

Money, Employees, and Lives: How Workplace Behavior Impacts Safety

Friday, May 15th | 1:15pm

The Cost of Incivility

presenters:

Elizabeth Henry, PennPRIME Trusts, Pennsylvania Municipal League

Erica Olguin, New Mexico Municipal League

Tracey L. Cline-Pew, Arkansas Municipal League

Abe Amorós, Pennsylvania Municipal League

Presentations:

- **Take Aways and Facts**

Elizabeth Henry, PennPRIME Trusts, PML

- **Civility and Workplace Safety**

Erica Olguin, New Mexico Municipal League

- **Psychological Safety's Impact on Workplace Safety**

Tracey L. Cline-Pew, Arkansas Municipal League

- **Making Sense of Civility in an Uncivil Nation**

Abe Amorós, Pennsylvania Municipal League

Takeaways:

Elizabeth Henry, PennPRIME Trusts, PML

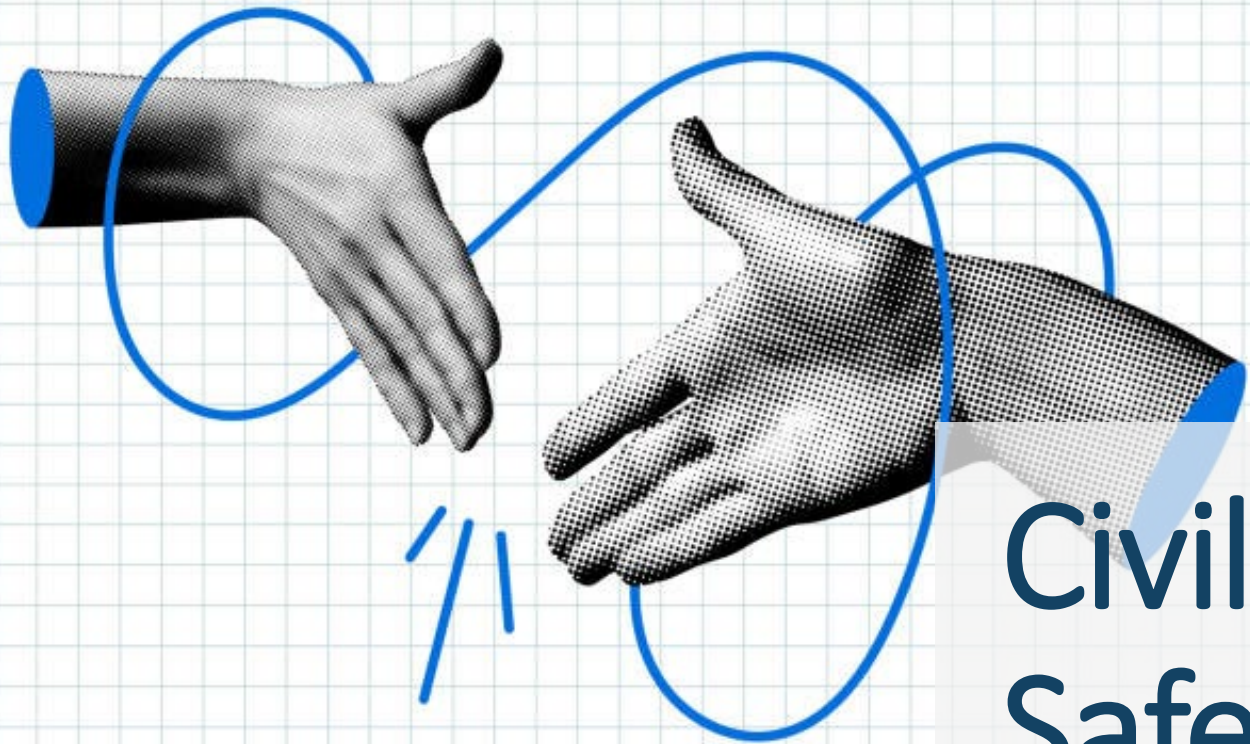
- Facts, figures, and insight into incredible risks of civility to take back to pools, leagues, and members
- Information about health and safety impacts of civility along with loss control approaches
- Incivility impairs focus, decision-making, and emotional resilience
- A picture your pools and members need to see: the importance of psychological safety in the workplace
- Resources from national organizations focused on civility and peacekeeping

Facts:

- A worker in the U.S. died every 104 minutes from a work-related injury.
5,070 deaths in 2024, 865 due to incivility.
U.S. Department of of Labor; National Safety Council, 2026
- Workplace incivility costs U.S. businesses \$2.1 to 2.7 billion daily in lost productivity and absenteeism.

Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)





Civility and Workplace Safety

“How respect and communication protect workers.”

- Erica Olguin, New Mexico Municipal League
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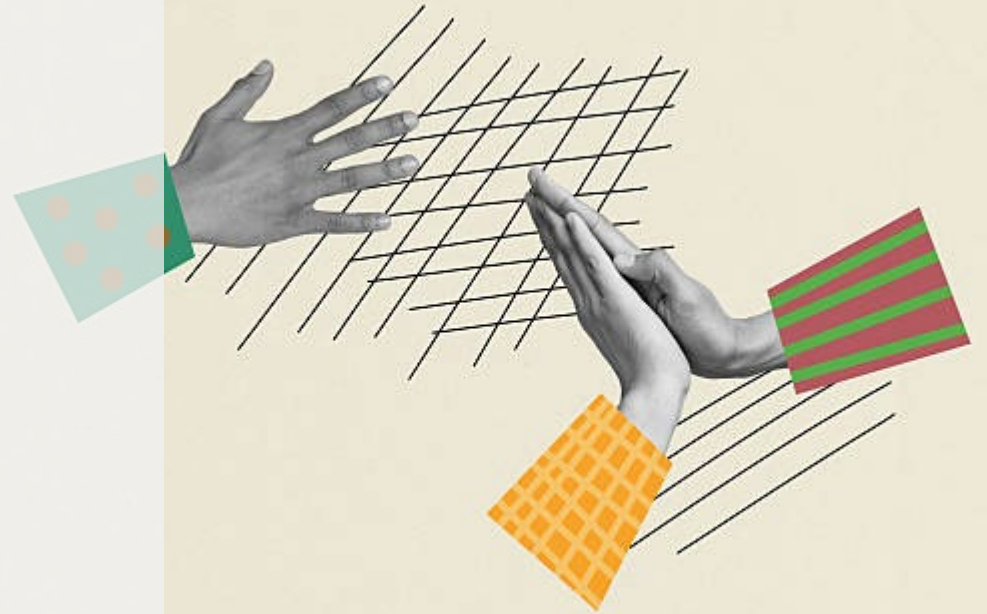


What is Civility?

- Treating others with respect
- Professional communication
- Listening without judgement
- Recognizing contributions

Civility Builds a Safer Workplace

- Encourages open reporting of hazards
- Improves teamwork in high-risk tasks
- Strengthens trust during emergencies
- Supports mental well-being = focus and alertness



Real World Examples:

1. Ignoring Safety Warnings

Lesson: When workplace culture discourages speaking up, hazards remain uncorrected, and lives are put at risk.

3. Horseplay and Disrespect

Lesson: What some view as playful or harmless “banter” can quickly turn into deadly behavior. Respecting boundaries and procedures is a matter of life and death.

2. Bullying Leads to Silence

Lesson: Incivility and bullying discourages people from speaking up ... Silence can cost lives.

4. Disregard for Teamwork

Lesson: Disrespectful attitudes can normalize unsafe shortcuts, putting everyone in danger.



& Safety Culture

- **OSHA** ... encourages “Employee Involvement”
- **CIVILITY** ... foundation for a “Strong Safety Culture”
- **RESPECT** ... employees “Speak Up Without Fear”



Civility in Action

- Use Respectful Language
- Acknowledge Concerns Quickly
- Collaborate on Solutions
- Model Good Behavior as Leaders

Benefits of Civility & Safety

- Fewer Accidents
- Stronger Morale
- Higher Productivity
- Better Retention



■ Erica Olguin, New Mexico Municipal League





Psychological Safety's Impact on Workplace Safety

- Tracey L. Cline-Pew, SPHR, SHRM-SCP
Arkansas Municipal League

Organizations promote workplace safety by:

- Establishing comprehensive policies and programs
- Conducting regular risk assessments and safety trainings
- Providing appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- **Fostering a culture of open communication where employees are encouraged to report hazards and participate in safety planning.**



You can't create a psychologically safe workplace without **emotional intelligence**

Know your audience.

Know when to speak – and when not to.

NEVER confront anyone when you are angry.

Be mindful of your own insecurity.

Know yourself – triggers, bias, fears.

Be empathetic.

Adjust your words and actions in accordance with the situation and emotional well-being of others.

Psychological Safety is the shared belief within a group that one can take interpersonal risks – like speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes without fear of punishment, humiliation, or negative social consequences. It creates an environment where team members feel comfortable, valued and supported to be authentic and contribute fully.

The Outcome of Creating a Culture of Psychological Safety?

Open communication, innovation, higher team performance, safer workplaces, and lower costs!

APA Report: the benefits of psychological safety include:

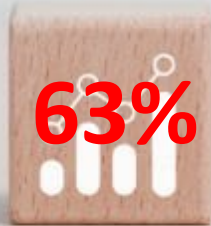
- Up to 76% more employee engagement
- 50% more productivity
- 27% less turnover
- 74% less employee stress
- Employees are 67% more likely to apply newly learned skills





Sadly, the same report showed that 63% of workers don't feel comfortable sharing opinions or being themselves in the workplace.

50% of workers reported that their managers failed to create psychological safety in the workplace.





The **National Safety Council** found a strong link between psychological and physical safety. In-person workers who felt psychologically unsafe had an injury rate of 36.5%, compared to 20.2% for those who felt safe.

Barriers to Psychological Safety

- Fear of Retaliation or Negative Consequences
- Authoritarian/Rigid Hierarchical Leadership
- Lack of Trust and Interpersonal Relationships
- “Blame” Culture and Low Psychological Safety Setting
- Unconscious Bias and Lack of Inclusion



What Organizations Can Do to Create Psychological Safety

- Train leaders and managers on concrete steps for fostering psychological safety
 - Make others feel safe to ask questions, try new things, ask for help, and learn from mistakes
 - Allow others to respectfully challenge the status quo without fear of retaliation
 - Encourage collaboration
 - Foster open dialogue and constructive debate
 - Value, listen to, and treat others fairly
- Examine the organization to see if there are unnecessary chains-of-command or boundaries that discourage communication from front-line workers to upper management
- Provide ways to recognize and celebrate employees' unique skills and talents in organization wide communications
- Repeatedly emphasize that the organization will not tolerate any employee undermining the efforts of another employee

Tools & Resources for Creating a Psychologically Safe Team

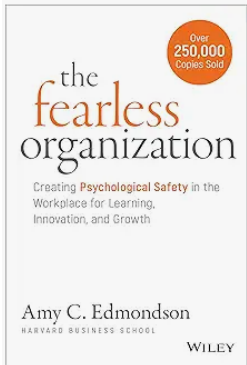


Psychologicallysafeteam.com offers free assessments

- Psychologically Safe Team Assessment
- Psychologically Safe Leader Assessment



Blue EQ offers comprehensive training, assessments, and certifications for leadership in emotional intelligence and psychological safety. www.blueeq.com



The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation and Growth

by Amy C. Edmondson

Provides a free four-section discussion guide to help teams process key concepts of psychological safety.

Tracey L. Cline-Pew, Arkansas Municipal League





Making Sense of Civility in an Uncivil Nation

- Abe Amorós, Pennsylvania Municipal League

- **Taking accountability – problem solving**
- **It's more than just “being polite”**
- **It's taking proactive measures to communicate better with coworkers**



“Civility is claiming and caring for one’s identity, needs, and beliefs without degrading someone else in the process.”

Cassandra Dahnke and Tomas Spath – Founders, Institute for Civility

identity
needs
beliefs



Institute
for **Civility**

Resources



Institute
for **Civility**

- Abe Amorós, Pennsylvania Municipal League



Q&A



More Questions?
Ideas or Suggestions?

We are here to Help!

National League of Cities Civility & Collaboration Group
risc.nlc.org/civility-collaboration-group/

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