

# Employee FRONTLINE

A newsletter from the WA State Employee Assistance Program

## Is Incivility at Work Getting Worse?

Does it feel like workplace incivility is getting worse? New research from the [Harvard Business Review \(January/February 2013\)](#) says it might be so. Civility isn't just a nice way to behave. It's a social skill used to build rapport with those around us. A lack of civility in the way we communicate



problems, difficult feelings, frustrations, and workplace annoyances causes us to jeopardize our relationships. Without civility at work, employees are slowly robbed of positivity. This behavior, if pervasive enough, can undermine productivity in the same way as other severe counterproductive behaviors. Creativity and a desire to pursue goals can be diminished. If this sounds familiar, you can reenergize civility at work more easily than you think. Make positive discussion about civility a part of your regular staff or group meetings. Spend five minutes discussing positive expressions and interactions, affirming behaviors, and evidence of civility. There's no need to label negative behaviors or dig up the past. With the focus on awareness, positive discussions, and increased expectations, you'll see a big difference almost overnight and a more positive work culture within weeks. Once things turn around, don't stop. Continue having preventive maintenance discussions and celebrate examples of positive communication.

## Complacency and Chronic Illness



Complacency is a lack of caring for one's illness, thus failing to ward off its symptoms or prevent relapse. Complacency is a hazard in the treatment of many kinds of medical conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and alcoholism.

Complacency is more complex than it appears. It's not just satisfaction with "good enough" and deciding to neglect self-care. The true culprit is a desire to forgo the aggravation of managing one's illness aided by lack of noticeable symptoms. The intervention and prevention for complacency is continual motivation to do what it takes to treat the condition. The easiest way to generate this motivation is by meeting with others who come together to help each other learn how to manage the condition and solve problems that are secondary to it. Find your group, or start one. You'll achieve more manageability and less guilt from the on-again, off-again cycle of self-care.

## Alcoholism Awareness Month: Understanding Enabling and "Terminal Uniqueness"

Enabling by others is how alcoholics avoid consequences for their problems. This need to protect can be difficult to stop. Is there an alcoholic in your life whom you view as unlike other alcoholics, one who's above the crowd, gifted, and who should have a private room in treatment, a celebrity doctor, or special handling? This type of enabling is dubbed "Terminal Uniqueness" by recovering addicts and those participating in successful recovery from addictive disease. Terminal Uniqueness undermines and delays admission to treatment. It reinforces denial, and it speeds the progression of the illness, which can be terminal.

## Act Quickly on the Small Stuff

Despite your busy day, you may discover time to increase productivity with this experiment. For one day, act immediately on any task that only takes a couple of minutes to accomplish. These small tasks are often delayed to reduce stress, but the relief is only temporary. They become more time-consuming and difficult tasks later when they must be resurrected from our "to do" pile. A day of interrupting this habit will surprise you with the results.

# Frontline Employee

## PTSD: “There’s an App for That”

There’s a new app to help those suffering with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). It’s available via iTunes, and it was produced by the Department of Veterans Affairs’ National Center for PTSD. Called “PTSD Coach,” it’s designed to be a supplement to psychological health care and support. Originally PTSD Coach was developed to help military veterans affected by PTSD. Family and friends of service members and veterans can also use the mobile app to learn more about PTSD and support resources. The app works on iPad and Android-powered devices. The app focuses on four spheres: education, self-assessment, managing symptoms, and finding support. You can download the PTSD Coach app anonymously. Depending on how the app is used, HIPAA privacy laws apply to information managed by the app.

<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/PTSDCoach.asp>



## Your Positive Work Culture Checklist



Respect means more than regard, consideration, and tolerance for age, sex, race, culture, and other differences. It also includes differences in generation, thinking styles, and how others approach problem-solving. Use this checklist to help you monitor your attitude toward others at work and collaborate with

them. When you feel irritation welling up, consider the following: 1) why is my coworker saying what he or she’s saying? 2) What might my coworker be thinking? 3) What does my coworker need to hear from me? 4) What can I say to my coworker so he or she feels heard? 5) What’s my coworker trying to accomplish? 6) How can I acknowledge my coworker, even though I believe he or she’s incorrect?

## Detaching Emotionally from Angry Customers

Dealing with angry customers can be a downer that leaves you feeling bitter and resentful, but practicing self-awareness allows you to gain control over these experiences so you can enjoy your job more. Start by acquiring an understanding of all the types of situations that cause customers to be emotional. Your advantage will be the inability to be thrown off guard and knowing what kind of response works best in specific situations. This practice of knowing the problems and having a toolbox of responses is a guaranteed stress reducer. It doesn’t stop there. Because you’re in control, you can more readily use empathy and patience, the most powerful of all relational skills for turning frowns into smiles.



## Star Performer Secrets

### Using Humility on the Job

Humility at work is the practice of denying one’s self-importance so the needs of others can be realized. Humility is a less well-understood but powerful relational skill. Few employees understand its true importance and how its impact can lead them to become star performers at work. Acting humble isn’t a demonstration of sacrifice, subservience, low self-esteem, or meekness. Quite the opposite. It’s a demonstration of maturity. It’s self-awareness and understanding how you affect others. When you’re humble, others are drawn to you because they’re attracted to your ability to help them feel safe, open, and not judged. You show a genuine desire to be a team-player, to discover the talents and abilities of your coworkers, to exercise patience, and to be open-minded. Humility has other behaviors associated with it, including being able to recognize your limitations, being a good listener, and knowing you haven’t learned all there is to know. To contribute to a positive work culture, strive to make humility a courtesy and a skill. You’ll draw others to you and be seen as the leader you truly are.

