

NEWSLETTER OF THE IAWBH

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Editor: Annie Hogh

Welcome to the Newsletter

It is with great pleasure that as President of IAWBH I welcome you to this newsletter and the International Association. Considerable work has been going on in the last year to get us to this point – and all by people who have demanding full-time jobs – so thanks to all the Board and our volunteers who have contributed time and knowledge.

What does next year bring? Well, after the website is up, you need to sign up and pay some dues! We are using electronic systems to keep our costs down, hence keep the fees low to encourage high membership – more about this in the next issue. Please do participate in SIGs and come to the 2010 conference in Cardiff. We will let you know when the website is ready for SIGs and dues.

This newsletter introduces our Special Interest Groups (SIGs). Colleagues from around the world have volunteered to manage a set of these, and information on them is in this newsletter. But if you want to set up another – go ahead and volunteer to Premilla D'Cruz.

Arrangements for the Cardiff conference are well underway. If you need to get a visa for Cardiff, and hence early acceptance of your abstract for the conference, let the organisers know and they can fast track the review of your abstract! Everyone - get writing and put in an abstract, or a full paper if you need to do so for funding or visa reasons. There may be prizes and the conference organisers are negotiating with academic journals for special issues of journals with papers from the conference. See <http://www.bullying2010.com/> for further details.

Thank you to everyone who has helped us launch the International Association. Now we all need to make the thing work for us – it's a terrific community already – let's make it happen.

Charlotte Rayner
President

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First newsletter from the IAWBH

We plan 3 – 4 issues a year of the newsletter to distribute news from the board, the SIGs and the organisers of the conference and we hope that it will also be a discussion forum for members of the IAWBH.

We are looking for people who would like to work with the newsletter – be an editor or co-editor. If you would like to be part of the editorial group of the newsletter please let me know: annie.hogh@psy.ku.dk. The next issue of the Newsletter will be distributed in November. Deadline is October 15.

Annie Hogh
Editor

IAWBH

Why the change of name? One thing that we have been working on is the establishment of a web site. The only domain name available to us was IAWBH. Thus, at our board meeting on 14th July 2009, we, the board members, had a discussion about the name of the association needing to reflect the domain name and vice versa. After considerable discussion, we took the decision to a preliminary change of the name of the association for practical reasons. While ideally we would have liked to have consulted with all interested parties, we thought that in the interests of getting on with things, that all of you interested in being members of the association would understand the need for us to make the decision. However, we intend to ask the members for formal approval in connection with the election process/next biannual meeting in Cardiff in June 2010. We hope you understand.

The mission of the IAWBH

The mission of The International Association on Workplace Bullying and Harassment is to stimulate, generate, integrate and disseminate research and evidence-based practice in the field of workplace bullying and harassment and to promote fairness, justice and dignity at work for all.

The Aims of the Association are to contribute by scientific means to:

1. the promotion of fairness, justice and dignity for all at work.
2. the promotion of a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of workplace bullying and harassment
3. increasing the knowledge of the contextual factors relating to workplace bullying and harassment

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4. understanding the interpersonal, intrapersonal, organizational and societal dynamics of workplace bullying and harassment
5. disseminating research-based knowledge and evidence-based practice on workplace bullying and harassment
6. bringing together researchers and practitioners for collaboration and knowledge sharing
7. broadening the geographical scope of research and evidence based practice into workplace bullying and harassment

Who are the board members of the IAWBH 2008-2010 and what are their roles?

President:

Charlotte Rayner is Professor of Human Resource Management at Portsmouth Business School and Director of the Centre for Organization Research and Development (CORD), UK. Email: charlotte.rayner@port.ac.uk

Secretary:

Michael Sheehan is Professor of Management and a Co-Director of the Centre for Research on Workplace Behaviours, Glamorgan Business School, University of Glamorgan, Treforest, Wales, UK. Email: msheehan@glam.ac.uk

Treasurer:

Pamela Lutgen-Sandvik is Assistant Professor of Organizational Communication in the University of New Mexico's Department of Communication and Journalism, USA. Email: plutgen@unm.edu

Conferences and events:

Helge Hoel is Senior Lecturer at Manchester Business School, The University of Manchester, UK. Email: helge.hoel@mbs.ac.uk

SIGs (Special Interest Groups):

Premilla D'Cruz is Associate Professor of Organisational Behaviour at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, India. Email: premilla_dcruz@yahoo.com

Communications (Web and Newsletter):

Annie Hogh is Associate Professor in Work and Organisational Psychology at the University of Copenhagen's Department of Psychology, Denmark. Email: annie.hogh@psy.ku.dk

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The Website

We are working on creating a website for the IAWBH and the aim is to have it up and running soon. The web address will be: www.iawbh.org

Conference in 2010

Michael Sheehan

Planning for the 7th biennial conference on workplace bullying and harassment, being held in Cardiff from 2nd to 4th June 2010, is well under way. A number of abstracts have already been received by the conference organisers and those abstracts have been double blind peer reviewed. Reviewer feedback has then been forwarded to the author(s) with any suggestions for changes included.

The organisers are pleased to have an exciting line up of keynote speakers, reflecting both the academic and practitioner interests of the association. We are confident that you will find what each of the speakers has to say both informative and interesting.

One of the aims for the conference is to bring together interested parties in organisations and government; researchers; policy makers; intervention specialists such as mediators, trainers, practitioners, therapists and counsellors in a unified and synergistic format where ideas may be shared and exchanged in the spirit of collegiality and co-operation. We think that the keynote speakers will help set the scene for such synergy.

Another aim of the conference is to enable researchers and practitioners to discuss and debate appropriate research and practicalities into matters affecting them at work to create new understanding; and to use that understanding to put in place positive strategies and interventions to create more meaningful, productive, and positive workplaces. The organisers are developing an exciting programme to help achieve this aim and are planning to have space available where people can meet in an informal setting to have such discussions.

For further information on the conference, make sure that you check the conference website on a regular basis at <http://www.bullying2010.com/> and don't forget to submit your abstract by 30th October 2009.

A doctoral student symposium

In conjunction with the conference, Helge Hoel and Michael Sheehan are organising a doctoral student symposium for Tuesday 1st June 2010. The symposium will be held in the Atrium building in Cardiff, which is the home of the Cardiff School of Cultural and Creative Industries of the University of Glamorgan. It is a new building and well suited for the day. Scholars working in the field of workplace bullying and harassment will address the symposium. Further details will be an-

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nounced shortly on the conference website and in the next newsletter. We encourage all doctoral students working in this important area to attend this day.

Introducing Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

Premilla D'Cruz, SIGs Coordinator, IAWBH Board

IAWBH is happy to announce the formation of Special Interest Groups (SIGs). Constituting an important meeting point for IAWBH members, SIGs serve a variety of purposes:

1. A point of contact for members to interact with other members who share similar interests relating to particular areas within workplace bullying, and to further those interests individually and collectively in terms of research, practice and other activities.
2. A forum through which members can learn about and develop new interests by interacting with/joining other SIGs.
3. A resource centre in terms of connecting with people, learning about and gaining access to existing perspectives, materials and skills, developing perspectives, materials and skills, taking the area forward, etc.
4. An avenue by which emergent areas can be developed.
5. A meeting ground for academics and practitioners/employers which promotes the development of the field through synergistic collaboration.

Following the circulation of our flyer in May 2009, we have had numerous IAWBH members come forward to initiate, convene and co-convene various SIGs. Details of these SIGs, along with convenors' and co-convenors' write-ups and contact information, are below.

SIGs are essentially member-driven, with a convenor taking the lead and a co-convenor actively supporting him/her. The minimum set of activities envisaged includes a webpage on the upcoming Association website, contributions to the Association newsletter and an e-forum or discussion group. Other activities are expected to emerge from the SIG itself. Convenors manage the activities and facilitate the functioning of SIGs, being assisted in the endeavour by co-convenors. SIGs will begin their activities after the Association website is up and running and you will be informed about this.

We would love to have you step up to initiate and convene/co-convene a SIG. Please write to me at premilla_dcruz@yahoo.com.

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SIGs so far (in alphabetical order)...

1. Bystanders SIG

Convenor: Roelie Mulder

In the mobbing process, bystanders play their own part, but which one? And why do they behave as they do? How do they influence the process and how can they be persuaded to do so positively? The aim of the Bystanders SIG is to seek answers to these and other questions. Through sharing knowledge and inspiring each other we hope to contribute to the growing insight about the mobbing process. So, please join us, we need you! Contact the convenor, Roelie Mulder.

2. Cross-cultural Issues SIG

Convenor: Maarit Vartia

The Cross-cultural Issues SIG is interested in interpersonal conflicts, bullying and harassment in multicultural workplaces and against ethnic minorities (racial harassment). The group discusses, encourages and supports research on the issue - a perspective so far quite little explored. The group will also promote development of practical measures for prevention and management of bullying and harassment in multicultural workplaces and against ethnic minorities. To join, contact the convenor Maarit Vartia.

3. Legal Issues SIG

Convenor: Rosemary Morgan

The Legal Issues SIG invites discussion, research ideas, legal resources as well as collaboration on legal issues and challenges to advancing and enhancing harassment-free workplaces. For example: The intersection or apparent conflict of legal rights such as freedom of expression and freedom from harassment; religious freedom and freedom from harassment can present legal confusion for employers, advocates, unions, courts and arbitrators. What decisions, research or even extra-legal approaches might assist in the challenging balancing of these rights? To join us, contact the convenor, Rosemary Morgan.

4. Organisational Influences SIG

Convenor: Sabrina Deutsch Salamon

Co-convenor: Brian Cariss

Join the SIG on Organizational Influences to discuss the role of situational and contextual factors in bullying and harassment in the workplace. These factors may include, but are not limited to, organizational antecedents such as the nature of work, the organizational culture or climate, and leadership. We recognize that such organization-level antecedents may interact with other group or individual-level factors in influencing bullying and harassment. We hope that this SIG will help us gain a deeper understanding of what organizations can do to minimize bullying in the workplace. To join us, contact the convenor, Sabrina Deutsch Salamon.

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5. Organisational Practitioners SIG

Convenor: Catherine Mattice

The Organizational Practitioners SIG is for individuals and professionals from organizations of any size offering services, or functioning within an organization, in the following types of areas: human resources, organizational development, conflict resolution, organizational psychology, business management, consulting, employee assistance, unions, employment law, and health and safety. Joining this SIG will provide the opportunity to network with internal and external practitioners in order to share pragmatic and real time best practices, general knowledge and resources. This SIG allows external consultants and internal folks to connect. We will be holding a reception at the next Conference in 2010, so please keep your eye out for information on this. Please join us! Contact the convenor, Catherine Mattice.

6. Quantitative Research Methods SIG

Convenor: Guy Notelaers

(more information will follow)

7. Risk Management SIG

Convenor: Carlo Caponecchia

Risk Management SIG is concerned with how organisations can systematically attempt to prevent and control workplace bullying. While based on the risk management paradigm of identifying, assessing and controlling hazards, effective risk management relies on knowledge from all areas of workplace bullying research. Thus the scope for the group is broad, applied and significant. The terms of reference for the group would be determined by members, but potential areas of interest include how to develop better risk management guidance material and risk assessment tools; improving reporting systems; and assessing, monitoring, evaluating and prioritising control strategies. Join this SIG by contacting the convenor, Carlo Caponecchia

8. Therapeutic Practitioners SIG

Convenor: Marie-France Hirigoyen

Co-convenors: Evelyn Field and Marina Pares

The major concern for therapeutic practitioners is to establish appropriate diagnoses and treatment for a person who is experiencing bullying at work (as a target, bully or both) or has been injured (often severely) and may have left the workplace for months, years or forever. There is a serious lack of evidence-based diagnoses and treatment which leads to major confusion between stress, trauma and depression. Consequently, many targets are injured first, by bullying, and second, by the substantial lack of professional and community understanding. The aim of the Therapeutic Practitioners SIG is to establish international discussion and further research to improve di-

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agnostic and treatment models, especially the DSM process, and to improve training for therapists.

9. Trade Unions SIG

Convenor: Fergus Roseburgh

Co-convenor: Ernesto Noronha

One of the main functions of the trade union movement is to protect and promote the interests of its' membership. We are all aware of the detrimental impact that bullying in the workplace has on all those involved, particularly those members we represent. Trade unions provide an ideal platform for encouraging employers and employees to adopt effective strategies and policies to combat such negative behaviour. The aim of the Trade Union SIG will be to draw on best practice from around the world from both within and outside of the trade union movement in order to enhance the working lives of our membership. To join this SIG, contact the convenor, Fergus Roseburgh at Fergus.

Mobbing / bullying researchers at the 14th European Congress of Work and Organizational Psychology

Elfi Baillien, KULeuven – Belgium

Over the last decade a steadily rising number of studies have been focussing on bullying, mobbing, harassment and similar topics, enhancing insight of the why, how and what of such unpleasant situations at work. Consequently, an eye-catching delegation of international bullying researchers enthusiastically travelled Santiago De Compostella to attend the 14th European Congress of Work and Organizational Psychology to share their astonishing findings and experiences in various bullying, leadership and well-being symposia. They hoped to sensitize colleague-scholars for this important issue in a broad range of other thematic sessions and looked forward to engaging in a cosy informal conversation with international colleagues whilst enjoying – at least for those dreaming of the bright Spanish sun – fairly untypical Spanish temperatures. We definitely picked up numerous interesting findings and we met even more passionate bullying researchers. And we most certainly hope to maintain this increase and amazing atmosphere among bullying researchers, and wish to welcome you next year at Cardiff, for the 7th International Conference on Bullying and Harassment.

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Coffee break



A bullying symposium

Contributions from members

One thing that we want to do is to give members the opportunity to contribute to the Newsletter. So if you have something from your research or practice that you would like to share with other members of the IABWH such as for instance an abstract from a conference (see below), please sent it to the editor (annie.hogh@psy.ku.dk).

Reintegration of a sick employee suffering from a mobbing-situation - instead of early retirement

By Klaus Schiller-Stutz

Abstract from the 4th International Forum on Disability Management 22-24 September 2008 in Berlin

Thesis

It is a win-win situation for those affected, as well as companies and our society in general, to re-integrate employees in their workplace, who fell sick because of a mobbing situation. Affected individuals often get diagnosed with a maladjustment disorder and are given sick notes for an extended amount of time. Senior employees (from 45 years old) are more often affected by mobbing than others, and as a consequence, take the early retirement route more often (Meschkutat et al., 2002). Workplace related rehabilitation and reintegration is important and central for the mental and physical health of an individual, after a mobbing situation has occurred. It is also crucial for the security of his or her existence.

In Europe the biggest challenges in the areas of workplace safety and health are stress at work, resulting in adverse health effects, as well as the increase of violence and mobbing at work (see the report of the European Agency for Workplace Related Safety and Health, 1/30/2008). The EU-report (Andersson, 2001) states that deficiencies in business organization, information and man-

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agement, as well as unsecure employment and longtime unsolved organizational deficiencies, all lead to the main reasons für mobbing and relating to individuals as scapegoats for organizational problems.

The expression mobbing describes two things (Schiller-Stutz, 2005, p. 13):

- On one side, it describes the repeated bullying and excluding behaviour of one or more persons towards an individual
- On the other side, it describes the arise and course of a destructive conflict with increasing escalation over time.

In Switzerland, right now, we see more frequent reports about health damages and illnesses, as a result of the overall increase of workplace related to psycho-social strains and mobbing. This leads to more days of absence from work, more use of prescription and other drugs, and more consultations with physicians (Swiss Bureau for Economy, seco, 2002). Mobbing gives rise to substantial costs for employees, companies and the society because of missed time at work, sickness, decreased performance, interrupted work flow and may be a damaged image for the company. Projections for Switzerland show that the economic costs für mobbing are between 8 to 13 billion Euro and projections for Germany are in the rage of 50 billion Euro.

Method

59 years old Mrs. Muster has been a bookkeeper in a city`s administration office for 11 years. Because of a nervous breakdown with depressive episodes and a maladjustment disorder, she has been sent on sick leave by her physicians and referred to a psychologist. It came out that she was asked to go into early retirement because of her overall drop in performance. However it became more evident that there were psycho-social strains and mobbing going on in her team and that over time she took on the role as a victim. Mrs. M. started to trust the therapist, who was using his active listening skills and who told her that he was bound to professional discretion. During therapy she talked about the mobbing situation and was able to release her emotions (like annoyance, powerlessness, anger, anxiety, shame and guilt). An in-depth analysis of the mobbing situation helped Mrs. M. to distance herself from the things that were happening, to name the involved players and their motives for their mobbing behaviour, to realize her own share in the mobbing situation and to develop new perspectives. After analyzing the „mobbing dynamics“, she was able to develop more constructive coping mechanisms. It was of great importance to Mrs. M. to leave her victim role behind. She agreed to have two clarifying meetings with her superiors, together with her therapist as mediator, while still being on sick leave. Her superiors realized that Mrs. M.`s decrease in performance and the worsening of the work climate all had to do with the mobbing situation, after they learned about several incidents and the dynamics within the team. They realized that it would be important, in the near future, to organize a course in „Team Coaching for Health“ for all their team members.

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Results

During her psycho-social treatment Mrs. M. was able to learn about how she became a victim and about the strategies and behaviour that support an exit from this role. She also learned how to cope with problems and conflicts in a more constructive way. The understanding of her superiors in regard of the mobbing situation in the team and the introduction of the course in „Team Coaching for Health“ were positive factors that supported the situation. The team was able to establish trust and a more respectful way of interacting with Mrs. M., which had a positive effect on the motivation and performance of all team members as well as on the work climate general.

Conclusions

Psycho-social strains and mobbing can be overcome with the help of a health professional, and those affected can learn how to cope in a constructive way in order to be integrated back in their original workplace. The sooner the early detection of mobbing occurs and the sooner an individual consults a health professional (physician or psychologist), the better the chances for a successful reintegration. The attitude and outlook of superiors and the management will make all the difference.

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