

business

■ COLUMN

Recent studies show incivility in the workplace on the rise

It seems that wherever I go people are angry. It is as if the entire world is on their shoulders, whether it's a clerk, a manager, a laborer or a medical personal they seem angry. I remember when the customer is always right, but now it is as if the customer is in the way of whatever they are doing and it is not customer service. I am wrong, or is there more tension in the world now?

Answer: Actually you are not necessarily wrong. Recent studies show that incivility in the workplace is on the rise. However, I think that many people are oblivious to the fact that they are uncivil. It is almost as if you were at a bar and there



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WORKPLACE WISDOM

was loud music. Your voice rises and rises so that you are sure you are being heard.

I believe that people don't want to be that way but they just get caught up in the negativity. Look at the news; nothing but negative disasters and wars with constant stories of unemployment, accidents, murders and bullying.

One tool I use to combat this is not to take the news

too seriously. I only watch the news to have an idea of what is happening in current events. The other thing I do is to make a choice to be happy every single day and to be thankful for what I have.

When you do encounter a server who is less than uplifting, do your best to create an atmosphere that is light and humorous by not going down to their level. For example, I change the moment the way I act and react to what I see and what is done to me. I can also influence them by the way I say hello and goodbye, especially when I am in an elevator. Instead of staring at the numbers I say something about how the other person is dressed, or the weather but it

is always something light and hopefully funny. Many times I ask, "Are you having fun today?" The answers are interesting and varied. Some people simply say "NO!!!" and my answer back is, "That's too bad, think of how great your day would be if you are having fun." When the person gets off the elevator instead of saying the standard "Don't work too hard" or "Have a nice day" or nothing as many people do, I say, "have fun." Yes that's right, I tell people to have fun. I have fun every day no matter who I am with or what I am doing. I make each and every moment an adventure.

A tip for the negative worker: You too can change your day by deciding to have fun. I know

you are probably saying, "Ted, how can I have fun when life is so crappy?" My answer is simple and I give it to you in the form of a question; compared to what? You know that no one can make you happy as happiness is a decision. One is either happy or not; your choice.

I don't mean you go around all day with a phony smile on your face. I mean genuinely choose to be happy. I have found that when I get up in the morning and choose to be happy I have the most wonderful day. Yes, do things go wrong in my day, of course? People still cut me off, they are still rude to me and in some cases others let me down or disappoint me, but I am still happy because I refuse to let

them bring me down to the place they are at.

Remember you have the ability to control your emotions as well as your day. Keep in mind it is not what happens to you because you that counts it is simply how you act and react to what happens to you that counts. Your choice.

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BULLYING AWARENESS

BULLYING IS NOT A GAME

ATTACHMENT AND TRAUMA TREATMENT CENTRE FOR HEALING

(ATTCH) HELPS TO HEAL THE BULLYING EXPERIENCE



Many are aware that bullying is a long-standing concern however, recent neuroscience has allowed us a better insight into the impact of bullying on our brain and body. We can now see that the areas involved in the sensory experience of pain are activated during intense experiences of social rejection. This means that the brain interprets the emotional pain we are feeling as though damage were occurring to one's physical body. Additionally, the overproduction of cortisol that is released due to remaining in a chronic state of fear can damage brain structure, impacting learning and retention. These experiences can also shift our view of self and the world around us, and if perpetual, can become traits for how we engage in relationships throughout life. Research indicates that it's possible to observe symptomatology in victimized youth similar to that of individuals who've experienced chronic violence. This includes a despairing acceptance of their victimization in the development of an attitude of self-reproach which may lead victims to maintain victim thinking and believe they deserve to be taunted teased and harassed.

The creative approaches to therapy that ATTCH uses such as art, play, and movement therapy are powerful tools for allowing victims, witnesses, and those exhibiting bullying behaviour to express themselves in a non-threatening way while regaining some control over their situation, body, and emotions. These approaches also provide sensory relief as they are working at the implicit (sensory) level. The primary focus of our treatment is on creating a sense of safety. Through this we focus on awareness of body sensations, emotions, needs and shifting from a victim to survivor mind-set and experience.

When treating clients who have experienced chronic bullying therapists must also have a firm awareness of trauma and its impact on the brain, body, and behaviour. Additionally, we know that it's not just the victim that experiences trauma. The victim, the witnesses, and the bully can all experience the themes of trauma (terror, powerlessness, hurt, fear, anger, revenge, victim thinking). An awareness of how to treat these themes in an effective manner is key to healing. All of ATTCH's therapists have completed specialized training in attachment and trauma intervention to effectively provide relief and help children and youth present in a more confident manner. Lori Gill, CEO and Lead Trauma Therapist for ATTCH is also a Certified Trauma Specialist, Consultant, and Trainer for the National Institute for Trauma and Loss in Children (TLC) and offers evidence-based training for TLC to help professionals learn about the

- Bullying is a relationship problem characterized by repeated acts of verbal, social or physical aggression, which is intended to inflict physical, emotional, or psychological harm on the target.
- There is often a power differential between the person doing the bullying and the target of the behaviour.
- Bullying takes place approximately every 7.5 minutes in the schoolyard, and every 25 minutes in the classroom.
- While most people believe physical bullying to be most severe and harmful, targets of bullying report that relational or social bullying is perceived as most devastating.
- Bullying behaviour peaks during the junior high school years (grades 7 and 8); however, if youths do not learn to solve relationship problems in healthy ways, this behaviour may continue into adulthood.
- Bullying in the workplace is often more subtle and often is misconstrued as "personality conflicts".
- Cyberbullying is a form of social bullying facilitated through social media sites like MSN, Facebook, MySpace, Youtube or other sites; it may also include using email, cell phones, instant messaging or text messages to spread hate messages, rumours, make threats or spread gossip. This form of bullying can create greater levels of anxiety for the target due to the anonymity and deniability that online communication affords.
- Effects of bullying include anxiety, depression, isolation, post traumatic stress, sleep disorders, panic disorders, and in too many cases, suicide.

TAKE A STAND AGAINST BULLYING

- When a bystander intervenes, bullying behaviour stops within 10 seconds 57% of the time.
- You can step in and let the bully know that his/her behaviour is unacceptable.
- Showing support for the target of bullying can make all the difference. Take time to talk to the person being bullied, let them know they are not alone, and show that you care.
- Refuse to be a passive observer in bullying behaviour. Take a stand and refuse to be a party to bullying.



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Counselling and Psychotherapy

Anger, Bullying, Anxiety,
MVA & Post - Trauma,
Relationships

Sources:

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www.prevnnet.ca

impact of trauma and how to effectively intervene at a sensory level.

To learn more about services offered please visit their website at www.attch.org or call (905) 262-0303.

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Barrow, L. (2009). In Darkness light dawns: Exposing workplace bullying. Port Colborne: Purple Crown Publishing.



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