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

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.


It’s not only what we do…but what we don’t do

Staying silent when speaking up is indicated, failing to acknowledge or support a co-worker, ignoring others, withholding important or vital information

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
Impact of Incivility at Work

- Low morale, low productivity, high turnover, 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 & Dicluca, 2008)

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, Olenader, Korneli, & Cavender, 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

8 Themes Identified
Qualitative Narrative
Content Analysis

Berating, Insulting, and Allowing [Verbal and Non-Verbal]

- Rude, insulting, demeaning remarks and gestures…frequently 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

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

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

Excluding, Gossiping, Degrading

- Ignoring, marginalizing, shunning, avoiding, and excluding
- Conducting secretive and clandestine meetings
- Gossiping, spreading rumors, degrading others
Refusing, Not doing, Justifying (Favoritism)

- Refusing to do one's 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
- Demanding or inequitable workloads
- 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)
Evidenced-Based Strategies

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

Ability to know one's emotions, strengths, weaknesses, and drives, as well as their effect on others

Capacity to manage one's emotional state; ability to think before acting

Passion and persistence that guide and facilitate reaching our goals

Ability to understand and appreciate emotions, needs, and concerns of others; use them to guide our behavior

Ability to manage relationships, find common ground, and build rapport

Ability to understand and appreciate emotions, needs, and concerns of others; use them to guide our behavior

M E

Self-Awareness

Social Skill

Empathy

Motivation

Self-Regulation

Ways to Develop and 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

“There are three things that are extremely hard: steel, a diamond, and to know one’s self”
Benjamin Franklin
Transforming the Organizational Culture

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

Raise Awareness Build Leadership Support

Assemble and Empower a Civility (Organizational Culture) Team

Measure Workplace Health!

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

Establish, Implement, and Commit to Unambiguous Foundational Statements
To create and sustain a campus culture that models civility, inclusion, diversity, and affirms the value of all members of the campus community.

Vision/Mission Statement: Exemplar

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

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

- 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

Thank You

CIVILITY

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