CIVILITY & COMMUNICATION IN THE MIDST OF DIFFERENCES

University of Central Arkansas, Diversity 2016-17
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INCIVILITY

A general term for social behavior lacking in civility or good manners, on a scale from rudeness or lack of respect for elders, to vandalism and hooliganism, through public drunkenness and threatening behavior. The distinction between plain rudeness, and perceived incivility as threat, will depend on some notion of civility as dictated by society.
Incivility Examples

- Profanity
- Tardiness
- Insubordination
- Cell Phone Usage
- Bullying
- Missing work
- Invasion of Privacy
Harvard has forced dozens of students to leave in its largest cheating scandal in memory. Harvard would not say how many students had been disciplined for cheating on a take-home final exam given last May in a government class, but the university’s statements indicated that the number forced out was around 70.

At a Duke-Maryland basketball game, Maryland students wear t-shirts applying the f-word to Duke’s team and chant expletives at the Duke players.

A professor receives a message on his answering machine – “You fat f___ with yellow teeth! You hump!” (From a student, the reason? The student cannot resell their sociology textbook)

An employee walks out after reaching the boiling point from boss behavior …..door slamming, side conversations, exclusion, and blatant disregard for people’s time….
PRICE OF WORKPLACE INCIVILITY

• 80% lost work time worrying about incident
• 63% lost work time avoiding the offender
• 78% stated their commitment to the organization declined
• 48% intentionally decreased their work effort
• 38% intentionally decreased the quality of their work

The Price of Incivility, Harvard Business Review
(800 managers, 17 industries Poll)
CIVILITY CHALLENGES

- Civility may be extended but not reciprocated
- Uncivil behavior tends to be enacted covertly *(micro aggression)*
- Laws or policies regarding incivility do not exist
- Not everyone plays by the same code of conduct
CIVILITY: TRUE OR FALSE
CIVILITY IN AMERICA 2016

- 95% Americans say civility is a problem
- 74% Civility has declined in the past few years
- 70% Incivility in this country has risen to ‘crisis’ levels
- 77% U.S. is losing stature as a civil nation

Source: Civility in America 2016 overview. Weber Shandwick and Powell Tate with KRC Research.
CIVILITY IN AMERICA 2016

Asked to identify the groups contributing most to the lack of civility in society, both likely voters and the overall public cite:

• politicians
• Internet/social media
• news media

(*each being named by more than half the respondents)
“Two monologues do not make a dialogue.”

…Jeff Daly, Internet Website Author
THE HARM OF “BLACK FACE”

Internet, Social Media Incivility
THE HARM OF “BLACK FACE”

Student Response:

Quote from Shoemaker when asked about the incident:

“That word just kind of happens in our friend group, ‘cause we know...we’re a big family, so that word does not offend anyone in our group.”

University Response:

Sorority Response:

Kansas State University interim associate provost for diversity Zella Wiley addressed the situation with a post to the school’s website on Thursday. “On Sept. 15, the university received notice that a derogatory social message and photo was sent out via social media. The involved person is not currently enrolled at the university. It is our understanding the second individual in the photo is not associated with the university,” Wiley began. “This racially offensive photo with a derogatory message has upset the K-State family and is not in concert with our principles of community. Such messages on social media are harmful to all.”
“It’s not that human nature has changed; we have simply become more transparent. The advent of digital communication has allowed us to engage in consequence-free hostility — when facial reactions and emotional responses are placed at a remove. Hostile messaging, abrupt e-mails, and caustic online posts and reviews have normalized an uglier and less empathic side of human behavior — and colored our politics and entertainment as well. Witness the humiliations routinely showcased on reality TV, the snarls of call-in shows and the acidic tone of popular blogs....
…..We are not built to like everyone, but we are built to behave civilly. We need to reinforce this message in homes, on campuses, at sports programs, and within the worlds of digital culture and commerce. We must be called out on excessive sarcasm, bilious remarks, soft bullying and anything that denigrates another individual. Humiliation is not entertainment. Whether it’s a shock jock, a coarse reality-TV show, an obnoxious song or a shout-fest on political TV: turn it off.”
CIVILITY

“Civility is a form of goodness; it is gracious goodness. But it’s not just an attitude of benevolent and thoughtful relating to other individuals, it also entails an active interest in the well-being of our communities.”

..... P.M. Forni
CIVILITY INDEX
CIVILITY

Characteristics of Civility:

- Mutual respect
- Community engagement
CIVILITY

- Civility DOES NOT equate to **NEUTRALITY**

- Civility DOES NOT equate to the absence of **CONFLICT**

- Civility DOES NOT equate to the removal of **FREEDOMS** (speech, expression)
A Civil Campus
Small Group Discussion
PROMOTING CIVILITY AND RESPECT

- Model good behavior

- Start a dialogue on expectations
  Identify norms for civility (arriving on time, ignoring email in meetings, not speaking while someone else is speaking, etc.)

- Accept that disagreement will exist

- Be a respectful listener
“....A CRUCIAL MEASURE OF OUR SUCCESS IN LIFE IS THE WAY WE TREAT ONE ANOTHER EVERY DAY OF OUR LIVES.”

- P.M. FORNI