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Debbie is the author of *The Effectiveness of Education and Cognitive Rehearsal in Managing Nurse-to-Nurse Incivility*, a research project and educational program for nurses. She has presented her anti-nurse-to-nurse incivility classes to several units at Sentara RMH Medical Center and was chosen for poster presentations at the Virginia Organization for Nurse Executives and Leaders conference and the Virginia Association of Doctors of Nursing Practice conference. Her study was published in the *Journal of Nursing Management*. Debbie is continuing to research nurse-to-nurse incivility throughout Virginia with the Virginia Nurses Association.

A NURSE'S STORY

Nursing research findings making a difference for our patients

"I was a staff nurse for 20 years and saw nurse-to-nurse incivility. It can take many forms — like a non-verbal innuendo such as raising an eyebrow when another nurse talks to you, a verbal affront like making a snide remark, or sabotaging someone by deliberately setting up a negative situation to hurt someone's reputation. In all, there are 10 possible acts of nurse-to-nurse incivility, with gossiping being the most common form.

Incivility decreases nurses' morale and the quality of their work — which has a negative effect on patients' safety. Unfortunately, incivility can cause nurses to leave their jobs, so you have turnover. It's costly for organizations to have to hire and train new nurses.

When I moved into management, I knew it was so important to make the best environment possible for our staff. In preparation for my doctorate research, I came across Dr. Martha Griffin's work on incivility in which she taught nurses what it looks like in practice. She role-played ways to deal with incivility. In her study, she eliminated incivility, so I decided to test her method with a pilot group at my hospital.

I tailored the training with help from a manager, who shared situations her department's nurses might face. After teaching Dr. Griffin's 10 acts of incivility to the pilot group of 32 nurses, I presented those department-specific situations, and the group role-played. Everyone hates to role-play, but when you practice, it plants a seed in your brain as to how to handle a situation.

We did a pre-survey, an immediate post-survey and a six-week post-class survey with the group. Our results showed that awareness of incivility increased, and the incidence of incivility decreased.

There are so many demands on our nurses: patients are sicker than they've ever been, and we're busier. We shouldn't have to deal with a negative work environment caused by incivility. We own this as a profession, and if we own it, we can fix it."