2015

# Exploring Incivility Toward Employee Absenteeism, Productivity, and Effective Communication: Veterans Health Administration

Sharron Miller
*Walden University*

# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Sharron Miller

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Karel Kurst-Swanger, Committee Chairperson,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. Barrett Mincey, Committee Member,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. Ian Birdsall, University Reviewer,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2015

Abstract

Exploring Incivility Toward Employee Absenteeism, Productivity, and Effective Communication: Veterans Health Administration

by

Sharron Miller

MPA, (Hon), Murray State University, 2002

BS, Austin Peay State University, 2000

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

November 2015

## Abstract

Uncivil behavior in the workplace can cause absenteeism or low job performance among employees, yet little academic literature addresses this relationship, particularly in the public sector. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to use the transactional analysis of communication (TAC) model to explore the ramifications of incivility in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). The central research questions focused on employee perceptions of incivility and effective communication within the VHA. Twelve VHA employees were recruited for participation through a snowball sampling technique. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the participants along with some VHA archived video training. Data were inductively coded and analyzed for emergent themes. Key findings revealed that VHA lacked effective communication, and malingering occurred due to workplace incivility. It was concluded that TAC curtailed misunderstandings of social dysfunctions in communicating. Another theme that emerged is that although workplace relationships were highly esteemed by employees, they believed that communication issues hindered those professional relationships and suggested training could be a valuable tool to improve workplace communication and reduce incivility. It was recommended that similar studies of this phenomenon be conducted for greater understanding and knowledge to the discipline. TAC served to effect positive social change by educating VHA leadership and their employees on how to thwart incivility in the workplace.

# Exploring Incivility Toward Employee Absenteeism, Productivity, and Effective Communication: Veterans Health Administration

by

Sharron Miller

MPA, (Hon), Murray State University, 2002

BS, Austin Peay State University, 2000

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

November 2015

# Dedication

To my GOD, ABBA-FATHER, Who recognizes me as His beloved and His portion. He is mine! It is You, my SAVIOR and LORD to Whom I present banquets of thanksgiving and praise as tribute for this document – period. It is also to You Who was, and is, Who provides me with much needed great grace of enabling empowerment and ability through your gracious love, and the blood of Your Son, my LORD and KING, CHRIST JESUS. Comfort, guidance, and leadership are also rendered through the gentleman HOLY SPIRIT'S inspiration. For this, I am eternally grateful to my loving GOD (ABBA-FATHER), the SON Who is my SAVIOR-LORD, and the gentleman HOLY SPIRIT...bless You!!!

# Acknowledgments

Special tribute from a humble heart of respectful acknowledgement, faith-believing trust, and a child-like reverential fear of ABBA-FATHER, the SON, and the gentleman HOLY SPIRIT! Thanks to You.

To Dr. Karel Kurst-Swanger, my Dissertation Chair, whose high level of academic expertise and "gentle" guidance fostered accomplishment of this challenging academic undertaking. You graciously mentored, and stuck by me when I frequently needed encouraging. We spoke of our names not being attached to junk; I appreciate it. You availed yourself to me via classroom, office/home, texts, and emails, and are known by students for high levels of academic excellence. Dr. Barrett Mincey – Methodologist; your in-depth knowledge of Research Methods and expertise is greatly appreciated as was your professionalism during times of correction. Thanks also to Dr. Ian Birdsall, my University Research Reviewer's guidance to my committee. Mrs. Jeanne Ainsley – Academic Advisor's attentive ears; my research participants for their contributions; Dr. Terrell, a trusted friend/confidant; and The Department of Veterans Affairs, National Center for Organization Development (NCOD) who allowed me full access to their "Civility, Respect, and Engagement in the Workplace" (CREW) archival Digital Video Disc (DVD) that aided full execution of my educational goals.

Lastly, to Jasmine and Harlin, my beloved offspring; your myriad of prayers and encouragement afforded finality of this academic journey. May the LORD continue blessing each of you. Remember: You are loved, smart, and important!!! Mommy.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of figures

# Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Incivility is no longer a matter of simply not "playing fair" in America's sandboxes or playgrounds, nor is it contained there. Workplace bullying and uncivil behavior have fueled a myriad of discourses. Incivility/disrespect is active in public workplaces, specifically, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA; U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Employee Education System [EES], 2011). Unsavory behavior of VHA employees commanded inquiry of workplace incivility. If employees are uncivil, organizational goals may suffer due to employee absenteeism and poor performance.

In light of the aforementioned imperatives, workplace incivility in the United States workplaces has gained much public attention from the media. There are very few studies conducted by VHA concerning this topic. A lack of published scholarly interplay yielded a dearth of literature. Therefore, it was evident that this investigative inquiry was needed to explore and understand some underliers of this phenomenon (incivility in VHA that was not without detrimental social implications) was needed as it remained partially unchartered territory. This study unmasked some social ills of uncivil behaviors in VHA; specifically some effects of office misconduct toward employees' unscheduled absence and/or work quality. This phenomenon was addressed by using Berne's (1963, 1964) theory of transactional analysis of communication (TAC) processes. It added in-depth understanding and greater knowledge of the problem by providing insight for practitioners and employees regarding the significance of productive communication in organizations (Stewart & Joines, 2012). TAC theory also aided policy change for organizations that needed to thwart unhealthy workplace relationships that sought to

undermine institutions that lacked the professional prowess to deter contentious behavior. Included in this chapter is a historical background of workplace incivility in VHA and the Unites States that relates to the study's problem and purpose. The major proposition of the theoretical framework is also presented. Other features of this chapter include knowledge gap identification and comprehensive explanations of each of the study's components that served as connectors from the study's problem to its significance.

## Study's Background

United States government spending and fiscal concerns have evoked many discussions. One of the United States' largest federal agencys, the VHA, incurred revenue losses and elevated costs associated with employee absenteeism (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [EEOC], 2009). VHA is the second largest U.S. governmental department (Congressional Research Service, 2013). Its mission: To serve, honor, and provide quality health care to U.S. citizens who serve this country (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2012). This inquiry examined VHA employees' responses to issues of workplace incivility in terms of their job withdrawal, work quality, and communication. It also provided some practical recommendations of how to improve employee interactions. Human behavior and interactions are changeable (Berne, 1964).

*Civilis*, means civility, it is a Latin word derivative of the word *citizen* befitting townsman, courteous, polite, and respect. Incivility is the opposite. Definitions for this term are seemingly plain, but in practicality what does civility and incivility look like? Perhaps human souls encompass minds, wills, emotions, intellect, and consciences – each element invisible, yet can be experienced but are untouchable. Nevertheless, words good

or bad may be felt. Conceivably, people are affected by the words and actions of others. Accordingly, incivility is not tangible, and for the purposes of this study, *incivility* and *disrespect* were used synonymously. Loomis (2000) viewed America as replete with tensions, stresses, and social strains. Civil Rights Activist Rosa Parks spoke of antisocial behaviors and eloquently stated:

> If you want to be respected for your actions, then your behavior must be above reproach. I learned from my grandmother and mother that one should always respect oneself and live right. This is how you gain the respect of others. If our lives demonstrate that we are peaceful, humble and trusted, this is recognized by others. If our lives demonstrate something else, that will be noticed too. (Parks, 1995, p. 1352)

*Respect* was defined as deserving high regard ("Respect," 2013). Forni (2003) indicated that civility means different things to many people. Forni listed over 50 words that described and/or defined civility: respect for others, non-bullying, etiquette, kindness, manners, politeness, courtesy, consideration, listening, good citizenship, tact, honesty, care, niceness, decency, and the "Golden Rule" (principle of reciprocity); the list continues. Forni also suggested that collectively the aforementioned list characterized civility as complex, good, belonging in the realm of ethics, and that it was center mass of respect in terms of courtesy, politeness, and just plain good manners. However, "civility is not noted as not being mere etiquette" (Guinness, 2008, p. 6).

**Current Aspects of Incivility toward Absenteeism**

An EEOC (2009) study cited personality conflicts as being the primary source of workplace violence, resulting in 55% of incidents. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2013), 5.3 million women (not counting men) experienced nonsexual harassment by coworkers; 56% were late to work because of workplace bullying; and homicide was cited as the leading cause of death for women (alone) in the workplace. Furthermore, over the span of 5 years, 2007-2012, an average of 564 work-related homicides occurred each year in the United States (U.S. Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Fact Sheet, Workplace Shootings, July, 2013). In 2008, a total of 526 workplace homicides occurred or 10% of all fatal injuries; and 17% of all workplace shooting homicides transpired in government (U.S. Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Workplace Violence Worksheet, July, 2013). The EES's (2011) Civility, Respect, and Engagement in the Workplace (CREW) initiative supported beliefs that treating fellow colleagues with respect resulted in VHA employees improved ability to support its patients – veteran stakeholders.

It was plausible that workplace misconduct warred against quality health care in VHA by potentially impairing health care and business outcomes through excessive unscheduled employee absenteeism and performance (EES, 2011). A 2000 civility study conducted through the Kenan-Flagler Business School at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and included 775 respondents:

> As a result of an incident of uncivil behavior, 28% reported they had lost time avoiding instigators, 53% lost work time worrying, 37% felt less organizational

> commitment, 22% decreased work effort, 10% decreased amount of time at work, 46% contemplated job changes, 12% changed jobs, and a total of 78% of managers believed that incivility has increased over the past 10 years. Other key findings also included: 50%-50% split between gender bullying. Women target woman 84% of the time, men target women 69% of time – overall, women are targets 75% of the time. Supervisors – majority are bullies 81%. Health hazards – 41% diagnosed with depressive disorders (loss of sleep, anxiety, inability to concentrate), 31% loss productivity, and 21% men exhibited symptoms associated with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). (Bruzzese, 2007, para. 4)

**Incivility in Federal Government**

At the helm of public trust are employees working at all levels of U.S. government. These public servant employees are required to display conduct becoming of public servants and are charged with maintaining high degrees of personal and professional conduct both in and out of the workplace and on or off duty. Rodney King's 1992 famous plea, "Why can't we all just get along?" is often jokingly touted as uncivil conduct breeds tragedy at work, school, and in other environments (King & Spagnola, 2012). However, incivility did not stop there; it was prevalent at the federal level of government. Quondam Senator Joseph Biden (as cited in Loomis, 2000) summed up the need for change of the "bad attitude" guard that had engulfed the upper chamber in the late 1970s and early 1980s. He stated:

> There's much less civility than when I came here ten years ago. There aren't as many nice people as there was before….Ten years ago you didn't have people

> calling each other sons of bitches and vowing to get at each other. The first few years, there was only one person who, when he gave me his word, I had to go back to the office to write it down. Now there are two dozen of them. As you break down the social amenities one by one, it starts expanding geometrically. Ultimately you don't have any social control.… We end up with 100 Proxmires here. One... makes a real contribution. All you need is 30 of THEM to guarantee that the place doesn't work. The Senate was hardly more civil than the House (Loomis, 2000, p. 39).

Uncivil workplace conduct in government at any level matters. Research had shown that civility in VHA promoted good business outcomes: employee attendance, productivity, profitability, and good customer service; unlike, negative outputs that were conducive to incivility (EES, 2011). VHA's (2011) CREW video suggested that workplace civility in VHA is a positive attribute, and it demonstrated a correlation between VHA's business outcomes of employee absenteeism, performance, and customer satisfaction. On average, $3 billion annually are lost to government organizations due to workplace misconduct (U.S. Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013).

**Knowledge Gap**

Little current research existed regarding incivility and TAC in VHA; thus, a gap in the literature remained regarding incivility toward employees' attitudes towards work committal, performance, and TAC relative to this particular health care system. Information was quite modest regarding any latent role(s) that TAC toward incivility had in terms of possible implications of its use, and towards positive social change in VHA.

This literature gap invited exploratory inquiry as this was moderately unchartered territory. As such, this phenomenological study necessitated examination of the aforementioned via thorough examination that fostered in-depth analysis for greater understanding. Further knowledge garnered from this inquiry served to influence public policy that equated to social progress for VHA and other governmental agencies.

## Problem Statement

The VHA's mission is to provide world class quality health care to United States military veterans (U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2012). Anecdotal information suggested that maybe disrespectful behaviors and lack of successful conversation skills in the workplace induced employees' tendency to incur unusual amounts of unscheduled time off from work (absenteeism) to avoid uncivil behavior by colleagues (EES, 2011). It is also probable that work quality suffers due to workplace impropriety. Nonetheless, a gap in the current research literature was afoot – TACs full authenticities of comprehensive interplay and influence towards communication behavioral development in VHA. VHA employees are encouraged, but are not mandated to attend civility training as an attempt to uphold civility and prevent office malfeasance (EES, 2011).

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to investigate workplace incivility in VHA by gaining full understanding of employees' perceptions of what civility and incivility are, their potential relational ramifications to the significance of office professionalism, and any impact that TAC could have in VHA to perhaps alleviate misconduct. In doing so, it probed VHA's commitment of excellent care for its

stakeholders and appraised the value of understanding beneficial discussions in VHA by explored assessments of any relational and impactful undercurrents of disrespect within the organization.

## Research Questions

Four research questions guided this study. Each was necessary and informed this qualitative inquiry. They addressed incivility relative to VHA employees' beliefs, lived accounts, and concerns regarding disrespect and communicating in VHA.

1. RQ1 –What are some ramifications of uncivil workplace conduct in VHA?
2. RQ2 – How do VHA employees perceive effective communication?
3. RQ3 – What is the relationship between respect, disrespect, and communicating?
4. RQ4 – How important are good workplace relationships in VHA?

## Theoretical Framework

Berne's (1964) transactional analysis of communication model provided the theoretical framework for this study's exploration of questionable workplace behaviors in VHA. TAC suggested that people's behavioral interactions are based on mindsets – adult to adult, child to child, parent to parent, adult to child, and parent to child interfacing. It demonstrated how quality communicative social transactions between people should be engaged. If exchanges are conducted on adult to adult levels healthy communications occurred; otherwise, the ability to communicate effectively became warped and unhealthy (Berne, 1964, p. 29). Counterproductiveness occurred when unsuccessful verbal exchanges transpired – failure to properly communicate. Figure 11illustrates TAC

model. Conversely, prospects that encouraged opportunities for constructive social intercourse promoted social progression of civility. Detailed explanations of TAC theory are presented in the following chapter.

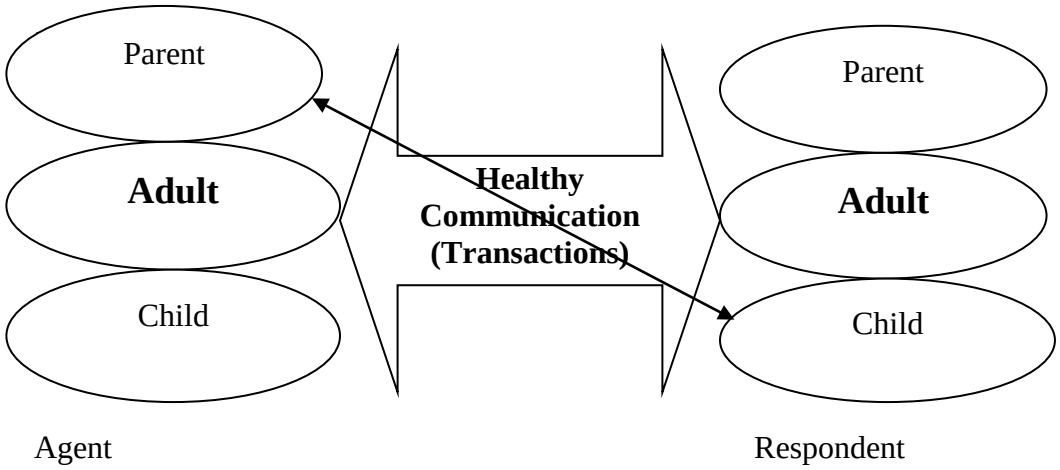



*Figure 1.* Transactional analysis of communication model

## Nature of the Study

My aim was to understand some questionable human behaviors that are recognized in society and their impactful rationale. To best accommodate this effort, hermeneutic phenomenological approach was the chosen. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) suggested that investigators secure value and rich descriptions of the social world through these selected inspections. This research paradigm garnered philosophical underpinnings and afforded comprehensive understanding, and enhanced interpretative analysis.

Acts of civility and incivility are lived experiences—human behaviors. For this reason, further logic for employing phenomenology coupled with hermeneutics was achieved: prelearning of the human experience by translating communicative actions, feelings, and reasoning into offerings of thick descriptions of identifiable and relatable

text (Moustaskas, 1994). Also, hermeneutical approach unmasked that which was hidden behind the objective phenomena (Moustaskas, 1994). In other words, it provided a means for vital interpretation of the subject matter being explored minus likely bias.

Twelve VHA employees participated in this study's indepth, face to face, semistructured interview process. Archived civility DVD data were also resourced for use. Content analysis and theme discovery were utilized; it discerned rich analysis of the data. NVivo Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) Computer Software provided full contextual scrutiny of the interview responses and observations of the archived DVD constributors.

Additionally, logic for this selected tradition was premised on my desire for extended comprehension. My ability to dispense this knowledge of the human phenomenon was also realized via this chosen design (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, 2005). Similarly, this interpretative design integrated well with the study's theoretical proposition – TAC's effective means of engaging open efficacious conversations (Berne, 1961, 1963). These objectives complimented this study within the context of the participants' lived experiences and perspectives that aligned with the study's problem. Moreover, this approach intermingled appropriately with the data collection techniques that yielded quality data production and withstood rigor/credibility (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). It also allowed me to closely capture the participants' points of view. It also maneuvered closer to the storylines through detailed interviewing and direct observation of archival data that provided me an unobtrusive, empirical evaluation of the video data's content, minus bias (Moustakas, 1994).

## Definition of Terms

*Bracketing: "*The setting aside of one's own experiences in as much as it is up to them to see things from a renewed perspective" (Creswell, 2007, pp. 59).

*Democracy: "*A political, or social unit that has such a government by the people, exercised directly or through elected representatives – art of government rule that is considered as the primary source of social equity, and political power" (Tocqueville, 1835, para. 17).

*Emic:* Involving analysis of cultural phenomena from the perspective of one who participates in the culture being studied ("Emic," 2015, para. 12).

*Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC):* A commission that enforces laws, and provides oversight and coordination of all federal equal employment opportunity regulations, practices, and policies (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2015).

*Hermeneutics:* An approach to the analysis of "interpreting" texts that stresses how prior understandings and prejudices shape the interpretive process (Creswell, 2007, p. 235).

*Lived experiences:* "In phenomenological studies this term stresses the importance of individual human's conscious experiences" (Creswell, 2007, p. 236).

*Malinger:* Absent without leave (AWOL), pretend incapacity, play hooky, truant, shirks places of attendance; work or duties ("Malinger," 2015, para. 20).

*Organizational culture:* Suggests common beliefs, customs, and values that embody personnel cultures, or systems of affirmative action, collective bargaining, merit system laws, practices, policies, rules, and regulations (Watkins, 2013).

*Phenomenology:* A complex system of ideas associated with philosophical doctrine based on the study of human experience in which considerations of object reality are not taken into account ("Phenomenology," 2015, para. 2).

*Positive social change:* Walden University defines positive social change as "a deliberate process of creating and applying ideas, strategies, and actions to promote the worth, dignity, and development of individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, cultures, and societies. Positive social change results in the improvement of human and social conditions." (Walden University, 2015, para. 4).

*Transactional analysis of communication (TAC):* An integrative approach to a theory of communication and behavior in psychology, and psychotherapy. It has several approaches: cognitive, humanistic, and psychoanalytic in terms of theories of personality, organizational, professional and personal communications, child development, counseling, and management consultancy (Berne, 1964).

*Veterans Health Administration (VHA):* Component of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). It implements the medical assistance program(s) through the Veterans Administration (VA); (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2015).

## Assumptions

This research consisted of several assumptions: (a) the terms under investigation (civility and incivility) were clearly defined; (b) TAC may provide paths to effective

respectful dialogue (Berne, 1963, 1964, 1966,); (c) validity was contingent upon participants' candid responses – negate bias (Babbie, 2007); and (d) the chosen sampling methodology for this qualitative study was bound by a narrow segment of the total population (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Rudestam & Newton, 2007). Each of these elements served to enhance descriptive and interpretative analysis and eliminated the need for lengthy expositions at the outset of the inquiry (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008).

## Scope and Delimitations

Imposed delimitations (controlled boundaries) were: The study was administered to a population of 12 interview participants in VHA's southern region who may or may not have had knowledge of effective communication via transactional analysis (component of effective communication). It also included DVD participants from various regions around the country who were familiar with, and had formerly engaged in the VHA's Civility, Respect, and Engagement in the Workplace Initiative. The number of video participants was approximately 37; and was all inclusive—age, race, work shift, education level, and blue and white collar employees.

## Limitations

Limitations arose in the wake of VHA's ongoing national investigation and close public scrutiny (Andrews, 2014). This scandal caused organizational and employee conditions to change. For this reason, some of this study's methodological considerations changed (midpoint of the study) as opposed to other initially proposed techniques that were in place at the outset of this research. VHA's workforce had become *vulnerable* and the study *sensitive in nature* (Liamputtong, 2006). As such, VHA implemented more

stringent rules and regulations for community partnerships and employee access. Because of this, community partnership with VHA was denied (halfway through the study). These uncontrolled restrictions were unforeseen and not initially allotted for, yet several strategies were adjusted to accommodate the study since they occurred at the outset of the IRB approval process for data collection.

- Sampling methodology was adjusted to snowball sampling (personal referral) strategy.
- Inability to engage employee participant recruitment efforts on VHA campuses; thus, flyer invitation recruitment techniques were utilized.
- Amendments were made to protect the study's vulnerable population; participants' anonymity/confidentiality restricted use of any participant demographic descriptive.

VHA is a multicultural organization comprised of blue and white collar employees, various ages, work shifts, departments/work sections, education levels, marital status, and income earnings. Nonetheless, exploration of these (full demography) was restricted; however, the study's trustworthiness was uncompromised.

## Significance of the Study

Incivlity is not a novel concept and it is also increasing in America's societies (Forni, 2003; Guinness, 2008). Disrespect is prevalent at federal, state, and local levels of government, is not limited to U.S. school systems, and is news worthy. It is in governmental agencies; more specifically, VHA (EES, 2011). VHA warranted more literature reinforcement in terms of its work forces' behavioral attitudes and how they

viewed interacting verbally among themselves. Additionally, practitioners who carefully discern the implications of incivility are better equipped to influence how best to serve the public at large by effecting affirmative change in VHA. It can arm itself with deeper comprehension of incivility and its role towards malingerers who may be direct or indirectly truancy of attendance or quality of performance. The significance of this inquiry was to provide greater knowledge and understanding of how organizational leaders may best assist employees who struggled with ineffectual workplace social decorum or who lacked communicative skills (Berne, 1961).

Furthermore, this study's necessity is stressed in its endorsement of underwriting (strengthened) public policy. And, organizations who encountered fiscal concerns resultant of bad actors could obtain financial respite by curtailed costs associated with external mediation services such as alternative dispute resolution (ADR) or, perhaps evade litigation. Moreover, TAC clarified that people's behaviors were simply outward expressions of their inner behavioral personalities; and their desired human entitlement to the quality of respect (Stewart & Joines, 2012).

## Summary

Chapter 1 introduced transactional analysis of communication theory, gap discovery in the current literature, and some points of view regarding incivility in organizations that have experienced it. The research questions with linkages to the theoretical framework and chosen research design were presented as were some foundational perspectives of civility and incivility. Discussions of some historical aspects

of incivility and current peer-reviewed literature that undergirds the study's theoretical suppositions and gap discovery are addressed in Chapter 2.

# Chapter 2: Literature Review

## Introduction

It was probably unreasonable to assume that interactions between employees in organizations will always be positive (Jongeward, 1974). It was perhaps equally unreasonable to presume upon predictions that bad behaviors can or will not negatively impact VHA. Nevertheless, research has suggested that VHA's employees' conduct is integral to providing quality health care to citizens who earn it by serving their country (EES, 2011). Veterans' options for procuring medical services are VHA, or other private health care facilities. Notwithstanding, VHA (public sector employees) are responsible for how they conduct themselves on and off duty and are accountable to the general public for their actions (Public Sector Ethics Act of 1994). Taxpayers fund public sector salaries.

As such, this literature review was premised on Berne (1964) theory. Other related suppositions of communication (TAC) and incivility in VHA as it pertained to the subject matter were used. Productive interactions and communicative processes may aid VHA's mission to provide quality health care to veterans (EES, 2011). Misconduct in governmental agencies and organizations has expanded. Seventeen percent of all U.S. fatal shootings occurred in government agencies (U.S. Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Fact Sheet, Workplace Shootings, July, 2013). That is more than half of those which take place in other job sectors – private and nonprofits. Due to a lack of

scholarly research, much is unknown about incivility towards the aforementioned concerns in VHA. A need existed to fully comprehend how and why disregard for basic human courtesy prevailed in VHA and how to curtail such incidents.

Herein all scrutinized reviews of extant literature germane to matters of study's theory and related assumptions that pertained to VHA personnel's behavior, their commitment levels to work quality, job withdrawal and discourse were surveyed for gap discovery. Other sections of this chapter include specified historical and current points of view of incivility in democratic governance. Databases, journals, and other research materials that were searched for data gathering are included. A thorough appraisal of the study's theoretical framework and other important suppositions are also introduced.

**Historical Views of Incivility in Democratic Governance**

Tocqueville (1835) focused on the functionality of the American system as democracy; in other words, common people have the right to rule and influence government. It was also thought that democratic equity (fairness) is a form of respect, and that freedom of speech is to be used in regards to respectful tones. From the early days of this country's democratic political process to the present, images of political civility or incivility had marked the impulse to win. In 1996, New Jersey voters were treated to a United States Senate race so vicious that journalists quickly tagged it as one of the worst in history (Carter, 1998). Mudslinging verbal attacks spawned allegations of affairs with slave girls, illegitimate children, forgery, financial improprieties, Mafia and Iranian terrorist donations, Watergate, hanging chads and ballot stealing, to even a Black man passing himself off as a White candidate to name a few. The point was clear: There had

never been an era in American democratic processes that was not tainted by verbal abuse and personal attacks (Carter, 1998). These aforementioned acts of incivility in the United States political arenas were observable globally. Notwithstanding, U.S. democracy is governed by public policy that drives public opinion that influences taxpayers' fundamental views of who gets what, when, where, why, and how.

Seemingly, civility/respect in democracy does not always exist. Public sector employees work at any three levels of government – federal, state, and local. They are subjected and obligated to policy regarding certain codes of conduct (behavioral specific) rules, regulations, and guidelines set forth by U.S. public policy. The Public Sector Ethics Act of 1994 (2014) indicated that these obligations are generally acknowledged conventions reflective of community expectations of those employed within the public sector. As agents of the public, employees are expected to communicate and interact productively while adhering to professional standards of conduct (Fredericksen, Witt, Patton, & Lovrich, 2015).

America's organizations have experienced increased numbers of verbal bullying; some victims resorted to suicide. This nonphysical form of violence was also etched indelibly in the affairs of the federal government as on July 16, 1999 former Majority Leader Robert Dole (as cited in Loomis, 2000) stated, that "We are, after all, a representative democracy – a mirror held up to America…. In a democracy differences are not only unavoidable; yet, if pursued with civility, and as well as conviction they are downright healthy, and beneficial to the country" (Loomis, 2000, para. 1).

Loomis (2000) posited that U.S. history is replete with uncivil tensions entrenched in democracy beginning with the first founding father, George Washington, and that it continues through modern day America. Perhaps these types of stresses/strains are probable in relationships. Nonetheless, the first American president, George Washington, reportedly copied and recorded 110 rules of civility and respectful behaviors (Brookheiser, 2003). Originally, they were written by the French Jesuits in 1595. Quondam President Washington was tasked to copy all 110 rules. These 110 civility rules quickly became guideposts for young Washington. His main rule was that every action done in company ought to be carried out with respect to those that are present or absent (Brookheiser, 2003). He enumerated others rules in *Of Civility and Descent Behavior*: consideration of others, non-embarrassing acts at the cost of others, give not attention to oneself but to others, do not argue with superiors, present ideals with humility, restrain from being critical, make corrections privately or if need be in public "gently" and respectfully (Brookheiser, 2003).

Respect and humility in public forums were also shared via mass protests with the father of the Civil Rights Movement, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. During this time, the United States observed unprecedented infusions of civility (respect) and incivility (disrespect). It was some of this country's most tumultuous, volatile, and hostile times (Ansbro, 2000). Dr. King's speeches were metaphorically laden with peaceful biblical language and principles that exuded nonviolent means of discourse, civil obedience, and calm reactions to brutality during many rallies, marches, and sit-ins. Dr. King's nonviolent, peaceful positive social change endeavored to include words synonymous to

civility: nonviolence, respect, peace, justice, concern, decency, selflessness, compassion, love, kindness, righteousness, and politeness (Ansbro, 2000). Carter (1998) argued that in Dr. King's desire to expand equity in America for all he also had an innate ability to inspire the masses to be civil in dissent. Dr. King clearly understood that uncivil discourse could not stand in democratic functioning; instead, that democracy demanded civil dialogue and that people must be relentlessly partisan of civility (Carter, 1998).

## Literature Search Databases and Search Engine Strategies

My exhaustive literature search included various resources relevant to the scholarly undergirding and credibility of the study. Each contribution was retrieved from Walden University's Library. Databases included: ABI/Inform Complete; Academic Search Complete; Business Source Complete/Premier; CINAHL; EBSCOhost; ERIC; Military and Government Collection; Policy and Administration Database; PsycARTICLES; PsyBOOKS; PsycINFO; SocINDEX; and Thoreau database. In cases where very few current source documents existed pertaining to this research phenomenon in VHA, I consulted with Walden University's extensive Research Library for assistance.

Relevant search terms and phrases introduced: *absenteeism, accountability, behavior, civility, communication, conduct, consideration for others, courtesy, customer satisfaction/service, democracy, disrespect, effective communication, egoism, employee attitudes, employee behavior, incivility, International Transactional Analysis Association (ITAA), job performance, malinger, manners, organizational behavior, organizational performance, outcomes, profits, pro-social, public organization, respect, rudeness, stress, tact, transactional analysis of communication,* and *workplace behaviors.*

## Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical framework for this study was premised on Berne's (1963, 1964) TAC theory. This theoretical proposition suggested that peoples' behavioral interactions are based on mindsets or "ego states" and are pathways to effective or ineffective dialogue (Berne, 1964, p. 23). This model's philosophical view was that all peoples have a right to equality of respect (Berne, 1964; Stewart & Joines, 2012). TAC was used in this study and by other researchers to explain the "why and how" of various behaviors. Its integrative involvement included theory of personality and personality change both used in psychotherapy to assist therapists in patient recovery efforts in the fields of psychology and counseling (Stewart & Joines, 2012). Outside therapeutic fields, TAC was also a model of theory communication used in organizational management systems (all sectors of society). It was useful in facilitating communication workgroup settings within organizations (Berne, 1963). Educational facilities of all levels (elementary through collegiate levels) have embraced TAC theory as a means of explaining how childhood issues are closely associated with and relative to behavioral concerns later on in adulthood (Stewart & Joines, 2012).

Accordingly, this theoretical representation was selected for this study for its potential relevant utility, reverence in literature, and purposed communication acumen. A charge was given to improve civility in VHA (EES, 2011). Effective interactions via communication supported the undertaking. It provided much needed clarity of some questionable behaviors in VHA. TAC theory was used in tandem with this current study's research questions and appropriately addressed some basis of disharmony in VHA.

**What is TAC?**

Good social skills framed the susceptibility for quality conversations. And, valuable discourse was the antidote for VHA's perpetrator – incivility. Nonetheless, communicating was revered as a source method and means to necessitate quality exchanges in organizations. This study exuded social connections through improved communication – TAC. Because of VHA's cursory familiarity with TAC, its level of commitment to sound communication and its social climate was challenged.

Berne (1961, 1964) developed TAC theory. It is a formulated means for prosocial intercourse, transactions, or exchanges consistent with one key idea – effective communication processes. TAC equates to verbal transactions or exchanges of interpersonal discourse between people (Berne, 1963, 1964; Stewart and Joines, 2012). TAC's social psychology method improves dialogue by teaching individuals exactly how to communicate effectively. Medically, this resource is used in psychotherapy. It also supports social psychiatry undertakings. Other offerings include organizational development – cultural change. It shows organizations how to rid themselves of verbal decay by means of effective messaging. The International Transactional Analysis Association (ITAA); (2013) claimed that "Foundationally all people are "ok" worthy and valuable, having a right to be respected, and that behaviors are modifiable through transactions – communication (exchanges) between people" (2013, p. 137). As such, it is probable that TAC helps improve the quality and effectiveness of workplace interactions. ITAA Transactionalists, Stewart and Joines (2012) shared Berne's theoretical stance that TAC means that "Every person deserves the quality of respect and importance" (p. 7).

These views were consistent with Berne's theoretical postulation that people should be treated equitably, and that civility is a pinnacle hinged on effective discourse. These Transactionalists also agreed that respectful dialogue is unlimited in personal interactions and all other areas of humanistic existence including personal settings. TAC focuses on oral exchanges, or transactions that occur during spoken conversations. These external humanistic transactions can be heard, traded orally, and seen in physical expressions during verbal exchanges.

Mathews (2011) claimed that TAC's usefulness dispensed noteworthy change in how organizations communicate. It was also proposed that "TAC theory can prevent breakdowns in conversing and bring about organizational change and development in the way that leaders communicate with their employees by knowing and understanding the importance of verbal transactions via discourse assessment" (pp. 30-40). Mathews championed the importance of using TAC theory in any and all organizations from Organizational Developer's (OD) and practitioners at all organizational echelons. In essence, TAC was viewed as a guidepost that no organization should ever be without.

**Literature Review (Key Suppositions of Incivility)**

Reviews of the literature provided theoretical suppositions of topical subjects related to incivility: What is Incivility? Where is Incivility? Incivility toward Business Outcomes – Absenteeism and Job Performance; and, TAC: A Means to Effect Positive Communication in Workplaces.

Literature inspections include: Berne (1964, 2010); Brooks and Geer (2007), Clark and Springer (2010), Forni (2003); Gavino, Wayne, and Erdogan (2012); Guinness

(2008); Howard and Cordes (2010); Johnson (2010); Joines (2010); Jongeward (1974); Joseph (2012); Landaiche (2009); Leiter, Price, and Laschinger (2010); Lizano-Reich, and Cloud (2009); King, Dawson, West, Gilrane, Pettie, and Bastin (2011); Martin (2011); Mathews (2011); Mountain and Davidson (2012); Schat and Frone (2011); Schwalb, D., and Schwalb, B. (2007); Stewart and Joines (2012); Suriyarakash (2011); and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (EES, 2011).

**What is Incivility?**

Despite a myriad of definitions and meanings of civility and incivility that supported this current study other studies seemed to suggest that not one widely accepted (lone) word to define incivility existed. Instead, several meanings for each word existed. As such, the purpose of having defined the two terms (previous chapter) ensured the accuracy of my usage and for understanding of the text to audiences.

Accordingly, Clark and Springer (2010) qualitative study used self-administered surveys at a statewide conference and a conceptual model for fostering civility in education. It clarified some perspectives of what incivility (disrespect) meant: rudeness, avoidance, exclusion, dismissing, ignoring, and unfairness. Respectively, civility/respect meant cultivating, collaboration, and harmony, working toward goal attainment. In *Choosing Civility,* Forni (2003) cited an inventory of civility related notions that consisted of "Care, collaboration, courtesy, consideration, niceness, politeness, kindness, manners, inclusiveness, compassion, selflessness" (p. 8). These corroborated with other construals of civility "courtesy, politeness, and consideration." Although each contribution of incivility upheld negative connotations, Forni's word list differed slightly

in actual word for word usage than Clark and Springer (2010) descriptive of incivility; however overlap occurred in the authors' assessments of incivility's influence.

Conversely, Schat and Frone (2011) qualitative study of workplace aggression (WPA) determined that possible linkages between WPA to overall job performance did exist. Surveys were administered via random digital dialing at the national level. They made no mention of the word incivility. The term workplace aggression; or, WPA was used. It was defined as "Being shouted at" "Insulted" or "Being threatened at work" (p.24). Although, this base meaning of incivility remains, the authors' substitutable terminology (WPA) to describe office misconduct added refreshment to the term's usage. Commonly, it was referred to in literature reviews simply as incivility. Furthermore, individuals on the receiving end of disrespect were referred to as "Targets – who avoid potentially harmful behaviors and who were targeted while working" (p. 24).

Researchers also conceptualized incivility in less than desirable and negative terms as being a detractor from that which is good in word, action, deed, and purpose. Research by Leiter, Price, and Laschinger (2010) remarked in their quantitative incivility study of Canadian nursing professionals (rooted in Strauss and Howe's generational theory) that incivility in the U.S. was cyclic towards generational norms; or were inherent in America's behavioral cycles. And, that shifts occurred in America's conduct from generation to generation, and characterized incivility as "Disrespectful, rude, condescending behaviors'' (p. 974). Furthermore, it was depicted as "Low intensity, deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm and it is in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect" (p. 972) (as cited in Andersson & Pearson, 1999, p. 457).

In *The Case for Civility,* Guinness' (2008) defined civility as "Intrinsically embedded in the context of the author's subject – American politics and culture" and identified it as "freedom of conscience" (p. 9). Brooks and Geer's (2007) qualitative empirical study recognized incivility as "name calling, contempt, and derision of the opposition" (p.1). Their explanation was based on the perspective of public election processes.

Collectively, all authors seemingly concurred in having defined incivility in terms of consensus – disrespect was a depressant. Some words descriptive were unique from study to study. Varying descriptions of civility and incivility were provided and was based on who was being asked in any given setting. The literature provided extensive and broad ranges of meanings of incivility, and was useful guideposts for the study.

**Where is Incivility?**

Although meanings, and descriptions of disrespect varied; it goes "Beyond negativity" (p. 1) Brooks and Geer's (2007). Aside from defining incivility, vitally important was exploring where this negative behavior occurred. Disrespect is nationwide. Civility in America is decreasing. Workplace woes are visible in offices throughout the United States – it is societal (Forni, 2003, 2009). Schat and Frone (2011) research indicated that workplace aggression (WPA) is nationwide. Incivility resides in VHA and that it can cost money (EES, 2011). Brooks and Geer (2010) maintained that incivility's negativity exists in public square's election processes. Clark and Springer (2010) suggested that it is disruptive on college campuses; while Leiter, Price, and Laschinger (2010) provided insight of uncivil conduct among varied generational Canadian nurses.

Similarly, a Civility Respect and Engagement in the Workplace (CREW) Pilot Study for VHA indicated that civility in VHA was lacking and inconsistent (EES, 2011). VHA has spent millions of dollars trying to counter internal fallout from disrespectful mayhem through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and federal EEO complaint procedures (EEOC Report, 2007). The organization also had incurred millions of hours of sick leave usage (EEOC Report, 2009). Customer service delivery was also thought to have been disrupted in this nation's second largest federal department because of experienced governmental shutdowns at the hand of federal lawmaker's inability to (amicably) pass necessary funding measures.

Clark and Springer's (2010) research introduced incivility in academia; specifically, college – nursing education. The authors proposed that uncivil eruptions are troubling and unveiled some implications of incivility on college campuses and within its classrooms. Clark and Springer (2010) depicted several themes of uncivil acts from and received by students, faculty members, and administrators in collegiate environments. They referred to some uncivil acts as, "Classroom disruptions, rude comments, aggressive intimidating bullying behaviors, cheating, sidebar conversations, and marginalizing others" (p. 322-323). These indicators foretold of civility's waning strength and that incivility waxed strong even in academia. This information is relevant and contributed to readers' knowledge that inconsideration in academia (students, faculty, and administrators) hindered progress and served to undermine organizations' missions.

Although unfavorable behavioral issues existed in academia and affects students, teachers, and administrator's academic and job performance, negative displays from bad

actors were also found in America's public square. In *Campaigns and Elections Magazine* (as cited in Brooks and Geer's, 2007) examination of damaging conduct in the public square was shared. These authors argued that "There is a declining sense of civility in our politics and constructive behavioral standards abandonment…it is an abscess that has oozed its toxin throughout the political system; and, it is getting worse" (p. 1). They assessed this impact of destructiveness on the electoral process. Their research showed that America's political landscape was fraught with negativity and that it is escalating. This is not antithetical to their former proposition of incivility's identity; however, they proposed that incivility in a particular forum (political debates) for electoral candidacy was a useful positive tool. For instance, uncivil attitudes and behaviors have positive repercussions for the general public at large in terms of general public elections. Furthermore, Brooks and Geer (2012) claimed that the "American public will not experience immoral erosion due to uncivilized and unsavory public displays of mudslinging during elections" (p.12). In other words, negativity enhanced debate processes by separating the strong from the weak in political arenas.

Conversely, Guinness (2008) contended for civility with a pressing concern that "Western civilization as we know it will die if not immediately restored" (p. 1). Likewise, Forni (2003) longed to see civility upheld and stressed the importance of civility's decline and longed for urgency in tackling incivility. Other authors (Clark and Springer, 2010) agreed, but Brooks and Geer (2012) found otherwise. Clark and Springer (2010) further believed that a critical need existed to expedite respite for sufferers of uncivil demonstrations in academia. Their study addressed relatable triggers of bad behavior in

collegiate atmospheres as – escalating employee turnover rates, financial burdens, fighting among faculty members and administrators, and faculty member initiation rituals, or "hazing" (p. 323). In spite of these indentified contributors of uncivil eruptions the researchers did not view them as excuses for misbehavior.

Leiter, Price, and Laschinger (2010) generational theory study evaluated whether uncivil work environments influenced nurses work quality and experiences of office distress of coworkers, supervisors, and team incivility. A questionnaire survey was used and divided into generational sectors: baby boomers and Generation X nurses. Cited implications of boorish workplace misconduct included "Burnout, high turnover intentions, and physical symptoms headaches, gastro-intestinal discomfort" (p. 974). Although, this research showed both generations as civility deprived, "Baby boomer nurses tended to experience higher levels of incivility on both measures of distress and work quality as opposed to their counterparts" (p. 970). The study's strength exemplified implications for proactive civility initiatives through proactive conversations; and, it comprehensively examined three generational cohorts: baby boomers, Generation X, and millennials; however, the latter's outcome was unmentioned in the results.

Schat and Frone's (2011) investigation of workplace aggression (WPA) toward work quality showed that U.S. workers experienced on the job conflict daily. It was based on the conservation of resources theory. It investigated psychological WPA and work quality. A national probability sample of U.S. workers supported the hypothesized model that WPA works negatively towards diminished productivity, employee health, and that it yielded negative attitudes among colleagues (Schat & Frone, 2011). The study proposed

that WPA is detrimental towards job performance. It also demonstrated that targeted employees of WPA inadvertently placed "Grave economic restraints on the US economy. Thus, suggesting that mediation efforts could be beneficial by alleviating issues of WPA" (p. 33). The results disclosed that further studies are needed to investigate potential policy implementation, and other suggestions for how to reduce WPA manifestations. The study's strength was its use of large probability sampling. It yielded valuable statistical data. Nonetheless, a limitation of the study was that cross-sectional data did not allow for ruling out other models that may be used to point to other WPA causal determinations.

Several authors concurred that incivility is negative anywhere, especially in the workplace (Clark & Springer, 2010; Leiter, Price, & Laschinger, 2010; Schat & Frone, 2011). However, Brooks and Geer (2007) found otherwise. These authors spoke of incivility in the context of American politics as being needful and acceptable. Guinness (2008) also spoke of incivility in the context of politics; however, Guinness contended that incivility is unruly in governmental political activities – debates, and elsewhere – period. Conversely, this view was antithetical to Brooks and Geer's (2010) argument that upheld incivility in politics as being a positive force. Nonetheless, most research harmonized and supported suppositions that misconduct in work environments exists nationwide, in all sectors, and in various organizations. These suppositions illuminated some attributing outcomes that may protect employees and organizations from issues of unprofessional trials that burden organizations.

**Incivility toward Business Outcomes: Employee Absenteeism and Job Performance**

Disrespect has wreaked havoc on individuals and has had fiscal spillover. Accordingly, VHA incurred millions of hours of sick leave usage that cost the organization millions of dollars (EES, 2011). These implications were tied to their business outcomes – specifically; work presence and work quality. When attendance is low, organizational productivity suffers. For this reason, each outcome was examined against workplace incivility. First, each was defined: Absenteeism – "Chronic absence (as from work or school), or something" ("Absent," 2013, para 3); and, performance – "The act, or process of performing towards accomplishment" ("Performance," 2013, para. 7).

Accordingly, Gavino, Wayne, and Erdogan (2012) research of social exchange theory had revealed that "Organizations spend billions of dollars in employee performance management" (p. 678). This quantitative undertaking increased awareness that employee behaviors (civil or uncivil) did align with organizations' goals and objectives. Social exchange theory contended that transactional human resource (THR) practices were positively related to good organizational citizenship behavior toward organizations (OCBO). THR behavior equated to the employee exchanges (transactional responses) being parallel to the organization's responses to them. For instance, if organizations were committed to organizational justice, then employees would behave better and display performance outcomes (quality productivity) to reduce organizational costs. Whereby, organizational citizen behavior toward individuals (OCBI), focused on individuals in terms of acts of altruism, courtesy, and peace keeping. Study results were

noted by use of tables, extensive demography, and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) prior to hypothesis testing. A noted weakness was only 35% of mailed surveys were returned and findings for OCBI were not offered. Nonetheless, the researcher's study contributed to this investigation by having examined how employee behaviors are not directly related to (all) Human Resources policy practices. THR's communicativeness and process orientation influenced prosocial behavior in terms of performance. In this manner, behavioral performance exchanges (positive or negative) were "Influenced by the organization's focused investment to enhance areas such as THR" (p. 681). It further demonstrated that effective management techniques were rooted deeply in addressing transactional exchanges because of behavioral challenges in the organization. And, that subpar performance and malingering prevailed when employees failed to report for duty in attempts to unburden themselves of office confrontations.

Conversely, Howard and Cordes's (2010) qualitative research introduced the person environment fit theory. It explored some ways that employees tended to distance themselves by "emotional pathways that influenced work alienation – participation and outcomes" (p. 409). Person environment fit theory offered insight for better understanding of employees' responses to office discord. It revealed that perceived workplace injustice of disrespect and favoritism caused employees to retreat from accomplishing tasks or they simply withdrew – excess truancy from work. Workplace injustice was attributed to specific acts of mental suffering, hardships, or adverse working conditions that warranted complaint procedures. Randomly selected surveys were administered to hundreds of employees from various occupations and industries

statewide. The structural equation model aided the researcher's hypothesis that recognized causal relationships. This research indicated that "Injustice is unfairness, and that incivility directly and/or indirectly impacted employees' performance and attendance via withdrawal outcomes – psychological separation, physical detachment, and personal and professional involvement" (p. 409). Random sampling via telephone book presented strength of increased diversity of the sampled population and decreased internal bias. The limitation was that mailed surveys yielded self-reporting concerns.

Other research conducted by Sliter, Sliter, and Jex (2010) probed incivility's role in terms of duty dereliction and job estrangement, or "employee withdrawal behaviors" (p. 122). Their research provided a solid foundation for knowledge enhancement of incivility towards job presence and participation via the conservation of resources (COR) theory. This mixed methodology study eliminated bias and offered diversified views that demonstrated how counterproductive behavior from workplace social stressors adversely impacted employees by "Detracting from peoples attempts to build, retain, and protect valuable resources such as personality characteristics, conditions, energies, and objects" (p. 123). They indicated that a direct correlation of uncivil interactions were causal to employee withdrawal – removal of oneself from workplaces via purposeful absenteeism. Additionally, that disrespect between colleagues positively related to poor performance. Strong statistical tools, correlation examinations, statewide sampling via email, archived data, and an interpersonal conflict at work scale to measure incivility were used. However, only bank tellers were sampled; so, investigators may deduce that the insolence

only hindered employees within a particular banking industry. Nonetheless, this research endorsed open dialogue and it illuminated that in doing so, incivility was subjugated.

King, Dawson, West, Gilrane, Pettie, and Bastin (2011) quantitative research was conducted in London and was also key for this investigation. It unmasked another dimension of workplace incivility – racial incivility. It contributed greatly to this study. It revealed knowledge that insolence towards people undermined good job performance. King et al. (2011) tenets of social identity theory indicated that unruly office in groups (cliques) enhanced organizational disrespect. Because of this, undue absenteeism occurred. The no-shows were community service recipients (stakeholders) who were serviced by organizations that did not ethnically reflect the community stakeholders at large. King et al. (2011) social identity theory suggested that "Organizations that do not reflect their community's demography were breeding grounds in workplaces for social injustice" (p. 1103). Racial incivility was geared towards the very stakeholders the organization was paid and charged to serve. It was indicated that "Workplace in groups who are the majority ethnic groups in organizations tended to behave disrespectfully to their servicing out groups – external minority clientele" (pp. 1103, 1104). These external service recipients (community members) were not ethnically reflective of the organization from which they were being served. Furthermore, King, et al. (2011) suggested that service providers who did not align demographically with their servicing communities had a tendency to cast down, and exert workplace irreverence towards their servicing stakeholders who are deemed outcasts, or minorities. Supposedly, outliers did not warrant respect because "they were incapable of fitting the demographical bill and

were therefore, subjugated to organizational in group's interpersonal maltreatment or subtle disfavor" (p. 1104). This research suggested that organizations must make efforts to openly communicate and pay close attention to internal and external diversity to overcome maliciousness, yet, cultivate affirmative internal and external engagement.

Qualitative research conducted by Ceravolo, Schwartz, Foltz-Ramos, and Castner (2012) administered pre and post survey questionnaires. As such, it was revealed that "60-90 minute effective communication workshops strengthened office conversations and helped reduce workplace verbal abuse from 90% to 76%" (p. 599). The communication workshops also provided outlets for employees to learn how to engage respectfully by employed wholesome assertiveness without aggressiveness lest uncivil tongues prevailed.

Moreover, VHA's EES (2011) study indicated that "Improved communication is an effective way to increase workplace civility" (p. 3). Unsavory verbal attacks rooted in counterproductive outbursts were causal to social intercourse deficits. And, unless employees understood exactly how to interact by way of constructive transmissions, that workplace disruptions would continue to have perpetual depressing inefficiency in VHA and its organizational outcomes. Conceivably, ineffectual impartation of information suppressed civility (EES, 2011).

The Civility, Respect, and Engagement in the Workplace (CREW) initiative – was VHA's most recent civility study (EES, 2011). Sufficient amounts of scholarly literature to adequately explore varying viewpoints were nonexistent; nor had recurring civility/incivility research been conducted by other internal or external investigators germane to this phenomenon in VHA available for scrutiny and understanding of this

occurrence. Again, the research literature was extremely sparse. Like previous research of workplace incivility, EES's (2011) study undergirded constructive social encounters as the primary means of civil enhancement. This was encouraged by VHA employees' voluntary workgroup formations that periodically met in the workplace and openly engaged in conversations. Discussion topics were subject to the participants' choosing.

Collectively, the surveyed literature yielded diverse methodologies, conclusions, and suggestions of some challenges of workplace unease associable to this study's phenomenon. Organizational complications were linked to inadequate communicative issues. These were cues that organizational efforts should focus on providing constructive ways of how employees are supposed to speak, listen, and respond appropriately. These assessed needs for help signaled hope of disarming hostile workplace inclinations and help cultivate goodness through learning and understanding how to employ proactive conversations. All employees must be taught the art of appropriate conversation skills to adequately engage one another. It is paramount to create cultures of respect and it is also imperative for employees and organizations' survival. As noted in the literature, solid messaging skills were the disarmament of poor engagement that translated to harmful mental, physical, and organizational manifestations of decay.

**TAC: A Means to Effect Positive Communication in Workplaces**

TAC is a means of producing constructive two-way communication. Berne's theoretical view of TAC model was that respect should be shown to all peoples as a basic right of humanity. Steward and Joines (2012) argued that respect should be doled out with impartiality. It explains ways to transmit information successfully and illuminates

the "why" of individuals' behavioral patterns. TAC model is integrative and has been used in several practical ways: schools, business management organizations, personality change strategies, psychology, psychoanalysis, and counseling practitioners use TAC in psychotherapy sessions to assist with patient recovery (Jonegeward, 1973).

Additionally, Berne's psychotherapeutic use of TAC served as a model for communication. It was also used in organizational management systems as a useful communication tool in facilitating workgroup conflict and focus group settings within organizations (Berne, 1963). In school systems TAC helped define how childhood development and behaviors are linked to how adolescents may behave later on as adults (Berne, 1964).

TAC approaches, principles, and strategies have been tested, supported by scholarly research, and utilized in studies. The literature reviews proposed that incivility is independent of high quality communication skills. EES (2011) civility workgroup study employed social communication as a basis for positive workgroup interaction. These workgroups indicated strong relationships between civility and positive discourse through effective communication processes (EES, 2011). Productive communication helped alleviate second guessing of employees' internal agendas and it informed how employees revealed messaging impacted positive interactions. TAC's conveyance techniques assisted organizations that struggled with communication issues without stifling freedom(s) of individual expression.

Mountain and Davidson (2012) stressed that TAC transactions created the necessary skills needed for respect. And, that it added value to employees' information

sharing while setting boundaries within organizations. In other words, communication boundaries were established minus freedom of speech infringement. Similarly, Clark and Springer (2010) claimed that "Educational open forums for coaching and mentoring through 'respectful' transmissions were avenues to embrace consideration of others" (pp. 324, 325). Collectively, it was agreed that organizations must have effective communication methods in place (Clark & Springer, 2010; Mountain & Davidson, 2012). Most research suggested that effective communicating – TAC assuaged malicious verbal confrontations, improved employee coping, and increased work presence, and performance. Thusly, civility increased while incivility decreased.

TAC theory was considered an evidence-based approach for valuable conveyance. Martin (2011) proposed that "TAC provided a simplistic framework for understanding human behavior in terms of conversations, and that it is a vital instrument of choice to assess quality transmissions and advantageous understanding" (p. 593). The appraised relevant tenets of TAC's claim included: it strengthened and resolved communication issues by revealing individuals, groups, and organizational weaknesses; ushered improvement of leadership styles; disintegrated dysfunctional relationships between management and employees; ignited proactive skills integration, and that it extinguished reactivity of recurring unwanted communication breeches. TAC is also "Simple enough that anyone regardless of education level, profession, and job position could understand it" (Martin, 2011, pp. 587, 593). Each attribute signified useful practicality for healthy social functioning in workplaces and society at large.

Landaiche (2009) indicated that "Professional susceptibility of intense intransigent behaviors in the workplace, or social pain (transactions) is likened to occupational hazards that further lead to withdrawal and hostility if not dealt with" (p. 233-235). This analysis was the author's use of TAC diagramming. It illustrated how recipients of rejection (disrespectful) transactions were analyzed. Thus, therapists, transactional consultants, teachers, and organizational practitioners were able to provide constructive recourses of action that supported effective exchanges. Additionally, Landaiche (2009) inspected TAC and proposed:

> Theoretical frameworks of this kind offered by TAC seem to have a way of usefully calming anxiety and, in effect, down regulating the painfulness of certain human interactions. I believe we are freer to move forward with what Berne conceived as the arrow of our periodic daunting aspirations. (Landaiche, p.237).

Others support Landaiche's (2009) view of Berne's TAC theory. Its utilitarianism of ethics and communication principles was also universal (the Eastern Hemisphere). Indian cultures also used TAC to promote healthy communication ethics in organizations. Suriyaprakash (2011) enlightened readers of the knowledge that TAC theory adamantly endorsed that "All people are ok in organizations, each individual was intrinsically linked interdependently with each other, and that TAC communicated ones inner goodness that contributed to corporate climates of positivity" (pp. 134-135).

Educators at all levels have utilized TAC theory practices for therapeutic operations in educational settings rather than strictly classical approaches such as psychosocial, psychoanalysis, and psychotherapy therapeutic procedures. Joseph (2012)

proposed that "TAC can, and should be applied elsewhere – education, training operations, and etc., in (any) organization" (p. 115). Berne championed the author's appraisal that TAC is a powerful psychoanalytical tool that anyone can use to effect positive interactions between individuals and in groups (Berne, 1963; 1966). TACs diversified qualities as a multifunctional tool can be used in any organization and its limitless usefulness in other nontherapeutic settings such as education systems was maintained by several researchers. Joseph (2012) espoused Berne's use of therapeutic operations of TAC to effectively facilitate two-way communications between students who struggled to communicate openly in classroom settings. The author's advocacy for TAC seemed beneficial in effecting open affirmative relations and communication processes for students who also suffered from inwardness due to low self-esteem, nonparticipative, and self noninvolvement issues. It was recognized also for its prowess in group dynamics. Joines (2010) research found that "Groups as a whole who underwent TAC processes were more fruitful in their knowledge of how to relate verbally to each other by having received verbal strokes (reinforcement) from fellow participants as opposed to lashing out" (p. 144).

Mathews (2011) cautioned that "Leaders in organizations must learn how to effectively assess verbal and nonverbal transactions" (pp. 30-33). In essence, leaders in organizations who embraced TAC fortified their positions as change agents. In addition, their professional business acumen is displayed. And, that how they conducted business by having become champions of positive organizational development was noticed by key leadership. Furthermore, subordinate employees tended to mimic their leaders conduct.

**Review and Synthesis of Relatable Studies and Literature Rationale**

It is vital to reiterate that too few articles in the peer-reviewed literature existed that systematically addressed uncivil concerns relevant to VHA. Thus, the exhaustive searched literature was inspected at length. It provided much detailed and diversified argumentation for logical reasoning of this study's phenomenon; in addition to some general assessments of incivility in VHA. Rationale for the selected literature served several purposes. Each selection provided relevant comprehensive diverse evidence that insolence was consigned to VHA and other organizations notwithstanding any particular size or organizational type. Its pervasiveness was unaffected by sectors: public, private, or nonprofit. The multiplicity of literature rendered varying methodologies/theoretical frameworks, and introduced manifold views. The compilation demonstrated further this study's claim: comprehend humanistic social behaviors in VHA and its emergent call to action for the purpose of civility strengthening and incivility resolution.

Aggregately, the literature unanimously made clear that disrespect signified detriment. Through these inspections, a revealed sense of urgency and hope regarding needed resolution for organizational disrespect was birthed. Additionally, the literature included myriads of expressed calls for timeliness – expeditiously disavow office mayhem in U.S. and abroad workplaces (King et al., 2012; Leiter et al., 2010; Suriyaprakash, 2011). The selections logically undergirded the study's phenomenology while having provided insight into other organization's issues of discord. Lastly, this collection of erudite literature fulfilled my obligation to provide audiences with scholarly information via required current, and exhaustively appraised peer-reviewed literature.

## Summary

Chapter 2 provided understanding of some major themes and distinctions in the literature of deviant conduct and communication efforts that occurred in varying workplaces domestically and abroad. Some echoed trends prevailed in the literature that suggested that workforce infighting is a determined force that is counterproductive and that bad conversations had linkages to issues such as low performance, job truancy, coping skills, and self-esteem. They were identified in the literature as systemic withdrawal mechanisms caused by office dysfunction. The literature synchronized several author's appraisals for TACs use and intervening qualities that skillfully underscored my rationale for its use – empirically based (practical) approach designed to help organizations build and strengthen consideration of others through solid discourse. This information illuminated gap discovery for fulfillment and enhanced knowledge extension. Included in Chapter 3 is an all inclusive explanation of how this study's research questions will be answered based on the selected methodological paradigm.

# Chapter 3: Research Method

## Introduction

Communication in VHA was explored against employee missions that accounted for their work quality and productivity. TACs claim – influenced good workplace encounters by quality conversations between colleagues was examined. It was selected for this study for its asserted value: beneficial for prosocial behavior through its communicative prowess. Using TAC model, participants were asked questions regarding their attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of respect, disrespect, relationships, and

communication. This chapter presents step by step procedures of how this study's research questions were answered. Discussions and explanations of the appropriateness of the study's chosen research tradition/ approaches regarding the research design and rationale, researcher's role, participant selection, data collection/analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations are presented. Logic for their use and how each fulfilled all obligatory roles for this study is presented and explained.

## Research Design and Rationale

Qualitative research design was used to explore disrespect, human behavioral attitudes toward work quality, attendance, and dialogue in VHA. These research questions were central to address this study:

1. RQ1 – What are some ramifications of uncivil workplace conduct in VHA?
2. RQ2 – How do VHA employees perceive effective communication?
3. RQ3 – What is the relationship between respect, disrespect, and communicating?
4. RQ4 – How important are good workplace relationships in VHA?

Research Question 1 explored the participant's perceptions of perceived consequences that are resultant of antisocial office behavior. It probed their personal experiences resultant of unruly actions of themselves as victims and/or perpetrators, and how these behaviors may or may not have affected their work quality or job presence. Research Question 2 surveyed how the participants discerned effective communication in their respective work settings. Their perceptions and perspectives of exactly what good communication meant and its relevancy in their daily interactions was garnered.

Research Question 3 appraised the participants overall attitudes toward office relationships in VHA and examined whether, or not, respect, disrespect, and effective conversations had purposeful meaning to them. It explored also their relevancy of positive adherence to each of them or negation; and possible interplay.
Research Question 4 explored if, and how quality relationships were relevant among colleagues in VHA, and why office relationships were foundational for mutual respect through verbal harmony, and its degree of importance.

The selected methodology was suitable to address several philosophical underpinnings of the research problem. Hermeneutic strategy also provided depth of meaning and aided the cruciality of researcher interpretations (McNabb, 2008). Participants' subjective, lived experiences through storytelling made this possible. More specifically, this research tradition's strategic feature provided prelearning of human lived experiences by translating communicative actions, feelings, and reasoning into thick descriptions of reader identifiable and relatable text (McNabb, 2008; Moustaskas, 1994). Furthermore, hermeneutic interpretation unveiled all that what was truly hidden behind the objective phenomena. A quantitative research design would have presented presentations of vast statistical data; however, the requirements for full range contextual "descriptive in nature" content would not have been fully satisfied; whereby, this qualitative design presented both statistical offerings and robust knowledge and understanding of the whole through storytelling production.

## Role of the Researcher

Denzin and Lincoln (2003, 2005) argued that researcher roles require that "investigators locate the most effective ways to present their storylines and to convince readers of its meaning truthfully" (p. 389). I was the source data gathering instrument of the investigative process and keeper of the records while professionally investigating that which was being explored and studied as objectively as possible. There were no unforeseen implications of the researcher-participant relationships as I managed for power relationships via Informed Consent (National Institute of Health, 2014). This was in keeping with the terms outlined in the NIH, and Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) ethical standards. My involvement did not entail supervision of, nor did it present conflicts of interest to potential participants. Still, Patton (2005) cautioned that it was almost impossible for interpretative storytellers to fully distance themselves from personal bias. Knowledge of this information provided me with a greater awareness of this possibility. Therefore, at the outset of this undertaking, all aspects of the research were made clear. Also, I, as managing instrument through which all data were collected, steps was taken to impede undue influence. This was achieved through my having taken sole responsibility for my own professional competency, preparation, and assurance that my mindset remained consistent throughout this project.

I had other key roles that were imperative to process. Within these roles, as primary managing instrument, I understood that critical investigation was crucial in research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Holliday, 2005; Rudestam & Newton, 2007). Similarly, I was responsible to convince myself and audiences that the findings were

based on my investigative prowess as critical researcher. Accordingly, Denzin and Lincoln (2003) prescribed that "qualitative researchers are also committed to an emic, case-based position, which directs their attention to the specifics of particular cases" (p. 16). Details were included about my individual/personal experiences as insider (emic role). This helped shape my aim towards the study topic and how it would be conducted.

As such, my personal and professional ability to socialize interconnections to the study stemmed from having participated in incivility meetings and programs. I also gained personal knowledge and professional experience of incivility by having served in professional employment positions that dispensed guidance regarding civility and incivility, and I had engaged extensively in civility initiatives. This type of connectedness bided caution. This prior knowledge of the study topic presented occasions for me to inform thick descriptions as an insider (emic role) from the study participants' outlook to the entire culture (Holliday, 2005). Nevertheless, my outlook was challenged to reflectively emerge from coming out of the inside – insidedness while attempting to look critically from the outside. As insider these precautions assisted my efforts to gain vital story pictures. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) cautioned against one's over placement in the storyline that could have ultimately dominated the text. Therefore, I rejected my propensity of insidedness. This unique awareness disavowed any personal agendas. Furthermore, as self as (critical) researcher, I clearly understood that as critical researcher, judgment suspension needed to be recognized by meticulously documented interpretations (Rudestram & Newton, 2007). Holliday (2005) endorsed this effort and also supported bracketing – "temporary suspension of all commonsense assumptions in

order to make visible the practices through which taken for granted realities are accomplished; and by setting aside of one's orientation to it" (p. 19; 185). Bracketing separated and deferred my thought processes and emotional consciousness, and thusly, personal conjectures had become deferred and unfamiliar due to judgment suspension.

## Methodology

Several key methodological determinations that befit this study are thoroughly discussed – population, sampling, and instrumentation. Each of these topics, others, and their techniques informed the study's purpose and is addressed with clarity. Each process was sieved via Walden University's strict Institutional Review Board (IRB) procedural guidelines (Walden University, IRB, approval# 07-18-14-A000719, 2015). As mentioned previously, VHA's ongoing investigation and public scrutiny caused this study to become *sensitive in nature* and its population *vulnerable* (Liamputtong, 2006). As such, community partnership with VHA was denied and several initially proposed methodological objectives were revised. Other requirements that shaped this chapter are also categorically presented.

### Sampling Strategy and Target Population

The target population was 12 VHA employee participants. Rationale for this small sample size was appropriately supported (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003, 2005; Rudestam and Newton, 2007; Trochim, 2006) proposed that "most qualitative phenomenological studies engage a relatively small number of participants (10 or fewer might be appropriate)" (p.107). Because this is a small number of participants, interviews allowed for greater flexibility (Rudestam and Newton, 2007). This sensitive in nature study greatly

influenced this study's initial sampling strategy. In lieu of this, deviations from my original plan were mandated – VHA and Walden University IRB directives. This equated revisits and revisions of the initially proposed and chosen sampling method – purposive sampling. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) noted that "for qualitative work, we draw a purposive sample, building in variety and acknowledging opportunities for intensive study" (p. 446) Furthermore, Rudestam and Newton (2007) indicated that qualitative researchers are more apt to elect purposive sampling to increase scope or range of exposed data" (p. 106). Although other sampling methods existed, Liamputtong (2006) suggested that sensitive researchers who have a specific aim in mind – vulnerable populations) – VHA employees who could suffer loss of employment, or suffer grief should consider snowball "referral" or chain sampling strategies.

Nonetheless, this vulnerable population prompted immediate adjustments. As such, snowball sampling (personal referrals) was utilized. This method ensured that VHA participant's need for anonymity and confidentiality was secured. This strategy employed a target population of 12 all inclusive VHA employees. All inclusiveness prevented identity divulgement. And, for vulnerability reasons, this carefully selected sampling technique aligned appropriately with the prospects of concern for the participants. Procedurally, this method was conducive to the good order and discipline of this investigative process.

## Instrumentation and Protocol

### Researcher-developed Protocol

Appropriate researcher-developed interview protocol was constructed. It consisted of open-ended questions (see Appendix A). The interview protocol allowed me to listen, write, and discern from the participants own perspectivial language. In other words, as listener, I was afforded opportunities to completely navigate from the conceptuality to the participant's direct thoughts concerning their lived realities. Additional rationale for use included low cost association of self-administered interviews, timeliness for interview completion, and face to face semi structured interviews provided greater response rates and yielded better quality response. In these forums interviews are more apt to probe for additional details and direct clarification in one to one settings.

In addition to the aforementioned protocol, other instrumentation was used that yielded triangulation – VHA's archived civility Digital Video Disc (DVD). Through it behavioral observational analysis was conducted. This product was developed by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, National Center for Organizational Development's, Employee Education System (EES). It was 14:48 minutes in duration. EES granted full access of the archived data for use throughout the study's duration. Formerly, it was used to amass understanding of civility in VHA. As such, it was adequately suitable for use in this current (incivility) inquiry. The product was closely observed, appraised, and thoroughly scrutinized for analysis and clarification of potential underlying patterns and/or themes that pertained to the participant's real world experiences and their (respective) perspectives.

Basis for employment of two separate and distinct instruments was noted by Rudestam and Newton (2007) suggestion that "Coupling protocols is a source of triangulation. And, it provides a means of cross-checking and corroborating evidence by illuminating themes" (p.114). Application of this instrument was significant to this undertaking. The archived data presented an additional application of empirical evidence and visual information for long term value from noncurrent archived data records (National Archives, 2014). Moreover, employment of each of the protocol and instrumentation offered multilayering. Equally, this type of qualitative phenomenological research design relies heavily on the use of triangulation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The collective sufficiency of the triangulated sources offered distinct strengths for this study to acquire certain experiences and feels for persons at differing times, and was beneficial for scrutinizing past events towards present experiences.

**Recruitment and Participation Strategy**

Because adjustments were made to accommodate the sampling strategy, this also prompted needed amendments to the study's recruitment procedures. Initial solicitation of VHA's populous included broad and diverse ranges of participants to gain variety (Trochim, 2006). Initial recruitment strategies included full demography: full time, day shift, male and female, white and blue collar employees of all ages, and races, and pay grades. In doing so, I would have had the benefit to recognize assorted contradictions and agreements that life experiences and diverse perspectives from all inclusive groups may have had in common. This strategy would have not ignored tensions and contradictions of lived experiences through diversity of race, gender and many other demographical

differences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 688). Nonetheless, this vulnerable population warranted immediate change in how recruitment procedures were carried out. Flyer solicitation reinforced recruitment efforts via snowball sampling and ensured additional layers of anonymity for the participant's voluntary participation (see Appendix D).

## Data Collection

### Interview Procedures

Data collection was based on the interview protocol and archived data. I was solely responsible for all aspects of data gathering. Notification to conduct research was granted by Walden University's IRB, August 26, 2014. Before interviews commenced, the interview protocol was pilot tested on a small sample prior to the actual interviews. This procedure ensured the accuracy of the researcher-developed interview protocol; facilitated my need to take stock of aspects of the interviewing process; and it appropriately gauged the interview protocol and determined its communicative suitability to answer the research questions.

Based on snowball sampling referrals, 12 participants comprised the participant pool from which data were collected via (one to one, face to face, in depth, semi structured interviews). Logistically, an adequate sampling number for this qualitative study was twelve (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Rudestam & Newton, 2007). A reserve list of seven alternates was retained in case of no-shows these additional participants comprised the back pool (Ross, 2010). Because of the sensitive nature of the study and vulnerability of the participants their expressed desire to participate was communicated to me only by personal telephone or text messaging. This was also how we conveyed our meeting

availabilities. In light of the study's status and theirs, this was not an unusual request. Interviews commenced September 3, 2014, and lasted 30 to 45 minutes each.

Informed Consent documents were disseminated to each participant and read aloud for clear understanding. Due to rules of sensitive engagement – anonymity and confidentiality, the forms were not signed. Instead, each participant was assigned a number from 1-12. Individual consent was provided via audio voice recording only. This document contained all pertinent information regarding study: voluntary nature, who, what, where, when, how; and that it warranted zero to minimal risk to participants. It also outlined my role – Walden University student conducting research and it clarified my nonprofessional status and/or affiliation with facility and/or its personnel. Clarity of the study's purpose and all pertinent information was reiterated at the onset of each participant's acknowledgement of the document (see Appendix C)

Prior to each interview, I engaged the participants in icebreaker conversations about their personal interests, hobbies, families, or whatever made them feel comfortable. This prompted relaxation and established rapport (Liamputtong, 2006; Rudestam & Newton, 2007). Meeting times depended largely on their individual availabilities and personal schedules. Data collection was completed approximately a month and a half after the September 3, 2014 starts date.

For privacy and/or anonymity participant's home were utilized to conduct the one to one interviews; however, my residence was used to privately view and scrutinize the archived civility DVD data. From it, integral data contributions from the thirty-seven VHA participant's lived experiences were extracted and essential to the investigation.

Member checks were performed after each interview as a check and balance system to help gauge validity (Rudestam & Newton, 2007). Participant feedback was also solicited by provided summations of the gathered information. This also determined if their individual experiences and data were captured accurately that affirmed that the study's storytelling information closely depicted the authenticity, accuracy, and reliability of the participant's real world experiences.

Each participant was debriefed upon completing interviews. Out briefs were an integral and an obligatory ethical component of the research process (NIH, 2014). During debriefings, appreciation was reiterated for the participant's participation. These brief sessions also allowed occasions for participants inquiry to garner additional details about the study that they thought was purposeful and relative – it was their right (Rudestam & Newton, 2007).

The audio recorded data collected from the interview protocol were used in tandem with my handwritten notes (analysis of them is discussed in forthcoming section). The archived DVD video data existed in its electronic audio/visual format and was reviewed as such. Memoing of empirical data captures extracted from the video depicted noted themes and patterns that were also utilized within their respective context. Accurate record keeping of dates and times depicting collected data was maintained. Interviews occurred weekly and continued for approximately 7- 8 weeks until completed. At the adjournment of each interview, all voice recorded interview sessions, researcher memos, and participants' contact information was confidentially and securely maintained by me. Needed recalls were accomplished telephonic recalls. These revisits differed slightly

from the baseline interviews, were much briefer than the initial interviews, and were also documented meticulously. The prospect of follow ups was also discussed and planned for accordingly at the onset of initial interviews.

The archived DVD data collection presented no unusual conditions; however, oddities were encountered during the interview data collection stage. Although, at the beginning of the interviewing process, several safeguards were employed that minimized risks of compromising anonymity – many participants conveyed (still) their apprehension about mentioning VHA's name during their audio recorded interviews. At my request, these participants opted to simply refer to VHA as the "workplace, or organization." Conversely, only a few others who did not share this perspective referred to the organization by its name – VHA.

## Procedural Data Analysis

Linkages of data to the specific research questions are vital (Creswell, 2007). For this hermeneutic (interpretive) process, data conceptualization was achieved by first moving inductively from coded units to larger representations by establishing codes and categories and or/themes of unstructured data from interview transcripts and reflective notes from my observations (Rudestam & Newton, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). Denzin & Lincoln (2005) described this process as being "developed by the research participants through processes of storying and restorying to a point of co-joint construction of each interview for further meaning within a sequence of interviews" (p. 126).

The data reduction process involved several steps: First, raw audio recordings of unstructured data from my electronic voice recording device and handwritten notations

were transcribed verbatim onto NVivo Qualitative Data Analysis Software. Next, all contextual data were then read and revisited constantly. Labeling was used to extract relevant impressions and actions that emerged from the data (Rudestam & Newton, 2007). At my judgment, these particular elements were illuminated (coded) as thought to have significant relevance in terms of being echoed throughout the data, undergirded the study's theoretical foundation, or similarities existed between these particular codes and the previously peer-reviewed literature.

After coding, established themes of codes and created patterns were used that further narrowed my interpretative focus. Data were purged further of codings of lesser pertinence; and, as a result created mutual groupings of useful themes (Rudestam and Newton, 2007). This process yielded opportunities to hear and conceptualize the data of echoed themes that emerged from the process of data analysis.

## Steps to Ensure Trustworthiness

No deviations of trustworthiness from the initial determinations were detected in any of the four categories – credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Therefore, each primary implementation for trustworthiness substantiations held firm. Ample consideration was given to these issues for this study that identified and installed steps that upheld my critical researcher standards that pertained to rigor and integrity. Moreover, others seeking replication or extension of this research is informed that each of the four issues of trustworthiness were closely evaluated and installed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 2005).

Qualitative perspectives and experiences tend to differ among researchers and invite judgment of the quality of the examination (Trochim & Donnelley, 2008). This study's carefully selected methodological aims support the idea that the findings were supported accurately, worth attention, and are appropriately ascribed strategies that provided discriminate audience's abilities to adequately appraise the quality and trustworthiness of this study.

**Credibility**

Credibility (truth value) was addressed by employment of two distinct and contrasting data collections rather than single source data. Denzin and Lincoln (2003, 2005) identified the use of source variety as data triangulation; or the multimethod approach. For this reason, this study's varied data sources supported the plausibility and credibility of this current research compilation by having utilized archival data. The second data source was researcher-developed interview protocol. It probed participant's lived experiences in sufficient detail for comparison to the previously recorded archived data (Rudestam & Newton, 2007). These layered data provided my critical researcher acumen credibility – multilayering for source triangulation. Collectively, these two separate, yet distinct data sources upheld the standards of critical researcher corroboration of evidence and yielded truth to theme and theory illumination (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Rudestam & Newton, 2007).

Member checking also established truth. This process cross checked for correct interpretation of the participant responses by induced participant verification of my narratives, interpretations, and confirmed accuracy. Rudestam and Newton (2007)

indicated that the credibility of truth might be ascertained by exploring participant's experience in sufficient detail. These credibility strategies – triangulation (multilayering) and member checking explicitly withstood their value for truth confidence.

**Dependability**

As sole research instrument, coresearchers in the roles of peer auditor or external consultancy were not employed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Instead, dependability of the findings consistency and repeatability was accomplished by carefully documented and meticulously maintained record keeping of the study's data from beginning to end. Coding and themeing techniques and examples of emergent themes demonstrated participant's quotations and examples in their original format from transcripts were used to undergird the study's dependability.

**Confirmability**

Reflexivity appropriately establishes confirmability – objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study was shaped by the study participants. My potentially assigned self judgments (subjectivity) were leveled by adherence to several techniques: standards of triangulation – multiple data source usage (discussed previously – credibility heading) and reflexivity. Self assigned roles: critical researcher and self as the researcher helped eliminate bias or skewedness. In these roles, I interrogated myself regarding the ways in which research endeavors were to be shaped and staged (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, 2003). My emic (insider) role that was shaped by my self-consciousness was disclosed in this study; and, it was confronted and converted to outsideness. Bracketing ensured that my personal orientations towards the study were not

realized. As self as the researcher, I radically assigned critical researcher thought to the task of (only) listening, understanding, and self-awareness of my own capacity to deliver valid and reliable information about the social worlds of the study participants – only. In doing so, I was resigned to the place of the reflexive researcher during the interpretive process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

**Transferability**

This study's findings are applicable in other settings and situations. Although this was considered a small study, thick descriptions were garnered and transferability was recognized (Rudestam & Newton, 2007). Accordingly, this was achieved by the myriads of provided detailed explanations regarding the phenomenon. This aided the formation of such substantial data descriptions that it could be concluded that this study's findings are transferable (Flick, 1998; Silverman, 1993 in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

**Ethical Procedures**

Researchers are ethically bound, and responsible to safeguard storytellers (Walden University, IRB, 2014). Moreover, per Walden University's IRB permissions and approvals, I adhered to the strict guidelines outlined in the IRB application and NIH regulations. Participants were clearly informed via informed consent documentation that this study was strictly voluntary. It also explained their right to discontinue the study at any time minus adverse action, or fear of reprisal (NIH, 2014). Accordingly, I was accorded The National Institute of Health Office of Extramural Research Certificate of Completion. It certified my successfully completion of having met all mandatory course

training requirements necessary that pertained to "Protecting Human Research Participants" NIH certificate number 1350301, dated, 01/06/2014, (see Appendix E).

Because this sensitive in nature study involved a vulnerable population, the following statement was reiterated to all participants: All research data were strictly confidential, treatment of data guaranteed protections of participant anonymity and confidentiality, no identifying information would be made available to anyone not directly involved in the study except for life threatening situations. (Liamputtong, P. 2006; Trochim, 2008). No life threatening situations were noted. Safeguards and protections: My secure personal computer with only my personal access was sealed in a container within a locked cabinet in a secure room at my residence. No deviations of this protocol were made. Destruction of all data and materials would occur in 5 to 7 years upon completion of research (NIH Document #1350301, 2014).

## Summary

At the core of this study was my quest for in depth knowledge and understanding of some human behaviors. These explored behaviors can be generalized to other settings. Thorough scholarly probing of them and their underlying causes that manifested and drove these socially unacceptable practices, and my rationale for this undertaking was realized. This was accomplished through hermeneutic (interpretative) examination. As such, this study secured value and richness by way of text of the social world (McNabb, 2008). Chapter 3 explained this study's data collection procedures and logic for each chosen selection – researcher roles, target population, recruitment, sampling strategy, and how the data were collection, sorted, coded, transcribed and secured. It also discussed

trustworthiness and codes of ethics in research. Each process was carefully selected, precisely organized, securely executed, and upheld the study's sensitive nature and VHA's vulnerable population. Each participant experienced complete anonymity and confidentiality; and, thusly, responded to the open-ended interview protocol regarding their lived experiences, perceptions, and descriptions of workplace incivility in VHA. They communicated freely and shared information openly without fear of reprisal. As a result of these unbridled conversations, vital information was given that provided keen insight and unfettered answers to the study's research questions. These research selections also provided a foundational backdrop for future sensitive in nature study replication. Chapter 4 presents the findings.

# Chapter 4: Findings

## Introduction

### Study Purpose

Chapter 4 unveils the findings of some explored specified behavior(s) that pertained to the crux of the study: incivility in VHA that were foretold as having hindering qualities that would not maximize, but diminish work ethics, and decrease employees' desire to attend work. This study relied on researcher-developed protocol (in depth, semi structured, one to one, face to face) interviews. It was also informed by detailed analysis of VHA's archival DVD video data: *Civility, Respect and Engagement in the Workplace (CREW)*. Collectively, the two data strategies established triangulation – compared the interview data to the archived data. From this, truth of the participants' real world experiences was established. Empirical evidence and detailed analysis of

perceptions, attitudes, and outcomes by (unedited) direct quotations and/or transcript memoing, and accompanied tables of emergent themes, descriptive statistical data and summaries are presented in this chapter.

Four research questions secured the findings. Tables 4 through 7 display the organization of the data and breakdown of the findings.

1. RQ1 – What are some ramifications of uncivil workplace conduct in VHA?
2. RQ2 – How do VHA employees perceive effective communication?
3. RQ3 – What is the relationship between respect, disrespect, and communicating?
4. RQ4 – How important are good workplace relationships in VHA?

## Setting

Concern for privacy abounded because of VHA's sensitive climate conditions. These concerns influenced participants' willingness to partake in this study and/or openly share their life experiences. Participants were considered "*vulnerable,* and their participative roles as potentially diminishing their autonomy, or maligning their lives" (Liamputtong, 2006, p. 3). As such, this research endeavor was *sensitive* research (Liamputtong, 2006). Therefore, steps were taken that minimized potential risks and that protected VHA participants' welfare (social or economic loss of financial standing, employability, or reputations). They were apprehensive about partaking in the study . Precautionary measures to minimize risks while protecting participants' welfare and securing data collection included:(a) recruitment by snowball sampling technique (personal referrals) via flyer invitations—all inclusiveness provided greater anonymity;

(b) limited demography collection; and (c) no personal recruiting or interviewing on VHA's campus or communicating with participants via VHA's email system (only personal electronics). Additional adjustments that minimized risks was conducted interviews occurred in the privacy of their homes (behind closed doors). These protections were irrelevant to the archival video data.

## Demographics

*Sensitivity* of the research curtailed my efforts to seek inquiry regarding the participants' full demography: name, age, work department/section, pay grade, years of employment, education, marital status, and so forth. No personal identifiable information (PII) was collected (see Appendix B). Aggregately, both the interview and archival samples varied in demography; age, race, employment times, and employment statuses; however, Table 1 represents only race and gender demographics – collected from the one to one interview participants. Only gender demographics were collected from the archived video sample to preclude my assumptions regarding participants' racial makeup or ethnicity. These *sensitive* data were conducive to both samples that were considered *vulnerable* populations. As such, both populations were protected by using only one or both of the two aforementioned demographics.

Table 1

*Sample Demographics – Frequency Rates, and Population Percentages*

| Face-to-Face Participants | Frequency, n (%) | Archived DVD Participants | Frequency, n (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 12 (100%) | Total | 37 (100%) |
| Males | 6 (50%) | Males | 16 (43.2%) |
| Black | 3 (50%) | | |
| White | 3 (50%) | | |
| Females | 6 (50%) | Females | 21 (56.8%) |
| Black | 3 (50%) | | |
| White | 3 (50%) | | |

## Findings

### Data Saturation

Although saturation occurred, data collection was not halted until all twelve participants were thoroughly interviewed. For this reason, the sufficiency of the data collection was more than ample to draw from. Conversely, in some instances where data overlap had become noticeable, redundancy occurred and created data saturation. These repetitive crossovers created fullness that provided a quality of strength that further reinforced the study's trustworthiness.

### Emergent Themes

The researcher-developed interview protocol elicited open-ended answers and probed the full breadth and depth of the participant's lived experiences to answer the study's research questions (see Appendix A). Moreover, content analysis of the archived data also provided thick descriptions that were highlighted and supported by (unedited) examples and/or quotations. Reported responses from detailed transcripts and reflective notes were coded and characterized into themes as outlined in their respective tables.

Table 2 presents the study's 4 research questions (RQs) and 17 interview question(s) (IQs) protocol. Each element is essential to understanding the discourse. For conciseness, the table's (IQs) were abbreviated. The unabridged list of IQs protocol is located at Appendix A.

Table 2

*Research Questions (RQs 1-4), and Applicable Interview Questions (IQs, 1-17) Protocol*

| Research Questions (1 – 4) | Corresponding Interview Questions Protocol |
|---|---|
| What are some ramifications of uncivil workplace conduct in VHA? | IQs 1 – 5; IQs 9 – 15; IQ 17 |
| How do VHA employees perceive effective Communication? | IQ 2; IQs 6 – 8; IQ 14; IQ 16 |
| What is the relationship between respect, disrespect, and communication? | IQs 1 – 2; IQs 4 – 8; IQs 10 – 16 |
| How important are good working relations in VHA? | IQs 3 – 6; IQs 9 – 13; IQ 15; IQ 17 |

This exploratory study hinged on civil and uncivil workplace behaviors in VHA; therefore, I thought it was necessary to ascertain the twelve participants' and archived civility DVD participants' perspectives of how they defined and/or characterized civility/respect and incivility/disrespect in terms of their lived experiences. Two main categories emerged: characterizations of civil and uncivil behaviors. Two of the participants' themes were regarded as remarkable. These cases, responses, rates, and percentages are outlined in Table 3.

As Table 3 indicates, all participants believed that the Golden Rule (treating others the way you would like to be treated) and respect were traits of civility. One participant stated, "Looking at respect is taking it back to old school, doing to others as

you would have them do unto you" (Participant 3, 2014). Another said, "For everyone where I work it's pretty much the Golden Rule. We treat people the way we want to be treated" (Participant 7, 2014). Another said, "I try to treat people like I would want to be treated in the workplace, like the Golden Rule" (Participant 11, 2014). Honesty, kindness, and trust were indicated by more than three-quarters. One participant posited that, "Hum, my personal definition of respect is being morally sound, kind to others, and respectful" (Participant 1, 2014); and, "If I treat you nice, you should likewise treat me in the same manner (Participant 2, 2014). Another stated that "Respect would be treating someone kindly no matter what your personal feelings about that person may be" (Participant 10, 2014). More than half thought that fairness and openness were qualities of civil behaviors. For instance, "I would define respect as treating someone fairly and the way that you would want to be treated" Participant 5, 20140. Another participant stated that, "Respecting someone means understanding that they are different, accepting them, and including them" (Archived Civility DVD, 2011).

Table 3 further indicates that the second category – incivility was defined by all interview and video participants as disrespect. For example, one participant said, "Incivility would be disrespect. Whereas, I tried to treat you nice, but in turn all you can do is say negative things about me; okay, okay (Participant 2, 2014). Three-quarters labeled it as distrust; and about half as bullying, and lying. One participant stated, "I was bullied a lot verbally by rumors that were spread about me knowing that I would not confront each situation" Participant 5, 2014). Another shared, "Some people use lots of hand gestures as a form of bullying" (Participant 2, 2014). It was also suggested that

"Bullying encompasses all negative misconduct and that in itself, is incivility" (Participant 12, 2014). It was also evidenced by abusive language, gossiping, and hostility. This comprised about a quarter of the participants. For example, "Gossiping, backbiting, and slandering each other to me are uncivil and disrespectful" (Participant 1, 2014). Still, another disclosed that "Disrespect is when you are, or when you are degrading a person, or treating a person unfairly" Participant 5, 2014). Incivility was also described as favoritism and rudeness by three-quarters of the participants. For example, "Disrespect to me is, I guess, blatantly not being nice to someone because of your personal feelings, or how you feel" (Participant 10, 2014). One participant labeled it as cheating. Approximately 17% of participants introduced three descriptions, and/or definitions of incivility as gender, and racial incivility. These three cases were noted in terms of participant's descriptive definitions of incivility. One of two participants described attributes of workplace incivility as *gender* incivility. Collectively, two participants described attributes of workplace incivility as *racial* incivility. Both cases are supported by the following transcript quotations, and examples (Rudestam & Newton, 2007, p. 183). The first finding was presented by Participant 3, who expressed incivility in terms of being both *gender* and *racial* incivility:

> I had become in VHA a [blank] at the time, and I moved to another state but still within VHA, I was grown, mature and I had done a lot of things. I was sitting in front of a panel of people. And this time it was racial incivility and it was also sexual incivility as far as my gender. And, they had let me know that they had never had a person in this position as a [blank] being [blank] or being of my

> ethnicity.… And, I let these very high up ranking individuals know, these are two things that are not going to change about me…so, can we move on? (Participant 3, 2014).

The second descriptive finding of racial incivility was noted during an interview provided by Participant 6. It was adamantly communicated verbally with robust animated hand gesturing:

> Respect is treating everyone I come in contact with the way I want to be treated which is with decency (the Golden Rule). Respect is, you know – you can't do it without saying I'm gonna treat you kindly. Hum, I'm not going to be hateful towards you and I don't want you to be hateful towards me. I'm not gonna show any racial bias, or prejudice against you. So, respect is being kind towards other human beings; disrespect is being mean. For instance, one time a white male colleague gestured to me (using a trigger finger he motioned), and held it to my head, and said, "Nigga, I'll kill you." He got away with it. It was reported all the way up the chain of command; and nothing came of it (Participant 6, 2014).

Table 3

*Descriptive Definitions of Civility and Incivility*

| Lived Experiences – Descriptions of Civility and Incivility | | |
|---|---|---|
| Characterizations | Frequency, n (%) | Archived DVD Contributors (Collectively) |
| **Civility/Respect:** | | |
| Fair | 7 (58.3%) | Conformity |
| Golden Rule | 12 (100%) | Getting along |
| Honest | 9 (75%) | Inclusiveness |
| Kindness | 10 (83.3%) | Openness |
| Openness | 7 (58.3%) | Playing nice |
| Respect | 12 (100%) | Respect |
| Trust | 8 (66.6%) | Trust |
| | | Uniformity |
| **Incivility/Disrespect**: | | |
| Abusive language | 3 (25%) | Animosity |
| Bullying | 6 (50%) | Anger |
| Cheating | 1 (8.3%) | Authoritarianism |
| Disrespect | 12 (100%) | Arrogance |
| Distrust | 9 (75%) | Avoidance |
| Favoritism | 5 (41.6%) | Conflict |
| Gender Incivility | 1 (8.3%) | Confrontational |
| Gossip | 3 (25%) | Cronyism |
| Hostility | 3 (25%) | Defiance |
| Lying | 6 (50%) | Disrespect |
| Racial Incivility | 2 (16.6%) | Egotism |
| Rudeness | 4 (33.3%) | Embarrassment |
| | | Interpersonal Problems |
| | | Rivalry |
| | | Sarcasm |

The first research question addressed the participants' perceptions of potential ramifications of uncivil workplace conduct. Five major thematic associations emerged: mission accomplishment, channeling frustrations, morale, customer service, and patient care issues. Two subcategories emerged: Coping and releasing frustrations (colleagues and patients). Responses, occurrence rates, and percentages are displayed in Table 4.

As Table 4 indicates, the majority of participants considered that workplace incivility gravely impacted VHA's mission. For example, "VHA data has found strong correlations between civility and job satisfaction, sick leave, and patient satisfaction" (Archived Civility DVD, 2011). In other words, the more they responded to each other with respect, outcomes of positivity increased in areas of job and patient satisfaction; also

sick leave declined. “Being civil in the workplace is key especially in VHA where patients are concerned. It is essential to good working relationships between employees and their stakeholders; otherwise, employees, patients, and the organization suffer” (Participant 2, 2014). Another expressed:

> Not being a team player makes people feel like they are left out of the loop, and they are apt to disengage himself from the whole work environment as a whole. So their productivity goes down, and they are slow about everything they do (Participant 4, 2014).

Over three-quarters of the participants thought misconduct hindered employee morale. For instance, “Morale tends to take a back seat when there’s animosity between coworkers; it’s the opposite when attitudes are right” (Participant 2, 2014). Another said, “I feel that employee morale is very important” (Participant 1, 2014). Yet, another responded, “I really haven’t been offended by anyone in my work section because I try to keep high morale about what I do. So in everything I do, I try to make it as positive as possible for the most part (Participant 4, 2014).

Over half believed that civil behaviors enhanced patient care. For instance, “Healthy organizations are places where employees want to work, and where patients want to receive care” (Archived Civility DVD, 2011). Another participant stated, “Respect is foundational” (Archived Civility DVD, 2011). “Things that influence good behavior – positive attitude in the work environment is gonna make things flow very easily” (Participant 4, 2014). Of the same percentage, participants reported that pressures of workplace discord and devaluation prompted feelings of frustrations directed towards

colleagues. For example, “I try to diffuse situations by remaining calm, professional, and polite. A lot of times you just need to let that person spout out all that they are upset about, be understanding, and then they usually calm down” (Participant 11, 2014). One participant recalled having almost taken frustrations out on a patient:

> Don’t get me wrong, I’m not perfect. Hum, there were several instances where I did let someone get me riled up, get me upset hum, and I had to be immediately in front of a patient, and I’d been short with a patient, and did not hear all of their story, hum, regarding their illness or whatever’s wrong with them. Hum, so to me I took, I took what…a situation that happened to me out on a patient and I know that’s wrong, but I’ve caught myself (Participant 1, 2014).

Still, another cited, “The veterans we serve should have an exceptional experiences every time. To achieve this goal at the foundational level, if employees don’t feel valued – what will we expect them to deliver to the patients?” (Archived Civility DVD, 2011). A quarter of the participants believed that workplace incivility adversely affected customer service, as reported:

> I had a few situations where patients (customers) were standing there watching me get blessed out, and they were very sympathetic because they knew I was wronged. I think that a big part of being an employee is to the best of your ability, to leave your personal life out of the workplace and be totally focused on your work when you’re at work. This is a driver of good customer service (Participant 11, 2014).

Another stated, “Passive-aggressive behaviors are detectable by patients, and they are made to feel uncomfortable in those types of situations, and may decide to seek their health care elsewhere” (Participant 8, 2014). Another reported, “When people are treated well, they treat others better, and patients better, and have a sense of self-worth” (Archived Civility DVD, 2011).

Table 4

*Implications of Uncivil Conduct in VHA*

| Lived Experiences – Ramifications of Incivility | |
|---|---|
| Backlash | Frequency, n (%) |
| Impedes organizational mission | 11 (91.6%) |
| Civility Improves patient care | 8 (66.6%) |
| Low patience and frustrations taken out | 5 (41.6%) |
| Colleagues | 6 (50%) |
| Patients | 1 (8.3%) |
| Poor morale | 7 (58.3%) |
| Decreased customer care | 3 (25%) |

Communication is at the root of this study. For this reason, it was necessary to acquire participants’ responses of their perceived explanations/definitions of effective communication and how they communicate effectively. Research question two acquired the emergence of five major themes in Table 5: significance of effective communication, body language, conversation training issues, and practical methods of how to communicate effectively, and two-way messaging are outlined with responses, occurrence rates, and percentages.

As shown in Table 5, all twelve participants believed that VHA’s workplaces were somewhat devoid of the importance of effective communication. One participant stated, “Highly technical fields rely on the accuracy of communication, and that old

interpersonal problems (uncivil behavior) can actually harm patient care" (Archived Civility DVD, 2011). Another participant stated:

> We are all human, on the same playing field so let's talk (communicate) about what's happening to you, and, you walk a mile in my shoes and I'll walk a mile in your shoes and hopefully we will have a better appreciation of what each of us must do (Archived Civility DVD, 2011).

Another participant responded, "There is no misunderstanding with good communication. You don't misunderstand. If you have a job for someone to do, there is none. If you communicate well there is no way for them to misunderstand or do the job wrong" (Participant 9, 2015). Still, another stated, "Lack of communication kills and if you don't have effective communication, nothing's gonna work right" (Participant 7, 2014). Two participants stated, "Communication is key" (Participant 10, 2014); and "Good communication is key. Failure to communicate effectively can cause problems" (Participant 11, 2014). Four participants believed that effective communication is important; 8 contended that it is very important. Over half specified the relevancy of nonverbal communication and thought that body language is a form of communicating. For instance, "Body language can be negative or positive; it replaces oral expression (Participant 12, 2014). Most participants thought that communication training should be offered. For example, a participant responded, "Staff development training for communicating and scenarios of good and bad customer relations should be conducted" (Participant 11, 2014). One shared, "Communication training is not provided so we, employees basically just go with what we know (Participant 12, 2014). The data also

indicated that more than three-quarters of the participants had some semblance of what they believed practical effective communication was. For example, "Practical communication is no screaming or hollering at employees. Always be coaching I think is the word. You can take any situation and turn it into a coaching (training) situation" (Participant 9, 2014). One participant said, "Effective communication is active constructive responder messaging" (Participant 10, 2014). Others stated, "I talk, you talk and we don't cut each other off" (Participants 8 and 9, 2014). Yet, others responded, "Practical communication is a form of sender-receiver-understanding messaging" (Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 2014).

Table 5

*Perceived Explanations of Effective Communication*

| Lived Experiences – Clarification of Effective Communication | |
|---|---|
| Explanation of Communication | Frequency, n (%) |
| Need of effective workplace communication | 12 (100%) |
| (Important) | 4 (33.3%) |
| (Very Important) | 8 (66.6%) |
| Body language relevancy | 2 (16.6%) |
| (nonverbal – eye contact, hand gesturing) | 4 (33.3%) |
| Lack of training – effective communication issues | 11 (91.6%) |
| Practical examples/ways to communicate effectively | 9 (75%) |
| (Sender/Receiver/Understanding Model of Messaging) | 9 (75%) |
| Two-Way Vertical/Horizontal Communication | 3 (25%) |
| (two people conversing) | 3 (25%) |

The third research question solicited the participants' perceived perceptions of any relationships they believed existed between respect, disrespect, and communicating that cultivate harmony or sows discord. Four key themes were identified: lack of civility customs in VHA, major barriers – effective discourse, camaraderie, and lack of leader

support/misbehaviors. Two affiliated subthemes emerged: employee recognition and civil engagement. Responses, occurrence rates, and percentages are listed in Table 6.

Table 6 shows that the participants believed that linkages exist between positive and negative behaviors and conversing in terms of influencing conduct. Over three-quarters thought that associations existed between respect, disrespect, and communication; and, that the major barrier of the relationship was disjointed conversations – due to a lack of open, honest effective communication processes. For example, one participant said, "interpersonal issues are harmful in VHA" (Archived Civility DVD, 2011). Another stated, "I feel like if you let people know exactly what they need to do in your workplace, they are going to feel successful and they're going to be kinder and happy" (Participant 11, 2014). "It's all about teamwork, communicating, people talking to each other without barriers, or issues getting the way, people getting along. It's about trust" (Archived Civility DVD, 2011). Another shared, "To get along I bite my tongue; I'm not a 'yes' person" (Participant 10, 2014). "Communication is held in high regard as the greatest barrier to positive relationships in the workplace" (Participant 3, 1014). Additionally, "A hidden agenda in communicating is a barrier (Participant 12, 2014). The same percentage of participants stressed that civility needed to be imbedded in VHA's organizational culture. For instance, "Employee surveys showed that VHA's workplaces are not consistently respectful" (Archived Civility DVD, 2011). In terms of organizational civility standards one participant contended:

> I feel that sometimes a lot of things get hum, lost in translation if things aren't effectively communicated; so as longs as a (standard) is put out there, where

> everyone's breeding positive energy, hum, I feel like that can definitely effect social change amongst coworkers, and those around (Participant 1, 2014).

Another participant stated that "Organizations need to learn how to create civil workplaces" (Archived Civility DVD, 2011). Over half believed that VHA's leadership did not support, nor promote cultures of civility; but were often perpetrators of incivility. For example, one participant suggested that, "Agencies are responsible to ensure that workplaces are conducive to serving veterans, and engaging respect will help achieve this mission" (Archived Civility DVD, 2011). "I respect patients. I respect people that I work for, and it's a two-way street" (Participant 7, 2014). Another participant reported that, "Leaders have to role model and live civility as well" (Archived Civility DVD, 2011). Still, another participant asserted that, "An incident was reported all the way up the chain of command; nothing came of it" (Participant 6, 2014); and "Leaders have to show staff that civility is important" (Archived Civility DVD, 2011). Furthermore, "If you are not courteous to your employees, you may in turn not be courteous to your customers" (Participant 9, 2014). About half of the participants proposed that courteous engagement by smiling, and rendering daily greetings would possibly help. Similarly, this same percentage shared thoughts of workplace camaraderie in terms of being responsive to colleague's needs by empathizing, sharing workloads, and attending during/after hours social functions. Special incentives to reward good behavior were also acknowledged. For example, "Give employees rewards then you'll definitely try to prove yourself as a worthy, positive employee" (Participant 1, 2014).

Table 6

*Associations of Respect, Disrespect, and Effective Communication*

| Lived Experiences –Relations between Respect, Disrespect, and Communicating | |
|---|---|
| Relativity (civility, incivility, communication) | Frequency, n (%) |
| Need organizational civility customs | 9 (75%) |
| Recognition of civil behavior | 3 (25%) |
| (awards, time off) | 4 (33.3%) |
| Engaging courteously | 6 (50%) |
| (smiling, render daily greetings) | 6 (50%) |
| Major barrier – disjointed communication | 10 (83.3%) |
| (lack of candid conversations) | 9 (75%) |
| Camaraderie/Participation | 6 (50%) |
| ( luncheons, after hour associations, empathy, sharing workloads) | 8 (66.6%) |
| Lack of leader support and leaders misbehavior | 7 (58.3%) |

Research question four obtained the participant's beliefs of the significance of good employee working relationships. Seven salient categories surfaced: positive and negative reactions to incivility in terms of job attendance, positive and negative reactions to incivility in terms of job performance, significance of office rapport, overt bullying, and covert nonsexual harassment. Responses, occurrence rates, and percentages enumerated in Table 7.

As Table 7 indicates, Over three-quarters of participants were unaffected by job attendance that was due to unsociable workplace behavior; and did not waiver in their commitment to come to work. For instance, one participant stated, "My job attendance is not so much effected because I would still go to work because that's my job and I'm pretty loyal; so my attendance does not suffer (Participant 10, 2014). Another said, "I have never intentionally missed work because of disrespect or anything like that (Participant 11, 2014). Another stated, "I never called out from work. I never skipped work for any reason whatsoever" (Participant 8, 2014). Yet, another reported, "As far as

my job attendance suffering – no, because I am the type of person who, should I receive any negative things towards me in the workplace, I will go directly to the person that is giving it to me to clear it up as best I can (Participant 4, 2014).

On the contrary, less than a quarter of the participants disclosed their purposeful malingering to avoid office contention or to deliberately sabotage colleagues by willful truancy. One participant stated:

I used to work in the [blank], and there was at one point this one female who I think (she) liked me. And, then because I didn't pay attention to her, she started making my life on the job living hell. And, so anyway, it got to...went as far as the supervisor who took her side. So, I took me some days off. It was…it was kinda like my way of retaliating. It's like the child; the child who doesn't want to do something and so they go sit in the corner and pout (Participant 6, 2014).

Job quality percentages were identical to those of work attendance in terms of loyalty and commitment. One participant stated:

> Disrespect in my case had made it where it wasn't as much fun to go to work as it had been in the past. I was tired of the snide comments or whatever the heck it was, and I elected to vacate the job and moved to a different section. I did keep my performance up at the maximum level I could. I did not cut back on anything that I did for the organization. I went at it with my normal 30 minutes early and I stayed as long as I needed to get everything done (Participant 8, 2014).

Another participant stated, "No, I never let anything affect my job performance because that's your bread-and-butter (Participant 6, 2014). Yet, another participant cited:

> One thing about myself, I "try" not to let anything's negative affect my job performance. I want to give 100% no matter if I'm having a bad day I still want to give 100% because it's what I'm there to get paid to do (Participant 4, 2014).

Percentages differed slightly regarding the participant's unfaithful (lackadaisical) attitudes toward their duties – a quarter of participants. For instance, "I had a disloyal attitude towards my job performance because of the incivility shown me over and over again" (Participant 10, 2014). Conversely, another stated, "Disrespect has not affected my job performance" (Participant 11, 2014). And, one participant said, "I enjoy coming to work to a place where I feel like I am respected" (Archived Civility DVD, 2011). Another cited, "Respect betters working relationships" (Archived Civility DVD, 2011). Office relationships were revered by a quarter of the participants as important; while three-quarters of the participants thought office relationships – rapport was very significant. For instance, "All that VHA does is relationship based, and if we are paying attention to people, and watering people like flowers they bloom and our patients benefit from that effort" (Archived Civility DVD, 2011). We should be better stewards of servicing each other. This is done by recognizing that fellow teammates are also our customers" (Archived Civility DVD, 2011). Another participant added, "People want to work in civil environments and have the power to address issues. This gives employees pride in what they do and being part of a strong team" (Archived Civility DVD, 2011). Less than half reported not having been hostile, rude, or ever having ever bullied colleagues; while half reported having experienced nonsexual office harassment.

Table 7

*Significance of Good Employee Relationships in VHA*

| Lived Experiences – Workplace Relations | |
|---|---|
| Rapport | Frequency, n (%) |
| Reaction to incivility and job attendance (+) (Sedulously/committed/unaltered desire to come to work) | 10 (83.3%) |
| Reaction to incivility and job attendance (-) (undesirable coming to work, purposely call out, sabotage colleagues via unexpected absenteeism) | 2 (16.6%) |
| Reaction to Incivility and job performance (+) (Sedulously/committed to productivity) | 9 (75%) |
| Reaction to Incivility and job performance (-) (purposeful slacking /duty evasion) | 3 (25%) |
| Workplace relationships – important | 3 (25%) |
| Workplace relationships – very important | 9 (75%) |
| Overt hostility, bullying, rude to colleagues | 5 (41.6%) |
| Covert nonsexual harassment includes gossiping, teasing, purposely withholding work-related information, physical, mental, emotional intimidation, sabotage | 7 (58.3%) |

## Summary

Chapter 4 introduced the findings of this phenomenological design. It presented details of the results including analysis of responses to the research questions. Analyses were provided by provisions of specified detailed summaries, descriptive statistics and raw direct quotations and examples. As such, explanations of the key findings are representative of the data that is consistent with the participant's replies that comprehensively answered the study's research questions. Chapter 5 presents a detailed interpretative analysis of the findings from the themes to the research questions. How the findings interrelate to the literature and how they tie back to the theoretical framework and the study's summary, conclusion, and recommendations are discussed.

# Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

## Overview – Study Purpose and Nature

This social research study was explored to address uncivil social functioning and TACs practicality in VHA particularly in regards to behaviors that aligned intimately with organizational outcomes. This phenomenological study's answers to the research questions were informed by each chapter's conditions: Chapter 1's research parameters—background, problem, purpose, and study significance provided full revelation of what the research addressed, what gap I hoped to fulfill, and why – current study's importance. Chapter 2 supported provisions of robust, significant, and detailed extant literature that immersed audiences in discussions that showcased and undergirded the study's theory and other suppositions that logically probed for gaps. Similarly, Chapter 3's chosen research method provided adequate methodological criteria for how the research questions were answered for this sensitive in nature study and treatment of the vulnerable population. Phenomenological hermeneutic design fostered the ability to amass data solely from participants' lived experiences to accurately assess comprehensive meaning and understanding of the research questions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Chapter 4 revealed what the answers to the research questions were by themed discovery. Chapter 5 provides interpretative analysis and commentary of each research question to determine each of their interrelatedness to the findings, the literature, and to the study's theoretical foundation. Also presented are discussions of the current study's limitations, recommendations for further research, and implications for affirmative social progress in VHA that can be applicable to other organizations and to the general public at large.

### Research Questions

RQ1 – What are some ramifications of uncivil workplace conduct in VHA?

RQ2 – How do VHA employees perceive effective communication?

RQ3 – What is the relationship between respect, disrespect, and communicating?

RQ4 – How important are good workplace relationships in VHA?

### Key Findings Summation

Based on the study's detailed data capture, key findings emerged. The first aim uncovered fresh terminology: *racial* and *gender* incivility. It was concluded that organizations suffer at the hand of misplaced aggression. It was also determined that TAC (adult to adult) conversations theory moved intimately in the affairs of civil confabulation. Furthermore, that very basic understanding of adult to adult engagement existed, and that this essential technique of communicating (adult to adult) was mostly devoid of VHA employee's conveyances. Lastly, VHA employees desired good relationships with coworkers and they wanted to learn how to properly engage each other.

## Interpretive Discussion and Analysis of the Findings

### Incivility Defined

Two primary terms conducive to this study – civility and incivility in VHA were affirmed and obtained from the triangulated data – VHA interview protocol and the archived video contributors concerning referenced definitions and descriptive. They were further examined against terminology located in the peer-reviewed literature and were consistent with it. This interpretative analysis confirmed knowledge in the discipline that was based on corroborative findings by Forni (2003); Clark (2010); Guinness (2008); and

Schat and Frone's (2011) analysis of what civility and incivility are regarding positive and negative workplace discourse and behavior. Nevertheless, these researchers distinctly and categorically classified each term: civility (positivity) and incivility (negativity). These conformed results suggested that although many individual terms were used that described civility and incivility, neither of them possessed any one particular universal word, or phraseology descriptive that uniformly isolated one particular word to provide a "sole" definition. This current study and previous research also identified these behavioral qualities as contradictory in nature to each other.

Conversely, Brooks and Geer (2010), argued the reverse. Their characterization of incivility was based on the type of setting in which incivility was used. Surprisingly, in political group forums such as political debates, incivility was defined and viewed as a positive attribute (Brooks & Geer, 2010). This stance seemed to suggest that as long as incivility was used in campaign elections (debate) processes only, that it was revered as an acceptable productive group defense mechanism; otherwise, it was viewed as unproductive. Their resolve of incivility was antithetical to the current study's findings and to previous literature that suggested that incivility in workplaces was unequivocal negativity. Accordingly, their treatise of situational group incivility was compatible to Berne's (1963) theoretical proposition that groups tended to define incivility at the behest of group behaviors that are usually visible in group's social situations. Also, theoretically speaking, Berne (1963) indicated that "As long as groups presented social contracts to each other at the onset of encounters, it is probable that group etiquette will abound" (p. 14). Berne believed also that a group's character or temperament (civil or uncivil) was

wed from whatever psychological mechanisms it favored for handling its individual anxieties.

For instance, if the social contract reads: "If you place nice, I'll play nice, then order is kept; otherwise, each group has its own specially endowed provisions (acts of incivility) for handling each other's group disorder" (Berne, 1963, p. 14-15). Berne's assertion is visible at the start of U.S. political debates and forums whereby moderators verbally introduced group social contracting befitting of these assemblies. Nonetheless, as Berne stated, this only curtailed political (uncivil) mudslinging as long as group norms were not crossed and they adhered to set boundaries. These findings confirmed Berne's theory that a group's culture also defined whether or not incivility is negative or not, and that defining it was not simply limited to individual labeling. These conclusions add to the body of knowledge and understanding of how one or groups defined or interpreted incivility. It is also determined by other aspects of one's culture: group social situations and individual (personal) anxieties (Berne, 1966).

**Incivility Redefined**

Paramount to the aforementioned uncivil discoveries surfaced some unique revelations that helped redefine incivility: *racial* and *gender* incivility. This conclusion was surprising because myriads of terms were used in previous literature that ascribed terminology to what incivility was except the terms *racial* and *gender* incivility. However, after having examined these findings against the literature, it was found that King, Dawson, West, Gilrane, Pettie, and Bastin's (2011) social identity theory study unmasked and defined *racism* as incivility. Apart from this, and my inquiry, other

literature was inconsistent in terms of unearthing *"racial"* incivility. Furthermore, only this current study's findings introduced the unique theme, *"gender"* incivility. As such, this finding was also inconsistent with all other literature. King et al. (2011) research discovered that *racial* incivility was used in the context of discrimination. This is also true for the context in which *racial* and *gender* incivility came about in this current study. Jongeward (1974) affirmed "Transactional analysis of communication theory's (TAC) usefulness for affirmative action in terms of discriminatory practices in organizations" (p. 105). None of the literature presented all inclusive lists of exhaustive words or phrases that defined, or described *incivility*. Nevertheless, these novice terms—*gender* and *racial* incivility—were highlighted to underscore their introductory importance and uncorroborated usage in the literature with the exception of one study by King et al. Exhaustive searches of the peer-reviewed literature did not reveal other known studies (including VHA) that specifically examined and presented either of the two expressions. Thusly, these findings narrowed gap fulfillment in the literature that aided defining incivility. It also applied scholarly knowledge extension in the discipline; and assisted VHA and other organizations' efforts to better comprehend what workplace insolence is.

Research Question 1 examined problematic conduct and its affiliated ramifications in VHA. Based on the data, implications of ineffectiveness of VHA's mission, and employee unprofessionalism occurred due to antagonistic behavior. It was found that improper workplace engagement undermined productivity and respectful equality that every employee and customer should receive. Theoretically, these findings were consistent with Berne (1964) contention that every person in all organizations

deserved the equality of utmost respect. Landaiche (2009) argued that workplace social pain disabled professionals; and that working to understand and resolve interpersonal issues in work environments caused by social ills can help deter situational aggression. These findings confirmed that VHA employees actually desire respect and they also had clear understandings that respect must be reciprocated via The Golden Rule—do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Each person is ok, has validity, significance and deserve respect" (Steward & Joines, p. 7, 2012). These confirmed results suggest that workplace insolence hinders employees' potential for professional growth and that organizational expansion also pivots on the growth of its personnel; however, should this natural attrition suffer, organizations fiscal soundness may also. It also confirmed, and added knowledge to the discipline that disrespect propagated organizational decay and professionals by prohibiting employees' ability to effectively uphold VHA's mission to provide quality care for veteran stakeholders who have earned and deserve it.

Research 2 elicited VHA employees' perceptions in relation to understanding effective communication. It was concluded that constructive dialogue was revered as the backbone of VHA's success – day to day business operations hinged on employees ability to know how to have crucial conversations. It was discovered that positive discourse helped disarm office hostility and uncivil office dysfunction. Overwhelmingly, it was concluded that one way to effectively convey affirmative social intercourse was differentiated. It was by sender – receiver – understanding model of TAC. This preferred method of communicating was rooted in trust issues in VHA; and none understood exactly how to (properly) engage conversations on adult to adult levels (see Figure 1).

Theoretically, Berne (1964) stressed that TAC is applied throughout diverse fields to include effective communication facilitation to dismantle unbridled rudeness during social intercourse between individuals, and groups to the extent of tackling issues of trustworthiness. Moreover, it was believed that only one way existed to achieve these constructive aims – adult to adult. And, although healthy transactions, strokes, or communications occur on one of three levels: adult, parent, or child levels; office conversations must transpire on adult levels. Accordingly, adult ego state functioning in the workplace (parent to child, or child to child) detracts attention from behavioral dilemmas (Landaiche, 2009). Stewart and Joines (2012) concurred that TAC provides full information so that open communications are upheld by each communicator, and that each party is made fully aware. This means that conversations in VHA must be performed on adult to adult levels, less egoisms, psychological mind gaming, and hidden agendas. Each of these must be disavowed. These effective communication principles were premised on Berne's complimentary social intercourse or complimentary transactions theory. For that reason, TAC does not uphold tenets of disrespectful criticism (Jongeward, 1974).

Conversely, TAC perpetuated the notion that individual interpersonal or professional relations albeit oppressive attitudes and behaviors are alterable through successful confabulation processes as previously illustrated in preceding chapters. TAC model has been applied in myriads of organizational management systems (Berne, 1964; Jongeward, 1974). These findings were consistent with theory and other authors who

agreed that civility cannot exist, nor survive without a means of effective communication (EES, 2011; Martin, 2011; Mountain & Davidson, 2012; Stewart & Joines, 2010).

Thusly, conversations devoid of adult to adult (complimentary transactions) yielded diluted activity (Berne, 1964). This research concluded that although VHA employees expressed some knowledge and understanding of sender-receiver-communication, they did not possess a comprehensive semblance of how to actually embark upon appropriate communicating or all that it entailed. Nor did their realities, and/or expressions of effective discourse proceed much further than, "I talk, you listen" conceptualizations. Effective communication's totality was not fully recognized in terms of constructive adult to adult dialogue.

It was concluded that a lack of training in this area was desired and regarded by them as needful. This was further confirmed by researcher confirmation that the necessary TAC skills could be obtained through learning and training opportunities (Martin, 2011; Jongeward, 1974). It was also consistent with theory: Berne (1964) assertion that TAC is a teachable tool, and a learnable skill. Clark and Springer (2010) stressed the importance of organizations to "Create opportunities to educate and train employees of how to foster cultures of civility" (p. 325). Furthermore, TAC training affords opportunities to institute constructive behavioral boundaries, and upholds the establishment of appropriate effective communication protocol for institution's employees (Mountain & Davidson, 2012). Additionally, Clark and Springer (2010) indicated that "Conversations must be facilitated, and that opportunities for open dialogue increases understanding and open new avenues for support via coaching, and mentoring"

(p. 324). This study noted also that recognition for good employee conduct should be rewarded in the form of awards or time off. Clark and Springer (2010) supported rewarding civility.

These literature suppositions wed the data that suggested that verbal engagement is integral to organizational success in terms of its developmental attributes for their professional, interpersonal, and customer relation acumen. Mathews (2011) contended for the intrinsic value of TAC's strength. It breeds, and upholds quality business standards, and endorses affirmative organizational climates. It produces internal goodness in individuals that translates into effective customer service delivery (Suriyaprakash, 2011). This suggests that lack of quality communications will ultimately suffer organizations' reputations and financial outcomes if clear lines of intolerance for dysfunctional behavior is not addressed, strictly enforced, and adhered to. The need for TAC processes presented no mixed results. Theory and literature rendered synchronized appraisals that were consistent with the study's findings and that extended knowledge of deeper understanding to the discipline.

Research question 3 explored relationships between respect, disrespect, and TAC. It was concluded that TAC comingled with civility; however no relationship was found to have existed between TAC and disrespect. For this reason, TAC only highlighted the impending doom of conversations between adults that were not conducted at complimentary (adult to adult) levels; this produced unhealthy dialogue (see Figure 1). As such, these respectful or disrespectful behavioral correlations were driven by how effectively or ineffectively employees communicated. Alternatively, effective

confabulation was reflective of good conduct. Whereby, ineffectual conversations were attributable to misbehavior. These findings were consistent with, and linked back to the literature. Stewart and Joines (2012) research indicated that TAC theory supports and maintains clear communication to avoid unproductive confrontations. Productive discourse was considered the driver of positive interactions, and poor communications undergirded uncivil actions. In other words, TAC and respect does not thrive minus the other, and that TAC was grounded in civility. For this reason, they were deemed mutually exclusive. TAC was the common denominator that fostered productive adult engagement. These findings also harmonized also with theory. Berne (1964) proposed that "people can be devoted to productivity or opt to maintain the status quo; however, through respectful engagement, people can enjoy nonthreatening environments" (p. 73). Furthermore, Berne suggested that verbal cohesion works toward respectful social outcomes is considered an activity. Berne (1973) submitted that when consideration is not given to the work of effective engagement, the human condition suffers at the hand of relationships that are considered combative. These findings concluded that how employee behavior – respectful or disrespectful is rooted in how they communicate. Nonetheless, collectively, they all share a common destiny – respect and TAC are intertwined, and is grounded in VHA's organizational success.

Research question 4 explored the significance of good working relationships in VHA. Employees' believed that their interpersonal/professional relationships with regard to colleague affiliations, individual professional business acumen towards each other and stakeholders were very important. These relationships were beneficial to customer care

and daily engagement with each other in VHA. Good working relations were preferred by employees as opposed to pernicious associations. Similarly, Forni, Buccino, Greene, Freedman, Stevens, and Stack (2003) have indicated that 83% of employees in a Baltimore organization believed that civil relations were also very important. This translated to coworkers not being averse to having coworkers to share information, lunches, and even after hour's time together. They longed for office camaraderie that provided as sense of on the job family type atmospheres where each believed they were intrinsically valued by the other. Berne (1963, 1964) proposed that TAC's framework was integral to the establishment of situations and circumstances that fostered good working relationships – (vertical, horizontal; and internal, and external relations) for organizational wellness. It was concluded that workplace relationships are not just significant; but that they are very important. Relationships are built through conversations (Berne, 1964; Jongeward, 1974). It was also concluded that on the basis of how employees perceived that they were being treated (maliciously) that they tended to withdraw. Withdrawal was visible in the form of absenteeism, and/or job performance. Workers also showed concern for the quality of office interactions and associations because they believed that it underscored patients' discernment of workplace unease; and that if customers paid attention to it, it could potentially cause stakeholders who noticed issues of office instability due to lack of workplace camaraderie in VHA to perhaps seek their health care elsewhere.

It was concluded also that poor relations at the behest of incivility in VHA impacted malingering. Although, it was surprising to discover that although VHA

employees experience overt and covert incivility daily, they did not overwhelmingly waiver in their coming to work; nor were they immensely negligent in regards to their work ethic. Instead, steady flows of commitment were noted in these areas as sustainable. Employees were sedulously committed to coming to work regardless of having to contend with unpleasant social situations. Only a marginal amount of VHA employee's commitments in either area declined. Reasons for the work declinations and office separations were purpose driven – spiteful disengagement of oneself via situational avoidance or to deliberately sabotage colleagues who were thought of as instigators of office mayhem. These individuals evoked workplace malingering – voluntary removal of oneself from the workplace in the form of purposeful absenteeism (deliberate calling out, fake illness, excessive leave/vacation, and etc), duty dereliction, or evasion.

Sliter, Sliter, and Jex (2012) research indicated that workplace "social stressors" detracted from employees' ability to forge positive and valuable personality traits, relations, and energies. King, et al. (2011) purported that the impact of *racial* incivility's force exuded employees' desires to flee from attending work more often. Likewise, Schat and Frone (2011) determined that workplace aggression (WPA) caused people who were deemed "targets" of it to manifest avoidance. Furthermore, Howard and Cordes (2010) research confirmed that based on employees' perceptions of workplace injustice and disrespect caused them to retreat in job committal – presence and productivity. These study's conclusions were consistent with this current study's claims. Collectively, these researcher's conforming results suggested that these behavioral (reactions) can be deliberate, and are byproducts of employees' attempts to avoid what they considered

unacceptable misconduct by fellow colleagues. In other words, individuals tended to incrementally separate themselves from attending work, or they displayed notable declines in their job performance. And, that incivility towards employees proliferated withdrawal outcomes that detract from organizational commitment. Berne (1964) theory contended that when individuals do not experience feelings of membership, connection, or belonging that often occurs during negative social intercourse, they tend to resign (withdraw) from a particular activity or setting.

Aggregately, this current study, its theoretical underpinning, and peer-reviewed suppositions achieved harmony regarding the importance of workplace relationships in terms of VHA employees' truancy and productive output. As such, it was concluded that a lack of good office relations bred purposeful and unnecessary truancy and subpar work production. Thusly, this study confirmed knowledge extension to the discipline by its reinforced conforming conclusions that unequivocally equated incivility to office relationships as symptomatic and indicative of workplace abandonment. And, although employee malingering was not overwhelmingly prevalent in VHA, employees seeking to project their own discontentment with the daily pressures, stressors, and annoyances of office discord, did so by willfully and negligently retreating from their responsibilities.

## Limitations

As a result of VHA's ongoing public scrutiny, I encountered unforeseen study limitations. These constraints were unrecognized at the onset of this study; however they arose during my IRB request for approval of data collection stage. These limiters were completely out of my control; however, this new information did not alter the study's

integrity. It did, however, render this study as sensitive in nature and VHA's population vulnerable. Because of this, unexpected rigid restrictions were placed on me and VHA's (now) vulnerable population that greatly influenced some methodological strategic determinations: extensive demography collection, sampling techniques, and recruitment strategy. However, each strategy was revisited and appropriate adjustments were made to accommodate each of them. Nonetheless, the strategic adjustments did not pose a threat to the study's trustworthiness. Discussions of said limitations were comprehensively addressed in Chapter 1, under their respective sub-headings.

## Recommendations

Having reflected on this study, much is still unknown about incivility in VHA towards the aforementioned concepts – absenteeism, productivity, and TAC. Looking forward, this study is a launching pad for further discussions of this nature. Specifically, more research is needed to propel researchers beyond VHA's imposed aforementioned limitations from this current study. Therefore, it is recommended that the study be replicated under circumstances that do not impede researcher access; findings may differ.

Accordingly, the remarkable findings – *racial* and *gender* incivility are cues that further research is warranted. Therefore, it is also recommended that this inquiry be replicated to focus on *gender* and *racial* incivility as uncivil acts in VHA. Addressing these in the context of full-scale demographical probing may afford researcher opportunities to: (a) Explore other methodological choices; (b) Aid future findings by providing vital information for subsequent study's tracking and trending purposes; (c) Greater scrutiny of unique findings; and (d) Deeper knowledge enhancement.

Furthermore, others can benefit from this study: VHA and other organizations at all levels of government: public, private, and nonprofit organizations. This is because this study's TAC theory is not limited in its educational and training prowess to any one particular sector. Therefore, it is further recommended that this study's findings be disseminated to the larger population via VHA regional and nationwide conferences, Call for Papers, articles, and presentations at local, state, and federal Town Hall meetings.

## Implications

The potential impact for social progress in VHA or other organizations is at hand. This research has demonstrated and authenticated the knowledge and understanding that VHA needs to combat ills of workplace social distress. TAC was provided as a catalyst to help establish workplace civility through open effective conversations. Appropriately, recommendations for practical application of TAC theory equated to a signaled need for change. Practitioners may educate employees of practical ways to enhance workplace interactions through civil social intercourse. VHA's leadership and organizational practitioners are responsible to lead the charge by examining this option as a potential means to ameliorate workplace social intercourse through policy implementation – professional's best practice, practitioner's tool, and performance measures.

## Conclusion

The conclusion of the matter is: Incivility exists in VHA; and, it is not conducive to good order and discipline. Because of this, negative implications exist for VHA's mission – job presence and the value of personnel output. A strategy to help prevent destructive encounters, or at best restrain them in VHA has been identified through

Berne's (1964) TAC theory. Through TAC theory, engagement of prosocial adult to adult level communicative transactions is recognized, win-win conversations between parties are birthed, nourished, and encouraged, and civil relations are fostered. Nonetheless, Jongeward (1974) cautioned that "TAC is not a panacea for incivility" (p. 2); however, that if effective adult conversations are lacking, this communicative deprivation could potentially mean a reduction in organizational productivity or job turnout.

Accordingly, opportunities to forge constructive office relationships and appropriate workplace etiquette through this practical option must be initiated at the behest of organizational leaders' advocacy of TAC to help cultivate and promote healthy civil work environments. Behavioral modification and organizational change does not occur overnight; it takes time. Policy implementation for TAC training should be addressed in VHA's Code of Conduct Policies, be methodically vetted in TAC processes, and be highly regarded and emphasized as relevant, strictly enforced, and adhered to. Compliance should be appropriately monitored as with any other organizational policies, rules, and regulations. TAC approach is recommended for organizations seeking to confirm their commitment to affirmative social change.

# References

Absent. (n.d.). In *Merriam-Webster's New Dictionary*. Retrieved from http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/absenteeism

Andrews, W. (2014, May 9). *Veterans care scandal: Shinseki orders nationwide audit of VA system.* [Video file]. Retrieved from http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/veterans-care-scandal-eric-shinseki-orders-nationwide-audit-of-va-veterans-affairs-system/

Ansbro, J. (2000). *Martin Luther King, Jr.: Nonviolent strategies and tactics for social change.* Maryknoll, NY: First Madison Books.

Babbie, E. (2007). *The practice of social research* (11th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Bandow, D., & Hunter, D. (2008). Developing policies about uncivil workplace behavior. *Business Communication Quarterly, 71*(1), 103. doi:10.1177/1080569907313380

Barlett, J., Barlett, M., & Reio, T. (2008). Workplace incivility: Worker and organizational antecedents and outcomes. *Academy of Management Review, 24*(1), 452-471.

Berne, E. (1961). *Transactional analysis in psychotherapy*. New York, NY: Grove Press.

Berne, E. (1963). *The structure and dynamics of organizations and groups.* New York, NY: J. B. Lippincott Company.

Berne, E. (1964). *Games people play: The psychology of human relationships.* New York, NY: Grove Press.

Berne, E. (1966). *Principles of group treatment.* Oxford University Press.

Berne, E. (1996). *Games people play: The basis handbook of transactional analysis.* New York, NY: Ballantine Books.

Berne, E. (1973). *What do you say after you say hello.* New York, NY: Bantam.

Brookheiser, R. (1996). *Founding fathers: Rediscovering George Washington.* New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Brooks, D., & Geer, J. (2007). Beyond negativity: The effects of incivility on the electorate. *American Journal of Political Science, 51*(1), 1-16. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-5907.2007.00233.x

Bruzzese, A. (2007). 45 *things you do that drive your boss crazy.* New York, NY: Penguin Group.

Carter, S. (1998). *Civility: manners, morals, and etiquette of democracy.* New York, NY: Basic Books.

Ceravolo, D., Schwartz, D., Foltz-Ramos, K., & Castner, J. (2012). Strengthening communication to overcome lateral voice. *Journal of Nursing Management, 20*(5), 599-606. doi: 10.111/j.1365-2834.2012.01402.x

Chong, A. (2008). Asian contributions on democratic dignity and responsibility: Rizal, Sukarno and Lee on guided democracy. *East Asia: An International Quarterly, 25*(3), 243-265. doi: 10.1007/s12140-008-9050-3

Clark, A., Bottom, K., & Copus, C. (2008). More similar than they'd like to admit? Ideology, Policy and populism in the trajectories of the British National Party and respect. *Journal of British Politics, 3*(4), 511-534. doi: 10.1057/6p.2008.20

Clark, C. & Springer, P. (2010). Academic nurse leaders' role in fostering a culture of

civility in Nursing education. *Journal of Nursing Education, 49*(6), 319-325. doi: 10.3928/01484834.20100224-01

Congressional Research Service. (2013). *Annual report of the congressional research service of the library of congress for fiscal year 2012.* Retrieved from www.fas.org/sgp/crs/

Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Crocker, M., & Henderson, C. (2008). A 12-step managerial civility recovery model. *People and Strategy, 3*(31), 20-21.

Davis, A. (2008). Lookism, common schools, respect and democracy. *Journal of Philosophy of Education, 41*(4), 811-827. doi: 10.1111/i.1467-9752.2007.00584.x

Democracy. (n.d.). In *Merriam-Webster's New Dictionary*. Retrieved from http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/democracy

Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2003). *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials.* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2005). *The sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Emic. (n.d.). In *Merriam-Webster's New Dictionary*. Retrieved from http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/emic

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2007). Annual report on the federal

workforce fiscal year 2006. Retrieved from http://www.eeoc.gov/federal/adr/adr_report_2006/index.html

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2009). Model eeo programs must have effective anti-harassment program. Retrieved from http://www.eeoc.gov/federal/model_eeo_programs/cfm#policies

Forni, P. (2003). *Choosing civility: The twenty-five rules of considerate conduct*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Forni, P. (2009). *The civility solution: What to do when people are rude.* New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Forni, P., Buccino, D., Greene, R., Freedman, N., Stevens, D., & Stack, T. (2003). *The Baltimore workplace study.* Retrieved from https://www.ubalt.edu/jfi/jfi/reports/civility.PDF

Fredericksen, E., Witt, S., Patton E., & Lovrich, N. (2015). *Human resource management: The public service perspective.* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Gavino, M., Wayne, S. & Erdogan, B. (2012). Discretionary and human resource transactional human resource practices and employee outcomes: The role of perceived organizational support. *Journal of Human Resource Management, 51*(5), 665-686. doi: 10.1002/hrm.21493

Guinness, O. (2008). *The case for civility: And why our future depends on it.* New York, NY: Harper One.

Holliday, A. (2005). *Doing and writing qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Publications.

Holstein, J., & Gubrium, J. (1994). *Handbook of constructionist research.* New York, NY: Guilford Publications.

Howard, L., & Cordes, C. (2010). Flight from unfairness: Effects of perceived injustice on emotional exhaustion and employee withdrawal. *Journal of Business Psychology, 25*(1), 409-428. doi: 10.1007/s10869-010-9158-5

Joines, V. (2010). Combining one-to-one and group-as-a-whole work in redecision group therapy. *Transactional Analysis Journal, 40*(2), 144-148. doi: 10.1177/036215371004000209

Jongeward, D. (1974). *Everybody wins: Transactional analysis applied to organizations*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Joseph, M. (2012). Therapeutic operations can be educational operations too. *Transactional Analysis Journal, 42*(2), 110-117. doi: 10.1177/036215371024200204

King, E., Dawson, J., West, M., Gilrane, V., Pettie, C., & Bastin, L. (2011). Why organizational and community diversity matter: Representativeness and the emergence of incivility and organizational performance. *Journal of Academy Management, 54*(6), 1103-1118. doi: 10.5465/amj.2010.0016

King, R. & Spagnola, L. (2012). *The riot within: My journey from rebellion to redemption.* New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.

La Caze, M. (2008). Seeing oneself through the eyes of the other: Asymmetrical reciprocity and self-respect. *Hypatia, 23*(3), 118-135. doi: 10.111/j.1527-

2001.2008.tb01208.x

Landaiche, N. (2009). Understanding social pain dynamics in human relations. *Transactional Analysis Journal, 39*(3), 229-238. doi: 10.1177/036215370903900306

Leiter, M., Price, S., & Spence Laschinger, H. (2010). Generational differences in distress, attitudes, and incivility among nurses. *Journal of Nursing Management. 18*(8), 970-980. doi: 10.111/j.1365-2834.2010.01168.x

Liamputtong, P. (2006). *Researching the vulnerable: A guide to sensitive research methods.*Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Lincoln, Y. & Guba, E. (2000, 1985). *Naturalistic inquiry.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Loomis, B. A. (2000). *Esteemed colleagues: Civility and deliberation in the US senate*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institute.

Lozano-Reich, N. & Cloud, D. (2009). The uncivil tongue: Invitational rhetoric and the problem of inequality. *Western Journal of Communication, 73*(2), 220-226. doi:10.1080/10570310902856105

Malinger. (n.d.). In *Merriam-Webster's New Dictionary*. Retrieved from http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/malinger

Martin, C. (2011). Transactional analysis: A method of analyzing communication. *British Journal of Midwivery, 19*(9), 587-593. doi: 10.12968/bjom.2011.19.9.587

Mathews, J. (2011). Transactional analysis derivatives an approach to organizational change and development. *International Journal of Business Studies & Research,*

*3*(1), 30-40.

McNabb, E. (2008). *Research methods in public administration and nonprofit management: qualitative and quantitative approaches.* Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharp Inc.

Mountain, A., & Davidson, C. (2012). *Working together: Organizational transactional analysis and business performance.* Burlington, VT: Gower Publishing.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

National Archives (2007, September). National archives and records administration strategic directions: Appraisal policy. Retrieved from http:www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/initiatives/appraisal.html

National Institute of Health. (2014). Training opportunities. Retrieved from http://www/nih.gov/science/index/html#training

Osatuke, K., Moore, S., Ward, C., Dyrenforth, S., & Belton, L. (2009). Civility, respect, and engagement in the workplace. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 45*(3), 384. doi:10.1177/0021886309335067

Osif, B. (2010). Incivility. *Library Leadership & Management, 24*(3), 91-97. Retrieved from https://www.libraries.psu.edu/psul/diversity/civteam/civility_resources.html

Patton, M. (2005). *Qualitative research: Integrating theory and practice.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Performance. (n.d.). In *Merriam-Webster's New Dictionary*. Retrieved from http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/performance

Phenomenology. (n.d.). In *Merriam-Webster's New Dictionary.* Retrieved from http://www/merriam-webster.com/dictionary/phenomenology

Porath, C., & Pearson, C. M. (2012). Emotional and Behavioral Responses to Workplace Incivility and the Impact of Hierarchical Status. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 42*(S1), E326-E357. doi: 10.111/j1559-1816.2012.01020.x

Public Sector Ethics Act of 1994. (2014). *Codes of conduct for public officials.* Retrieved from //www.legislation.qld.gov.au/legisltn/current/p/publicsecetha94.pdf

Respect. (n.d.). In *Merriam-Webster's New Dictionary*. Retrieved from http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/respect

Ross, L. (2010). *Research methods: A practical guide for social sciences.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education Publishers.

Rudestam, K., & Newton. (2007). *Surviving your dissertation: A comprehensive guide to content and process.* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Schat, A., & Frone, M. (2011). Exposure to psychological aggression at work and job performance: The mediating roles of job performance and personal health. *Journal of Work and Stress, 25*(1), 23-40. doi: 10.1080/02678373.2011.563133

Sliter, M., Sliter, K., & Jex, S. (2012). The employee as a punching bag: The effect of multiple sources of incivility on employee withdrawal behavior and sales performance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 33*(1), 121-139. doi: 10.1002/job.767

Smith, S. (2008). Agency and surprise: Learning at the limits of empathic-imagination and liberal egalitarian political philosophy. *Critical Review of International Social*

*& Political Philosophy, 11*(1), 25-40. doi: 10.1080/13698230701880489

Stewart, I., & Joines, V. (2012). *TA today: A new introduction to transactional analysis*. (2nd ed.). Chapel Hill, NC: Lifespace.

Suriyaprakash, C. (2011). Ethics in organizations: My eastern philosophical perspective. *Transactional Analysis Journal, 41*(2), 133-135. doi: 10/1177/0362153711041002.07

Tocqueville, A. (1835). *Democracy in America.* United Kingdom: Saunders and Otley.

Trochim, W. & Donnelly, J. (2008). *The research methods knowledge base* (3rd ed.). Mason, OH: Atomic Dog Publishers.

U. S. Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics (2013). Injuries, illnesses, and fatalities. Retrieved from www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/osar0016.htm

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (2015). About VA: Mission, vision, core values & goals. Retrieved from http://www.va.gov/about_va/mission.asp

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Employee Education System. (2011). *Civility, respect, and engagement in the workplace* [DVD]. Available from the National Center for Organizational Development.

Walden University. (2014). Research ethics & compliance: Welcome from the IRB. Retrieved from www.academicguides.waldenu.edu/researchcenter/orec

Walden University (2014). Positive social change. Retrieved from http://catalog.waldenu.edu/content.php?catoid=61&navoid=9236

Watkins, M. (2013, May 15). What is organizational culture? *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2013/05/what-is-organizational-culture/

# Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Research Topic: *Exploring Incivility toward Employee Absenteeism and Productivity: Veterans Health Administration*

Participant: _____

Participant Number: _____

Participant Position: _____

Date of Interview:_____

Time of Interview:_____

Place of Interview:_____

Interviewer: _____

*This study necessitates a need for exploratory inquiry to further understand incivility toward employee absenteeism, job performance, and transactional analysis of communication in Veterans Health Administration, while serving to effect positive social change through practical applications to thwart uncivil social ills through informing/educating VHA employees*. ***Based on your own experiences/views, please respond to the following interview questions:***

1. What is your personal definition of civility (respect), and incivility (disrespect)?
2. How can effective communication (attribute of Transactional Analysis) effect positive social change within your work section?
3. What role, if any, do you play in terms of respectful behavior(s) in VHA?
4. What do you perceive as the greatest barrier of effecting positive respectful workplace relationships in VHA?
5. How and in what ways can courtesy and respect be engaged in VHA?
6. Why is communicating courteously among VHA employees important?

7. How is effective communication(s) endorsed in VHA, and to what extent is it encouraged?
8. What are some practical communication applications that seemingly have positive effects on employee behaviors?
9. What are common personality traits of employees experiencing workplace disrespect?
10. How do you, and/or other VHA employees respond to issues of workplace disrespect?
11. How do you describe yourself as a victim of workplace incivility? As an offender of workplace incivility?
12. What types of behaviors influence respectful or disrespectful behaviors in your workplace?
13. How important are civility and incivility in VHA?
14. What is effective communication, what does it mean to you?
15. What do good working relationships mean to you? Are they important? Why/why not?
16. Why is effective communication important, and how can it be used in your work section?
17. What are some of your lived experiences with incivility in VHA in terms of job attendance and performance?

Appendix B: Demographic Questionnaire

Participant Number:_____

~~Position Title~~:_____

Date:_____

1. ~~What is your age range (20-30 etc.)?~~_____

2. What is your race?_____

3. What is your gender?_____

4. ~~What year did you start work at VHA?~~_____

5. ~~What is your current position?~~_____

6. ~~Are you a white, or blue collar VHA employee?~~_____

7. ~~Are you a day/evening-shift VHA employee?~~_____

8. ~~Are you a full-time VHA employee?~~ _____

9. ~~Are you serving in a supervisory capacity?~~_____

10. ~~What is your HIGHEST level of formal education?~~_____

12. ~~Have you ever participated in (any) VHA Civility, Respect and Engagement in the Workplace (CREW) Pilot Studies? If yes, when? Please describe your experience:~~

_____

_____

_____

## Appendix C: Informed Consent Document

Dear Participant,

My name is Blank. I am not affiliated professionally with the VHA, Human Resources Department. I am a doctoral student in Public Policy Administration at Walden University. My dissertation topic is incivility, which is synonymous with disrespect. Disrespect takes on various forms – verbal, nonverbal, and physicality. It is present in workplaces across the country (public, private, and non-profit sectors). This study will examine workplace incivility (disrespect) in VHA toward employee absenteeism, job performance, and communication with intentions to thwart these behaviors in VHA, and other organizations.

As an employee of VHA, you are invited to (voluntarily) participate in this study by supporting the study's efforts to obtain your expressed verbal permission (via audio taping) to participate in a face-to-face interview. Interviews will last about an hour, and is strictly on a voluntary basis which means participants have the right to decline or discontinue participation at any time include. Should the researcher know the participant, assurances also will include that declining or discontinuing will not negatively impact the participant's relationship with the researcher. Although there is no compensation for participants, and while you may not benefit directly from this study, you will make major contributions to the information now known about workplace incivility (disrespect). In the future, VHA and/or other organizations may benefit because more research is being conducted to gain better understanding of this phenomenon, its potential causes, and how

to best deal with workplace incivility (disrespect) toward employee absenteeism, job performance, and communication.

As sole research instrument, I am solely responsible to keep confidential records of all interviews, notes, and etc., garnered from this study. Agency leaders are aware of the research; but, not the identity of the participants. Participant responses will NOT be attributed to them directly, or indirectly to ensure strict confidentiality. Identity of participants will NOT be disclosed or shared with anyone; however, this form does express a limit to confidentiality – "duty to report" clause that outlines that "I, the researcher, will keep all interview information private unless I, the researcher, learn of possibly illegal activities." There is minimal to no known risk involved in the research. Nonetheless, should situations occur during the process whereby participants become extremely upset, a general referral to contact VHA's Employee Assistance Program's (EAP) toll free hotline at, 800-xxx-xxxx is suggested. It is available to VHA employees under their benefits program, and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

All collected interview information will be audio recorded, maintained securely by the researcher, and destroyed as soon as transcription is completed. To demonstrate informed consent, participants are required to verbally agree to participate by accepting researcher terms and agreements in this document via voice audio. Although informed consent is provided by participants via verbal voice recording, participants will be given this document for their records.

Your participation is greatly appreciated. If further information is needed, please contact the researcher, Blank, at (xxx) xxx-xxxx, or at Blank@Waldenu.Edu. Also,

Walden University‘s Research Participant Advocate may be contacted at, 612-312-1210, or email IRB@Waldenu.edu. Again, thank you for your assistance.

Respectfully,
Blank

Appendix D: Invitation to Participate


# Walden University

**PARTICIPANTS NEEDED!!! For RESEARCH in Workplace Civility/Respect & Incivility/Disrespect.**

I am looking for **VHA employee only** volunteers **(All inclusion criteria – males/females, white/blue-collar, all work shifts, full/part-time employees, etc.)** to take part in a study of Workplace **Respect/Disrespect in VHA.**

Your participation would involve **1 interview** session: One-on-one, face-to-face approximately
**1 – 1.5 hr. in duration (conducted outside the VHA facility at a time convenient for you).**
**STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY!!!**
**In appreciation for your time, your participation provides:**

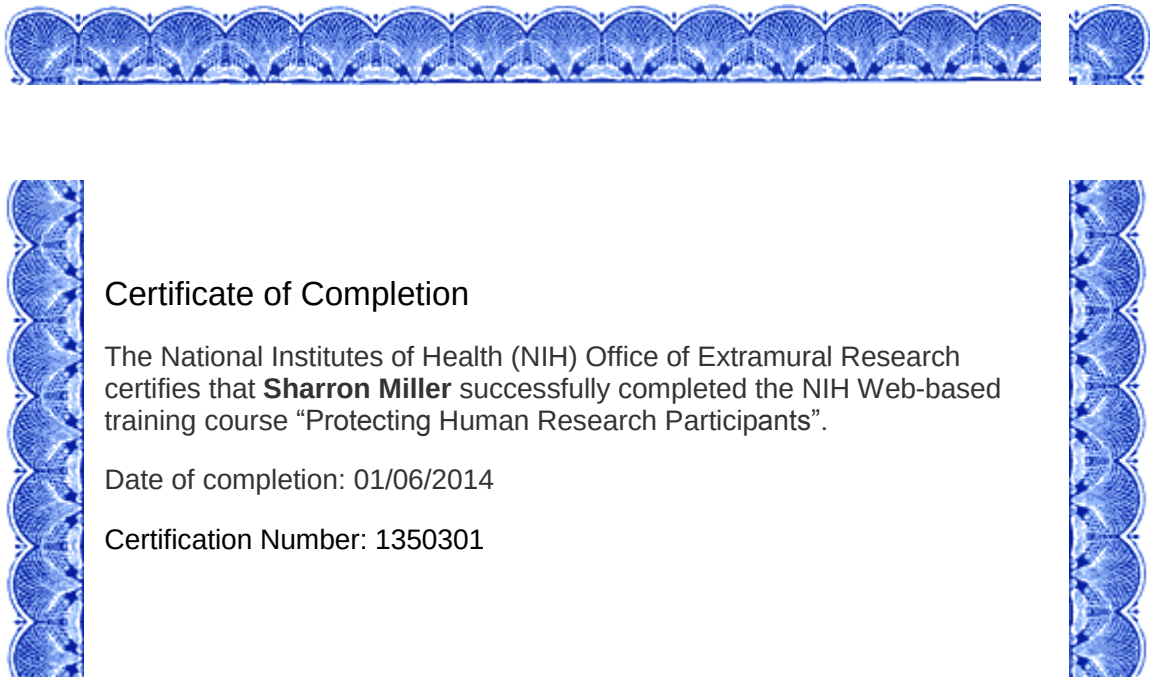
***Vital information.
***You receive satisfaction of contributing to a special field of knowledge.
***Learn more about oneself.
***Take ownership of a subject by explaining it to others.
***Directly influence how effective communication is delivered.

For more information about this study, or to **volunteer** for this study, **please** contact:

Blank Doe, Walden University
(xxx.xxx.xxxx)
Email: Blank.Doe@Waldenu.Edu

**The study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), Walden University.**

Appendix E: National Institute of Health Certificate



Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Sharron Miller** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course “Protecting Human Research Participants”.

Date of completion: 01/06/2014

Certification Number: 1350301