Beyond Diversity: Civility in the Workplace

Mark S. Nagy, Ph.D.
Xavier University
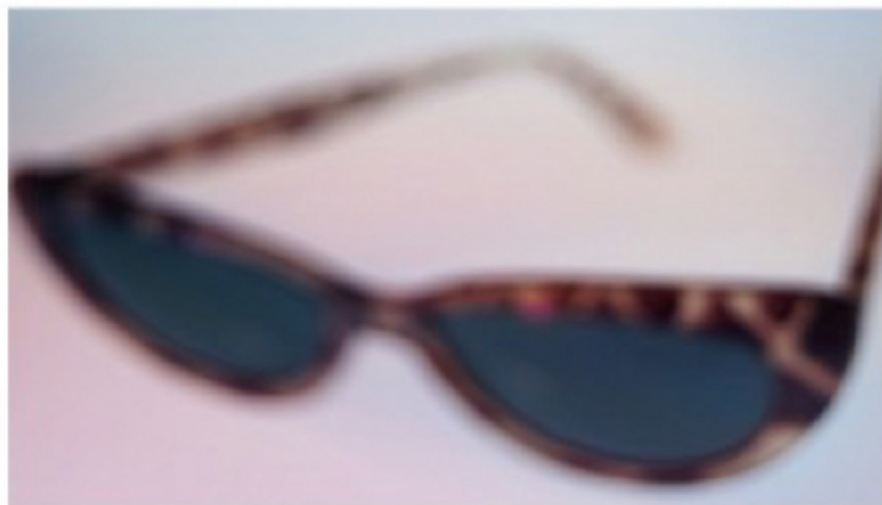**Marcus Management Consultants, LLC**
April 25, 2017

Incivility: A Definition

- **Incivility:** Low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, *in violation of norms for mutual respect* (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; italics added for emphasis)

MARCUS MANAGEMENT
Consultants, LLC

Incivility Characteristics

- **Ambiguous Intent**
  - incivility is not necessarily intentional on behalf of instigator
  - interpretation of ambiguous behavior determines degree of incivility (if any)

MARCUS MANAGEMENT
— Consultants, LLC —

Incivility Characteristics

- **Violation of Local Norms**
  - no universal standards of uncivil behavior
  - incivility defined at local level; what may be uncivil in one environment may be completely civil in a different situation

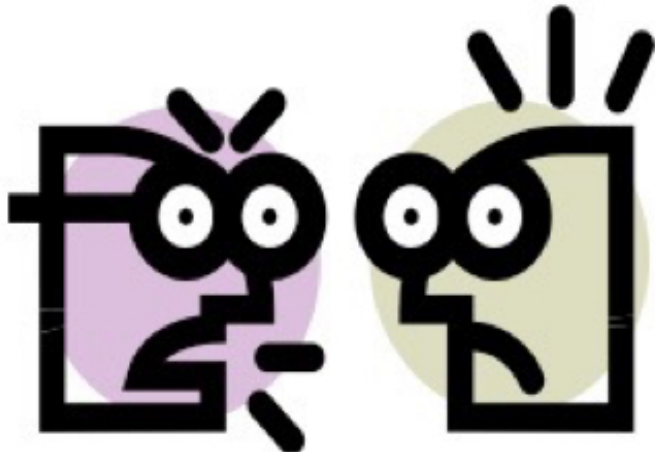MARCUS MANAGEMENT
— Consultants, LLC —

Incivility Characteristics

- **Downward Spiral**
  - uncivil behavior is thought to encourage additional uncivil behavior, resulting in a continuous downward spiral
  - hence, should curtail uncivil behavior as quickly as possible

Examples of Incivility

- Yelling at Someone
- Ignoring Someone
- Making Demeaning Comments About Others
- Addressing Someone in Unprofessional Terms
- Eye-Rolling

MARCUS MANAGEMENT
— Consultants, LLC —

Perspectives of Incivility

- **Targets or Victims**
  - most of the research on recipients of incivility
  - impact on targets related to a number of negative outcomes (e.g., turnover, absenteeism, lower performance, etc.)

Perspectives of Incivility

- **Instigators or Perpetrators**
  - those or engage in uncivil behavior
  - surprisingly, many readily admit to engaging in uncivil behavior
  - oftentimes a reaction to dissatisfaction or perceptions of unfairness
  - outcomes are same as victims of incivility

MARCUS MANAGEMENT
— Consultants, LLC —

Natural Biases: Similar-to-Me

- **Fact: We Like Others Who Are Similar to Us**
  - often, that similarity is based on gender, race, or religion
  - many diversity programs focus on these external markers and create opposing groups (Similar and Different)

MARCUS MANAGEMENT
Consultants, LLC

Natural Biases: Similar-to-Me

- **But, We Have Many Things in Common With Each Other**
  - Likely have similar tastes in food, music, sports, fitness, TV shows, etc. with "different" others
  - Also likely to have dissimilar tastes with "similar" others

Copyright Marcus Management Consultants, LLC

Natural Biases: Similar-to-Me

- **Point:** We likely share similar interests with others REGARDLESS of external markers or group membership

- So, need to focus on getting to know the PERSON

- **This Takes Time and Effort!**

Copyright Marcus Management Consultants, LLC

Cognitive Efficiency

- Unfortunately, it is natural to engage in 'Cognitive Efficiency'

- It is easier to categorize someone based on an external marker or group affiliation than to get to know them

MARCUS MANAGEMENT
— Consultants, LLC —

Cognitive Efficiency

- **To Achieve Mutual Respect, We Have to:**
  - recognize this natural tendency
  - fight that mental shortcut
  - take the time to get to know others on a personal level
- **This, Again, Takes Effort**

MARCUS MANAGEMENT
— Consultants, LLC —

Civility: A Definition

- **Civility**: "Demonstrating sensibility of concern and regard, treating others with respect. Workplace civility is behavior that helps to preserve norms for mutual respect at work; it comprises behaviors that are fundamental to positively connecting with another, building relationships and empathizing" (Pearson, Andersson & Porath, 2000).

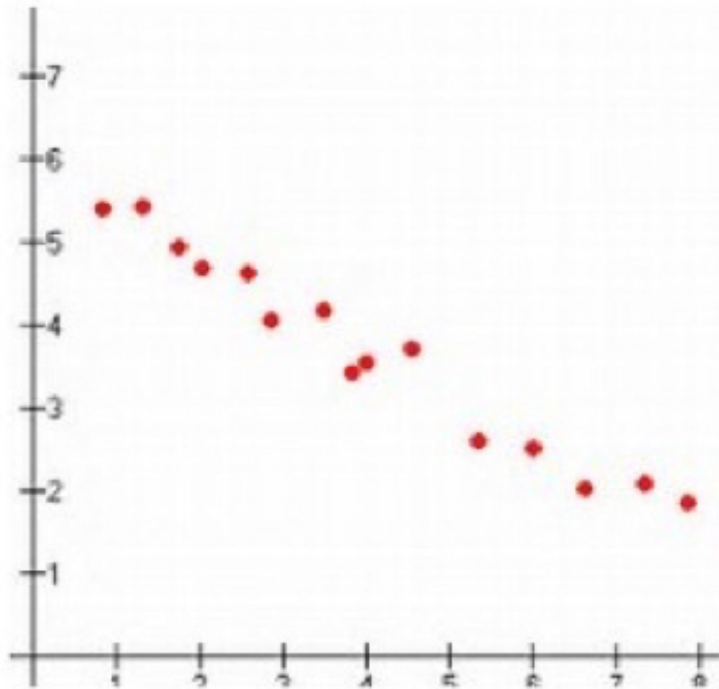MARCUS MANAGEMENT
— Consultants, LLC —

14

Civility Correlates
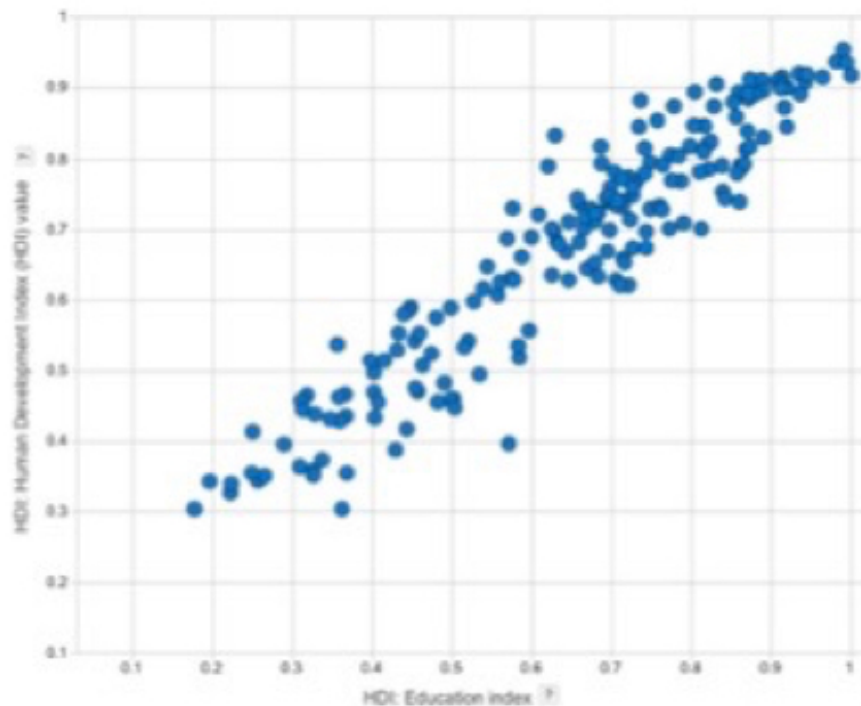
- **Civility is Positively Related to:**
  - Performance Indicators (e.g., patient perceptions of healthcare)
  - Procedural Justice (fairness in the procedures used to make decisions)

MARCUS MANAGEMENT
— Consultors, LLC —
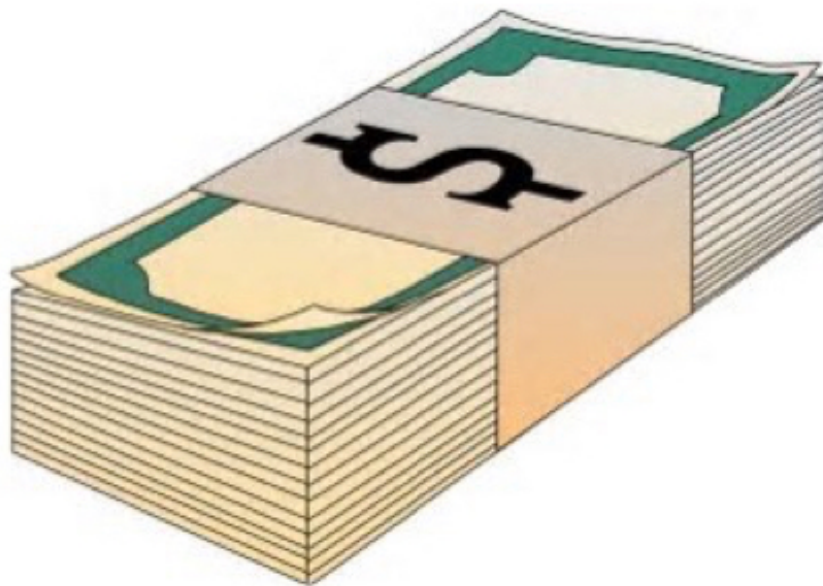
15

Civility Correlates

- **Civility is Negatively Related to:**
  - Absenteeism
  - EEO complaints
  - Turnover
  - Perceived Exclusionary Behavior (e.g., unanswered emails, exclusion from important meetings; gossip)
  - Verbal Abuse
  - Physical Abuse

MARCUS MANAGEMENT
Consultants, LLC

16

Monetary Outcomes of Civility

- **EEO Formal Complaint Costs *Per Hospital***
  - High vs. Medium Civility: $38,264 difference
  - High vs. Low Civility: Nearly $61,000 difference

- **Sick Leave Costs *Per Employee***
  - High vs. Low Civility
    - Patient Care Sick Leave: $240 difference
    - Administrative Sick Leave: $130 difference
    - Manual Labor Sick Leave: $120 difference

MARCUS MANAGEMENT
Consultants, LLC

17

Civility vs. Incivility

- Although negatively related to incivility, civility is NOT the opposite of incivility

- Research on Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCBs): Behaviors outside normal job duties that benefit the organization
  - Civility positively related to OCBs
  - Incivility not related at all (i.e., not negatively related)to OCBs

MARCUS MANAGEMENT
Consultants, LLC

18

Focus on Civility: Step 1

- **Identify Workgroups of Interest**
  - VHA Measure of Civility
    - 8 items
    - Overall Civility
  - Assessment of Workplace Civility
    - 33 Items
    - Five Dimensions (individual, coworker, supervisor, organization, general)
  - Reports of Workgroup Problems

MARCUS MANAGEMENT
— Consultants, LLC —

19

Focus on Civility: Step 2

- **Workgroup Meets Several Times**
  - May need several meetings (e.g., monthly)
- **Workgroup Defines Civility**
  - Each workgroup must define what civility means to them
- **Understand and Encourage Civility**
  - Once defined, group must carry that understanding forward in their interactions
  - Agree to "police" themselves

Copyright Marcus Management Consultants, LLC

MARCUS MANAGEMENT
— Consultants, LLC —

Modeling Civility

- **Zero-Tolerance Expectations**
  - the Department will simply not tolerate disrespect
  - part of your student training is to be professional, and that includes treating others with respect

- **Look in the Mirror**
  - constantly examine how you behave
  - it may not be new, but adhere to the Golden Rule: *Treat others the way you would like to be treated*

Copyright Marcus Management Consultants, LLC

MARCUS MANAGEMENT
— Consultants, LLC —

Stopping Incivility

- **Listen Carefully**
  - The Department encourages you to report uncivil behavior
  - by reporting, we can detect patterns of incivility and address problem areas

- **Hammer It When It Happens**
  - we (the Department) cannot always address uncivil behavior; we need your help
  - engage in some peer pressure: openly discourage uncivil behavior

Copyright Marcus Management Consultants, LLC

MARCUS MANAGEMENT
— Consultants, LLC —

No One Gets a Free Pass

- **Don't Excuse Powerful Instigators**
  - *everyone* is accountable – students, faculty, and staff
  - those who are popular or in higher positions do not get a "free pass"

Copyright Marcus Management Consultants, LLC

MARCUS MANAGEMENT
— Consultants, LLC —

Local Examples of 'Civility'?

- Example 1
- Example 2
- Example 3

Copyright Marcus Management Consultants, LLC

MARCUS MANAGEMENT
— Consultants, LLC —

Positive Outcomes of Civility Focus

- Emphasis on what to do, <u>NOT</u> what to avoid

- Workgroup understands what is appropriate behavior

- Workgroup has better understanding of others' roles in workgroup

- Respect among workgroup members enhanced

MARCUS MANAGEMENT
— Consultants, LLC —

25