


Strengthening Workplace Health: The Significance of Administrative Recognition of Bullies' Story- Telling Proficiency

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The background of the slide features a faint, circular seal of Boston University. The seal contains the text "BOSTON UNIVERSITY" at the top and "DCCCXXXIII" at the bottom. In the center, there is a shield with a book and a banner, surrounded by the Latin motto "SCIENTIA FIDES AMICITIA".

Conflicts of Interests and Disclosures

There exist no real or perceived vested interests on the part of the investigator

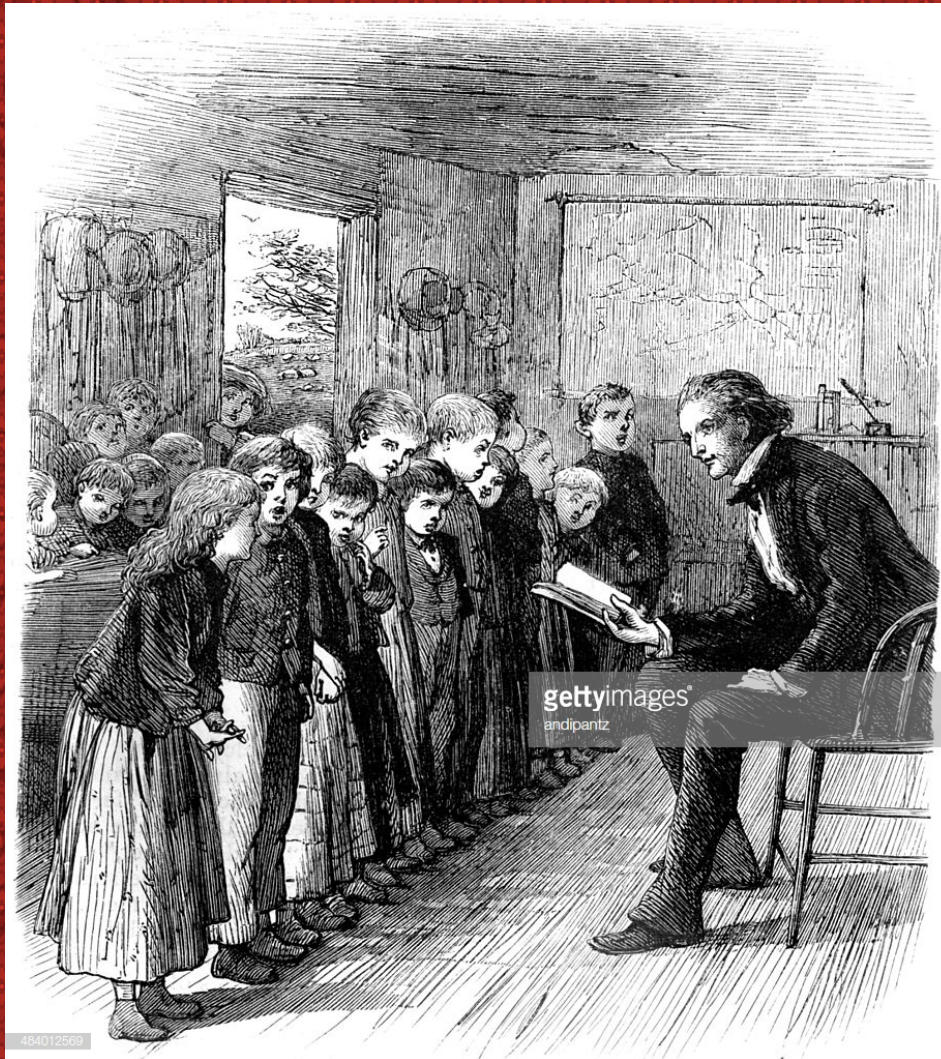
Objectives

1. Describe the relevance of story-telling to workplace interactions.
2. Discuss constituent aspects of bullying as story-telling, as garnered through critical hermeneutic analysis.
3. Examine the significance of workplace administrators' recognition of bullying stories to quality of workplace health.



(Without administrative support, you're defying gravity)

Story-Telling in the Workplace



The background features a dark red, textured surface with a repeating diamond pattern. A large, faint watermark of the Boston University seal is visible on the left side. The seal is circular and contains the text "BOSTON UNIVERSITY" at the top and "DCCCXVIII" at the bottom. In the center of the seal is a shield with a figure holding a staff and a book, with the motto "SCIENTIA FIDES AMICITIA" below it.

Everyone loves a good story,
and workplace peers are no
exception

Fisher (1984) argued that through their compelling nature, stories:

- persuade and interest listeners,
- illuminate lived experience, and
- facilitate communicative sharing
as they
- convey information

The background of the slide is a dark red color with a repeating diamond-shaped pattern. On the left side, there is a large, faint watermark of the Boston University seal. The seal is circular and contains the text "BOSTON UNIVERSITY" around the top and "DCCCXVIII" at the bottom. In the center of the seal is a shield with various symbols, including a book and a figure.

In short, stories foster
collective knowing and
communal meaning

They shape workplace climate
and enable shared

“understandings and actions”

(Phillips & Brown, 1993, p. 1549).

As metaphors, stories symbolize
and condition beliefs



Nursing's Primary Story/Metaphor:
(both within and beyond the
discipline)

hi, I care.

Caring

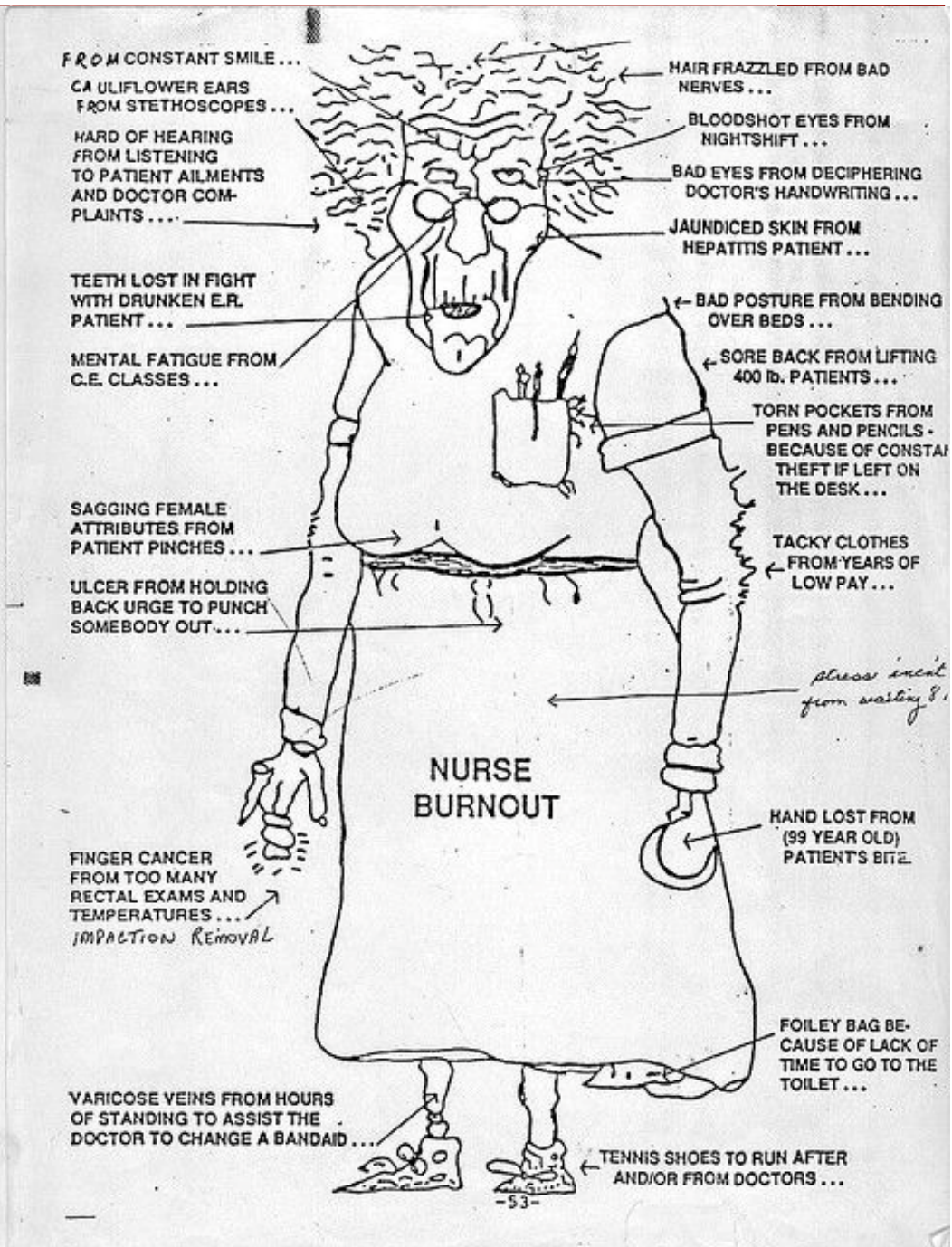


Yet, working daily with their
peers in a high-stress field ...

Nurses' 'caring' story incorporates
incredibly complex, stress-generating
work



as well as
often-
unremitting
personal
demands:



Diverging personal and
organizational goals and
expectations often result
in...

A Search for Personal Power

10 Ways to keep your Power

- 1 decide to take control of your life
- 2 Know that your heart is strong
~ you will survive the ups & downs
- 3 Tell the truth to yourself & others
- 4 get your head out of the SAND
- 5 Trust your INTUITION
- 6 never act like a VICTIM
- 7 follow things through
- 8 Have a great ACTION PLAN!
- 9 stay flexible & relaxed
- 10 Stop giving your POWER away!

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that effort can go awry

Power seeking AUTONOMY
facilitates ability to effectively
IGNORE OTHERS to
personal benefit

Lammers, J., Stoker, J. I., Rink, F. & Galinsky, A. D.
(2016). To have control over or to be free from
others? The desire for power reflects a need for
autonomy. *Personality and Social
Psychology Bulletin*, 42, 498-512.

Power seeking CONTROL
facilitates STEREOTYPING
to categorize difference

Fiske, S. T. (2018). *Social Cognition:
Selected works of Susan T. Fiske*.
London: Routledge.

To paraphrase Tom Hanks in
Apollo 13...



Culture and climate shift, setting
the stage for enactment of “out-
of-control dynamics” (Cilliers, 2012)

—bullying

At least superficially, bullying is:

Use of illegitimate power through verbal and nonverbal behaviors aimed to enhance the prestige and resource access of the bully perpetrator

(Shorey & Dzurec, 2016)

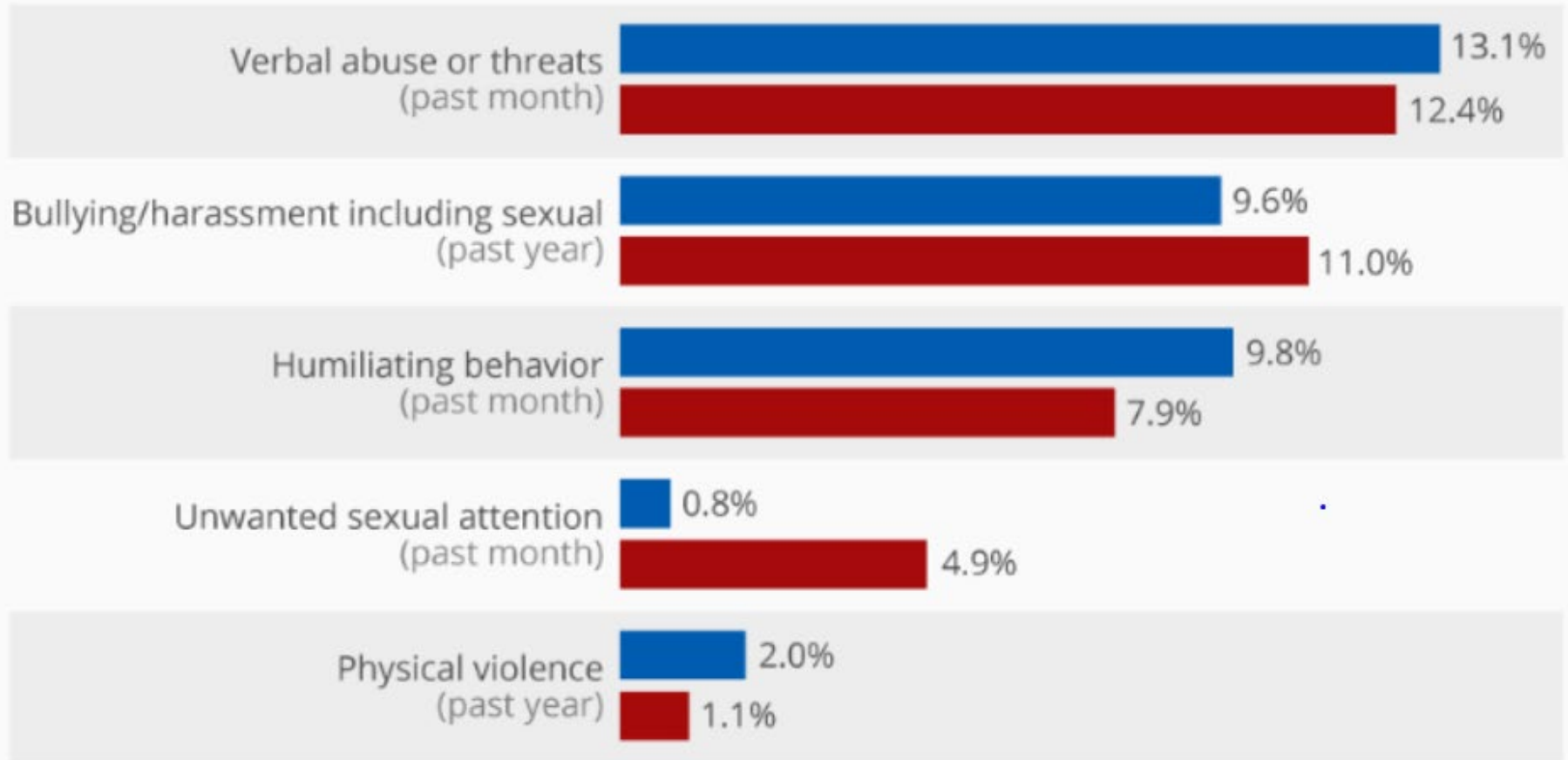
Bullying is rampant and
growing in workplaces
internationally

It thrives in workplaces in
which formal expectations and
perceptions of lived reality
(i.e., organizational and personal goals)
diverge

How Often Do U.S. Workers Experience Abuse & Harassment?

Share of U.S. workers who have been subjected to the following (2015)

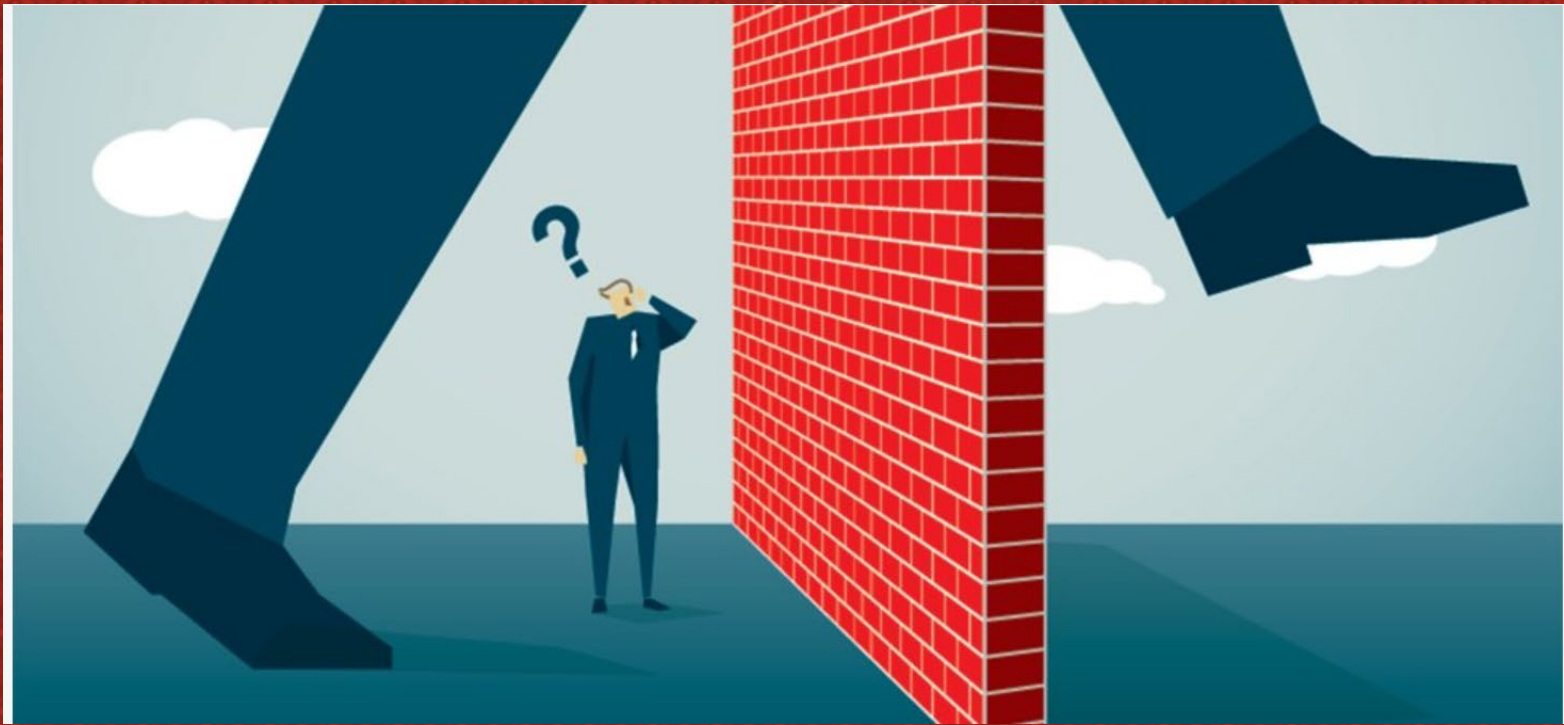
Men Women



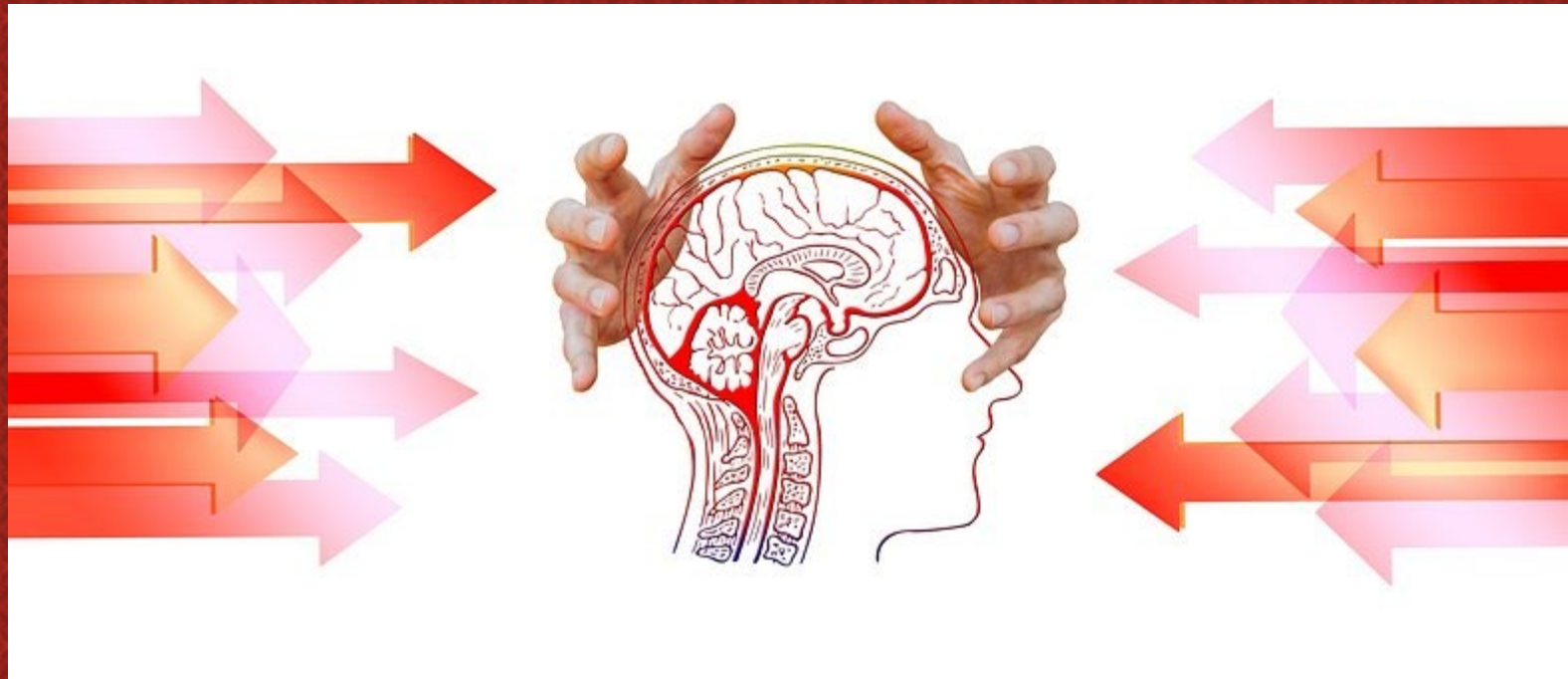
Study Goal:

To strengthen understanding and explanation of bullying's tenacity in the workplace through elucidation of its core processes

Beyond descriptions of evident behaviors
that act largely to obscure a vision
of what's really at issue



Researching Bullying as Story- Telling



Critical Hermeneutics

Within and beyond the superficial
to the essential

A qualitative approach that examines:

ambiguity of meaning

duality of action outcomes

relevance of lived experience

as these features, historically-situated,

influence culture and power

Steps of the Method:

Social-Historical textual analysis of intention (saying), reference (connote/denote), and context (delivery)

Formal analysis of conventions (tacit understanding) and structure (marketing)

Merger of the two analyses ('texts' and their roles in the social system)

Findings:

Bullies are

- proficient, compelling story-tellers
- successful in exploiting the rules of story-telling
- well-facilitated in a social context motivated by high levels of perceived stress

Some Well-Worn Examples



Phases of Story-Telling in Workplace Bullying

1. Saying

via exploited communicative competence (Hymes, 1972) or narrative agency (Tye-Williams & Krone, 2015), incorporating just enough truth to urge belief via ‘stories’;

2. H e a r i n g

long-held beliefs are ‘seen’ (Ariely, 2008; Brader, Valentino, & Suhay, 2004; Lotto, 2017; Sontag, 1966);

[btw--“Don’t believe everything you think”]

--Penny, L. (2017) *A great reckoning: A novel*.
NY: Minotaur. p. 316

3 . S i t u a t i n g

nurturance in organizations

favoring formal documents

and processes, with laissez-

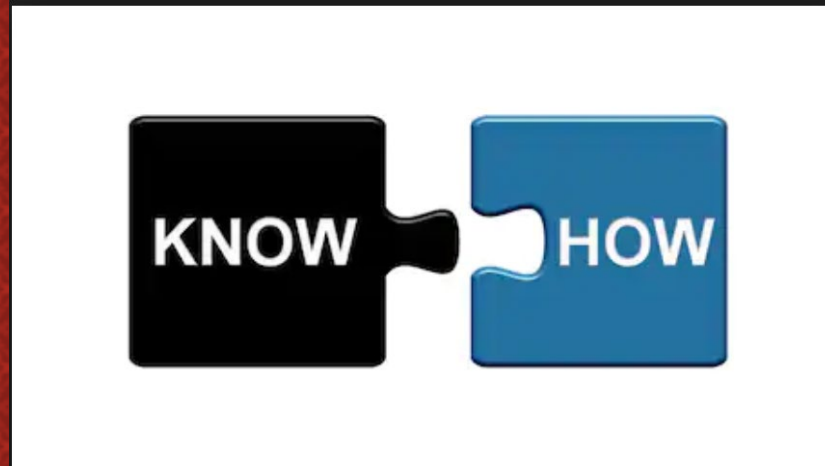
faire leadership styles

(Dzurec, 2013; Glambek, Skogstad, & Einarsen, 2018;

Westercamp, 2013)

“By carefully managing communication, and therefore the process of cultural production, powerful individuals and groups can legitimate their positions and institute a form of social control that removes the need to exercise control directly”
(Phillips and Brown, 1993, p. 1551).

The Significance of Administrative Recognition of Bullies' Story- Telling Proficiency...



(Laschinger & Fida, 2014; Phillips et al., 2018; Sparkman, 2018)

“when you understand,
you know what to do”

(Bennis et al., 2003, p. 55)

Constituting
Administrative
Understanding, Skill, and
Know-How

Acknowledging that Bullying is REAL, despite:

- Victims' frequent inability to describe what happened clearly (Tye-Williams & Krone, 2015)
- Inconsistent and often confusing reports from bully and victim
- Seeming insignificance of incidents
- Hesitance of victim to take corrective action

Suspending Personal Belief

Offering a safe place for victims to speak

Attending to personal beliefs about the perpetrator's:

organizational role

personal characteristics

formal power status

Hearing and Recognizing ‘Process’

“Our Father merely looked at us all and heaved the great sigh of the put-upon male. Oh, such a sigh. It was so deep it could have drawn water from a well, right up from beneath the floor of our nitwit household. He was merely trying, that sigh suggested, to drag us all toward enlightenment through the marrow of our own poor female bones.” (Kingsolver, 1998, p. 74)

Noting Connotation and Denotation

(In a faculty meeting):

“an opinion that differed from hers...was not met with very welcoming, um, body language or communication” (*connotation — ‘I do not appreciate this’*)

“vocalizing something and contradicting her would be seen as insubordinate” (*denotation — disobedience*)

(Parker, 2014, p. 176) (parenthetical phrases and italics added).

Looking for Telltale Signs of ‘Power Grabs’

For Victims:

Shame

Sadness

Confusion

Anxiety

Physical sequelae
sequelae

For Perpetrators:

‘Double speak’

Recontextualization

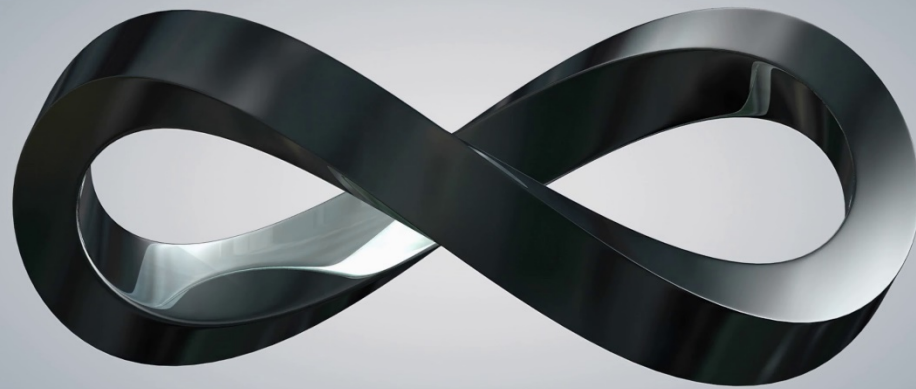
Overt intimidation

Ostracism

Organizational

over-concern

Recognizing role fluidity among bullies and victims



Examining organizational practices

What *effective* policies are in place?

Are there venues for reporting bullying?

What is the over-riding organization
gestalt?

Does your organization follow *Just
Culture* principles?

And

Empowering co-workers

- Authenticity
- Networking
- Just Culture
- Opportunity
- Risk-taking for growth

All Aimed Toward Preventing

Ch a o s

Without thoughtful, administrative oversight, unseeing group think has free rein



But/and....

Administrators can provide a legitimate, empowering recombobulation area by...



This REALLY exists at the General Mitchell International Airport in Milwaukee, WI, USA

Recognizing the power of bullies'
well-told (if often largely inaccurate)
stories
AND

Refusing to fall victim—without clear
forethought—to the influence of bullies’
story-telling prowess...

For strengthened productivity,
employee satisfaction,
workplace health,

and the joy of success

Thank you