How to Create a Civil Environment

Health care is stressful, and professionals often struggle with respectful healthy communication. There are several ways nurse preceptors can contribute to a civil environment to enrich the nursing profession.

Role Model. Preceptors are role models to new employees from the very first day of orientation. Preceptors can set standards for professional and appropriate communication and interactions with others.

Promote a Culture of Civility. Preceptors are responsible for the tone they set in the preceptor/preceptee relationship. Preceptors should strive to create a setting where open, honest and healthy communication is encouraged and expected.

Provide Feedback. Preceptors should include communication skills in their evaluation of the preceptee. Reward the preceptee for positive contributions to a civil workplace, and offer constructive feedback when the preceptee failed by providing them with specific examples of alternative actions.

Preceptors Role in Combating Workplace Civility

Workplace incivility is a form of horizontal violence, and has been linked to decreased job satisfaction, decreased job performance and high rates of new graduate nurse burnout. Examples of uncivil behaviors include rude, discourteous and disrespectful behavior. Preceptors can do their part to prevent nurse burnout by contributing to supportive workplaces that promote the full potential of each new nurse.

Civility Training Programs

Incivility is often linked to poor communication. Training programs that focus on developing civil interactions have been successful. Civility training can improve retention rates of new and experienced nurses. When the following four steps were used in a neuro intensive care unit, staff turnover was reduced by more than 50 percent (Montgomery & Dean, 2016). Although the project was driven by staff nurses, the commitment of nurse managers to employee development was critical.

1) Promote the use of evidence-based practice related to civility.
2) Improve compliance with civility training guidelines.
3) Establish unit education that can be shared.
4) Inspire nurses to be aware of how communications effects care delivery and staff relationships.

How to Create and Contribute to a Civil Workplace

Simple rules to improve the culture of communication and work toward a more civil workplace follow.

- recognize nurses’ ethical and legal obligations to create and contribute to a healthy work environment
- focus on the promotion of respectful relationships between people
- create healthy interactions
- be aware of the importance of civil interactions among all health care workers
- increase the number of confident interactions between staff
- encourage team work strategies to create buy-in
- provide continuing education about civility, communication and listening skills
- relate civility to evidence-based trends in patient satisfaction, quality outcomes, a healthy work environment, staff retention and reduced stress

“i believe we can change the world if we start listening to one another again.” Margaret J. Wheatley, Ed.D.