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Gerontological Education Research & Outreach



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

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In preparation...

The workshop involves interactive audience participation!

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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



Source: National Standard of Canada (2013). CAN/CSA-Z2000-13/ENF 8700-803/2013. Psychological health & safety in the workplace — Prevention, promotion, & guidance to staged implementation.

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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*

Interpersonal
(directed towards others)

Cyber
(emails, texts, social media)

Victimless
(does not directly impact others)

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What is Workplace Bullying?

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

Frequent
(1-2x/week)


Hostile

Persistent
(> 6 mths)

Power imbalance

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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

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I don't think there's anybody that can say they haven't experienced it in care.... It just comes from everywhere. You've really got to be the kind of person that just lets things slide if you're in our job or you're miserable. [S0125]

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 nursing station & you're running with your hands full & look distressed & they just turn the other way. [S0138]

Someone you're about to work with all day & you're just saying "Hi" nicely to them & 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... [S0231]

Or it's like there's 5 people at the table & 4 of them get brought coffee. Right? That little action of 'oh, 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. Bullshit! [S0163]

Like me & Amelie, we literally just teamed 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. [S0111]

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Gossip used to be pull your friends aside in the bathroom & let's talk about it. But now we have this greater, um, tool.... 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... [S0138]

People will go on there [Facebook] & openly call out other workers. I don't want any part of that, right? I just don't. [S0143]

...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 swears, right? Like, oh no.... [S0120]

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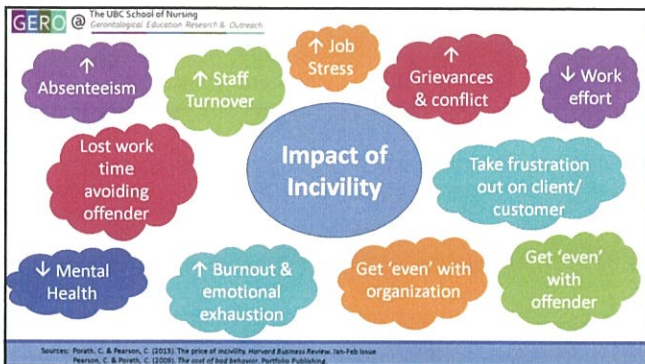
And I probably call for help less, because again, I don't know what their expectations are & if they kind of look at me sideways because I asked for help with something... But I don't want someone else looking at me sideways or thinking I'm incompetent... [S0107]

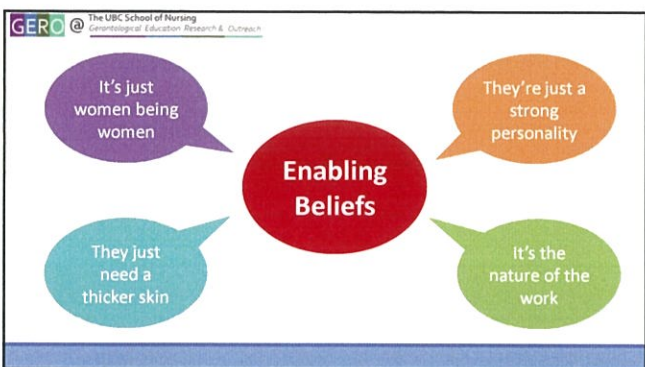
We're going to work short forever if you don't start treating the new staff with respect because the new staff are going to turn in tears, you know, after one shift & never come back again. You're going to work short every single day for as long as you can imagine. [S0201]

That one negative comment can ruin somebody's, I mean, everything - [their] self-image, whatever, right? So as an adult... our jobs, our careers, our performance in our jobs, they identify us. So if somebody's making you feel like you're inadequate in some way at 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, right? [S0201]

The trust is broken... So if I need to stand 2" from you on the other side of the bed & work with you pulling tabs off pads, rolling people, like that's a really intimate workspace. How can I possibly feel comfortable asking her for help at this point? [S0138]


...safety becomes an issue as well because care aides are cutting corners or they're, you know, especially if it's not their resident... they'll just do the bare minimum. If they're pissed at you that day because they have to answer the call, they'll just do actually what's necessary rather than what really needs to be done... [S0129]





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Individual & Table Exercise




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

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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



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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.
9. Be approachable, sensitive & honest.
10. Address civility...



Source: Bryan Cave's Code of Civility

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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?

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Self-Kindness



<https://youtu.be/UaUx4N2PyZQ>

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How to be Your Best Civil Self...

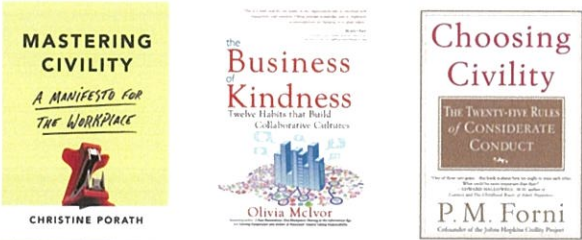


- ✓ Connect with your inner 5-year old. Sleep, eat, play, smile.
- ✓ Think about who you admire at work. What do they do that you would like to? Talk to them, go for coffee.
- ✓ Be intentional in your actions. Plan a kind act at work & carry it out.
- ✓ Evaluate your interpersonal skills. Ask for feedback.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

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Print Resources



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Online Resources

TED Talks
Christine Porath: https://www.ted.com/talks/christine_porath_why_being_nice_to_your_coworkers_is_good_for_business
Orly Wahba: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yn9VxUPIc5g>

Other Online Resources
Guarding Minds at Work: <https://www.guardingmindsatwork.ca/>
Mental Health Commission of Canada: <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English>
YouTube – use civility, respectful workplace & kindness as search terms
LifeVestInside – www.lifevestinside.com
Author Leon Logothetis - <https://leonlogothetis.com/>
Facebook groups – e.g., The Kindness Challenge

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... to our participants, research team & funding partners

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Examining Incivility & Bullying in Long-Term Residential Care

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