Creating Psychologically Safe Workplaces: How OHS Representatives Can Help Address Workplace Incivility & Bullying

Heather Cooke, PhD
Post-Doctoral Research Fellow
Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research Trustee

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In preparation...
The workshop involves interactive audience participation!

TEXT HCOOKE232 to 31360 to join
OR
Go ONLINE to PaREV.com/HCOOKE232

What is Workplace Civility?
- Characterizes a work environment where workers are respectful & considerate in their interactions with one another
- A civil workplace is one in which
  - people treat each other with respect & consideration
  - the organization effectively handles conflicts between workers
  - workers from all backgrounds are treated fairly


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What is Workplace Incivility?

- Low intensity, deviant act that violates workplace norms for respectful interactions
- Characterized by an ambiguous intent to harm

What is Workplace Bullying?

- Repeated, misuse of power intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient

Examining Workplace Incivility & Bullying in Long-Term Residential Care

- Two unionized, not-for-profit care homes - one urban & one rural
- Interviewed 31 staff
- Spent approximately 100 hours 'hanging out', observing staff interactions
I don't think there's anybody that can say they haven't experienced 7 & 11, you've got to be the kind of person that just lets things slide if you're in our job or you're miserable. (2022)

Sometimes it's body language, just, you know, trying to be intimidating quietly. Sometimes, it's just not helping you when they totally have the time. Like sitting at the nurses' station & you're running with your hands full & look distressed & they just turn the other way. (2022)

You're about to work with all day & you're just saying "Hi" to each other & they blatantly look the other way & ignore you... To me, this is huge because it sets the tone of the day... It's a blatant "screw you" kind of thing... (2022)

Or it's like there's 5 people at the table & I of them get brought coffee. Right? That little action of, I forgot you were here... But you don't really just forget you know. I thought I should get another one but I didn't think I needed to. I thought I'd counted right. Bullsh*t! (2022)

Like me & Amelle, we literally just turned up & left Rebecca to her own. Because Rebecca would never help us. So we were just like, "Well, if she's not helping us we're not going to help her." So we kind of did that for probably 3-4 weeks. (2022)

Gossip used to be pull your friends aside in the bathroom & let's talk about it. But now we have this greater, um, too... to talk to anybody anywhere in the world about your issues or your interests or whatever. So, people are talking behind each other's back. A lot of it happens in my opinion, on Messenger. It could be texting too or whatever... (2022)

People will go on there [Facebook] & openly call out other workers. I don't want any part of that, right? I just don't. (2022)

...one staff was so angry that somebody was off that day. "Guess who called in sick to work today?" And then they wrote most of her name with like a few little asterisks in there but obviously it's to see whose name it was & then a whole bunch of sweats, right? Like, oh no... (2022)

And I probably call for help less because again, I don't know what their expectations are & if they kind of look at me sideways because I asked for help with something... But I don't want someone else looking at me sideways or thinking I'm incompetent... (2022)

We're going to work short sower if you don't start treating the new stuff with respect because the new stuff are going to turn in teams, you know, after one shift & never come back again. You're going to work short every single day for as long as you can imagine. (2022)

That one negative comment can ruin somebody's image, everything - [their] self-image, whatever, right? So if an adult... Our job, our career, our performance in our job, they identify us. So somebody's making you feel like you're inadequate in some way or what you're doing professionally, that can be a real... that can be a determinant to being successful in a career or with an employer or whatever. (2022)
Impact of Incivility

- Absenteeism
- Turnover
- Mental Health
- Job Stress
- Grief & conflict
- Work effort
- Lost work time
- Avoiding offender
- Burnout & emotional exhaustion
- Get even with organization
- Get 'even' with offender
- Take frustration out on client/customer

Enabling Beliefs

- It's just women being women
- They just need a thicker skin
- They're just a strong personality
- It's the nature of the work

**Individual & Table Exercise**

- Thinking about your own workplace, complete the Guarding Minds@ Work Organizational Review Worksheet
- Discuss with your table mates:
  1. Do issues related to *civility & respect* present a greater risk to particular groups of employees (e.g., new employees, certain jobs, shift workers)?
  2. What are the *strengths* of your workplace in terms of civility & respect (e.g., what do you do well, what should you continue doing)?
  3. What could your workplace do to *improve* this area (e.g., what could you do more of, what could you do less of)?
As OHS Representatives...

- Model positive behaviour
  - Be the change you want to see in the world
  - Watch your language
  - Be mindful of the perils of social media
  - Reinforce expectations regarding civility for new team members
  - Encourage feeling of psychological safety

Creating Norms of Civility

1. Greet & acknowledge each other.
2. Be generous with ‘please’ & ‘thank you’.
3. Respect each other’s time commitments.
4. Treat each other equally & with respect, no matter the conditions.
5. Acknowledge the impact of behaviour on others.
6. Practice inclusiveness.
7. When issues arise, act early, directly & respectfully.
8. Acknowledge the contribution of others.
10. Address civility.

Table Exercise

Review the recommended actions...

1. Which do you think would be most effective in promoting civility & respect?
2. Which are likely to be low cost or no cost in terms of time & expense?
3. Which do you think will have a measurable benefit to your workplace as a whole?
Self-Kindness

https://youtu.be/UaUx4N2PyZQ

How to be Your Best Civil Self...

- Connect with your inner 5-year old. Sleep, eat, play, smile.
- Think about who you admire at work. What do they do that you would like to? Talk to them, go for coffee.
- Be intentional in your actions. Plan a kind act at work & carry it out.
- Evaluate your interpersonal skills. Ask for feedback.
- Practice your listening skills.
- Be aware of your body language & your facial expressions.
- Know your triggers & your biases.
- Practice, practice, practice!

Above all, be kind to yourself. Kindness is contagious. Spread it around!

Print Resources

MASTERING CIVILITY
A Manifesto for the Workplace
CHRISTINE PORATH

The Business of Kindness
OLIVIA MICHAT

Choosing Civility
THE DUTIES OF RESPECTFUL CONDUCT
P. M. FORNI
Online Resources

TED Talks
Christine Porath:
https://www.ted.com/talks/christine_porath_why_being_nice_to_your_coworkers_is_good_for_business

Only Watch:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9Voi5ic5g

Other Online Resources
Guarding Minds at Work:
https://www.guardingmindsatwork.ca/
Mental Health Commission of Canada:
https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/en/English

YouTube – use quality, respectful workplace & kindness as search terms
LifeVestInside – www.lifevestinside.com
Author Leon Logothetis – https://leonlogothetis.com/
Facebook groups – e.g., The Kindness Challenge

Thank you!

For more information:
Email: heather.evanscoles@ubc.ca
Website: http://gero.nursing.ubc.ca/

Alzheimer Society British Columbia

Exhibiting inclusivity and building in Long Term Residential Care

Principal investigator: Dr. Heather Colie
Co-investigator: Dr. Jennifer Baumhoch
Research Assistant: Kaitlin Murray

Community Advisory Committee:
Martha Brauchler & Cheryl Wright, HEU
Rhonda Corby & Karen Lam, RES.
Lisa Kelly, Senior Living
Jennifer Luke, SafeCare BC
Megan Scott, BCDSU

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