From the school to the workplace: How can we stop the bullying and harassment?

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Overview of presentation:

- Bullying in schools to bullying in the workplace.
Why should we care about bullying in schools?

• Health related problems associated with being bullied include suicidal ideation (Due et al., 2005), being hurt physically (Baldry & Farrington, 1999; Craig, Peters, Konarski, 1998), prevalence of self-reported symptoms of anxiety or depression (Bond, Carlin, Thomas, Rubin, & Patton, 2001) and in extreme cases suicide.

• The impact of being bullied has been shown to have long-term implications for adults, such as increased incidences of depression and low self-esteem (Olweus, 1994; O’Moore & Kirkham, 2001).

• Further evidence has shown that both the bully and the bystander are at risk for health related problems (Rivers, Poteat, Noret, & Ashurst, 2009).

• A number of children are at risk of not achieving the three determinants of health as a result of being bullied: healthy child development, a good education, and safe schooling.
Figure 1: Brofenbrenner’s Ecological System Model Applied to the School Setting
• Bullied child, from Mission, British Columbia, Canada, (May 5, 1986 — NOVEMBER 10, 2000) was a student who committed suicide after experiencing a cycle of bullying by psychological abuse and verbal threats from three female bullies at her high school.[1]

• She left behind a note to her family that referred to the bullying to which she had been subjected to: "If I try to get help, it will get worse. They are always looking for a new person to beat up and these are the toughest girls. If I ratted, they would get expelled from school and there would be no stopping them. I love you all so much." She committed suicide by hanging herself with her dog's leash in her bedroom.[1]

• Legal proceedings

• The historic, landmark and precedent setting court case was presided over by Provincial Court Judge Jill Rounthwaite. It was noted that one of the girl bullies named in the suicide note was the daughter of a Royal Canadian Mounted Police Officer in Mission. Two girls were convicted of uttering threats with the intent to instill fear, and criminal harassment.[2] Their identities are protected because they were prosecuted under Canada's Young Offenders Act. B.C. Provincial Court Judge Jill Rounthwaite's ruling stated that it was clear that one of the accused had bullied Wesley repeatedly thus giving the victim reason to fear for her life. Rounthwaite also stated that bystanders added "to the power of the bully" by letting the harassment continue without intervention. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suicide_of_D., April 14, 2016.
School bullying defined:

- We say a student is being bullied when another student, or several other students:

  - say mean and hurtful things or make fun of him or her or call him or her mean and hurtful names
  - completely ignore or exclude him or her from their group of friends or leave him or her out of things on purpose
  - hit, kick, push, shove around, or lock him or her inside a room
  - tell lies or spread false rumours about him or her or send mean notes and try to make other students dislike him or her
  - and other hurtful things like that.
• When we talk about bullying, these things may happen repeatedly, and it is difficult for the student being bullied to defend himself or herself. We also call it bullying when a student is teased repeatedly in a mean and hurtful way.

• But we don’t call it bullying when the teasing is done in a friendly and playful way. Also, it is not bullying when two students of about the same strength or power argue or fight.

• Three elements: *Intentionality, repeated* and there is an *imbalance of power*.

• Dan Olweus, 2013
Family characteristics of bullies:

- Having an absent father, low cohesion, little warmth, parents with high power needs that permit or encourage aggression, physical abuse, poor family functioning, negative affect (anxiety, depression or guilt), authoritarian parenting and harsh physical punishment.
School environments that encourage or discourage bullying:

- Lack of teacher support, schools with unfavorable environments, poor teacher relations, where rules are perceived as unfair and not uniformly enforced,

- Bullying depends on the extent to which teachers take an active role in promoting student welfare, are interested in helping students, allow the possibility of alternative forms of self-expression, promote cooperation, and create an equitable school environment.
Some Canadian Results

Percentage of students who reported being victimized in the past two months.

### Prevalence of Bullying Victimization and Bullying Behaviour during the Past 12 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once or a few times</th>
<th>About once a month</th>
<th>About once a week</th>
<th>Many times a week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Victimization – physical</strong></td>
<td>4190</td>
<td>60.3%</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Victimization – verbal</strong></td>
<td>4200</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Victimization – social</strong></td>
<td>4190</td>
<td>47.9%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Victimization – cyber</strong></td>
<td>4132</td>
<td>73.8%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bullying – physical</strong></td>
<td>4191</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bullying – verbal</strong></td>
<td>4183</td>
<td>55.4%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bullying – social</strong></td>
<td>4185</td>
<td>64.7%</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bullying – cyber</strong></td>
<td>4185</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Education outcomes and the criminal justice system

• Bullies are more likely:
  To be failing students in both middle and high school and to end up in the criminal justice system.

• E.g. longitudinal data following males over a period of eight years discovered that those who continued to be bullies after school completion were at a much greater risk of ending up in prison over an eight year period.

• Bullying at school was a strong predictor of self-reported violence, delinquency, and other anti-social outcomes in young adulthood.

• The probability for criminal offending up to eleven years later was two and a half times greater for bullies.
To sum up, what needs to happen to make schools safer for all?

• School:
  ❖ Principals’ commitment to allocate resources to bullying-related activities appears to be associated with improvements (Olweus, 2004).
  ❖ Key factor – commitment to program implementation (Rigby, 2002).

• Teachers are the key agents of change with regard to adoption and implementation of Olweus Bullying Program in school (Olweus, 2004).

• One of the most highly recommended and widely implemented strategies for addressing bullying problems in school is providing training to teachers and other school personnel (Frey et al., 2005; O’Moore, 2000).
• **KEY** - Common components of these trainings include: definition of bullying, bullying prevalence, signs of bullying and victimization, impact of bullying on educational and social-emotional developmental outcomes, contributing factors to bullying, and strategies for prevention and intervention (O’Moore, 2000).

• The most important program elements in reducing bullying were meetings and training efforts for parents and close playground supervision. Firm disciplinary sanctions for students engaged in bullying such as serious talks, principal referrals, and loss of privileges were also associated with reduced bullying.

• Teachers who participate in a bullying prevention program, feel more confident about handling bullying problems, and feel more positively about working with parents regarding bullying problems (Alsaker, 2004).

• School Climate:
• Creation of caring and respectful relationships are critical to preventing bullying.

• Parents:
• May be hard to engage the bully’s parents but this is essential to alleviating the problem
• Community

• Getting the help of the community is important. Police, etc.

• Education and training to increase awareness of the problem.

• A “whole-school approach” whereby the resources of the whole school, community, including parents, teachers, and students, are coordinated in a systematic manner.

• Working cooperatively with parents.

• Two components for successful anti-bullying programs: parental and community involvement.
Workplace Bullying and Harrassment
I would like to share my story with you but I have to admit, I feel if I do so, somehow, the bully will certainly find out. I have some paranoia about him having abilities to do me further harm. Here it goes with some editing for my safety. The bullying began after I was promoted. I had been doing excellent work and well liked by my staff. My busy work load suddenly increased significantly and I was excluded from important meetings. I was yelled at, ridiculed, and belittled in front of others. I would be given direction one day, and the next screamed at for doing exactly it the way he told me to and his language was vulgar. He appeared to be so well put together, charming, and very articulate. One moment a professional, the next moment a monster. In time he somehow gather others to join him in his bullying. I have since learned that this is called mobbing. I decided to leave this place of employment and I am now doing something I love to do. I am a successful professional with 2 Masters Degrees, but I still feel some of the affects of this experience. This man is very well known in the public eye and for this reason, I must remain anonymous. Thank you for letting me find a way to share my story.

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 defining 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)
Numbers

- 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 Defined

- 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, Alberta has neither
- 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
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
**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
- EMDR—caution, not much evidence for bullying yet
  - This is essentially exposure therapy and if used early on could destabilize
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 RTW
- Re-Entry Interview
- Support from supervisors/leaders to address workplace issues—may need facilitation
- Protection from bullying going forward
- Graduated RTW
- On-going monitoring/follow-up of employee and group
- Continued psychological treatment
- Confidential supporter
Early stages of bullying

- When bullying is detected early on by the target and that he/she have been able to talk about it in time, it may be possible to find a solution.

- Then the symptoms are similar to those of stress: anxiety and many somatic symptoms: digestives problems, chest pains, a feeling of constriction in the throat, anorexia, nausea, headaches, muscular pains, and so on.

- But, while stress only becomes destructive when it is excessive, bullying is destructive by nature.
Stage 2 of bullying

- If the situation persists, victims gradually find themselves psychologically disabled
- Their thought processes are disturbed and they cannot think of anything else
- Depressives symptoms: the target becomes dejected and loses interest in life
- Short term memory loss, decreased concentration
- Feeling of powerlessness and worthlessness that they hide from their GP
- It is the bullying process which causes people to have feelings of worthlessness, self-doubt and guilt
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 Summer School

- Workplace bullying is a serious workplace 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 ACT, wisdom therapy and rumination-focused CBT hold promise; however, it is the relationship that is most healing
Discussion
Sources


Sources

