Key takeaways

• Recognize uncivil behaviors vs hostile and aggressive behaviors

• Be familiar with causes/predictors of experienced, instigated, and witnessed incivility

• Understand how incivility can be propagated through an organization or group

• Know where to start when choosing an action in response to incivility you may experience
Introduction: Ground Rules

• Questions and discussion are encouraged!
• Everyone is on an even playing field here
• Safe space for sharing experiences
• Practice perspective taking, avoid blame
• Focus on learning from past experiences rather than ruminating
• No specific names! Code names only!
Understanding Incivility
Counterproductive Workplace Behaviors
(Spector, Fox, Penney, et al, 2006)

Counterproductive workplace behaviors:
Behaviors that go against the legitimate interests of the organization.

Examples:
• Absenteeism/lateness
• Bullying/incivility
• Cyber loafing/withdrawal
• Production deviance/sabotage

Opposite concept: Organizational Citizenship Behavior
Incivility definition

• Rude, discourteous, or unsociable speech or behavior (generic dictionary);

• “Low-level breaches of community standards that signal and erosion of conventionally accepted norms and values,” (LaGrange, Ferraro, & Supancic, 1992);

• “Disregard for others in the workplace, in violation of workplace norms for respect” (Andersson & Pearson, 1999).
Qualities of uncivil behavior

- Low intensity
- Ambiguous intention to harm others
- Direct or ambiguous recipient
- Violation of norms for mutual respect
- Not directly aggressive, not violent
What behaviors do you think are considered uncivil?

“Disregard for others in the workplace, in violation of workplace norms for respect”
What is incivility?

- Gossiping
- Rumor Spreading
- Tone of voice
- Interrupting/not listening
- Undermining credibility in front of others
- Privacy invasion
- Not giving appropriate credit
- Ignoring input
- Silent treatment

- Side conversations during a meeting
- Leaving the printer jammed
- Leaving communal space dirty
- Public reprimands
- Exclusion
- Dirty looks
Sources of instigated incivility

• Customer instigated;
• Coworker instigated;
• Supervisor/manager instigated.

Sources of instigated incivility vary, and the effect of sources can also vary.
Consequences of Incivility
Experiencing Incivility: Individual Emotional Cost

• Increased anger, fear, and sadness (Porath & Pearson, 2012);
• Reduced optimism and heightened emotionality (Bunk & Magley, 2013);
• Emotional exhaustion (Kern & Grandey, 2009; Slither et al., 2010);
• Depression (Lim & Lee, 2011);
• Increased negative emotions (Kim & Shapiro, 2008, Sakurai & Jex, 2012);
• Increased negative affect and lower positive affect (Giumetti et al., 2013);
• Lower affective trust (Cameron & Webster, 2011).
Experiencing Incivility: Individual Physical/Personal Cost

• Decreased energy (Giumetti et al., 2013);

• Increased stress (Cortina et al., 2001; Lim & Cortina, 2005; Miner et al., 2010).

Stress is linked to many other physical problems....

• Decreased wellbeing (Cortina et al., 2001; Lim & Cortina, 2005);

• Decreased marital satisfaction (Ferguson, 2012);

• Increased work-family conflict (Ferguson, 2012).
Experiencing Incivility: Behavioral Consequences

- Increased reciprocation (Bunk & Magley, 2013);
- Increased retaliation (Kim & Shapiro, 2008);
- Increased deviance (Lim & Teo, 2009);
- Increased counterproductive workplace behavior (Penney & Spector, 2005);
- Decreased task performance, creativity, and organizational citizenship behavior (Porath & Erez, 2007);
Experiencing Incivility: Organizational Costs

- Decreased engagement (Chen et al., 2013);
- Increased absenteeism (Sliter et al., 2012);
- Increased withdrawal behaviors (Cortina et al., 2001);
- Turnover intentions (Lim et al., 2005);
- Organizational exit (Porath & Pearson, 2012).
Witnessing Incivility

- Increased negative affect (Porath & Erez, 2009);
- Reduced task performance, creative performance, and helpfulness towards others (Porath & Erez, 2009);
- Decrease in mental health (Miner, Settles, Pratt-Hyatt, & Brady, 2012);
- Decrease in physical health (Miner, Settles, Pratt-Hyatt, & Brady, 2012);
- Increase instigating uncivil behaviors towards others (Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2000);
- Predictor of emotional exhaustion (Totterdell et al., 2012).
Consequences Summary

• High cost to individual wellbeing
  • Emotional, psychological, physical health cost

• High cost to culture
  • Lack of trust (individual and organizational)
  • Time to mend relationships and handle incidents

• High cost to organization
  • Replacing lost workers
  • decreased productivity/quality
Causes and Predictors of Incivility
What do you think makes someone more likely to experience incivility?
Experiencer Disposition

Individuals who are more likely to experience incivility include:

• **Racial minority** (Cortina, Kabat-Farr, Leskinen, Huerta, & Magley, 2013);

• **Young in age** (Lim & Lee, 2011) and Gen X opposed to Baby Boomers (Leiter et al., 2010);

• **Disagreeable and/or neurotic personality type** (Milam, Spitzmueller, & Penney, 2009);

• **Higher body mass index (BMI)** (Sliter, Sliter, Withrow, & Jex, 2012);

• **Mix research on men vs women** (Lim & Lee, 2011; Cortina et al., 2001; Cortina et al., 2013).
Instigating Incivility

• Negatively related to -
  • *job satisfaction* (Blau and Andersson, 2005);
  • *distributive justice*: spreading out work and resources equally across individuals (Blau and Andersson, 2005);

• Positively related to -
  • *contract violation, strain, and depression* (Blau, 2007);
  • being a target of incivility (Trudel and Reio, 2011);

• Characteristics of perpetrators:
  • High levels of power (Cortina et al., 2001);
  • Trait anger (Meier & Semmer, 2013);
Cognitive-Behavioral Theory – Affect Infusion Model
Affect as Information

- **Affect** = broad emotional state/mood

  Affective state can be treated like information and can influence our behaviors and thoughts

- When making judgements, individuals tend to attribute feelings to current thoughts and behaviors (Forgas, 1992)

- Affect can act like heuristics (Forgas, 1994)
  - When there is not enough information to construct a response, individuals can fall back on what they are feeling in the moment
Reflect and share: Can anyone recall a time where they used affect to inform their reaction/behavior?
Cognitive Processing Strategy

• The relationship between emotions and behaviors is influenced by cognitive process
  • Automatic processing $\rightarrow$ familiar/anticipated experiences
    • Scripted responses, experienced behavior
  • Constructive processing $\rightarrow$ unfamiliar/unexpected experiences
    • Come up with a new response/behaviors, no scripted responses

• Certain type of cognitive processing leads to affect infusion
  • State feelings seep into behaviors
Affect Infusion Model (Forgas)

• **Affect infusion** – affect seeps into behaviors

• **Automatic processing** ➔ no affect infusion
  • Respond based on previous knowledge or experience
  • Your current state does not matter

• **Constructive processing** ➔ affect infusion
  • Individuals create a new response for an unexpected or confusing scenario
  • Pull from the environment, other people, and their own affective state
Affect Infusion Model (Forgas)

Affect

- Constructive
- Automatic

Affect Infused Behaviors

Unaffected Behaviors
Precursor experiences

• **Psychological contract breach**
  - Expectations of fairness are not met by the organization (Morrison & Robinson, 1997)

• **Psychological contract violation**
  - Negative emotions such as anger and a sense of betrayal due to expectations of fairness not being met (Suazo, Turnley, & Mai-Dalton, 2005)

• **Violation of expectations can lead to increased incivility** (Sears & Humiston, 2015; Sayers, Sears, Kelly, & Harbke, 2011)
Affect Infusion Model (Forgas)

Rough morning…

Close friend bails on breakfast

Busy teammate cancels

Negative Spin/Behaviors

Unaffected Behaviors
Great morning!

Close friend bails on breakfast

Busy teammate cancels

Positive Spin/Behaviors

Unaffected Behaviors
Affect Infusion Model (Forgas)

- Explanation of why psychological contract violation leads to incivility
  - High violation $\rightarrow$ constructive processing $\rightarrow$ uncivil behaviors

- The negative feelings associated with perceived violation can be infused into future behaviors, leading to an increase in uncivil behaviors (Sears & Humiston, 2015; Sayers et al., 2011);

- If experience is negative, but expected, violation not present.
What can we do?
Note – Incivility vs hostility/aggression

Know when to handle it on your own and when to reach out to your HR representative or manager.

If you feel threatened by hostility or aggression... **ESCALATE**!

If you feel that your experience is influencing you negatively... **ESCALATE**!

Reach out to *an adjacent manager* - if you feel the need for distance.
Phrases to consider...

- I am having some challenges with [challenging person], and would like to get your insight.
- I am feeling unsure of an interaction I had with [person]. Can I talk to you about it?
- I am concerned with the interactions I have seen within [insert team/group], and I was wondering if you could give me some coaching on how to respond if it happens again.
If you are comfortable...

Focus on what you can control.

**Be candid, change the culture!**

Stop yourself from propagating incivility.

Influence others to behave more civilly.

Mitigate your own negative consequences when you experience incivility.
Long (ish) Term Mitigation

Put yourself in a more positive state/trait:

• Practice self care;
• Eat healthy and workout;
• Find a job you like or find what you like in your job;
• Maintain work/life balance;
• Build relationships with your coworkers;
• Make you workplace comfortable.
Long (ish) Term Mitigation

Set yourself up to process automatically:

• Set a schedule;
• Maintain your calendar;
• Get to know your teams and how they work;
• Get to know the ‘difficult’ people on your teams;
• Anticipate challenges and change.
Short Term Mitigation

If you know/anticipate changes or something new, put yourself in a state of positive affect:

• Eat your favorite breakfast;
• Wear your favorite clothes;
• Practice meta-meditation (loving kindness meditation);
• Avoid negative spiral/rumination;
• Channel someone who inspires you (what would Leslie Knope do?);
• Schedule lunch or an activity with a friend after a tough meeting;
• Plan for breaks doing something you like.
Short Term Mitigation

If you know/anticipate changes or something new, set yourself up for automatic processing:

• Create a familiar environment – clothes, food, room, people;
• Plan responses to anticipated problems/comments;
• Be prepared, know the topic.
Pay attention your mindset...

Slow down!

• If you are constructively processing and feeling negatively, give yourself time to assess the whole situation.

When appropriate, give others the benefit of the doubt:

• Practice perspective taking.

• Ask that person if they meant their words/actions to be taken that way. **They may not know!**
Coach Others in Civility

Be candid – tell others how their actions impact you

• Discuss in person – what did you mean by [insert sharp sentence];

• Ask about intentions – did you intend that message to be...

Develop trusting relationships:

• Find someone who will tell you when you come off in a way you do not intend.
Phrases and words to use!

• I am unsure of the tone/intention behind this email, can you please clarify?
• I appreciate your perspective. I see it differently myself.
• I prefer to think about the situation from a more positive/constructive perspective.
• I understand/respect your frustration. In the future, could you be more constructive in your feedback/communication.
Other strategies for confronting/combating incivility

• Use emojis!
• Run a tricky email by someone you trust
• Skip the email and call them!
• Positive sandwich – compliment, consider, appreciation/trust
Build a Culture that Promotes Civility

• Relationships and rapport can build trust!
• Trust can overcome misconceptions!
• Candor can mitigate miscommunications!
• Individual changes can cascade!
• Know yourself, know your triggers.
• Incivility stops with you.
Review key takeaways

• Recognize uncivil behaviors vs hostile and aggressive behaviors
• Be familiar with causes/predictors of experienced, instigated, and witnessed incivility
• Understand how incivility can be propagated through an organization or group
• Know where to start when choosing an action in response to incivility in your environment
References


