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# Course Description:

This course is designed to provide you with tools, resources, and knowledge to effectively establish an environment where civility is a common workplace practice and expectation.

# Learning Objectives


1. **Identify** *causes of incivility*
2. **Understand** *how to have civil and safe Conversations*
3. **Build** *dialogue skills*
4. **Create** *inclusive habits and build reciprocal empathy*





# We live in a Polarized Society

- Workforce is becoming more diverse with people facing very different realities.
- Gen Z & Millennial employees expect to be able to talk about polarizing topics at work.
- It is impossible to NOT bring strong emotions into the workplace.



What are root causes of incivility in the workplace?

- Lack of awareness
- Resistance to change...constant change
- Cultural differences
- Power dynamics
- Lack of accountability
- Time and resource constraints

## The State of Civility in the Workplace

Our research shows the importance of navigating the delicate balance of encouraging open dialogue while maintaining respect for individual differences as we aim to build a more respectful, understanding, and collaborative world of work.

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Nearly two-thirds of U.S. workers have experienced or witnessed incivility in their workplace within the past month.

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One-third of U.S. workers believe workplace conflict will increase over the next 12 months.

*Source: SHRM Research on Civility, Conflict and Expression, February 2024*

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## THE STATE OF CIVILITY



### **UNCIVIL BEHAVIOR AT WORK IS BECOMING COMMONPLACE.**

Nearly **two-thirds** of workers said that they have experienced incivility or witnessed incivility in their workplace within the past month.



### **SOCIETAL AND POLITICAL TENSIONS ARE RISING.**

**One-third** of U.S. workers believe workplace conflict will increase over the next 12 months.

## CIVILITY IS A BUSINESS IMPERATIVE

Uncivil workplaces lead to job dissatisfaction and turnover.

**WORKERS WHO RATE THEIR WORKPLACE AS UNCIVIL ARE:**

**3x** more likely to be dissatisfied with their job.

**2x** more likely to leave their job in the next year.



## INCIVILITY CREATES BARRIERS

Civility breaks down barriers against authentic self-expression and promotes employee well-being. Compared to workers who have not witnessed or experienced incivility at work in the past month, those who have are:



**More likely to filter  
much of what they say.**



**Less likely to speak their  
mind in their workplace.**



**Less likely to share their honest  
thoughts without fear at work.**



**Less likely to be their  
authentic selves at work.**

## **HOW UNCIVIL BEHAVIOR SHOWS UP**

**According to workers who experienced or witnessed incivility at work, the top 5 uncivil behaviors observed were:**

- 1. Addressing others disrespectfully.**
- 2. Interrupting or silencing others while they are speaking.**
- 3. Excessive monitoring or micromanaging.**
- 4. Ignoring others or paying little attention to others.**
- 5. Unprofessional or disrespectful body language.**

The time  
for change  
is NOW!

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When we  
change the  
way we look  
at things,  
the things  
we look at  
change.



# Inclusive Conversation Tips

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Inclusive communication should include information on:

- The societal context of the conversations & importance to the organization.
- What you will do with the feedback from the conversations.
- Why it's okay for employees to engage in these conversations.
- The fact that the conversation is uncomfortable for all parties.
- What help and support is available for anyone who is challenged by the topics being discussed.



Keep communications simple, honest and direct.

Be aware that conversation locations matter!



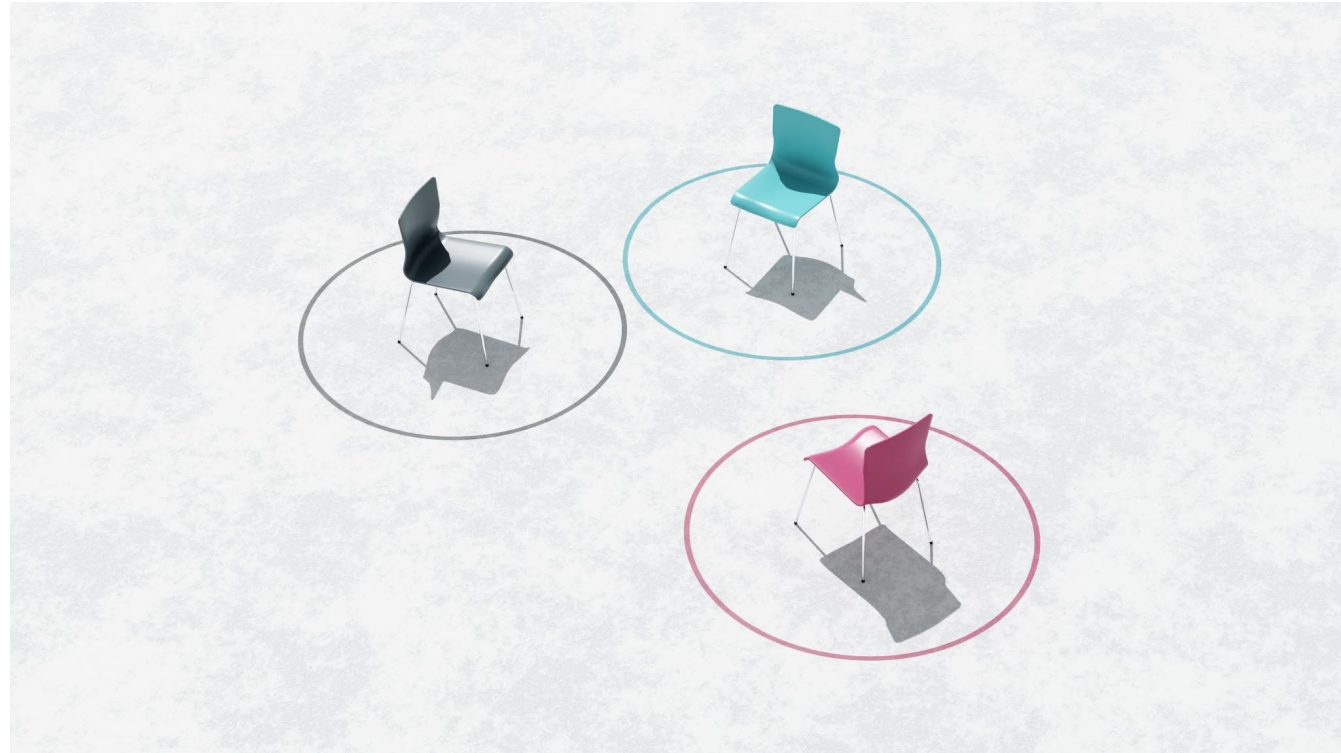
I can do things you  
cannot, you can do things,  
I cannot. Together we can  
do great things.  
-- Mother Theresa

## Post Conversation Tips:

- Share **gratitude** for those who took part and recognition of the emotional energy spent by everyone.
- Identify **key themes** of the learnings gained from the conversations.
- Connect conversations to university's values and mission.
- Make a **commitment** to action as a result of your learnings.
- Communicate how you intend to **keep the conversation going** to learn from and hear the voices of protected class employees.

# Debate or Discussion or Dialogue

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## DEBATE

- Competitive – focus on succeeding and winning, proving others' logic “wrong”
- Focus on “right” and “wrong” through evidence
- Looking for weaknesses, searching for flaws in others' logic – critique their position
- Listening is used to form counterarguments
- Focus on conflict and difference as an advantage
- Disregard relationships
- Using silence to gain an advantage

## DISCUSSION

- Conceptual and/or conversational – present ideas, often in “clean” or “sophisticated” ways
- Aim to share information – seeking to stay “neutral” in conclusions
- Seek answers and solutions
- Give answers, often those following academic standards – “What do our readings say?”
- Listening is used to find places of disagreement or to gather rational pieces of argument
- Avoid areas of strong conflict and difference
- Retain relationships
- Avoid silence

## DIALOGUE

- Collaborative, towards a sense of community understanding
- Aim to re-evaluate and acknowledge assumptions and biases
- Bring out areas of ambivalence
- Look for shared meaning
- Discover collective meaning; re-examine and destabilize long-held ideas
- Listening without judgment and to understand
- Building relationships
- Honor silence



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# Constructive Confrontation *with a learning mindset*

- Clearly articulate the topic or issue and use non-accusatory language.
- Listen attentively and consider the other person's point of view.
- Be aware of peer-to-peer communications and influence. Use phrases like:
  - *You may or may not be aware...*
  - *Help me to understand...*
  - *Let me think about what you said...*
  - *How is this productive to our work...*
  - *How does this impact our relationship...*
- Know when to take a pause.
- Involve leadership immediately if unable to work through on own.

## Boundary Setting is Important

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- Helps individuals understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Sets rules of conduct within the workplace.
- Determines what is and is not appropriate on the job.
- Sets expectations for accountability to our actions and allows for disciplinary action for those who violate them.

“Some of the most compassionate people are also the most bounded...”

Boundaries are not fake walls, not separation, they’re not division. They are respect for what’s ok and what’s not ok for me.”

- Brene Brown

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There's a  
**MOMENT**  
where you have to  
choose whether to be  
silent or stand up.

**Malala Yousafzai**

*Pakistani activist for  
female education*



Being an active bystander means being aware of when someone's behavior is inappropriate or threatening and choosing to challenge it.

“MOVE OUT OF YOUR COMFORT  
ZONE. YOU CAN ONLY GROW IF YOU  
ARE WILLING TO FEEL AWKWARD  
AND UNCOMFORTABLE WHEN YOU  
TRY SOMETHING NEW.”

—BRIAN TRACY

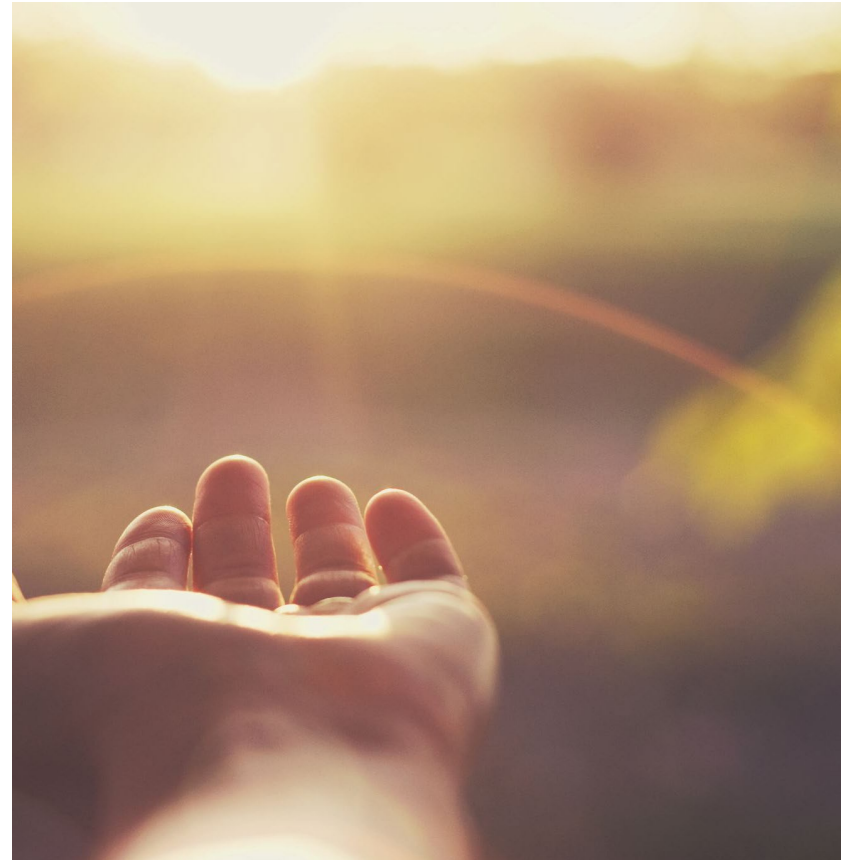


How to have Inclusive Conversations

# Inclusive Habits to Live By...

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- **Acknowledging:** You don't know everything. There is always something to learn.
- **Legitimizing:** Other perspectives are just as valid as your own and need to be listened to for understanding, not necessarily agreement.
- **Listening:** Listen to understand and be aware of your own biases.
- **Reflecting:** Spend more time reflecting on your values and beliefs. Why do you believe what you do?
- **Questioning:** Show genuine interest in others. Be curious, not judgmental, about others' experiences.
- **Respecting:** Respect the dignity of every person even when you don't agree with them. Separate the person from the position.



# Inclusive Habits continued...

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- **Pausing:** Always pause before you provide your opinion on polarizing topics. Take a deep breath. Think about what you are going to say. Be patient with mistakes. Be patient with the frustrations of historically marginalized groups. Be patient with people who don't understand your experience as a member of a historically marginalized group.
- **Accepting:** Accepting does not mean agreement. It means you acknowledge that there are a myriad of worldviews and it's important to learn about them. Accepting is better than tolerating. Work to move from tolerance to acceptance.
- **Apologizing:** If you say something that offends someone else, genuinely apologize. Do not defend your comment. Simply say "I am sorry. Please help me to understand why that was offensive." Consider it a teaching moment.

# The End Point is Reciprocal Empathy

If we can get to an ability to understand what it's like to be the 'other' then we increase the likelihood of generating new ways to engage with each other.

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When we engage, we create opportunities to learn more about each other's similarities and differences, build better relationships & improve trust.

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This leads to employees feeling more valued, respected and more motivated to give their all.



# CONTACT INFORMATION:

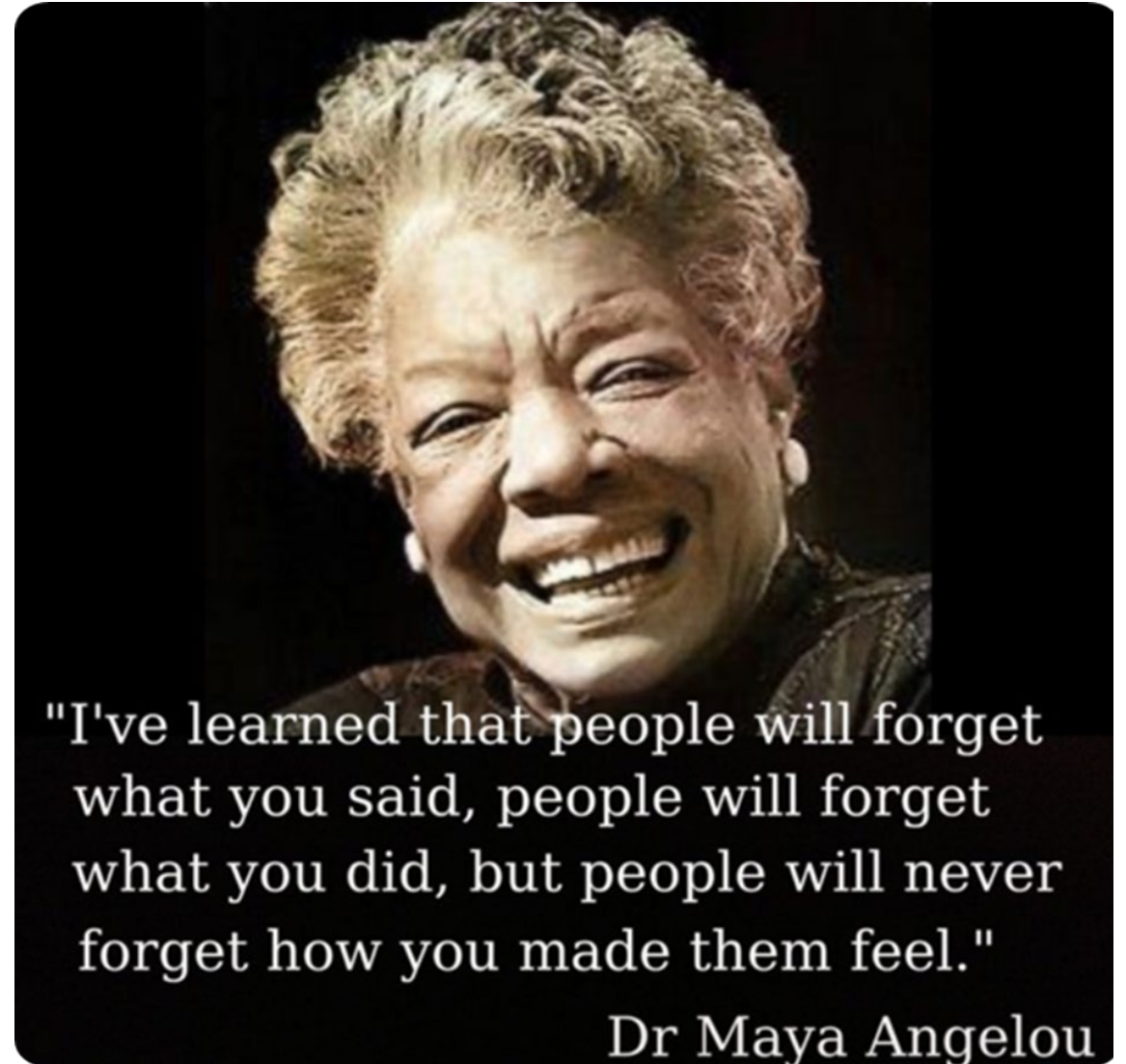
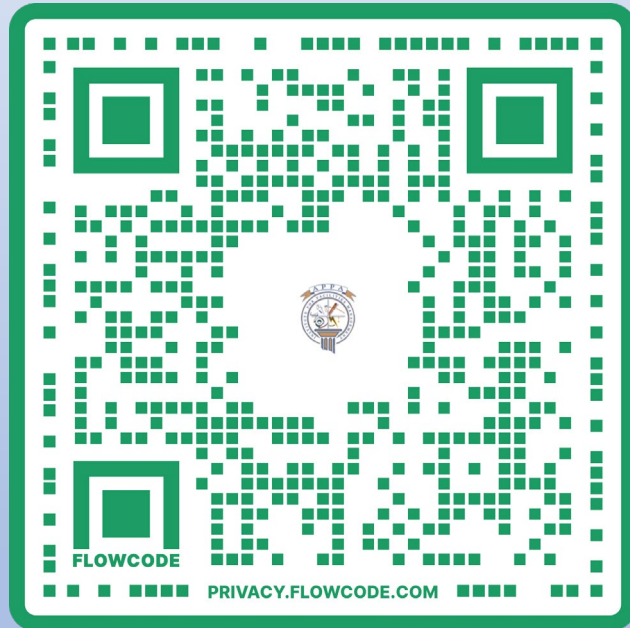
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This concludes The American  
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