

Civility as a Strategy to Reduce Workplace Violence in Healthcare

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Civility in healthcare is more than professional courtesy—it is a crucial component of a safe and healing environment. When healthcare professionals consistently model respect, kindness, and effective communication, they improve their work environment, set a standard for communication with patients, and increase patient satisfaction (Leiter et al., 2011). Could fostering staff civility be a key strategy in reducing violence directed at employees by patients or visitors?

The Ripple Effect of Workplace Civility

Healthcare is inherently high stress and tensions can escalate quickly. How staff engage with one another significantly impacts the overall climate of the workplace. Prioritizing civility fosters a culture where mutual respect becomes the norm, critical

information is routinely communicated, and a professional standard for interactions is established.

Incivility among healthcare workers fuels tension, distrust, and discontent, which can trickle down to patient interactions. Patients and their families are keen observers of these dynamics. A workplace characterized by professionalism reassures patients that they are in a supportive, well-functioning environment where respectful communication is expected and delivered. Conversely, visible discord can heighten tension and increase aggression. A cohesive team is also harder to divide, reducing opportunities for behavioral manipulation.

A civil workplace reduces burnout, stress, and emotional exhaustion among staff, which can improve their ability to respond calmly and effectively to chal-

lenging situations. Since individuals exposed to psychological violence face an increased risk of physical violence (Mento et al., 2020), fostering civility is a proactive step toward workplace safety.

Workplace violence prevention should not focus solely on reactive measures. By embedding civility into workplace culture, healthcare organizations create safer environments for both staff and patients. As we continue to refine our approaches to workplace violence, we must ask ourselves: What if the first step toward safer workplaces is simply treating each other with greater respect? ■

References

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