

# Alignment



**The Joint Commission Leadership Standard (LD.03.01.01)  
addressing disruptive and inappropriate behaviors/  
The Crisis Prevention Institute's (CPI) *Workplace Bullying* seminar**



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## Background

The Joint Commission named its July 9, 2008 Issue 40 Sentinel Event Alert “Behaviors that undermine a culture of safety.” It is clear that, through the undermining of employee safety, disruptive individuals threaten patient safety—the core mission of every accredited hospital or organization.

In response to this safety threat, effective January 1, 2009, the Joint Commission promulgated a new Leadership Standard (LD.03.01.01) to address intimidating, disruptive, and inappropriate behaviors. The Joint Commission cited research demonstrating that negative interpersonal conduct by physicians and others can lead to medical errors, preventable adverse patient outcomes, poor patient satisfaction, increased cost of care, increased malpractice risk, and turnover among professionals who have to deal with the abusive offenders.

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<p>Effective January 1, 2009 for all accreditation programs, the Joint Commission has a new Leadership standard (LD.03.01.01) that addresses disruptive and inappropriate behaviors in two of its elements of performance (EP):</p> <p>EP 4: The hospital/organization has a code of conduct that defines acceptable and disruptive and inappropriate behaviors. (Note: Documentation is required).</p> <p>EP 5: Leaders create and implement a process for managing disruptive and inappropriate behaviors. (Note: Direct impact requirements apply).</p>	<p>The Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) has been training professionals to manage disruptive behavior since 1980. CPI’s internationally recognized programs provide training in verbal de-escalation strategies and emphasize the prevention of potentially aggressive situations.</p> <p>CPI’s <i>Workplace Bullying</i> seminar provides an objective definition of both incivility and bullying and explores related concepts as a continuum.</p> <p>CPI’s <i>Workplace Bullying</i> seminar details strategies to minimize the possibility of workplace bullying and to promote a respectful workplace environment. These strategies address the issue from a holistic perspective, involving individual employees, managers and supervisors, and the organization as a whole.</p>

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<p>In addition, standards in the Medical Staff chapter have been organized to follow six core competencies to be addressed in the credentialing process, including interpersonal skills and professionalism, which directly correlate to the issue of disruptive and inappropriate behaviors.</p> <p>Patient Care</p> <p>Medical Knowledge</p> <p><b>Interpersonal and Communication Skills:</b> Demonstrate skills that result in effective information exchange and teaming with patients, their families, and professional associates (e.g. fostering a therapeutic relationship that is ethically sound, uses effective listening skills with non-verbal and verbal communication; working as both a team member and, at times, as a team leader).</p> <p><b>Professionalism:</b> Demonstrate a commitment to carrying out professional responsibilities, adherence to ethical principles, and sensitivity to diverse patient populations.</p> <p>Systems-Based Practice</p> <p>Practice-Based Learning and Improvement</p>	<p>CPI's internationally recognized programs provide training in interpersonal and verbal de-escalation strategies that emphasize the prevention of potentially aggressive situations.</p> <p>CPI programs are known worldwide for their holistic approach to maintaining the professionalism of staff—even during crisis moments.</p>
<p>Other Joint Commission suggested actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Educate all team members – both physicians and non-physician staff – on appropriate professional behavior defined by the organization's code of conduct.</li> </ol> <p>The code and education should emphasize respect.</p>	<p>The philosophy of the Crisis Prevention Institute is to promote respectful, service-oriented, and safe workplace cultures. This philosophy is modeled and implemented within the context of training.</p> <p>Participants are provided with a policies and procedures template to assist in addressing expectations around respectful workplace behavior for internal and external consumers at all levels.</p>

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Include training in basic business etiquette (particularly phone skills) and people skills.

2. Hold all team members accountable for modeling desirable behaviors, and enforce the code consistently and equitably among all staff regardless of seniority or clinical discipline in a positive fashion through reinforcement as well as punishment.

3. Develop and implement policies and procedures/processes appropriate for the organization that address:
  - “Zero tolerance” for intimidating and/or disruptive behaviors, especially the most egregious instances of disruptive behavior such as assault and other criminal acts. Incorporate the zero tolerance policy into medical staff bylaws and employment agreements as well as administrative policies.

CPI’s training addressees all forms of workplace bullying. These include face-to-face interactions, telephone and other types of electronic communication, written communication, cyber-bullying, and even acts of omission meeting CPI’s definition and criteria for workplace bullying.

Workplace incivility and bullying can occur at any level of an organization. These include managers and supervisors, individual employees, peers, subject matter experts, consultants, consumers, vendors, etc.

Bullying behavior can only thrive within a workplace culture that tolerates it.

Organizations that prioritize respectful, service-oriented, and safe workplace practices take the issue of disruptive and inappropriate behavior seriously. These organizations emphasize that employees and consumers at all levels have an inherent right to both physical and emotional safety at all times and in all interactions within the organization.

Seminar participants are provided with a policies and procedures template to assist in addressing expectations regarding respectful workplace behavior and proper responses to inappropriate workplace conduct.

A thorough review of current organizational policies, procedures, and practices is recommended.

The review should be comprehensive and address the following:

- Assess the clarity of expectations with regard to appropriate behavior and professional conduct.

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- Medical staff policies regarding intimidating and/or disruptive behaviors of physicians within a health care organization should be complementary and supportive of the policies that are present in the organization for non-physician staff.
- Reducing fear of intimidation or retribution and protecting those who report or cooperate in the investigation of intimidating, disruptive, and other unprofessional behavior. Non-retaliation clauses should be included in all policy statements that address disruptive behaviors.
- Responding to patients and/or their families who are involved in or witness intimidating and/or disruptive behaviors. The response should include hearing and empathizing with their concerns, thanking them for sharing those concerns, and apologizing.
- How and when to begin disciplinary actions (such as suspension, termination, loss of clinical privileges, reports to professional licensure bodies).

4. Develop an organizational process for addressing intimidating and disruptive behaviors (LD.3.10 EP 5) that solicits and integrates substantial input from an interprofessional team including representation of medical and nursing staff, administrators and other employees.

- Provide clear expectations for all interactions with internal and external consumers.
- Explain conduct codes and other behavioral expectations contained in policies and procedures.
- Clearly provide and promote proper channels for reporting disruptive, inappropriate, uncivil, and/or bullying behaviors.
- Ensure accountability by responding to any complaint in a timely manner.
- Establish a code of behavior for internal and external consumers.
- Clearly communicate codes of behavior, guidelines, and policies.
- Provide a structure for reporting possible disruptive, inappropriate, uncivil, and/or bullying behaviors that can be invoked by internal and external consumers.
- Consistently implement policies and procedures for all internal and external consumers at all levels.

Participants are provided with a policies and procedures template addressing expectations around respectful workplace behavior for internal and external consumers at all levels.

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5. Provide skills-based training and coaching for all leaders and managers in relationship-building and collaborative practice, including skills for giving feedback on unprofessional behavior and conflict resolution. Cultural assessment tools can also be used to measure whether or not attitudes change over time.
6. Develop and implement a system for assessing staff perceptions of the seriousness and extent of instances of unprofessional behaviors and the risk of harm to patients.
7. Develop and implement a reporting/surveillance system (possibly anonymous) for detecting unprofessional behavior. Include ombuds services and patient advocates, both of which provide important feedback from patients and families who may experience intimidating or disruptive behavior from health professionals. Monitor system effectiveness through regular surveys, focus groups, peer and team member evaluations, or other methods. Have multiple and specific strategies to learn whether intimidating or disruptive behaviors exist or recur, such as through direct inquiries at routine intervals with staff, supervisors, and peers.
8. Support surveillance with tiered, nonconfrontational interventional strategies, starting with informal "cup of coffee" conversations directly addressing the problem and moving toward detailed action plans and progressive discipline if patterns persist. These interventions should initially be nonadversarial in nature, with the focus on building trust, placing accountability on and rehabilitating the offending individual, and protecting patient safety. Make use of mediators and conflict coaches when professional dispute resolution skills are needed.

The seminar includes interactive lectures, individual and group experiential activities, large and small group discussion, and guided note taking.

Additional assessments and consultation are also available through CPI.

Additional assessments and consultation are available from CPI in addressing staff perceptions and customizing policies, procedures, protocols, and behavioral codes.

Participants are provided with a policies and procedures template addressing expectations regarding disruptive and inappropriate workplace behaviors, outlining suggested procedures for reporting these behaviors, and guidelines for organizational investigation and response.

Recommendations for targets of disruptive, inappropriate, and/or bullying behaviors are provided.

The seminar identifies steps to appropriately respond to acts of disruptive, inappropriate, and/or bullying behaviors.

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<p>9. Conduct all interventions within the context of an organizational commitment to the health and well-being of all staff, with adequate resources to support individuals whose behavior is caused or influenced by physical or mental health pathologies.</p>	<p>The seminar asserts that respectful workplace behavior begins at the level of organizational culture.</p>
<p>10. Encourage inter-professional dialogues across a variety of forums as a proactive way of addressing ongoing conflicts, overcoming them, and moving forward through improved collaboration and communication.</p>	<p>CPI's <i>Workplace Bullying</i> seminar details strategies to minimize the possibility of workplace bullying and to promote a respectful workplace environment. These strategies address the issue from a holistic perspective, involving individual employees, managers and supervisors, and the organization as a whole.</p>
<p>11. Document all attempts to address intimidating and disruptive behaviors.</p>	<p>CPI emphasizes that all incidents involving disruptive behavior be documented.</p>

The material contained in this alignment is provided for informational purposes only and is not intended to constitute legal advice. Legal counsel should be consulted regarding the specific application of this information to your organization. For more information on this standard, please contact the Joint Commission. For more information on the Crisis Prevention Institute's (CPI) *Workplace Bullying* seminar, please contact CPI at **1-800-558-8976**.