

When incivility is a mental health problem and when a mental health problem is incivility: echoes from South Africa

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Objective

The objectives of the presentation are as follow:

- To identify when incivility is a mental health problem and when a mental health problem is incivility.
- To describe the relationship between incivility and mental health problems from the perspectives of South African professional nursing education.

Introduction: Incivility

- Clark, Farnsworth and Landrum (2009:7) defined incivility as **“rude or disruptive behaviours which often result in psychological or physiological distress for the people involved and if left unaddressed, may progress into threatening situations”**. Incivility is broadly referred to as unprofessional, as well as insulting comments and actions, extending into violence (Cassum, 2018, p. 7).
- What plain rudeness, or incivility means to various people, is strongly based on the opinions and perceptions of a particular population of civic virtue, or civil society (Yassour-Borochowitz & Desivillia, 2016, p. 414).

Introduction: Mental Health Problem

- Refers to any condition that affects your mood, thinking, or behaviour.
- For example, depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, eating disorders and addictive behaviours.

Previous works

- 2020 ***Roots and constructs of incivility in nursing education: refocusing solutions and actions.*** This is a Doctoral Project submitted for the Award of the Philosophy in Nursing (PhD) at the University of the Western Cape, (UWC), Cape Town, South Africa.
- 2012 ***Experiences of nurse educators' with incivility of nursing students' in a school of nursing, Western Cape, South Africa.*** This is an MCUR dissertation submitted to the School of Nursing at the University of the Western Cape, (UWC), Cape Town, South Africa.

Previous works

- Vink, H.J. & Sefotho, M.M. 2023. ***Incivility: An antithesis of Botho/Ubuntu in Professional Nursing Education***. Gender & Behaviour Volume 21 (1), 21449- 21465.
- Vink, H.J., Frantz, J. & Julie, H. 2022. ***Socio-economic and political roots of incivility in professional nursing education***. Gender & Behaviour Volume 20 (3), 19826- 19842.
- Vink H. 2016. ***Effects of Students' Incivility on Nurse Educators in a South African School of Nursing***. Sigma Nursing Repository, <http://hdl.handle.net/10755/616219>
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- Vink, H.J. & Adejumo, O. (2014). ***Nurse educators' experiences and perspectives of incivility among nursing students in a South African school of nursing***. African Journal for Physical, Health Education, Recreation and Dance, October (Supplement 1:1), 166-178.

Tree of incivility

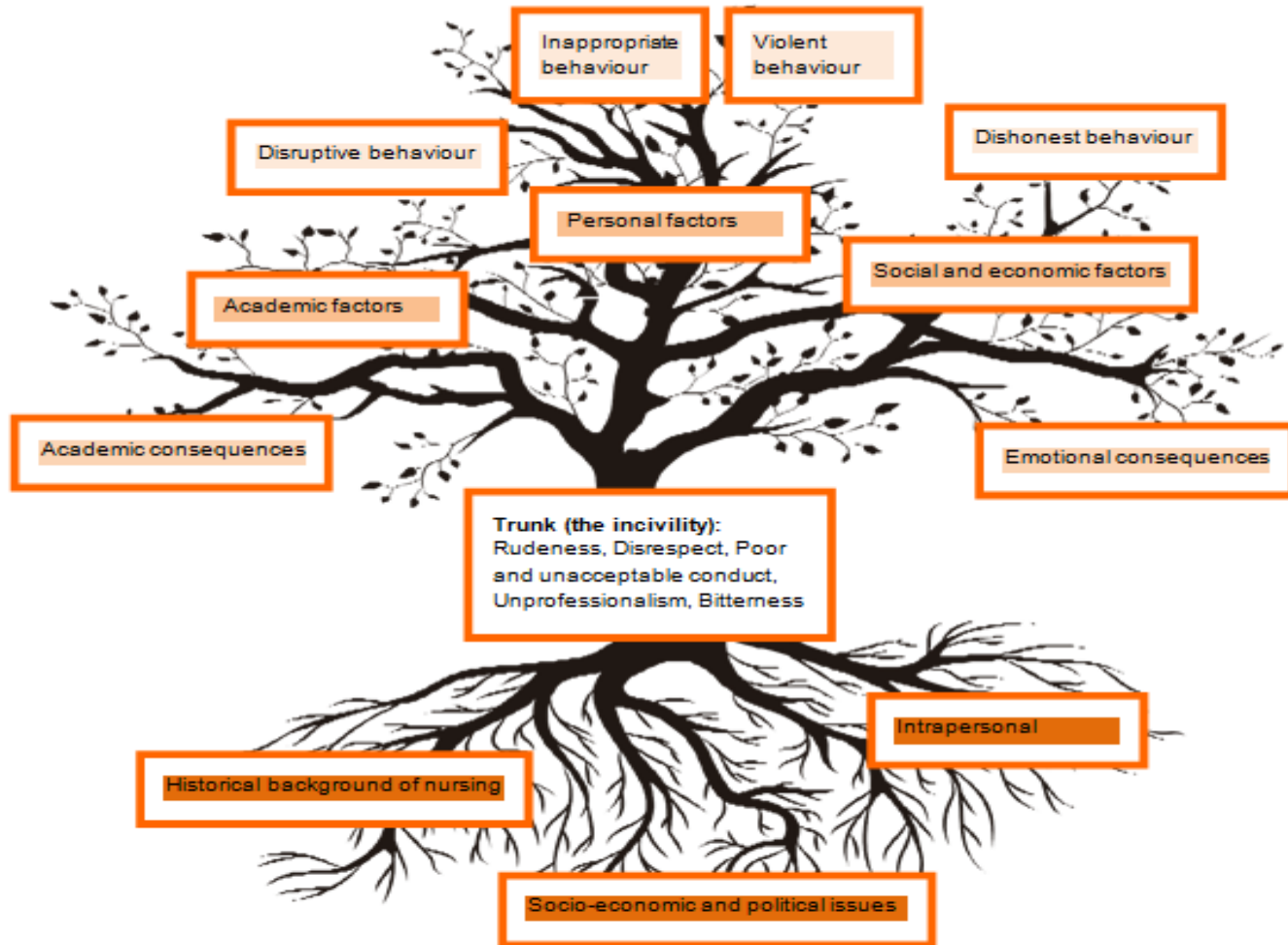


Figure 1: Tree of incivility in professional nursing education

How incivility manifests

Acts of incivility	Triggers of incivility	Response to incivility	Contributing factors of incivility
Disruptive behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none">Late coming, Noise, Loud talking, Walking up and down	Academic triggers <ul style="list-style-type: none">Academic preparation, Academic setting, Bad attitudes & behaviour, Influence of the SRC	Emotional responses <ul style="list-style-type: none">Anger & Aggression, Surprise & Shock	Academic factors <ul style="list-style-type: none">Language barriersLack of care and supportLarge student volumesWork overload/Shortage of staff

How incivility manifests

Acts of incivility	Triggers of incivility	Response to incivility	Contributing factors of incivility
Inappropriate behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use of electronic devices, Inappropriate dress code, Tiredness & sleeping	Emotional & pathological triggers <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alcohol & Drug abuse; Fear & Anxiety, Frustration & Aggression	Ignorance <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feigning ignorance	Personal factors <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Age• Stress

How incivility manifests

Acts of incivility	Triggers of incivility	Response to incivility	Contributing factors of incivility
Violent behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shouting, Swearing, Fighting, Vandalism, Aggression, Abuse of power, Belittlement & Humiliation, Isolation, Intimidation & Threats	Cultural and social triggers <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Male dominance & Cultural issues, Poor role modeling, Poor social interaction, Poverty & lack of financial support, Societal influences, Upbringing, Norms & Values	Educator interventions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Addressing student, Communicating respect, warmth & interest, Report behaviour	Socio-economic factors <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial issues “Hangry student”, Substance abuse, Socio-economic background

Incivility Effects

- The effects of incivility have been described as harmful.
- It negatively affects the lives of those involved.
- Concerns have been raised, globally, regarding its effects on nursing education, nursing and patient care.
- Incivility generally seems to be often driven by more complex issues.
- Personality traits, adjustment to work and studies, characteristics of developmental stages, lifestyle habits, cognition, physical, emotional, and mental health problems.

Effects continued

- In 2002, at the University of Arizona, three nursing academics were shot by a disgruntled student, and described as a tragic example of incivility.
- Another student, with a history of anxiety, with psychological condition since adolescence, shot several people at Virginia Tech University, in 2007.
- Incivility, therefore, holds serious consequences for students, clinical nurses and nurse educators.
- Therefore, academics and clinical staff should have the ability to differentiate between incivility and mental illnesses (McNaughton-Cassill, 2013, pp. 94–95).

Effects continued

- Nursing professionals in the classroom and clinical settings also experience incivility from each other.
- The effects are seen as physiological symptoms e. g. anxiety, nightmares, low self-esteem, and substance abuse.
- However, as educators are victims of each other, students are also victims of their educators, as well as working nurses.
- They cannot develop critical thinking & clinical judgement abilities in stressful and hostile classes and clinical settings.

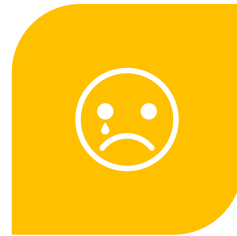
Mental health problems in incivility



ANGER, AGGRESSION,
STRESS, DEPRESSION



DOUBT, INFERIORITY,
LOW SELF-ESTEEM,
SUICIDAL IDEATION



SADNESS, HURT,
EMOTIONAL
EXHAUSTION



FEAR, ANXIETY,
INSOMNIA

Recommendations

- Understand the complex relationship between incivility and mental health problems and that it is bidirectional.
- Guidance towards accessing emotional and psychological support from the onset of experiencing incivility to prevent development of mental health problems.
- Early detection, and intervention of mental health problems is crucial in prevention of violent attacks.
- Access to mental health care services must form part of holistic care in nursing and nursing education.

Conclusion

- Incivility and mental health problems are interrelated.
- Incivility holds devastating consequences for perpetrators and victims if not addressed.
- Nurses in academics and clinical practice need to differentiate between incivility and mental health problems.
- Mental health problems must be treated and not ignored to promote respect and civility in workplaces and academic settings.

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