# About PF4: Civility & Respect

## What are Psychosocial Factors?

Psychosocial factors are elements that impact employees' psychological responses to work and work conditions, potentially causing psychological health problems. Psychosocial factors include the way work is carried out (deadlines, workload, work methods) and the context in which work occurs (including relationships and interactions with managers and supervisors, colleagues and coworkers, and clients or customers).

## What is PF4: Civility & Respect?

GM@W defines PF4: Civility & Respect as present in a work environment where employees are respectful and considerate in their interactions with one another, as well as with customers, clients and the public. Civility and respect are based on showing esteem, care and consideration for others, and acknowledging their dignity.

## Why is Civility & Respect important?

A civil and respectful workplace is related to greater job satisfaction, greater perceptions of fairness, a more positive attitude, improved morale, better teamwork, greater interest in personal development, engagement in problem resolution, enhanced supervisor-staff relationships, and reduction in sick leave and turnover. Organizations characterized by civility and respect create a positive atmosphere marked by high spirits and work satisfaction. This allows people to enjoy the environment, whether they are staff, clients or customers.

## What happens when civility and respect are missing from the workplace?

When a workplace lacks civility and respect, this can lead to emotional exhaustion amongst staff. In addition to health problems, an incivil and disrespectful workplace is associated with greater conflict and job withdrawal. A work environment that is incivil and disrespectful also exposes organizations to the threat of more grievances and legal risks.

Probably the most extreme example of disrespectful behaviour is bullying. Exposure to workplace bullying is associated with psychological complaints, depression, burnout, anxiety, aggression, psychosomatic complaints and musculoskeletal health complaints. Bullying not only affects those directly involved, but also affects bystanders, as they too experience higher levels of stress. A number of provinces currently have, or are considering, legislation to address such behaviours.

## How can Civility & Respect be improved?

Start by conducting the GM@W Organizational Review and/or the GM@W Survey and reviewing the results. If **Civility & Respect** is identified as an area of concern or relative strength, refer to the GM@W Action Resources for a practical strategy and evidence-based and effective suggested actions that can improve **Civility & Respect**. It is also important to discuss the findings with employees to gain a further understanding of the results and to obtain input into possible interventions. Furthermore, it is important to evaluate the undertaken interventions over time to ensure they are effective and to take corrective action where needed. Consider reviewing the resources below. Finally, refer back to the GM@W website on occasion for new ideas about how **Civility & Respect** can be enhanced.

**Further information about Civility & Respect:**

- Belton, L., & Dyrenforth, S. (2007). Civility in the workplace: Measuring the positive outcomes of a respectful work environment. *Healthcare Executive, 22*(5): 40, 42-43. Retrieved from http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17892116

- Crocker, M., & Henderson, C. (2008). A 12-step managerial civility recovery model. *People & Strategy*. Retrieved from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_6768/is_3_31/ai_n31909630/

- Gilbert, M. & Bilsker, D. (2012). *Psychological Health and Safety: An Action Guide for Employers*. Retrieved from http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/Workforce/Workforce_Employers_Guide_ENG.pdf

- Ramarajan, L., Barsade, S., & Burack, O. (2008). The influence of organizational respect on emotional exhaustion in the human services. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 3*(1), 4-18. Retrieved from http://people.hbs.edu/lramarajan/RamarajanBarsadeBurack.pdf

- Legacy Business Cultures. (2012). *Respectful Workplace*. http://www.respectfulworkplace.com/articles/

- The Great-West Life Assurance Company. (2012). PF4: Civility and Respect. In *Centre Resources by GM@W Factor* and *On the Agenda*. Retrieved from http://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com

- Vartia, M. (2001). Consequences of workplace bullying with respect to the well-being of its targets and the observers of bullying. *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health, 27*(1), 63-69. Retrieved from http://www.sjweh.fi/download.php?abstract_id=588&file_nro=1

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