Incivility vs. Mental Health

Many faculty members find themselves at a loss when they encounter uncivil or difficult behavior in the classroom. Recognizing incivility in the classroom, applying the appropriate techniques and practices to prevent incivility, as well as being able to differentiate deliberately disruptive behavior from mental health issues will help in managing stress in the classroom.
RECOGNIZING INCIVILITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Student Behaviors

Students are more likely to disrupt class when they are frustrated with either the instructors’ or other students’ behavior towards them.

- Inappropriately disclosing personal information
- Arguing about grades
- Cutting class
- Clowning around
- Talking during lectures
- Cheating
- Packing up to leave before end of class
- Reading non-course material
- Coming in late
- Intimidating professor or other students
RECOGNIZING INCIVILITY IN THE CLASSROOM
Faculty Behaviors Influencing Incivility

- Giving poorly organized lectures
- Exhibiting irritating behavior
- Failing to grade assignments in a timely manner
- Neglecting to fully explain evaluation process
- Being rude to students
- Providing ineffective test/quiz reviews
- Showing favoritism
- Being unavailable
- Grading inconsistently
RECOGNIZING INCIVILITY IN THE CLASSROOM
Student Incivility Affecting Other Students

STUDENT INCIVILITY AFFECTING STUDENTS

#1 FAILING TO CONTRIBUTE TO GROUP PROJECTS
#2 USING CELLPHONES IN CLASS
#3 CHEATING
#4 BELITTLING OTHERS
#5 TALKING DURING CLASS
#6 COMING TO CLASS LATE OR LEAVING CLASS EARLY
FACULTY STRATEGIES THAT ENCOURAGE CIVILITY & LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM

ATTITUDE & PRESENCE
- Stay organized and let that reflect in your classroom environment.
- Show empathy by being more caring and fair.
- Pay attention to students’ non-verbal cues.
- Interject humor into your lectures and class environment.
- Remain confident in yourself and ultimately your decisions.
- Build a sense of camaraderie and respect with your students.

CONNECT & COMMUNICATE
- Allow for a 24-hour cooling off period if a discussion gets heated.
- Chat one-on-one with students.
- Encourage students to visit you during your office hours.
- Establish eye contact.
- Keep a calm tone of voice (without being monotone).
- Respond calmly to emails (Save all email communication for documentation purposes).

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT
- Establish rules and proper conduct early on in the semester.
- Maintain a brisk instructional pace.
- Make use of cooperative learning groups.
- Construct and adhere to a clear syllabus.
- Be firm when students act inappropriately.
- Create opportunities for students to experience success in their learning and social behavior.
- Give continuous activity signals to keep students on task (Stand near an inattentive student)
CONTACT FOR HANDLING INCIVILITY

If disruptive behaviors occur despite your efforts at prevention, you must act as early/quickly as possible. Otherwise you can lose control of the classroom, frustrate other students, and create a hostile learning environment.

**DANGEROUS BEHAVIOR**
A student is in imminent danger of hurting herself or others.

**EXTORTION**
A student is unhappy about a score on a test and sends you an email to exhort you into changing their grade.

**INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR**
A student confronts you during a class lecture about receiving a failing grade for cheating.

**ACCOMMODATIONS**
A student tells you he has ADHD and needs extra time to take exams.

**WORRISOME BEHAVIOR**
In a writing assignment, a student discloses anxiety and depression to the extent of not eating or sleeping.

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**COUNSELING SERVICES**
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MANAGING MENTALLY ILL STUDENTS
Student Incivility Affecting Other Students

10% of students suffer from depression

25% of students reported having suicidal thoughts or feelings

44% of students who seek counseling at college have had psychological treatment before

14% of students reported engaging in abnormally reckless behavior

College stress contributes to exacerbate depression, anxiety, eating disorders, substance abuse, bipolar and schizophrenia
Educators are often the first to notice a student’s emotional, behavioral or mental disorder. The following is a list of potential indicators of mental illness.

**Classroom Indicators**
- Disregard for rights or feelings of others
- Misinterpretation the situation
- Evidence of hallucinations
- Delusions
- Paranoia
- Extreme emotional stress
- Suicidal thoughts/attempts

**Indicators of Student Distress**
- Poor impulse control
- Memory/attention problems
- Social isolation
- Poor hygiene
- Difficulty communicating

**Academic Indicators**
- Deterioration of work
- Missed assignments
- Absenteesim

**Veterans Student Indicators**
- Sensitivity to cues in the environment that remind the student of past traumatic events
- Difficulty concentrating
- Rapid anger
- Poor impulse control
- Dampened emotional responsivity