Leading a MH Nursing Team to Improve Civility through Assertiveness Training with Role-play
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AIM STATEMENT
The AIM of this study is to improve civility in the workplace through the use of evidence-based leadership strategies.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?
Annual All Employee Survey (AES) – Civility scores for 2011 showed a sharp decline. The Civility Scale measured 8 items:
- Respect
- Conflict resolution
- Cooperation
- Anti-discrimination
- Value differences
- Diversity acceptance
- Personal interest
- Reliability

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?
- The Institute of Medicine (IOM) tells us that effective communication reduces patient care errors.
- Incivilities in the workplace, including ineffective communication, lead to unnecessary staff distractions and undermine the culture of safety.
- Workplace incivilities are at one end of a continuum of violence in the workplace.
- Providing safe care within Mental Health services requires staff to remain focused continuously.
- Civility in the workplace conveys respect and promotes safety.

WHAT DID WE DO?
We tested an evidence-based leadership strategy to improve civility, using assertiveness training with role-play during staff meetings.

METHODS
Design: Translational research guided by Neuman Systems Model and Peplau’s Theory of Interpersonal Relations.
Sample Size: N = 169
Sample: VA MH Nursing Service
Independent Variables: Working in MH Nursing Service 05/12 and received assertiveness training with role-play 09/2011 – 05/2012
Dependent Variables: AES-Civility score
Survey Instrument: AES Civility Scale

Data Collection Procedures: AES responses automatically transmitted to independent contracted data collection agency and de-identified.
Data Analysis: T-test for independent samples and Cohen’s d for effect size

RESULTS
Two Civility Scale items reached statistical significance (p<.05): cooperation (p = .023) and anti-discrimination (p = .027). The Civility Scale mean score showed a trend toward statistical significance (p = .055). The leadership strategy had a rapid and meaningful effect. Civility in the workplace is everyone’s right and everyone’s responsibility. This was a cost effective educational approach to safety.

RECOMMENDATIONS
- This leadership strategy should continue.
- Support for Nurse Manager use of role-play should be increased.
- Staff should be recognized for their positive behaviors.
- Results should be compared across services.

REFERENCES