No Accident: Psychological Safety and Civility in a South-West Maternity Unit

Crossingham G*, Bashaeb M, Gray E, Sabah N, Shearing, T, Orim, I, Wegbe L. *Dept of Anaesthesia, University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust. University of Plymouth Medical School, Plymouth, UK. Contact: gemmacrossingham@nhs.net

Introduction

In 2020, a Health Safety Investigation Branch national maternity report concluded that "the CQC, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, should assess relational aspects of its regulation of maternity units". [1] Psychological safety (PS) is the belief that one will not be penalised or humiliated for sharing ideas or mistakes. Similarly, the 'Civility Saves Lives campaign has highlighted the importance of respect and professional courtesy and has been adopted by the RCOG and the RCM.

This medical student-led project aimed to assess the level of civility and PS within our maternity unit and subsequently, co-create interventions to improve both elements using quality improvement methodology.

Methods:

- A literature review of psychological safety and civility measurement articles was conducted to identify relevant questions for a 15-question department-wide survey.
- The questions were short-listed by iterative discussion amongst the authors.
- A mixture of open & closed questions about negative and positive experiences were included to achieve a balanced view.
- Questionnaires were distributed to all maternity staff via email, roaming iPad and QR code displayed on posters.
- Quality improvement methodology (serial PDSA cycles) were used to test interventions to allow timely refinement of potential interventions.

Initial Results

79 staff responded to the survey:

- 96% felt PS was extremely important to the safe functioning of the unit and 89% considered their colleagues as friends
- Only 16% rated themselves as 5 or less on a scale of 1 to 10, rating their confidence in raising a concern

However :

- 46 % experienced one or more incidents of incivility in the last month, with 49% being unable to address this
- 28% felt other staff members undermined their efforts

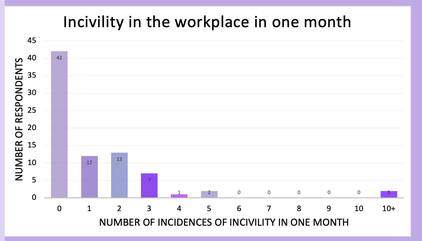


Figure 1: Bar chart showing the number of incidents of incivility in one month in Derriford Maternity Unit

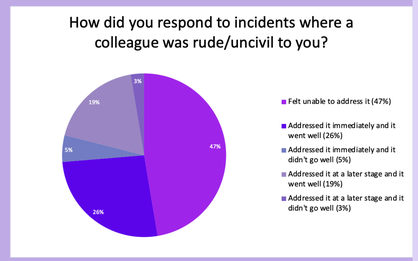


Figure 2: Pie chart showing how staff members responded to incidents of incivility in Derriford Maternity Unit

Interventions:

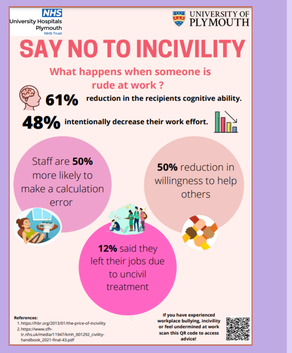
The RCOG *Workplace Behaviour Toolkit* was adapted into poster format. These posters directed staff to further resources via a QR code. Posters describing the impact of incivility and suggestions for how to grow civility in the workplace.

Stories of positive staff experiences of psychological safety and civility were shared as posters and at the monthly PROMPT courses. These were taken from the well-established Learning from Excellence scheme at the Trust

Examples of Interventions





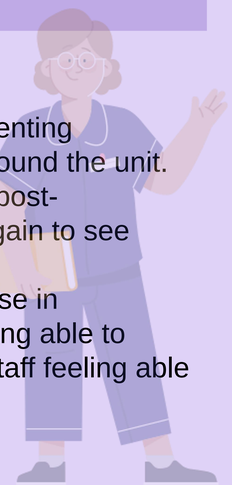






Results Post Intervention

- This project is currently in the stage of implementing the intervention through placing the posters around the unit.
- Following this stage, results will be measured post-intervention, by distributing the initial survey again to see if results have changed.
- Post intervention results aim to show a decrease in incidences of incivility, an increase in staff feeling able to address forms of incivility and an increase in staff feeling able to raise concerns.



References
[1] Delays to intrapartum intervention once foetal compromise is suspected HSIB, November 2020. https://www.hsib.org.uk/investigations-and-reports/delays-to-intrapartum-intervention-once-fetal-compromise-is-suspected/. Accessed Jan 2022.
[2] Workplace Behaviour Toolkit, RCOG. https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/careers-training/workplace-workforce-issues/workplace-behaviour/toolkit/. Accessed Jan 2022.