Civility Builds Excellence
Key points, discussion questions and takeaway tasks for each section

INCIVILITY

Discussion questions

Reflect on a time you witnessed or experienced incivility at work. How did it affect your emotions and your ability to perform?

What leadership behaviours from your experience have either encouraged or discouraged open communication in the workplace?

Why do you think power tends to increase the likelihood of uncivil behaviour, and how can leaders guard against it?

Takeaway task

Takeaway Task: "The Civility Awareness Journal"

Assignment: For the next 5 workdays, keep a brief journal noting:

Any moments of incivility you observe or experience (even subtle ones like interruptions or eye-rolling).

How it made you or others feel in the moment.

Any performance or mood impacts you noticed (yours or others').

One intentional civil action you took or witnessed (e.g., active listening, asking before giving feedback).

Goal: Build awareness of both the subtle and overt ways behaviour shapes workplace culture and learn to shift your own influence toward positive engagement.

PERCEPTION VS. REALITY

Discussion questions

1. Can you recall a time when your perception of a situation turned out to be very different from someone else's?
   What influenced your perspective, and how did it affect the outcome or your relationship with the other person?
2. Which of your own filters (e.g., upbringing, culture, emotional state) do you think most strongly shapes how you perceive the world?
   How might this influence how you interpret situations at work?

3. How can you apply the idea of 'stepping into someone else's world' in your communication or leadership style?
    What practical steps could you take to understand others' perspectives more effectively?

Takeaway Task: "The Perception Filter Reflection"

Assignment:
Over the next 3 days, choose one interaction per day (personal or professional) and reflect on the following:
- What was your initial perception of the situation or person?
- What filters (e.g., assumptions, stress, past experience) may have shaped that perception?
- How might someone else have seen the same situation differently?
- What would you do differently next time to better understand their point of view?

Goal:
To develop awareness of how your internal filters influence your perception—and to practice perspective-taking for more effective communication.

BELIEF SYSTEMS

Discussion questions

- Which beliefs do you hold that might be limiting your growth or potential—personally or professionally? Where might they have come from?
  (e.g., early experiences, family influence, past feedback)
- Have you ever experienced a moment or piece of feedback that permanently changed how you saw yourself or others? What made it so impactful?
- What are some practical ways you can give yourself or others constructive feedback that supports positive belief change?

Takeaway task

Create a Personal Belief Audit:
1. Identify one area in your life where you're not getting the results you want.
    (e.g., career progression, relationships, health)
2. Reflect and write down:
    o What do I believe about this area?
    o What values do these beliefs reinforce?
    o How do these beliefs influence my behaviour?
    o What results have I been getting?
3. Challenge the belief:
    o Ask: *What if the opposite were true?*
    o Gather feedback (from yourself or others) that might support a new belief.
4. Commit to a new behaviour for one week based on an empowering belief—and track the result in a short daily learning log.

COMPLEXITY

Discussion questions

- Where in your work do you face complicated vs. complex challenges—and how do you currently respond to each?
- How does your organization encourage (or hinder) psychological safety and open information sharing?
- What assumptions do you hold about others' intentions or goals that might limit your ability to collaborate effectively?

Takeaway task

Reflect on a recent complex problem.
- Identify who was "around the pool" and who wasn't.
- Ask yourself: Did everyone feel able to share? Why or why not?
- What's one thing you could do this week to foster more inclusivity, civility, and team mastery in a live project or team setting?

WHAT'S YOUR THEME TUNE?

Discussion questions

- Have you ever experienced a situation where your words were misunderstood? How did you handle it?
- How can awareness of your "theme tune" or reputation improve your daily interactions at work or in personal life?
- What strategies can be used to reduce miscommunication, especially in written forms like emails?

Takeaway task

Reflect and Act:

Take a moment to identify your current "theme tune" — what do colleagues or friends typically "hear" or perceive when you enter a room or send a message? Write down one change you can make in your communication style (spoken or written) to better align your reputation with how you want to be perceived. Then, over the next week, consciously apply that change and observe any differences in how people respond to you.

ORGANISATIONAL BENEFITS

Discussion questions

- How can organisations actively foster civility to improve employee engagement and retention?
- What role does management trust play in the success of organizational change initiatives?
- How might reducing workplace incivility lead to measurable cost savings beyond those mentioned in the research?

Takeaway task

Organisational Reflection:

Identify one aspect of civility that could be improved within your organisation or team. Develop a simple action plan to enhance this area—for example, improving communication, recognising positive behaviour, or addressing conflicts respectfully. Over the next month, implement this plan and observe any changes in team morale, trust, or productivity.

Structured Feedback

Discussion questions

- What stops you from giving feedback?
- Who do you need to give feedback to, and who *should* you give feedback to?
- How might giving and receiving feedback improve performance?

Takeaway task

Structured feedback:

Identify opportunities to give feedback on all aspects of stakeholder behaviour

Use the structured feedback approach to give someone feedback on the positive effects of their behaviour. Review how that went. How did it feel? How did they respond? What was the outcome?

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