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.
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
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 2nd June 2010 – so please mark your di-
ary. 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.
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/

Annie Hogh, editor (Board, Communication)

Abstract


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
The field of conflict and conflict resolution is an important scientific neighbour for us who do research and support the development of best practices and proposes a descriptive nomenclature of workplace psychological harassment.


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 that 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.
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.