

Addressing Incivility: A Barrier to Nursing Practice and Care

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Despite the professional expectation that nurses should show caring behavior towards patients and co-workers, uncivil behavior persists (Eggerstone, 2011). According to Clark (2014) incivility causes psychological and physiological problems for all involved. Incivility is described as rude, disruptive, intimidating, and undesirable behaviors directed towards another person (Stokowski, 2011). It impacts nursing care and practice by contributing to poor patient care and outcomes as well as medication errors (Joint Commission, 2010). Additionally incivility is a barrier to collaboration, mentoring, and collegiality. There is a need to provide nurses and nursing students with skills to engage in civil ways that support nurse-to-nurse collegial relationships (Berry, Gillespie, Gates, & Schafer, 2012; Randle, 2003). Cognitive Rehearsal is one evidenced based strategy which can be used to address incivility, which is a barrier to nursing care and practice (Griffin 2004, 2014).

Methodology: The researcher obtained IRB approval to conduct a qualitative comparative study utilizing a purposive sample of nine senior nursing students. Pre and post surveys using open ended questions regarding incivility, prevalence and confidence to use Cognitive Rehearsal (CR) to address incivility were administered. Comparative analysis was used to organize data into categories and themes.

Findings: Four themes were extrapolated from the survey results to include: Definition of incivility, observing incivility, experiencing incivility and using CR. All students were able to accurately define incivility. Ninety percent of the students felt confident that they could use CR to address incivility as new graduate nurses. Students admitted to being victims of incivility as well as being perpetrators. Several committed to behavior changes. Twenty percent of the students requested additional information about incivility.

Recommendations: Nurses and nursing students should be prepared with evidenced based strategies to address incivility which is a barrier to nursing care and practice. This training could be incorporated in nursing program curriculum and orientation training for new hires and new nurses.

Limitations: This study is specific to one small sample recruited from a university located in the northeast region of the United States, subsequently, generalization is limited.