

Managing Rudeness at Work



Participant Guide

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Welcome to the “Managing Rudeness at Work” workshop.

While a training program on workplace manners and courtesy may seem like overkill, the reality is: rudeness is an epidemic costing industry millions a year. Indeed, what society seems to be gaining in terms of both knowledge and technological advancement, it's losing out on basic social values that directly impact the bottom line. Bosses freely intrude on subordinates' personal space, gossiping co-workers are norm, and quality customer care has been forgotten. The result: an environment not conducive to getting work done, dissatisfied clients aiming for the competition, and in some cases, blatant tolerance for abuse and harassment.

To address the growing problem of rudeness in the work setting, this workshop introduces the concept of civility, its importance to a agency, as well as its typical causes and effects. Skills needed to effectively practice civil behavior, as well as different ways organizations can systematize civility in the workplace will also be discussed.

Workshop Objectives

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

Define rudeness, understand its causes, and enumerate at least three of its behavioral indicators.

Describe the costs of rudeness, as well as the rewards of civility, within the workplace.

Determine practical ways of practicing workplace etiquette, including the proper use of greetings and respect.

Identify skills in diagnosing the causes of rude behavior.

Explain the role of forgiveness and conflict resolution in the creation of a civil working environment.

Describe the different elements of effective communication, particularly effective para-verbal and non-verbal communication.

Identify specific policies that address rudeness and employee conduct.

Civility Review

Have you ever considered the current practice of civility in our workplace, as well as your own personal contribution to the status quo?

Think about a time when you felt most respected or considered by a co-worker, superior and/or subordinate. Identify the unique characteristics of the situation you've brought to mind. Assess your own practice of civil behavior in the workplace.

The following guide questions can help during this process:

1. Describe the situation where you felt most respected by a co-worker, superior and/or subordinate. What *exact behavior* did you observe from your co-worker that made you feel treated with respect?
2. What was the effect of your co-worker's respectful behavior on:
 - a) Your performance on the job?
 - b) Your relationship with your co-worker/s?
 - c) Your self-esteem?
3. Have you been treating your co-workers with similar respect? On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 representing "consistent practice of civil behavior", rate yourself in terms of your practice of civility in your workplace. Explain the rating you gave to yourself.
4. Is civility the norm in your organization? On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 representing "civility as consistently practiced", rate the practice of civil behavior in your workplace. Explain your rating.
5. What do you think you and your organization are doing correctly to reinforce civility in your workplace? What do think you and your organization still needs to improve?

Take a moment to review your responses. Keep your responses in mind during the workshop, as these answers can assist in transferring the skills learned in this workshop to practical life.

Activity: Case Study

Stamos suffered severe stress working for her employer's uncle, described as having an "explosive personality." The uncle refers to the women in the office using the term "bitches," waylaid meetings and had been resistant to directions and suggestions. According to an article written by Harvey Enchin for the Vancouver Sun, Stamos' employer's uncle "burst(ed) into the woman's office, made accusations against her and threatened her to the extent that she locked herself in her office and, at one point, called the police." And despite the blatant display of rudeness and abuse, the employer would not fire his uncle.

The case was brought to court and the judge ruled in favor of Stamos. Annuity Research was required to pay Stamos "six months' salary, vacation pay, and expenses incurred in finding another job, as well as a bonus the employer had offered as an inducement for her to stay, another \$3,600 for dental repairs arising from grinding her teeth due to stress and an additional sum to cover mental distress."

- 1. List down all the acts of rudeness experienced by Stamos in Annuity Research.**
- 2. What do you think are the effects of these acts of rudeness on Stamos? How about the effects on the agency?**
- 3. Do you think that the judge's ruling was fair? Why or Why not?**
- 4. What do you think is the cause of rudeness in Stamos' workplace?**
- 5. Aside from taking the case to court, what do you think can be done by both Stamos and the management of the agency to overcome similar cases of rudeness in the future?**

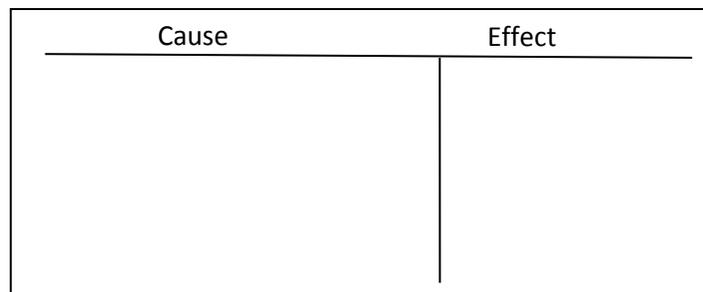
A Cause-and-Effect diagram is an effective tool that you can use when trying to understand the potential causes of rudeness in the workplace is.

Also called the Ishikawa Diagram (after its inventor Kaoru Ishikawa) as well as the Fishbone Diagram because of it looks like the skeleton of a fish, the Cause-and-Effect diagram is a graphic tool that helps users identify, present and analyze the possible causes of a particular outcome.

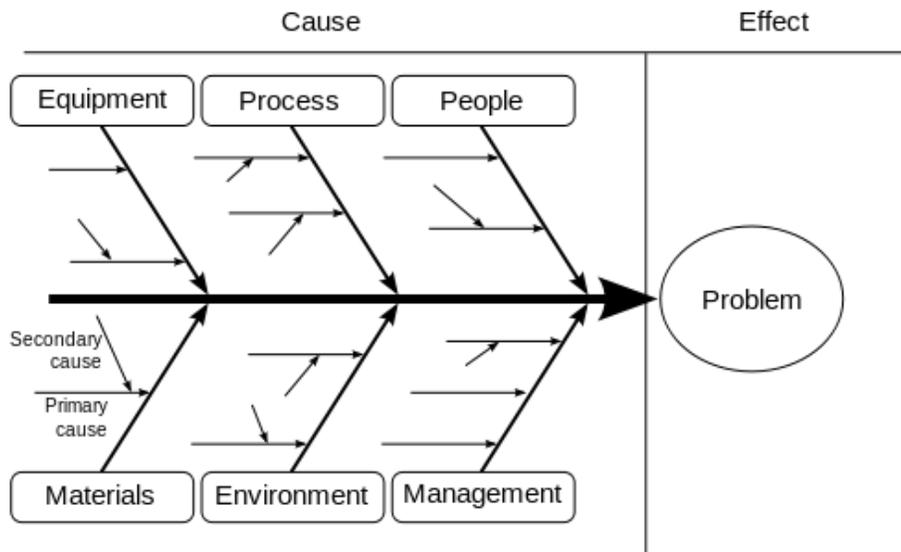
From a Cause-and-Effect diagram we can see both basic causes of a situation or problem, as well as possible interactions among the different causes. Used correctly, the cause-and-effect diagram can also be a way to increase a group's awareness of the different factors surrounding a problematic event.

How do you create a Cause-and-Effect diagram? The following are some simple guidelines to follow:

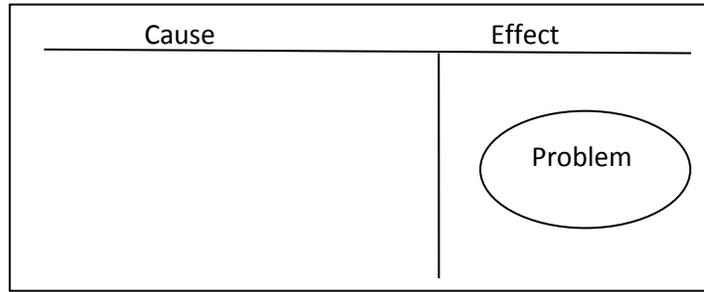
1. Note that the diagram has two sides: the cause side which is on the left and occupies as much as 75% of the drawing space, and the effect side on the right.



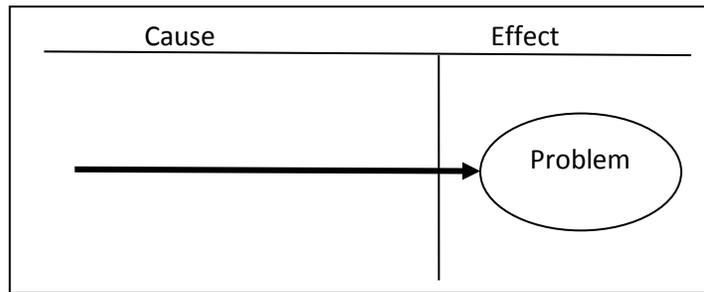
2. Identify the consequence or effect that you want to understand. Place it on the effect box



to the right. You may add a brief description so that the exact effect that you want to analyze would be immediately clear to the person looking at the diagram. Be as specific as possible when presenting the effect.



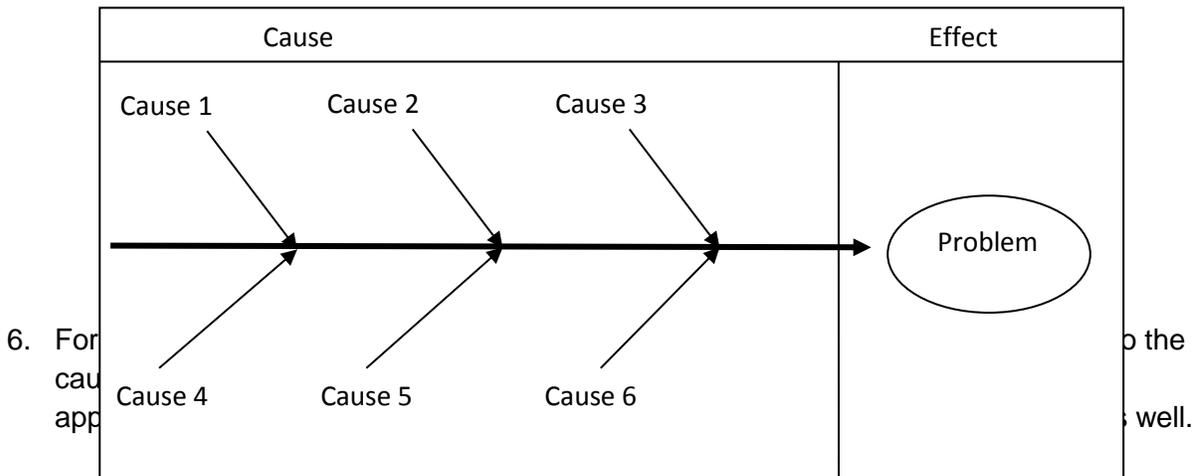
3. Draw the spine of your diagram. The spine is a horizontal arrow pointing to the effect box. You can think of it as like the vertebrae of your fishbone.



4. Identify as many possible main causes of the effect you are analyzing. The causes you will list may be an intelligent guess, or it may be born of empirical research. A problem in production, for example, may be caused by issues in the process of making the product, poor management of resources, inferior materials, and faulty equipment.

Here's a hint: some researchers have ready categories that they use when coming up with the causes of particular situations. For instance, there are those who keep these six ready categories in mind: Equipment, Process, People, Materials, Environment, and Management. Others use easy-to-remember categories, such as the 4Ps: Policies, Procedures, People, and Plant.

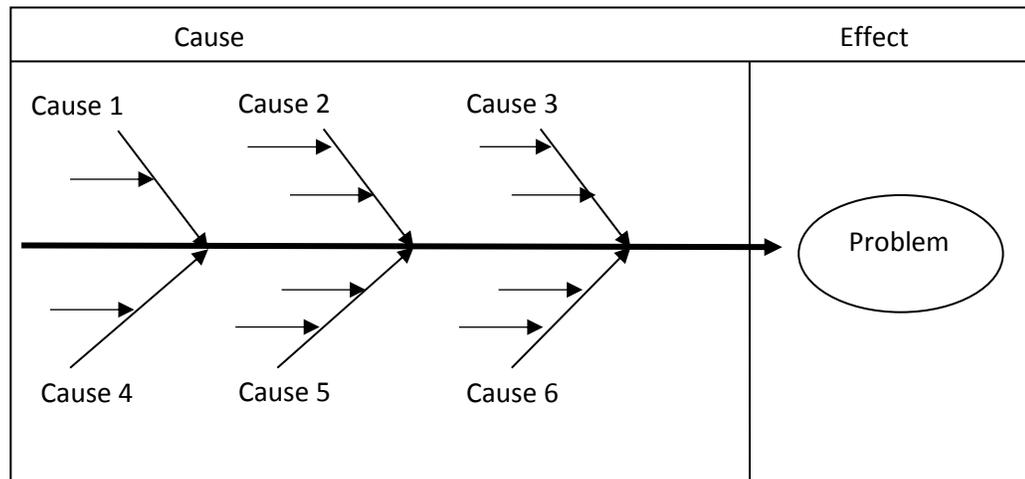
5. Place all the causes you've identified inside boxes above or below the spine and create arrows directing from the cause to your diagram's spine. If done correctly, your diagram will look like a fishbone, with smaller bones branching out from the main vertebrae.



6. For cau app

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s well.

For best results, challenge yourself or your group into a critical analysis of the problem situation by studying the problem from all angles.



A completed Cause-and-Effect Diagram is presented in the Case Study section of this module.

7. Now it's time to analyze your cause-and-effect diagram. Tips in analyzing your diagram include:
 - Is there a recurring cause, e.g. poor communication? Then perhaps it represents an area worth looking into. You may have stumbled upon the main cause which will account for most of the symptoms. Remember: in systems, the cause-and-effect process is not linear but circular.
 - Are there areas where you don't have much information on? Then perhaps further investigation is needed in that area.
 - Does there seem to be logical inconsistency in your diagram? Find out where the irregularity is coming from. You may have to challenge your assumptions.
 - Keep on asking "why" questions. For example, if you've jot down "no agency policy" as one of your causes, ask yourself: why is there no agency policy? Ask why again when you've come up with the answer.

Activity: Case Study

ABC is a non-profit organization that provides free health services to disadvantaged communities. It is staffed mostly by individual volunteers and members of interest groups with the same advocacy.

A long-term problem in the organization is the amount of interpersonal conflict among its staffers. Because the group is staffed by people from different organizations, there is a tendency for some members to hijack a project's PR to promote their own advocacy.

There is also a constant struggle when it comes to determining who is in charge. For while the staffers also share the view that health care services are important to the communities they serve, they differ on the way delivery of services should be conducted. For instance, there are those who insist that beneficiaries must pay at least half of the services fee, to discourage the dole-out mentality. While others believe that making beneficiaries pay defeats the purpose of the program. The bickering and arguments can get so bad that at one point some of the staff members walked out just minutes before an important program.

The stressful nature of the job adds to the tension between the members. Most of the flare-ups occur after the group has been exposed to the grueling work of catering to hundreds of patients in a day.

Ten Tips for Creating Respect and Civility in Your Workplace

Author: Barbara Richman

Organization: [HR Mpact](#)

1. Before acting, consider the impact of your words and actions on others.
2. Create an inclusive work environment. Only by recognizing and respecting individual differences and qualities can your organization fully realize its potential.
3. Self-monitor the respect that you display in all areas of your communications, including verbal, body language, and listening.
4. Understand your triggers or “hot buttons.” Knowing what makes you angry and frustrated enables you to manage your reactions and respond in a more appropriate manner.
5. Take responsibility for your actions and practice self-restraint and anger management skills in responding to potential conflicts.
6. Adopt a positive and solution-driven approach in resolving conflicts.
7. Rely on facts rather than assumptions. Gather relevant facts, especially before acting on assumptions that can damage relationships.
8. Include others in your focus by considering their needs and avoiding the perception that you view yourself as the “center of the universe.”
9. View today’s difficult situations from a broader (big picture) and more realistic perspective by considering what they mean in the overall scheme of things.
10. “Each one influence one” by becoming a bridge builder and role model for civility and respect. Act in a manner whereby you respect yourself, demonstrate respect for others, and take advantage of every opportunity to be proactive in promoting civility and respect in your workplace.

Activity: Three Sides of Incivility

Recall a conflict that you've had with another person. This person can be a co-worker, family member or a friend. Complete the activity below:

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Below is a table with three columns: "My Side", "The Other Person's Side" and "The Truth."

My Side	The Other Person's Side	The Truth

2. In the first column, "My Side", present your list of grievances in the conflict you've recalled. The format of your entries is not important; you can present arguments, interests, feelings and/or needs, whichever is applicable. You can use paragraphs or bullet points, whichever they are more comfortable with.
3. Proceed next to filling up the second column. As objectively as possible, present the other party's grievances in your conflict. Make sure that you give as much detail to the other party's grievances as you did to your list of grievances.
4. Lastly, accomplish the third column: "The Truth." For this column, think of other objective reasons for the conflict. You can integrate your point of view with the other person's point of view to see if there are elements of the story you are neglecting. You may also imagine what objective and caring third persons would likely opine about your conflict.

Tips for Professionalism in the Workplace

By Mary Beth Magee, eHow Contributor

Create and maintain a high level of professionalism in your workplace by applying some simple, yet important guidelines. Educational consultant James Stenson describes professionalism as "a set of internalized character strengths and values directed toward high-quality service to others through one's work." Take a quick, downloadable quiz from the Goals Institute to measure professionalism in your organization, then apply these tips as needed.

1. Business Etiquette Begins at the Top

- Model the desired behavior from the highest position in the company to the lowest ones. Foster excellence by displaying it. Establish a clear-cut set of expectations through employee handbooks, in-service training and timely feedback. Jim Ball, president of The Goals Institute, observes, "More commonly, unprofessional behavior exists when leaders allow it to exist by failing to proactively establish and clarify codes of conduct and principles of professional excellence and then communicate and enforce those standards."

2. More Than Doing a Job

- Demonstrate professionalism at any level of employment by the attitude you bring. Ask yourself if you can answer "True" to these statements:
I do the job to my best ability.
I take pride in the job I do.
People are better off because of the way I do my job; I make a difference.
I start my workday neat and clean.
I report for work on time and stay for my entire shift or workday.
I honestly earn my pay.
I treat my customers, clients and coworkers with respect and dignity.
I employ good manners in my interactions with others.
I keep my mind on the job at hand.
I respect my work and myself.
I take care of my tools and supplies, whatever their cost.
Add these statements for management-level positions:
I set an example of proper performance for my staff.
I regularly acknowledge and reward excellence among my staff.
I give meaningful feedback when I see a problem developing.
I enforce company guidelines evenly across my staff.
I provide a "measuring stick" of what I expect from my staff.
I supply appropriate tools to enable my staff to perform their work.
Answer "no" to a question, and you've spotted a potential problem in your company's culture.

3. Professionalism and Ethics

- Ethics and professionalism are closely related. Set high ethical standards for employee behavior. Support those standards with training, communication and an atmosphere of trust, advises consultant Shawn Smith. Ethical "problems can add up to significant legal exposure and loss of competitive advantage in the marketplace," she writes. "The employers that best avoid these difficulties are not necessarily the ones with the fanciest ethics policies, but those that most effectively provide their workforce with the framework to identify and address ethical issues as they arise."

Civility in the Workplace

Collaborating

According to the Search for Common Ground, a non-profit

organization that aims to transform conflict into cooperative action, there are four steps to cooperative conflict management:

1. Raise the issue with the other person in a way that invites cooperation.
1. Listen to each other to discover your interests.
2. Create options: possible ways to solve the problem.
3. Develop an agreement that meets as many as possible both of your interests



Compromising

Compromising, also referred to as bargaining, is the middle ground between collaborating and competing.

When you compromise, just like when you engage in collaboration, you're willing to see the other person's point of view. But unlike in collaborating, you don't aim to go so far as find that ultimate solution equally favorable to both sides. Instead, you're willing to find even just the minimum workable solution, and allow the sacrifice of some interests.



Accommodating

The Accommodating Style of conflict management involves sacrificing most, if not all of your interests in order to satisfy or gain the favor of the other party. Basically, accommodating is deliberately taking a loss on the bargaining table.



Competing

If collaborating involves the merging of two different points of view, competing is the opposite. Instead of working together, competing promotes seeing the other party as an opponent that must be challenged, if not defeated. The objective is clearly to win, and for the other party to lose.

Competing, however, is vulnerable to underhanded tactics and victimization. There are some people who are willing to cross many lines to get to the end goal of winning. For instance, bullying and intimidation can be off-shoots of a competing conflict management style. The same goes with the use of personal attacks and manipulation. The winner of the conflict is not always the person who is on the right; rather he or she may simply be the person who holds the most power.

Avoiding

The avoiding style of conflict management involves actively finding ways to steer clear of a problem situation and/or simply not acting on the issue in contention. It may also be indicative of authoritarian management --- perhaps you tend towards avoidance because you feel stifled and dominated by those in power. If the avoiding conflict is not for strategic purposes, then perhaps avoidance is not the best conflict management style to use.

