Respect in the workplace: an evaluation of a short online intervention program

Workplace incivility is a growing problem for many organizations. One study reported that 71% of public service employees experienced incivility over the previous five years (Cortina, Magley, & Williams, 2001). In Nova Scotia, it is estimated that approximately 90% of employees have experienced at least a mild form of aggression in their workplace (Francis, Kelloway, Gatien, & Wentzell, 2008). These negative workplace behaviors are a concern not only because they affect employee productivity but also because they affect employee health and the health of the overall organization (Dehue, Bolman, Vollink & Pouwelse, 2012; Hansen, Hogh, & Persson,2011; Lim & Lee, 2011; Porath & Pearson, 2010; Sakurai & Jex, 2012; Tuckey, Dollard, Saebel, & Berry, 2010). Studies show that individuals who are frequently bullied at work have higher levels of depression, stress symptoms, and blood pressure, along with decreased energy, and a decreased sense of wellbeing compared to those who are not bullied (Dehue et al., 2012; Hansen, Hogh, & Persson, 2011; Tuckey et al., 2010).

Despite the wealth of research that clearly demonstrates the negative consequences of incivility, bullying, harassment, and discrimination in the workplace, there is a lack of research on effective strategies to deal with these issues (Leiter, Laschinger, Day & Oore, 2011). For the limited workplace abuse intervention strategies that do exist, there are even fewer studies that evaluate their effectiveness (Leiter et al.,2011). The purpose of this study was to fill this gap in the literature by evaluating an online training program targeted at reducing incivility, bullying, harassment and discrimination in the workplace.

Defining Workplace Abuse

There are a multitude of definitions and constructs related to workplace

abuse. In practice, terms are often defined by legislation (Brough et al., 2009) although conceptually there is considerable overlap in the terms (Herschovis, 2011). Aggression, bullying and incivility are three common related constructs that are predominant in the literature. Workplace aggression is a behavior directed by one or more people in a workplace towards the goal of harming one or more others in that workplace in ways that the intended targets are motivated to avoid, therefore making it an attempted injurious or destructive behavior (Baron & Neuman, 1996; Barclay & Aquino, 2011). There is no consensus on the definition of bullying, however, it is agreed to be a form of workplace abusiveness that can cause harm (Sperry, 2009). One definition of bullying is "the intentional infliction of a hostile environment upon an employee by a coworker or coworkers, typically through a combination of verbal and non-verbal behaviors" (Yamada, p. 480). Bullying is therefore considered an aggressive behavior as there is intent of harm. Workplace incivility, another related construct, is defined by Anderson and Pearson (1999) as "acting rudely or discourteously, without regard for others, in violation of norms for respect in social interactions" (p. 455). Incivility involves low intensity deviant acts whereby there is ambiguous intent of harm (Anderson & Pearson, 1999). Unlike bullying, incivility only sometimes falls under the definition of aggression. That is, incivility can also fall outside of the aggression construct whereby there is no intent of harm (Anderson & Pearson, 1999). This study will use the construct "workplace abuse" to encompass incivility, bullying, aggression, discrimination and harassment. Thus, while considering the whole body of research for all related constructs, we use the term workplace abuse throughout.

Consequences of Workplace Abuse

Workplace abuse can have a direct negative impact on employees' mental and physical health. Specifically, research has connected workplace abuse to greater levels of emotional exhaustion (Grandey, Kern, & Frone, 2007) and psychological distress, reduced emotional and somatic well-being (LeBlanc & Kelloway, 2002), lower levels of psychological well-being, as well as reports of reduced satisfaction with health (Cortina et al., 2001; Martin & Hine, 2005; Tepper, 2000). Further, Hansen, Hogh, and Persson (2011) found that workplace abuse is not only associated with poorer self-reported health, but also manifests in a negative physiological response, as shown by an undesired change in cortisol levels (Hansen, Hogh, and Persson, 2011).

Workplace abuse may also *indirectly* result in negative mental health consequences for employees. For example, Oore et al. (2010) found that incivility can worsen the impact of strain on individuals in the workplace. That is, in a sample of hospital workers, those with high workload and low job control combined with incivility had a stronger connection to lowered mental health compared to those who did not experience the combined effect with incivility. Thus, incivility not only has direct negative consequences on mental health but can also act to exacerbate the negative effects of other workplace variables as well (Oore et al., 2010). Unfortunately, the consequences of workplace abuse also extend beyond the workplace, with individuals who experience workplace abuse

reporting lower life satisfaction overall. Further, workplace abuse not only affects those within an organization, but can spillover to employees' families. That is, workplace abuse can cause relationship issues and problems with work and family conflict (Ferguson, 2012; Tepper, 2000).

Workplace abuse not only negatively impacts the health of employees and their families, but it also has unfortunate consequences for organizations. These consequences can be very costly to an organization due to decreased employee productivity (Porath & Pearson, 2010; Sakurai & Jex, 2012), higher reports of counter productive work behaviors (CWBs) (Sakurai & Jex, 2012), lower normative and affective commitment (LeBlanc & Kelloway, 2000; Reio, 2011; Tepper, 2000; Porath & Pearson, 2010), reduced job or employee satisfaction (Lim & Lee, 2011; Nunez-Smith et al., 2009; Porath & Pearson, 2010; Reio, 2011; Tepper, 2000), and associated higher turnover rates (LeBlanc & Kelloway, 2002; Nunez-Smith et al., 2009; Porath & Pearson, 2010). An interesting study was conducted by Porath and Pearson (2010) that tested the impact of incivility on performance, creativity and helping behavior. They found that those in the uncivilly treated group experienced hindered concentration; they were less able to come up with creative ideas, and were less likely than the civilly treated control group to offer help to others.

Even if employees do not directly experience workplace abuse, even being in an environment where workplace abuse occurs can have detrimental individual and organizational consequences (Porath & Pearson, 2010). That is, working in an uncivil environment has been associated with decreased reports of energy,

motivation, and commitment to the organization. Employees were also less altruistic, courteous, and less likely to act in the best interests of the company. Team members also reported reduced trust, feeling of appreciation or value, were less likely to seek out of accept any form of feedback and were more likely to avoid raising concerns or asking for help (Porath & Pearson, 2010, p. 66).

Less severe forms of workplace abuse can sometimes lead to more damaging occurrences of abuse. That is, according to Andersson and Pearson (1999) incivility, a lower form of abuse, can lead to a spiral that has potential to result in more coercive action. The starting point of incivility is where norms for respect are violated. If neither party departs from the uncivil interaction of behaviors, it has the potential to spiral to a continual exchange of uncivil behavior and feelings of negative affect, loss of face, desire for revenge, anger, etc. At multiple points, either party is inherently faced with the option to depart form the spiral of negative behaviors, however, once past the "tipping point" is reached, the "exchange of incivilities escalates into an exchange of coercive actions" (p. 462). Other factors involved affect the path of the spiral and whether it cycles into coercive action or ceases to spiral on. This raises the need for interventions to inhibit this path and prevent lesser forms of abuse from escalating into more detrimental behaviors.

Employees who experience workplace abuse rarely file a formal complaint with the organization (Cortina & Magley, 2009; Sidle, 2009). Therefore, although an organization may not receive any formal notice from employees, this does not mean that the organization is free from abuse. Cortina and Magley (2009) found

that incivility must persist for weeks to months and employees must appraise the incivility as fairly aversive before they seek support or report to management (p. 285). As reporting of workplace abuse is so low, it is important that organizations do not discount low reports of abuse and assume that their organization is free of concerns. Rather, organizations should examine the situation in more detail and ensure that procedures or training is in place in order to prevent any behaviors that would otherwise go undetected. As discussed, failing to address underling issues can result in negative consequences for organizations and their employees.

Resolving Workplace Abuse

Training or education about workplace abuse may help reduce or prevent its occurrence and the associated negative effects (Porath & Pearson, 2010). Schat and Kelloway (2003) found that instrumental and informational support moderated the select effects of workplace violence. This demonstrates the practical relevance of developing secondary intervention strategies to increase support and information about workplace in order to help buffer the negative consequences of workplace violence (Schat & Kelloway, 2003). Estes and Wang (2008) also argue it is beneficial to train all members of the organization about expectations for civility, effective interpersonal skills, and how to appropriately manage any conflict that does occur; all which should be promoted consistently among organizational leaders, members, stakeholders, and customers. Overall, training employees and managers can help increase their awareness about how to act respectful, and recognize and respond to signals that workplace abuse may be occurring in their organization (Porath & Pearson, 2010).

While these are suggested factors and actions that may reduce the impacts of workplace abuse or lower its occurrence, they are not defined intervention programs that can be generally implemented in organizations. One of the few intervention programs that does exist for addressing workplace abuse is Osatuke, Moore, Ward, Dyrenforth and Belton's (2009) civility, respect and engagement (CREW) process. According to Leiter, Day, Oore, and Laschinger (2012) the objectives of CREW are that "participants become more sensitive to the impact of their social behavior on others," "participants develop effective strategies for responding to incivility and disrespect at work" and that "participants develop a deeper repertoire of supportive interactions with colleagues" (p. 74).

Leiter et al. (2011) evaluated the impact of CREW and found that this 6-month civility intervention did help to reduce incivility in the workplace. This intervention also positively impacted health care workers' reports of burnout, job attitudes, management trust, and absences. In a later study, Leiter et al. (2012) found that positive changes from this civility intervention could be sustained over a one year period. Specifically, when measured one year after intervention, improvements in civility, incivility, workplace distress, and job attitudes were sustained. This is one of the few studies that have evaluated the effectiveness of an incivility intervention. The findings demonstrate that incivility interventions have the potential to create long lasting results.

According to Leiter (2013), "a major shortcoming in the thinking about intervention is the small amount of research that has objectively evaluated

interventions, comparing their impact to what happens in control groups" (p. 53).

Leiter et al. (2011) argue that effective interventions should not only include a

"means of interrupting negative exchanges" but should also actively promote

positive exchanges (p. 1270). It is suggested that improving the impact of

interventions is most likely to occur through "testing procedures, noting their

strengths and weaknesses, and adjusting the processes in subsequent tests. The

field calls out for research projects that take action and closely monitor how events

unfold" (Leiter, 2013, p. 46, for a discussion of intervention best practices see

Biron & Karanika-Murray, 2015). Although CREW is one of the only workplace

abuse intervention strategies that has been evaluated and demonstrated effective, it

is a 6 month intervention and therefore requires an extensive amount of employee

time and commitment. Our study focused on whether positive results could be

obtained from a a short online training intervention. Given that organizations prefer

shorter more concise training, these findings would be of particular interest to

employers.

Respect in the Workplace Program

Respect in the Workplace is a program that was developed in partnership

with Canadian Red Cross and the RespectED organization, a division of the Red

Cross. RespectED's internationally acclaimed curriculum was used to develop this

90 minute interactive program that is available in both French and English. The

Respect Group was responsible in developing the program, with co-founders being

Sheldon Kennedy and Wayne McNeil. While their Respect programs were initially

developed for sports and schools, they have most recently expanded scope and

applicability of respect training for the workplace. The training consists of instructional slides, animated scenarios, expert clips and interactive questions and answers. A sample of some of the program sections include Positive Power in the Workplace, Managing Emotions in the Workplace, Discrimination, Workplace Harassment, Emotional Bullying, Responding, and Reporting and Documentation. There are also links that lead participants to further information as well as handouts available throughout the training for reference material. Participants are able to complete the training at a time that is convenient for them and do not have to complete the whole training in one sitting. The developers of the program state that their mission is to "empower people to recognize and prevent abuse, bullying and harassment through interactive, online certification" and their vision is to "eliminate abuse, bullying and harassment by inspiring a global culture of respect."

Overview of the Present Study

The promoters of Respect in the Workplace argue that the program can increase respect and result in better organizational health, higher morale, less illness and absenteeism, higher attraction and retention of employees, a stronger corporate culture and reputation, as well as increased productivity and profitability. Unlike interventions that require extensive resources, this newly developed respectful workplace program is both time and cost effective. These features make it inherently attractive to organizations, increasing the likelihood that managers and employees will buy into the program. However, the Respect in the Workplace Program has yet to be evaluated or assessed according to its intended outcomes. The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of this intervention..

Hypotheses

Respect in the Workplace introduces the issues of discrimination, bullying, and harassment and informs employees what the terms mean, what is and isn't appropriate behavior, and how to effectively act if these behaviors occur. In this study, it is hypothesized that participation in the Respect in the Workplace training (relative to the control group) will result in…

H1:   *…an increased recognition of incivility*

H2:   *...less experienced incivility*

H3:   *....increased sense of efficacy for employees dealing with incivility*

H4:   *….increased experienced civility*

H5:   *….increased sense of psychological safety*

H6:   *... less perceived stress* and

H7:   *...increased job satisfaction*

Method

Participants

All participants were employed on one of several selected units in a long-term care facility. In total, there were 413 employees who were invited to participate in this project; 243 Nursing Services employees, 72 Dietary employees, 71 Environmental employees, and 27 Leadership Team employees. Of these, 165 participated in Survey 1 resulting in a 40% response rate. One hundred and twenty-eight employees participated in Survey 2 and 117 participated in Survey 3; overall, 102 participated in all three surveys.

The majority of the sample (88%; n= 146) were female with only 12% male (n=19). In total, 24% (n =40) of employees were 30 years or younger, 16% (n=27) were between 31-40, 27% (n=46) were between 41-50, 26% (n=44) were between 51 - 60 years old and 5% (n=8) were over 60 years old. The majority indicated their highest level of education as at least some post-secondary training or education (83%, n=139). Twenty-five respondents (15%) indicated they were in a supervisory role. The majority of participants (79%, n=133) were from Nursing Services

Employees were assigned to experimental or wait-list control groups based on the unit on which they worked. We used a form of matched block assignment in which each work unit/floor assigned to the experimental group was matched by a similar unit/floor that was assigned to the wait-list control group. Employees were split into the two conditions in this way in order to maximize the disconnection between the two groups to minimize spillover of the intervention to the control group. Those who work on different units are separated by floors and generally work only within their unit, decreasing the possibility that those who completed the training would be mixed with those who were in the wait list control group. There were 92 participants in the experimental group who all participated in the training and 73 in the wait-list control group who were offered the training after all three surveys were distributed.

Procedure

As an incentive to participating in the study, the organizations were offered the Respect in the Workplace training at a reduced rate. They were informed that

the Respect in the Workplace training is a potential solution to the issue or potential issue of workplace abuse in their organization. This study received ethical approval from both the university's Research Ethics Board as well as the organization's research committee before commencing. Posters were placed around employee areas to notify them of the upcoming study and to generate interest. Supervisors of chosen work units were informed about the study through information handouts and in a scheduled information meeting. As an incentive to participate, every survey that employees completed entered them into a chance to win 1 of 5 $100 Visa Gift cards, with 2 bonus chances for completing all three surveys.

All participants completed a pre-test (T1) to provide baseline measures on all study variables. Pre-test surveys were offered in both online and paper formats and took approximately 15 minutes to complete. The primary researcher and organizational helpers distributed surveys to the employees' units for ease of completion and clarity. For those units in the experimental group, employees were invited to participate in the online training immediately after they completed Survey 1. The training and online surveys were completed on netbook computers that were provided by the researchers.

Weeks four and five involved no training or surveys. During weeks six and seven, Survey 2 (T2) was distributed via email to those who provided an email address and directly to the units for those who preferred a paper format. Weeks eight and nine involved no training or surveys. Weeks ten and eleven were allocated for Survey 3 (T3), during which surveys were again offered by email or

in paper format. The researcher again was present at the organization during this time to assist with data collection. Online surveys were not offered on the netbooks for T2 and T3 as there were barriers to completion due to the difficulties encountered with use of computers and the paper surveys being the preferred option.

Measures

Internal consistency for scales is reported on the diagonal in Table 1. In addition to theses measures, experimental group participants were also asked questions immediately before and after the online training. These assessed trainees' reaction to the and are used by the training developers to assess participants' experience with workplace abuse and their reaction after the training.

Demographics. Standard demographic questions were used to differentiate participants based on their age, ethnicity, gender, hours of work, education, seniority, whether they are in a supervisory role, their department, work location, and work unit, as well as their job title and primary shift of work.

Civility. Workplace civility was measured using the Veterans' Health Administration Civility Scale (Meterko, Osatuke, Mohr, Warren, & Dyrenforth, 2007; 2008) in order to assess hypothesis 5. The responses for this 8-item scale were rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly agree*). Sample items include "People treat each other with respect in my work group," and "Differences among individuals are respected and valued in my work group."

Workplace Incivility. Workplace incivility was measured using using Cortina et al.'s (2001) 7-item Workplace Incivility Scale. The responses were rated on 7-point Likert

scale ranging from 1 (*Never*) to 7 (*Extremely often, more than 15 times*). The introductory statement "During the past 2 months while employed by *Organization X*, were you ever in a situation where any of your supervisor or coworkers…" was followed by these sample question stems such as "Addressed you in unprofessional terms, either publically or privately?" and "Doubted your judgment on a matter over which you have responsibility?" Two additional items were taken from Cortina et al. (2011) "Yelled, shouted or swore at you" and "Accused you of incompetence".

Stress*.* Stress was measured using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983). This 14-item scale assessed the degree to which situations in one's life are appraised as stressful. Questions were rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Never*) to 7 (*Extremely often, more than 15 times*). Seven items were reverse coded resulting in high scores on this scale indicating higher levels of reported stress. Example items following the preamble "In the past 2 months, how often have you…" include, "felt nervous and stressed?" and "found that you could not cope with all of the things that you had to do?"

Self-Efficacy. Employee's self-efficacy about dealing with incivility was assessed using an altered version of the General Self-Efficacy Scale (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001). Four of the original items were retained and four were revised to reflect the self-efficacy in relation to incivility. The scale response options varied between 1 *(Strongly disagree)* to 7 *(Strongly agree)*. Internal consistency for the original, non-altered scale has previously shown alpha = .86 and .90 (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001). Sample items include: "Compared to other people, I can handle incivility very well" and "I believe I can succeed at most any endeavor to which I

set my mind."

Job Satisfaction. To assess employee satisfaction with their job, one item was asked; "All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job?" (Warr, Cook, & Wall, 1979). As shown in a meta-analysis conducted by Wanous, Reichers, and Hudy (1997), single item measures of job satisfaction have been demonstrated to be robust, and able to capture the construct. Response options ranged from 1 (*Not at all satisfied*) to 6 (*Satisfied*).

Recognition of Incivility. Recognition of workplace abuse was assessed by the item "Are you able to recognize what is considered uncivil / disrespectful behavior in your workplace?" which was created for this study. Response options range from 1 (*Never)* to 5 (*Always*).

Results

Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations of all study variables are presented in Table 1. To examine our hypotheses we ran a mixed 3 (time) X 2 (condition) doubly repeated multivariate analysis of variance. Although the overall multivariate effect was not significant [$F(12,400) = 1.21$, ns), a significant univariate effect for experienced civility was observed [$F(2,204) = 3.00$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .03$). The cell means are shown in Table 2. As shown, experienced civility increased slightly for the experimental group and decreased slightly for the control group.

Post-Hoc Sub-Group Analysis

As part of our collection of reaction criteria (see below), we asked respondents if they had ever engaged in uncivil workplace behaviors. Approximately 58% reported never engaging in such behaviors with the remainder saying that they had been uncivil at least

rarely. It is possible that the effects of the training varied as a result of the extent to which individuals engaged in incivility (we are grateful to an anonymous reviewer for this suggestion). Therefore, we conducted a split sample analysis in which the above analysis was conducted first among respondents who had never been uncivil and then among respondents who had reported engaging in some level of incivility.

For those who reported never engaging in incivility, neither the multivariate [$F(12,32) = 0.92$, ns] nor any of the univariate effects were significant.

For individuals who had reported engaging in at least some incivility, there was a significant multivariate effect, $F (12,220) = 2.0$, $p <.01$ of training. Inspection of the univariate effects suggested significant increases attributable to training in both participants' sense of efficacy [$F(2,114) = 4.60$, $p <.01$, $\eta^2 = .08$] and in participants' perception of civility [$F(2,114) = 5.22$, $p <.01$, $\eta^2 = .08$; see Table 2] in the organization

Reaction Criteria

The Respect in the Workplace training program had two built in surveys for participants; one at the beginning of the training, and another after all the training modules are complete. This is presented only for additional information and is not part of this study's main analyses. Of the 127 employees who participated in the training either as part of the experimental or wait list control group, 85% (n=108) said that discrimination, harassment or bullying has occurred in their workplace. While 65% (n = 83) said they personally witnessed it occur, 43% (n=54) said they heard about it but didn't witness it themselves. Further, 44% (n=56) said it happened to them yet only 6% (n=19) said they regularly engaged in the behaviors themselves. A large majority (91%, n=115) of the employees believed that these

behaviors have a negative effect on the person targeted as well as the work environment (95%, n=121).

Participants completed the post-survey after they completed all of the training modules. Of those that completed the training, 99% (n=115) indicated that they found the training program easy to use and 91% (n=106) reported it was convenient to complete. Similar to the pre-survey, 91% (n=106) indicated that discrimination, harassment or bullying occurred at the organization, with 72% (n=84) indicating they personally witnessed it occur and 43% (n=50) hearing about it but not witnessing it personally. Further, 52% (n=60) indicated it happened to them but only 17% (n=20) said they regularly engaged in the behaviors themselves. The great majority (92%, n=107) believed the behaviors have both a negative effect on the person targeted as well as the work environment (91%, n=106). After taking the training, the majority indicated they feel better equipped to identify and respond properly to discrimination (93%, n=108; 93%, n=108), harassment (92%, n=107; 95%, n=110), and bullying (91%, n=106; 94%, n=109) on the job. Overall, 97% (n=112) of participants rated the program as either very valuable (64%, n=74) or valuable (33%, n=38).

Discussion

In this study, we examined the effects of a short, on-line respect in the workplace training intervention. Results offered some limited support for the intervention suggesting that participants who had been trained (and worked in units where others had been trained) reported experiencing increased civility in the workplace. Subsample analyses refined this observation suggesting that the

program resulted in increased efficacy and civility among those participants who had reported in engaging in incivility themselves.

These results suggest a differential effect of training depending on one's experience in enacting uncivil behaviors in the workplace. An increased sense of efficacy among those who had engaged in incivility may break the "tit-for-tat" exchanges (Anderson & Pearson, 1999) that lead to incivility spirals in organizations. Training also resulted in the perception of more civility at work among employees who had been uncivil – again suggesting that the program may break the incivility spiral.

In all our analyses, the wait-list control group reported higher levels of civility initially than did the intervention group. This may be attributed to the fact that the intervention group units were chosen by the organization partially due to the fact that they were the units that were more likely in need of the training. That is, the organization purposely assigned units to training based on the perception that there was more incivility in those units. Although this may be expected in a natural field setting, it suggests that the effects of the program may have been obscured by a lack of true random assignment.

The results of this study may also be attributed to an increase in awareness from the intervention. That is, employees may have become more cognizant of the organization's commitment to respect, just from having a respect in the workplace training program and associated surveys. Thus, the change in civility may just be due to the fact that the organization did something to focus on respect in the workplace, thus showing the organization's lack of tolerance for disrespect and its

commitment to a respectful environment. Or likewise, employees may be more aware of what it means to be respectful, thus reporting more respect overall in the organization. This is supported by the observation that these effects were particularly strong for those who reported engaging in incivility and may explain why no effect was found for a change in incivility, a more behavioral or frequency based measure of workplace abuse.

According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (U.S. Department of Labor, 2002), the nursing home sector is the second most hazardous sector as reported by employees. With such a difficult environment to work in, turnover rates are also relatively higher with those who work in this caring occupation. Finding ways to increase job satisfaction and respect is especially beneficial for long term care workers. Given that health care workers provide care in a environment that is undeniably demanding and stressful, as found by Oore et al. (2010), focusing on civility at work may a proactive way for health care providers to impact their well-being. Our results suggest that the Respect in the Workplace intervention has this effect in long-term care employees.

Online education and training is becoming increasing more popular as a convenient mechanism for learning. This is especially important in health care where operations cannot be shut down in order to allow for staff training. In the current context, the online training was one of the major benefits of the training as employees were able to complete the training at a time and location that worked best for them. Having access to our research computers while at work, many chose to complete during their shift. Some, however, preferred and completed the training

at their homes.

Online training is especially a beneficial option for working populations that are self sufficient with computers, and work varying shifts, making training timing easier to coordinate. On the opposite side, online training may prove difficult for populations of employees who do not have easy access to the internet or familiarity with computers and on-line programs. However, as demonstrated in this sample, basic computer assistance can help those attending training online to overcome the technical difficulties and reap the associated benefits.

Limitations and Future Research

Although we believe that implementing the intervention in an actual organization offered considerable strength to the study, it also created limitations that may have affected the strength of the manipulation. For example, participants did not always have the opportunity to participate in the training in a quiet environment. Rather, training was completed on the employee's work unit in their staff room or at a table in the unit area. There were many distractions present including residents needing care and staff having conversations. Therefore, the full effect of the training may not have been received due to these distractions that were present when trying to concentrate on the material.

Another concern is that the sample population used in this study had a very low working ability with computers. The researcher and project helpers had to assist employees intensively for the registration process and minor glitches throughout the training from basic computer issues. While there was generally sufficient assistance available for employees, there were more obstacles and

perhaps reduced levels of self efficacy from frustrations with use of the computer. This may have also interfered with employees' ability to get the full value out of the training.

Finally, it was clear that the organization designated units for participation in the study based, to some extent, on experienced incidents within the unit. Thus, the units assigned to the experimental group reported substantially lower levels of civility at pre-test compared to the control group units. This suggests that assignment was not random and that the "problem" units were more likely to be assigned to the experimental group. Furthermore, some departments (e.g. Nursing) participated more in the study than others, which suggests caution when generalizing the results, as individuals working in various roles may have different interests in completing respect in the workplace training, which also likely affected the outcome that was achieved. The developers of Respect in the Workplace recommend that the training be mandatory, and as this training was voluntary, this also subtracts from the training effect that may have otherwise been observed if the training was mandatory.

Future research should continue to evaluate interventions using a strong longitudinal controlled design. While some support for the training was found in this sample of long-term care facility workers, it would be interesting to test the effectiveness of this and other respect intervention programs on various other populations. An interesting future study with a strong design would be to contrast a short in-classroom respect training to an online respect training program to determine the effectiveness over time in comparison to a wait list control group.

This would provide indication as to whether the level of training involvement is a more prominent indicator of the outcomes or whether the content is the main determination of outcomes.

Conclusion

Using a longitudinal wait-list control design, we found partial support of the hypothesized relationships for this short online Respect in the Workplace training. However, given the limitations of intervention research, the conditions of training and assessment were less than optimal, as per the limitations addressed in this study. Therefore, we suggest that the small effect of civility in the current study was actually an underestimate of the capabilities of this training. This study has implications for organizations and future research, demonstrating that there is some promise for short online interventions in targeting workplace abuse, even in less than optimal conditions due to the nature of limitations associated with organization interventions. With the strengths of cost and time effectiveness that short online training programs offer, there should be increasing interest in the expansive array of workplace training options that could be offered through the use of technology.

Acknowledgements

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Table 1. Correlations between Variables

	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Group	--	--									
2. Sex	--	-.084	--								
3. Age	--	-.120	.130	--							
4. Ethnicity	--	.084	.090	.085							
5. Tenure	--	.061	.074	.575**	--						
6. Education	--	-.174*	.009	-.366**	-.094	--					
7. Hours	71.24 (18.25)	-.023	-.165*	.104	.025	-.027	--				
9. Title	--	-.063	-.064	.287**	.068	.355**	-.191*	.075	--		
10. Unit	--	-.177*	-.007	.243**	-.009	.115	.033	.062	-.234**	--	
11. Job Sat T1	5.25 (1.53)	-.057	-.054	.129	.034	.025	.084	.037	.007	-.021	.077
12. Job Sat T2	5.11 (1.66)	-.019	.026	-.001	-.049	-.059	.018	.028	.003	.092	.160
13. Job Sat T3	5.25 (1.62)	.032	.032	-.053	-.064	-.181	.023	.071	.113	-.012	.116
14. Stress T1	3.40 (.78)	-.064	.017	-.028	-.108	.023	.013	.052	-.002	-.170*	-.119
15. Stress T2	3.36 (.73)	.001	-.038	-.056	.100	.069	-.118	-.119	.041	-.099	-.170
16. Stress T3	3.34 (.72)	-.219*	-.128	-.015	-.036	.067	-.090	.007	-.017	-.034	-.076
17. Civility T1	5.02 (.95)	.080	-.148	-.139	.035	-.232**	.279**	.050	.204**	.000	.140
18. Civility T2	5.01 (.90)	.090	-.023	-.044	.077	-.139	.207*	-.040	.116	.001	.061
19. Civility T3	5.04 (.99)	-.044	.176	-.078	.125	-.090	-.007	-.100	.010	.072	.136
20. Incivility T1	1.75 (.86)	.085	.032	-.065	-.069	.017	-.110	.061	.089	.024	-.061
21. Incivility T2	1.69 (.80)	.010	.040	-.091	.056	-.058	.014	.027	-.008	.044	-.107
22. Incivility T3	1.71 (.82)	-.058	-.100	-.017	.051	-.051	.008	-.066	.061	-.015	-.132
23. Efficacy T1	5.69 (.67)	.010	.098	.040	.095	-.046	.058	-.022	.076	.046	-.001
24. Efficacy T2	5.71 (.66)	.013	.138	.035	.008	-.109	-.008	.061	-.131	.099	.171
25. Efficacy T3	5.71 (.64)	.029	.260**	.059	.182*	-.062	.067	.107	-.016	.104	.197*
26. Recog T1	4.38 (.65)	-.058	-.009	-.082	.219**	-.010	.029	-.030	.099	.103	.083
27. Recog T2	4.41 (.76)	.040	.131	-.066	-.033	-.103	.243**	.030	.070	-.159	.007
28. Recog T3	4.65 (.86)	.061	.254**	.015	.147	-.039	-.120	-.012	.120	-.023	.084

* p<.05; ** p<.01 *Notes. N*'s range from 124 to 164 due to occasional missing data. For sex, 1 = male, 2 = female. For Age, 1 = 16 - 20 years, 2 = 21 - 25 years, 3 = 26 - 30 years, 4 = 31-35 years, 5 = 36 - 40 years, 6 = 41 - 45 years, 7 = 46 - 50 years, 8 = 51 - 55 years, 9 = 56 - 60 years, 10 = 61 - 65 years, 11 = 66 + years. For tenure, 1 = Less than 6 months, 2 =6 months - 1 years 3 = 2 - 5 years, 4 = 6 - 10 years, 5 = 11 - 15 years, 6 = 16 - 20 years, 7 = 21 - 25 years, 8 = 26 - 30 years, 9 = 31+ years. Hours of work are based on a two-week period.

Education value increases with higher levels of education. Job satisfaction ranges from 1 = Not at all satisfied to 7 = Very satisfied. Self-Efficacy and Civility ranges from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Stress and Incivility ranges from 1 = Never to 7 = Extremely often (more than 15 times). Recognition ranges from 1 = Never to 5 = Always. Cronbach's alpha values on diagonal.

Table 1. Correlations between Variables

(Continued)

	M (SD)	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
11. Job Sat T1	5.25 (1.53)	--								
12. Job Sat T2	5.11 (1.66)	.419**	--							
13. Job Sat T3	5.25 (1.62)	.447**	.735**							
14. Stress T1	3.40 (.78)	-.098	.054	-.181**	(.765)					
15. Stress T2	3.36 (.73)	-.246**	-.273**	-.361**	.205*	(.755)				
16. Stress T3	3.34 (.72)	-.267**	-.284**	-.212*	.246**	.722**	(.763)			
17. Civility T1	5.02 (.95)	.273**	.292**	.341**	-.169*	-.183*	-.154	(.842)		
18. Civility T2	5.01 (.90)	.351**	.367**	.392**	-.355**	-.390**	-.310**	.647**	(.822)	
19. Civility T3	5.04 (.99)	.160	.226*	.345**	-.205*	-.250**	-.252**	.426**	.523**	(.865)
20. Incivility T1	1.75 (.86)	-.286**	-.338**	-.212*	.266**	.205*	.183	-.388**	-.453**	-.248**
21. Incivility T2	1.69 (.80)	-.201*	-.137	-.099	.172	.330**	.162	-.322**	-.530**	-.218*
22. Incivility T3	1.71 (.82)	-.058	-.216*	-.156	.055	.210*	.034	-.088	-.454**	-.232**
23. Efficacy T1	5.69 (.67)	.258**	.318**	.281**	-.203*	-.279**	-.367**	.149	.296**	.356**
24. Efficacy T2	5.71 (.66)	.273**	.391**	.290**	-.206*	-.413**	-.361**	.212*	.356**	.344*
25. Efficacy T3	5.71 (.64)	.364**	.374**	.428**	-.240*	-.404**	-.297**	.290**	.388**	.278**
26. Recog T1	4.38 (.65)	.166*	.190*	.199*	-.123	-.019	.046	.034	.005	.020
27. Recog T2	4.41 (.76)	.152	.204*	.214*	-.068	-.081	-.138	-.006	.138	.041
28. Recog T3	4.65 (.86)	.017	.087	.094	.050	-.177	.023	.017	.141	.069

* p<.05; ** p<.01

Notes. *N*'s range from 124 to 164 due to occasional missing data. For sex, 1 = male, 2 = female. For Age, 1= 16 - 20 years, 2 = 21 - 25 years, 3 = 26 - 30 years, 4 = 31-35 years, 5 = 36 - 40 years, 6 = 41 - 45 years, 7 =46 - 50 years, 8 = 51 - 55 years, 9 = 56 - 60 years, 10 = 61 - 65 years, 11 = 66 + years. For tenure, 1 = Less than 6 months, 2 = 6 months - 1 years 3 = 2 - 5 years, 4 = 6 - 10 years, 5 = 11 - 15 years, 6 = 16 - 20 years, 7= 21 - 25 years, 8 = 26 - 30 years, 9 = 31+ years. Hours of work are based on a two-week period. Education value increases with higher levels of education. Job satisfaction ranges from 1 = Not at all satisfied to 7 = Very satisfied. Self-Efficacy and Civility ranges from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Stress and Incivility ranges from 1 = Never to 7 = Extremely often (more than 15 times). Recognition ranges from 1 = Never to 5 = Always. Cronbach's alpha values on diagonal.

Table 1. Correlations between Variables (Continued)

	M (SD)	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
20. Incivility T1	1.75 (.86)	(.904)								
21. Incivility T2	1.69 (.80)	.611**	(.916)							
22. Incivility T3	1.71 (.82)	.626**	.608**	(.912)						
23. Efficacy T1	5.69 (.67)	-.174	-.180*	-.180*	(.818)					
24. Efficacy T2	5.71 (.66)	-.193*	-.189*	-.189*	.734**	(.778)				
25. Efficacy T3	5.71 (.64)	-.100	-.135	-.135	.641**	.653**	(.833)			
26. Recog T1	4.38 (.65)	-.139	-.058	-.058	-.078	.120	.122	--		
27. Recog T2	4.41 (.76)	-.001	-.035	-.035	.102	.171	.246*	.278**	--	
28. Recog T3	4.65 (.86)	-.042	-.133	-.133	.252*	.228*	.348**	.332**	.181	--

* p<.05; ** p<.01

Notes. *N*'s range from 124 to 164 due to occasional missing data. For sex, 1 = male, 2 = female. For Age, 1= 16 - 20 years, 2 = 21 - 25 years, 3 = 26 - 30 years, 4 = 31-35 years, 5 = 36 - 40 years, 6 = 41 - 45 years, 7 = 46 - 50 years, 8 = 51 - 55 years, 9 = 56 - 60 years, 10 = 61 - 65 years, 11 = 66 + years. For tenure, 1 = Less than 6 months, 2 = 6 months - 1 years 3 = 2 - 5 years, 4 = 6 - 10 years, 5 = 11 - 15 years, 6 = 16 - 20 years, 7 = 21 - 25 years, 8 = 26 - 30 years, 9 = 31+ years. Hours of work are based on a two-week period. Education value increases with higher levels of education. Job satisfaction ranges from 1 = Not at all satisfied to 7 = Very satisfied. Self-Efficacy and Civility ranges from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Stress and Incivility ranges from 1 = Never to 7 = Extremely often (more than 15 times). Recognition ranges from 1 = Never to 5 = Always. Cronbach's alpha values on diagonal.

Table 2

Means for significant univariate effects

Full Sample Analysis	T1	T2	T3
Civility			
Experimental	4.93	4.81	5.05
Control	5.23	5.17	4.96
Subsample 2 (Sometimes Uncivil)			
Efficacy			
Experimental	5.49	5.65	5.62
Control	5.85	5.64	5.72
Civility			
Experimental	4.81	4.62	5.12
Control	4.93	5.01	4.83