

TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP FOR TRUE WORKPLACE COLLABORATION:

Strengthening workplace culture through
attention to workplace bullying affronts

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It matters

THEMES EMERGING FROM CURRENT STUDIES





Considering Workplace Bullying as a Disruptive Phenomenon



Workplace bullying is subtle,
aggressive, engaged, repeated,
intentional (or recklessly proffered)
behavior including:

physical and/or psychological threat
perception of hurt (LD 2/28/15)



Even if it's unintentional through 'reckless disregard' (Parzefall & Salin, 2010, p. 763), bullying reflects a stable power imbalance mediated by a constellation of often-unacknowledged conditions.



It may emanate from implicit bias, that is, unconscious beliefs about others' differences (Greenwald & Krieger, 2006)



Bullying is on the rise,
worldwide—sometimes
provoked by superiors, but as
often by peers or subordinates
(Wright & Hill, 2015)



A faculty member once asked,
“What’s the difference between
being a bully and maintaining
expectations of excellence?”



That is a **REALLY** good
question—with a pretty simple
answer:



“She chose me to be her battering ram and on three separate occasions she unleashed her negativity on me. Swearing at me, criticizing what I was doing, demeaning me and just saying negative comments with others present” (Gaffney et al., 2012, p. 5)



Sometimes individuals feel victimized when victimization was not intended, and because the experience is decidedly personal, it's hard to make an objective assessment of what constitutes 'bullying.'



Interpreting bullying
communications and sorting
them out is complex

THERE'S THE RUB....





Moreover, as bullying interactions evolve, bullies and victims often switch roles



And as they try to discuss their angst,
victims often engage in ‘chaotic
communication’ (Tye-Williams & Krone, 2015)

....Like this:



“I really was never talked to like that before in a professional setting and was caught really off guard...making me feel bad about my age and that I have not been a nurse very long...you were just on defense at first and misunderstanding what I was trying to get out of the meeting, because later I feel like you started to understand I was just there to learn. I clearly was speechless the whole meeting. I am also embarrassed that I cried the whole time and was unable to express that. Sorry.”



Those with a history of sensed
inadequacy become victims and
may become bullies as well.

Meaning and safety reside in familiar roles



Bullies—pleasure in invoking emotional pain in others

(Dalton, 2007; Indvik & Johnson, 2015; Lieber, 2010; Szalavitz, 2010)

Victims may have learned the victim role

(Dzurec & Bromley, 2012; Karpinski et al., 2013)



Roles lived through early experiences
come to be expected and to make
cognitive and affective sense.

They are recognized roles, even if they
are not understood.



Over time, bullying sets up a stable and often unexamined power dynamic favoring bully perpetrators (Lutgen-Sandvik & McDermott, 2008)

It countermands the very features that constitute inclusive excellence.

SIMULTANEOUSLY,
ORGANIZATIONS ARE
BECOMING INCREASINGLY
COMPLEX (AND
CONTINUOUSLY, SUBTLY
SYSTEMATIZED)



A word cloud with the word "systems" as the largest and most central element. Other prominent words include "socially-constructed", "boundary-maintaining", "deliberately", "personnel", "tasks", "understandings", "designed", "patterned", "substitutability", "among", "participants", "goal-directed", "accomplishing", "activity", "technical", "orientation", "ready", "status", "human", "environmental", and "structures". The words are arranged in various orientations and colors, including purple, orange, yellow, green, and red.

activity
accomplishing
goal-directed
participants
substitutability
among
systems
technical
orientation
ready
status
human
environmental
tasks
understandings
designed
personnel
deliberately
boundary-maintaining
socially-constructed
structures



The unchallenged bully-victim dynamic interrupts organizational dynamics—creating false connections and driving victims increasingly further from inclusion as it is allowed to endure.



Often clandestinely. Yet,



“Everything could be snarled all to hell under the surface as long as you didn’t let it crack through and didn’t speak its name” (McLain, 2011, p. 284)



Some points to note:



Bullies' language is significantly challenging, even as it defies interpretation. As a result:



“She tried to smile, the way people do when they know the joke is on them, but not why” (King, 2011, p. 445).



The subtle affect of bullies'
language is not innocuous:



“...Stuff like that leaves an impression, especially when spoken in tones of dry scientific certainty. **Leaves an impression? A scar, more like it**” (King, 2011, p. 486).



Results on organizational
functioning:

A word cloud centered around the word "systems". The words are arranged in various orientations and colors. The central word "systems" is in a large, dark purple font. Other words include "socially-constructed", "goal-directed", "status", "participants", "understandings", "environmental", "deliberately", "tasks", "ready", "accomplishing", "personnel", "structures", "activity", "technical", "substitutability", "orientation", "human", "patterned", "among", "designed", and "boundary-maintaining".

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goal-directed
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Outcomes for bullies' victims (and once it's in place, it is contagious):



Left out of discussions, employees victimized through workplace bullying find themselves systematically overlooked, excluded from decisions and actions that benefit them and their employing organizations

(Goodboy, Martin, Knight, & Long, 2015).



Leaders' Roles Make a Difference



“Subordinates who perceived their supervisor as being low on agreeableness and high on introversion reported significantly more workplace bullying, supporting a negative halo effect hypothesis” (Mathiesen, Einarsen, & Mykletun, 2011, p. 637).



In other words, transformative leadership requires attention to workplace bullying.

We believe the way forward is through **inclusive excellence**.

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE





systemic actions that
focus specifically on
enhancement of diversity,
equity, inclusion, and
accountability



Workplace Culture Intangibly Shapes the Quality of Workplace Life

- Values
- Principles
- Beliefs
- Relationships

In a Positive Culture



Personal strengths and organizational needs match

Individual growth and development is fostered

Evaluation is performance-, not personality-, based

Resources support high quality worklife

In a Negative Culture

Benign neglect

Absent leader

Applauding only stars

Vague expectations

Uneven accountability

Worker isolation

Ignoring of individuals' anxiety

<http://www.hotelnewsnow.com/Articles.aspx/8466/Avoiding-10-workplace-culture-killers>

[\(Mathiesen, Einarsen, & Mykletun, 2011\)](#)

‘Employee Accountability Process’

(Koppelman, 2012; Marx, 2007)

- Protecting those we serve
- Practicing from an evidence base
- Fulfilling performance standards

AND

- TAKING CARE OF US

The single greatest impediment to error prevention in the medical industry is that we punish people for making (apparent) mistakes
(Leape, 2002)

Palpable mistakes (like the alleged ‘mistakes’ involved in bullying) influence quality of care and organizational outcomes

JUST CULTURE

Marx, 2007

HUMAN ERROR	AT-RISK BEHAVIOR	UNREASONABLE RISK
<p>LEADER'S ROLE:</p> <p>Process reassessment</p> <p>Procedural changes</p> <p>Training and Environment redesign</p>	<p>LEADER'S ROLE:</p> <p>Remove negative incentives</p> <p>Introduce positive incentives</p> <p>Increase situational awareness</p>	<p>LEADER'S ROLE:</p> <p>Remediate</p> <p>Take punitive action</p> <p>(Table from Marx, 2007)</p>

LIKELIHOOD THAT I AM SEEING BULLYING INCREASES LEFT
 ↳ to RIGHT

CONSOLE	COACH	PUNISH
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So what do you need
to know about
workplace bullying
to promote a
supportive learning
culture?

- ✓ Providing tools to line managers
- ✓ Redesigning inadequate systems
- ✓ Developing managerial competencies
- ✓ Assuring quality
- ✓ Building relevant policy
- ✓ Acting from a place of authenticity



Consider a whole-person approach,
incorporating: physical,
psychological, social, spiritual (and I
would add cognitive) considerations



And NEVER forget:

The Drunken Driver has the Right-of-Way

“The loudest has the final say,/ The wanton win, the
rash hold sway,/ The realist's rules of order say/ The
drunken driver has the right of way.”

Coen, E. (2009). (Poems). The drunken driver has the
right of way. NY: Three Rivers.

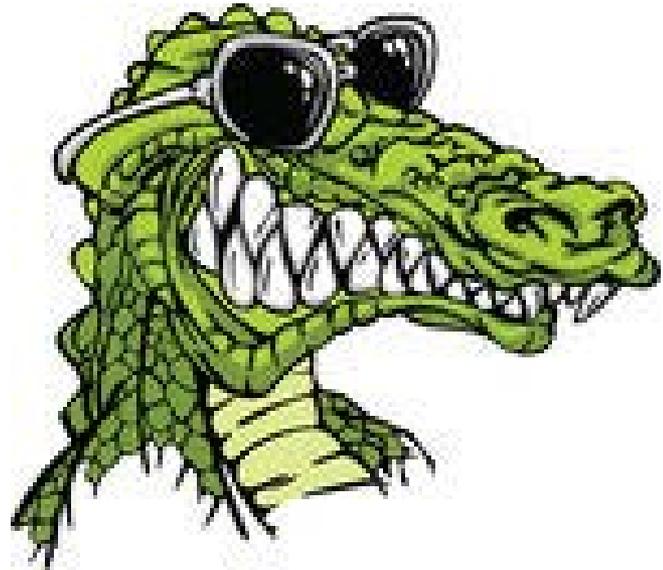
UNLESS WE ARREST
HIM/HER

IF WE'RE GROWING, WE'RE
ALWAYS GOING TO BE OUT
OF OUR COMFORT ZONE.

JOHN MAXWELL

▪
▪

When growth focuses primarily on the tangible aspects of the job—



A better alternative:



strengthened culture through
attention to workplace bullying