ADDRESSING WORKPLACE BULLYING: FROM VICTIM TO CHAMPION

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Presentation Objectives:
1. Distinguish aspects of workplace bullying
2. Describe the role of context in workplace bullying
3. Select ways to celebrate and strengthen workplace context
4. Engage in addressing bullying vignettes
5. Develop a plan for going forward

Presentation Summary Objective:

“And the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started And know the place for the first time” (p. 61)

What does ‘workplace bullying’ mean to you?............

Let’s Chat

Workplace bullying: often subtle, engaged, repeated, behavior – intentional or involving ‘reckless disregard’ (Parzefall & Salin, 2010) – posing a physical and/or psychological threat and a perception of hurt through a power imbalance mediated by a stable constellation of unacknowledged conditions.

Our research suggests the workplace bullying is a hotbed of ‘unacknowledged conditions’
“Unacknowledged conditions make the actors’ understanding possible but are not included in their accounts” — Allen, 1995, p. 177.

A simple but telling example.....

“Say those three little words that will make me walk on air.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPECTATION:</th>
<th>VEILED REPLY:</th>
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<td>“I love you.”</td>
<td>“Go hang yourself.”</td>
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AN OLD JOKE — Two sets of rules with illustration
Once established, bullying represents a deterministic, dynamical system run by unacknowledged rules

OUTCOME: an enduring configuration of personal and organizational discomfort that will lead to personal suffering and organizational dysfunction if it is not actively curtailed

(as reported repeatedly in the literature)
Victims are silenced and bullying is perpetuated "by powerful barriers to communication"

--Allan, Cowie & Smith, 2009, p. 902; Dzurec, et al., 2013; Sedivy-Benton et al., 2015

How can that happen?

--Dali 1952
Mathematically, bullying acts at a highly theoretical level in a predictable way as a deterministic, non-random, dynamical system.

\[ a^2 + b^2 = c^2 \]

A deterministic dynamical system suggests a dynamical rule that specifies the immediate future of all state variables, given only the present values of those same state variables.

What this means: Our “language speaks us”

-- Allen, 1995, p. 176
Communication Barriers—paradoxes in bullying language

Hints and innuendo
One-way ‘doublespeak’ (Herman, 1992; Orwell, 1949)
Decontextualization (Hamilton-Wieler, 1988)
Demeaning, shaming, and stealing voice

—Dzurec, Kennison, & Albataineh, 2014; Dzurec & Bromley, 2012

You decide:
Unfortunate workplace situation?
Manager on a mission?
Workplace bullying?

Exercise: Gina & Susan—Context, Perpetrator, Target
Break?

\[ a^2 + b^2 = c^2 \]

The Influence of Lived History

We learn to communicate in our families, and then we use that skill, every day in every way

"Dzurec, Kennison, Gillen, & Crube, 2015"
Behaviors and descriptions characterizing historical family dynamics frequently figured:

- in published, victims’ descriptions of their communications
- in theoretical descriptions

“I feel I don’t measure up to their expectations… Somehow I wasn’t good enough there either… I had nobody to ask when I grew up. Dad was out of the game and mum didn’t know much. I copied classmates that I knew came from good families.”

“… constant bickering about petty issues”

-- Strandmark & Hallberg, 2007, p. 337

“Respondents described actions such as deans or directors throwing paper across the room, banging hands on the table in meetings, shouting, loudly criticizing faculty in front of their colleagues, and looking at others dismissively ‘down their noses’”

Childhood neglect leads to development of violence (Bolger et al., 2001)

Stress emerges as personal and professional values diverge (Strandmark & Hilberg, 2007)

“Old baggage” (p. 289) characterizes workplace difficulties (Lindy & Schaefer, 2010)

Childhood experiences and subsequent vulnerability are linked (Tracey & Alberts, 2006)

“Hierarchical regression analyses revealed that ‘expecting loyalty in exchange for nurture at work’ relates positively with the experience of bullying. In contrast, findings indicated a negative association between leadership involving ‘behaving like a senior family member at work’ and bullying.”

--Soylu, 2011, p. 217

Impact—We learn what we live, and then we live what we learn....
As Heidegger noted, we are our histories:

"In its factual Being, any Dasein is as it already was, and it is 'what' it already was. It is its past, whether explicitly or not" (p. 41).


To interpret is...to set up a shadow world of 'meanings.' It is to turn the world into this world” (p. 7)—Sontag, 1966.

A function of ‘core whatness’
-Kerr, 2002; Parse, 2013
CORE WHATNESS:
Who we are—and what think we see, as a result—represents an amazing amalgamation of physiology and philosophy —Kerr, 2002; Parse, 2013

How can that happen?

Your brain is wired to make sense of the world
--Alper, 2008; Alper, 2008; Berdyaev, 1957/1952; Lotto, 2012

Given an incomplete picture, your brain must complete it
Your brain looks for context to make sense of sights and sounds as it builds on context from your past, that is, your lived experiences

Do you hear what I hear?

Abandonment?

Black, 2002
Our pragmatic utility process suggested that for those victimized by bullying situations, the recall of strong and negative past memories — those involving loss, shame, and abandonment, for example — may act to define ongoing bully-victim communication and relationship parameters, significantly influencing opportunities for the development of personal resilience.

\[ a^2 + b^2 = c^2 \]

Communication and Lived History Interface

“It was at the end of a dry season, Orleanna,” he snapped. “When it’s hot enough the puddles dry up.” You brainless nitwit, he did not need to add (p. 74) (italics added).

— Kingswood, The Poisonwood Bible, 1998
Thoughts?

What did the chef say to the sous chef?

“He just didn’t seem to understand the banter.”
--Alexander, MacLaren, O’Gorman, & Taheri, 2012

This is where things start to get a little fuzzy
“Our research highlights that... verbal bullying... has no effect on either satisfaction or commitment... bullying behaviour... is... a cohesive aspect of kitchen culture... behavioural impacts, rather than bullying characteristics, must be considered within their context... to establish whether or not they are actually damaging to an industry.” --Alexander, MacLaren, O’Gorman, & Taheri, 2012, p. 1245

Based on history, the brain can make mistakes in interpreting meaning—especially when communication content and process don’t match (as in bullying)– but what’s NOT said trumps everything else.

A closer look at how unacknowledged conditions take hold
Eleanor Roosevelt (n.d.) asserted that “No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.”

Context is everything and it represents present and past

First, physiology:

“In the case of fearful experiences, or fearful feelings, the conscious emotion may be the result of some immediately present stimulus triggering long-term explicit memories and amygdala activation”

Second, prosody:

Prosody – the source of more than 90% of interpreted communication meaning

--(Pell, 2005; Dzurec, Kennison, & Albataineh, 2014)

Third, we extend our history through language and interpretation:

‘Language speaks us’

--Allen, 1995; Gadamer, 1979

http://www.dailyliked.net/backwards-brain-bicycle/
In bullying, **victims** give unacknowledged consent as a function of core whatness as they interpret the surrounding environment—

**THIS IS NOT THE SAME AS ASKING FOR IT!!**

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**WARNING**

Acknowledging core whatness can engender vulnerability!!

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We don’t generally acknowledge vulnerability
— Brown, 2015
What happens if you do acknowledge vulnerability?

Let’s discuss

What *could* happen if we acknowledge vulnerability

“Vulnerability is the courage to show up and be seen.”

— B. Brown
http://www.forbes.com/sites/davidkwilliams/2013/07/18/the-best-leaders-are-vulnerable/#2a8789887dce
Vulnerability and courage, used within a principles-based setting, is vital and non-negotiable.

(http://www.forbes.com/sites/davidkwilliams/2013/07/18/the-best-leaders-are-vulnerable/2/#6f72720f2867

In your worklife, what makes you most vulnerable? And what are the ways you address it?

Let's chat

Refuse to Give Consent
Potential for Damage to an Industry:
Uninformed Core Whatness, Lived History of Abandonment,
Language Speaking Us in an Unprincipled Setting

\[ a^2 + b^2 = c^2 \]

Need a break?

It's Beyond 'Me:' What's Happening in the Environment to Facilitate Bullying
Bullies have core whatness, too

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Aggressor
Victim
Savior
Martyr
Expert

(Dzurec and Ross)

Bullying Axes

Fear
Covetous
Criminality
Frenzy

MacYoung

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Aggressive Bully

“Your thinking is all wrong” – Gaffney et al., 2012, p. 9

“…All her friends ganged up against me when I reported it” – Gaffney et al., 2012, p. 5
“Cheryl stated that she ‘didn’t want to be anywhere where she could approach me alone.’ This idea of ‘not wanting to be alone with the instigator’…dealt with fear and intimidation” (Peters, 2014, p. 221).

Yamada (2013) noted that among the most adept bullies are those who present themselves as helpless.

“the more subtle ways in which faculty may remain employed but disengaged—essentially, ‘retiring on the job.’” (Keashly & Neuman, 2010, p. 54), simultaneously encouraging others to do their work for them.

*Savior:*

“She (bully) said I’d (victim) be at risk. I’d be intimidated and she was fearful for me” (Corney, 2008, p. 173).
(parenthetical phrases added)
Martyr: “shield them from retaliation” (Keashly & Neuman, 2010, p. 57)

Expert: “Janice… said, ‘...I brought a research article that described how the board passage rates in one institution dropped after their curriculum revision, which happened to be the one our leader was proposing, had been revised and implemented...She started yelling at me and pointing her finger telling me I was just trying to make things difficult and that we needed to move forward.’” (Condon, 2015, p. 23).

There is a core whatness in the bully-target relationship, itself
10 Characteristics of Healthy Workplace Relationships

- Members are responsible for their own happiness/successes/failures
- Members aren’t trying to ‘fix’ each other (but they may coach)
- The relationship is appropriately balanced
- Conflicts are addressed head-on and then dropped
- Feelings (as appropriate) are shared honestly and openly
- Members take time to care for themselves
- The relationship takes precedence over personal needs
- Members agree to disagree
- Members value the relationship
- Sometimes, just spending time together is a good thing

Victim depends on relationship and follows objective rules to serve self and organization

Bully depends on relationship and follows subjective rules to serve self WITHIN the organization’s rules

Mutual need fuels their ongoing commitment

--Dzurec, Fitzgerald, Karpinski, Bromley, Meyers, Phillips, 2013

Bullies and victims readily flip their respective roles as their relationships continue
CATASTROPHIZATION works both ways

Our research shows that self-identified victims tend to respond emotionally (not cognitively) to bullying

---Bromley & Dzurec, 2010; Dzurec & Bromley, 2012; Karpinski et al., 2013

Catastrophization involves rumination, magnification and helplessness

---Sullivan, Bishop, & Pivik, 1995

In bullying, it is an emotional response to relational pain –

---Karpinski, et al., 2013; Bromley & Dzurec, 2010; Dzurec & Bromley, 2012

The bully-victim relationship is ongoing

---Dzurec & Bromley, 2012; Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009; Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011

Victims often don’t notice bullying until it’s gone on for some time

---MacIntosh, Wuest, Gray, & Aldous, 2010; Dzurec & Bromley, 2012; Dzurec, Kennison, & Alftatalo, 2014

Bully/victim relationships are complex and confusing

Bullies need power
feels insecure
seeks sense of self from others
establishes inappropriate expectations
readily violates boundaries
meets personal needs within organizational structure

\[ a^2 + b^2 = c^2 \] for bullies
history of abandonment
challenged sense of self-worth (Black, 1999)
committed to understanding the bully’s needs
hard-pressed to capture ‘what happened’
generally committed, hardworking, honest,
unadmittedly vulnerable (Brown, 2015)

\[ a^2 + b^2 = c^2 \] for vulnerable targets

Personal AND organizational factors the deter reporting

Corporate Attitude of Denial
A Culture of Violence; Workplace Dehumanization
Lack of: Worker Empowerment, Teamwork/Partnerships
    Incentives, as well as existing Disincentives
    Awareness
    Information, Access to Available Information
    Communication/Training
    Resources;
    Reporting AND Follow-Up with Consequences
    Written Policy and Definitions

DHHS, 2006
• long-term employee interrelationships
• entitlements
• ambiguous evaluation procedures; and
• the notion of ‘academic freedom’
  --(Keashly & Neuman, 2008)
• struggles
  --(Peters, 2014)

Academic Organizations, in particular, facilitate bullying

Race and gender certainly can act as ‘unacknowledged conditions’ (Martin, 2015), influenced by unrecognized contextual bias (Fischer, 2015)

What happens when victims report?
Qualitative analysis of 102 narrative reports:

variability and unevenness of administrative responses

targets’ collective sense of administrative abandonment (status limbo)

--Dzurec, 2013

“Participants’ periodic but regular follow-ups unleashed a complex spiral of events that made their predicament more difficult than ever”

--D’Cruz & Noronha, 2010, p. 111

Potentially at issue:

Victims’ ‘chaotic narratives?’

“Co-worker responses of support or lack thereof were related to the construction of various narrative forms and the level of narrative agency evident in target accounts”

--Tye-Williams & Krone, 2015, p. 3
"Right, okay, so, and, from from then on it, it just sort of over an eighteen month period, it, it gradually got worse and worse and I became, um, alienated from the team. At team meetings I would feel, um, that, that I couldn't speak sometimes and then other times I would. I would gain my strength and pick myself up for a while but then something would happen because, because, being frank, a lot of report writing and there were always that they could pull your reports to patients, you see and then it, it, it went from my senior to, to, to the manager who I don't think he'll move anywhere really so, and then she sort of developed, and several more people, or, or I just felt I was becoming more and more in this light and then it was impacting on my health slowly and, uh, it just went on from there, really" (pp. 12-13).

A Chaotic Victim Narrative (Tye-Williams & Krone, 2015)

Existentially, workplace bullying may be a mutually-shared path: to personal safety for the perpetrator and to sense-making for the target and maybe to both for bystanders.

Individuals' behaviors are strongly influenced by personal emotions and environmental characteristics; moreover, complexity makes it hard to know what to do—so individuals tend to do whatever takes the least effort—to default.

Amir, Ariely & Mazar, 2008; Andrade & Ariely, 2009; Ariely, 2011)

Behavioral Economics
Addressing a sense of abandonment and vulnerability (Black, 1999; Brown, 2015) may apply to bullies, targets, and administrators as they deal with the upshots of bullying.

Abandonment and Vulnerability

Avoid Becoming A Victim

At personal and organizational levels, selective inattention (Chabris & Simons, 2010)?

Or possibly resource control theory (Hawley, Shorey, & Alderman, 2009) at work?

Attend to relevant theories: Selective Inattention and Resource Control
Consider that emotions replace ‘rational’ thought, becoming chaotic and contributing to bullying’s dynamism for targets who are victimized and for bystanders.

For a more positive experience?

Strengthen YOU and Strengthen Workplace Context
Features that Rout Bullying Efforts

- prosody, stated intent, and personal expectations match organizational goals are primary for everyone
- standards are established and followed
- authentic involvement of all stakeholders
- trust, vulnerability, honesty

Recognize What Bullying is NOT

- Being ‘hard but fair’
  - Using objective evaluation standards
  - Implementing performance based, not personality based, assessments

What bullying is NOT
Just as everyone has a role in its perpetuation, everyone has a role in taking care of bullying’s management and elimination.

Working Together is Mandatory

Individuals’ needs for affect
--Schlett & Ziegler, 2014
Social support structures
--AbuAlRub, 2004
Shared interpretations of workplace events
--Brooks, 1995; Lau, 2013

Develop an active, conscious organization

Bad News, Good News: Conversational Order In Everyday Talk And Clinical Settings. Chicago: University Of Chicago.

Recognize the power of verbal and nonverbal language nuances.
“The more one can be emotionally neutral about the relationship process between others, the more efficient will be a detriangulating maneuver”—Kerr, 1988, p. 57.

The more cognizant of unacknowledged conditions we all can be, the more efficient will be efforts to stem workplace bullying.

- Recognize organizational goals
- Separate thoughts and emotions
- Facilitate change directly
- Distinguish who others are from what they do
- Tap into your own core whatness
- Acknowledge your vulnerabilities

Recognize personal needs and emotions
Limit system-based mistakes
Manage personnel effectively and objectively

Build a Just Culture

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<th>AT-RISK BEHAVIOR</th>
<th>UNREASONABLE RISK</th>
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<td>Process reassessment</td>
<td>Remove negative incentives</td>
<td>Remediate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Procedural changes</td>
<td>Introduce positive incentives</td>
<td>Take punitive action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and Environment redesign</td>
<td>Increase situational awareness</td>
<td>(Table from Marx, 2007)</td>
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Likelihood of Dysfunctional Culture and Bullying Increases Left to Right

WPB Statistics: (as of Spring 2016)

3 states (UT, TN, CA) have enacted workplace bullying legislation; many bills have been introduced

http://healthyworkplacebill.org/
Expectations of mutual employee support
Value for time away from work
Clear communication
Active thought
Recognition of individual need and uniqueness
Work patterns that promote ‘breathing space’

Just Culture characteristics

Findings of our recent study demonstrated the inadequacy of policy and seriously spotty progress in establishing useful legislation—Where are the unacknowledged conditions?
--Dzurec et al., 2013

With language in mind, consider developing appropriate policies to halt inattentual blindness (Chabris & Simons, 2010) emerging from the unacknowledged factors that direct its occurrence and perpetuation

Build a policy
Let's review major points

Know that context (with its emergents) is everything

Workplaces should encourage reporting: ‘If you suspect something, say something’

Recognize Inherent Challenges:

- Bullying is compelling, as the brain is challenged by the confusing, one-way, doublespeak messages of bullying
- External pressures, such as unions, reinforce bully-victim dynamic
- Administrators must intervene to stop bullying, but there is not language to explain its seriousness
- It’s hard to think on your feet when you’re under this kind of pressure
- Current policies are not useful
Think proactively not reactively about workplace bullying
Think about your own history of loss
Put labels on what you are seeing—recognize your shame
The long-term, predictability of workplace bullying
The vague responses to its components
The ways bullies get their way
The emotional, catastrophizing response of ‘victims’
The bully’s ability to back you into a corner
What the bully DIDN’T say to you

Encourage
Personal Trust
Take a stand based on what is proper, honest
Keep records
Report what is happening using objective, rational language
Study and improve policies

‘Burden of Proof’ (Sanders, et al., 2012) is challenged by unacknowledged conditions
“And the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started And know the place for the first time” (p. 61)


As champions