Management Best Practices to Guard Against Workplace Bullying and Incivility
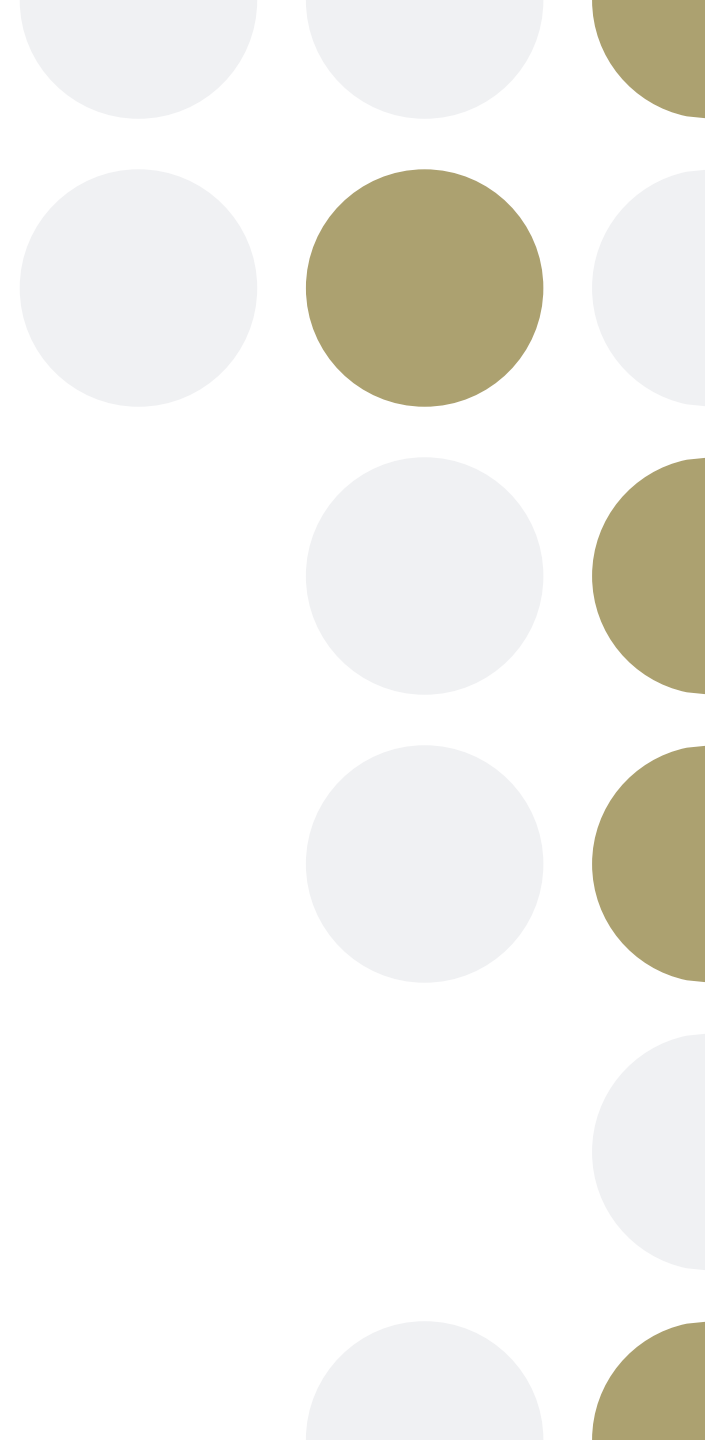
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Self-assessment

1=strongly disagree   5=strongly agree

- My workplace values differing opinions.
- My workplace encourages openness and honesty.
- My manager engages in empathetic listening.
- I feel like I can be myself at work.

What is Workplace Incivility?

- "Low-intensity conduct that lacks a clear intent to harm but nevertheless violates social norms and injures targeted employees" (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001; Cortina, 2008)

- Form of *employee deviance* (Robinson & Bennett, 1995), which, in turn, represents a subset of *antisocial employee behavior* (Giacolone & Greenberg, 1997)
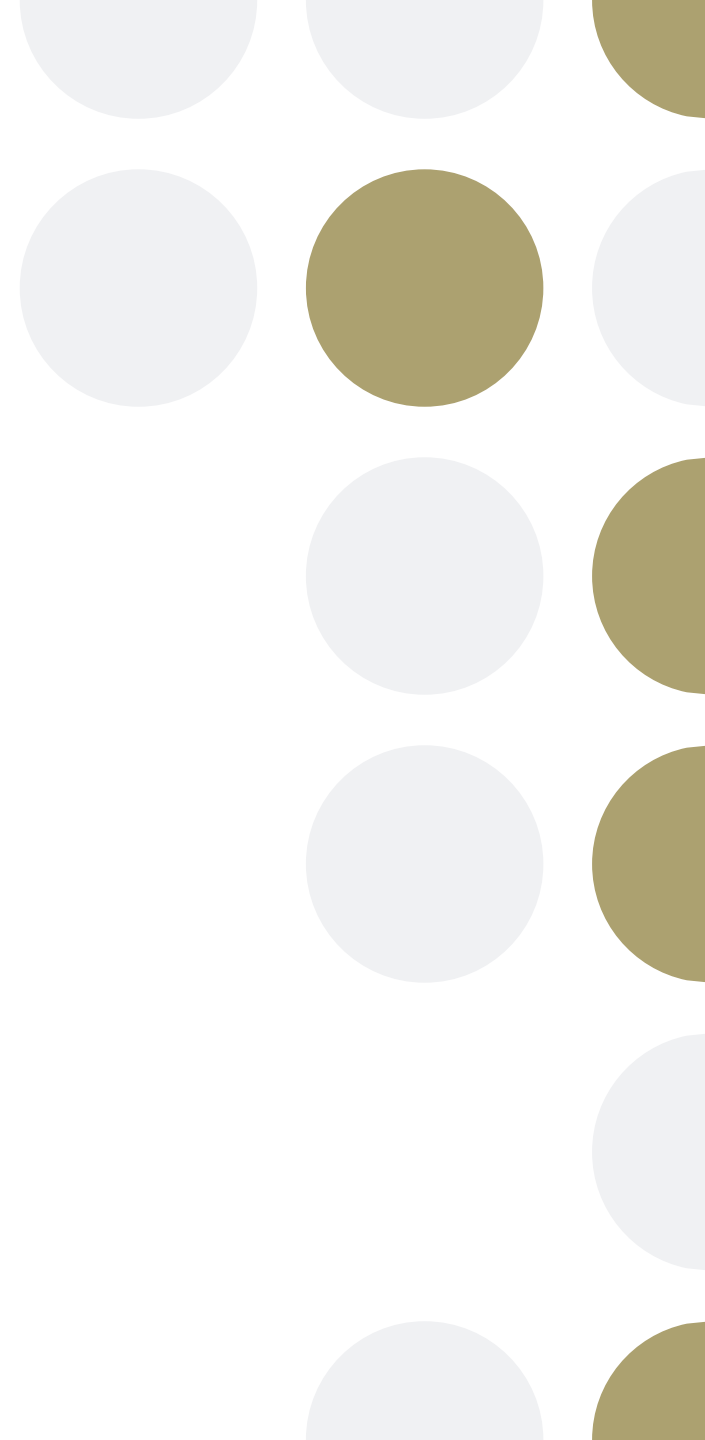
What is Workplace Incivility?

- Often attributed to other factors, such as the instigator's ignorance, oversight, or personality; intent, whether present or not, is ambiguous to one or more of the parties involved (Andersson & Pearson,1999; Pearson, Andersson, & Wegner, 2001)

  - Behaviors are often categorized as trivial, rude, or just discourteous (Pearson et al., 2000, Andersson & Pearson, 1999).
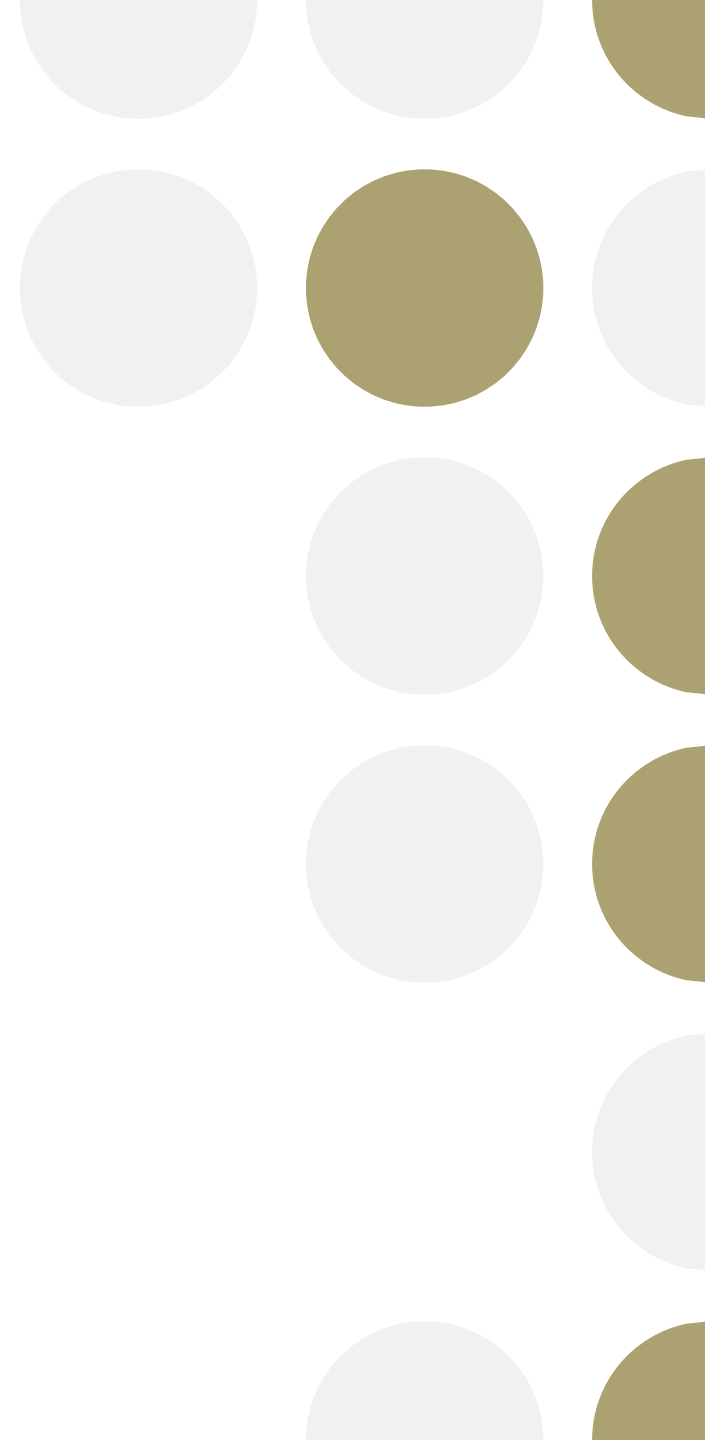
Workplace Incivility and Gender

- Women often experience higher frequencies of incivility in the workplace than do men (Cortina et al., 2001)

- The rates of incivility are often higher among women than between women and men (Gabriel, Zhenyu, Butts, Rosen, & Sliter, 2018)

    - It is often other women creating a more difficult and uncivil environment for other women

    - The more agentic (masculine) characteristics a woman displays, the greater occurrence of incivility from other women they are likely to experience

- The greater the number of women in a work group, the greater the experience of incivility and its negative effect on perceived workgroup performance and job satisfaction (Roberto & Longoria, 2019)
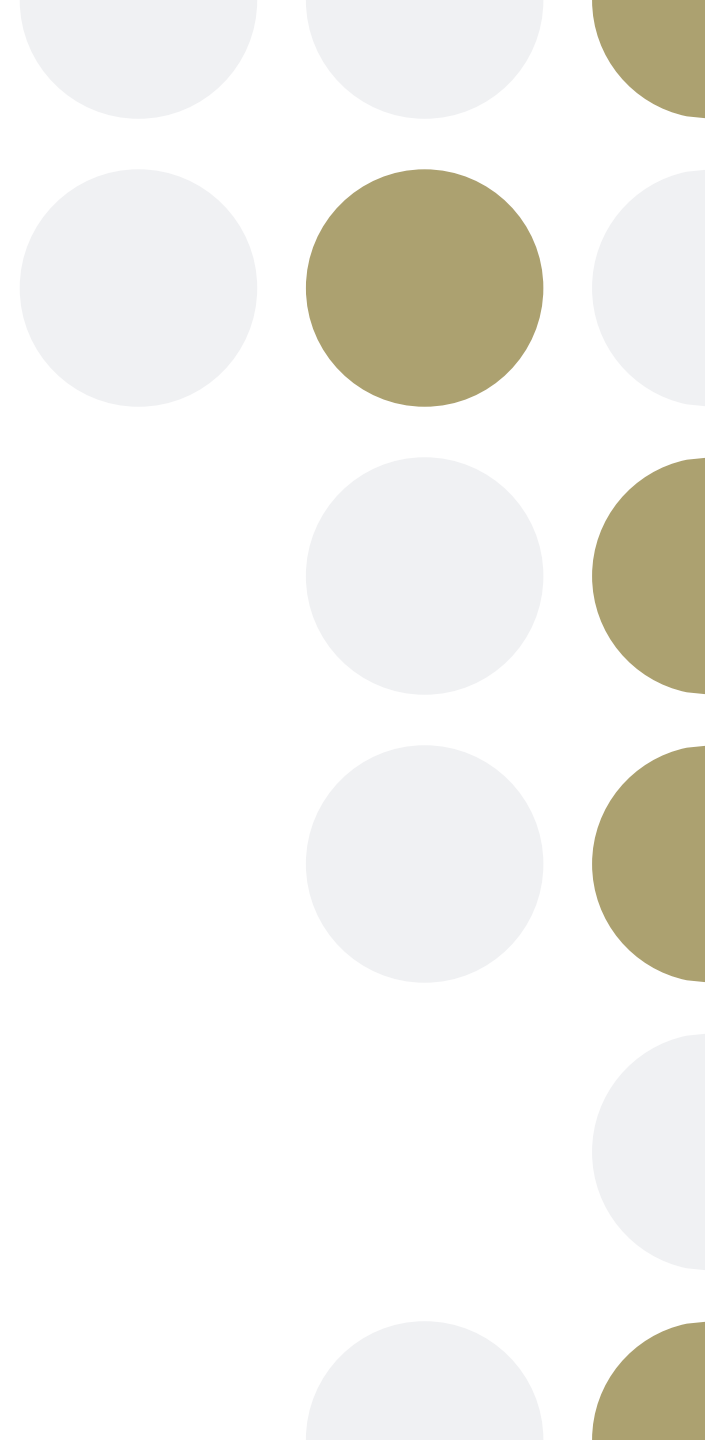
Examples

- Microaggressions
- Unconscious bias
- Bullying (in person and/or online)
- Ignoring
- Social Isolation/Exclusion
- Humiliation (public and/or private)
- Rudeness
- Interrupting
- Being disruptive
- Belittling/Condescension
- Gossiping
- Taking credit for other's work
- Micromanaging colleagues
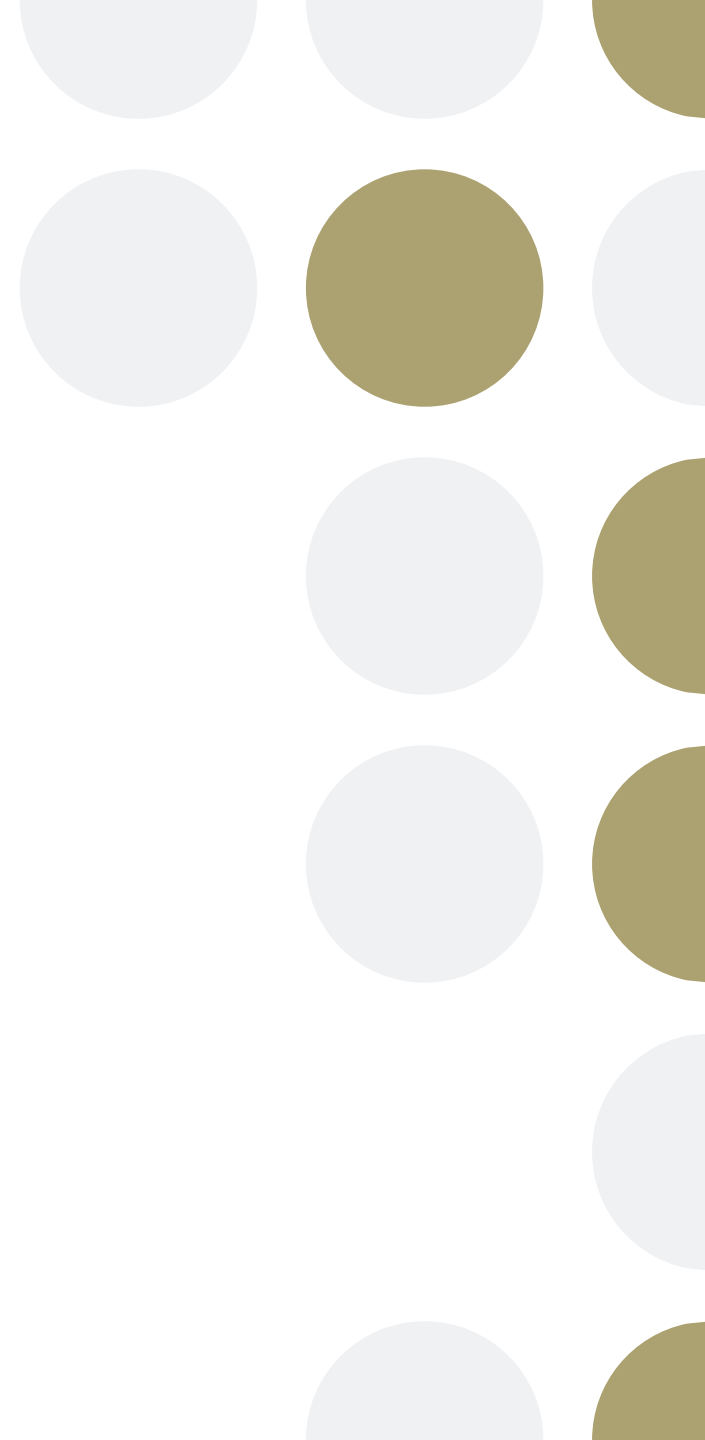
Example Comments

- "That's so gay"/"That's retarded"
- "I've already told you this"/"As per my last email"
- Calling women "girls", "sweetie", "honey", "dear"
- Telling men to "grow a pair", "man up"
- "Are you PMSing?"
- "You need to smile more"
- "I didn't know you were _____. You don't act like it"
- "I'm just going to call you ____" (name is difficult to say)

Impact on Employee Wellbeing

- Abusive behaviors at work lead to:
  - Negative mood, cognitive distraction, fear, and perceived injustice (Barling et al., 1996; Barling, Rogers, & Kelloway, 2001)
  - Damaged Social Identity and anger (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Cortina et al., 2001; Miner-Rubino & Cortina, 2004)
  - Negative impact on employee wellbeing and productivity (Cortina, 2008; Roberto & Longoria, 2019)
    - Burnout, anxiety, stress, and dissatisfaction, absenteeism, turnover, lower creativity, reduced performance
  - Incivility costs 500 Fortune companies almost $16M/year (Porath & Pearson, 2013)
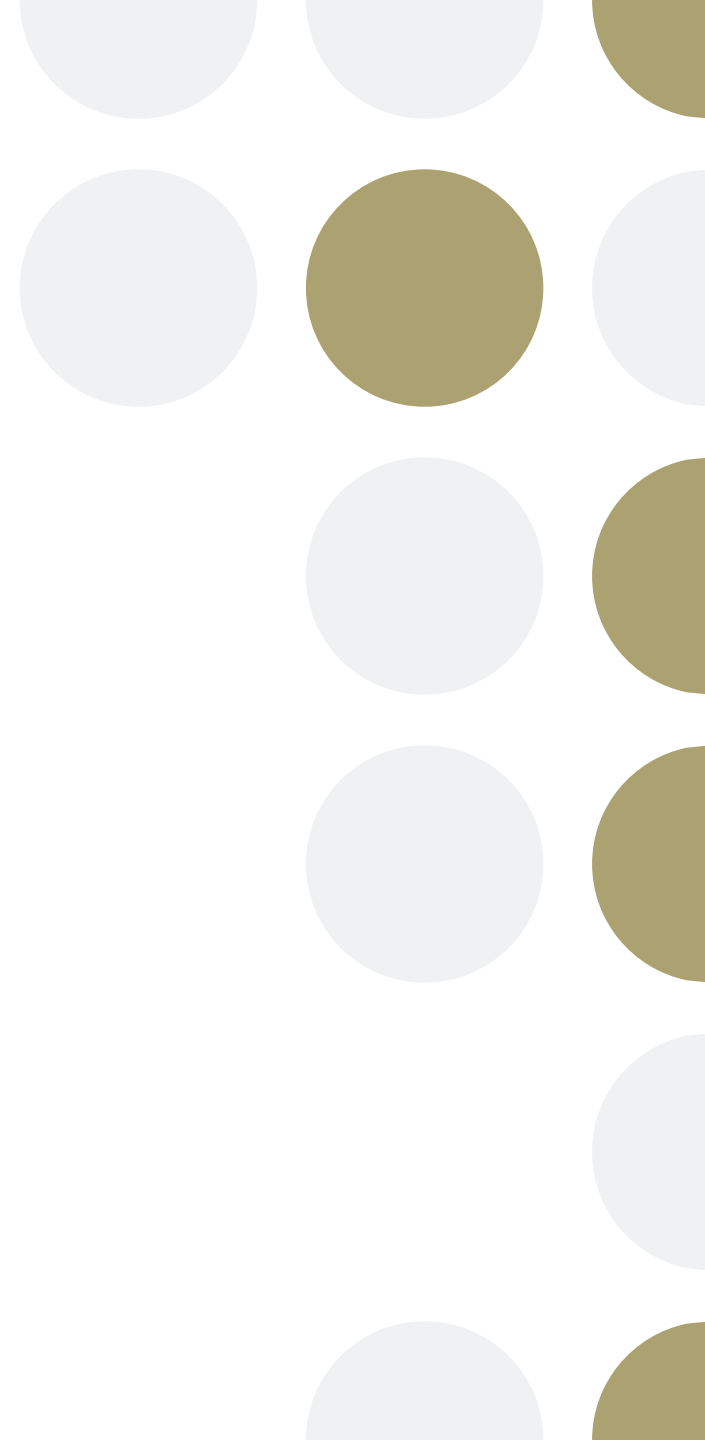
Activity/Discussion in groups

- Do you feel comfortable challenging other people's ideas at work?

- What issues today impact civility in your workplace?

- What processes are in place at work to resolve conflict?

- How have you handled incivility in the past? What went well? What would you do differently?

- Are you more civil at work or outside the workplace?
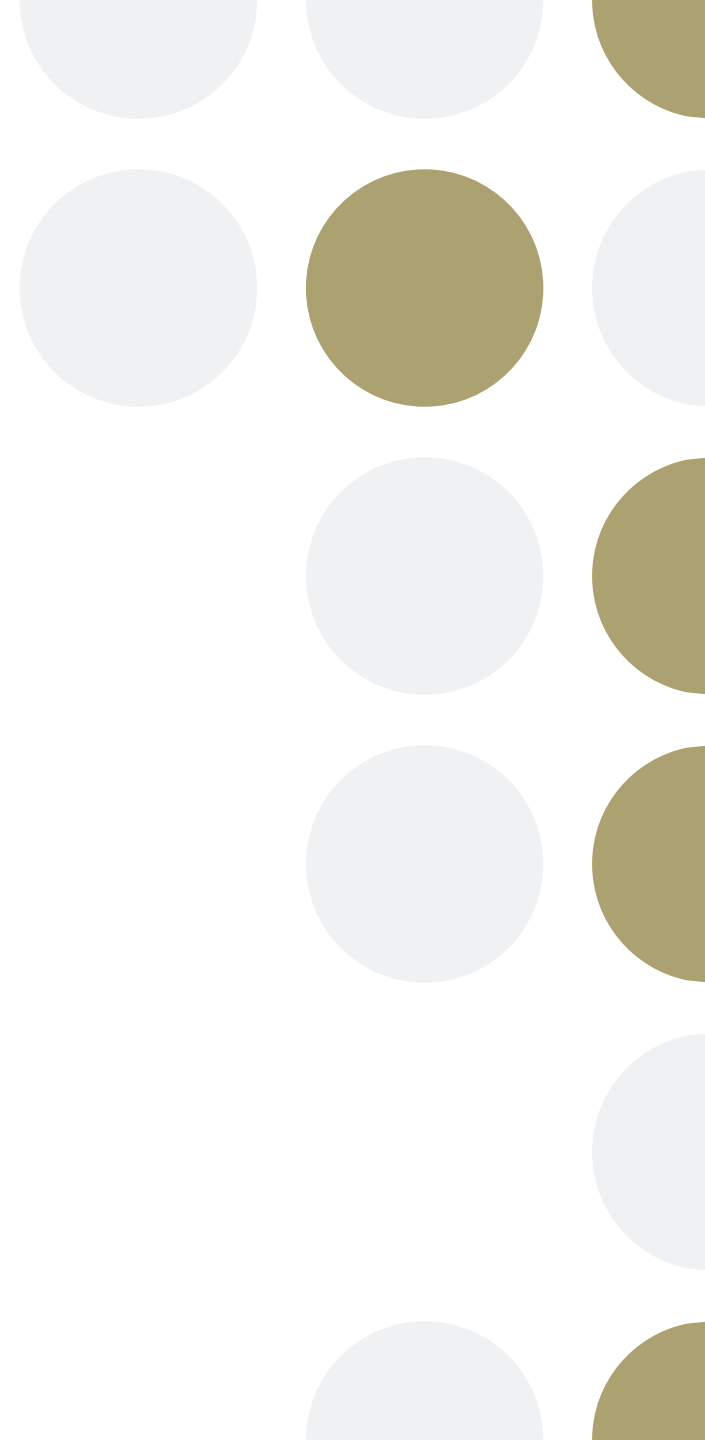
Management Best Practices

- Educate and communicate
- Promote a culture of respect and civility – must start at the top
- Build trust
- Encourage transparency
- Deal with instances on incivility immediately
- Establish norms for mutual respect
- How to host civil conversations (handouts)

Questions?