

An Evidence-Based Approach to Integrate Civility, Professionalism, and Ethical Practice Into Nursing Curricula

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This article presents an evidence-based approach to integrate concepts of civility, professionalism, and ethical practice into nursing curricula to prepare students to foster healthy work environments and ensure safe patient care. The author provides evidence to support this approach and includes suggestions for new student orientation, strategies for the first day of class, exemplars for incorporating active learning strategies to enhance student engagement, an emphasis on positive faculty role modeling, and suggestions for curricular integration.

Keywords: active learning strategies; civility; ethical practice; incivility; nursing curriculum; orientation; professionalism

All nurses regardless of setting or position have an ethical obligation to create and sustain healthy work places and to foster an atmosphere of dignity, professionalism, and respect. Every year since 1999 (except 2001, after the 9/11 attacks, when first responders were rated higher), Americans responding to Gallup Polls rated nurses highest on honesty and ethical standards.¹ Although this distinction is impressive, it is important for nurses to consistently display actions that merit this high honor. Nursing practice is guided by codes of ethics detailing the moral and ethical imperatives for nurses. First, the International Code of Ethics for Nurses² emphasizes the nurse's responsibility to respect human rights, treat others with dignity and respect, and provide respectful and unrestricted care. Next, the American Nurses Association (ANA) *Code of Ethics for Nurses With Interpretive Statements*³ clearly articulates all nurses' obligation to foster safe, ethical, civil workplaces. Specific provisions within the Code of Ethics³ address the nurse's responsibility to act in a manner that is consistent with maintaining patient, coworker and personal safety, civility, and respect. For example, Provision 1.5 requires nurses "to create an ethical environment and culture of civility and kindness, treating colleagues, co-workers, employees, students, and others with dignity and respect...and that any form of bullying, harassment, intimidation, manipulation, threats or violence will not be tolerated"^(p4), and Provision 7.2 requires

academic educators to "ensure that all graduates possess the knowledge, skills, and moral dispositions that are essential to nursing."^(pX)

In addition to ethical codes of conduct, there are several other foundational works supporting the need for an evidence-based approach, which integrates concepts of civility, professionalism, and ethical practice into nursing curricula. The integrated approach detailed in this article is closely aligned with the National League for Nursing core values of caring, integrity, diversity, and excellence⁴ and Essential VIII: Professionalism and Professional Values described by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN),⁵ which underscores the importance of nurses being accountable and responsible for their individual actions, and ensuring that civility is present so that professionalism can occur. This integrated approach also meets the recommendations of the 2011 Institute of Medicine Report, particularly the second recommendation of empowering nurses to participate in collaborative efforts to improve work environments and health care systems.⁶ These foundational documents support the need for professional and civil actions that must be continuously demonstrated by nurses in all areas of nursing education and practice.

Furthermore, the Center for American Nurses⁷ recommended disseminating information to nurses and nursing students that specifically address conflict and provide ways to recognize, address, and change disruptive behavior in the workplace. The Center⁷ also advocated for the development and implementation of teaching strategies and curricula that educate nursing students on the incidence and prevalence of disruptive behaviors and to instruct and incorporate specific ways to eradicate uncivil behavior. This article presents an evidence-based approach to integrate the concepts of civility, professionalism, and ethical practice into nursing curricula.

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The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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Accepted for publication: August 13, 2016

Published ahead of print: October 3, 2016

DOI: 10.1097/NNE.0000000000000331

By doing so, students and new graduates are better prepared to foster healthy work environments to ensure the delivery of safe, quality patient care.

Defining Civility, Professionalism, and Ethical Practice

Although the concepts of civility, professionalism, and ethical practice are interrelated, each is defined separately to provide a deeper understanding of each individual concept. First, civility is defined as expressing respect for others while honoring differences, discussing them robustly, and treating one another with dignity, honor, and respect.^{8,9} In a concept analysis, Clark and Carnosso¹⁰ found that civility requires an authentic respect for the people involved and that each encounter requires time, presence, engagement, and intention to seek common ground.

DeLesky¹¹ defines professionalism as the “assimilation of nursing skills and knowledge integrated with dignity and respect for all human beings, incorporating the assumptions and values of the profession while maintaining accountability and self-awareness.”^(p359) According to Crigger and Godfrey,¹² professional identity in nursing refers to an individual’s perception of himself or herself and the fulfillment of responsibilities toward society, recipients of care, and other professionals, and to himself or herself. This process is influenced by characteristics, norms, and values of the nursing discipline, resulting in an individual thinking, acting, and feeling like a nurse.

According to the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics,³ ethical practice is a promise that nurses are doing their best to provide care for their patients and their communities, supporting each other in the process, and ensuring that all nurses fulfill their ethical and professional obligations. Respect for persons is an ethical principle and an element of professionalism, which maintains that all human beings have an unconditional moral worth that requires nurses to treat each individual with value, dignity, and respect.¹¹ The American Nurses Association¹³ declared 2016 as the year for emphasizing a culture of safety. Fostering a culture of safety in health care requires an emphasis on civility, professionalism, and ethical practice. When these interconnected, interrelated concepts are lacking or underdeveloped, the potential for incivility increases. This is concerning since incivility in the health care environment can have a negative impact on individuals, teams, organizations, and ultimately, patient care.

Negative Impact of Incivility in Nursing Practice and Education

In health care, the consequences of incivility can result in life-threatening mistakes, preventable complications, and harm or even death of a patient. The author defines incivility as rude or disruptive behavior (as well as failing to take action when action is warranted)—which may result in psychological or physiological distress for the people involved—and if left unaddressed, may progress into unsafe or threatening situations.¹⁴⁻¹⁶ Acts of incivility may include nonverbal behaviors such as arm-crossing, eye-rolling, or refusing to listen and walking away or more overt behaviors such as making disparaging remarks, belittling others, or intentionally excluding and marginalizing others. Incivility also includes failing

to take action when actions are warranted,¹⁷ such as withholding important information about a patient’s care, failing to intervene on another’s behalf, refusing to assist a colleague, or neglecting to acknowledge others. These behaviors, especially if perpetuated in a patterned way over time, can have lasting and harmful effects.

In the academic environment, Feldman¹⁸ noted that failure to address incivility degrades the learning environment and may eventually harm the reputation of the school. In nursing and other health-related disciplines, the impact of incivility can be far-reaching and may extend beyond the academic setting and negatively impact patient safety. Therefore, nursing faculty must take the lead to model professionalism and ethical practice, and set the tone for civility as a shared value within nursing programs. Clearly, students are not the only group to display uncivil behaviors; faculty and administrators may behave unprofessionally or disrespectfully as well. However, the focus of this article is to present an evidence-based approach to integrate the concepts of civility, professionalism, and ethical practice into nursing curricula and to provide faculty with strategies to prepare students to foster healthy work environments and ensure safe patient care.

New Student Orientation

To begin, all institutions of higher learning need to create and widely disseminate clearly articulated vision, mission, and shared values statements with an intentional focus on civility, professionalism, and ethical conduct. Connelly¹⁹ strongly encouraged all colleges and universities to develop and circulate a code or statement of civility across the campus community and reinforce the code throughout the students’ academic experience. According to Connelly,¹⁹ the statement of civility should be based on the institution’s mission and needs to include a brief description of civility, an explanation of the importance of respecting each person’s dignity, and a list of shared values for all members of the campus community to commit to fulfilling. An exemplar of a mission statement, statement of civility, and a list of shared values is displayed in Table 1.

These foundational statements are shared with all members of the campus community and emphasized during new student orientation. Recognizing that not all students entering an institution attend new student orientation, it is incumbent on nursing programs to introduce students to the institution’s mission and values and to align the nursing program foundational statements with the institution-at-large. New student orientation to the nursing program reinforces adherence to the foundational statements and underscores the importance of being a responsible citizen, with an intentional focus on civility, professionalism, socialization to the profession, and ethical conduct. In addition to immersing students in institutional and program belief statements, instituting a civility pledge can be an effective way to obtain commitment to the goals, shared values, and norms of the nursing program. An exemplar of a Civility Pledge with corresponding norms/ground rules is displayed in Table 2.

Orientation for incoming nursing students should be intentionally focused and carefully arranged. For example, before the on-campus orientation experience, online modules may be used to accomplish basic orientation needs such as securing health records and distributing the student

Table 1. Exemplar of Foundational Statements

Mission statement: The University strives to create a campus culture that values civility, ethical behavior, professionalism, respectful discourse, and affirms the contributions of each member of the campus community.

Statement of civility: All members of the University are dedicated to creating and maintaining a civil community that supports respectful discourse, openness to opposing points of view, and passionate argument. The display of ethical conduct and treating one another with respect is requisite to constructive communication and community building. Without civility, we miss opportunities to understand others points of view and to find common ground. Civility is not equivalent to censorship, but instead is needed to bring decorum to discourse. This Statement of Civility is predicated on our shared values.

Shared values: Academic excellence; respect; professionalism; ethical conduct; integrity; accountability; social justice; citizenship

handbook, policies, and procedures. In addition, preassigned readings related to civility, professionalism, and ethical practice may be completed by students in advance of group activities conducted during on-campus orientation. The goal is to allow as much time as possible for other orientation activities conducted during on-campus orientation. The number of days dedicated to new student orientation to the nursing program varies; however, 3 days is recommended to allow sufficient time to engage students in interactive and collaborative learning activities to introduce and emphasize the key concepts of civility, professionalism, and ethical practice, and socialization to the nursing profession. These essential concepts are requisite to the delivery of safe, quality patient-centered care.

Active learning exercises can be incorporated to highlight specific evidence and rationale for fostering safe patient care. Some examples include discussion of High Reliability Organizations,²⁰ the ANA Code of Ethics,³ Institute of Medicine Report,⁶ ANA Scope and Standards of Practice,²¹ the Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice,⁵ and Quality and Safety Education for Nurses competencies.²² Other activities for learner engagement during new student orientation include Slicing the Civility Pie¹⁵ and incorporating free-writes focused on the students' responsibility in fostering civility, professionalism, and ethical practice.

White Coat Ceremonies: A Trend for New Student Orientation

An important trend occurring in nursing programs across the United States is the inclusion of a formal White Coat

Ceremony. These formal ceremonies are commonly held on entry into the nursing program and symbolize a professional rite of passage designed to celebrate and welcome new students into the profession. White Coat Ceremonies typically include a keynote address delivered by a nurse leader and marked by students taking a public oath acknowledging their commitment to the profession. The ceremony is commemorated by the donning of the white coat and/or a lapel pin as visual evidence of the students' commitment to quality patient care.

Since 2014, the Arnold P. Gold Foundation and the AACN have partnered to make funding available to nursing schools interested in initiating a White Coat Ceremony.²³ This partnership funds White Coat ceremonies for new nursing students at the beginning of an academic year to promote the importance of humanistic, patient-centered care. White Coat ceremonies are not intended to take the place of other formal ceremonies such as convocation, pinning, or commencement; instead, the White Coat Ceremony marks the beginning of the students' professional journey.

Laying a Foundation for Success: First Day of Class

The intentional investment of time and resources made during the first day of class (and consistently reinforced thereafter) will pay vast dividends in preventing incivility and lays the foundation for ongoing success. Being well prepared for class allows faculty to arrive on time, set up teaching-learning materials, and welcome students. Getting to know students by name and recognizing the uniqueness that each student brings to the learning environment are

Table 2. Exemplar of a School of Nursing Civility Pledge

Goal: To foster an ethical, respectful, professional academic work and learning environment for all members of the School of Nursing. This pledge is founded on Provision 1.5 of the Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements, which requires all nurses to create "an ethical environment and culture of civility and kindness, treating colleagues, coworkers, employees, students, and patients with dignity and respect."^{3(p4)} To honor this commitment, all members of the School of Nursing commit to fostering a healthy work and learning environment that promotes respect, teamwork, collegiality, professionalism, and productive discourse. We pledge to abide by our vision, mission, and cocreated norms and to communicate and interact with civility, professionalism, and respect. When we disagree, we will restrict our differences to the issue itself while continuing to respect the person with whom we disagree. To accomplish our commitment, we agree to abide by and be accountable for the following ground rules:

- Assume goodwill and best intentions
- Be respectful in our interactions
- Use direct communication and speak directly to the person involved
- Role model professionalism, civility, and ethical conduct
- Listen carefully and with intention to understand
- Honor and respect diversity
- Be open to other points of view
- Hold self and each other accountable for abiding by our norms

ways of showing respect and setting a positive tone. Sharing our teaching philosophies with students and being clear and explicit about our values and beliefs help create a safe, civil learning environment. When students understand our views, methods, and rationale, they are more likely to feel engaged in, and part of, the learning process.²⁴

Being civil and professional does not mean we all agree. In fact, faculty in higher education have a responsibility to foster learning environments where argument, debate, civil discourse, and spirited discussions thrive. To do this effectively, faculty must implement strategies that foster safe learning spaces for students to freely and respectfully express their views, positions, and beliefs. Several authors^{15,18,19,24,25} emphasized the importance of being specific about expected behaviors in the classroom, including setting and maintaining appropriate ground rules during the first day of class. Establishing, implementing, and reinforcing class norms are foundational for a respectful and civil teaching-learning environment. When faculty and students work together to craft classroom norms, all parties are more likely to abide by them. Faculty can begin by explaining the value and importance of cocreating norms, describing how norms need to be closely aligned with the mission and values of the institution and nursing program, and emphasizing how these values provide a basis for desired classroom behavior. It is everyone's responsibility to reinforce and monitor adherence to the norms and to periodically evaluate how they are working. An exemplar of a cocreated preamble and a nursing class goal with corresponding norms is displayed in Table 3.

Feldman¹⁸ suggested that faculty use the first day to clearly explain expectations and learning objectives of the class and include this information in the syllabus. A detailed syllabus can deter uncivil student behavior by providing specific details about course objectives, methods of evaluation, attendance issues, makeup examinations, and other areas in which confusion can foster conflict. The course syllabus is an agreement with students that can be used to guide discussion about expectations and goals to be accomplished throughout the course. A poorly developed syllabus can be frustrating to students and contribute to student resentment, whereas a well-constructed syllabus often eases student

anxiety and provides a solid platform for cocreating classroom and clinical norms.^{14,24}

A well-built, clearly designed syllabus should include critical "talking points" such as codes of conduct, conflict negotiation and academic dishonesty policies, learning objectives and assignments (with rationales and grading rubrics), and discussion of responsible social networking and online etiquette.²⁴ These critical talking points serve as a foundation for cocreating behavioral norms and fostering engaged learning environments.¹⁵ Sharing a synthesized version of one's teaching philosophy can also be included as a talking point. Teaching philosophies represent ideas, beliefs, and assumptions about teaching, ways to put these beliefs and strategies into practice, and goals for student learning.

These strategies are also applicable to the online learning environment. De Gagne et al²⁶ conducted an extensive literature review regarding cyberincivility in the health-related disciplines of medicine, nursing, and allied health. The review revealed that uncivil behaviors occur not only in the classroom and clinical settings but also in the online learning environment (OLE) and that professional students and faculty need help to realize that online incivility is not congruent with codes of professional conduct. The authors recommended that issues related to cyberincivility be included in the curriculum, to raise students' awareness of these issues, and faculty develop policies and guidelines to deter both student and faculty incivility in health professional education.

In a 2-part study,^{27,28} researchers measured nursing faculty's and students' perceptions of incivility in the OLE and identified strategies to address online incivility. Uncivil student behaviors in the OLE included failing to complete assignments in a timely manner, posting ambiguous or vague responses that did not add meaning to the online discussion, and failing to fulfill group responsibilities. Uncivil faculty behaviors included having unclear expectations about assignments, posting a vague or confusing syllabus, and failing to respond to students' postings or post grades in a timely manner. Several strategies were identified to create civility in online courses, including providing clearly defined behavioral expectations, norms, and consequences for uncivil behavior; faculty role modeling of professionalism and civility;

Table 3. Exemplar of Cocreated Preamble, Goal, and Corresponding Class Norms	
<i>Preamble:</i> As a community of adult learners, we are committed to acting in ways that reflect the professional, ethical nurse we each aspire to be. Learning and applying the key concepts of civility, professionalism, and ethical practice are essential to professional nursing practice. As adult learners, we seek to foster debate, challenge ideas, engage in social discourse, and encourage intellectual inquiry. These important discussions require faculty and students to bring civility to discourse and respect to our conversations and encounters. Therefore, we agree to act in accordance with the following class goal and corresponding norms.	
<i>Class goal:</i> Act in ways that reflect the professional, ethical nurse we each aspire to be.	
<i>Corresponding norms</i>	
■ Engage in respectful interactions	
■ Listen well while others are speaking	
■ Treat others as you wish to be treated (Golden Rule)	
■ Assume goodwill; encourage and inspire each other	
■ Respect differences and be open to other points of view	
■ Make thoughtful contributions to group work	
■ Be on time and respect one another's time and contributions	
■ Use electronic and media devices for class purposes only	
Have fun!	

addressing incivility immediately and holding offenders accountable; and having faculty and students sign a civility statement.

Marnocha et al²⁹ investigated the posting of unprofessional online content by nursing students. Seventy-seven percent of the participating 293 schools had encountered at least 1 incident of students' posting unprofessional content; 46% were aware of unprofessional content being posted by nursing students at other schools. Unprofessional online content included making negative comments about patients, peers, the work environment, or the nursing profession; profanity; breaches in patient confidentiality; and using discriminatory language. Participants in the study expressed a high level of concern about these behaviors. The authors noted that in some cases, students do not fully understand the ethical standards that guide decisions about online postings. The authors suggested more intense guidance regarding social networking and increasing awareness about cyber professionalism. The authors further emphasized the need for implementing social media policies, reporting online unprofessional content in a timely manner, and educating faculty and students on the ethical and professional standards for nursing. Whether in the "live" classroom or in the OLE, engaging students in a meaningful and open conversation about expectations for classroom behavior, critical talking points, a philosophy for teaching and learning, and the importance of adhering to professional standards and codes of ethical conduct is a powerful way to encourage and role model professional behavior expected of nursing students and nurses.

Power of Active Learning Strategies

Designing and implementing active learning strategies require a transition for both students and faculty. Students need to move from a more passive role to an active, engaged, and problem-solving role. Students also need to learn to work in teams and communities, collaborate with peers, and view faculty as facilitators of learning, rather than imparters of knowledge and information. The faculty role must change as well—with an intentional shift from faculty being the expert to becoming the facilitator of student learning.²⁴

Engaging students in active learning activities minimizes disruption, promotes civility and collaboration,¹⁴ and helps students stay focused and motivated.³⁰ While integrating the concepts of civility, professionalism, and ethical practice begins during new student orientation, integration of these concepts must progress throughout the curriculum over the duration of the students' nursing education experience. This integration may be accomplished by engaging students in specific activities such as having them complete and discuss the results of the Civility Index for Students,³¹ used to assess perceptions of respectful interactions and civility acumen. Other strategies to enhance meaningful and applicable learning include simulated scenarios, role-playing, storytelling, narrative pedagogy, case-based scenarios, and group discussion using Socratic questioning.

One example of an active learning strategy includes having students complete assigned readings related to ethics, moral distress, and ethical decision making before class and write a short paper describing a real or potential ethical dilemma that might occur with a particular patient popula-

tion (eg, newborns in the neonatal intensive care unit, patients living with HIV-AIDS, and incarcerated persons). The students discuss their dilemmas during a small group activity; the group can select 1 of the ethical dilemmas; describe how it impacted the patient, family, and other members of the health care team; and use an evidence-based ethical decision-making model to resolve the dilemma.¹⁵

In addition to student engagement, active learning strategies promote critical thinking, efficient problem solving, and clinical inquiry in nursing students who must be well prepared to foster positive work environments and ensure patient safety. Because significant learning also takes place outside the classroom, faculty can encourage students to practice and apply what they have learned in class to their lives outside their courses. Faculty can facilitate professional workshops and journal clubs and involve students in other program activities that stress the importance of civility, professional, and ethical practice.

Faculty as Positive Role Models

Nursing faculty can implement several strategies to set a positive tone for a successful academic term. Being a positive role model for professionalism and ethical conduct, as well as setting the best example we can for students, co-workers, and practice partners, is one of the most formidable tools in the civility toolbox. First impressions matter and are often made at "lightning speed." When students meet faculty for the first time, they register myriad impressions, and often, these impressions are lasting ones. Therefore, it is important to consider how we present ourselves, interact, communicate, and treat others. A positive role model is someone who shows confidence, poise, and grace. Positive role models communicate well, listen to understand, show respect and gratitude for others, and are willing to admit mistakes.

The author has developed a Civility Index for Faculty³¹ to use as a reflective exercise to measure perceptions of faculty civility. The index is designed to raise awareness, generate discussion, and determine strengths and opportunities to improve faculty role modeling. The index may be completed as an individual self-reflective exercise or with a colleague to garner another person's perspective. Some elements of the Index include regarding students as adult learners and expecting them to succeed, role modeling civil discourse and an appreciation for opposing points of view, using objective grading criteria and well-defined assignment rubrics, and incorporating constructive feedback from students and colleagues to improve learning outcomes.

Being a positive role model includes setting a welcoming tone for students. Faculty are encouraged to send an e-mail greeting to students before classes begin to welcome them and brief them on the agenda for the first day.²⁴ Students also appreciate regular messages from faculty about course requirements and assignments throughout the course.

Imperative of Curricular Integration

This flexible, evidence-based approach can be successfully integrated into new or existing nursing curricula. Faculty in each nursing course can tailor and incorporate the concepts of civility, professionalism, and ethical practice into courses in several creative ways. For example, faculty can incorporate civility-themed simulations, role-plays, or learning activities

based on TeamSTEPPS³² into a Professional Issues or Nursing Leadership course. These simulated activities provide realistic opportunities to practice professional communication and constructive conflict negotiation skills. For instance, the author combined cognitive rehearsal, role playing, and the use of scripts as a learning technique to improve communication during uncivil encounters.

The author used live actors to simulate an uncivil nurse-to-nurse encounter with students enrolled in a senior leadership course. The students prepared for the learning activity by reading data-based articles in advance of class. Then, they participated in a 1-hour faculty-led didactic session on the topic of workplace incivility and use of cognitive rehearsal as a strategy to counter incivility in the practice setting, especially when patient safety was at stake. The students observed the scenario, provided written feedback on its effectiveness, and participated in small and large group discussions to debrief the scenarios. This approach provided the students with effective strategies to manage conflicts in similar situations they may encounter as new nurses in the practice setting.

Other examples of simulated experiences include faculty-to-student conflicted encounters where a student is performing a patient assessment when the clinical instructor (or nurse preceptor) criticizes the student's performance in the presence of a patient—or an uncivil student-to-faculty encounter where a student calls the faculty member's credibility into question in a derogatory manner during class. Using evidence-based frameworks from TeamSTEPPS such as DESC (describe, express, suggest, consequences) and CUS (concerned, uncomfortable, safety)³² to prepare and practice scripts to address uncivil encounters is an excellent learning activity to prepare students to manage conflicted situations they might experience in the academic or practice setting.

Rewarding Civility, Professionalism, and Ethical Practice

Students participating in required and extracurricular civility, professionalism, and ethical practice activities may be recognized in a formal ceremony to celebrate their participation and dedication to the profession. A badge system is a tangible way of recognizing students for their participation and achievements. Using the Olympic medal system as an example, a bronze, silver, or gold badge (with an accompanying certificate) can be awarded based on the level of student involvement and achievement. The specific requirements for each badge achievement can be based on the level of student involvement in required class activities as well as participating and taking a leadership role in elective activities such as membership on committees, participation in journal clubs, attendance at faculty-student social events, and other activities focused on fostering civility, professionalism, and ethical practice.

Measuring Success

Although the full complement of this integrated approach has not been studied to determine outcome success, several studies have measured the effectiveness of various elements of this approach. For example, Jenkins et al³³ conducted an exploratory mixed-methods study to test whether participation in a journal club was an effective intervention to change

civility perceptions among nursing students. The authors found that participation in the journal club changed students' attitudes and behaviors about civility, including students' refusal to participate in uncivil behavior, being more supportive towards others, and attempting to prevent or avoid incivility.

Clark et al^{34,35} conducted a 2-part study to measure student and newly graduated nurses' ability to identify and address incivility in the practice environment. The first part of the study involved the combination of live actors to depict an uncivil nurse-to-nurse encounter and the use of scripting as a means to address the uncivil behavior. The scenario allowed students to reflect on their own behaviors and practice how they might handle the situation if faced with a similar event. A 10-month follow-up study was conducted with a sampling of newly graduated nurses who participated in the first part of the study to measure the newly graduated nurses' ability to apply what they learned from the learning activity. Participants reported using the information learned in class to depersonalize the behavior and address incivility and to communicate more clearly particularly in patient safety situations.

In a more recent study,³⁶ the authors implemented and evaluated the effectiveness of a communication competency educational program to improve students' advocacy behaviors. Portions of the TeamSTEPPS curriculum³² were used as an experiential learning strategy to improve communication and teamwork within the practice environment. The authors described how the intentional use of competency-based communication models used within the context of Knowles' Adult Learning Theory had a positive impact on the students' ability to advocate for themselves and their patients. Results from preintervention to postintervention indicated the importance of communication competency education when advocating for themselves or for their patients. More studies are needed to evaluate the outcomes and effectiveness of this comprehensive, integrated approach to determine if the proposed strategies improve civility, professionalism, and ethical practice among nursing students.

Conclusion

Incivility in the health care setting can have a negative impact on individuals, teams, organizations, and ultimately, patient safety. Nurse educators have an ethical responsibility to ensure that all graduates possess the essential skills needed to foster healthy work environments to ensure safe patient care. This evidence-based approach to integrate the concepts of civility, professionalism, and ethical practice into nursing curricula provides several strategies to equip faculty to address this critical issue.

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