

NEWSLETTER OF THE IAWBH

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Editor: Annie Hogh

Welcome to the November newsletter

This has been another very productive month for us. The conference has received a record number of abstracts, which is terrific news. Make sure you catch the cheapest rates for the conference and this is for members of the IAWBH. So get your membership of IAWBH sorted out on our website then you can pay the cheapest rate for the conference.

The website is now up and running, thanks to Christoph Seydl who has volunteered many hours - we are indebted to him. On the website (www.iawbh.org) you will be able to catch up on our news and interact with others through the Special Interest Groups (SIGs), which should meet your needs more closely. Please use them to build on others' work so that you make the very best use of your own time.

I need to let you know that Marie-France Hirigoyen has had to resign from the Board. She wanted to cut down the time she spends in many areas, and of course that included IAWBH. I would like to thank Marie-France very much for her contribution to the Association and her very valuable input in a period when we were working out the basics of the Association. You may remember that you elected two 'deputies' to stand in if anyone from the Board had to step down. Hence Staale Einarsen from Bergen University has joined the Board. I welcome him and thank him for helping us keep the operation going.

Board members have been working hard since the last newsletter and several of them have updates to give you here. Please do enjoy reading these pages; they include the 2010 Conference in Cardiff and the SIGs. This is your community. Use it and participate, then we can all advance our knowledge together.

Charlotte Rayner, President

Introducing the new board member

"Staale Einarsen is Professor of Work and Organisational Psychology and Director of the Bergen Bullying Research Group at the University of Bergen, Norway. He received his masters and professional degree in Clinical Psychology from the University of Bergen in 1991 with a master thesis on workplace bullying, and a Ph.D. from the same university in 1996, again with a focus on workplace bullying. Staale has published extensively in the fields of workplace bullying, leadership, creativity and innovation and psychosocial factors at work since the early 1990ies and has published a number of scientific articles books, book-chapters and commissioned reports. Together with Helge Hoel, Dieter Zapf and Cary L. Copper he co-edited the volume *Bullying and emotional abuse in the workplace: International perspectives on research and practice*.and *Bullying in the Workpalce; Recent*

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trends in research and practice" with Dieter Zapf. His work has appeared in journals such as Leadership Quarterly, Work and Stress, Journal of Occupational Psychology, British Journal of Management, Journal of Applied Social Psychology, European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, Aggressive Behaviour, Scandinavian Journal of Management and Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology.

The 2010 Conference

The closing date for the submission of an abstract for the 7th biennial conference on workplace bullying and harassment being held in Cardiff from 2nd to 4th June 2010 was the 30th October, 2009. For further information please visit <http://www.bullying2010.com/>

We have received more than 220 abstracts by the closing date, all of which have been, or are being, subjected to a double blind peer review process. Thanks to all of you who have submitted an abstract and we look forward to you joining us in Cardiff next year. Thank you also to the reviewers who have assisted us so far, and who are continuing to assist us with the reviewing process.

We are in the process of notifying people who have submitted their abstract about the outcome of the review process. Such notification will come as quickly as possible so that you may pay your IAWBH membership and your conference registration fee and plan your travel arrangements.

Please also visit the conference website for information relating to registration.

The IAWBH website is now available. For people coming to the conference, it is suggested that you might like to join the association so that you are eligible for the reduced conference registration fee. *IAWBH membership is £60 per annum and if you are a paid up member of the IAWBH then you receive a massive £75 discount off the full fee, a considerable saving.* See the conference website for further details.

We look forward to seeing you in Cardiff in June 2010.

Michael Sheehan, Board Secretary

Venue for the IAWBH's Conference in 2012 – Applications invited

First Call

After a series of successful biennial conferences (the last one in Montreal 2008) and with the Cardiff conference on the horizon, the Board of the International Association of Workplace Bullying and Harassment would like to invite potential candidates for hosting the 2012 Conference to express an interest. The invitation is open to any academic institution which would like to consider hosting the event in accordance with a set of specifications drawn up by the Board.

To ensure a fair and transparent selection process and to make sure that the best applicant in terms of the overall interest of IAWBH and its membership is selected, the Board has developed a set of criteria against which applicants will be judged. These criteria are translated into a set of

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questions which need to be successfully completed by the applicants. To enable us to manage the selection process, any interest in hosting the Conference should be expressed directly to Helge Hoel (helge.hoel@mbs.ac.uk) and you will receive an application form.

The venue for the 2012 conference will be announced in Cardiff at the closing event on 4 June 2010.

Deadlines:

Deadline for expressing interest in hosting the conference: 31 December 2009

Final deadline for applications: 1 March 2010.

Helge Hoel, Board - Responsible for Conferences and Events

Update on Special Interest Groups

I am delighted to inform you that SIG webpages and web-based discussion fora are now ready for your use. Please check out the IAWBH website at www.iawbh.org or www.iawbh.com for the SIGs webpages and sign up to SIGs of your choice. We look forward to your enthusiastic participation.

SIG convenors and co-convenors and I have worked with Christoph Seydl on the SIGs part of the IAWBH website to make this user-friendly and functional. Christoph has been very generous in giving us so much of his time and his help has been invaluable.

One more Special Interest Group (SIG) has been added to our existing list of SIGs. Cynthia Marcello has stepped forward to initiate and convene a SIG on formal knowledge, power and professions (the details are below).

We now have the following SIGs: bystanders, cross-cultural issues, dynamics of formal knowledge, power and professions, legal issues, organisational influences, organisational practitioners, quantitative research methods, risk management, therapeutic practitioners and trade unions.

I also take this opportunity to welcome Nils Mageroy who will convene the therapeutic practitioners SIG.

Dynamics of Formal Knowledge, Power and Professions SIG

Convenor: Cynthia Marcello

The bases and forms of power derived from the knowledge possessed and utilized in the profession have implications for workplace bullying research. Extant literature on workplace bullying discusses the phenomenon as an imbalance of power creating disparity between those who possess the power and those who do not. The study of the professions focuses on the structures of power that are attributed and related to individuals based on the status and power associated within a profession of power. Implications for the development of transformational leadership models that use psychological empowerment as a facilitator of formal knowledge will be emphasized.

Premilla D'Cruz, Board, SIGs Co-ordinator

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Members' corner

The board has decided that in the future we would like to include pieces of interest for members of the IAWBH i.e. abstracts from peer reviewed articles and books in the newsletter; information about journal special issues and conference calls. Pamela Lutgen-Sandvik had kindly volunteered to show how a book abstract can be done. On the website where we have created space for a discussion forum in general as well as space for all the Sigs. We encourage you to use these sites and please visit our website on www.iawbh.org/

However, for this issue we have received an article from Evelyn Field, which you can read below.

Annie Hogh, editor (Board, Communication)

Book abstract

Lutgen-Sandvik, P., & Sypher, B. D. (Eds.). (2009). *Destructive organizational communication: Processes, consequences, and constructive ways of organizing*. New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis.

Destructive Organizational Communication brings together highly respected communication and management scholars to examine the destructive communicative processes in organizations explore ways to integrate theory and practice, and to identify areas for more constructive ways of organizing. Going beyond descriptions of various types of organizational communication, this volume explores how we might live and work together in a way that organizes our endeavours more humanely. Each problem-focused chapter examines a specific aspect of destructive organizational communication, reviews existing theory and research about that communicative form, and outlines its consequences and associated harms. It is a cooperative effort by scholars who have long been interested in exploring, critiquing, and exposing destructive practices at work and those committed to advancing supportive, healthy, and communal organizations.

Article:

Diagnosis and treatment for victims of workplace bullying

By *Evelyn M. Field*

'I was unaware of the insidious, toxic impact of his sociopathic behaviours on my health. I became depressed, overweight and my blood pressure increased. A month later I broke down, with an invisible, devastating, debilitating injury, one day my body wouldn't carry me to work. After nine years of severe depression and trauma I'm just coping with the damage to my life by the bully, my employer and their insurance company. Though he eventually lost his job, I've not been vindicated, validated or received justice. When my case ends, I can't imagine how I will ever work again or trust an employer to provide a safe environment.' Alice

The workplace bullying research literature is top heavy with descriptions of what workplace bullying involves; its causes and injuries, while the self-help literature is mainly influenced by those

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who've experienced its toxic impact, which creates some blind spots. However, it's not sufficient to discover what it is and why it happens, we need to know how to manage bullying within organizations and help the individuals directly affected, which includes, targets, bullies and bystanders. I would like address this article to those affected and focus my concern on victims.

A literature review reveals the groundwork research of Stale Einarsen, Noreen Tehrani, Eva Mikkelsen, Pamela Lutgen-Sandvik, Hans Leymann and others. I believe that the time has come for collaborative debate, challenges, research and collaborative action on issues regarding diagnosis and treatment of victims of workplace bullying. I would like to envisage the future development of theoretical frameworks.

I work as a counselling psychologist and have a varied background, which has been heavily influenced by treating victims of school and workplace bullying, abuse, violence and crime. I also live in Melbourne, surrounded by the largest Holocaust survivor population outside Israel. Thus I'm surrounded by trauma!

Fortunately, I work with some targets who are bullied at work, learn to survive and move on, their bullying scars surface only when triggers cause flashbacks. Many skills I employ to assist them will be included in my next book, *Bully Blocking at Work*, a self-help guide to managing workplace bullying, being released early 2010 by AustralianAcademicPress.

However, when I meet someone who has been or continues to be severely injured by workplace bullying, I am in a foreign territory! There are no diagnoses dealing with workplace bullying in the DSM IV! Many victims will experience depression, anxiety disorders and so on, but many of my clients who were bullied at work, also experienced a physical and /or psychological threat to their lives. This has been reinforced by clinical assessment. Please don't bombard me with Criterion A objections. Currently, client perception is more relevant than legal evidence. (Refer reference below). However many mental health professionals still avoid Criterion A and thereby invalidate, downgrade and demote their client's experiences and treatment by the law, insurance companies, employers and treatment professionals.

As a mature-aged psychologist working alone, (from home, Melbourne, Australia,) I used some initiative and wrote to the DSM V committee on trauma, who will consider my suggestions to include workplace bullying as a possible cause of trauma. Two magic words that would change the face of research and practice worldwide!!!! I invite you to join this crusade.....

Furthermore, some of my clients are extremely injured, physically, psychologically, spiritually, psychically, socially and so on. Many will never return to their former personalities and lives. It is as though they have been curdled, split, injured by nocebo, brainwashed into paralysis! There is little clear evidence to explain exactly why or how workplace bullying causes such a high degree of injury, which if known, could then be effectively translated into evidence-based treatment practices!

Another serious issue is that of symptoms. Most of the seriously injured victims of workplace bullying I treat demonstrate symptoms differently to other victims of trauma. Noreen Tehrani has pioneered this work. Thus, for example, anyone who has listened to a long-term victim of bullying will recall their high level of hyper-vigilance and their obsessing about the bullying and associated events for years. So many have sleep, weight and hair-loss symptoms. Few forget anything! Is it possible that victims of workplace bullying suffer differently and therefore demonstrate separate symptoms to victims of child sexual abuse, domestic violence, prisoner of war or

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crime! Thus we need further research into whether or not workplace bullying trauma (W.B.T.) exists!

The trauma treatment literature has offered some short-term methods which fail to protect many victims from their lengthy medico-legal battles, personality injuries, economic losses, changed family relationships, sex life and physical well-being. If my hypothesis is correct, then over the many months or years of treatment, and I treat some clients for 5-9 years, we need to encourage research to demonstrate appropriate guidelines for treatment for every stage victims encounter.

Finally, worldwide we know that workplace bullying can seriously injure people, and I am sure that many good therapists treat victims, with or without an appropriate diagnosis, using their standard bag of tricks, effective therapies developed over many years of professional practice. But is that enough? Under the auspices of the Australian and New Zealand Psychological Societies I have begun training psychologists to treat victims of workplace bullying. Thus I am aware of the total lack of training material.

I believe that we need to build a strong evidence-based body of knowledge, like training in any therapy or disorder, e.g. anorexia, marital therapy, to guide mental health professionals and provide victims of workplace bullying with the most appropriate, therapeutic interventions to deal with their injuries and move on.

I welcome your feedback, debate and challenges to get the evidence-based diagnosis and treatment ball rolling!!!

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*Van Hooff, M., McFarlane, A.C., Baur, J., Abraham, M., & Barne, D.J. (2008). *The stressor Criterion-A1 and PTSD: a matter of opinion?* Journal of Anxiety Disorders. (2009) Jan; 23(1). University of Adelaide, Australia.