**Video Title:** Workplace Incivility: The Silent Epidemic

**Video URL:** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X91ZElURMtA**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X91ZElURMtA)

**Run Time/Source:** 6:01, Texas A&M School of Education & Human Development/YouTube

**Close Caption Available:** Yes

Incivility as a source of workplace conflict is described on page 325 of the textbook. In this video, Professor Jia Wang examines the growing epidemic of workplace incivility through microaggression visible in the modern workplace. Incivility in the workplace is spreading like an epidemic. Over the past 18 years, tens of thousands of people worldwide report have been mistreated at least once a month. What was the last time you felt ignored? Unappreciated? Underappreciated? Degraded? Or just embarrassed? What behavior have you witnessed or experienced that you would consider disrespected or inappropriate?

Wang, her colleagues, and students conducted a study on workplace incivility for ten years. First, they learned that uncivil behavior takes various forms, including demeaning comments, not giving credit to others, gossiping, disrupting meetings, insulting, yelling at others, bullying, and harassing. A woman named Sally said, “My boss would criticize me harshly all the time until I cried. He would write down all my problems, like 20 of them. He would read the list in front of others in a very big meeting.”

Second, the Wang team learned that uncivil behavior is rude and discourteous. Have you ever had people take your food out of the refrigerator without telling you? Are people not returning your phone calls? Talking behind your back? In essence, uncivil behavior demonstrates a lack of respect for others. Uncivil behavior can also be mundane. A man named Henry said that one time his boss looked at his handwriting and said, “Henry you better start practicing handwriting and submit it to me because you need to learn how to write.” These examples show that uncivil behavior is often subtle, and therefore people have remained silent about the subject.

Wang’s research showed that uncivil behavior can be very powerful and can be triggered by a number of causes. Two stand out. The first cause is an informal workplace environment, which is quite prevalent these days. This informality is evidenced by the dress code, language choice, and conversation patterns. With increased informality, the line between what is and is not appropriate has become blurred, with some of the long-standing rules about respect and politeness have vanished. Power and social status can also cause incivility because people with more power tend to have more opportunities to be uncivil. Less powerful employees are often incivility targets, with higher-status workers getting away with it.

Insensitive actions can have lasting impact. Uncivil words and deeds can have negative impacts on the psychological and physical being of workers. Being treated uncivilly can reduce creativity, focus, commitment, motivation, and job satisfaction. Negative outcomes to the organization include reduced productivity and turnover and hurt the bottom line. Technology advancements are another contributor to incivility, including cyberbullying. Technology has enabled uncivil behavior virtually everywhere.

Wang hopes that her brief talk will elevate your awareness of workplace civility. It is time to break the silence and reverse the incivility epidemic.

*Questions for Thought and Discussion*

1. The video mentions several negative outcomes from incivility such as decreased productivity and job satisfaction. Trash talking (page 169) is another form of uncivil behavior. If you were trash talked by a coworker, how would that affect you?

2. You have read about the research on uncivil workplace behavior. But in your experience what is a highly-frequent form of uncivil workplace behavior?

3. Identify a conflict-resolution technique that you think would be effective in stopping repeated uncivil behavior directed at you.

4. Business etiquette training is still available. How might such training help stem the “epidemic” of uncivil workplace behavior?

5. Provide an example of how information technology has contributed to workplace incivility.