



HR Council – Oct 3, 2024

### **What is Civility?**

- Civility is the act of showing regard for others by being polite, like the civility you showed in speaking kindly to someone who has hurt your feelings.
- Social interactions in which participants maintain respect for one another, and demonstrate respectful behavior toward one another, even when they disagree.

**See SHRM INFOGRAPHIC**

### **Five steps SHRM talks about to begin this journey.**

1. Educate Yourself
2. Establish shared understanding of civility with your teams.
3. Establish and foster team norms for mutual respect.
4. Promote a culture of civility.
5. Become a catalyst for civility.

### **STEP 1. EDUCATE YOURSELF.**

It is crucial to equip yourself with knowledge and understanding of the current state of civility and incivility in both the workplace and society at large. Be honest. Does your workplace operate and value mutual respect? Could you get better?

- Civility is a business imperative.

A lack of civility in the workplace leads to lower job satisfaction, less innovation, higher likelihood to leave, and higher turnover.

#### **Potential question to consider:**

“What does civility mean to you?”

“What does respectful communication look like to you?”

“What does incivility mean to you?”

“How have you managed incivility in the past? What went well?”

What would you do differently?”

“Can you talk about a time you had a productive disagreement? What made it productive?”

Ingredients for civil conversations:

- **Empathy** – Trying to understand different viewpoints.
- **Respect** – Listen without judgement – **Assume Positive Intent**
- **Transparency** – Speak with clear intentions.

## **STEP 2: ESTABLISH SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF CIVILITY**

- Building a solid foundation for civility within your team starts with establishing a shared understanding of what civility means, often referred to as a shared mental model.
- By ensuring everyone has a similar understanding of what constitutes civil and uncivil behavior, your team can communicate more effectively and navigate disagreements constructively.

### **How to do this:**

1. Ask each team member to share their thoughts on what constitutes civil and uncivil behavior in a work setting.
2. After team members share individual perceptions, facilitate an open dialogue to discuss areas of agreement and disagreement.
3. Share the SHRM Civility Index with your team to supplement the discussion and reinforce the significance of civility.
4. Aim for a collective understanding of the definition and importance of civility by the conclusion of the discussion. Take a participatory with the team to ensure **everyone’s voices are heard**.

## **STEP 3: ESTABLISH AND FOSTER TEAM NORMS FOR MUTUAL RESPECT.**

- Following a shared understanding of civility, establishing clear team norms for mutual respect will further guide your journey and the team’s interactions.
- These norms will define how your team interacts, communicates, and resolves conflicts in a civil manner. These norms are specific behaviors expected from everyone in the group.

### **Ways to do this:**

1. Involve all team members in the norm-setting process.

2. Evaluate existing norms to ensure they align with fostering mutual respect and psychological safety. Develop strategies to address any shortcomings.

3. Identify and implement new team norms for mutual respect.

Examples:

- Practice active listening.
- Avoid interrupting others when speaking.
- Base constructive or difficult conversations on information.

4. Address incivility promptly. Establish clear procedures for reporting, addressing, and resolving conflicts.

5. Clearly articulate expectations and establish mechanisms for mutual accountability.

**STEP 4: PROMOTE A CULTURE OF CIVILITY.**

- With shared definitions of civility and team norms for mutual respect in place, you can actively cultivate a culture of civility within your team.
- This culture reflects employee perceptions of how leadership and managers utilize policies, procedures, and practices to maintain a respectful and civil work environment. These behaviors are expected not only from leaders but also from all team members.

**Considerations:**

1. Civility starts with you—lead by example to set the tone for civility within the team.

2. Encourage open and honest communication, which helps team members feel comfortable expressing their opinions, concerns, and feedback.

3. Embrace diversity and differences in perspectives and opinions.

4. Cultivate empathy to foster understanding and support among team members.

5. Recognize and reward acts of civility displayed by team members. Develop or revise policies, procedures, and practices to maintain a respectful and civil work environment. These behaviors are expected from everyone. Leaders and team members should model respectful behaviors.

**STEP 5: BECOME A CATALYST FOR CIVILITY.**

You are now ready to be a catalyst for civility. Remember, fostering civility is an ongoing process, and doing so will further cement civility as a norm and expectation in your workplace culture.

1. Use SHRM's Cards Against Incivility to practice civil dialogue with your team.
2. Access a free, web-based tool from SHRM and Rising Team to run a 30- to 60-minute team activity designed to foster civil and open dialogue.
3. Further enhance your skills by exploring SHRM's Managing Workplace Conflict Toolkit.
4. Explore self-guided resources from SHRM and Inclusivv that highlight proven techniques and effective frameworks to host civil conversations at work.

\* **SHRM Civility Toolkit**