


Civility in the Workplace

Promoting a Respectful & Inclusive Culture

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Empowering Leaders, Elevating Teams

growth



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Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Differentiate between civil and uncivil behaviors
- Explain the importance of civility
- Describe the negative impacts of workplace incivility
- Apply practical strategies for addressing uncivil behavior
- Engage in scenario-based activities to practice responding to incivility with professionalism and empathy

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Ice Breaker: One Word Check-In

In the chat, share one word that describes what a positive and civil workplace feels like to you.

just one
word

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"Without civility we run the risk of acting as though we have 'no fellow passengers' on the journey of life."

-Deborah Eicher-Catt

A circular photograph showing three people sitting on a train. A man in the foreground is looking out the window, while a woman and another man are visible behind him.

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What is Civility?

Civility is about:

- Treating others with respect and dignity
- Listening actively
- Acknowledging others' contributions
- Greeting colleagues warmly
- Offering help without being asked
- Owning your mistakes and apologizing when necessary

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What is Civility? (cont.)

Civility is about:

- Respecting differences in opinion, background, and work style
- Maintaining a calm and respectful tone – even in conflict
- Being mindful of your body language and tone
- Using inclusive language



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The Effects of Civility

Effects on the individual and work team when someone feels respected:

- More productive
- Happier, healthier, and helpful
- More creative
- More focused
- More likely to stay with organization
- More engaged
- Feel valued



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Video Debrief: Self Reflections

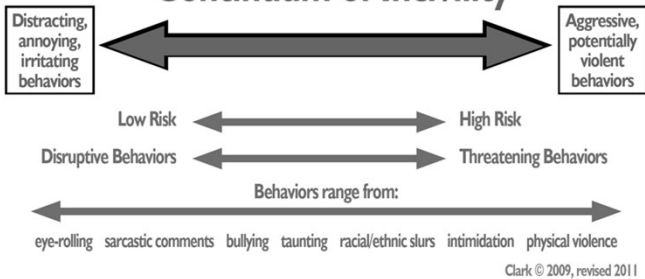
1. Write down one insight that stood out to you and one behavior they want to change or reinforce in their own workplace interactions?
2. Christine Porath shares research on how incivility impacts productivity and collaboration. Have you ever experienced or witnessed workplace incivility? How did it affect the individuals and the team?

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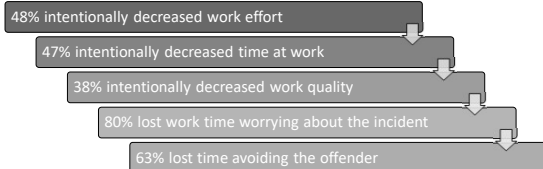
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Continuum of Incivility



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The Impact of Incivility

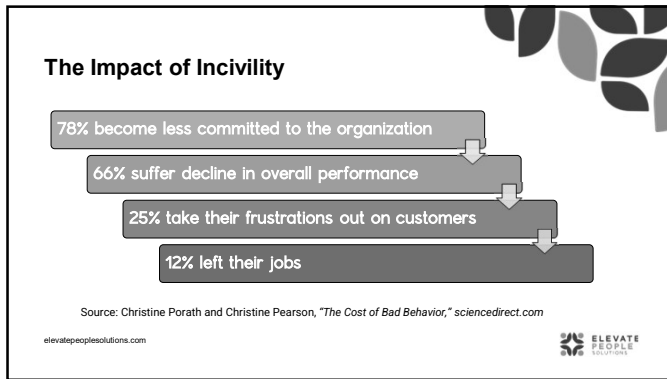


Source: Christine Porath and Christine Pearson, "The Cost of Bad Behavior," *sciencedirect.com*

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When respect is lost, everything that holds relationships together crumbles - whether in the workplace or in life. Disrespectful words and actions don't just hurt feelings; they erode trust, damage morale, and create a toxic environment where no one thrives.

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Common Uncivil Phrases

1. *"That's not my responsibility."*
2. *"That's a stupid idea."*
3. *"This isn't my problem - figure it out."*
4. *"You clearly don't know what you're talking about."*
5. *"We've always done it this way—why change?"*
6. *"Just do what I say and stop asking questions."*
7. *"I'll get to it when I feel like it."*

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Debrief: Processing Uncivil Phrases

- Have you ever been on the receiving end of similar comments? How did it affect you?



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RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE BEHAVIORS

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Core Behaviors That Demonstrate Respect

- Greet colleagues warmly
- Practice active listening
- Be mindful of tone and body language
- Use inclusive language
- Give credit where it's due
- Address conflict respectfully



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APPLYING CIVILITY AT WORK

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Strategies for Practicing Civility

- Start meetings with a check-in
- Give feedback with empathy
- Avoid gossip and sarcasm
- Recognize others' contributions regularly
- Speak up when witnessing disrespect

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Practical Strategies for Addressing Incivility

Address Incivility in the Moment

- **Stay Calm & Professional:** Responding with composure helps de-escalate the situation.
- **Use a Neutral Tone:** Avoid mirroring the uncivil behavior. Instead, say, *"I'd appreciate it if we could discuss this respectfully."*
- **Set Boundaries:** If someone is being disrespectful, calmly say, *"I'd like to continue this conversation when we can be more constructive."*

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Practical Strategies for Addressing Incivility

Use the "I" Statement Approach

Rather than accusing or blaming, express how the behavior affects you:

- *"I felt disrespected when my ideas were dismissed. I'd appreciate constructive feedback instead."*
- *"I felt uncomfortable when that comment was made. Let's keep our discussions professional."*

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Practical Strategies for Addressing Incivility

Address the Behavior Privately

- If the uncivil act wasn't extreme, speak privately to avoid embarrassment or defensiveness.
- Example: *"I noticed that our discussion got tense earlier. I'd like us to work together respectfully—how can we do that?"*

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Practical Strategies for Addressing Incivility

Encourage a Culture of Respect

- **Model Civility:** Treat others with kindness and professionalism, regardless of stress or disagreements.
- **Acknowledge Positive Behavior:** Reinforce respectful interactions by thanking colleagues when they handle conflicts well.
- **Encourage Open Dialogue:** Create a safe space for team members to address concerns without fear of retaliation.

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Practical Strategies for Addressing Incivility

Engage Leadership & HR When Necessary

- If incivility persists, document incidents and escalate concerns to leadership or HR.
- Provide specific examples (dates, words/actions used, impact on work).
- Request guidance on resolving the issue without creating further tension.

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Practical Strategies for Addressing Incivility

Foster Team Accountability

- Honor workplace norms and hold each other accountable.
- If someone witnesses incivility, they can say, *"We all agreed to be respectful—let's refocus on that."*

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Scenario 1: The Dismissive Colleague

Situation:

During a team meeting, Jordan shares a new idea for improving a process. Without discussion, Pat rolls their eyes and says, "We've tried that before. It didn't work then, and it won't work now. Next."

Discussion Prompt:

- What behavior(s) in this scenario are uncivil?
- How could someone address this in the moment - respectfully?
- How can the team foster a more inclusive space for sharing ideas?

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Scenario 2: The Blame Game

Situation:

A deadline was missed, and during a department meeting, Chris says loudly in front of everyone, "Well, it wasn't my fault. Alex dropped the ball again."

Discussion Prompt:

- What impact does this kind of comment have on team dynamics?
- How could Alex respond without escalating the situation?
- What might a leader do to restore civility and accountability?

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Scenario 3: Public Criticism

Situation:

During a team huddle, a supervisor corrects an employee's mistake harshly, saying: "I don't understand how you keep messing this up—it's not that complicated."

Discussion Prompt:

- How does this violate principles of civility and respect?
- What could the supervisor have done differently?
- How might this affect employee morale and performance?

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One Key Takeaway

- Write down one specific action you will take to be more civil and respectful at work.
- Civility Challenge: Pair up with an "accountability partner" to check in after a week.



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Summary of Key Take-Aways

1. Civility Enhances Workplace Success – Research, including insights from Christine Porath's TEDx talk, shows that respect and professionalism boost employee morale, engagement, and business performance.
2. The Cost of Incivility – Rude and disrespectful behavior leads to decreased productivity, higher turnover, and damaged team collaboration.
3. Recognizing Uncivil Behavior – Subtle and overt incivility, such as dismissive remarks, interruptions, or gossip, erodes workplace culture.

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Summary of Key Take-Aways

4. Practical Strategies to Promote Civility – Use respectful communication, active listening, and constructive feedback to foster a culture of professionalism.
5. Speaking Up & Setting Boundaries – Address incivility in the moment using "I" statements and private conversations to maintain workplace harmony.
6. Leadership & Team Accountability – Everyone plays a role in maintaining a respectful workplace; modeling civility and reinforcing positive behaviors create long-term change.

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Thank you!

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