



CREW: Civility, Respect, and Engagement in the Workplace

What is CREW?

Civility, Respect, and Engagement in the Workplace (CREW) is a culture change initiative. First launched by the VA in 2005, it has since been utilized by over 1,200 VA workgroups to establish a culture of respect and civility in their organization.

The National Center for Organization Development (NCOD), a VHA organization dedicated to supporting healthy workplaces, oversees the CREW initiative. Federal Occupational Health's (FOH) Center for Organization Development and Leadership (CODL) has partnered with the NCOD to bring CREW to non-VA locations.

Civility is essential and expected behavior for all employees, regardless of what organization they belong to. Some fundamental behaviors associated with civility include courtesy, politeness, and consideration.

Respect connects us at a personal level. It reflects an attitude developed from deep listening and understanding, cultural and personal sensitivity, and compassion. It honors all the participants in an interaction by creating a safe place to have difficult conversations, and fosters an environment of honesty and mutual trust.

Engagement is the result of respectful relationships within an atmosphere of trust. It provides all staff with the charge, the parameters, the training, and the support to make decisions "on the spot" in the best interest of the customer.

How does CREW work?

Trained facilitators meet regularly at your site with selected workgroups for approximately six months. These voluntary meetings allow time for employees to have workgroup-level conversations about civility and their work environment, have positive experiences with each other, and practice new behaviors that can become the cultural norm. Facilitators come to meetings prepared to encourage problem-solving efforts and conduct activities that can help improve employee relationships.

Does CREW look the same at each site?

There is no manual for CREW, so the content of CREW meetings may look very different at each site. However, the initiative is structured similarly in that each site will identify a CREW coordinator to organize the initiative, CREW facilitators to run CREW meetings, and workgroups to participate in the meetings.

What are the benefits?

- **A customized approach** to meet the needs of your agency.
- **A national network** of experienced and certified trainers and specialists.

"The link between employee satisfaction, patient satisfaction and clinical outcomes is clear. CREW has provided the necessary tools for us to achieve unprecedented levels of civility, respect and engagement in the workplace, resulting in patient satisfaction."

Director, Birmingham Medical Center

"Through CREW, employees were able to identify and change unappreciated behaviors in the workplace. Employees work together where they resisted before, and are cordial where they avoided one another before. Sincere commitment to CREW will make a difference where you work."

CREW Facilitator, AFGE President at CAVHCS

"My CREW experience as a facilitator has been fantastic. Employees engaged in open and honest dialogue, renewing lines of communication and gaining awareness of behaviors. They were able to see others' points of view and resolve some of their own issues."

CREW Facilitator, St. Petersburg VBA Regional Office

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What are the benefits of CREW?

CREW not only makes intuitive sense, but it also makes excellent business sense. Research suggests a strong correlation between civility and important outcomes such as:

- Reduced EEO complaints
- Reduced sick leave usage
- Increased patient satisfaction
- Improved employee satisfaction
- Higher retention
- Better productivity and performance

What types of workgroups benefit from CREW?

CREW is not a quick fix for a very troubled team, nor is it a substitute for good supervision. In general, CREW works best with groups that:

- Aren't in crisis or undergoing formal investigation
- Are not extremely understaffed with little time to participate in CREW meetings
- Are open to participation in CREW

How can leadership and labor partners support CREW?

There are many ways leadership and labor partners can support CREW, such as:

- Dedicating time for employees to participate in CREW
- Providing a budget for the purchase of small items to use during CREW meetings
- Maintaining and encouraging regular communication with the CREW coordinator and facilitators
- Providing visible support of CREW throughout the organization

What resources are available to us as we implement CREW?

FOH's CODL offers ongoing support to help successfully implement CREW, including:

- Facilitators to conduct CREW workgroup meetings
- A variety of resources and materials tailored for CREW workgroups
- Support and follow-up between workgroup sessions to gauge progress
- Regular CREW facilitator meetings with leadership

How do we become involved in CREW?

For more information about CREW, please contact the FOH Center for Organization Development: **301-594-9026** or **Priscilla.Clark@foh.hhs.gov**.

