

# One in Four Workers Experience Workplace Incivility, Fueling Toxic Work Environments, Says New meQuilibrium Study

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*Employee resilience, manager support for team mental well-being and psychological safety can protect against incivility, improve productivity and retention*

BOSTON, March 30, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- One in four employees reported experiencing rude, disrespectful or aggressive behavior in the workplace, according to the new meQuilibrium survey of 5,483 employees released today. Uncivil behaviors such as being ignored (26.1%), having one's judgment questioned (24.2%) and coworkers addressing colleagues in an unprofessional manner (17.3%) were among the most common forms of incivility. While fewer employees experienced severe forms of workplace incivility, the prevalence of extreme events is disturbingly common: about 1 in 20 employees reported being targeted with angry outbursts, being yelled or cursed at, being accused of incompetence or being the butt of jokes from coworkers.

"Workplace incivility creates a toxic work environment that undermines team cohesion and collaboration, erodes trust between employees and their managers, and can ultimately damage the organization's reputation," explained Brad Smith, PhD., Chief Science Officer, meQuilibrium. "When employees are subjected to rude, disrespectful, or aggressive behavior in the workplace, it can lead to decreased job satisfaction, increased stress and decreased productivity, which can result in higher rates of absenteeism, turnover, and decreased organizational performance."

Employees facing high incivility work environments report an elevated risk of job worries (42.4%), burnout (37%) and low motivation (33.5%). The negative impact of incivility extends to productivity measures and turnover risk as well. Workplace incivility raises the risk of endorsing "quiet quitting" by 87%, almost doubles the rate of self-reported productivity impairment and quintuples the risk that an individual will be seriously considering quitting his or her job.

## Solutions to Incivility in the Workplace

While incivility at work has significant negative impacts on well-being and business outcomes, proactive manager support for team mental well-being, high employee resilience, and a culture of [psychological safety](#) are powerfully protective against the damaging impacts of incivility. Specifically, the perception of positive support from one's manager substantially reduces the risk that employees experience uncivil behavior at work by between 25% to 66%, depending on the type of behavior. Employees on teams characterized by high levels of psychological safety rarely experience uncivil behavior in the workplace.

"Effective managers who support team mental well-being dramatically improve retention and speed innovation by ensuring psychologically safe environments," said Jan Bruce, CEO and co-founder, meQuilibrium. "Supportive managers cut also burnout risk, boost productivity and provide an important buffer against incivility."

Other survey findings include:

- **Managers who are attentive to team well-being can reduce turnover risk by as much as 78%.** Well-supported employees are 25% less likely to struggle with somatic symptoms of

stress, 33% less likely to have a hard time getting motivated in the morning, 56% less likely to experience high work stress and have a 58% lower risk of burnout.

- **Highly resilient employees always fare better, even when things are difficult.** In work environments characterized by incivility, highly resilient employees are 56% less likely to endorse "quiet quitting" and show 52% lower stress-related productivity impairment compared to less resilient employees.
- **Self-reported stress-related productivity impairment is up by 33% over pre-pandemic levels.** Employees under 30 are 62% more likely to report stress-impaired productivity than employees 60 and older. Younger employees were 2.7 times more likely to endorse the concept of "quiet quitting".

The full meQuilibrium study can be found [here](#).

Methodology: Approximately 5,483 members participated in meQuilibrium's January 2023 check-in, which examined worker well-being, incivility in the workplace and psychological safety. Of the 5,483 respondents, 2,911 completed both the incivility and well-being portions of the survey.

## About meQ

meQuilibrium (meQ) is the #1 global digital resilience solution to build workforce wellbeing and performance. Our mission is to make any workforce a workforce for growth. meQ's data analytics based approach uses AI to predict workforce risk for burnout, turnover, and behavioral health risks, and prepare employees for growth and propels teams to action. The meQ solution is available in 14 languages, and serves Fortune 1000 global enterprises in 130 countries. meQ product innovation has been recognized by Brandon Hall's Annual Technology Awards and the 2022 WELCOA Well-being Trailblazer Award. Learn more at <https://www.meQuilibrium.com>.

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