Incivility in the Academic Environment

Elizabeth Sprunk, PhD, MSN, RN, CNE
Objectives

At the end of today’s presentation, participants will be able to:

- Define incivility, especially as it relates to the academic environment.
- Discuss the effects of incivility on the campus community, including effects on faculty members.
- Describe at least 5 strategies that can be used to prevent or manage incivility in the academic setting.
- Describe at least 5 tips for remaining civil during a conflict.
Overview of Incivility

- Incivility is a growing phenomenon in American culture.
- Impacts many aspects of society including areas such as:
  - Politics
  - Marketplace
  - Workplace
  - Cyberspace
  - Social Media
  - Sports
  - Education
Are we more Uncivil than Civil?

- American public in general is viewed as more uncivil than civil (Weber Shandwick, 2012).
Desensitized World

- Bombarded by reports of incivility.
- Have become desensitized to the consequences of uncivil acts on humanity.
Reflection
Common Characteristics of Incivility

- Rude or discourteous behavior directed at another person.

- Uncivil behavior demonstrates lack of respect.

- Uncivil behavior is perceived as such by the recipient.

- Uncivil behavior may lead to harm or distress to the recipient of the behavior.

- Uncivil behavior negatively affects the relationship between the giver and receiver.
Incivility in the Academic Setting

- Becoming a growing phenomenon.
- Colleges and Universities are not immune.
Incivility is discourteous, rude, or impolite speech or actions that violate the standards of mutual respect (Feldman, 2001).

Academic incivility is any speech or behavior that negatively affects the well being of students or faculty members, weakens professional relationships, and hinders the teaching–learning process (Clark & Kenaley, 2011).
**Definition of Terms cont.**

- **Bullying** is going beyond incivility and consists of deliberate, aggressive, and repetitious behavior that is physically or psychologically disruptive, and causes purposeful harm to an individual (Felbinger, 2009).

- **Civility** is “the authentic respect for others when expressing disagreement, disparity, or controversy. It involves time, presence, a willingness to engage in genuine discourse, and a sincere intention to seek common ground” (Clark & Carnosso, 2008, p. 13).
Continuum of Incivility

Distracting, annoying, irritating behaviors

Low Risk

Disruptive Behaviors

High Risk

Threatening Behaviors

Aggressive, potentially violent behaviors

Behaviors range from:

eye-rolling  sarcastic comments  bullying  taunting  racial/ethnic slurs  intimidation  physical violence

Clark © 2009, revised 2011
Consequences of Incivility

- Physical effects
- Emotional effects
- Impairment of cognition
- Behavioral changes
- Weakens personal relationships
- Impacts work setting
Several types of academic incivility exist.

- Administrator-to-Faculty
- Faculty-to-Administrator
- Faculty-to-Student
- Student-to-Student
- Student-to-Faculty
- Student-to-Administrator
- Staff-to-Faculty
- Faculty-to-Staff
- Faculty-to-Faculty
Faculty–to–Faculty Incivility Research

- Clark, Olender, Kenski & Cardoni, (2013)
  - Quantitative study to measure nursing faculty perceptions of faculty–to–faculty incivility.
  - Administered the Faculty–to–Faculty Incivility Survey to 588 nursing faculty in 40 states.

- Results
  - 68% indicated moderate to serious problem.
  - Stress, demanding workloads.
  - Resist change, fail to perform share of workload, distracted meetings, making rude or threatening remarks.
Factors that keep faculty from addressing faculty-to-faculty incivility.

- Fear of retaliation.
- Lack of administrator support.
- No clear policy to address faculty incivility.
- Takes too much time.
Strategies to Foster Civility and Collegiality (Clark, 2013)

- Effective leadership.
- Development of Norms or Desired Behaviors.
- Relationship Building.
- Faculty Development.
Faculty Incivility Video

www.youtube.com/watch?v=_MM41OMMJzs
Student Incivility
Student Incivility

- Student incivility against faculty is a growing problem on college campuses.
- Reported in all areas of education, including classroom, clinical, and online.
- May threaten the psychological and physical well being of faculty.
- Impedes the learning process and student–teacher relationship.
- Uncivil behavior may extend into the workforce.
CONTRIBUTING FACTORS
Review of Literature
Student–to–Faculty Incivility in Nursing Education
Luparell (2007)

Qualitative study to describe nursing faculty experience of incivility and their reactions to it.

Interview of 21 faculty.

Results:

Described varying levels of severity.

Used terms such as assaulted, attacked, or wounded.

Felt threatened, believed were in danger.

Seven themes extracted.
Sprunk (2013)

Phenomenological study to describe and understand the lived experience of nursing faculty who experienced student incivility.

12 nursing faculty members interviewed from 7 colleges or universities.

Results

Subjected to a variety of unacceptable student behaviors.
- Rude and Disrespectful
- Threatening and Intimidating
Results cont.

- Time Consuming.
- Tarnished Reputation.
- Support is Beneficial.
- Harmful to Health and Well-Being.
- Questioning the Future.
Civility in Education
Creating a Culture

- Civility is the foundation of caring.
- Health care professions are based on the concept of caring.
- Ethical guidelines for nursing and other health professions state respect and caring must extend to all persons the health professional comes in contact with.
- Students are obligated to abide by this code of ethics.
Strategies to Create a Culture of Civility

Prevention and Management
Development/Revision of Policies and Procedures

- Zero tolerance or lenience policy for acts of incivility exhibited by students.
- Develop social media policies.
- Examine admission policies.
- Policies must be visible, transparent, and easily accessible for all to view.
- Faculty include policies in their syllabi and review with students each semester.
- All faculty must consistently follow the policies and uphold stated consequences of violations.
Student Development

- Faculty role modeling.
- Teach students about professional and ethical codes of conduct.
- Teach students how to manage and report occurrences of incivility.
- Stress management.
Faculty Development and Support

- Imperative for administration and colleagues to provide support and encouragement.
- Listening
- Mentoring
- Roundtables or Meetings
- Education for Faculty
- Teach Conflict Management Skills
Conflict Management Skills

- Don’t engage in dialogue until you are calm and have thought through what you want to share.

- Actively listen to what is being said during the conflict.

- Reflect what you heard by restating and questioning.

- Make sure your tone of voice is respectful and even.

- Speak assertively, not aggressively.
Creating a Culture of Civility
Questions


References cont.


