

# NEWSLETTER OF THE IAWBH

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Volume 2, Issue 1  
March 2010  
Editor: Annie Hogh  
Co-editor: Laura Crawshaw

## Welcome to the November newsletter

A warm welcome to the February newsletter. This has been a busy few months with membership of the Association growing well. Arrangements for the biennial conference in June 2010 are finally coming into place too, after a record 220 abstracts were submitted. The organisers at Glamorgan University have done a great job in coordinating peer review and letting everyone know their results. This newsletter has some early information on the conference including the pre-conference PhD workshop, and news about SIGs.

We continue our scholarly networking with some great abstracts in this issue.

The final mention is for **elections** which will be held in May. Only members can vote, and only members can stand for election, so remind everyone on your network join up to IAWBH! Elections will be electronic through the website. We'll be seeking three new Board Members, of which at least one must be a practitioner. The President, 'reserve' Board Members (2) and electoral Committee (2) also need to get elected every two-year cycle. Look out for more details as they are formulated in the next Newsletter in April when we'll be asking for nominations and letting everyone know the process.

Meanwhile I hope your 2010 has started well. Whether or not you are coming to the conference, please do contribute to the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and enjoy this newsletter.

*Charlotte Rayner, President*

## 7th International conference on workplace bullying and harassment

We are delighted with the response we have received to date for the conference being held in Cardiff from 2nd to 4th June 2010 inclusive.

We received more than 220 abstracts from researchers and practitioners worldwide.

For those abstracts accepted, about 140 people have currently registered to attend the conference. We encourage those people whose abstracts have been accepted and who have not yet registered to do so as soon as possible.

There is a wide variety of topics being presented and this augurs well for an interesting and highly successful conference. There ought to be something of interest for everybody, researchers and practitioners alike.

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We also encourage people to arrange their travel and accommodation as early as possible and further details for how they can do so may be found on the conference website at <http://www.bullying2010.com/>

*Michael Sheehan, Board Secretary*

## **Update Doctoral workshop – Cardiff - 1 June 2010**

More than 20 PhD students have already booked a place at the Doctoral, pre-conference Workshop. The programme for the event is now available (see below). The workshop aims to provide doctoral students studying subjects associated with workplace bullying and harassment with an opportunity to engage with current presentations on the subjects focusing on conceptual as well as methodological issues. In addition, the workshop will provide the participants with the opportunity to discuss aspects of their own research with fellow doctoral students of bullying and harassment in small groups or 'surgeries', each facilitated by an expert in the field.

Participation in the workshop is free for PhD students who will be given preference. Other participants will be accepted as far as space allows. A nominal fee will be charged for participants other than PhD students for access to the presentations. The 'surgeries' are open to PhD students only.

In order to get the maximum out of the afternoon's surgeries, all participants will be asked to submit a 250-word statement providing the following information: Working title of the thesis/dissertation, aims/objectives and the proposed or applied research method.

All participants will be given the opportunity to give a 10 minute presentation to the other group members, 5 minutes outlining their study and 5 minutes focusing on dilemmas/issues they wish to discuss.

Registration is still open and a place can be reserved by contacting Helge Hoel (IAWBH Board member, responsible for conferences and events):

[helge.hoel@mbs.ac.uk](mailto:helge.hoel@mbs.ac.uk)

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## Doctoral Workshop Programme – 1 June 2010

- 8.30-9.00 Registration
- 9.00 Welcome and opening remarks
- 9.15 *"Agreed and disputed wisdom: Exploring the concept of workplace bullying"*  
Charlotte Rayner, Portsmouth University & Helge Hoel, University of Manchester
- 10.45 Coffee break
- 11.00 *Contemporary issues in bullying research methods.*  
Participants choose either workshop A or B.
- A: *"The measurement of workplace bullying"*. Morten Birkeland, Nielsen, University of Bergen.
- B: *A qualitative approach to studying bullying and harassment: collecting and analysing qualitative data.* Pamela Lutgen-Sandvik, University of New Mexico.
- 13.00 Lunch break
- 14.00–16.30 Group "PhD surgeries": Advice and discussion on research strategy and methods.
- 16.30 Concluding remarks

*Helge Hoel, Board - Responsible for Conferences and Events*

## Progress on Special Interest Groups - SIGs

SIGs convenors and co-convenors and I are looking forward to meeting up with you in Cardiff and taking SIGs forward. A "SIGs evening-out" is planned on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2010 – so please mark your diary. More details on this will be sent out to you shortly.

In the meanwhile, we look forward to your participation on the SIGs discussion fora (check out <http://www.iawbh.org/sig>).

I am happy to announce a new SIG on Emotions and Personality (details below) initiated by Donna-Louise McGrath.

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## **Emotions and Personality SIG**

This SIG provides a forum to explore, share and deepen our understanding of the role of emotions and personality in workplace bullying. Within the same organisation, some people bully, yet others don't. This SIG seeks to explore some possible explanations for this difference. In particular, a common theme in the bullying literature is that envy has frequently been identified by targets as a reason for being bullied. In such cases, targets of bullying may have some superior personal or professional quality which elucidates the comparatively inferior qualities of the perpetrator (or group). The bullying of envied others reduces the perpetrator's feelings of inferiority. Narcissistic traits such as the perpetrator's lack of empathy and grandiose yet fragile self view no doubt also plays some role in bullying. Yet most workplace bullying research is based on reports from the targets of workplace bullying, which means we have little first hand data about the personality traits, emotions and motivations of the perpetrators of workplace bullying. This perhaps raises questions about the future direction of workplace bullying research and whether the focus should move toward taking on the challenge of engaging the perpetrators of bullying. Such self-report data would be most useful to informing workplace bullying prevention programs or for employment screening.

*Premilla D'Cruz, Board, SIGs Co-ordinator*

## **Members' corner**

Here members have an opportunity to include in the newsletter pieces of interest for members of the IAWBH. For instance abstracts from peer reviewed articles and books; information about journal special issues and conference calls. In this issue we have a summary of an article by Evert van de Vliert proposing that bullying and conflict researcher find inspiration in each others' area. You can also read an abstract of an article by Laura Crawshaw calling for a development of a standard nomenclature of the concepts of bullying/mobbing/harassment etc.

On the website we have created space for a discussion forum the Sigs. We encourage you to use these sites and please visit our website on [www.iawbh.org/](http://www.iawbh.org/)

*Annie Hogh, editor (Board, Communication)*

## **Abstract**

### **Workplace bullying? Mobbing? Harassment? Distraction by a thousand definitions.**

By Laura Crawshaw

The growing body of research on what is variously termed workplace bullying, mobbing, psychological abuse, and/or harassment reflects a growing problem of conflicting terms and definitions. This definition proliferation impedes our ability to conceptualize the phenomenon of workplace aggression in clear and consistent terms, and complicates effective collaboration among researchers and practitioners. The absence of a shared descriptive language for the phenomenon is doubly perplexing for employers, legislators, and other members of society who seek to address this source of psychological pain in the workplace. This article calls for the development of a standard

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nomenclature to facilitate research and support the development of best practices and proposes a descriptive nomenclature of workplace psychological harassment.

From Crawshaw, L. (2009). Workplace bullying? Mobbing? Harassment? Distraction by a thousand definitions. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 61, 263-267. doi: 10.1037/a0016590. Copyright © 2009 by the American Psychological Association. Reproduced with permission.

## Article summary

### **"Moving bullies and victims up on conflict-researchers" waiting lists". A state-of-the-art commentary by Professor Evert van de Vliert.**

By Professor Staale Einarsen, University of Bergen

The field of conflict and conflict resolution is an important scientific neighbour for us who do research and applied work in the field of bullying and harassment. One of that former field's most distinguished scholars, Prof. Evert van de Vliert, has just published an interesting and thought-provoking state-of-the-art commentary in the journal *"Negotiation and Conflict Management Research"*, appearing in the journal's latest issue in February 2010 (volume 3, number 1). In this commentary, Professor Van de Vliert, argues that although bullies and victims, their mutual relations, and possible remedial actions in such cases should be at the heart of what conflict researchers should pay attention to, surprisingly few do. Van de Vliert goes on to describe three issues that have intrigued him personally as a conflict researcher looking over the fence to the field of bullying and which may be mutually beneficial for the two fields to look at more closely. He names these issues: *all-over-again problems*, *neutral-and-aloof problems* and *root-beyond-root problems*.

Regarding the all-over-again problems, what puzzles Van de Vliert is that although the conflict field for long has stated that conflicts are cyclic, conflict researchers seldom study the unceasing series of events that are typical for bullying scenarios. Even though the bully may "win" a given situation, he or she typically starts all over again, again and again. Why is this so, and, what can we learn about conflicts in general by studying this phenomena? The neutral-and-aloof problem is about a particular thing in bullying cases, and that is the fact that there are neutral observers and witnesses there that have no role in the bullying scenarios. They are not involved, nor are they a third party that may have some control over the process or the outcome of the bullying situation. Still, does that mean that they have no influence? Van de Vliert argues that they are there and not there at the same time. He even proposes a label for this new role in conflict research, the "Zeroth parties". Hence, research on bystanders in bullying cases may be a gift to the conflict literature.

For those present at the international bullying conference in Montreal in 2008, it may come as no wonder that Professor Van de Vliert is interested in macro explanations for bullying and conflicts at large, to be found in the very living conditions that people face around the globe. Under the heading *root-beyond-root problems* he argues that climatic survival is at the heart of why bullying is more prevalent in some countries than in others. Implicitly, he further argues that bullying, as a very distinct but also severe conflict phenomenon, is highly suitable for cross-cultural research where the fruits of this research may create more knowledge on the very roots of interpersonal conflicts and also its measures.

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As I see it, such an invited state-of-the-art commentary must also be seen as an invitation to submit our work as bullying researchers to this journal. Secondly, it poses the professional view by Professor Van de Vliert of what we as bullying researchers may and should bring to the conflict field. Yet, we may also read this commentary as an invitation to us in the bullying field to think more closely about what are the issues and problems we address in our field that may also add to the knowledge in related fields, in this case the conflict and conflict resolution field. As said in the article; *"The ferry between the conflict island and bullying island carries few passengers"*. Hence, there is room for many on board.

**Deadline for the next Newsletter is April 6.**