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Chicago Dept of Public Health



OFFICE OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Violence Prevention E-Brief

A Culture of Thoughtfulness

INCREASING CIVILITY IN THE WORKPLACE

In a culture of thoughtfulness:

- Disagreements and cultural clashes are viewed as inevitable and as vital for learning and for making well-reasoned decisions
- We recognize that we could be (and often are) wrong and others could be (and often are) right.
- Mistakes are viewed as inevitable and as a way to learn how to do better in the future.
- Communication skills that forward sound decisions and problem-solving are used and supported. *(Eileen Gambrill, School of Social Welfare, Univ. of CA at Berkeley)*

Examples of Incivility in the Workplace:

- Making jokes about others behind their backs
- Rude comments
- Excluding people from social occasions
- Taking other people's food from the refrigerator
- Blocking people's pathways in elevators and hallways
- Upbraiding someone in front of others
- Slamming down phones

(From Eileen Gambrill, School of Social Welfare, Univ. of CA at Berkeley)



CIVILITY :

- Involves generosity even when it is costly, and trust, even when there is risk
- Creates a duty not to do harm as well as a duty to do good
- Requires us to acknowledge our differences and resolve them respectfully
- Requires us to listen to others with knowledge of the possibility that they may be right and we may be wrong
- Allows and may require criticism of others, but this should always be respectful
- Should not depend on whether we like or know people *(Gambrill)*

Increasing Civility in the Workplace TOOL BOX:

- **Increase skill in:** responding effectively to criticism, giving criticism, active listening—empathy, disarming strategies, inquiry, decreasing signs of defensiveness
- **Increase Emotion Management Skills:** regarding anxiety, anger, 'feeling down'- acquire calming skills (TAKE TEN!)
- **Increase Positive Behavior Change Skills:** decrease use of punishment, increase use of positive feedback; pay attention to positives going on!
- **Decrease cognitive biases/distortions:** mind reading, overgeneralization, jumping to conclusions, emotional reasoning
- **Resist magnifying or exaggerating the importance of some incident**

The key elements in the art of working together are how to deal with change, how to deal with conflict, and how to reach our potential... the needs of the team are best met when we meet the needs of individual persons.