

Civility matters!

Why it matters

In its white paper [Civility Matters! An evidence-based review on how to cultivate a respectful federal Public Service](#), the Association of Professional Executives of the Public Service of Canada (APEX) identifies civility as an important issue for the federal public service. The paper, written by Craig Dowden, Ph. D., reports on the findings of public service surveys as well as research conducted in workplaces throughout North America. The latter reveals a two-fold increase in the incidence of incivility within a ten-year span (1998 to 2011) and shows that incivility has profound negative impacts on individual employees, teams and organizations alike. On the other hand, **respectful teams**:

- possess **more energy**
- are more likely to **feel motivated and enthusiastic** about acquiring new skills and being exposed to new ideas
- experience increased feelings of **vitality**
- express more **job satisfaction** and are **more committed** to their organizations
- have members who are rated as **having significantly higher performance** compared with employees who are part of the least civil teams in the organization

Most frequently occurring forms of incivility



- Neglecting to turn off cellphones
- Checking email or texting during a meeting
- Using email to send a difficult message to avoid facing the individual



- Paying little or no attention to an expressed opinion
- Not listening during a meeting or conversation
- Not saying “please” or “thank you”



- Talking behind someone’s back
- Making demeaning remarks
- Talking over or down to someone
- Blaming others rather than accepting responsibility



- Doubting someone’s judgment
- Taking credit for someone else’s work or ideas

Costs of incivility



of employees who experience uncivil behaviour get even with the offenders



report a desire to get even with the organization



exposed to co-worker incivility decreased the amount of time spent at the office



10 or more hours of work time per month spent complaining or listening to others complain about their supervisors



average spent by executives each year resolving employee-related conflicts

Impacts of incivility on employee engagement



indicated declining commitment to the organization following uncivil treatment



report that their performance declined



30% more likely to develop coronary heart disease



take out their frustrations on clients



Lower levels of job satisfaction and a higher intent to quit their job: 12% leaving as a result