

21 Phrases to Handle Workplace Incivility

Avoid

Say Instead

"You're not a team player."	→	"Can we talk about how your role connects to the team's goals?"
"You always complain."	→	"I hear your concerns. Let's focus on solutions."
"You're wrong."	→	"That's one view. Let's look at the facts together."
"That makes no sense."	→	"I want to understand your perspective better."
"You're making a big deal out of nothing."	→	"Let's step back and see how we can solve this constructively."
"You never respond to me!"	→	"Just following up to make sure my email reached you."
"You're impossible to work with."	→	"It feels like we're stuck. How can we move forward together?"

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"You never do your share."	→	"Can we revisit task distribution to make it fairer?"
"Why are you so slow?"	→	"Would it help if we adjust the timeline or get support?"
"You're just being difficult."	→	"It sounds like you have a different view—let's understand it."
"Calm down, you're overreacting."	→	"I see this matters to you. Let's work through it calmly."
"We've always done it this way."	→	"Here's how we usually approach it. What new angle can we try?"
"You should know this by now."	→	"Would it help if we review this again step by step?"
"You don't care about this."	→	"It seems we have different priorities—how can we align?"

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"You're not qualified to handle this."



"This decision sits with leadership, but your input is valuable."

"You never listen."



"Can we pause and make sure we're on the same page?"

"You don't understand how this works."



"Here's how this usually works. Want me to walk you through it?"

"You're wasting my time."



"Let's focus on the most important part of this."

"You'll never get this right."



"With some adjustments, this can improve a lot."

"Stop talking over me!"



"I'd like a moment to finish my point, then I'll listen."

"You don't contribute anything."



"Can we explore how your strengths can be applied here?"