



# BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE

Presenter:  
Janet P. Schmidt



# Definition

Bullying is usually seen as acts or verbal comments that could 'mentally' hurt or isolate a person in the workplace. Sometimes, bullying can involve negative physical contact as well. Bullying usually involves **repeated incidents or a pattern** of behaviour that intimidates, offends, degrade or humiliate a particular person or group of people. It has also been described as the assertion of power through aggression.



# Bullying is not...

- Demanding boss
  - Great expectations
  - Don't diminish feelings of dignity
- Poor communicators
  - A reasonable person
  - Lacking in skills or under pressure
- Normal conflict
  - Should be able to work it out
  - If unresolved, it may escalate into dispute-related bullying



# The Bullying Process

**Level 1: Indirect, moderately aggressive**

- **Denied your existence**
- **Failed to support**

**Level 2: Direct, escalating aggression**

- **Put You Down**
- **Used Demeaning Nonverbals**
- **Undermined Your Ability to Work**



## **Level 3: Direct, severely aggressive**

- **Damaged Your Reputation**
- **Verbally abused you**
- **Physically abused you**

By Celeste Brotheridge



# GENDER STATISTICS

[www.Bullyinginstitute.org](http://www.Bullyinginstitute.org)

		BULLY	
		WOMEN	MEN
TARGET	WOMEN	50% (87)	30% (71)
	MEN	8% (13)	12% (29)



# Possible Characteristics of Targets

## Three main groups:

- **Severe psychological problems and personality disturbances**
- **Disappointed and depresses**
- **Normal personality (the most common group)**

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# IMPACT ON TARGETS

## MENTAL HEALTH:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Reduced motivation and satisfaction
- Suicide or suicide contemplation

## PHYSICAL HEALTH:

- Musculoskeletal health problems
- Gastro-intestinal problems



## **BEHAVIOUR:**

- Increased sickness absence**
- Performance decrements**
- Reduced efficiency**
- Increased isolation**
- Intention to resign (and resignation)**
  - Céleste Brotheridge**



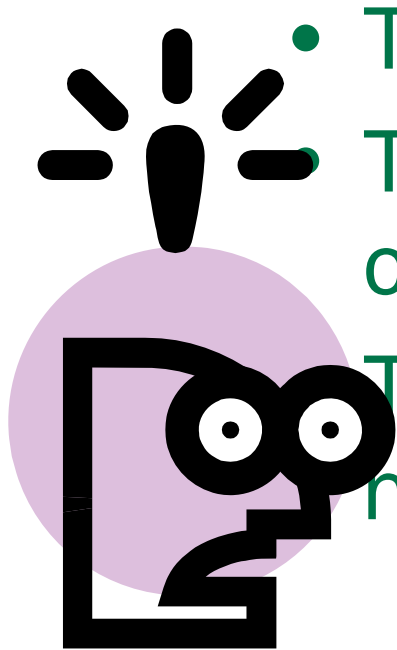
# Self Esteem

- People gain most of the sense of value and self-worth through their work and their relationships.
- When people are repeatedly told that they are useless and incompetent, they absorb that message until they become convinced it is true and begin doubting themselves.
- One of the main reasons people suffer self-doubt is because of low self-esteem

The European Journal of Work and organizational Psychology (EJWOP), 1996, 5(2) devoted a whole issue to bullying and its effects including PTSD. PTSD is a normal and natural emotional reaction to a deeply disturbing and shocking experience.



# Who is the most culpable:



- The bullies who torment others?
- Targets who let the behaviour continue?
- The people who stand by and do nothing?



# Observers

- Afraid to get on bully's bad side.
- May put their own job at risk.

OR...

- May be politically aligned with bully.
- Blame the target.
- May start bullying the target (mobbing).



# Observers

See no evil, hear no evil,  
speak no evil



- The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good (wo)men to do nothing. [Edmund Burke]
- Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral. [Freire]



# Gallup Organization

Bullying is the single most important reason people quit their jobs.

Don't Bring it to Work by Sylvia LaFlair, Jossey Bass, 2009, Page 76



# Origins of Bullies (Namie)

1. Chronic (serial) – sociopath
2. Opportunistic - competitive
3. Accidental – unaware of impact
4. Substance Abuse



# The Challenge

1. People don't know they are bullying.
2. The term 'bully' is offensive to those who are behaving that way.
3. The person has acted like this many times before and it has gone unchecked including doing variations of this behaviour in front of their bosses.



# The Persecutor

There has been abuse or neglect that has often remained a family secret or the source of unresolved shame.

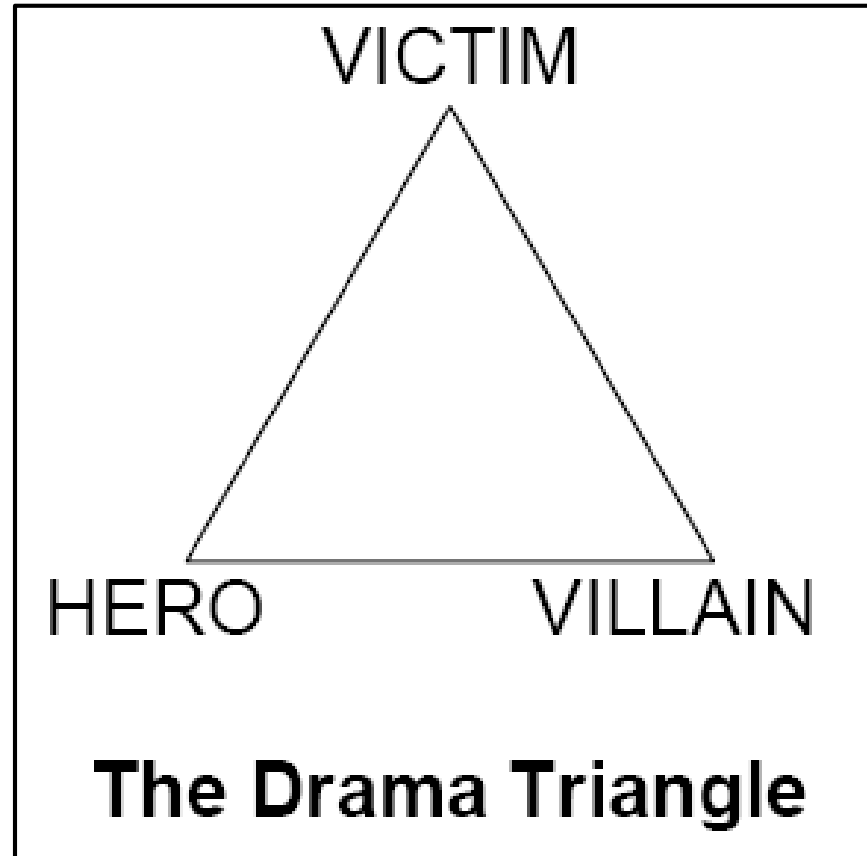
Famous Examples: Hitler, Stalin, Idi Amin

Don't Bring it to Work by Sylvia LaFlair, Jossey Bass, 2009



- Most kids who are labelled bullies learned early in their lives that they had little alternative than to fight to be heard, and they took this need to be recognized into the realm of intimidating others.
- Persecutors are often afraid that if they show their ‘soft side’ they will be annihilated’

Don't Bring it to Work by Sylvia LaFlair, Jossey Bass, 2009, Page 143





# Contribution

No one can cause you to treat another badly.  
You are responsible for the way you choose  
to respond.

Everyone always believes that the other  
person started the conflict and they are  
simply evening the score.



# Common Patterns

- Targets tend to be non confrontational (passive in face of bullying)
- Bullies respect power and control
- Bullies require secrecy, shame, silent witness
- Targets value fairness and feelings

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# THREE GENERIC WAYS OF DEALING WITH BULLYING\*

## 1) Change the targets

- Educate targets
- Obscures who is really to blame
- Doesn't prevent bullying

## 2) Change the bullies

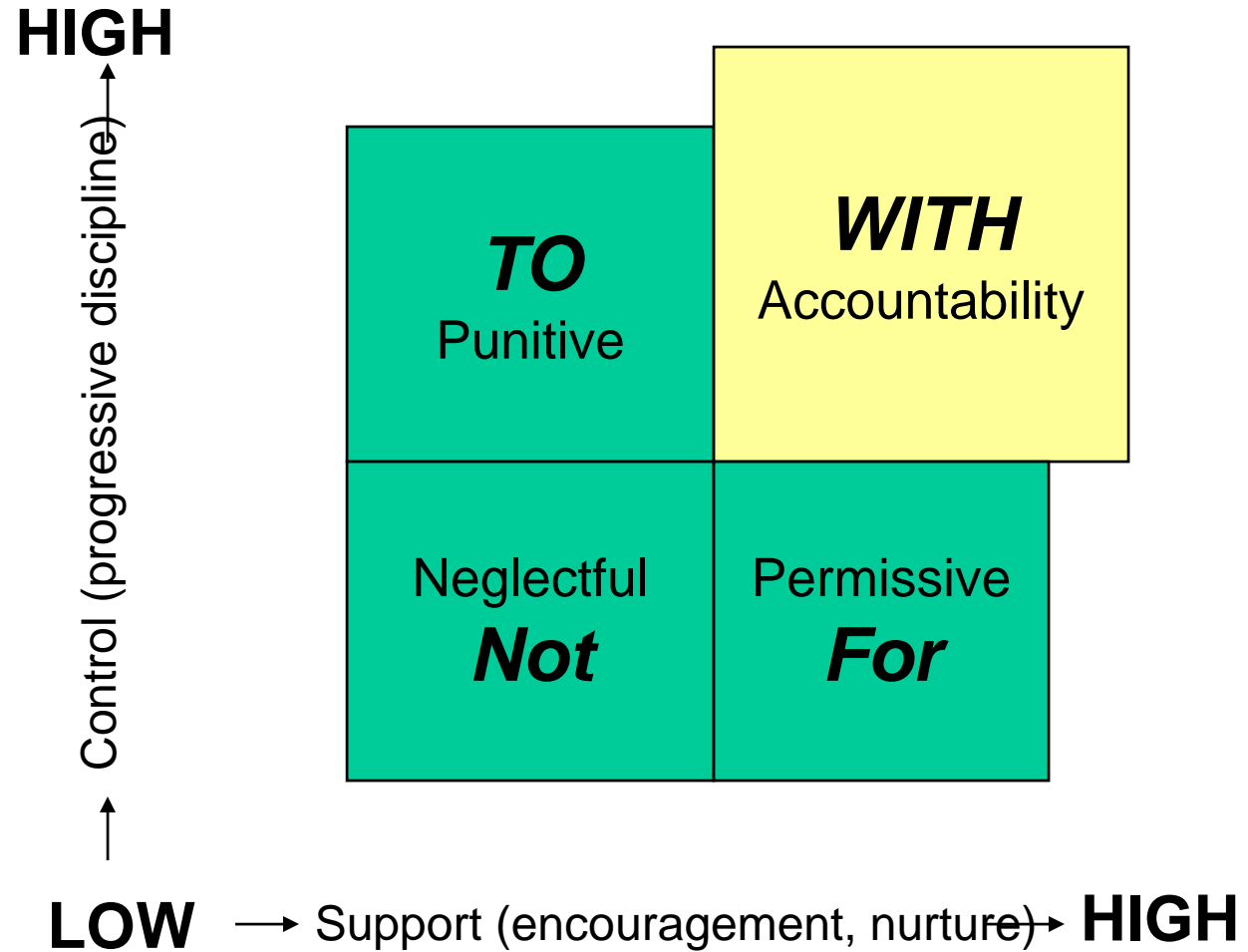
- Talking: Build awareness of their behaviours
- Training : Educate bullies
- Grading: Take disciplinary measures

## 3) Change the system

\* (*Futterman, 2004*)



# Discipline Window



Adapted by Janet Schmidt from Ted Wachtel (1999, February). **Restorative Justice in Everyday Life: Beyond the Formal Ritual.**



# What doesn't work

1. Calling someone 'a bully' or accusing them of 'harassing' behaviour.
2. Using too much force. Using a sledge hammer when a pry bar would work.
3. Reacting with intensity/frustration of multiple events without directly addressing earlier events.
4. Responding out of anger. Attacking the person instead of addressing the behaviour. Using a tone that sounds 'parental'.



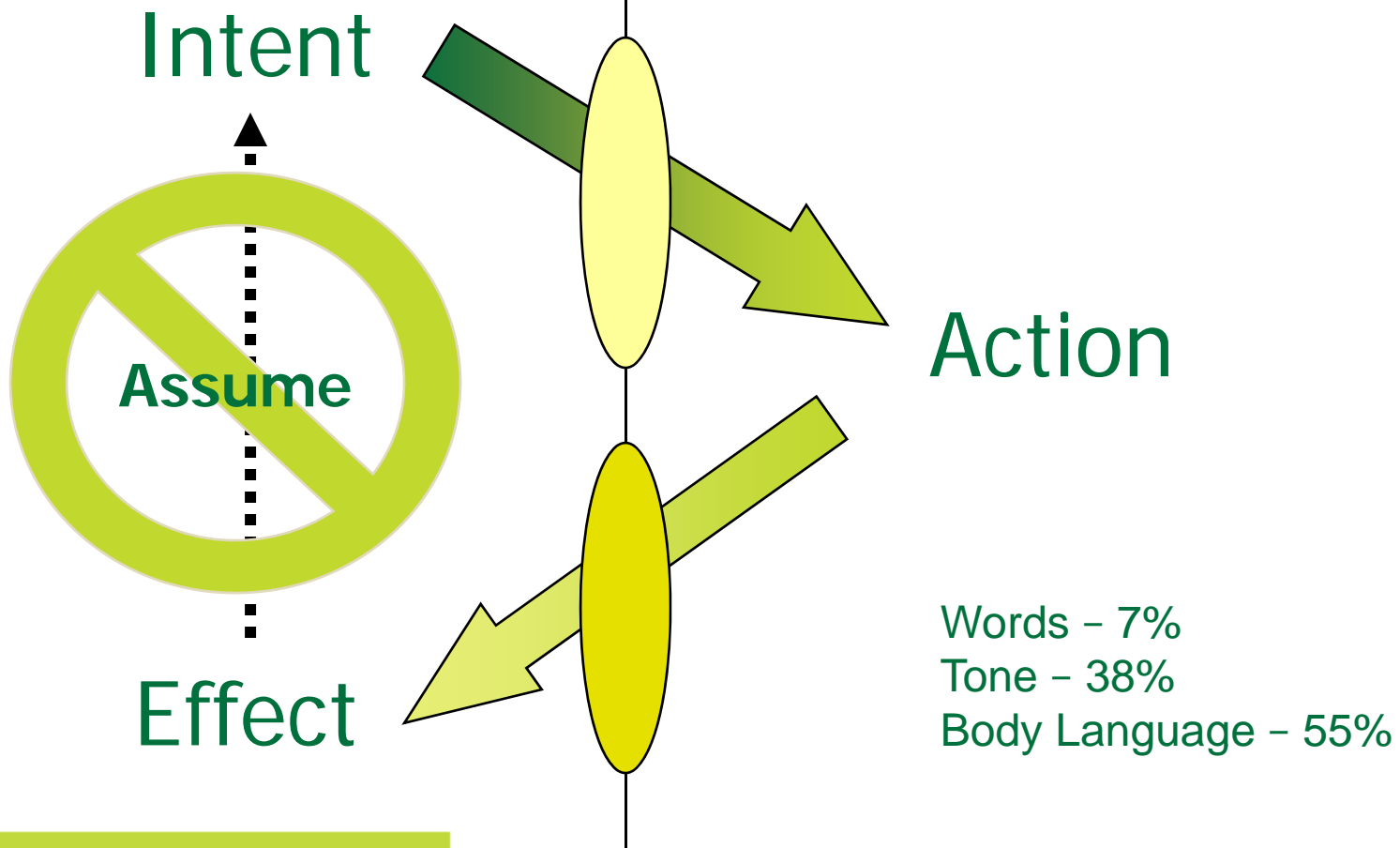
# Two Principles

1. Being honest about specific behaviour and the impact of the behaviour. In other words no labels or exaggerations.
2. Show concern for the persons well being.



Private

Public





“The next time you feel angry at a persecutor, remember that even these most difficult of office characters have something to offer, if only they can overcome the underlying wounds that gave rise to their patterns.

Don't Bring it to Work by Sylvia LaFlair, Jossey Bass, 2009, Page 143

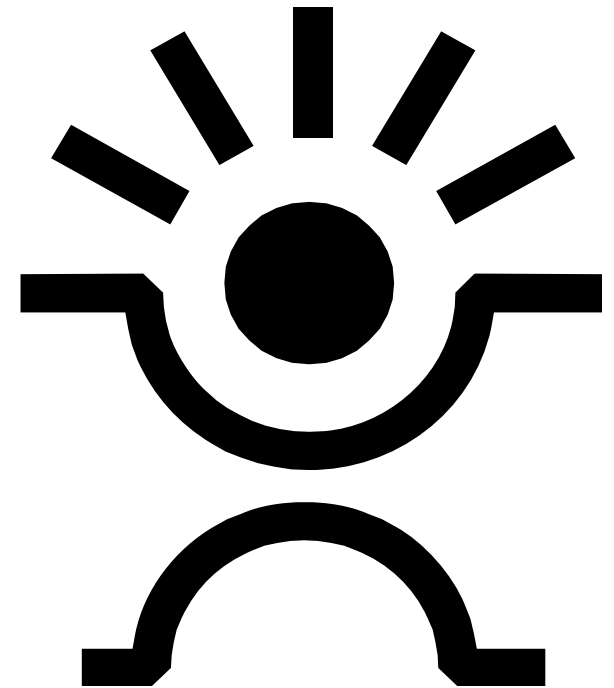


- Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. – MARK TWAIN
- Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter. - MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.



# Enjoy a bully-free workplace and help others do so as well!

- The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy. - [MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.](#)





# TRANSFORMATION TO VISIONARY

Don't Bring it to Work by Sylvia LaFlair, Jossey Bass, 2009







## Stay if...

- You need the paycheck.
- You won't be sacrificing your health.
- You can find an internal ally.
- You love your job (other than the bullying part...).
- You think that you can either ignore the behaviour or change it.



## Avoid bully at all costs...

- Limit exposure to this person especially during their most difficult times.
- Sit far away from this person in meetings.
- Avoid one-on-one contact with the bully. If contact is necessary, have at least one other person in the room.



# **WHEN THE PREY BECOMES THE PREDATOR:**

## **Bullying as Predictor of Reciprocal Bullying, Coping and Well-Being**

**By Raymond T. Lee and Celeste M  
Brotheridge**

1. Verbal abuse
2. Work being undermined
3. Belittlement



# Verbal Abuse

1. Created a fall guy (bullied others) .44
2. Undermined others (.19)
3. Coping by problem solving (.47)



# Work Being Undermined

1. Undermined others (.23)



# Belittlement

## 1. Self Doubt (.58)

- Cynicism, Emotional Exhaustion, Physical and Affective Symptoms

## 1. Indirect/Passive (.44)

## 2. Ignored bullies (.24)



# Strength to Excess

	Tricky Fickle Inconsistent Fawning Changeable	Deceptive Wishy-washy Unreliable Groveling Erratic
	Dominate Argue Jar Unsympathetic Impatient	Oppress Fight Overwhelm Ruthless Driven
	Guard Inflexible Unfriendly Pessimistic Ritualistic	Unresponsive Obsessive Rejecting Defeated Compulsive
	Critical Fussy Gullible Disillusioned Defensive	Righteous Furious Victimized Despairing Martyred

Resol



# Strength to Excess

Clever  
Sympathetic  
Flexible  
Affectionate  
Innovative

Lead  
Challenge  
Stimulate  
Self-assured  
Eager

Reserved  
Careful  
Even  
Cautious  
Systematic

Responsive  
Concerned  
Innocent  
Hopeful  
Contemplative

Re



# Strength to Excess

Clever Sympathetic Flexible Affectionate Innovative	Tricky Fickle Inconsistent Fawning Changeable	Deceptive Wishy-washy Unreliable Groveling Erratic
Lead Challenge Stimulate Self-assured Eager	Dominate Argue Jar Unsympathetic Impatient	Oppress Fight Overwhelm Ruthless Driven
Reserved Careful Even Cautious Systematic	Guard Inflexible Unfriendly Pessimistic Ritualistic	Unresponsive Obsessive Rejecting Defeated Compulsive
Responsive Concerned Innocent Hopeful Contemplative	Critical Fussy Gullible Disillusioned Defensive	Righteous Furious Victimized Despairing Martyred



# Johari Window Model

SELF



RECEIVES FEEDBACK

I know

I don't know

They Know

Public

Blind Spot

They Don't Know

Private  
(hidden area)

Unknown

Insight

OTHERS

GIVES FEEDBACK