![HEALTHY WORKFORCE INSTITUTE®]

What our Research Reveals About
Healthcare Leaders' Ability to Address Bullying and Incivility in the Workplace

2021 **Disruptive Behavior Research Report**

While most healthcare leaders deal with disruptive behaviors daily and understand the angst this causes them and their teams, many are unaware of the tremendous impact to patient safety, the patient experience, team performance, and the bottom line. Numerous studies show the deleterious effects disruptive behaviors have on employee morale, turnover and a high rate of medical error and adverse patient outcomes (The Joint Commission, 2008, 2016).

Additionally...

- Healthcare organizations spend between $30,000 and $100,000 per year for every employee who experiences workplace violence in the form of bullying and incivility (P. Lewis & Malecha, 2011, p. 41).

- A related study showed that for each percentage point increase in nurse turnover annually, costs the healthcare system $373,200 (NSI Nursing Solutions, 2016, p. 1).

- In a study in 102 hospitals with 4,530 participants, 67% agreed that intimidating behaviors were linked with adverse effects including 27% stating this resulted in patient death (Rosenstein & O'Daniel, 2008).

The evidence is clear. When bullying and incivility go unaddressed in healthcare, bad things happen to patients and employees.

Therefore, healthcare organizations have an ethical responsibility to their patients and a financial responsibility to their organization to do something about bullying and incivility.

The questions are…

Who is responsible?
Front line leaders are ultimately responsible for addressing bullying and incivility in their departments. Unfortunately, they do not always understand how to deal with the incivility and bullying of their employees, especially the employees who are so clinically competent. Therefore, they often do what's comfortable – they do nothing. As a result, they are hemorrhaging great employees, losing valuable time and financial resources, and harming the very patients they're serving.

Healthcare organizations can no longer afford to use silence as a strategy.

What do you do?
You equip your front line leaders with the skills, tools, and support they need to address disruptive behaviors and hold their employees accountable for professional conduct.

Where do you start?
You start by giving your leaders the essential skills they need to eradicate bullying and incivility in their departments.

Introducing,
Eradicating Bullying & Incivility:
Essential Skills for Healthcare Leaders

To equip leaders, the Healthy Workforce Institute (HWI) developed an online virtual learning program designed to equip front line leaders with the skills and tools they need to set behavioral expectations and hold their employees accountable for professional conduct.

What leaders learn

Leaders begin the course by taking a baseline assessment based on five critical categories. This information helps leaders determine their current understanding of disruptive behaviors and the degree to which they are incorporating healthy workforce best practices into their department culture. The baseline also helps assess effectiveness from pre- to post-baseline.

Each of the five modules included in the course contain interactive audio-visual lessons, action guides, and resources. Leaders engage in monthly live Q & A calls with other leaders from across the country, receive personalized coaching from Dr. Renee Thompson, CEO and Founder of the Healthy Workforce Institute, and receive ongoing resources with practical tips they can use immediately to begin making positive changes!

A Deeper Dive into the Course Content

MODULE 1 Getting Clear on Bullying Behavior

Leaders get clear on what bullying is and what it's not. They discover why bullying and incivility are so prevalent in healthcare even though we have numerous studies showing the negative impact when disruptive behaviors are ignored.

MODULE 2 Recognizing Disruptive Behaviors

In module 2, we "un-normalize" deviant behaviors by looking at how these show up in healthcare. With this knowledge, leaders can quickly intervene and address any incidents of bullying and incivility.

MODULE 3 Setting Behavioral Expectations

Leaders do a good job setting performance expectations but fail to set behavioral expectations. In this module, leaders learn how to clearly set behavioral expectations WITH their teams in a way that takes the focus from "what the boss says" to "what we all say."


MODULE 4 Confronting Disruptive Behaviors

One of the reasons leaders aren't addressing disruptive behaviors is because they don't know how. In module 4, they learn practical, simple techniques to confront bullying and incivility in their departments (even the employees who are so clinically competent but destructive!).

MODULE 5 Holding Employees Accountable

And finally, it's one thing to confront disruptive behaviors and set behavioral expectations, but it's another to actually hold employees accountable for professional conduct. In this powerful module, leaders build strong partnerships with their HR partners and learn how to hold everyone accountable.

To wrap up the program, leaders will retake the Healthy Workforce Assessment and compare their new score with the preassessment results, receive a certificate of completion, along with five contact hours.
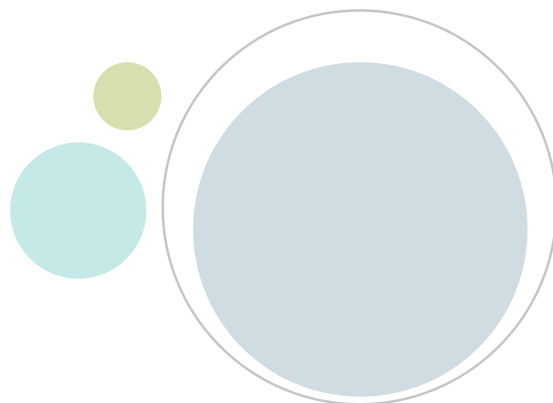
And the results are in!

Quantitative Findings

In the pre- and post-assessments, leaders answer four questions per each of the five content categories (total of 20 questions with a maximum of 200 points).

Of the **430 leaders who enrolled in the course** and completed both the pre- and post-tests, **results showed marked improvement** in all critical categories.

The following represents select key questions that reflect the leader's ability to recognize and address disruptive behaviors, set clear behavioral expectations, and hold their employees accountable for professional conduct.

The following charts reflect Category (C) and Question (Q) Data.

C1-Q4: I feel confident in my ability to recognize and address bullying in my department.
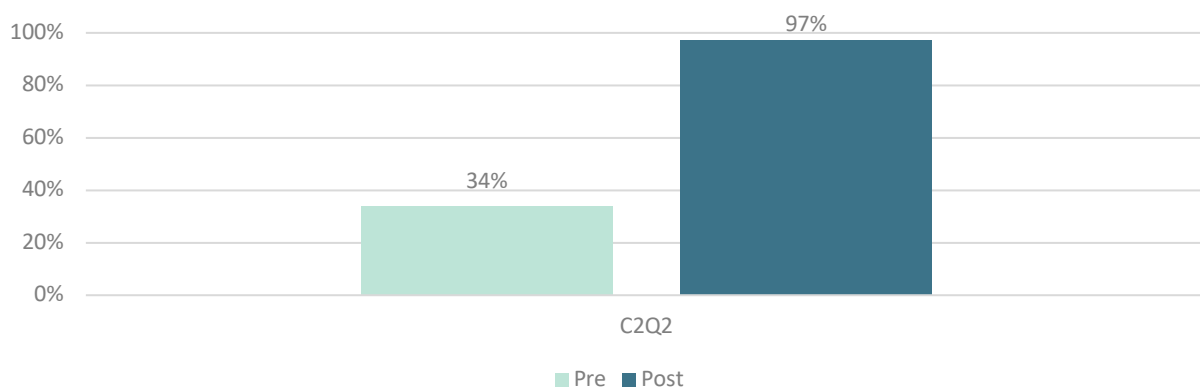   **Pre –** 27% said they were doing really well or had totally mastered this.
   Post – 93% said they were doing well or had totally mastered this.
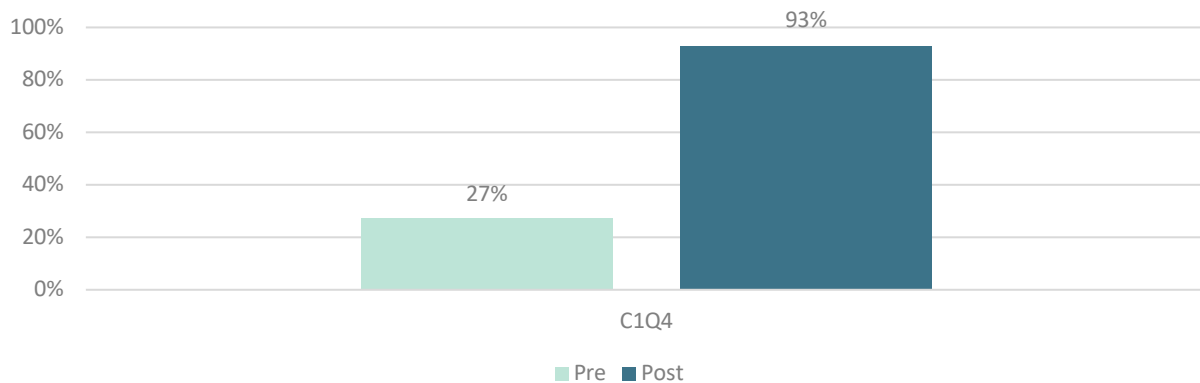
C2-Q2: I know the difference between bullying, hazing, harassment, and discrimination.
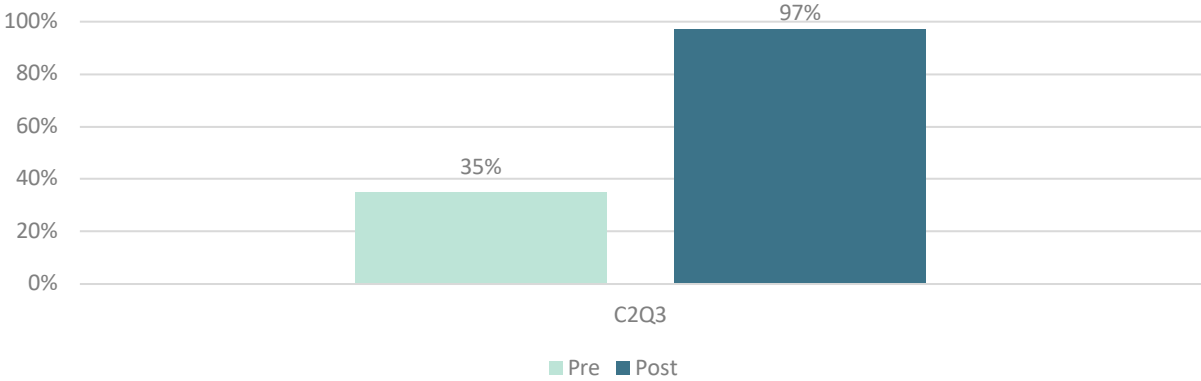   **Pre –** 34% said they were doing really well or had totally mastered this.
   Post – 97% said they were doing well or had totally mastered this.

C2-Q3: I know which employees are at high risk for becoming targets of bullying.
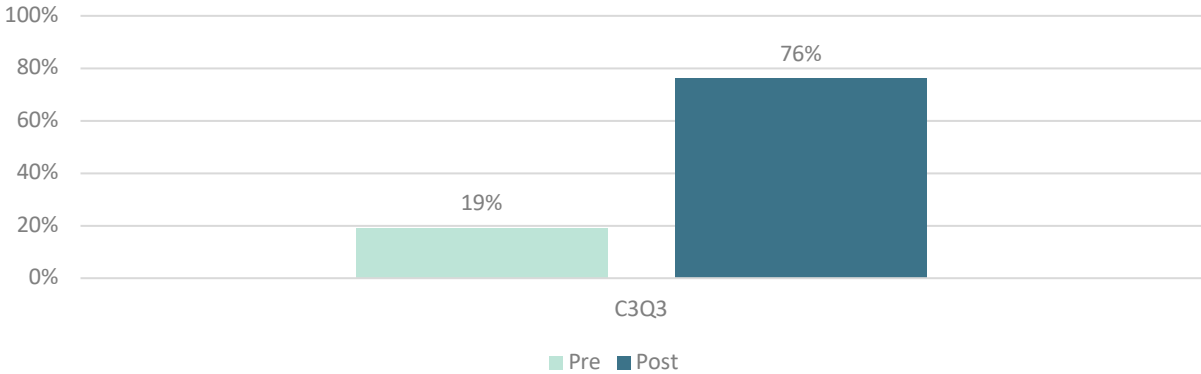 **Pre –** 35% said they were doing really well or had totally mastered this.
  Post – 97% said they were doing well or had totally mastered this.

C3-Q3: I have a step-by-step process that enables me to set behavioral expectations with my employees.
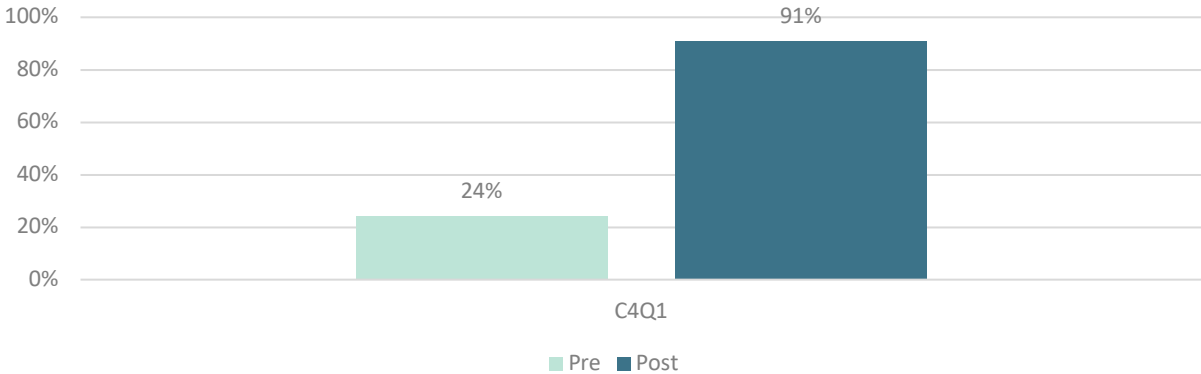 **Pre –** 19% said they were doing really well or had totally mastered this.
  Post – 76% said they were doing well or had totally mastered this.

C4-Q1: When my employees tell me that they are being bullied, I know exactly how to respond.
  Pre – 24% said they were doing really well or had totally mastered this.
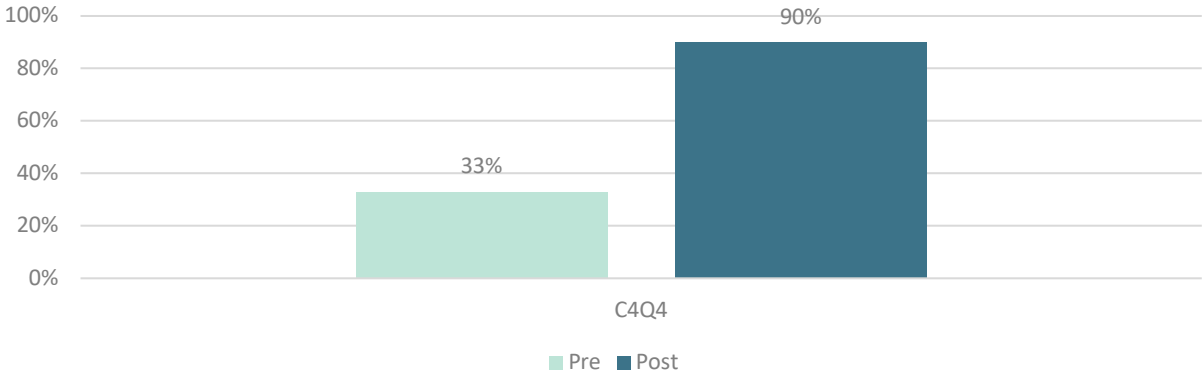 **Post –** 91% said they were doing well or had totally mastered this.

C4-Q4: I am confident in my ability to confront disruptive behavior with my employees.

Pre – 33% said they were doing really well or had totally mastered this.
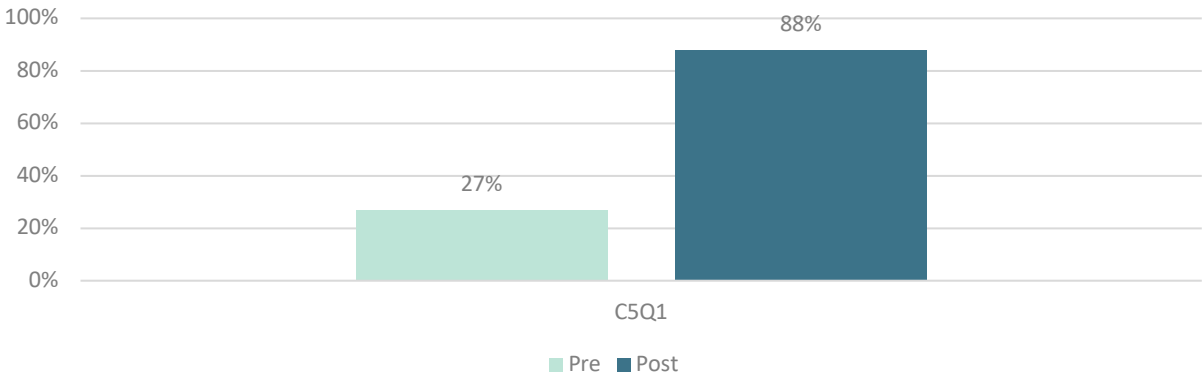**Post –** 90% said they were doing well or had totally mastered this.

C5-Q1: I have a process for addressing complaints of workplace bullying & incivility.

Pre – 27% said they were doing really well or had totally mastered this.
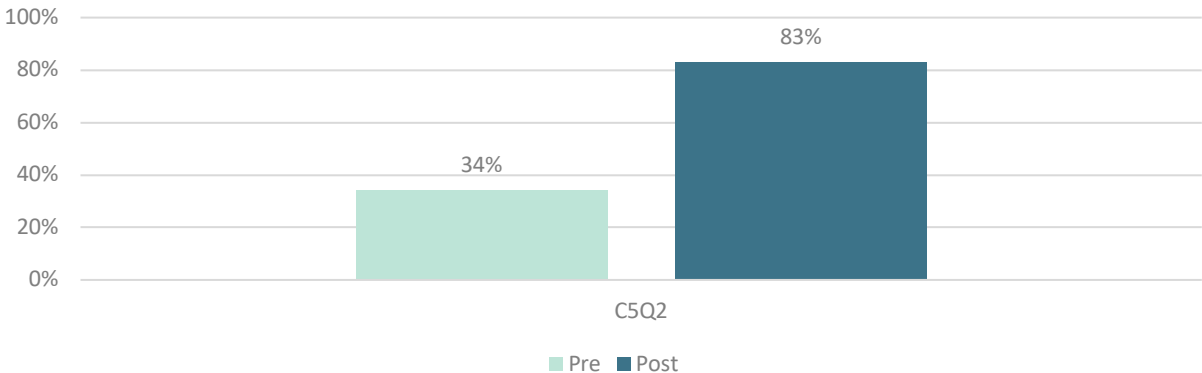**Post –** 88% said they were doing well or had totally mastered this.

C5-Q2: I feel supported by my Human Resources Department when I want to hold my employees accountable for unprofessional behavior.

Pre – 34% said they were doing really well or had totally mastered this.
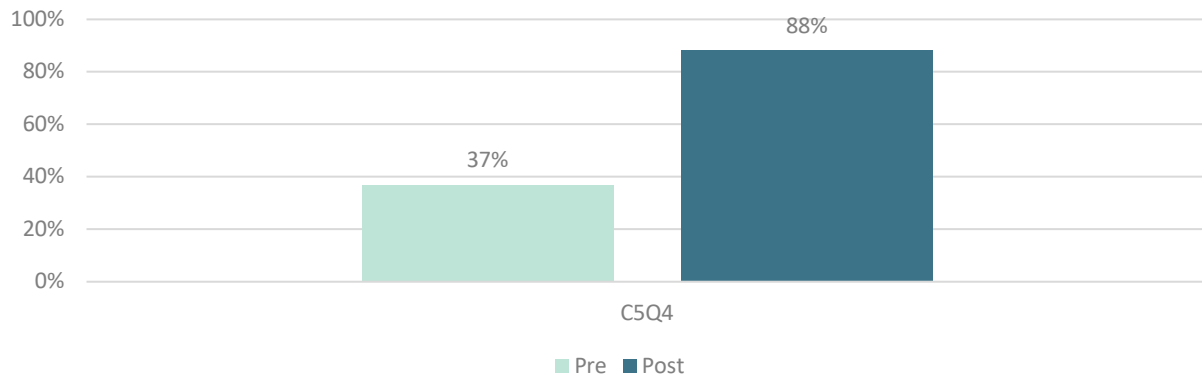**Post –** 83% said they were doing well or had totally mastered this.

C5-Q4: I feel confident in my ability to hold my employees accountable for professional behavior.
Pre – 37% said they were doing really well or had totally mastered this.
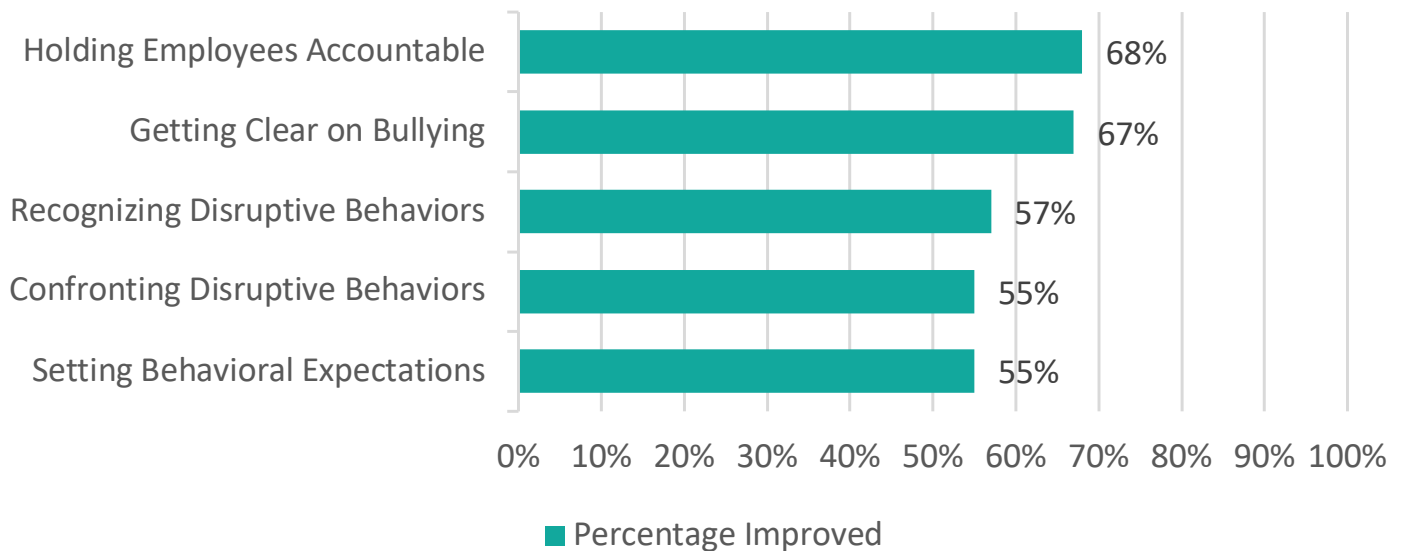**Post –** 88% said they were doing well or had totally mastered this.

Pre ◼ Post

Overall, leaders who completed the course experienced a

62%

improvement

Of the five content categories included in the course, leaders experienced the following **improvements**:

Category	Percentage Improved
Holding Employees Accountable	68%
Getting Clear on Bullying	67%
Recognizing Disruptive Behaviors	57%
Confronting Disruptive Behaviors	55%
Setting Behavioral Expectations	55%

◼ Percentage Improved

What's interesting is that the hard data tell us that leaders are not equipped with the skills and tools they need to recognize and confront disruptive behaviors, set clear expectations for professional conduct, and hold employees accountable.

What we heard from the leaders

Overall, the leaders identified the scripting tools, confronting techniques, and strategies to set behavioral expectations as their greatest wins.

Phrases taught such as, "Can I count on you…" or, "I haven't witnessed this myself, but I believe it to be true" were commonly cited as incredibly helpful.

One leader wrote, "I am **not scared to address it now**. I no longer just sweep it under the rug."

"This course has taught me to critically look at behaviors and not just rationalize, 'oh that's just _____.'"

Conclusion

Results clearly demonstrated that by heightening awareness of behaviors that undermine a culture of safety, equipping leaders with the skills needed to set behavioral expectations and hold employees accountable, leaders created and sustain a healthy, professional, and respectful workforce culture. These beneficial actions resulted in retention of staff, improved patient outcomes, and healthier bottom lines.

Best of all, there are tangible improvements in staff interactions.

Contact us at **WeCare@HealthyWorkforceInstitute.com** to find out how you can gift this program to your frontline leaders.

When leaders are equipped to address disruptive behaviors, the good employees stay, patients achieve better outcomes, and resources are preserved.

REFERENCES

The Joint Commission (TJC). (2008, July 9). Behaviors that undermine a culture of safety. *Sentinel Event Alert*, 40.
http://www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/18/SEA_40.PDF

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Lewis, P. S., Malecha, A. (2011). The impact of workplace incivility on the work environment, manager skill, and productivity. *Journal of Nursing Administration*; 41(1):41–47.

NSI Nursing Solutions. (2016). 2016 National healthcare retention and RN staffing report. Author.
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To learn about this course and others in our Healthy Workforce Academy, go to **HealthyWorkforceAcademy.com**

Listen to what graduates of **Healthy Workforce Institute's** EBI course have to say.

"Before I knew about the Healthy work force curriculum, having honest, hard conversations about behavior was difficult for me. I have gained knowledge and practical applications on how to address behavior head on. Renee and her team lay out great resources and processes for it to be addressed. Thank You!"

- Lesley Burns, MSN, RN,
Emergency Department
Baylor Scott & White - Temple
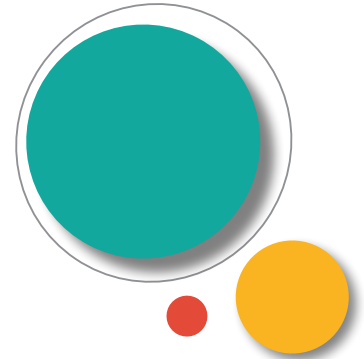
She's a good nurse, but.... " We have all said it at some point in our career. This course quickly shows us how detrimental that statement is to develop a culture of kindness, integrity, and respect. Concise doses of wisdom and practical tools to help to eradicate bullying and incivility is just what this course delivers! I highly recommend"

- Terry Hayes, MSN, RN, CPNP,
Director of Perioperative Services
Texas Health Arlington Memorial Hospital

"The Eradicating Bullying & Incivility course provides solutions to the real-world problems we face when leading teams of healthcare professionals. Understanding the differences in incivility, a bad day, and true bully behavior allows us as leaders to better utilize tools and resources to address issues head on and help keep our teams on the path to excellence."

- Trenton Vaughan, BSN, RN, NE-BC,
Nursing Director,
Baylor Scott & White- Round Rock

Contact us today at
WeCare@HealthyWorkforceInstitute.com
to find out how you can enroll your leaders

HealthyWorkforceInstitute.com

"The EBI course provided a framework for how to talk to employees as well as counseling that was so very helpful. By taking this course it gave me the ability to assist staff in creating credo's for each of my units. So very helpful for new hires coming into our unit!"

- Amy Bucciarelli, BSN, RN, OCN
Director
Moffitt Cancer Center

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