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Incivility in Academic Environments: If You See Something, Say Something

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This presentation entails a review of current literature on incivility in academic environments, risk factors, effects, and strategies for its reduction. The focus is at the broad institutional rather than disciplinary level., though the American Nurses Association developed a white paper on workplace incivility and bullying in 2015.

Bullying is a focus of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention because it is associated with adverse health effects in victims. Incivility is defined as a pattern of rude or discourteous behaviors. Bullying is a pattern of intentional, more frequent and intense, repetitive interactions usually by one person against another, while mobbing is bullying that is perpetuated by a group in a particular limited environment. Bullying can entail physical, verbal, or relational harm or property damage. Victims but also witnesses to bullying demonstrate adverse effects.

The occurrence of incivility, bullying and mobbing in academic environments can be traced back to the origins of modern universities 1000 years ago. It has increased in recent years related to increased competition, decreased resources, and corporatization in academic environments.

The personal and organizational costs of a culture of incivility are demonstrable. Organizational risk factors have been identified in an extensive body of research literature, and academic organizations are regarded to have high risk. This issue is integrally related to and cannot be considered separately from discrimination and harassment. The process of tenure is a known factor, as is the hierarchical structure of academic organizations.

Faculty, staff, administrators, and students are both perpetrators and victims. Personal and institutional costs are great. Organizational strategies for reducing the likelihood of incivility are described, and personal strategies are considered. The literature is conflicted on the benefits to individuals of reporting. However, there is no good reason for organizational tolerance of incivility.

Title:

Incivility in Academic Environments: If You See Something, Say Something

Keywords:

Bullying, Incivility and Mobbing

References:

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Abstract Summary:

Content Outline:

Incivility in Academic Environments: If You See Something, Say Something

1. Introduction
2. Definitions: incivility, bullying, mobbing
3. Prevalence

1. Key points
2. There are organizational costs to tolerance of incivility
3. Organizational risk factors are greater in academia
4. Organizational strategies can be successful

1. Conclusion
2. There is no benefit to organizations tolerating incivility
3. The issue has industry-wide attention

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Author Summary: Dr. Nancy C. Sharts-Hopko has served in faculty and administrative roles in nursing education for 40 years. She was an inaugural member of the NLN Certification Commission, which she chaired 2009-2011, and formerly served as Treasurer, Sigma Theta Tau International. She is a member of the faculty of the Emerging Educational Administrator Institute.