



Workplace Incivility: What's a Leader to Do?

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2011 NASA OH Meeting
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Opening thoughts...

Bad news:

Bad behavior → high (unaccounted)
costs

Good news:

When bad behavior is curtailed:

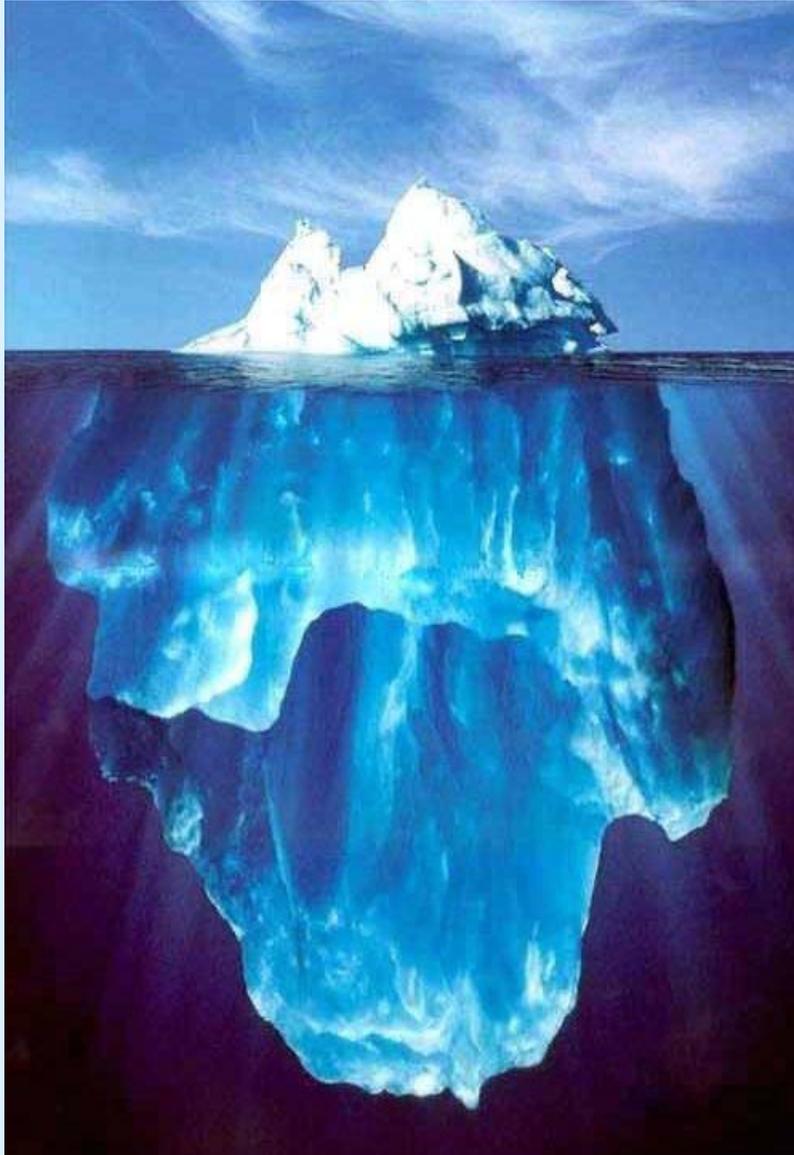
* benefits: productivity, commitment, retention,
satisfaction, creativity, cooperation,
health...

Agenda

- Shifting role of “professional” \implies civility
- “incivility”
 - forms, costs, players
 - Mini-case: “County Hosp-Midwest USA”
- Organizational Success Stories
 - Mini-case: “Health Care Services, Inc.”
- What to Do? Key Actions
 - Leaders
 - Targets
 - Offenders

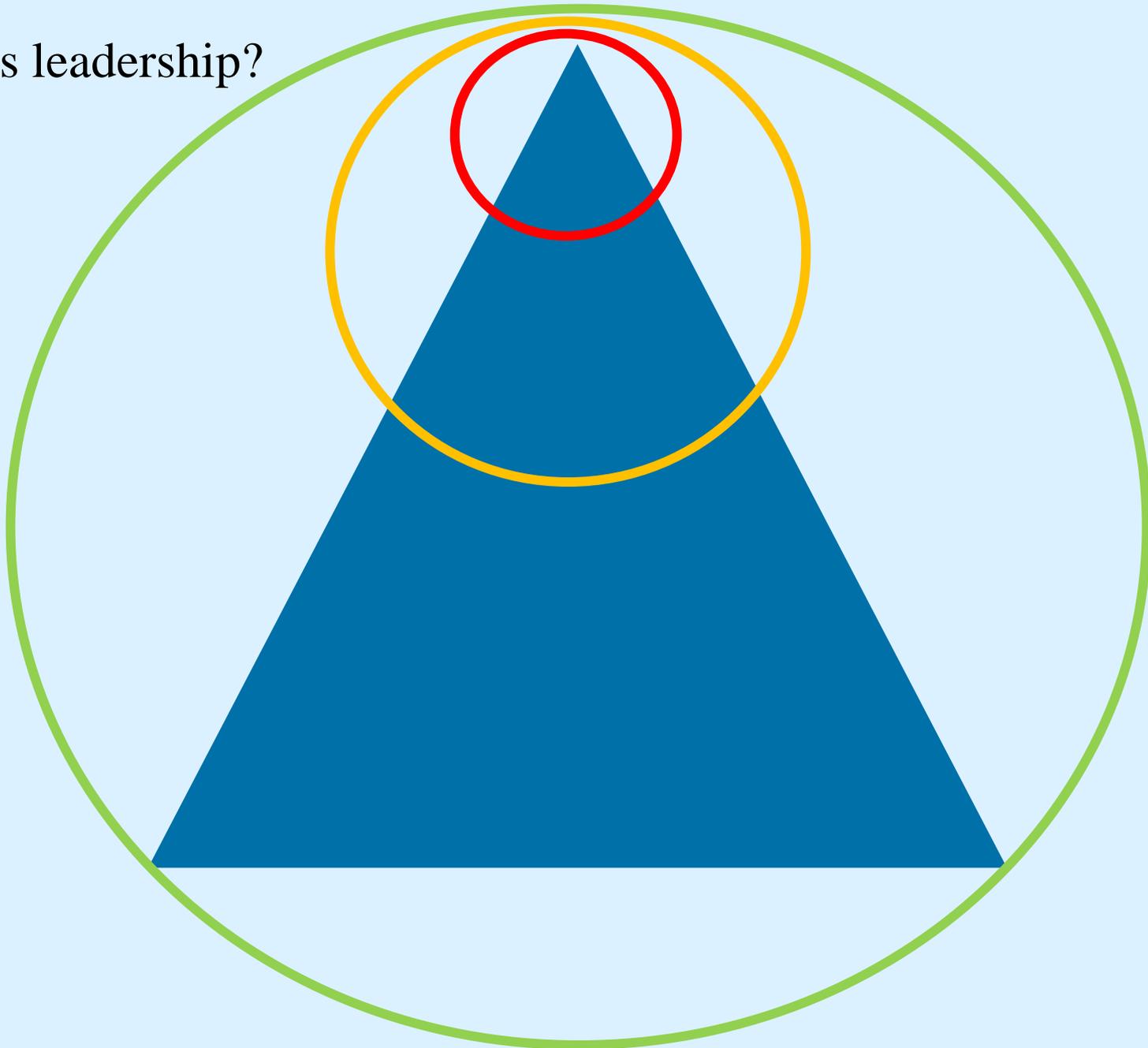
interactive, grounded, practical

“the *dawn* of the Age of Human Capital”



- complex svcs/products
 - globalization
 - extraordinary customer demands
-
- compression of time
 - hyperspecialization
 - transient employment
 - work means less to many
 - info/expertise deluge
 - generational conflux (n=4)
 - collective neg emotional temperament
 - shifting “leadership”
 - shifting role of “professional”

Where's leadership?



Shifting Role of “professional”: increasingly as collaborator/ team member...

- Build on each other’s ideas
- Openly examine and resolve differences
- Remain mindful of how people work together
- Discuss objs/task until well understood/accepted
- Make decisions by examining/comparing differences/alternatives, not steam-rolling
- Keep egos in check
- Familiarity across group; unity as team
- Energize each other
- **Mutual respect**

Shift: Intrapersonal Schizophrenia to Achieve Collaborative Success



**Mastery /
Business /
"Succeed"**

vs.

- Focus on Task
- Individ. Confidence
- Power
- Assert, aggress
- Independence
- Individ. Perfecting
- Individ. Efficiency
- Individ. Effectiveness

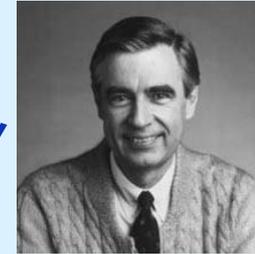
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- Focus on Task
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- Focus on Task + Process
- Consideration
- Openness
- Listening
- Tolerance
- Acceptance
- Patience

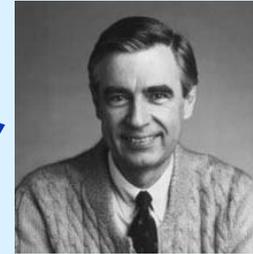
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What's the connection to *workplace incivility*?

As a leader, it's your responsibility to model civility & curtail incivility.

workplace incivility:

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

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**Lack of mutual respect
among employees.**

How pervasive is incivility?

- **98% have been targets (ee-to-ee)**
- **65% witnessed at least 1x/month**
- **10% witnessed at least 1x/day**
- **In 1998, 20% were targets at least 1x/wk**
- **... In 2008, that number rose to 48%**

What does incivility look like in your org?

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

*... a few common examples, then,
please brainstorm*

What does incivility look like?

Common examples...

- not listening
- using email when F2F is needed
- disrupting meetings
- 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
- flaunting status
- withholding requested information or action

...individuals acting like they're the only people in the workplace

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**

Why should you care?

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



What do targets do?

88%

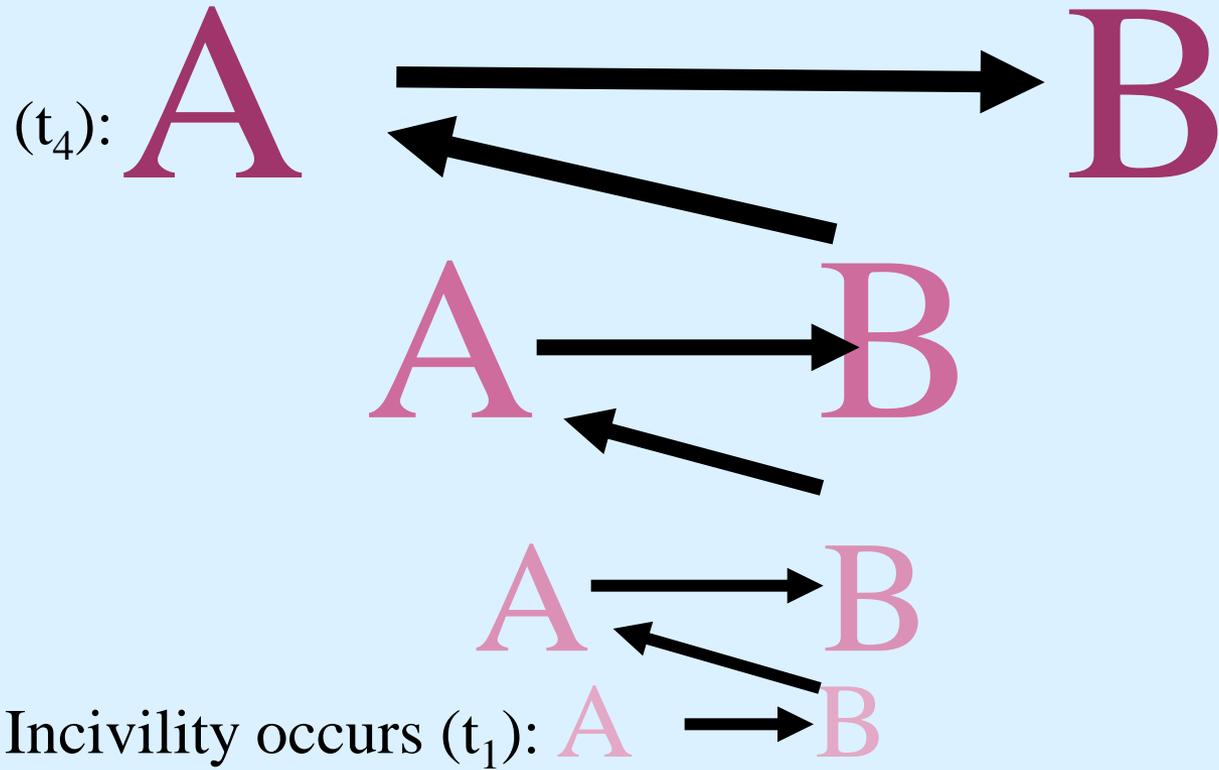
will do something
to get even
with their
organizations.

~

94%

will do something
to get even
with their
offenders.

Escalation

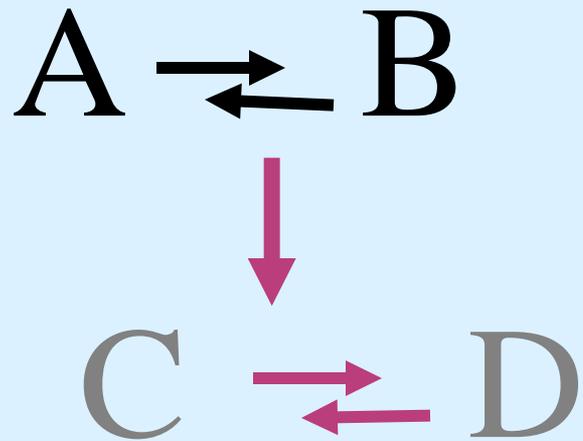


It starts with an offender and a target...

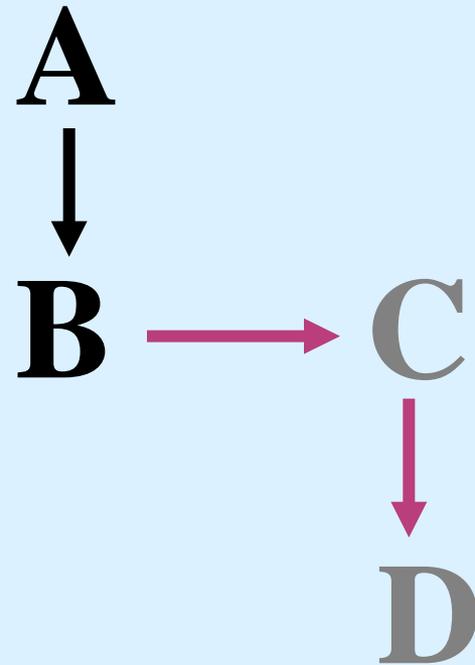
But 98% of targets do something that creates ripple effects



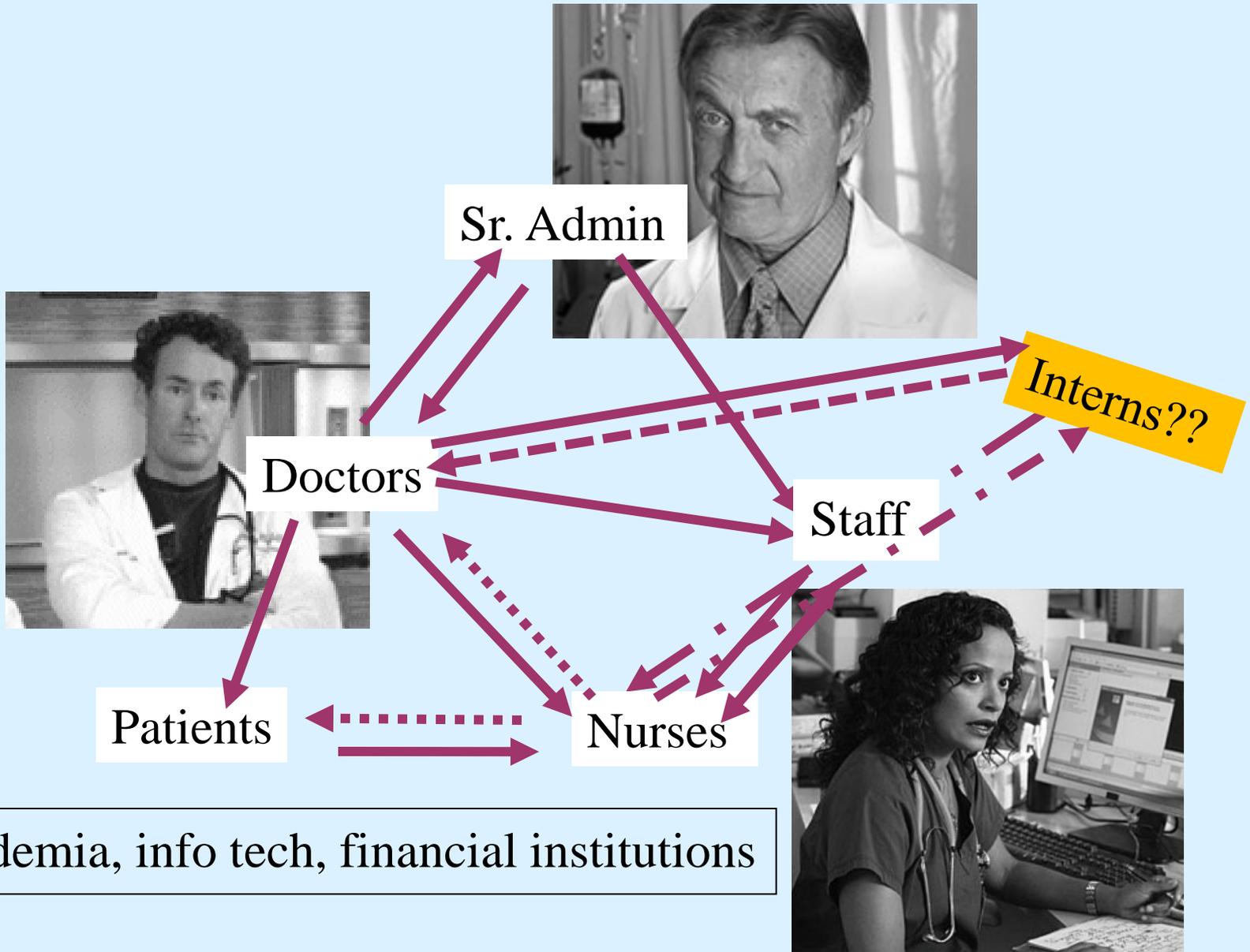
Cascading



or



A Fictitious Erosive Path



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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“Radiology Sandwich,”
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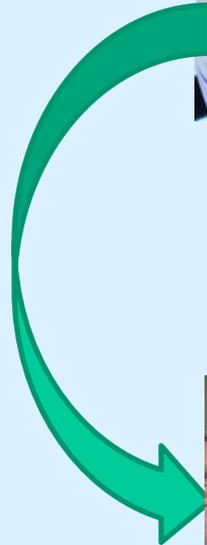
Radiologists



Residents

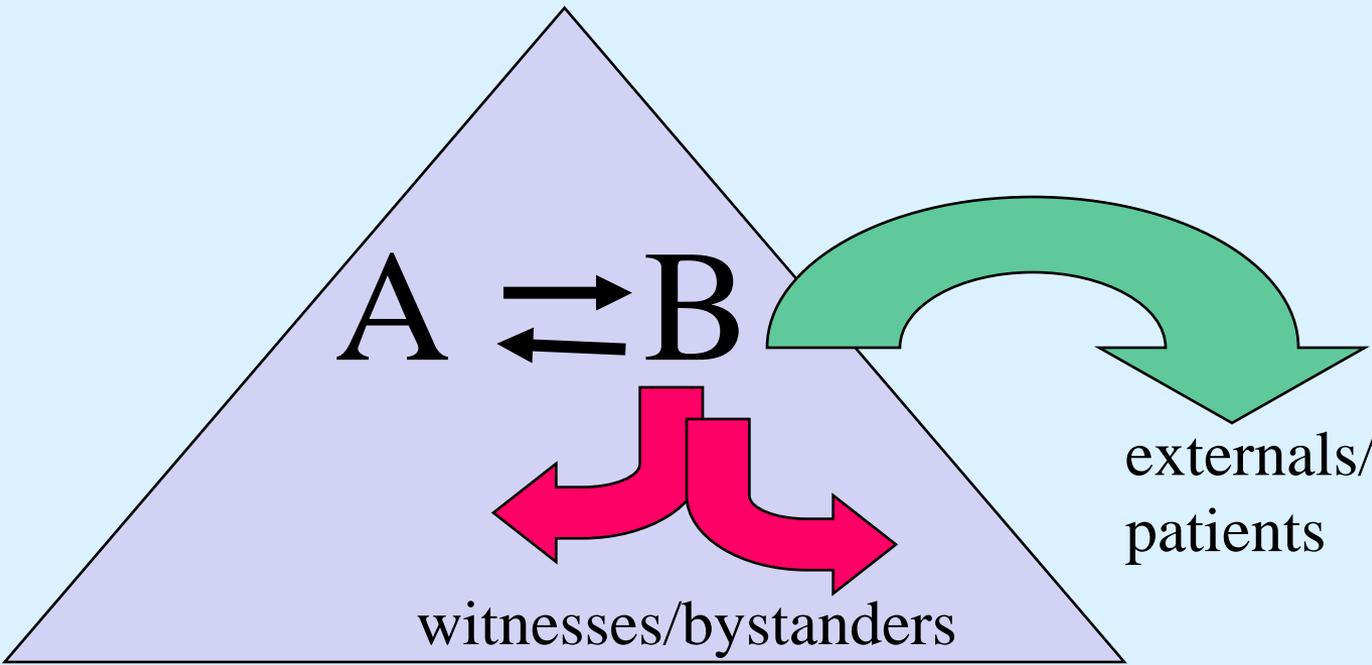


Nurses



“Hostile unionized staff”

Extended Effects



Deeper individual effects...

Targets experience
negative
emotional impact.

~

anger/fear/sadness

~

Stress

emotional contagion
cognitive impairment
depleted cooperation
withered creativity



Teams lose...

morale slips, time is wasted,
communication is clogged



Cooperation drops

- 16% refuse to work w/offensive teammate
- 25% leave work 1-2x/wk for teammates to finish

Creativity Suffers

- less ideas generated
- lower quality
- ...even among those who simply observe ee-to-ee incivility



What does this look like in medicine?

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

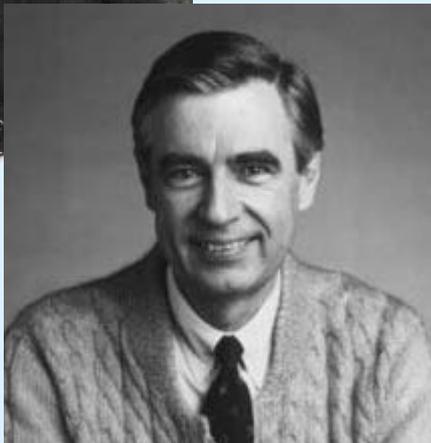
“Health Care Services, Inc”

- 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

Leader's Top 10



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 +...

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**
- **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

Closing Summary: Incivility→High Costs

When employees are treated badly by other employees

- 88% get even with their orgs
- 94% get even with their offenders

- 1/2 cut back work *effort*
- 1/2 cut back work *time*
- 1/3 intentionally decrease *quality* of their work
- 2/3 *lose time worrying* about their offender
- 4/5 *lose time worrying* about the incident
- 4/5 have *less commitment* to org

- 1/2 consider leaving
- 1 in 8 actually leaves
 - with them go knowledge, networks, experience
 - they'll report a different reason
 - often wait months/years, so time lag b/w incivility and exit

...and these numbers include targets only

Closing thoughts...

Bad news:

Bad behavior → high (unaccounted) costs

Good news:

When bad behavior is curtailed:

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

*Success begins with *you**

Thank you!

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