



# **Curtailing Workplace Incivility**

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# Learning Objectives

*Target deliverable: Customized action plan to improve civility in your workplace*

- “incivility,” examples
  - Who’s affected by incivility?
  - What roles do individuals play?
- Costs of incivility
  - How does incivility spread?
  - What do targets typically do?
  - Formulate financial rationale for action
- What to do about incivility
  - Examples of organizational successes
  - How to manage through employment cycle
  - Top 10 actions *leaders* should take
  - Most important actions *targets* should take
  - Most important actions *offenders* should take

# Agenda

## Intros

### Concepts-

- *incivility* – forms, costs, characters, your perspectives
- Recommendations about what to do
  - financial rationale
  - successes
  - 3 key stakeholders: leaders, targets, offenders
  - employment cycle

### Application-

- Case: Tom Stowe, Parts 1,2,3
- Current state: Incivility in your organizations today
- Desired future state: visual, ‘mind map’
- Action plan: HR cycle, steps, timing

***Interactive, grounded, practical, “fun”***

# *Opening thoughts...*

## *Bad news:*

**Bad behavior** → high (unaccounted) costs

## *Good news:*

### **When bad behavior is curtailed:**

\* benefits: productivity, commitment, retention,  
satisfaction, creativity, cooperation,  
health...

**There are many possible avenues - -**

**Success begins with \*you\***

**DVD?**

## workplace incivility:

*“seemingly inconsequential  
inconsiderate  
words and deeds  
employee-to-employee  
that violate  
conventional workplace conduct”*

# workplace incivility:

*“seemingly inconsequential  
inconsiderate  
words and deeds  
employee-to-employee  
that violate  
conventional workplace conduct”*

**Lack of mutual respect  
among employees.**

## What does incivility look like in your org?

Examples of “minor” bad behaviors between employees that might communicate a lack of respect?

*... a few common examples, then, please write down specifics you've seen, then go for max combined list around groups*

# What does incivility look like?

## Common examples...

- **disrupting meetings**
- **sending loaded email messages**
- **using email when F2F is needed**
- **keeping people waiting for appointments needlessly**
- **leaving a mess for others to clean up**
- **shuffling off worst assignments; hoarding 'plum' assignments**
- **setting others up for failure**
- **taking credit for others' work**
- **blaming others to cover your own mistakes**
- **not saying the basics (e.g., please, thank you, hello)**
- **using 'lingo'/jargon to exclude others**
- **texting, emailing in meetings, even when asked not to**
  
- ***...individuals acting like they're the only employees in the office***

# Offender: Power Trends

60-20-20, m/f

Flow of Incivility



- \* **condescending attitude**
- \* **demeaning, belittling**
- \* **keeping others waiting**
- \* **emotional tirades, displays of temper, tantrums**
- \* **denying/delaying resource access**



- \* **disrupting mtgs, inappropriate behavior at mtgs**
- \* **gossiping about, damaging reputation**
- \* **not listening, ignoring others**
- \* **interrupting others' work, hovering**



- \* **averting requests to follow authority**
- \* **securing work space, not replenishing supplies**
- \* **'disappearing'**
- \* **spreading rumors**

*A scenario to focus our thinking/interest...*

## **Tom Stowe, Part 1**

- Do you see any ‘bad behavior’ here?
- Could this, or something similar, occur in your organization?
- What outcomes could follow this situation?
- What would you do if you were Tom? ...Tom’s boss? ...someone else attending meeting?
- “*So what?*” Why should you/anyone care?

# Why should we care?

- **Pervasive (98% = “targets”)**
- **Tends to escalate in intensity**
- **Cascades to others**
- **Erodes...**
  - **individual/org values – norm to it**
  - **indiv/team behaviors**
  - **competitiveness**
  - **cooperation**
  - **creativity**
  - **satisfaction**
  - **commitment**
- **Costs organizations \$\$ -  
turnover, stress, time/effort/performance**

## What do targets do?

88%

will do something  
to get even  
with their  
*organizations.*

~

94%

will do something  
to get even  
with their  
*offenders.*

# Individual effects...

Targets experience  
negative  
emotional impact.

~

anger/fear/sadness

~

**stress**

‘brain-burn’

amygdala hijacking  
emotional contagion  
cognitive impairment  
depleted cooperation  
withered creativity

52%

waste work time  
worrying  
about what  
has happened.

~

28%

waste time  
trying to  
avoid their  
offenders.

24%  
put in  
less  
hours.

~

22%  
put in  
less  
effort.

*Returning to our case...*

## **Tom Stowe, Part 2**

- What should Tom do? ...his boss?
- What would you do if you had been at the table?
- How could this have been averted or mitigated?
- Could this kind of scenario happen in your organization? Similarities/differences?
- What impact/effects could follow this situation?

# Target-inflicted Costs: Overview

*When employees are treated badly by other employees...*

- 88% get even with their orgs
- 94% get even with their offenders
  
- cut back work *effort*
- cut back work *time*
- intentionally decrease *quality* of their work
- *lose time worrying* about their offender
- *lose time worrying* about the incident
- have *less commitment* to org
  
- consider leaving
- some actually leave
  - with them go knowledge, networks, experience
  - they'll almost never tell you that's the reason they left

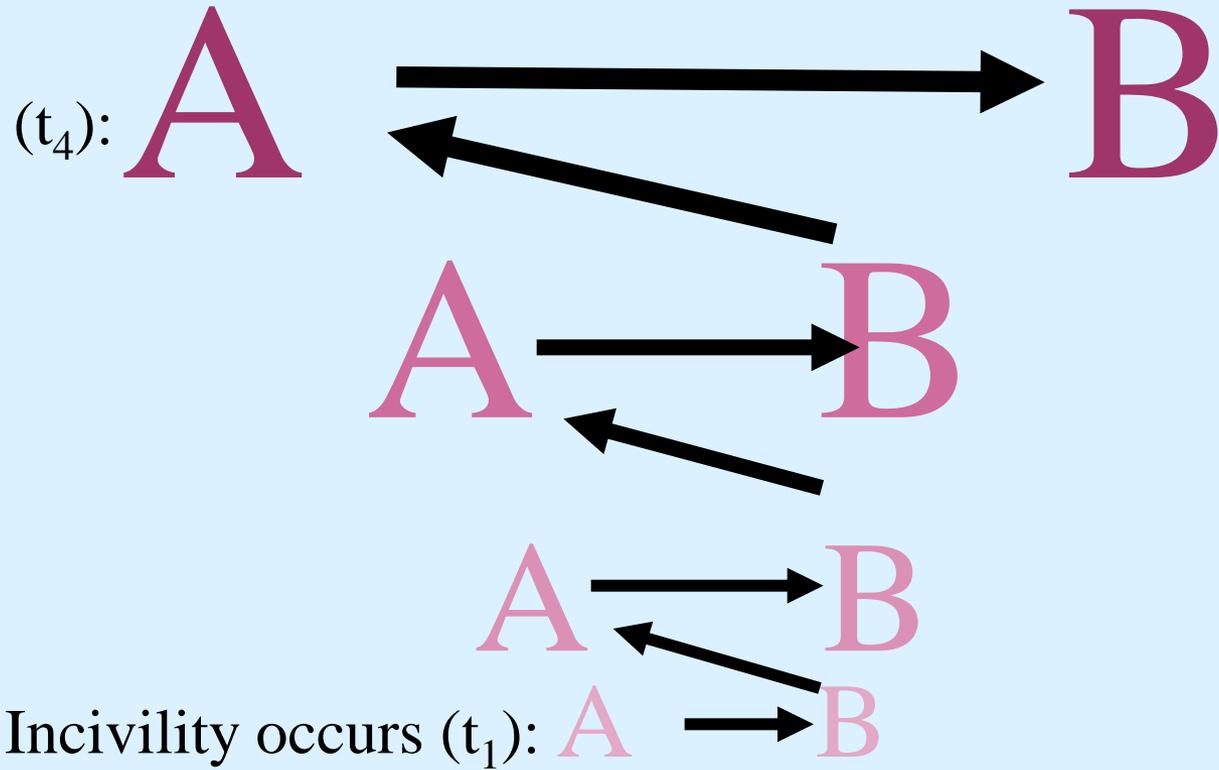
...and these costs include targets' reactions only

It starts with an offender and a target...

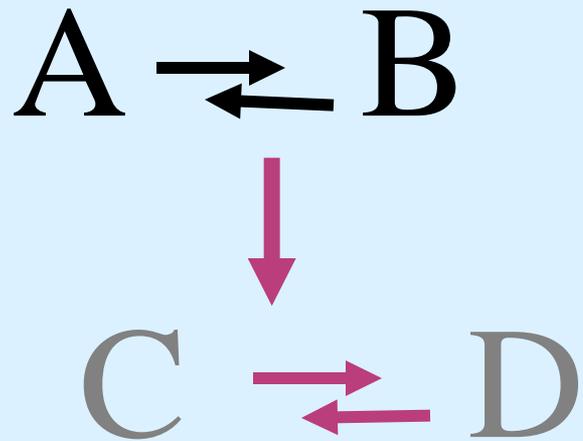
**But 98% of targets do something that creates ripple effects**



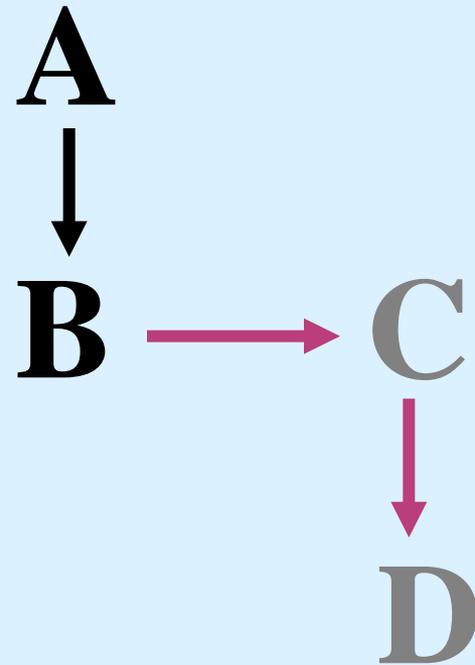
# Escalation



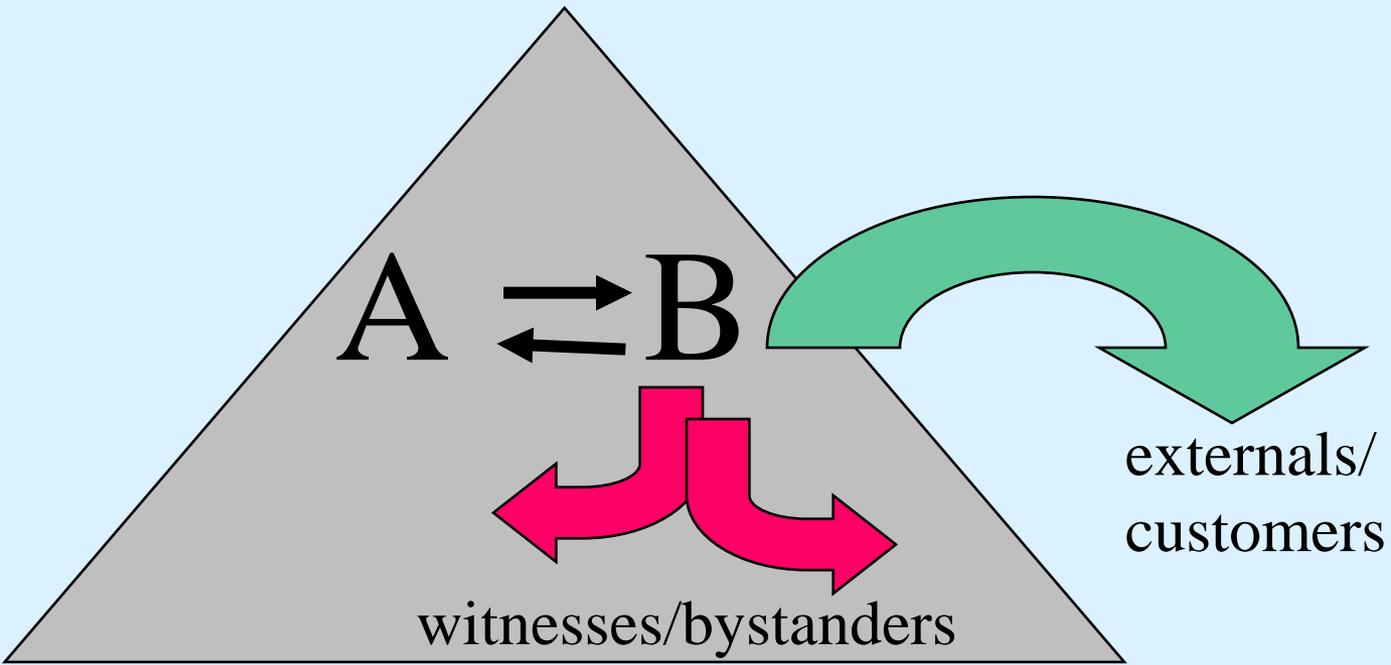
# Cascading



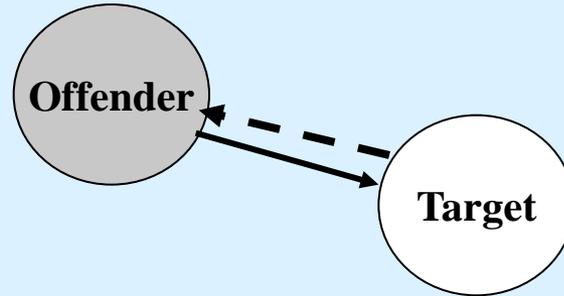
or



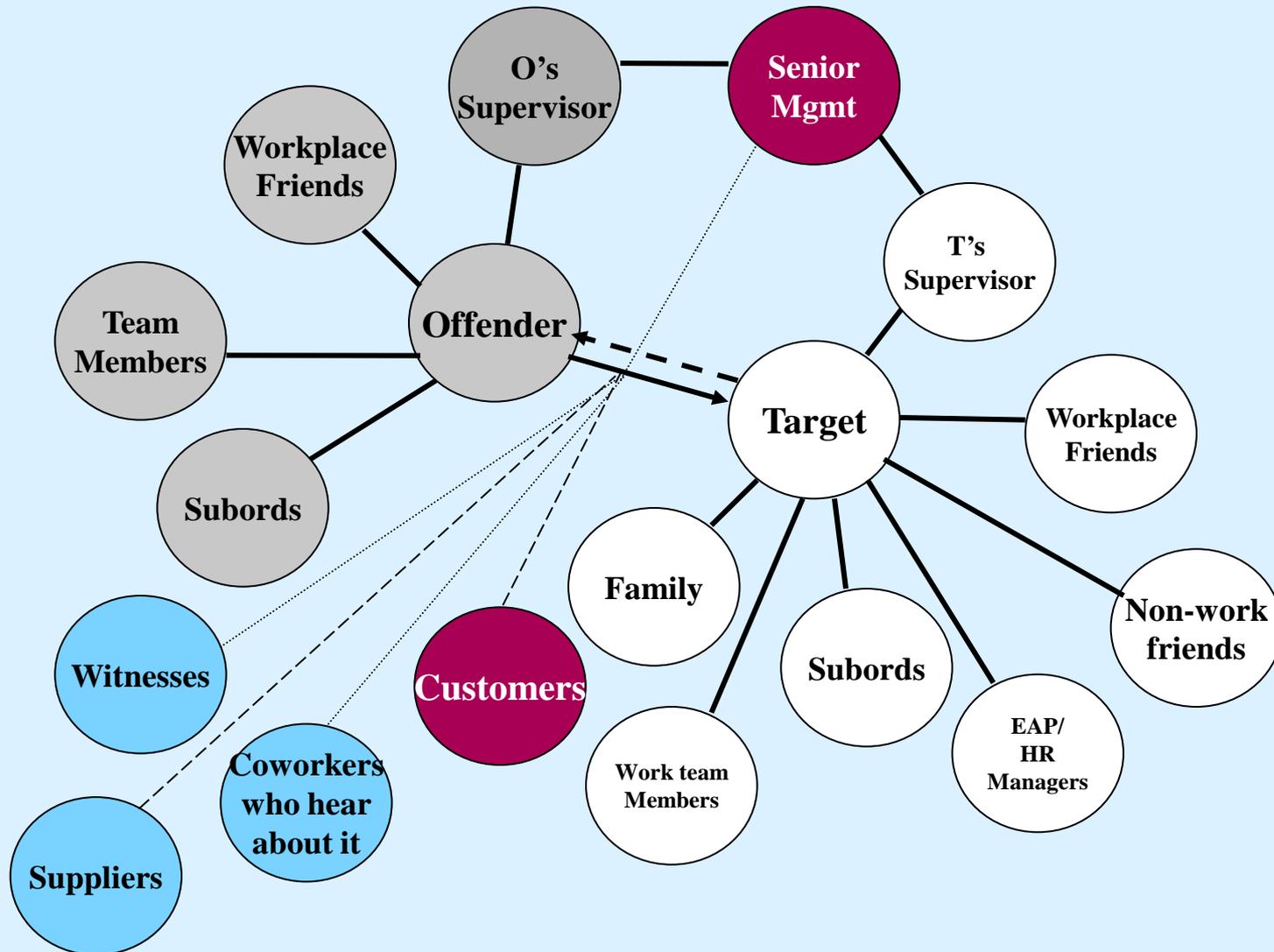
# Extended Effects



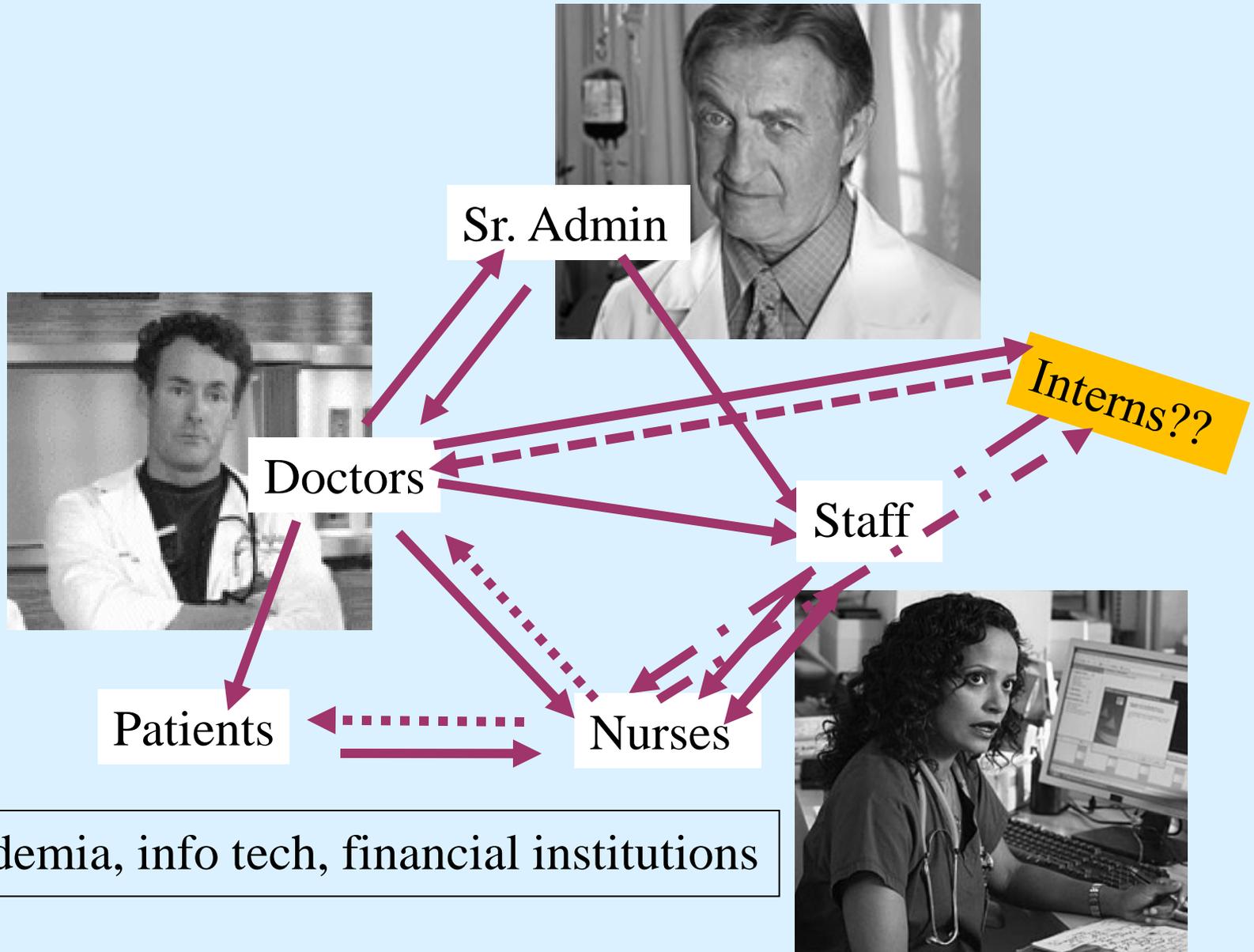
# Extended Reach 'within' O/T dyad



# Extended reach 'within' O/T dyad



# A Typical Erosive Path



law, academia, info tech, financial institutions

A real medical case...

what sorts of “incivility” scenarios come to mind?



Brainstorm, plz,  
then reality

# A *Real* Erosive Path

“Radiology Sandwich,”  
County Hospital  
Mid-west, USA



“Gifted but nasty surgeon”



Radiologists



“Hostile unionized staff”

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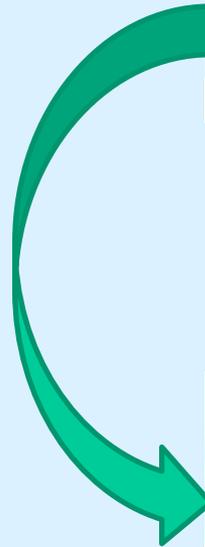
Radiologists



Residents



Nurses



“Hostile unionized staff”

*Returning to our case...*

*Please read/analyze paragraph by paragraph*

## **Tom Stowe, Part 3**

- Did you anticipate these outcomes?
- Who should have been noticing the negative effects?
- How should the negative effects be captured?  
Would these effects be noticed in your organization?
- Any additional effects possible?
- What 'lessons' do you take for leaders?

46%  
of employees who  
are treated  
uncivilly  
think about  
leaving.

12%  
will actually  
leave.

~

...but  
they won't  
report it  
that way.

Over half  
believe  
they would have  
career problems if  
they reported  
incivility  
in their  
workplaces.

~

Less than 10%  
report their  
experiences to  
EAP or HR.

# Who cares? 'Show me the money' ...

## One organization's financial rationale

- IT firm, 50,000 ees worldwide
- Estimated P(reactive incidents) at .01 [rationale: "best co"]
- Cost = incidents x P (particular response) x cost to firm
  - e.g., for exiting:  $C = 500 \times .12 \times$  their calculated cost of turnover
- Calculated only *three* potential costs:
  - work time lost worrying
  - weakened commitment
  - turnover
- Did not project full potential costs, for example...
  - Escalating, cascading to others (ees, Cs)
  - Erosion of individual values, shifts of norms
  - Losses in team productivity
  - Cost of managing any of it
- Initial estimate = >\$12 million/year

*Good news: What has worked?*

## **Org. Success Stories**

- **“Global Pharma”**
  - zero tolerance, hammered a repeat offender
  - Improvements: employee satisfaction, retention
- **“LA Law”**
  - mirror test, zero tolerance, training, coached repeat offenders and then tied to perf./rewards
  - Improvements: hiring, retention, morale, creative interaction, “teaming”
- **“Silicon High Tech”**
  - weeding out before it enters, signal detection training, zero tolerance, incorporated in training
  - Improvements: values/culture stability, morale

# “Health Care Services, Inc”

- Developed mission statement that included expectation of mutual respect among employees
- Measuring, holding accountable for *values*
  - “Is the *company* living up to your expectations?”
    - Are your *teammates*? Is your *manager*?
  - Everyone gets annual ‘Values Report Card,’ incl CEO
  - If low scores, then mandatory development plan
  - 360 f/b at least every 2 yrs for all VP+
- Training/development for *values*
  - Orientation includes style assessments re: relationship impact
  - Sr execs present re: team dynamics, conflict resolution
- Rewards for *values*
  - Stars are nominated for living up to *values*
  - Incentives are based on these value-based evaluations

# “Health Care Services, Inc”

- **Before**
  - Under investigation by SEC, suits pending from shareholders, almost out of cash, unhappy place to work
- **After (6 yrs later)**
  - *Fortune*: Top 10 Most Admired Health Care Cos.
  - *Training*: Training Top 100 Cos.
  - 50% reduction in annual turnover rate
  - Stock value increased tenfold
  - Market capitalization from \$250K to \$5 billion

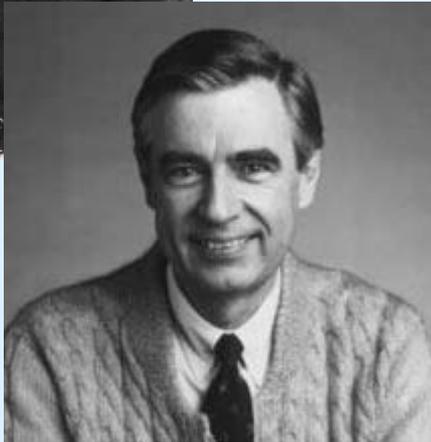
# What's a **target** to do?

- **#1: Be careful! Often power-driven**
- **If possible,  
address issue with the offender**
- **Stay put and appreciate why**
- **Detach from offender; Limit future encounters**
- **Learn from the situation**
- **Report the incident, if 'safe'**
- **Appeal to a higher power**
- **Nurture yourself, actively address added stress, emotional impact**
- **Find a better work environment**

## What's an **offender** to do?

- Reflect on your A-B-Cs
- Enlist help of trusted colleagues
- Videotape/audiotape yourself
- Gather data, ask for feedback
- Find a great coach
- Change 4 behaviors:
  - Listen better
  - Take less credit, give more
  - Increase sincere use of words that convey civility - - *please, thank you, excuse me, I'm sorry*
  - Think before you speak:
    - experience → think → respond rather than
    - experience → respond → regret

# What's a **leader** to do?



1. Set zero-tolerance expectations
2. Take an honest look in the mirror
3. Weed out trouble before it enters
4. Train employees to be civil
5. Listen fully (360 f/b)
6. When incivility occurs, hammer it
7. Heed warning signals
8. Don't excuse powerful offenders
9. Gather data (360 f/b + post-dep)
10. Calculate potential costs, ID  
importance: tasks + process +  
culture + retention +...

# Conceptualizing Your Action Plan, Pt.1

- **What's your objective?**
- **What's the big picture/desired future?**
- **What big actions will be needed?**
- **Who are the critical stakeholders?**
- **What resources/gaps do you anticipate?**

## **Detailing Your Action Plan, Pt. 2**

- **Specific goals?**
- **How: smaller tasks/actions required?**  
**Prioritize them**
- **Target dates**
- **Stakeholders (delegate, support)**
- **Specific measures of success**
- **Benefits, “rewards,” positive outcomes**



Moving to Action  
**The HR Cycle and Civility**

*Termination, Exit*

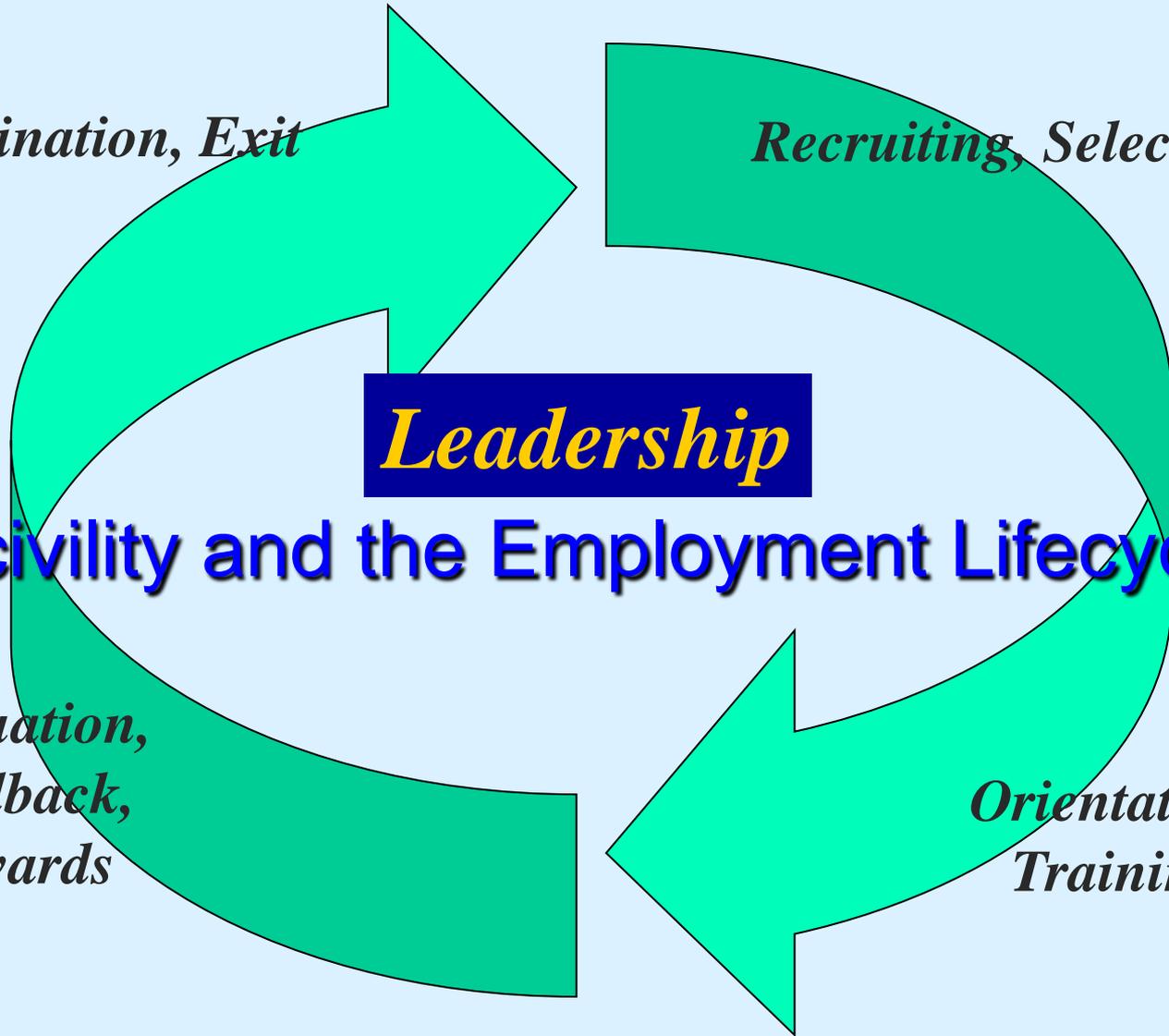
*Recruiting, Selection*

***Leadership***

# **Incivility and the Employment Lifecycle**

*Evaluation,  
Feedback,  
Rewards*

*Orientation,  
Training*



*Termination, Exit*

## **Recruiting, Selection**

- \* References
- \* “Fit”
- \* Trail
- \* PEOPLE risks

*Leadership*

*Evaluation,  
Feedback,  
Rewards*

*Orientation,  
Training*



*Termination, Exit*

*Recruiting, Selection*

***Leadership***

**Orientation, Training**

- \* Code of conduct
- \* Stress management
- \* Sensitivity (harass.)
- \* Listening
- \* Conflict resolution

*Evaluation,  
Feedback,  
Rewards*

*Termination, Exit*

*Recruiting, Selection*

***Leadership***

**Evaluation, Rewards**

- \* 360 f/b
- \* Document
- \* F/b despite clout
- \* No special treatment

*Orientation,  
Training*



## **Termination, Exit**

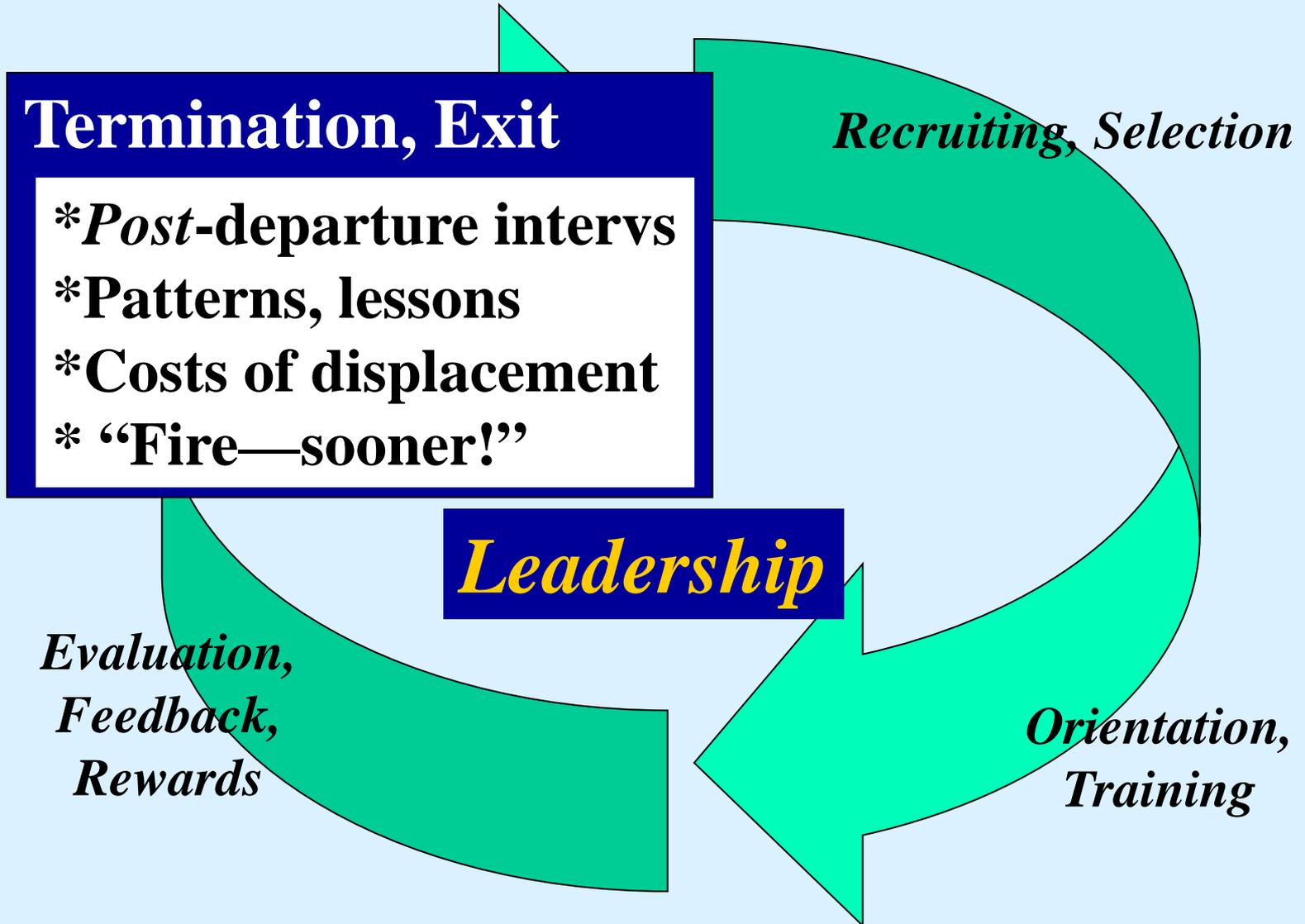
- \* *Post-departure intervvs*
- \* **Patterns, lessons**
- \* **Costs of displacement**
- \* **“Fire—sooner!”**

*Recruiting, Selection*

*Leadership*

*Evaluation,  
Feedback,  
Rewards*

*Orientation,  
Training*



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# *Closing thoughts...*

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\* benefits: productivity, commitment, retention,  
satisfaction, creativity, cooperation,  
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**There are many possible avenues - -**

**Success begins with \*you\***

*Thank you!*

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