or authority, ganging up, joining forces
- Treating junior, adjunct, new, clinical or faculty without the ‘right’ degree with disdain and disrespect

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**Excluding, Gossiping, Degrading**
- Ignoring, marginalizing, shunning, avoiding, and excluding
- Conducting secretive and clandestine meetings with select people
- Gossiping, spreading rumors, degrading others
Refusing, Not doing, Justifying (Favoritism)
- Refusing to do ones share of the work or being assigned an easier or inequitable workload
- Justify ‘not doing’ … by having more urgent, pressing, or important work to do

Blaming and Accusing
- Being blamed and falsely accused of something they did not do; often with no evidence of wrong-doing
- Accusations often ill-founded, but taken as truth. The accused felt powerless to ‘prove’ their innocence

Taking Credit (Ripping Off) Others Work
- Subtle and blatant attempts [and successes] at taking intellectual property or course content for their own gain or without obtaining permission or giving credit

Distracting and Disrupting Meetings
- Using computers, mobile devices, and engaging in other non-meeting related activities [grading papers, side conversations]

Top Factors Contributing to Faculty and Administrator Incivility
- Stress
- Inequitable workload distribution
- Unclear roles and expectations
- Imbalance or abuse of power and authority
- Organizational volatility and instability
- Ineffective leadership

Reasons for Avoiding Addressing Incivility
78.5% of respondents avoid addressing incivility
- Fear of retaliation (personal and professional)
- Lack of administrator support
- No clear policies or guidelines to address incivility
- It takes too much time and effort
- May lead to poor evaluations
- Lack skills (or confidence) to address incivility
- Makes matters worse
- Feel powerless (new, non-tenured, adjunct, clinical faculty)
Positive Role Modeling

Example is not the main thing in influencing others. It is the only thing.

Albert Schweitzer

Enhancing Emotional Intelligence, Self Awareness, Openness to Feedback

ME

“There are three things that are extremely hard: steel, a diamond, and to know one’s self”

Benjamin Franklin

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Ways to Hone Self-Awareness

- Construct and understand your life story (Narrative identity)
- Keep a reflection journal/Share with a mentor
- Practice self-reflection and introspection
- Complete self-assessment and aptitude surveys
- Ask for feedback
Transforming the Culture
Pathway for Fostering Organizational Civility®

Hiking Path near Driggs, Idaho

Clark, 2013, 2017

Raise Awareness and Build Organizational and Leadership Support

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Measure Workplace Health

Identify and Maximize Strengths

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Identify and Maximize Strengths

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Assemble and Empower a Civility (Organizational Culture) Team

Develop and Implement an Evidence-Based Data-Driven Action Plan

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Establish, Implement, and Commit to **Unambiguous** Foundational Statements

**Vision/Mission Statement: Exemplar**

To create and sustain a campus culture that models civility, inclusion, diversity, and affirms the value of all members of the campus community.

**Shared Values: Exemplar**

- Academic Excellence and Service
- Global Citizenship and Social Justice
- Inclusion and Diversity
- Integrity and Accountability
- Civility and Respect
- Collaboration and Connectedness

**Pledge of Civility and Well-Being**

[Commitment, Charter, Promise, Creed]

- Vision, mission, strategic goals, values
- Commitment to civility and well-being
- Well-defined norms/ground rules
- Accountability measures

**Recognize that every opinion is valuable**

- Express and receive feedback without making it personal
- Stop collusion, direct the issue back to the owner
- Practice authentic listening
- Encourage discussion of ideas and issues, not people
- Celebrate each other’s successes
- Treat others as you wish to be treated

**Hire for Civility**

Robust Vetting of Candidates

*Maintain a High Bar – Don’t be Tempted to Settle*
Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines
Confidential Reporting Systems
Addressing Incivility; Rewarding Civility

Linking Healthy Work Environment
Criteria to Performance
360° Evaluation Based On:
Vision, Mission, Values, Charter/Pledge, Norms

Skill Building
- Leadership Development
- Effective Communication
- Constructive Conflict Management

Don’t make the mistake of assuming people can “just do it.” Effective organizations use training, education, ‘script development’ and role play to improve communication and constructive conflict negotiation skills.

Maxfield et al, 2011

What if attempts to resolve conflict are unsuccessful?
- Live your best life: “Living well is the best revenge.” - George Herbert
- Stay civil, but detached—take the high road and walk away.
- Do not ‘complain’ internally – rely on external mentors
- Engage in positive self-talk, Develop a script—“This behavior can’t affect me unless I let it, and I’m not going to let it.”
- Work from home as much as your work responsibilities allow
- Communicate by telephone or e-mail
- Avoid meeting with the uncivil colleague(s) alone
- Assess your commitment to the organization: Explore options and opportunities
- Build resilience and engage in self-care activities

The Stress of Incivility Changes Us

Find your Edge
Find and Cultivate Your ‘Sweet Spot’
of Confidence and Courage

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Thank You

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