

Fold me

"Civility costs
nothing and buys
everything"

-Mary Wortley Montagu



positivity.project@das.oregon.gov

Fold me

CIVILITY

Managing Incivility

The Journal of Occupational Health Psychology states (in part): “science has shown that incivility is a real stressor with real consequences: though the conduct is subtle, the consequences are not.” A study conducted in 2021 by Dr. Shannon Taylor, Professor of Management at the University of Central Florida, along with colleagues at the University of Central Florida and the University of Illinois, found that as many employees are returning to work on-site, developing and maintaining good relationships with co-workers is important now more than ever. [1]

Incivility can take on very subtle forms and it is often prompted by thoughtlessness rather than actual malice; in fact, many offenders don’t recognize their behavior as uncivil. Here are a few steps we can take to ensure incivility doesn’t influence our morale:

1. Block or unfollow online personalities or platforms that perpetuate negativity and belittling of others. Removing exposure to negativity can have a bigger impact than you may think.
2. Model the behavior you wish to see in others. Routinely assess your behavior and ask others for feedback.

3. Speak up. If you feel someone has behaved in an unrespectful way, find an appropriate time and place to speak 1:1 with that person and clearly let them know how their words/actions made you feel. Be honest and specific but avoid putting them on the defensive by being accusatory.

4. Let go of previous slights that are preventing you from moving forward, like carrying a heavy burden on our backs, holding on to past unresolved wrongs only weigh us down.

5. Don’t jump to conclusions or assume you know another person’s intent or motive.

6. Be aware of your own influence among your peers. Curt Thompson, psychiatrist, and author of “Anatomy of the Soul,” wrote: “It is not possible to not influence others or not be influenced by others.” The things you say and do have impact.

“The goal of being civil is not to have other people reciprocate respect and kindness to you (though that’s usually a natural outcome). The goal is for others to see you as successful when you continue to practice civility, regardless of others’ responses. It’s about you, not them.” [2]

[1] Shannon G. Taylor, Lauren R. Locklear, Donald H. Kluemper, Xinxin Lu. “Beyond Targets and Instigators: Examining Workplace Incivility in Dyads and the Moderating Role of Perceived Incivility Norms.” Journal of Applied Psychology (First published: June 10, 2021) DOI: 10.1037/apl0000910

[2] <https://www.myamericannurse.com/civility-starts-with-you/>