# Workplace bullying: ignoring the behavior is the same as condoning the behavior

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ABSTRACT

Workplace bullying can be challenging to identify and even more difficult to manage and decades of research indicate incidences of workplace mistreatment are increasing on a global scale. Research conducted by the Workplace Bullying Institute found that about 50% of employee's report experiencing bullying in the workplace. Bullying behaviors result in damage to the targets, bystanders, perpetrators and the organization itself.   Managers must not only understand the hostile behaviors but be prepared to address them. Managers that choose to turn a blind eye to workplace bullying are choosing a departmental path that will result in loss of employees, productivity, efficiency and/or morale.   The following paper will discuss workplace bullying definitions, statistics, literature and finally suggestions for management strategies that will contribute to the elimination or minimization of bullying in the workplace.

Keywords: workplace bullying, harassment, management, conflict resolution, anti-bullying policy
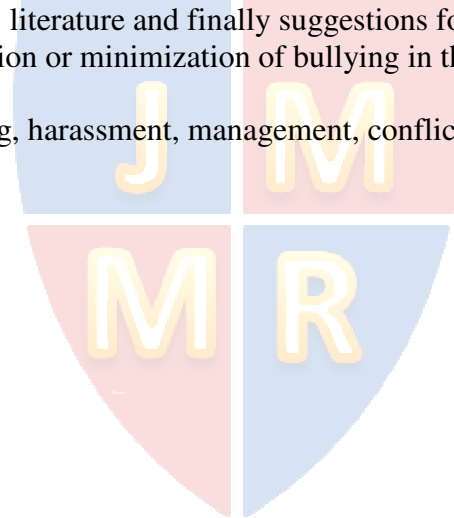
INTRODUCTION

Bullying in the workplace can include acts or verbal comments that are meant to intimidate, offend, humiliate, degrade or isolate someone. In 2011, a survey conducted by The Society for Human Resource Management found 51% of employees had experienced bullying in the workplace and in a 2014 survey, The Workplace Bullying Institute reported that 50% of employees had experience harassment in the workplace.   One reason the behaviors are persisting is that bullying can be difficult to define.   Each individual can perceive different behaviors as appropriate or inappropriate based on their culture, experiences, goals and personal needs. Another reason why bullying continues, is that there is no formal, communicated organizational anti-bullying plan of action.   For these reasons, many managers choose the path of ignoring bullying, hoping the issues will resolve or disappear. This path, ignoring the behaviors, is not always chosen out of weaknesses but rather out of uncertainly on how to address harassment. What should a manger do if bullying behaviors are observed and acknowledged?   When the answer to this question is unknown, the destructive behaviors often remain unchecked for years leaving a path of destruction with a vague beginning and an uncertain end.   The following paper has the purpose of clarifying a definition of workplace bullying, defining the scope of the problem, sharing a review of relevant literature followed by managerial recommendations for action to mitigate or end workplace bullying.
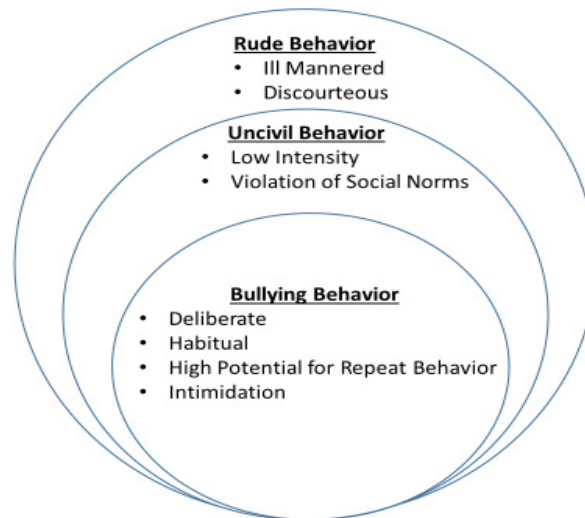
RUDE, UNCIVIL OR BULLYING

As a starting point for discussion on workplace bullying, it is important to define bullying. What is bullying? What is not bullying? To clarify this definition, a distinction will be made between rude, uncivil and bullying. These are three different types of behaviors that require three different levels of managerial response.

Rude behavior can occur consciously or unconsciously and is generally considered low intensity, causing a minimal reaction in the target.   Rude behavior in the workplace includes foul language, discourteous actions like "cutting" in line, unexcused bodily noises like burping and or a raw state or ill-mannered behaviors, omitting "please" and "thank you."

Like rude behaviors, uncivil behavior can also be categorized as low intensity and include violations of workplace norms. Uncivil actions can include demining language, mocking, excluding others, interrupting, and gossiping.   Actions may be considered uncivil if they simply do not take into consideration the well-being of others, but not necessarily directly attack others.

Bullying behaviors can be classified as high intensity, meaning the actions provoke an intense response in the target. This includes intimidation, aggression, deliberate unfriendly behavior, brow-beating, habitually cruel, overbearing, social exclusion and generally involves real or perceived power imbalances. For a categorization of bullying the harassing behavior will be ongoing with a high likelihood that the behaviors will continue in the future.

Figure 1: Defining Rude, Uncivil and Bullying

While, bullying can include rude and uncivil behavior, bullying is distinctly different. Bullying is intense, specifically directed towards a target and is repetitive. Academic researchers often describe workplace bullying as severe, ongoing, negative abuse achieved primarily through nonverbal and verbal actions (Cowan, 2012)(Keashly & Jagatic, 2003)(Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008). Further, "workplace bullying is a form of interpersonal mistreatment exceeding incivility and based in repetitive, deliberate and derogatory actions towards an individual (Salin, 2003). With bullying there is intent to harm and a perception of power imbalance (Askew, Schluter & Dick, n.d.). Abuse can be the line that draws the distinction between rude and uncivil to bullying. Workplace bullying, often achieved through negative communication, is abuse (Cowan, 2012).

DEFINITIONS OF WORKPLACE BULLYING

One of the reasons why bullying persists, is a lack of a consistent, universally accepted definition (Ballard, 2016). Consider that five United States Government Policies and Agencies have different definitions for workplace bullying.

Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act of 1986

The Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1986 defines bullying as "behavior that is repeated, systematic and directed towards an employee or group of employees that a reasonable person having knowledge of the circumstances, would recognize the actions as planned attempts to victimize, humiliate, undermine or threaten and ultimately creates a risk to health and safety." A key aspect of this definition is that a reasonable person would recognize the actions as planned attempts to victimize.

The World Health Organization

The World Health Organization defines bullying as "a multifaceted form of mistreatment, mostly seen in schools and the workplace. It is characterized by the repeated exposure of one person to physical and/or emotional aggression including teaching, name calling, mockery, threats, harassment, taunting, hazing, social exclusion or rumors" (Srabstein & Leventhal, 2010). A key aspect of this definition is the idea of repeated exposure of one person or the target.

Washington State Department of Labor & Industries

The Washington State Department of Labor & Industries (2013) defines workplace bullying as "a pattern of behavior that harms, intimidates, undermines, offends, degrade or humiliates an employee, possibly in front of other employees, clients or customers. It is a serious health and safety issue. The targets of bullying may suffer from physical and mental health problems that can last for years." A key aspect of this definition is the acknowledgement that ongoing harassment in the workplace can result in negative health or safety for the employee and/or the employees involved.

Healthy Workplace Campaign

The Healthy Workplace Campaign (2017) defines workplace bullying as the "repeated health-harming mistreatment that takes the form of verbal abuse, offensive behavior of threatening, humiliated, intimidating or involved work interference of sabotage." A key aspect of this definition includes the idea that the bully has the intent of interfering with the work of the target.

Workplace Bullying Institute

The Workplace Bullying Institute (2015) defines workplace bullying as "repeated mistreatment of one or more persons (the targets) by one or more perpetrators and includes verbal abuse, offensive conduct/behavior which are threatening, humiliating or intimidating, work interference, sabotage- preventing from getting work done." A key aspect of this definition is the description of offensive behavior that is humiliating or intimidating to the target.

Comprehensive Definition of Workplace Bullying Based on Five United States Government Policies and Agencies

It is clear that exact details in workplace bullying definitions vary. This paper will focus on a definition of bullying that is derived from key characteristics of the workplace bullying definitions from five United States Government Policies and Agendas. As such, for the purposes of this paper, workplace bullying can be defined as the repeated exposure to mocking, threats, harassment, social exclusion, humiliation, intimidation and/or interference with work. The exposure results in a work environment that is negative in terms of health and safety for the target, the bully and the bystanders.

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM AND WORKPLACE STATISTICS

Global Scope

It is important to study workplace bullying because this issue is a widespread, pervasive, global phenomenon. All organizations in all countries experience some elements of bullying behaviors. Researchers are documenting instances of bullying all over the world. As an example:

- United States (Walter, 2013)(Stern, 2015)(Ricks, 2016)
- Europe (Smith, 2013)(Ariza, Leal-Rodriguez & Leal-Millan, 2015)(Escartin, 2016)
- Australia (Hanley & O'Rourke, 2016)(Allison & Bastiampillai, 2016)(O'Rourke & Antioch, 2016).
- Asia (Kwan, Tuckey & Dollard, 2014)(Spector, Zhous & Xin Xuan, 2014)(Lee, 2015)
- Africa (Lena-Mari van, Crizelle & Rothman, 2011)(Olivia, Leon T. De, Lizelle & Michael, 2016)(Smit & Du Plessis, 2016).
- South America (Salas et al, 2015)(Elizabeth Nasco-Samillan, Cabanillas-Cruz &Vergara-Wekselman, 2015).

Statistics on Workplace Bullying Occurrences

The Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI) was started by Ruth and Gary Namie and is regarded as North America's authority on Workplace Bullying. The WBI conducted major research studies in 2010 and 2014 describing the scope of workplace bullying in contemporary organizations.

Workplace Bullying Institute 2010 Bullying Survey

Workplace Bullying Institute- August 2010
Online survey of over 2000 adults in the US during 2010:

- 35% of workers have experienced bullying firsthand.
- 62% of bullies are men.
- 58% of targets are women.
- Women bullies target women 80% of cases.
- Bullying is 4X more prevalent than illegal harassment (2007).
- The majority (68%) of bullying is same gender harassment.

Workplace Bullying Institute 2014 Bullying Survey

Workplace Bullying Institute- February 2014
Online survey of 1000 adults in the US during 2014:
- 27% have current or past direct experience with abusive conduct at work.
- 72% of the American public are aware of workplace bullying.
- Bosses are still the majority of bullies.

- 72% of employers deny, discount, encourage, rationalize or defend workplace bullying.
- 93% of respondents support enactment of Health Workplace Bill.

From a review of workplace bullying scope and statistics, clearly workplace bullying is reaching every aspect of the work world and impacting nearly all employees.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been over 2 decades of research devoted to understanding workplace bullying. The following will highlight a few of the researchers that have contributed to the study of harassment in the workplace.

Author	Heinz Leyman	Anderson and Pearson	Zapf and Gross	Baillien et al.	Taylor and Pattie
Date	1990	1999	2001	2013	2014
Conclusion	Individuals that experience workplace bullying can display symptoms of PTSD.	Incivility in the workplace is growing and is a potential forerunner to increasingly aggressive acts.	Most people that experience workplace bullying, first attempt to resolve the issue with conflict solving strategies.	Work task conflicts are directly related to workplace bullying and task conflicts can lead to relationship conflicts.	Generally, followers respond to ethical leadership.
Key Finding	Introduction of the concept of "Mobbing."	Individuals that incite uncivil behavior must be held accountable or the behaviors will intensify.	The individuals that successfully cope with workplace bullying avoided escalating behaviors.	Task conflicts without any personal overtone may encourage bullying.	Individual differences in awareness can diminish the spread of uncivil behavior.

Author	Laschinger, Wong, Cummings, and Grau	Einarsen and Nielson	Samnani and Singh	Conway, Clausen, Hanseon and Hogh	Trepanier, Farnet and Austin
Date	2014	2015	2015	2016	2016
Conclusion	Leadership action and response is significant for creating a healthy work environment.	Exposure to workplace bullying can forecast increased levels of stress for the employee even five years later.	It is important to understand how the characteristics of the perpetrator, target and environment can foster or eliminate bullying.	Researcher found an association between workplace bullying and workers remaining at work while ill.	Bullying negatively impacts employee satisfaction, self-governance and competence.
Key Finding	When workplace incivility is present there are harmful consequences.	Employees exposed to bullying can experience long term negative effects.	The researchers encourage an investigation of workplace climate when seeking knowledge and understanding of workplace bullying.	Employees experiencing workplace bullying present frequently continue to come to work even when ill.	Bullying behaviors adversely impact employees' psychological inner resources.

Author	Horton	Van den Brande, Baillien, De Witte, Elst, Godderis	Francioli, Hogh, Conway, Costa, Karasek and Hansen	Samnani, Boekhorst and Harrison	Perminiene, Kery and Perminas
Date	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016
Conclusion	Workplace bullying is emotionally, physically and professionally damaging to the victim and perpetrator.	Work related factors such as role stressors and personal related factors such as emotional focused coping can trigger or contribute to workplace bullying.	Perception of a poor psychosocial work environment, is positively associated with self-reported exposure to work place bullying.	Through a qualitative analysis instances of managers repeatedly engaging in bullying towards union organizers and supporters were identified.	The study found that individual characteristics may directly as well as indirectly foster workplace bullying. Characteristics such as conflict solving styles.
Key Finding	To minimize workplace bullying, organization should increase employee bullying training and awareness.	The research supports that coping strategies and resources may play a role in the avoidance of workplace bullying.	Improving the psychosocial work environment may be key in minimizing the highest proportion of the risk of being bulling in an organization.	The presence of bullying often causes employees to separate themselves from involvement with a union.	The study demonstrates that conflict-solving styles may, in part, explain aspects of workplace bullying.

Author	Kwan, Tuckey and Dollard	Ricks	O'Donnell and MacIntosh.	Mulder, Bos, Pouwelse and van Dam.	Plopa, Plopa and Skuzinksa
Date	2016	2016	2017	2017	2017
Conclusion	Organizational psychosocial safety climate is a precursor to the coping strategies used by employees in response to bullying.	Witnesses observing bullying behaviors view the presence of unchecked bullying as an absence of leadership.	Workplace bullying, specific to men was studied and found that participants identified the main problem with ongoing bullying as the lack of workplace support to address and resolve bullying.	The study is an investigation of the impact of workplace mobbing on bystander's cognition and emotions. Results found female bystanders were more likely to feel sympathy for the victim.	Personality traits, are factors that contribute, at least in part, in explain the influence bullying can have on employees' perceived well- being.
Key Finding	Organizations that foster caring and responsible action can offer an important role in limiting the likelihood of workplace bullying.	Witnesses observing bullying behaviors are negatively impacted.	Men can experience long term consequences both emotional and physical to workplace bullying.	Victims should reflect on their own response related to workplace mobbing. A victim's approach rather than avoidance behavior appears to elicit the most positive bystander reaction.	Contributes to the knowledge of variables that impact the relationship between bullying and an employees' wellbeing.

The researchers discussed in this review of literature communicate that workplace bullying is a global issue with significant consequences for employees like loss of productivity, loss of job and potential for long term experiences of emotional distress. Second, bullying is only resolved through active choices like the application of conflict solving strategies or leaving the job.   Third, when managers permit incivility there is a likelihood that the incivility will progress to bullying.   Finally, employees experiencing or observing ongoing bullying will view the managerial allowance of the behavior as a lack of true organizational leadership.

POLICIES AND THEORIES USED TO MINIMIZE WORKPLACE BULLYING

Policy maker and academics alike recognize the prevalence of workplace bullying. With recognition there are several federal and state policies that have been used or passed in an attempt to minimize workplace attacks.   There are various options used to combat workplace bullying (Weisel, 2016), of these options, two legislative policies and two academic theories will be discussed.

Legislation Applied: Title VII of the Civils Rights Act of 1964

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits most workplace harassment and discrimination, covering all private employers with more than 15 employees. The Act prohibits discrimination against workings based on race, color, national origin, religion and sex and later extended to pregnancy, sex stereotyping and sexual harassment.   The term harassment is not specifically listed in the Act but has evolved through interpretations by the Supreme Court.   The Supreme Court has interpreted that a hostile supervisor that alters an employee's terms or conditions of employment creates a work environment that violates Title VII.

Legislation Applied: Healthy Workplace Bill

The Healthy Workplace Bill (HWB) is legislation that has the intent of supporting severely bullied employees. The legislation allows for the claiming of damages by the bullied and legal incentives for employers that act to prevent bullying behaviors.

Theory Applied: Hofstede's Dimensions Power Distance Index

In addition to extensive study on workplace bullying, there are many management theories that can be applied to help understand how workplace harassment develops and progresses. Understanding conflict development from a perspective of theory is one strategy that can support the minimization of workplace conflict and harassment.
The research of Geert Hofstede in the 1970s began to examine culture variances across branches of IBM in over fifty countries. Some workplace conflict can develop out of difference of perspective and differences in culture. Cultural differences can result in different definitions about appropriate workplace communications, policies and pressures.   Dr. Hofstede, distributed over 100,000 questionnaires to IBM employees, twice over a four-year interval. The surveys sought to understand the employees work satisfaction, goals and beliefs. The studies identified and validated independent dimensions of national cultural differences (Hofstede, 2011).

- Power Distance.
  - The degree to which the less powerful members of an organization and institutions expect the equal power distribution.
- Individualism vs Collectivism.
  - Individualism is one side versus its opposite.
  - Collectivism refers to the extent to which people integrate into groups.
- Masculinity vs Femininity.
  - Related to the division or responsibilities between women and men.
  - Distribution of values between the genders.
- Uncertainty Avoidance.
  - Society or group's tolerance for ambiguity.
- Long-Term Orientation Vs Short Term Orientation.
  - Long term values persistence, status, and having sense of shame.
  - Short term values cooperation, tradition and preserving dignity.
- Indulgence vs Restraint.
  - Indulgence references a society values the enjoying life and having fun.
  - Restraint references a society that administers stern social norms.

Increasingly, organizations are functioning, in a globalized environment. With gains in diversity, there are expansions in perceptions regarding acceptable application of power and what constitutes bullying. Cultural differences offer variances in values, communications, goals and conflict resolution. Hofstede's dimensions communicate that people will respond to power, collectivism, gender, risk, goals and indulgences differently. Understanding Hofstede's research can help managers begin to recognize where potential conflicts may develop, understand that individuals will all view harassment experiences differently and how to create workplace organizations that support organizational policies with greater global compatibility.

Theory Applied: Glasl's Nine Stage Model of Conflict Escalation

Friedrich Glasl developed an escalation model useful as a diagnostic tool for a conflict facilitator and for training employees about the process of conflict escalation. Understanding conflict escalation is another strategy that can be used to communicate with employees and attempt proactive discussions to reduce the potential for bullying. The nine stage conflict escalation model is presented in Friedrich Glasl's book *Konfliktmanagement* published in 1997.

1. Hardening.
   - Conflict escalates developing from a difference over some issue or frustration and repeat efforts to overcome the difficulties fail.
2. Debates and Polemics.
   - Counterparts are not agreeable to the other's sensible position and discussions develop into arguments.
3. Actions, Not Words.
   - The parties no longer think discussion can result in resolution. The parties become competitors.
4. Images and Coalitions.
   - The conflict exceeds the initial issues and becomes about victory or defeat.

5. Loss of Face.
   - The status of the person is hurt by a public event and both sides begin to see each other no longer with superiority or inferiority but rather as good and evil.
6. Strategies of threats.
   - Parties issue mutual threats from which they cannot withdrawal.
7. Limited Destructive Blows.
   - Now they expect the counterpart to be capable of a very destructive act, a solution is no longer viewed as possible and there is no longer any real communication.
8. Fragmentation of the Enemy.
   - Aggression builds and the goal is to gain power over the adversary.
9. Together into the Abyss.
   - The first priority is obliterating the adversary. The drive to crush the opponent is greater than self-preservation.

Glasl's model of conflict escalation provides a description of how a word, event, or experience can progress into the degeneration of a working relationship or an ultimately destructive synergy. An understanding of Glasl's model can help managers identify and categorize issues in the work environment and the model can serve as a foundation for organizational employee conflict training. Further, with use of the model, managers can begin to reflect on stages of conflict and develop proactive policies for future minimization of negative behavior in the workplace. Finally, an examination of Glasl's model will help managers understand employee behaviors and anticipate potential issues that will develop if the negative behaviors are not addressed immediately.

MANAGEMENT ROLE IN STOPPING WORKPLACE BULLYING

Policies and theories alone are not sufficient for ending workplace bullying. These are merely tools that can be applied by managers and organizational leaders. It is up to the managers, to be conscious, communicative and choose to create positive work environments that eliminate bullying actions. Bullying behaviors must be eliminated if an organization desires productivity, innovation, creativity and growth. Workplace bullying allowed to progress will causes damage to the target and to observing bystanders.

Targets of workplace bullying experience anger, helplessness, reduced confidence, loss or sleep, fear of vulnerability, anxiety, poor work performance and sadness. Targets can also experience a decline in health (Escartin et al, 2009), feelings of devaluation (Sidle, 2010) and post- traumatic stress (Ballard, 2016). While, the bystanders experience increased stress and less work enjoyment (Giorgi et al 2014)(Schieman and Reid, 2008). Clearly an employee that is spending significant time in these emotional states, will be less than efficient. "Exposure to workplace bullying has been claimed to be a serious social stressor with detrimental long-term health consequences for those exposed" (Hogh et al, 2011).

Organizational Experience with Workplace Bullying

Unchecked workplace bullying also affects the workplace by fostering reduced organizational efficiency, absenteeism, turnover, stress, poor corporate image, ineffective customer service and low employee morale. An organization steeped in these issues is not

operating in a place of efficiency and organizations with high incidences of bullying correlate with low employee engagement (Loh et al., 2010)(Yeung and Griffin, 2008).

Management Experience with Workplace Bullying

It is the manager's responsibility and obligation to end workplace bullying within their department (Laschinger & Fida, 2014). Managers are fiduciaries of their organization and their role as leaders requires acceptance of necessary principles, adherence to legal requirements and support of organizational standards to ensure safety for all stakeholders. A manager's responsibility includes the physical and psychological safety of each employee (Martin, 2008). Once workplace bullying has infiltrated a department or an organization, employees perceive themselves as helpless to end the cycle. An organization full of perpetrators and targets, becomes unruly, with repeated actions and retaliations. Focus on goals and productivity can become fuzzy, hidden behind acts of retaliation and protection. How can this hostile work environment be avoided or changed? It is the responsibility of managers from front line to executive that must, choose action, rather than ignorance or tolerance. An individual accepting a managerial role must be prepared to address conflict in the workplace. It is through a proactive process of choice, that managers turn an organization from whispers, intimidation and stress to an organization of open communication, collaboration and checks and balances.

One reason managers struggle to end workplace bullying is that no clear solution exists to the workplace bullying problem (Staff and Sheridan, 2010). So, an absolute formula or plan of action for ending workplace bullying cannot be offered. The needed strategy must be based in part on management theory and in part based on specific organizational employees, mission, values and goals. The following offers a four step anti-bullying process that managers can apply with some customization to meet the needs of their organization and department. Managerial application of these four steps can begin a process of communication and team work that will reduce the likelihood of ongoing, unchecked workplace bullying.

The following are steps that managers should take to create a departmental culture absent of harassment.

1. Gauge Workplace Culture and Environment
   - Listen to stakeholders to gauge internal and external organizational climate and attitude of workplace bullying (Hall and Lewis, 2014).
   - Remain aware of current legal policies relevant to workplace bullying (Hall and Lewis, 2014).
   - Provide fair, equitable and needed resources to all employees (Wheeler, Halbesleban and Shanine, 2010).
   - Obtain organizational support and leadership buy-in to end workplace bullying (Hall and Lewis, 2014).
2. Define Bullying Prevention Policy Specific to the Organization
   - Create and communicate a corporate code of ethics specific to mitigating bullying (Valentine, Fleischman, & Godkin, 2015).
   - Describe and define specific negative and positive examples of workplace actions considered acceptable and unacceptable (Hall and Lewis, 2014).

- Create or apply a scale like WB-C (Workplace Bulling Checklist) as a diagnostic tool to help employees and management define and gauge allegations of bullying (Fox & Cowan, 2015).
3. Create and Implement Organization Specific Anti-Bullying Program
    - Create and communicate clear consequences for violating the organizational anti-bully policy (Hall, 2012) (Hall and Lewis, 2014).
    - Apply policies that foster an environment of collaboration, teamwork, trust and communication (Sherner, 2015) this can include mentoring and coaching (Wheeler, Halbesleban and Shanine, 2010) and ongoing workplace bullying training (Kitterlin, Tanke & Stevens, 2016).
    - Leadership should respond to and actively manage conflict through problem solving strategies and attempts to minimize escalation to higher emotional levels (Leon-Perez, J., Medina, F., Arenas, A., & Munduate, L., 2015).
    - Offer a cognitive rehearsal script, interactive cognitive rehearsal training, and prepared de-escalating responses to managers and employees to mitigate acts of violence in the workplace (Wee, 2016).
4. Assess Organizational Anti-Bullying Program
    - Routine use of employee reflective practices to improve future performance (Fleming, 2016).
    - Periodic review, analysis and adjustment of Organizational Bullying Prevention Policy (Namie, 2007).

Figure 2: Four Step Process for Developing Organizational Anti-Bullying Policies
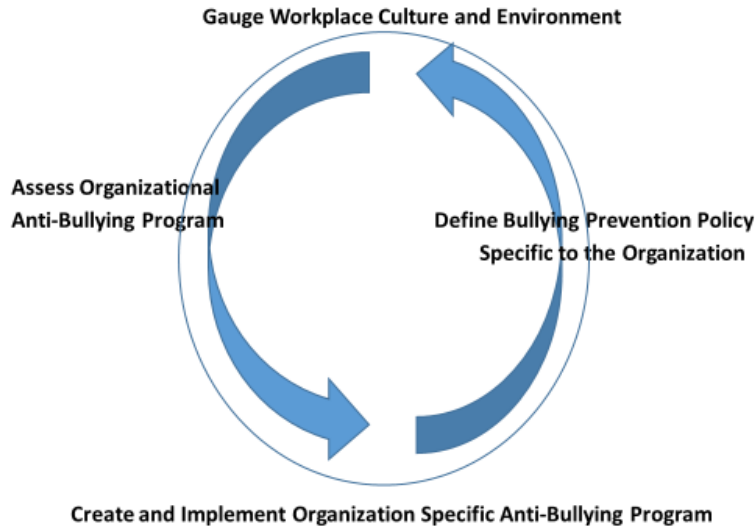
The Four Step Process for Developing Organizational Anti-Bullying Policies is cyclical with the purpose of ongoing gauging of the organization's work environment, ongoing review of organizational definition of bullying, ongoing creating and implementation of an anti-bullying policy and ongoing policy assessment. Managers must take active steps and choose to create

infrastructures that inform employees of desirable behaviors and enforce consequences for employees that act in harassing manners.

The dynamic, cyclical aspect of the described Four Step Process for Developing Organizational Anti-Bullying Policies is important. Certainly, there are many researchers that are calling for organizational anti-bullying policies (Glendinning, 2001)(Mathieson, Hanson & Burns, 2006)(Richard & Daley, 2003).   For the policy to be effective, it must be dynamic with the changing needs of employees and the policy must be specific to the organization.

Mattieson et al, (2006) identified the importance of understanding employee's needs when creating an organizational anti-bullying policy. The researchers suggest information on bullying be obtained directly from employees. Specifically, through surveys conducted on the prevalence of bullying and informal and formal appraisal discussing be used to gauge bullying activities.

Salin (2008) studied workplace bullying through surveys on 400 Finnish city administrators and found many of the city anti-bullying policies were simply copied and pasted policies from other organizations and did not adapt for the specific needs of each city. Salin describes the importance of an anti- bullying plan that is specific to the organization, a generic anti-bullying policy can indicate a low commitment to the anti-bullying policy.

Clearly, just any policy prohibiting bullying behavior will not do (Thomas, 2013).   The development and delivery of an effective anti-bullying policy should include ongoing stakeholder involvement (Rayner and Lewis, 2011) and the policy should be organization specific. The Four Step Process for Developing Organizational Anti- Bullying Policies supports a cyclical procedure for gauging the workplace culture, defining bullying, creating and implementing an organization specific anti-bullying plan and assessment of application. Organizations are dynamic, employees are changing, thus the anti-bullying plan must remain a dynamic process with the intent of addressing the organization's most current bullying needs. Further, the suggested four step process allows for a policy that is company specific and constantly adapting based on ongoing internal and external feedback.

CONCLUSION

Workplace bullying is a pervasive and global issue. Yet, many organizations are not taking steps to end internal, negative employee behavior. "44 percent of businesses do not take any action to rectify the situation, but while this willful ignorance might help companies in the short term, it's ignoring the long-term effects and far-reaching impact of the behavior…" (Florentine, 2014). Employees in an organization where no action is taken to end bullying will often view inaction as permission. As David Maxfield, co-author of the book *Speak Up of Burn Out: Five Crucial Conversations that Drive Educational Excellent* and *Influence: The New Science of Leading Change writes* "Silence is not golden, silence is permission."

When these bullying incidents occur in the workplace, negative organizational consequences will develop, whether the consequences are as minimal as reduced efficiency or as great as employee turnover. But, with proactive planning, managerial training and recognition of responsibility, managers can create cultures of collaboration that reject or report harassment. Reducing bullying the in the workplace is in a manager's best interest and can support employee

engagement which translates to higher profits and greater organizational citizenship (Schneider et al., 2009).

To create an effective, productive work environment that rejects harassment, managers can follow The Four Step Process for Developing Organizational Anti- Bullying Policies. This process includes ongoing gauging of workplace culture, defining bullying, creating and implementing an organization specific anti-bullying plan and assessment of application. Managers should never ignore potential bullying problems, delay resolution or turn a blind eye. These actions will contribute to organizational loss and indicate a lack of true leadership.
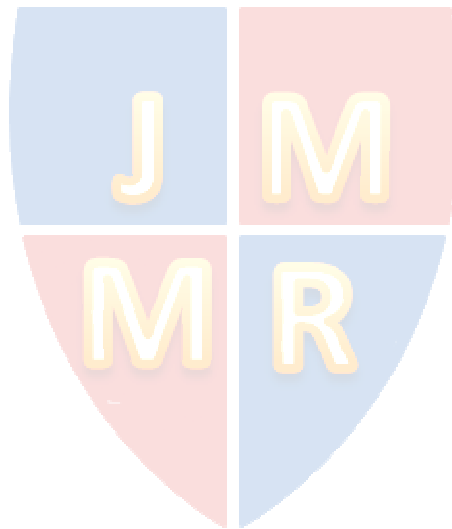
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