

### Annotated bibliography

Heeman, V. (2007). Workplace Bullying: A Distinct, Interpersonal, and Communicative Phenomenon.

Paper presented at the meeting of the National Communication Association.

*Workplace Bullying: A Distinct, Interpersonal, and Communicative Phenomenon*, is a literature review with a goal to examine how the existing written works on bullying relates to, the poorly studied, workplace bullying. Workplace bullying is interesting because it is something that involves two or more adults in a professional setting, yet is analogous to how, more commonly; children and adolescents react to one another in a social setting. In reference to this paper (Heeman), bullying is defined as “behaving in a habitually cruel way to others,” and it continues by suggesting that those generally bullied are insubordinate or less powerful. According to a reference in this article (Porhola et al. 2006), bullying is collectively depicted as negative behavior directed at a target under a set of three criteria: “(1) It is aggressive by nature or intentionally doing harm, (2) that is carried out repeatedly over time, (3) within an interpersonal relationship characterized by an imbalance of power (Porhola et al. 2006).” In order to address this situation as the phenomenon that it is, many have thrown terms around to better describe this type of bullying. Workplace incivility seems to be the most widely utilized; however they are not the same.

Heeman discusses six important areas of bullying including; the difference between workplace bullying and incivility stating that bullying is a heightened and more extreme, repetitive form of incivility. Heeman also includes an accepted definition of bullying as stated previously, the description of different roles of bullying (i.e. bully, target, and bystander), as well as the significance, contributing factors, and implications of workplace bullying.

Omdahl, B. L. (2006). Towards effective work relationships. In J.M. H. Fritz & B. L. Omdahl (Eds.), *Problematic relationships in the workplace* (pp. 279–297). New York: Peter Lang.

*Problematic Relationships in the Workplace* is an overview written for the purpose of identifying problematic relationships in a professional setting and how one might go about positively approaching and dealing with these types of relationships on a regular basis. It may seem to be common knowledge that certain workplace relationships can sometimes end in turmoil, and leave the professional setting a stressful environment. Instead of just recognizing that fact, Omdahl has explained six key principles that can be helpful with how to handle and even prevent certain negative fallouts from happening within these interpersonal relationships in the workplace. The principles include: (1) cultivate expectations for professional civility in the public sphere, (2) rather than assuming the other or self “problematic,” consider more constructive attribution, (3) minimize shame, (4) manage stress with effective coping strategies, (5) facilitate forgiveness, and (6) involve third parties for assistance, (Omdahl 2006).

Omdahl points out that by cultivating expectations for professional civility, momentum is facilitated “...toward accomplishing the mission by minimizing non-mission orientated demands,” (Omdahl 280). If we follow principle two, asking us to consider constructive attributions, then flexibility is most likely a beneficial outcome. A business must be willing to change and be flexible in order to honor the diversity of the community and promote respect and fairness within the workplace. If a difference is seen as problematic instead of constructive to the business and professional morale, it can promote the feeling of negativity instead of fostering positive energy and self-esteem. The principle of minimizing shame in the workplace goes along with the previous to facilitate constructive attributions. With a high shame rate along any demographic boundary in the workplace, it too can create an abundance of negative energy that

can be picked up by others and bring down the morale of the whole system. “Problematic relationships in the workplace would be markedly reduced if shame were better managed,” (Omdahl 286). Based on principle 4, which talks about managing stress effectively, it is likely that if stress was managed in a positive way, it would cause a reduction in shame, which could potentially cause a reduction the pessimistic attitude that comes with inferring problematic behavior. This, in turn could potentially help facilitate forgiveness (principle 5) between associates. Finally, principle 6 simply delves into the idea of involving a third party if the issue cannot be worked out between the parties involved.

After reading these two articles in relation to proper behavior in the workplace, I now feel that I have a better understanding of how behavior and relationships on a professional level can affect the interpersonal communication, thus affecting the amount and quality of work that is satisfactorily accomplished in the workplace. These articles mainly focused on the importance on how to maintain professionalism in the workplace as well as what actions and behaviors to avoid and to be aware of in order to evade a negative situation. The information in these papers provides good understanding of what the root problems of negativity may be. Being familiar with these behaviors or patterns could absolutely help promote positivity and productivity in the workplace. By having knowledge of the matter, one could better avoid or dismiss an issue at hand.

These two papers complement each other when it comes to professional behavior in the workplace. No matter what area you work in, there will most likely be required collaboration and cooperation with others on a regular basis, which may not always be the easiest thing. Depending on whether or not the working atmosphere is constructive or deconstructive, the morale of the working environment can fluctuate significantly. Based on that fact, if there is a

bullying issue, it will most likely cause a negative feedback loop. This loop would create immense shame and withdraw from the target involved (Principle 3, Omdahl). Continuing on, an increase in shame, decreases total morale, which increases stress level lowering one's patience, thus sending that negative feedback loop back to the start initiating a top- down, deconstructive cascade of negative behavior and low work output.