Mental Health & Bullying: Workplace Hazards & Liabilities

Research on the Rock
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Purposes of Work

- defines who we are as people, as humans (birth-death)
- promotes growth & development of one’s self
- Defines our personhood
- Valued member of society
- Defines your social persona
- Self concept- increased self-esteem, sense of identity, self image, sense of purpose, self worth, autonomy, independence and achievement, personal satisfaction, and personal fulfillment
- Cognitive stimulation

- *Bread and butter* 😊
10 Hallmarks of a Psychologically Safe Workplace

1. Psychological support
2. Organizational culture
3. Clear leadership and expectations
4. Civility and respect
5. Growth and development
6. Recognition and reward
7. Involvement and influence
8. Workload management
9. Balance
10. Psychological protection
The Faces of Mental Health @ Work

**Workplace bullying** = “Those who can, do, those who can’t bully” → 45% PSAC

**Addictions** = Lost productivity in Canada is 24.3 billion/yr

**Violence** = 1. Argentina 2. France 3. England & Wales 4. Canada 5. Finland. Violence means the attempted or actual exercise by a person, *other than a worker*, of physical force to cause injury to a worker, and includes threatening statements or behaviour which gives a worker reason to believe that he or she is at a risk of injury.

**Moral distress/ethics** = knowing what is right and not speaking up.

**Individuals with Mental Illness** = the challenges, the not knowing, the anxiety… *PTSD* 9.2% (Canada #1)… *Harassment* 60%… *Sexual Harassment* 30%
Bullying at Work

The common denominator

- Is the on-going health- or career **endangering mistreatment** of an employee, by one or more of their peers or higher-ups
- A **consistent** pattern of behavior designed to control diminish or devalue a peer (or group) that creates a risk to health and/or safety
- The **persistent** demeaning and downgrading of humans through vicious words and cruel acts that gradually undermine confidence and self esteem
- **Repeated** offensive, vindictive, cruel or malicious behavior used as attempts to humiliate or undermine an individual or employee(s)
- The **misuse of power or position** that undermines a person’s ability, or leaves them feeling hurt, frightened, angry or powerless

"All cruelty springs from weakness."
(Seneca, 4BC-AD65)
AKA

Workplace bullying
Horizontal hostility
Lateral violence
Mobbing
Psychological/emotional abuse
Toxic workplace behaviors

“Professional Cannibalism”
Bullying Statistics

- As many as 10% of suicides may be related to workplace traumatization
- 81% of bullies are in supervisory roles
- 58% of bullies are female
- 84% of bullied employees are female
- 21% of all workers have been targeted by bullies
- Targets endure bullying for almost 2 years before complaining
- Only 13% of bullies are ever punished or terminated
- 71% of bullies outrank their targets
The Profile of a Bully

- an exaggerated degree of apparent respect to those in authority above them
- 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
- 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
The DSM-IV Diagnostic Criteria for Narcissistic Personality Disorder are:

- A pervasive pattern of grandiosity, need for admiration, lack of empathy, as indicated by at least five of:
  1. a grandiose sense of self-importance
  2. is preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love
  3. believes that he or she is "special" and can only be understood by, or should associate with, other special or high-status people (or institutions)
  4. requires excessive admiration
  5. has a sense of entitlement, ie unreasonable expectations of especially favourable treatment or automatic compliance with his or her expectations
  6. is interpersonally exploitative, ie takes advantage of others to achieve his or her own ends
  7. lacks empathy and is unwilling to recognize or identify with the feelings and needs of others
  8. is often envious of others or believes that others are envious of him or her
  9. shows arrogant, haughty behaviours or attitudes
**Manifestations of a Bully**

**Overt** - name calling; bickering; fault finding; backstabbing; **rumors/gossip**; criticism; intimidation; shouting; blaming; using put downs; raising eyebrows; making faces

**Covert - unfair assignments**; sarcasm; eye rolling; ignoring or freezing out; refusing to help; whining; refusing to work with someone; sabotage; isolation exclusion; fabrication

**Non-verbal = 80% of all communication**
Busy, but not!!!

Go away! I'm very busy.

Yes, lots of work to do.
Like a drug, it too has adverse effects:

**Psychological** – PTSD-50% suffer still after 5 years; burnout; depersonalization; maladaptive responses, psychiatric co-morbidities (anxiety & depression).

**Physical** – decreased immune response; >stress related disease, cardiac arrhythmias (increased risk of heart attack due to continuously circulating catecholamine)

**Emotional** – anger; irritability; self doubt; feelings of failure; decreased self-esteem. A shaken confidence & uncertain competence.

**Social** – 1/3 to ½ of relationships and family members worsen after someone witnesses or is in receipt of bullying tactics.

**Brain**

**SUICIDE!!!!!!**
Stressed & Frightened
Intimidation
Process

Yourself → Stressors → Stress Response

Your colleagues
Your environment
Your supports
Organizational Impact

These behaviors can permeate a whole organization just like a cancer can a body

- Decreased productivity
- Compromised patient care
- Decreased quality of patient care
- Decreased staff morale
- Liability issues (withholding of information & timeliness of responses)
- Breach of confidentiality
- Violation of professional standards of practice
- High rates of sickness and absenteeism
- High staff turnover
- Financial implications
What a leader can do?

- Transformational leadership/emotional intelligence
- Out of sight, out of mind
- Change management
- Performance reviews & evaluations
- Know different generational cohorts
- Inspire and help people succeed and excel
- Build civility & respect
- Recognition & reward
- Understand team & group dynamics
- Power & politics
- Build engagement & commitment
- Involvement & influence
- Prevent & address workplace conflict
- Beware of boundaries
- Promote positive mental health @ work
- Identify a workplace mental health champion
Leader/Org. to do’s

Corporate social responsibility
The duty to Accommodate
Policy Development and Enforcement
Zero Tolerance – “Broken Window Philosophy”
The role of Legislation
The role of Unions
The role of Professional Associations
Disability Management
Change Management
Employee and Family Assistance Program
The Role of Worker’s Compensation
Operational and Strategic Directions & Planning
Ethical Obligations
Organizational Legalities and Liabilities
Protective Disclosure (policy)
Whistleblower legislation and policy
The Development of Mental Health Champions
Promoting Human Rights at Work
Accountable to who?

- Yourself - code of ethics/standards/scope & legislation (Standards- duty to report inappropriate behavior)
- Employer - roles/responsibilities/job description, policy
- Colleagues - reliability, punctuality, respect
- Patients/customer - quality of care/service, responsiveness, respect, confidentiality, privacy
- Union and professional associations e.g. Code of conduct = NAPE, PSAC, CUPE, etc.
- Public/society - expects safe competent respectful healthcare; PROTECTION OF THE PUBLIC
- Organization - Vision, mission & values (Strategic directions).
How to Respond

Key measures:

1. Don’t sweat the small stuff
2. Stand up for yourself (courage, strength & determination)
3. Documentation- frequency, regularity, patterns
4. Build your supports- you are not alone
5. Policies and legislation

• "All it needs for evil to prosper is for people of goodwill to do nothing" (Edmund Burke)
Questions & Discussion: Your turn

Thank you for your attention!!!

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