



### The Association of Black Nursing Faculty (ABNF)

- Professional Development
- Encouragement
- Support
- Communication

The mission of ABNF is to address health issues of concern to the Black community through the scholarly activities of the Black Nursing Professoriate

## ABNF Policy Statement on Incivility

### Policy Statement

The Association of Black Nursing Faculty (ABNF) strongly advocates for the continuous vigilance of nurses and nursing faculty to increase and implement interventions to decrease incivility within the nursing profession, patient care settings, as well as within the general community.

The American Psychological Association has created a civility working group to address the issue of incivility (Planto, 2017). Incivility in the United States has been on the rise for several years. The theoretical concept of workplace incivility was introduced into the literature in 1999 by Andersson and Pearson (1991). However, there is growing evidence that incivility is not limited to the United States. In 2015, Holm, Torkelson, and Backstrom, reported results of a study investigating workplace incivility in Sweden as a social process. Incivility continues to occur at an estimated astronomical cost of in the U.S. and severely impacts professional nursing practice, patient care, and nurses' health and well-being (Andersson, 1999). Williams (2016) reports that rudeness, discourtesy, and insulting behaviors have now replaced civility in the United States. A recent poll by Shandwick, Tate, and KRC Research (2017) reports that Americans believe incivility has reached crisis levels. Television shows, movies, political campaigns, internet bullying and news broadcasts currently depict uncivil behavior as the norm. Recent university student behaviors have escalated to violence when students disagree with messages delivered by invited speakers. This year incivility has resulted in deaths in Dallas, Texas and Charlottesville, Virginia.

There is a state of intransience when two or more differing opinions are expressed, there is no longer room to seek common

ground or listen to what the other has to say. Incivility has impacted all forms of employment including nurses; resulting in a global shortage of employed nurses associated with individual nurses response to incivility.

Incivility is known by a variety of terms, such as workplace and lateral violence, abuse, and bullying, that are all detrimental not only to nursing but society in general (ANA, 2015; Clark, 2008). It is important for citizens of the nation to identify and define incivility as well as develop strategies to deflect discourteous, insolent, and bullying behaviors in academic, social, and clinical settings.

Incivility in society may have reached its zenith. Recently, a celebrity used Facebook to display a photo of the celebrity holding what appeared to be a severed head of the president of the United States. Condemnation of the photo came from people in general without regard to political leanings. This is a great opportunity for each of us to take stock of what we say and do to others. There are civil ways to disagree with others. Disagreement is important, however the delivery of the message may impede an opportunity to discuss and either agree to disagree, or reach a compromise. Physical assault is neither appropriate nor an acceptable way to oppose divergent points of view.

Although the American Nurses Association and the Joint Commission zero-tolerance policy advocate addressing this serious problem among nurses and healthcare workers, it is imperative that nurses join with others to address this epidemic throughout the nation. Recently, efforts to address the problem have diminished, and the problem is becoming more widespread. Nurses are a well-respected component of the community, who are often tasked to address issues that impact the health of the nation. Inci-



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vility has reached a pinnacle when it escalates to physical assault and shootings.

### Recommendations

Nurses can play a pivotal role in implementing educational opportunities that socialize nurses and nursing students to assist patients and families to address incivility, by providing the appropriate training and coping skills within the community at large. Powell, Powell, & Petroski (2015) reported that better organizational structure promoted lower incivility and bullying. In addition, others also report that emotional and organizational support buffer the effects of incivility (Miner, Settles, Pratt-Hyatt & Brady, 2012).

### Recommendations

Now is the time for nursing to assume a leadership position that confronts incivility as a health issue by changing the status quo with meaningful interventions and sanctions for unacceptable behavior to preserve the ethical and moral fabric of the country. The ultimate goal is for nurses, nursing students and nursing faculty to employ the benefits of teamwork and positive behavior as part of the solution to incivility. By adopting the skills of conflict resolution, problem solving, personal accountability, and respectful communication nurses will recognize and model positive behaviors that address negative actions.

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