Civility Saves Lives
Re-auditing the Embrace transport service

Dr Bethan Dean[1], Dr Alexander Tattersall[2], Jess Medlam[1], Dr Mark Winton[1]

1 Embrace Yorkshire & Humber Infant & Children's Transport Service, 2 Airedale NHS Foundation Trust, Email: bethandean@nhs.net

Recognising the impact of incivility is the first step to positive change.

Civility Saves Lives is an international movement to improve communication for the benefit of patient care.

Incivility creates barriers to communication, reduces team performance and affects patient safety.

Methods

Initial audit period March to August 2023 and second from July 2024 to March 2025

Staff reported episodes of incivility on a proforma. We reviewed recorded telephone line data from reported episodes.

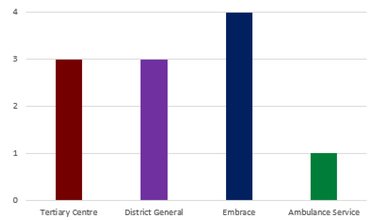
In the repeat cycle random snapshot data was also recorded from referral conference calls and team handovers using a proforma.

Pertinent recorded line data was transcribed and a thematic analysis performed.

Results

Episodes of incivility occurred across staff groups and clinical areas

Care areas involved in incivility



Job role of perpetrator (outer circle) and recipient (inner circle) of uncivil behaviour

Thematic analysis of transcripts

Performed by 3 individuals, 2 internal, 1 external to Embrace

Behavioural themes

1. Obstructive
2. Passive aggressiveness
3. Undermining
4. Fixation/repetitiveness
5. Learned behaviours

Contextual themes

1. System failures
2. High acuity
3. High complexity

→ Individuals with high cognitive load

Role of bystanders

An increasingly active role of bystanders was seen compared to the previous audit cycle

Patient safety aspects

Near miss in a case subsequently diagnosed as Hirschsprungs

Potential – delay in starting inotropes in DGH

Operational changes

5 second civility prompt played on the recorded referral line to anyone prior to them being placed in the call. Becoming human in 2026!

"Civility saves lives, please be courteous in your communication"

Operational changes

House rules.

Posters in clinical areas as visual reminders and facilitate bystander prompting should uncivil behaviours occur (in draft).

On-going reporting

Reporting of episodes of incivility will continue & has moved to an online reporting system, with follow-up via clinical leadership.

Empowering the team

Working to empower the potential recipients and bystanders by:

Conflict resolution training for the transport Consultants, particularly de-escalation methods.

Creating a civility webpage with resources for the wider MDT.

Awareness of, and confidence in reporting, incivility is increasing.

Providing resources and training for confronting incivility for recipients and bystanders allows us to continue to hold colleagues to account if communication becomes un civil.