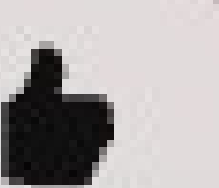


Why Good People Act Badly

What It Costs Us, And What We Must Do About It

© Smarts and Stamina, LLC, 2025.

These materials are shared for personal reference only.
If you'd like to discuss licensing or collaboration opportunities,
please reach out to info@MJShaar.com.





Three Misconceptions

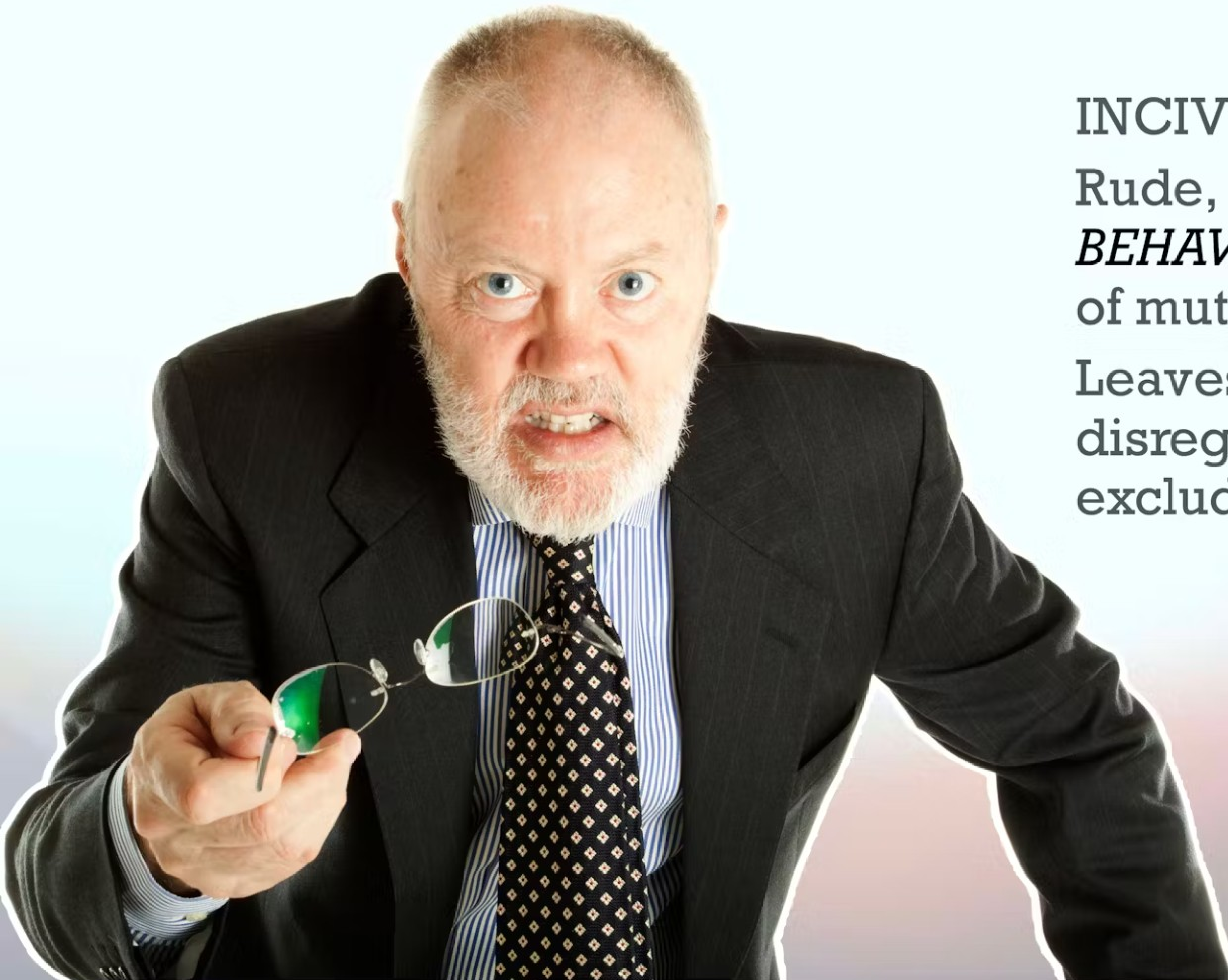
- Incivility is a personal, behavioral issue
- Kindness isn't my job
- RAK are enough



This jerk was losing his mind at the checkout over a \$1 coupon, bullying the teen cashier and holding everyone up.

This isn't the story of a hopeless
jerk, but of a struggling human.





INCIVILITY:

Rude, disrespectful or impolite *BEHAVIOR* that violates norms of mutual respect.

Leaves others feeling disregarded, devalued, excluded or unsafe.

Cause #1

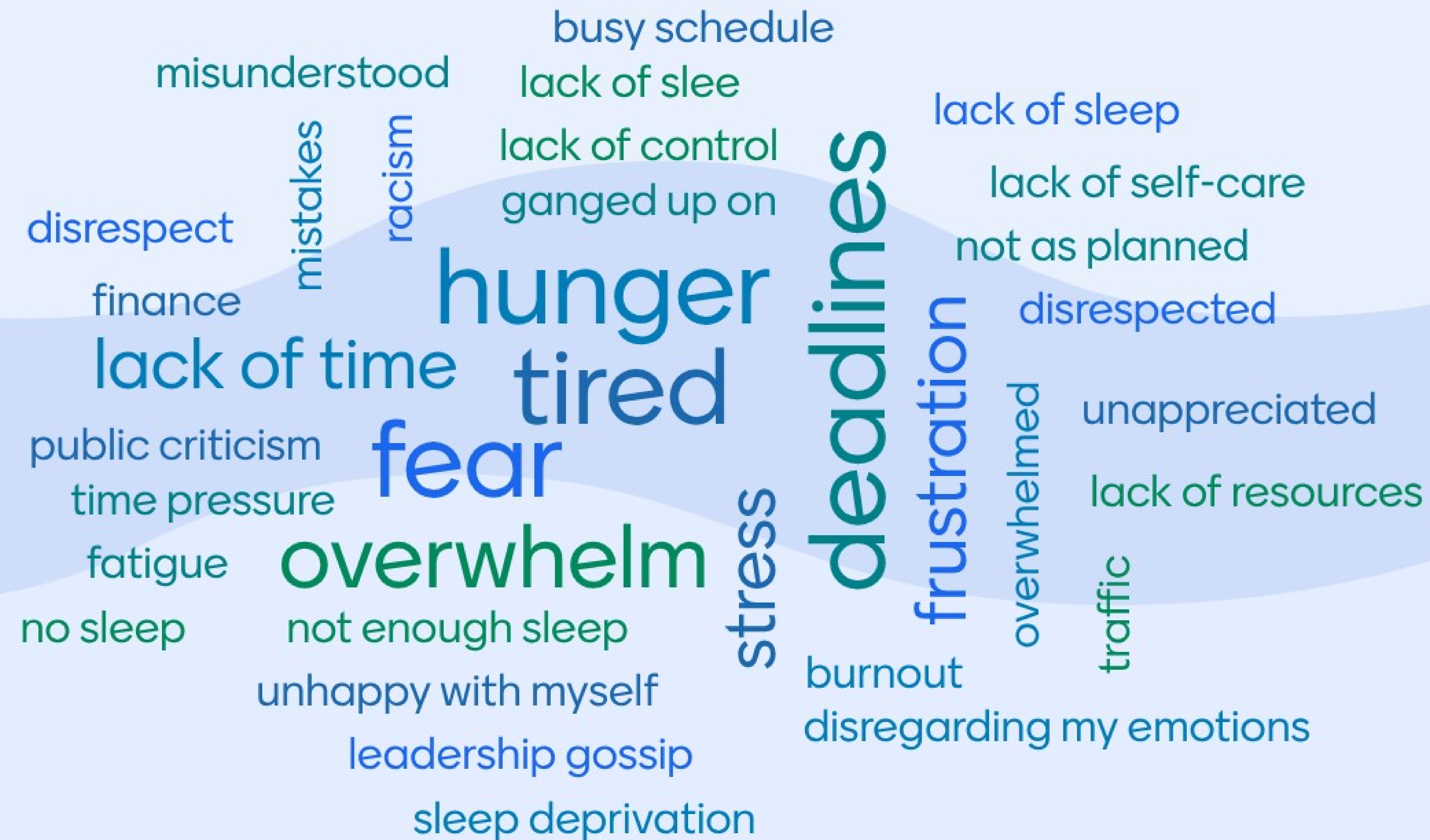
Overwhelm

Stress, time pressure and exhaustion

“We lash out instead of reaching out”

➔ Can't be solved with civility training

What causes you to act in less than ideal ways?



You know who is going through a lot right now?

Pretty much everyone!

- 70% of Americans are on survival mode
- 54% of US employees are quietly cracking
- 75% struggle with low mood due to global political turmoil and current events
- 60% report feeling lonely, at least sometimes

Cause #2

Over-emphasis on profit

- When results matter more than respect, incivility thrives
- People and profit isn't a binary choice - we need both



→ Not solved by civility training

Cause #3

Overlook

- It doesn't stand out
- We accept it as part of life
- It becomes easy to perpetuate

➔ Possibly slightly alleviated with civility training, but weak solution

76-98%

For a total of 190M acts of incivility *each DAY!*

It spreads like wildfire

Not just to witnesses, but also to whoever
will listen



Emotional Drain

- 80% lost work time - avg 37 min/incident/worker
- Adds up to 2 days off/month
- 66% cut back their effort
- 12 % left their job - unkind workplace is over 10X more likely than compensation to be the reason why people leave



Mentally Costly

- 5X more likely to miss information
- Impairs working memory
- Increases mistake rates
- Makes decision making longer
- Reduces willingness to share and ask for information

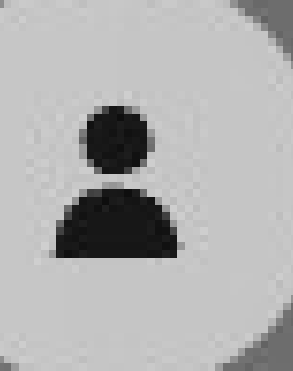
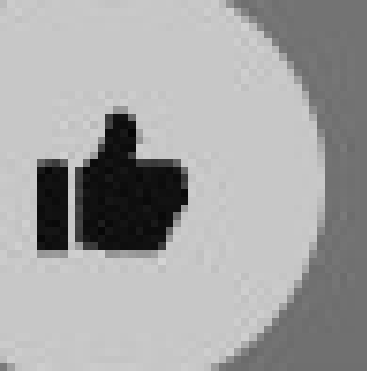
Cost to American Businesses:

\$2.7B *daily*

And some costs
cannot be numbered...



Physically Damaging



A problem this
BIG
can't be ignored

The solution isn't civility

- It isn't systemic
- It isn't contagious
- It doesn't heal us from the emotional and physical consequences of “dying a little inside”

The cure is kindness



How do you feel when you hear me say we need more kindness at work?

0%
It's not my job!

5%
Mixed emotions

95%
Couldn't agree more!

Invest in kindness, or manage its absence

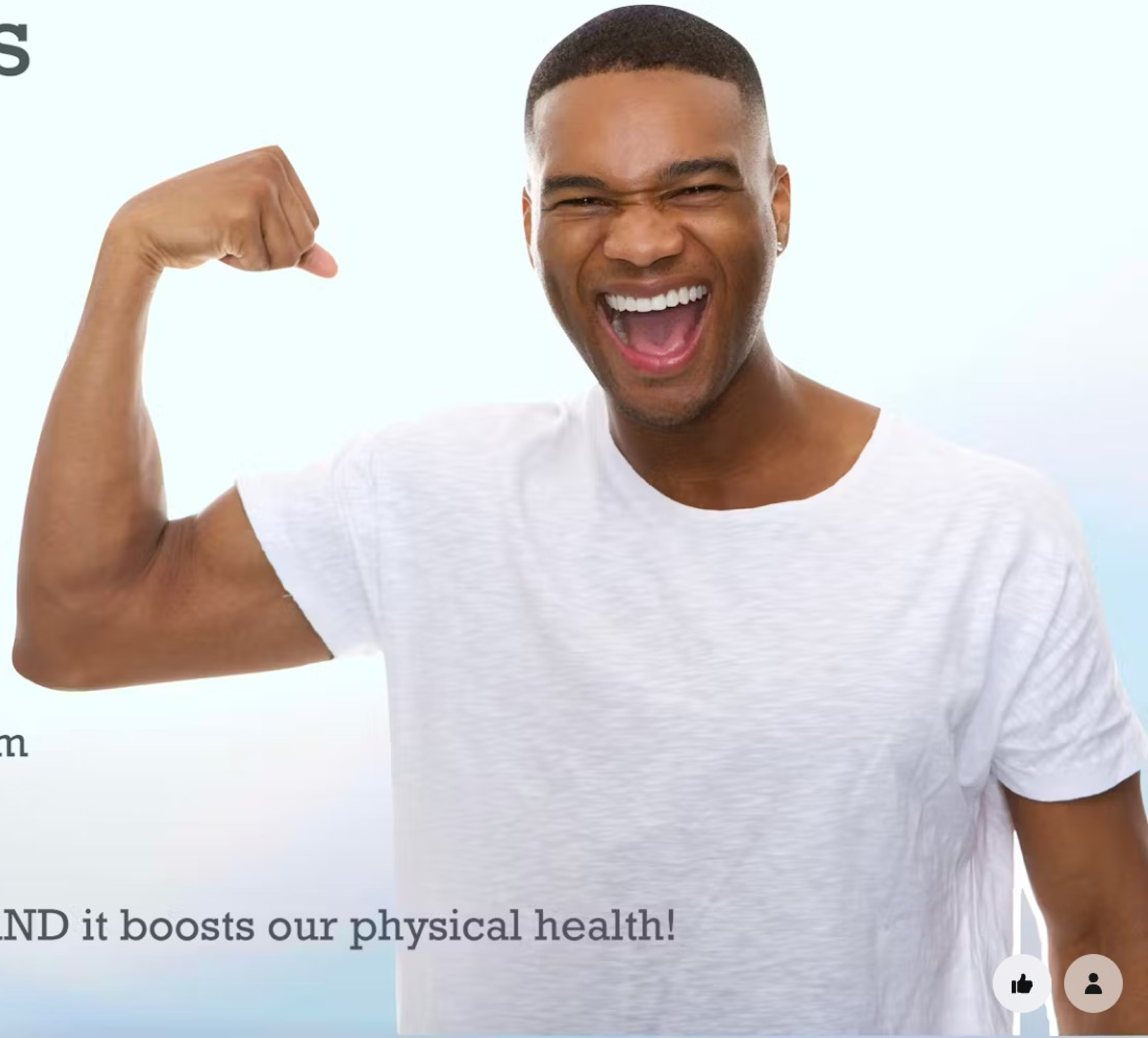
- Managers spend nearly 7wks/yr dealing with the fallout from incivility
- 74% of workplace incivility could have been avoided with manager involvement
- Companies with 3X more positive energizers outperform their competition
- Having a best friend at work makes us 7X as likely to be engaged

KINDNESS isn't NICENESS!

Kindness brings

- 🙋 Enhanced support
- 😄 Greater adaptability
- 😊 Improved self-esteem
- 🏆 Better quality of service
- 🤝 More natural collaboration
- 😌 Enhanced meaning at work
- 😞 Less absenteeism and overwhelm
- 🙌 Greater talent retention

... AND it boosts our physical health!



Meet Leo



Kindness changes
EVERYTHING



Humans are built for connection.
Kindness is the very foundation of collaborative
success.

When kindness is a bunch of random acts,
it brings temporary boosts.

When it's our operating system,
it brings timeless value.



If kindness is to become our operating system, does that mean we should measure it?



When we live out our values, we

😊 Grow more attuned to other people's needs

😊 Improve the quality of our interactions

🤝 Foster more natural collaboration

😊 Enhance meaning at work

😄 Reduce incivility

🙌 **CREATE CULTURES IN WHICH PEOPLE CHOOSE TO STAY**

Value-Based Decision Making

(at the individual level)

Know your own values,
and bring them to the forefront

Be kind while I pursue my goals

- VS -

Let my values inform my goals
and how I achieve them



Systemic value-based decision-making must be implemented in how we...

- **Hire, fire** (Remember, first who, then what?)
- **Promote** (sales volume vs positive energizers)
- **Communicate** (eliminate war-like language)
- **Evaluate performance** (impact on team's WB/ability to succeed)
- **Create upward accountability** (surveys, 360-d feedback)
- **Set goals, manage deadlines, assign tasks**

Changing what behaviors are culturally acceptable, which get rewarded and whom we emulate



Picture your team making decisions through a values lens. What becomes possible?

A word cloud visualization centered around the themes of 'connection' and 'success'. The words are arranged in a circular pattern, with some words appearing vertically. The background features light blue wavy lines. The words include:

- increased productivity
- uninhibited creativity
- psychological safety
- feel great at work
- trust
- positivity
- fairness
- collaboration
- working with purpose
- look forward to work
- inspiration
- teamwork
- everything
- innovation
- compassion
- engagement
- connection
- success



This isn't values work for our websites.
This is medicine for incivility, and a lifeline for our people.

The Gap

Knowing what's right but lacking
the bravery to follow through.

Meet Bear

Kindness is why he showed up.
Kindness is how he operated.
Kindness is why he had a good day.



Our new lens

- Incivility is a costly, systemic issue
- Kindness is everybody's job
- Values-based decision making is the key



Please join me on [LinkedIn.com/in/MJShaar](https://www.linkedin.com/in/MJShaar)
for lots more incivility and kindness convos,
or visit [MJShaar.com](https://www.MJShaar.com)

MJShaar💡

