

# Behind Office Doors: Bullying in the Workplace

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# Objectives: What....

- \* Is workplace bullying?
- \* Are behaviors are associated with workplace bullying?
- \* Is the impact of workplace bullying?
- \* Are strategies that can be used to manage workplace bullying?

# Workplace Bullying



- \* **Repeated**, health-harming mistreatment of one or more persons (the targets) by one or more perpetrators.
- \* **Abusive** treatment
- \* Unethical and unfavorable treatment of one person over another.

\* (Keashly & Neuman, 2010; Namie & Namie, 2009; Namie & Namie, 2014; [bullyonline.org](http://bullyonline.org))

# Definition

- \* “is a type of interpersonal aggression that is frequent, intense, and occurs over a specific period of time” (Lester, p. ix 2013)
  - \* There is a combination of power dynamics:
- \* Mobbing involves more than one actor going after a target.



# Facts

- \* Approximately, 54 million people are bullied
  - \* Many reports involve two or more individuals
- \* 35% of professionals reported being bullied in their careers (***Lester 2013 preface***)
- \* **ONLY 23%** of bullies receive any consequences because targets are not believed
  - \* (Keashly & Nuewman, 2010, Crothers, Lipinski, & Minutolo, 2009, Namie & Namie, 2009, Namie & Namie, 2014)

# Facts

- \* Is 4 times more prevalent than illegal, discriminatory harassment.
  - \* 80% of bullying cases did not lend themselves to protected classes (Namie & Namie, 2014)
- \* Is LEGAL
- \* Can happen anywhere: but linked to leadership changes and resource shortages.
  - \* (Keashly & Neuwman, 2010, Crothers, Lipinski, & Minutolo, 2009, Namie & Namie, 2009; Namie & Namie, 2014)

# Verbal

- \* Yelling
- \* Lying
- \* Belittling
- \* Profanity
- \* Spreading Rumors
- \* Gossiping
- \* Name calling
- \* Teasing
- \* Putdowns



# Physical

- \* Intimidation
- \* Unwanted physical contact
- \* Violating personal boundaries
- \* Aggressive posturing
- \* Physical altercation



\* ("Types of Bullying in the Workplace," 2014)



# Non-verbal

- \* Isolation
- \* Exclusion
- \* Avoidance
- \* Ignoring
- \* Eye rolling
- \* Unwanted physical gestures
- \* Inappropriate written material
- \* Interfering or altering office space, materials, and/or equipment
- \* Retaliation

\* (Queensland Government, 2007, p. 1)

# Cyber

- \* Unwanted or threatening emails , voice messages and/or texts messages
- \* Forwarding emails to others
- \* Cc-ing others in on emails
- \* Posts on social networking sites
- \* Signing person up for unwanted information



# The Bully

- Vindictive in private but charming in public: Efforts appear to be caring
- Portray self as wonderful but actual behaviors contradict this
- Can't distinguish between leadership and bullying
- Counter attacks and denies when asked to clarify
- Manipulates and uses others

\* (Keashly & Neuman, 2010; Namie & Namie, 2009; Namie & Namie, 2014)

# The Bully

- Are obsessed with controlling others
- Use charm and behave appropriately when superiors are present
- Are convincing and compulsive liars and no remorse
- Excel at deception, lack conscience, and are dysfunctional
  - (Keashly & Neuman, 2010; Namie & Namie, 2009; Namie & Namie, 2014)

# Targets

- \* Fair
  - \* Caring
  - \* Ethical
  - \* Creative
  - \* Competent
  - \* Vulnerable
  - \* Social
  - \* Collaborative
  - \* Honest
- \* (Lester, 2013, Namie & Namie, 2014)



# Impact on Individuals

- Poor physical and mental health
  - PTSD, anxiety, depression, panic attacks, cardiovascular problems, nausea, tremors, gastrointestinal issues, sleep disorders, and etc.
- Increased absences
- Impaired self-esteem
- Decreased productivity and morale

\* (Keashly & Neuman, 2010; Namie & Namie, 2009; Namie & Namie, 2014)

# Impact on Individuals

- \* Withdrawal and isolation
- \* Shame, guilt, and humiliation
- \* Poor work relationships
- \* Financial harm

\* (Keashly & Neuman, 2010; Namie & Namie, 2009; Namie & Namie, 2014)

# Impact on Organizations



- Increased turn over
  - Lose the best staff: keep the worse
- Financial loss: increased sick leave, health claims, absenteeism, recruit new employees
- Decreased productivity, morale, and creativity
- Legal issues

\* (Keashly & Neuman, 2010; Namie & Namie, 2009; Gordan, 2013; Namie & Namie, 2014)



# Strategies that do not work for targets

- \* Reporting to
  - \* Supervisor/management
  - \* Human resources
  - \* Union
- \* Filing a formal complaint
- \* Talking to bully: themselves or others
- \* Threatening to tell others

(Lester, 2013)

# Strategies that work for targets

- \* Left: voluntarily or involuntarily
- \* Developed social support: family, friends, and/or co-workers
- \* Avoided bully
- \* Managed emotions, thoughts, and behaviors
- \* (Lester, 2013)



# Additional Strategies

- \* Decide a strategy and be strategic
- \* Find support and consultation
- \* Early intervention
- \* Try to get supportive witnesses



\* (Keashly & Neuman, 2010; Namie & Namie, 2009; Namie & Namie, 2014)

# Additional Strategies

- \* Document, document, document
- \* Don't engage in bullying behavior
- \* Advocate for legislation

\* (Keashly & Neuman, 2010; Namie & Namie, 2009; Namie & Namie, 2014)

# Strategies for Organizations



- \* Have good leadership
- \* Be quick to action and take seriously
- \* Need to understand what the target is experiencing
- \* Be diligent to identify bullies, support witnesses, and protect the target

# Strategies For Organizations

- \* Talk to witnesses:
  - \* They play a role in prevention and management
- \* Assess your organization for where it is
  - \* Talk to all people on all levels
- \* Get feedback from workers on formal policies and approaches that may be more effective than informal
  - \* Develop and follow a workplace bullying policy

# Strategies for Prevention

- \* Communicate and ensure that the environment is one where respect and civility prevail
- \* When hiring, screen for bullying behavior
- \* Educate and train staff including human resources



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