Using Appreciative Inquiry to Decrease Incivility and Promote a Healthy Work Environment: A Literature Review

Kelly C. Tomlinson, MSN, RN¹
David P. Hrabe, PhD, RN²
Joyce Zurmehly, PhD, DNP, RN, NEA-BC³
Barbara Warren, PhD, RN, PMHCNS-BC, FNAP, FAAN²
(¹)Department of Nursing, City of Hope, Duarte, CA, USA
(²)College of Nursing, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, USA
(³)College of Nursing, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, USA

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The contemporary healthcare environment is complex and stressful. As healthcare professionals struggle to meet the needs of patients, families, and communities; tension and negative attitudes often prevail. This high-stress atmosphere can lead to an unhealthy work environment in the form of disruptive behavior, lateral or horizontal violence and/or bullying (Vogel, 2016; Bujold, 2015; Dondale, 2012). Beyond the concern of an unhealthy work environment, incivility can lead to high employee turnover, negative patient outcomes and increased healthcare costs (Gillen, Kernohan, Begley, & Luvben, 2017; Oyeleye, Hanson, O’Connor, & Dunn, 2013; The Joint Commission, 2016; Townsend, 2012; Wilson, Diedrich, Phelps, & Choi, 2011; Ulrich, Lavendero, Woods, & Early 2014).

Attempts to meet the needs of healthcare staff and patients with current traditional methods of managing and creating change have been ineffective (Trajkovski, Schmeid, Vickers, & Jackson, 2013). In a Cochrane review of interventions regarding incivility in the workplace, there was little evidence that problem-focused individual or organizational interventions effectively addressed incivility (Gillen, Kernohan, Begley, & Luvben, 2017). A different approach is needed.

Appreciative inquiry (AI), developed by Cooperrider and Srivasta (1987), constructs a shared vision in a positive manner with the underlying premise that the focus of one’s attention is what becomes one’s reality (Trajkovski, Schmeid, Vickers, & Jackson, 2013). Evidence supports that AI can be an effective intervention to create a more positive organizational climate, affect how individuals appraise their environment and increase employee engagement (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Campbell, 2013; Richer, Ritchie, & Marchionni, 2010; Ruhe et al., 2011; Trajkovski, et al’s. (2013).

To deliver high quality, safe patient care, a work environment should promote positive interactions, clear communication, and collaboration. Appreciative Inquiry is a promising strategy to address incivility and promote a healthy work environment.

Title:
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Keywords:
Appreciative inquiry, Incivility and healthy work environment
References:


Oyeleye, O., Hanson, P., O’Connor, N., & Dunn, D. (2013). Relationship of Workplace Incivility, Stress, and Burnout on Nurses’ Turnover Intentions and Psychological Empowerment. Journal of Nursing Administration, 43(10), 536–542. https://doi.org/10.1097/NNA.0b013e3182a3e8c9


from https://www.jointcommission.org/sentinel_event_alert_issue_40_behaviors_that_undermine_a_culture_of_safety/


Abstract Summary:
Incivility is an issue in nursing that needs to be addressed. This is a literature review to find if there is evidence that appreciative inquiry could be an intervention to address incivility and help create a healthy work environment.

Content Outline:
I. Introduction: Appreciative Inquiry, Incivility and Healthy Work Environment

II. The costs of incivility
A. High stress, turnover
B. Disruptive behavior, lateral/horizontal violence, bullying
C. Negative patient outcomes
D. Increased healthcare costs

II. Appreciative Inquiry
A. Creates a shared vision
B. Promotes positive interactions
C. Supports collaboration
D. Encourages employee engagement
First Primary Presenting Author

**Primary Presenting Author**

Kelly C. Tomlinson, MSN, RN
City of Hope
Department of Nursing
Clinical Director of Hematology and Hematopoietic Cell Transplant
Duarte CA
USA

**Professional Experience:** I received my Bachelors degree from the University of Nebraska Medical Center in 1998. I have 20 years of experience both as a bedside nurse and as a leader in Hematology Oncology and Blood and Marrow Transplants. I received my masters degree from Walden University in Healthcare Leadership in 2008. I am currently working on my DNP as a nurse executive with a tentative date for graduation of 2019.

**Author Summary:** Ms. Tomlinson is a seasoned, perceptive nursing administrator who cares deeply about her staff and the care that they provide. She is a strong advocate for the nursing profession and sees herself as the voice for the nurses who report to her. As the title of her project demonstrates, she is committed to a healthy work environment following AACN’s Synergy model to promote skilled communication and true collaboration within her sphere of influence.

Second Author

David P. Hrabe, PhD, RN
The Ohio State University
College of Nursing
Associate Professor of Clinical Nursing
Columbus OH
USA

**Professional Experience:** I have been a psychiatric staff nurse, nurse manager and clinical nurse specialist conducting stress management, communication and team building workshops for staff nurses and managers. I also have been in staff development, continuing education, and higher education faculty. I was funded through HRSA for $1.3 million to implement the Nurses to Nurses Project which was focused on promoting RN Retention and improving patient outcomes. That project focused on work environment and teamwork issues. I currently administer, Nurse Athlete, a health program for nurses and healthcare professionals.

**Author Summary:** Dr. Hrabe is an Associate Professor of Clinical Nursing and the Executive Director of Innovations and Partnerships at The Ohio State University College of Nursing.

Third Author

Joyce Zurmehly, PhD, DNP, RN, NEA-BC
Ohio State University
College of Nursing
Director, Doctor of Nursing Practice Program
Columbus OH
USA

**Professional Experience:** Currently Director of the Doctor of Nursing Practice Program at The Ohio State University. Columbus, Ohio Responsible for program oversight, strategic planning, teaching,
mentoring DNP students. Director, Ohio University-Chillicothe Regional Campus, Nursing Program
Responsible for oversight, strategic planning, student outcome of LPN-RN, ADN, Accelerated BSN and
Traditional BSN programs System Director, Critical Care Nursing, Adena Health System. Responsible for
nursing oversight of critical care nursing units, budget management, strategic planning, quality patient
research study as the State coordinator for Ohio.

Author Summary: Dr. Zurmehly is an Associate Professor of Clinical Nursing at The Ohio State
University College of Nursing, and Director of the Executive DNP Program Track. She has been an
educator for over 25 years, and teaches health policy at the DNP level. She has a background in nursing
regulation at both the state and national levels, and worked with NCSBN where she assisted in
developing national model education rules and the Transition to Practice program.

Fourth Author

Barbara Warren, PhD, RN, PMHCNS-BC, FNAP, FAAN
The Ohio State University
College of Nursing
Professor of Clinical Nursing and Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing Specialty Track Director
Columbus OH
USA

Professional Experience: Dr. Warren is a Professor of Clinical Nursing and Psychiatric Mental Health
Nursing Specialty Track Director at The Ohio State University, College of Nursing. Her research interests
include interrelated perspectives of mental health, wellness and illness in the context of systems and
organizational structures; focus on these perspectives in the context of culture, inclusion and healthcare
disparities in relation to individuals, communities and populations.

Author Summary: Dr. Warren is a Professor of Clinical Nursing and Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing
Specialty Track Director at The Ohio State University, College of Nursing. Her research interests include
interrelated perspectives of mental health, wellness and illness in the context of systems and
organizational structures; focus on these perspectives in the context of culture, inclusion and healthcare
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