

Research on bullying and harassment in the NL workplace.

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- ***The workplace is the fifth leading cause of death in the U.S., and many workplace practices are as harmful to health as second-hand smoke. Worse than the enormous physical and psychological toll on people and the enormous economic costs to companies and society, is that no one seems to care as work arrangements move toward less, rather than more, healthful environments.***
- Jeffrey Pfeffer (Stanford U.), expounding on themes raised in his 2018 book, *Dying for a Paycheck*.

Workplace bullying defined:



- **Bullying at work involves repeated negative actions and practices that are directed at one or more workers. The behaviours are unwelcome to the *target* and undertaken in circumstances where the target has difficulty in defending him or herself. The behaviours may be carried out as a deliberate act or unconsciously. These behaviours cause humiliation, offence and distress to the target. The outcomes of the bullying behaviours have been shown to cause clinically significant distress and impairment in social, occupational, and other areas of functioning.**
- **(Einarsen et al., 2003: 15)**

Prevalance

- **40% of Canadian workers experience bullying on a weekly basis**
- **The 2011 Public Service Employee Survey (PSES), which includes all federal government:**
 - **employees, found that 29% of about 200,000 survey respondents experienced harassment in the previous 2 years.**
 - **37% of workers have been bullied: 13% currently and 24% previously.**
 - **40% of bullied individuals never tell their employers and 62% of employers who are told ignore the problem, hoping that it will stop on its own, not knowing what to do or normalizing this damaging behaviour.**
 - **45% of targets suffer stress-related health problems.**

The workplace bully



- **An exaggerated degree of apparent respect to those in authority above them (Harvey, 2002).**
- **Often invisible and occurs behind closed doors without witnesses.**
- **Play mind games, reverse psychology, a taker & mean-spirited.**
- **Even if witnessed, team members usually side with the bully (feel intimidated themselves).**
- **Pathological liar, deceptive, charming, shallow & superficial.**
- **Need for control with sociopathic and/or psychopathic tendencies (UK National Workplace Bullying, 2009).**
- **Insecure people with poor or non-existent social skills and little empathy. They turn this insecurity outwards, finding satisfaction in their ability to attack and diminish the capable people around them (Canada Safety Council, 2009).**
- **Lisa Adams (October 30, 2013)**

Pat Ferris - Workplace bullying



- **Harassing, offending, socially excluding, negatively impacting work tasks**
- **Repeated and regular (i.e., weekly)**
- **Over time i.e., 6 months**
- **Escalating**
- **Target gets in an inferior position**
- **Target often does not know why they were targeted**
- **Different from incivility, conflict, harassment, violence**
- **Quebec has law under Labor Code as does British Columbia**
- **Other provinces have law under Occupational Health and Safety**
- **Generally managed through civil court (constructive dismissal), Arbitration, or criminal court (intentional infliction of nervous shock)**

Three categories of workplace bullying



- **Threat to personal standing such as public humiliation, verbal threats, shunning the target, and spreading gossip or rumors:**
specific behaviors include cursing, screaming, and publicly criticizing the target, cutting someone out of meetings and social events
- **Threat to professional standing:**
withholding vital information, work obstruction, taking credit for the target's work, denying access to training, not providing constructive feedback, and assigning impossible tasks or workloads
- **Tactics of control and manipulation:**
the bully attempts to control the target by threatening job loss, isolating the target i.e., office away from others

Types of workplace bullies

- **Subtle bullies** – torment their targets with quiet but piercing techniques. Is a two-faced, passive-aggressive destroyer of reputations through rumour spreading, controls target's reputation.
- **Abusive bullies** – hound a target employee without mercy, and humiliates target in a public setting.
- **Controlling bullies** – control target via withholding resources (e.g. time, budget, autonomy, training) necessary to succeed.
- **Raging bullies** – intimidate everyone in the vicinity with their out-of-control anger.
- **Echo bullies** – are not normally abusive, these bullies mimic bullying behavior with their own subordinates.

Types of workplace bullies - continued



- **Opportunistic bullies** – are competitive people who are interested in making career gains even though it may involve stepping on other people.
- **Critic bullies** – falsely accuse and undermine targets behind closed doors, attempting to control the target's self-identity.
- **Source:** Workplace Bullying Institute, and *Bullying Bosses: A Survivor's Guide* by Robert Mueller

What is not bullying



- **Expression of conflicting opinions**
- **Direct communication**
- **Corrective feedback**
- **People just not getting along**
- **High performance standards**
- **One-time verbally aggressive outburst**

Who bullies



- **Everyone from time to time**
- **Stressed individuals**
- **Bullied individuals**
- **Narcissists**
- **Anti-social organizations**

Who are the targets

- **Anyone**
- **Competent workers, high belief in justice, politically unaware**
- **Outsider position**
- **Three broad types:**
 - Provocative (less agreeable, prone to arguments or freely speaking mind)**
 - Submissive (passive, insecure, desire for approval, conflict avoidant)**
 - Rigidly conscientious (organized, self disciplined, conventional, moralistic, rule bound)**

Impact on the targets

- **Anxiety**
- **Depression**
- **Obsessions**
- **Post-traumatic disorders**
- **Suicidal thinking and suicide**
- **Loss of self, identity, and beliefs in the world**
- **Health related concerns such as heart disease**
- **Financial: loss of career**
- **Family**

Return to work issues



- **Adequate time off work**
- **Often takes longer than a traditional diagnosis may indicate**
- **If the workplace has not addressed the bullying behaviors secondary gain becomes an issue in return to work**
- **Re-entry interview**
- **Support from supervisors/leaders to address workplace issues – may need facilitation**
- **Protection from bullying going forward**
- **Graduated return to work**
- **On-going monitoring/follow-up of employee and group**
- **Continued psychological treatment**
- **Confidential supporter**

Evidence based treatment



- **Narrative and art therapy for processing**
- **Group therapy for support: *caution!***
- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy components:**
 - Management of Physiology: breathing and relaxation**
 - Hypnotherapy**
 - Identifying and correcting negative beliefs**
- **Rumination Based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy**
- **Acceptance and Commitment Therapy**
- **Psychoanalytic Therapy**
- **Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing-caution, not much evidence for bullying yet. This is essentially exposure therapy and if used early on could destabilize the client**

Examples of workplace harassment



- **Dr. Gabrielle Horne**
- **Halifax cardiology researcher Dr. Gabrielle Horne has won a landmark \$1.4 million lawsuit against the Nova Scotia Health Authority, the largest sum ever awarded in Canada for damages due to loss of reputation and career.**
- **<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/gabrielle-horne-lawsuit-award-1.3641444>**
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- **Robert Duhaime**
- **Took his life because he was bullied at work, Workers' Compensation Board rules in his wife's favour**
- **<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/robert-duhaime-wcb-tribunal-appeal-decision-1.5067862>**
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- **Eric Donovan**
- **The Workers Compensation Board reviewed Eric Donovan's death and — although they couldn't say with 100 per cent certainty — they found his death was likely brought on by stress caused by bullying.**
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- **<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-eric-lisa-donovan-workplace-bullying-legislation-1.4900031>**

What is happening in Canada?



- **Bill C-65 received Royal assent on October 25, 2018 Canadian Labour Code sections (Harassment and violence) new section to protect federal workers at 8% of the workplace.**
- **<https://www.parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/bill/C-65/royal-assent>**

What is happening in Newfoundland and Labrador?



- **The Harassment-Free Workplace Policy**
- **https://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/exec/hrs/working_with_us/harassment_free_workplace.html#pre**

What can the bullied person do?



- **1. Documentation – frequency, regularity & patterns.**
- **2. Build your supports - rarely are you alone.**
- **3. Know policies & legislation.**
- **4. Know yourself, your body and your strengths and limitations.**
- **5. Stand up for yourself (courage, strength & determination).**

Concluding comments from the therapists

- **Workplace bullying is a serious work-place injury that wounds the human soul**
- **It is one of the most painful and traumatizing experiences a human can have**
- **If treated early standard therapies and safety are effective**
- **If treated long after onset treatment is very difficult**
- **The core of treatment is first a safe human and warm therapeutic relationship. Client centred therapy is the beginning**
- **Education that bullying behaviour is not normal is important**
- **A therapist must be adaptable and bring a range of skills to treatment**
- **Third wave CBT treatments such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, wisdom therapy and rumination focused CBT hold promise however, it is the relationship that is most healing**

Research Questions



- **what are the lived experiences for employees bullied in the workplace**
- **what are the lived experiences for employees when seeking supportive help from others.**

Discussion



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Sources

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- **<http://www.grahamlowe.ca/documents/284/Bullying%20and%20mobbing%20fact%20sheet%20-%20LOWE.pdf>**
- **October 30, 2013: Dr. Lisa Adams - Workplace Bullying: The Silent Epidemic, NLCAHR presentation**

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- **[1] Workplace Bullying Institute “Workplace Bullying Survey,” (2007)
<http://www.workplacebullying.org/research/WBI-Zogby2007Survey.html> (accessed July 31, 2009).**