A Nasty Piece of Work: Goals and Communicative Actions of Parties in Workplace Bullying Conflicts

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Abstract: Workplace bullying conflicts involve a far wider group of employees than simply the bully-target dyad. We distinguish workplace bullying as a unique type of conflict because it involves the markers of routine conflict with the added features of power disparities, aggression, and persistence (i.e., repetition, duration). Specifically, we focus on nine employee groups, detailing their general profiles, motivations (goals), and tactics (communicative actions). By emphasizing roughly three different types of target (provocative, passive, rigidly conscientious), bystander (bully allies, target allies, neutral bystander), and bully (accidental, narcissistic, psychopathic) and noting that each of these types has different motivations and uses different communicative actions or tactics, we provide an idea of how impossible addressing bullying can feel and how these conflicts can be such a *nasty piece of work*.

Adult bullying is a unique type of escalated, entrenched conflict that occurs between and among organizational members. Nearly half of all U.S. workers' are affected by bullying during their working lives, either being targeted or witnessing abuse as a bystander (Namie & Lutgen-Sandvik, 2010). The extreme power disparity between bullies and targets, the aggressive character of bullying communication, and the persistent wearing down that occurs mark adult bullying as a unique type of escalated, destructive workplace conflict. Adult bullying at work is not, however, simply a dyadic one-on-one conflict—many others are involved and affected.

We explain bullying conflicts from three standpoints: targets, bystanders, and bullies and show how these types of conflict can be a *nasty piece of work*. Doing so provides a better understanding of some of the forces that constitute the phenomenon and potentially locate leverage points for more effective interventions. We begin by describing the features that make workplace bullying a unique type of conflict. From this we outline typologies of conflict motivations (Fukushima & Ohbuchi, 1996; Ohbuchi & Tedeschi, 1997) and conflict management tactics (2002). We then explain why the factors of focus—profiles, motivations, tactics—are useful for understanding bullying conflicts and subsequently flesh out these three factors for each group. We wrap up by suggesting avenues for future research.

Workplace Bullying as a Unique Form of Conflict

Workplace bullying takes place between and among people who work together and is marked by "a pattern of repeated hostile behaviors over an extended period of time; actual or perceived intent to harm on the part of the actor [i.e., bully]; one party being unable to defend him- or herself; [and] a power imbalance between parties" (Keashly & Nowell, 2011, p. 424). Power disparity is central to bullying conflicts, and research calls the disadvantaged parties *targets.* The target's disadvantaged position can be due to bullies' higher position (e.g., supervisor), influence, or charisma; or can develop because of the persistent "hammering away" characteristic of bullying (Tracy, Lutgen-Sandvik, & Alberts, 2006, p. 163).

Bullying is a *pattern* of ongoing aggressive communication (Lutgen-Sandvik, Namie, & Namie, 2009), and when targeted workers try to explain their experiences, they often struggle with how to encapsulate the story, usually needing "to describe the entire set of behaviors and their interrelationships" as these unfolded over time (Keashly & Jagatic, 2011, p. 50). The enduring character of bullying contributes to targets' sense of powerlessness. Persistent attacks increase stress and decrease coping capacity, which exacerbate feelings of powerlessness making targets even more easily bullied and less able to defend themselves (Leymann, 1996).

Bullying is also *escalatory*; initially aggression is passive, circuitous, and immensely difficult to describe; typically increasing in frequency, antagonism, and injury over time. In extremely escalated cases, aggressors may even start to objectify their targets, which enables the use of more aggressive, inhuman attacks. In some instances, "the total destruction of the opponent is seen as the ultimate goal to be attained by the parties" (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2003, p. 19).

Conflict, on the other hand, involves (a) parties that are interdependent, (b) a perception by at least one party that an opposition or incompatibility (or the potential) exists among the goals or values, and (c) interaction among the involved parties (Fukushima & Ohbuchi, 1996; Knapp, Putnam, & Davis, 1988; Putnam & Poole, 1987). Bullying includes these general conflict features but has the additional features noted above; thus, bullying is "most like intractable, escalat[ed] violent conflicts between unequals" (Keashly & Nowell, 2011, p. 427). In bullying conflicts the agressors' goals might be to harm or drive targets out; target goals may be to end abusive treatment and repair identity damage. The aggressive character of bullying conflicts creates hostile work environments affecting many employees, whether directly targeted or not.

The Communal Character of Bullying Conflicts

One of the tendencies, especially in US organizations and popular thought, is to individualize the problem (Lutgen-Sandvik & Tracy, 2011). Supervisors, manager, and bystanders often blame the victims for their own abuse or see targets' reports of abuse as exaggerated, subjective, and questionable (Keashly, 2001). By attending to the experiences of more of the involved, affected

employees, we can more readily recognize the complexity of bullying conflicts and avoid, at least partially, such myopic viewpoints. Thinking of bullying as simply dyadic (i.e., a personality clash) glosses over the communal nature of workplace communication and impedes efforts toward resolving this nasty part of work (Namie & Lutgen-Sandvik, 2010). Because workplaces are sites of collective human interaction, what occurs between dyads or among members bleeds and buzzes throughout the workgroup and affects all in proximity (Waldron, 2000). Thus, understanding target, bully, and bystander perspectives can shed light on why these conflicts are so difficult to resolve.

Certainly any view of a bullying conflict is partial, and current research on the subject overemphasizes the target perspective. Less research explores bystanders' experiences (for an exception see Vartia, 2001) and bully explanations are nearly nonexistent (for an exception see Rayner & Cooper, 2003). However, interpersonal communication scholars have studied verbal aggression from aggressors' standpoints for decades (e.g., Infante, Trebing, Shepherd, & Seeds, 1984), and psychology researchers have explored aggression and high aggressives for even longer (e.g., Lewin, Llippit, & White, 1939). These findings inform the sections on bullies.

We call attention to the fact that bullying conflicts involve all proximate group members, whether or not they are actively engaged in the conflict. Indeed, bullying conflicts slowly colonize nearly all actions and interactions in workgroups where it is present (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006). To gain a clearer picture of others' involvement, the core material herein explores three inter-related factors associated with targets, bystanders, and bullies: general profiles, motivations to act or withhold action, and conflict tactics. We outline these factors because involved parties may be unwilling or unable to report them. They may not fully understand their motivations; they may feel bound by emotion display rules; they may feel compelled to perform certain image-management work, and so forth. These factors do, however, flesh out bullying conflicts in particularly useful ways.

Motivational Goals, Communicative Tactics, and Group Profiles

Motivational goals and conflict tactics are inextricably linked. Motivational goals fuel action, giving behavior its energy and direction. Motivation is the one of the first links in a chain of interconnected interactions that lead to various outcomes, both intended and unintended. To understand bullying conflicts requires understanding the motives of the involved or affected actors. Communicative actions or tactics in conflict management are the ways that people approach and engage with conflict; these make sense in light of what motivates parties. Tactics are driven motivations coupled with personality tendencies, social situations, and, especially, "the opponent's message behavior" (Knapp et al., 1988, p. 416). Underscoring different parties' motivations and

tactics helps to better understand where to intervene and why certain interventions are less than effective.

In addition to motivations and tactics, experienced subjectivities (what we call *profiles*) can evoke specific motivations and tactics. Profiles are the common markers of persons who report certain personal or social characteristics in interviews or surveys. A few words of warning: On one hand, profiles are over-generalizations and exceptions always exist. As such, those dealing with bullying conflicts will want to avoid using profiles for either witch-hunting or victim-blaming. On the other hand, to ignore personality traits, social tendencies, and the patterns documented in scientific research can be naïve and counter-productive. Rather, profiles can be used as *sensitizing devices* when sorting out bullying, if used prudently as a general guide rather than a hard-and-fast set of rules. We flesh out each of these factors in what follows.

Motivational Goals in Bullying Conflicts

Multiple goals theory proposes seven core motivations or goals in conflicts, two associated with resources and five with relationships (Fukushima & Ohbuchi, 1996; Ohbuchi & Tedeschi, 1997). Resource goals are *economic* and *personal*. Economic resource goals include the desire to obtain or protect something of economic value; and personal resource goals are those concerned with maintaining privacy, personal freedom, and choice. Social resource goals include *relationship, power-hostility, identity, functionality,* and *justice*. Social relationship goals are motivated by a desire to maintain or develop high-quality connections with others. Social power-hostility goals include the drive to punish or establish influence and dominance over others. Social identity goals are associated with face-saving, self-supporting, or preserving a preferred image. Social functionality goals "resolve the conflicts in a constructive or socially appropriate manner" (Ohbuchi & Tedeschi, 1997, p. 2185). Finally, social justice goals are inclinations toward egalitarianism and restoring social fairness. (Table 1 summarizes these goals.) Motivations typically guide tactics, which we now explain in terms of bullying conflicts.

Table 1. Motivational Goals in Conflict Management

Motivational Goal	*Description*
Resource Goals	• *Economic* – drive to obtain or protect something of economic value • *Personal* – drive to maintaining privacy or personal freedom and choice
Social Goals	• *Relationship* – drive to maintain or protect good relationships with others • *Power-Hostility* – drive to punish or establish influence or dominance over another • *Identity* – drive to face-saving, identity supporting, and preserving self-image • *Functionality* – drive to resolve conflict in constructive way • *Justice* – drive for fairness and the need to restore social justice

Tactical Communication in Bullying Conflicts

An applicable approach to tactical communication in conflicts is Rahim's (2002) theory of managing organizational conflict, which categorizes tactics as integrating-problem solving, obliging-accommodating, dominating-forcing, avoiding-withdrawing, and compromising. We also include third-party tactics from multiple goals theory (Fukushima & Ohbuchi, 1996) because appealing to third-parties is common in bullying conflicts due to targets' power disparity in relation to bullies (Keashly & Nowell, 2011; Zapf & Gross, 2001). (See Table 2 for summary.) Integrating-problem solving "involves openness, exchanging information, looking for alternatives, and examination of differences to reach an effective solution acceptable to both parties" (Rahim, 2002, p. 218). Obliging-accommodating "is associated with attempting to play down the differences and emphasizing commonalities to satisfy the concern of the other party" (Rahim, 2002, pp. 218-219). A dominating-forcing style is associated with a win–lose orientation in which "a dominating or competing person goes all out to win his or her objective and, as a result, often ignores the needs and expectations of the other party" (Rahim, 2002, p. 220). Avoiding-withdrawing is sidestepping, ignoring, or steering clear of conflicts and the parties with whom conflict is present. In compromising, parties identify and settle on a solution that is partially satisfactory to those involved but not completely pleasing to either. Third-party tactics involve

persons outside the conflict; usually someone with formal power, informal influence, or both; to intervene, problem-solve, or protect vulnerable parties (Fukushima & Ohbuchi, 1996).

Table 2. Conflict Management Tactics

Conflict Management Tactic	*Description*
Integrating-Problem Solving	Openness, exchanging information, looking for alternatives
Obliging-Accommodating	Playing down differences, emphasizing similarities for others' sake
Dominating-Forcing	Winning is objective, often ignoring needs of other party, forcing one party's position or opinion
Avoiding-Withdrawing	Ignoring, steering clear of conflicts or other parties
Compromising	Parties identify, settle on partially satisfactory solution
Third-party	Bring someone else into conflict, usually with power to resolve conflict or influence others who have power to arbitrate conflict

Adapted from(Ohbuchi & Tedeschi, 1997; Rahim, 2002)

Group Profiles

Although bullying conflicts are social and contextual and a number of systemic contingencies press parties toward particular ways of handling conflict, bullying-conflict research suggests that certain types of subject positions are more likely to be targeted, to aggress against others, or to remain bystanders. Targets that are provocative may draw the attention of aggressive others, whether that provocation is simply speaking their minds or tending toward aggression themselves. Bystanders most often remain silent hoping they can avoid involvement but may also side with targets or bullies. Bullies typically are high-verbal aggressives and tend to respond aggressively or harshly in most situations, escalating aggressive behavior when perceived pressures increase. We begin by exploring targeted workers.

Targets

Profiles. Although anyone can be targeted by bullies at work (Zapf, Einarsen, Hoel, & Vartia, 2003), research on victimization (i.e., being the focus of

others' aggression) suggests that certain traits and tendencies situate employees in ways that make them more vulnerable. Victimization research points to three general profiles: provocative, submissive, and rigidly conscientious (Aquino & Lamertz, 2004). The first author's work suggests that there are two sub-types of provocative targets: aggressive and assertive. The *provocative* type is "aggressive, hostile, or irritating and therefore likely to provoke attack from others" (Aquino & Lamertz, p. 1025-26). Aggressive provocative targets are conflict-prone, usually less agreeable, and more likely to become involved in conflicts because they often disagree with others and create friction in their interactions (e.g., Aquino & Bradfield, 2000; Olweus, 1978).

The second provocative target type is *communicatively assertive,* typically employees who readily speak their minds, a tendency that can infuriate some bullies. People who are professionally successful or highly skilled are often assertive and can be targeted because their experience or expertise may pose a threat to a less secure bully (Fast & Chen, 2009; Namie, 2007a). Depending on the pressures bullies are facing, the argumentative style of communicatively assertive employees can trigger harsh responses from high-verbal aggressives (Crawshaw, 2007; Fast & Chen, 2009). The assertive target may also have effective argumentation skills. High-verbal aggressives are often lacking in this area so have considerable difficulty countering skilled peers or "insubordinate" subordinates. When low-argumentation skill employees face conflict situations, they can quickly run out of constructive material so fall back on verbal aggression (Infante, Trebing, et al., 1984; Infante & Wigley, 1986).

The next target type is the *submissive* employee, a person who is conflict-aversive. The submissive target can be "passive, insecure, frequently rejected by peers, and unwilling to defend against attack" (Aquino & Lamertz, 2004, p. 1025). Submissive targets can be less extroverted, stable, and independent, and they can have an increased dependency on and desire for others' approval (Coyne, Seigne, & Randall, 2000; Zapf, 1999). Appearing weak, anxious, unassertive, low in self-esteem, or conflict-aversive can be provocative for high aggressives (Adams & Crawford, 1992; Zapf & Einarsen, 2003). Passive inclinations can make the submissive employee an easy target; the "weakling" also can be seen as low-risk—someone who can be bullied with impunity and serve as an example or warning to others (Neuman & Baron, 1998). Some high-verbal aggressives even say they use aggression to express disdain of their targets (Infante, Riddle, Horvarth, & Tumlin, 1992).

The final target type is the *rigidly conscientious* worker. These employees are very scrupulous, assiduous, "organized, self-disciplined, hardworking, conventional, moralistic, and rule-bound" (Lind, Glasø, Pallesen, & Einarsen, 2009, p. 234). Rigidly conscientious employees can be bullied at work because others perceive them as infuriatingly condescending due to their apparently inflexible, perfectionist approach to work and adherence to work-related rules. Rigidly conscientious workers are unlikely to go along with informal group rules

if they believe the informal rules to be morally or ethically wrong. When these employees face situations they view as breaking the rules, they can become "rude, suspicious, uncooperative, ruthless, [and] irritable" (Lind et al., 2009, p. 234). They are likely to stubbornly defend their points of view, especially when issues such as work quality, client ethics, or productivity expectations are at stake. What they see as moral or ethical issues are far more important to rigidly conscientious employees than are relationships or others involved in the conflict (Brodsky, 1976). Additionally, they may report coworkers who break rules, behaviors making them widely unpopular, increasing their social isolation, and reducing potential allies or supporters (Aquino & Lamertz, 2004). When workers are in such socially isolated positions, they are easier targets; bystanders may even feel satisfaction at seeing them targeted (Zapf & Einarsen, 2003).

In addition to these general profiles, three other factors increase the likelihood of being bullied: organizational position, communication skill deficits, and social difference. First, although employees at all levels can be bullied (Zapf et al., 2003), typically the higher one's position, the lower the incidence of bullying (Aquino, 2000; Harlos & Pinder, 2000; Namie et al., 2003). Second, persons who lack effective social and communication skills (e.g., some submissives and many high-verbal aggressives) can have great difficulty protecting themselves and thus be targeted quite easily (Coyne et al., 2000). Third, being noticeably different also increases the risk of becoming an outsider and thus a target (Hodson, Roscigno, & Lopez, 2006; Schuster, 1996; Zapf, 1999). In the United States and Britain, for example, employees of African descent "are victimized more frequently than any racial group" (Aquino, 2000, p. 182).

Motivations (i.e., goals). Most targets involved in an entrenched bullying conflict are motivated by *resource personal, resource economic, social identity,* and *social justice goals.* Resource personal goals are driven by a need to maintain personal freedom, in this case freedom from attacks on their character. Targets go to great lengths to protect themselves and end abuse. Interpersonal aggression, by definition, is behavior targets are motivated to avoid (Neuman & Baron, 2005). Targets are also highly motivated by social identity goals. Targets want to be vindicated (Cowan, 2009); they want to redeem themselves because being victimized is stigmatizing (D'Cruz & Noronha, 2010; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008). Especially in the US, being a victim brands someone as weak, childish, or culpable—others often assume targets did something to bring abuse upon themselves (Lutgen-Sandvik & McDermott, 2008).

Most targets are motivated by *resource economic goals;* they want to maintain their jobs, and this motivation is well-founded. Most targets find that bullying only ends when they quit, transfer, or are fired (Namie, 2007b). Targets want to manage face and identity threats and be vindicated; these are social identity goals (Cowan, 2009; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008). *Social justice goals,* based on a drive for fairness or restorative justice, are at play in bullying conflicts.

Targets communicatively position themselves as moral warriors fighting depraved enemies and argue that they respond accordingly to restore justice and fairness (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006). Many responses to bullying conflicts are indirectly motivated by what targets call a *moral imperative* to act against what they perceive as corrupt actions and interactions.

Typically all parties are motivated to protect their interests and identity and to achieve a fair or just outcome. Although all target types share some similar motivations in bullying conflicts, goals also differ depending on what is personally important. *Provocative (aggressive) targets* are motivated by social power goals. Rather than a drive to punish (often seen with bullies), these targets' power goals are to establish influence and dominance over others in conflicts. Also quick to speak up, the *communicatively assertive* provocative targets are motivated by economic personal goals—they are driven to protect their right to free speech, personal freedom, and choice. *Submissive targets* want to avoid conflicts so are motivated by the social functionality goal, the desire to settle conflicts in a socially proper way. They are also motivated by social relationship goals as they wish to maintain peaceful, non-confrontational contact with others. *Rigidly conscientious* targets are motivated by power goals; they want to make other parties see the issue as they do. Specifically, rigidly conscientious targets want others to recognize the importance or moral value of the issue.

Tactics. Bullying conflicts most often involve affective (e.g., threatening identity, values) types of conflict rather than cognitive (e.g., focusing on ideas, tasks). Although problem-solving and compromising work well for cognitive conflicts, such is not the case for affective conflicts. Problem-solving efforts in bullying conflicts often exacerbate the conflict (DeDreu, 1997). And despite targets' efforts to appease or oblige high-aggressives (e.g., speaking with the bullies about the problem, working harder, cutting off communication with certain peers, monitoring their own messages to the bullies), hostile actions and interactions continue unabated or even escalate (Lutgen-Sandvik, Alberts, & Tracy, 2008; Richman, Rospenda, Flaherty, & Freels, 2001; Zapf & Gross, 2001).

In line with diverse target profiles and motivations, victimization literature suggests that "conflict styles [tactics] … [can] distinguish victims from non-victims [, and] … employees who rely on certain styles more than others may unwittingly present themselves as potential targets of aggressive action" (Aquino, 2000, p. 174). The provocative aggressive target's tendency to use forcing communication likely elicits aggressive tactics from other parties. Because provocative aggressive targets want to gain influence over bullies in the conflict, they more often use dominating-forcing tactics, but some form of problem-solving typically precedes forcing. Forcing tactics are more often passive aggressive because bullies typically have more power, influence, or both than targeted workers. In fact, "higher levels of bullying [are] predictive of … behaviors such as purposely wasting company materials and supplies, … doing

one's work incorrectly, and … damaging a valuable piece of property belonging to the employer" (Ayoko, Callan, & Härtel, 2003, p. 283).

The *provocative assertive targets* are motivated to speak their minds in disagreements and argue about issues of disagreement without employing verbal aggression. Depending on the parties involved, even their assertive disagreement can trigger aggression, hostility, and behavior framed to "put them in their place." Tactics of *submissive targets* usually are obliging-appeasing and avoiding-withdrawing, although all targets use these tactics to some degree. They hope that if they do nothing to upset anyone, the conflict might go away. Submissive targets are typically amenable to compromising tactics to manage conflict but rarely suggest such tactics themselves (Ayoko et al., 2003). Rather, they are willing to go along with others' ideas regarding compromises if they believe those tactics will end the conflict.

Rigidly conscientious targets use forcing tactics because they feel so strongly about the issues at hand. They will also use problem solving, accommodating, and compromising but *only* when these tactics get them the results they want. If less aggressive tactics fail, rigidly conscientious targets shift to forceful communication, often coupled with third-party involvement (Aquino & Lamertz, 2004). Because they believe they are right—absolutely—they work to involve higher authorities as allies in the conflict.

Bystanders (Non-bullied Witnesses)

Profiles. Because bullying conflicts are so volatile and aggressive, they typically spread fear through the entire workgroup and push members into one of three non-bullied bystander groups: those who cluster around and support bullies (*bully allies*), those who support or protect targets (*target allies*), and those who attempt to distance themselves from the bullying conflict (*neutral* or *silent bystanders*) (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006). Bystanders are often considered *secondary* targets because although they are not targeted directly, their "perceptions, fears and expectations are changed as a result of being vicariously exposed to violence" (Barling, 1996, p. 35). This group often reports "significantly more general stress and mental stress reactions in employees from the workplaces without bullying" (Hogh, Mikkelsen, & Hansen, 2011, p. 108) and often leave organizations (avoiding) after witnessing bullying (Rayner, 1999).

Depending on the framework, bully allies are alternately labeled "passive bullies, followers, or henchmen," (Olweus, 2003, p. 67), or patrons and pawns (Boddy, Ladyshewsky, & Galvin, 2010). Olweus' framework, taken from his work on schoolyard bullying, indicates that passive bullies and followers are those "who participate in bullying but do not usually take the initiative (Olweus, 2003, p. 67). These "passive bullies can be equally troubling to the victim … where others are gathered willingly or unwillingly to participate in continuous malevolent actions" (Vickers, 2006, p. 271). Henchmen-women, on the other hand, actively take part in bullying conflicts, loyally following the bully's lead

and working to undermine, remove, and sometimes even destroy targets' reputations (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006). Boddy et al.'s (2010) work focuses on bullying in organizations and suggests that bullies have two types of allies: patrons and pawns. Patrons help bullies ascend to positions of power and persons to whom bullies turn to as third-party allies. Bullies often choose these people as a support network. Pawns, who often emerge later as targets, are persons initially loyal to the bullies who side with them in bullying conflicts but later feel or discover they are being used or manipulated.

In other workgroups, bystanders who witness and then subsequently model aggressive communication and become bullies can be of grave concern. Whether bystanders mimic bullying behavior depends, in part, on group norms and cohesion. If workgroup cohesion is high, bystanders' direct observation of bullying can increase their own use of aggression (Ferguson & Barry, 2011). Additionally, "norms of toughness … tend to reduce the likelihood that witnesses to workplace bullying will take action against it. On the contrary, such norms tend to increase the odds that witnesses will join in and even applaud the action of workplace bullies" (Baron & Neuman, 2011, p. 217). In a majority of cases, emerging active bullies is not as frequent as members becoming more rude and discourteous in everyday interactions (Andersson & Pearson, 1999), likely due to the reciprocal nature of communication (McCroskey & Richmonda, 2000). Although some members may become more uncivil over time, others empathize with and try to help targets.

Target allies, in contrast to bully allies, are bystanders who witness abusive conflicts and side with the targets. They comprise a second (albeit small) group of bystanders—those who either believe abuse is morally wrong or have long-standing friendships with targets (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006). Ferguson and Barry (2011) suggest that directly witnessing another's abuse "affords the observer an opportunity to witness and, accordingly, vicariously experience the emotions of the target (or victim) …. [giving the observer … an opportunity to empathize with the victim, and perhaps to mentally place themselves in the victim's shoes" (p. 89). Other bystanders may eventually join the target's side of the conflict, especially if they shift from being followers, patrons, or pawns to being targets.

Unlike target or bully allies, *neutral* or *silent bystanders* withhold voice and allegiance to parties of the conflict and take a Switzerland-type position in the conflict, striving to be uninvolved non-combatants. Silent bystanders want to stay out of the conflict because they see targets being "undermined, disenfranchised, and emasculated" (Boddy et al., 2010, p. 124).

The relative size of bystander groups is unique to each workgroup, bullying conflict dynamics, issues of contention, and personalities of those involved. Regardless of the setting, membership in bystander groups continuously shifts and morphs. Targets' supporters may burn out; non-involved persons can become targets or begin taking sides, and persons in the bully's circle of

supporters are ousted. Persons safe from targeting can become targets when bullies' alliances shift, which they commonly do (Westhues, 2005). Depending on the bullies' profile, bullies often redirect aggression to persons who look like a threat or whose actions or words place bullies in a negative light (Crawshaw, 2005; Fast & Chen, 2009).

Motivations. Nearly all bystanders are motivated by *economic resource goals;* like targets, most want to keep their jobs. The threat of becoming embroiled in the bullying conflict often jeopardizes employment (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2007; Namie, 2007b). Further motivations depend on the bystander's profile. *Bully allies* who may passively and symbolically side with aggressors are often motivated by *social relationship goals* and want bullies to see them as allegiant. Some bully allies are motivated by *social justice goals* and believe that targets are in the wrong and bullies in the right. Many are motivated by *social identity goals* and preventing their own potential target status. *Power-hostility social goals* motivate henchmen-women who, like bullies, can be high-verbal aggressives (Beatty & McCroskey, 1997). This type of bully supporter may want to establish their own dominance, strength, and position in the workgroup.

Target allies are often motivated by *social justice goals;* their primary motivation is to restore fairness at work and stop abusive treatment of workers (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006). Some are motivated by a moral imperative to right a wrong and to take action against tyranny. Crystal was motivated by this goal at Youth Matters. In some cases if bystanders are motivated toward justice, they collectively work with targets and like-minded allies in acts of collective resistance (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006). Target allies are also motivated by *social relationship goals* and want to maintain their friendships and positive interpersonal affiliations with targeted persons.

Silent bystanders, on the other hand, are typically motivated by *personal resource goals;* they want to maintain their privacy and personal freedom, which can be threatened if they become involved in the conflict. Another motivating factor for silent bystanders is the *social identity goal* (face-saving, identity-preserving); they want to avoid becoming a target (Rayner, Hoel, & Cooper, 2002). Additionally, silent bystanders may be motivated by *social relationship goals* and hope to not alienate bullies, targets, or anyone allied with either side by appearing neutral. Sadly, this strategy rarely works because bullying conflicts are so emotionally charged, mainly because the stakes are high, that both target and bully groups negatively judge those who stand by silently. In all bystander groups the motivations typically drive the tactics.

Tactics. *Bully allies* side with aggressors and use tactics including spying on targets and target allies and reporting back to bullies (third party, forcing), silently looking on as bullies harass and abuse targets (avoiding), and bending to the bullies' demands (obliging). For allies who also aggress, tactics can include ignoring targets' feelings or needs (avoiding), asserting their influence (forcing),

and stressing their position as a bully ally (forcing, appeasing). The latter move is tied with efforts to force outcomes favoring bully allies or bullies (Vickers, 2006).

For *target allies* motivated by *social justice goals*, they may speak with upper-management (third party), meet with union stewards (third party), organize group discussions outside the workplace (avoiding) (Zapf & Einarsen, 2005). Most tactics have a dominating-forcing thread because target allies are interested in taking disciplinary action against bullies—blocking promotions, countering claims, constructing employment termination—even if third-parties are involved. Target allies motivated by *social relationship goals* provide social support. They offer instrumental support by helping targets with their work and trying to arrange breaks and moments of escape, informational support by telling targets of their redress avenues or about powerful allies who might help in the fight for justice, and emotional support in the form of "empathy, caring, acceptance and assurance" (Tracy, 2009, p. 88). Supportive tactics are supplementary to conflict tactics but often involve advising targets how to fight back in the bullying conflict. Thus, even social support can be indirectly forcing and advising targets how to win. Tactics of those choosing to remain silent, however, are focused on self-protection.

Silent bystanders try to withdraw into a nonaligned position that appears safe (Namie & Lutgen-Sandvik, 2010) using avoidance-withdrawal tactics. In toxic working environments, however, neutral bystanders may struggle with whether to stay uninvolved or help the targets being persistently abused (Bowes-Sperry & O'Leary-Kelly, 2005). It can be difficult "to remain uninvolved in such cases … due to a seemingly strong need for the target to seek support for their case" (Hoel, Einarsen, & Cooper, 2003, p. 151). On the other hand, neutral bystanders are often motivated by social relationship goals, so will remain friendly with persons from both sides of the conflict—an obliging-accommodating tactic.

Bullies

We have argued earlier that bullying conflicts involve all affected workers, not simply bully-target dyads, and have outlined both target and bystander dynamics. In bullying conflicts, however, the bully or aggressor plays a crucial role. Unlike other types of conflict that assume mutuality of parties, "workplace bullying … is characterized as involving a clearly identified actor (bully)…. [who is] primarily the provocateur" (Keashly & Jagatic, 2011, p. 52). Although bullies cannot harass, humiliate, and verbally abuse others unless the organization's climate is marked by a "sense of permission to harass" (Brodsky, 1976, p. 84), certain personality types appear more likely to use verbal aggression. Some people appear to be more verbally aggressive than others, whether it is an inborn trait (Beatty & McCroskey, 1997) or socially learned (Baron & Neuman, 2011). These actors may not always instigate the conflict but are the parties who persistently use hostile, aggressive attacks to press their side.

Profiles. Bullying conflicts occur in relationships of unequal power, so despite coworkers being most common source of aggression in the workplace (e.g., Keashly & Neuman, 2005), when asked to identify a bully targets most often report that the perpetrator is someone with legitimate power—supervisor, direct manager, or upper-manager (e.g., Ayoko et al., 2003; Hoel, Cooper, & Faragher, 2001; Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy, & Alberts, 2007). Even when lacking legitimate power, bullies tend to have access to more resources than targets, including relationships with persons with influence. In addition to more power and influence than targets, research suggests three general bully profiles based on motivation, tactics, and responses to challenge (Kelly, 2006): the *accidental bully* (under pressure); *narcissistic bully* (vulnerable, insecure); and *psychopathic bully* (grandiose, power-driven) (Egan, 2005). For the most part, most bullies fall into the accidental category; they bully as a means of goading productivity from others. Other bullies, however, appear to have personality pathologies driven by fear, insecurity, or extreme ambition. Narcissistic and psychopathic traits are tendencies that range on a continuum and are influenced to some degree by contextual, situational factors. However, people who have worked with any bully type will recognize the characteristics to some degree, as they are quite descriptive of observed behaviors.

Accidental bullies are the most common and are (usually) managers with a very tough, even rough, style and way of interacting and directing others.' They demand that others complete work tasks, often within exceedingly tight deadlines, and have little or no perception that what he or she says hurts or disturbs others. The accidental bully typically over-reacts to pressure and passes that reaction on by blowing up, making impossible demands, and otherwise communicating in a blunt, insensitive, insistent manner. The situational factors that trigger accidental bullies are wide-ranging and can include unorganized or poorly orchestrated changes and demands; organizational conditions such as work pressure, high performance demands, role conflict, and role uncertainty (Hoel & Salin, 2003). In their drive toward tasks, they often lose sight of the humanity of others (Boddy, 2010; Egan, 2009). They frequently act aggressive as a means to an end—to reach higher standards, thrash the competition, protect the company, and so forth. The welfare of people is secondary to task or output goals. Accidental bullies expect others to be resilient; to understand that nothing personal is meant by their tirades. In fact, “such people are often shocked when they are made aware of the consequences of their attitudes and actions” (Egan, 2005, para 8; see also Crawshaw, 2007). This bully type is the most amenable to intervention, particularly if that intervention is tough and straightforward (Egan, 2005).

The *narcissistic bully* is charismatic but driven by fear, especially fear of appearing incompetent and so “justifies harm to others for [his or her] own survival” (Kelly, 2006, p. 277). This bully does not plan to harm others, “he [or she] does so offhandedly, as a manifestation of his[/her] genuine character” (Egan, 2005, para 10). They are exceedingly self-absorbed, frequently pretentious, and can have “fantasies of breathtaking achievement” (Egan, 2005, para 10). They

believe themselves to be better than others and therefore should be treated exceptionally, yet feel entitled to treat others as they wish.

Narcissistic bullies are typically shame-prone and exceedingly sensitive to slights or any hint that they are less than competent (Crawshaw, 2007; Fast & Chen, 2009). Because they have limited impulse control and are fear-driven, their grandiose self-image is easily punctured, and they can respond by acting out in rage and making outlandish claims about their detractors (Kelly, 2006). That is, if they are crossed or questioned, they can respond with cruel fury (Kernis, Grannemann, & Barclay, 1989). Given these tendencies, narcissistic bullies can shift from being very charming to extremely difficult and even vicious. “Their abuse is not cold and calculating and meant to intimidate, it's just an expression of their superiority when they rage against you because they see you as the idiot. Of course they don't have much empathy” (Egan, 2005, para 8). The narcissistic bully can alter his or her communication and behavior if organizations are willing to invest considerable time and effort coaching and counseling. Although the cost may be high, if the narcissistic bully is valuable, their “talents may be worth it” (Kelly, 2006, p. 277).

The third bully type is the *psychopathic bully*, a rare personality type (1% to 2% in general population, 15% - 25% in prisons) that is thought to be found in higher proportions in senior-level organizational positions (up to 3.5%) (Babiak & Hare, 2006; Boddy, 2010). These aggressors are also called industrial psychopaths, organizational psychopaths, organizational sociopaths, and corporate psychopaths (see Boddy et al., 2010 for discussion). These non-criminal or successful psychopaths, deemed *successful* because unlike criminal psychopaths they have evaded legal authorities, are “not prone to outbursts of impulsive, violent, criminal behaviour” (Boddy, 2010, p. 301). Psychopathic (like narcissistic) bullies are grandiose, but they come across as friendly and charming at first. They are highly motivated to gain power and exceedingly talented at ingratiating themselves with powerful others. They often rise almost meteorically in organizations “because of their manipulative charisma and their sheer, single minded dedication to attain senior levels of management” (Boddy et al., 2010, p. 124). These bullies can be authoritarian, aggressive, and domineering but in a way that imbues a sense of safety, particularly when organizations face an external threat.

Psychopathic bullies usually work to attract a follower base of patrons who can assist in their ascendancy. They also identify pawns to use or manipulate and potential opponents they attempt to undermine or disenfranchise (e.g., auditor, HR staff, safety and security personnel) (Boddy et al., 2010). Developing a cadre of followers is important to the psychopathic bully, and they are likely to react aggressively to those whom they perceive as disloyal or oppositional to their goals (Egan, 2009). These bullies may perform feelings of remorse if the situation calls for it but these are not *felt* emotions; they are more likely to be displayed for manipulative effect (Kelly, 2006). Their personalities are marked by cold-

heartedness, manipulativeness, ruthlessness, and lack of emotions including fear, empathy, guilt, and remorse when they harm others (Boddy et al., 2010). Psychologists believe that this personality type has no capacity for empathy or perspective taking (Babiak & Hare, 2006).

A disturbing part of communicating with psychotic bullies is that they may distort what others say in self-serving ways. They typically blame others if their own actions bring about negative ramifications. If this bully type is challenged about his or her behavior their reaction is as volatile as the narcissist but often involve threats of litigation, claims of being a victim of bullying, threats of divulging information about others, and escalated bullying (Crawford, 2001; Kelly, 2006). Counseling or mentoring has little effect as the psychopathic bully is unlikely to change their communication or behavior (Clark, 2005).

General bully characteristics or traits for all types. Most bullies are unlikely to praise others (Wigley, Pohl, & Watt, 1989) and are prone toward verbal aggressiveness. They are likely to have this trait to a higher degree than those who do not bully others, regardless of the situation or pressure. Because high-verbal aggressives have lower scores on perspective taking and higher scores on social dominance orientation (Parkins, Fishbein, & Ritchey, 2006), they are unlikely to perceive aggressive messages as hurtful (Infante et al., 1992). Motivations do differ somewhat, however, based on unique profile markers.

Motivations. *Accidental bullies* are motivated predominantly by *economic resource goals* (Kelly, 2006), the desire to gain or keep something of economic value (Fukushima & Ohbuchi, 1996). Their drive for achievement comes from this motivation. Typically the accidental bully wants to reach high standards and meet organizational goals (regardless of human costs). They respond readily to demands from higher-placed organizational members, especially as those demands deal with output or the organization's financial survival. Certain antecedents can drive the accidental bully by evoking additional stress around work production, which evokes aggression, venting negative emotions, and pushing subordinates and peers even harder (e.g., Hoel & Salin, 2003). Quite likely, frustration exacerbates accidental bullies' aggression if they believe employees are stifling production goals (Infante, Trebing, et al., 1984).

Narcissistic bullies, on the other hand, are driven by *social identity goals* (e.g., face saving, identity-preservation, maintaining their self-perception of someone exceptional). They justify aggressive treatment as a means of bolstering their persona and maintaining their image- or identity-management work. Secondarily they may be motivated by economic goals of obtaining something of value but only if it serves the primary goal of bolstering grandiose self-identities. These bullies are want to protect others' perceptions of them as competent and excellent (Crawshaw, 2007; Egan, 2009; Fast & Chen, 2009). Narcissistic bullies like Buddy and psychopathic bullies are often motivated to act aggressively because of a tendency to ascribe others' actions and words as having

malevolent intent and see themselves as victims (Bing et al., 2007; Burroughs & James, 2005; Crawford, 2001). As such, *justice goals* are activated for both types, as they believe they have been wronged and so seek retribution (Bing et al., 2007; Infante et al., 1992). Other indirect motivating factors are psychopathology (e.g., transference of negative emotions towards someone who represents unresolved conflict) and argumentative skill deficiency (e.g., lacking ability to communicate position effectively) that can trigger verbal aggression (Infante, Trebing, et al., 1984). Buddy at Youth Matters could argue well, but when Claire, the Executive Director, demanded he stop mistreatment of staff, he said to others that she was "a bitch just like [his] mother." Narcissistic bullies as high-verbal aggressives can be motivated by their own anger and bad mood—emotions they rarely control very well (Infante et al., 1992).

Psychopathic bullies are motivated predominantly by *power-hostility social goals*, the drive to establish dominance, gain power, and punish anyone who stands in the way of achieving these. As part of a drive for power and influence, psychopathic bullies are often motivated by *social identity goals* and will cover up errors and bad decisions or scapegoat and shift blame onto others (Egan, 2009). As high-verbal aggressives, they can be driven by the desire "to appear 'tough,' … to be mean…, and to express disdain for" the other person (Infante et al., 1992, p. 122). Self-defense, reprimanding someone, winning arguments, expressing anger, and manipulating the another person's behavior are also motivations for verbal aggression (Infante, Bruning, & Martin, 1994). They may be motivated by *social justice goals* because they often have a retribution bias (belief that retaliation is better than reconciliation); they might also be motivated by a potency bias (tendency to frame conflict as a contest in which to demonstrate dominance or submissiveness) (Burroughs & James, 2005), another form of a *power-hostility social goal*.

Tactics. Primarily, bullying involves a hostile, forcing-dominating conflict management style—bullies want their way and often shift conflicts over tasks (cognitive conflicts) to conflicts attacking targets' identity or values (affective conflict) (Keashly & Nowell, 2011). Conflict management tactics are aggressive, and bullying conflicts, rather than being marked by a single form of negativity, involve numerous barbs, jabs, and machinations. Instead, exchanges are far more extreme and intense than everyday incivilities. Tactics vary by bully type, as might be expected, although all bullies use verbal aggressiveness (passive or active) to varying degrees. Most bullies derogate their targets, often to justify their own abuse of others in the conflict. Caustic humor is a common tactic bullies use against targets because it is ambiguous and provides plausible deniability. "High verbal aggressives [claim] that about 46% of their verbally aggressive messages … [involve] trying to be humorous…. [As such,] "using humor may be a tactic for being mean to a disdain another, or it may be an 'evasive' device which masks the use of personal attacks and avoids provoking physical violence" (Infante et al., 1992, p 125).

Depending on the bully type, tactics can include blaming targets for the bullies' errors (narcissistic, psychopathic), making unreasonable demands (accidental), criticizing targets' work ability (all types), yelling and screaming (accidental, narcissistic), inconsistently referring to made-up rules (narcissistic, psychopathic), threatening job loss (all types), discounting targets' accomplishments (all types), socially excluding targets (narcissistic, psychopathic), insults and put-downs (all types), taking credit for targets' work (narcissistic, psychopathic) (Namie, 2000; Smith, Cowie, Olafsson, & Liefooghe, 2002), and scapegoating (narcissistic, psychopathic) (Hoel & Salin, 2003). Psychopathic bullies disparage, belittle, emasculate, and destroy anyone who appears to be blocking their aspirations (Egan, 2009). Tactics can include physical and psychological intimidation intended to cause fear, distress, or harm to the target (Parkins et al., 2006). This type of bully employs third-party tactics quite often; depending on the protection of patrons, the important or powerful others with whom the bully has developed power-based relationships. In fact, they are quite adept at *managing up*, so to speak (Namie, 2007a).

Table 3 Three Groups' Profiles, Motivations, and Tactics

Profile	*Primary Motivational Goals*	*Most Common Conflict Tactics*
Provocative Aggressive Target	• Social Power	• Dominating-forcing • Integrating - Problem Solving • Obliging- Accommodating • Third-party
Provocative Assertive Target	• Justice • Economic Personal	• Integrating - Problem Solving • Obliging- Accommodating • Compromising • Third-party • Dominating – Forcing
Rigidly Conscientious Target	• Social Power	• Dominating – Forcing • Third-party
Passive Target	• Social Functionality Goal	• Avoiding – Withdrawing • Obliging-Accommodating
Bully Ally Bystander	• Economic Resource • Relationship • Identity • Justice • Power-Hostility	• Third Party • Avoiding–withdrawing • Obliging-Accommodating
Target Ally Bystander	• Economic Resource • Justice • Relationship	• Third Party • Domination-Forcing
Silent Bystander	• Economic Resource • Identity • Relationship	• Avoidance-Withdrawal
Accidental Bully	• Economic Resource	• Dominating-Forcing**
Narcissistic Bully	• Identity • Justice	• Dominating-Forcing**
Psychopathic Bully	• Power-Hostility • Economic Resource • Justice	• Dominating-Forcing** • Third party (patrons)

Notes: * All targets are motivated by Personal Resource Goals, Economic Resource Goals, and Social Identity Goals. We note here goals that differ among target types. ** Verbal aggression is a hallmark of bullies' communication.

This overview of the involved employee groups outlines many of the issues involved in bullying conflicts and illustrates why bullying can be so difficult to stop. Table 3 summarizes involved party profiles, motivations, and associated tactics. There are many drivers of bullying in organizations beyond the involved parties we have focused on in this paper. (For in-depth discussions of these see Baron & Neuman, 2011; Salin, 2003; Salin & Hoel, 2011). This look at the three central employee groups suggests areas of research necessary so that we might improve organizational efforts in resolving bullying conflicts. We now move to possibilities for change.

Transformational Possibilities

We now bring some optimism to the article and talk about directions for transformation. Although we believe strongly that bullying is an organization-wide issue, individual employees are keen to be empowered to improve these situations, so we touch on both. Fleshing out the different types of targets, bystanders, and bullies, as well as their motivations in these conflicts, underscores the complexity of bullying conflicts. Clearly—no "one size fits all" solution will work. Rather, the dynamic nature of the resource and social goals in combination with the differing tactics to managing conflicts will result in negative spirals of retaliation and war zone like workplaces. Then where does this leave organizations? Our experience suggests that organizations dealing with bullying conflicts should carefully consider this chapter's discussion to be forewarned of the involved actors and their situatedness. Organizations will necessarily have to conduct a careful analysis of the history (e.g., involved parties, motivations, tactics to date) surrounding the conflict to unravel the situational dynamics unique to the involved workgroup.

Bullying really is an organization-wide issue rather than something individuals alone can solve. Solving the problem is not only an organization-wide responsibility but successful efforts require the total commitment of top-level organizational leadership, involvement of middle-management, and engagement of employees (Tehrani, 2001). Short-term approaches such as identifying lone perpetrators while ignoring initiating and maintaining factors ultimately fails to produce meaningful, lasting change.

Vandekerckhove and Commers (2003), who claim that bullying results from being inadequately prepared for the pressures of globalization, argue that organizations need "new rules" such as "clearly defined channels for support and advice in addition to clear reporting standards, times, and lines. Not surprisingly, this merges with a higher concern for *communication*" (p. 47, emphasis original). Indeed, for there is a "need for new managerial skills such as strong interpersonal, communication, and listening skills and an ability to engage in reciprocal rather than manipulative behavior." We would add that *all* organizational members need these communication skills.

In fact, the most effective interventions for reducing aggressive communication among organizational members occurs via changing the very nature of day-to-day conversations (for full discussion and details see Keashly & Neuman, 2005; Keashly & Neuman, 2009). Policy development, while important for victim redress, has little effect on reducing bullying if the organizational climate and culture does not change at a fundamental level. Similarly, although the training of individuals about workplace bullying is important, labels the phenomenon, and should be part of an overall plan for staff training, training alone rarely has a determinable effect on interpersonal aggression levels (Vartia & Leka, 2011). Rather, the members need to learn new ways of interacting at the day-to-day level.

From Keashly and Neuman's (2009) work with the USA Veterans Affairs, we summarize the following steps for an effective organization-wide approach. This approach requires the involvement of four groups. First, top-level persons must be committed to organization-wide change regarding dignity for all workers. Second, middle-managers must be involved at each step. Third, members from support staff such as HR, Employee Assistance Program, ombudspersons, and unions should be involved. Finally, representatives chosen by direct-line staff in each program or division must be involved. Organizations may benefit from bringing someone in from outside to help facilitate analysis and planning, as an outsider may be more objective and less likely to have a vested interest in outcomes. Teams comprised of persons from these groups carryout the following steps: (1) in each workgroup conduct a base-line evaluation of aggression using a validated measure (Neuman's WAR-Q, Workplace Aggression Revised Questionnaire is outstanding); (2) based on the types of aggression and the unique make up of each group, teams develop tailored interventions and implement them; (3) after three to six months, teams conduct a follow-up evaluation using the same measure as in step (1). If desired change has not occurred, teams assess the follow-up findings, design new approaches, implement, and measure again in a pre-determined time frame. We cannot stress the importance of this approach if true change is desired. However, if there is no support for this plan, we suggest the following individual-level actions for targets, bystanders, and bullies.

Individual responses to managing bullying conflicts constructively begin when involved parties are able to recognize when a simple conflict has become a bullying conflict. In particular for targets *and* bystanders, is being able to name abusive conflicts "workplace bullying;" this is an important first step to understanding what is occurring and what to do about it (Namie, 2007a). Information about bullying (e.g., research articles, books) coupled with being able to name bullying as a distinct phenomenon also bolsters employee claims to upper-management and HR (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006). Targeted workers may also decide to file formal or informal complaints to unions, EEOC, the bully's boss, or attorneys (Macintosh, 2006), reports that typically require detailed documentation (e.g., dates, times, events) (Tracy, Alberts, & Rivera, 2007). Targeted workers

may also consider filing lawsuits against employers but should understand that such suits are rarely won and take enormous resources and personal energy.

Ensuring self-care and social support is especially important for effectively dealing with bullying conflicts. This may mean taking time off, trying not to take the experience personally, and spending time with trusted others (Namie & Namie, 2009). Gaining peer support is easier if other organizational members understand bullying and know it is occurring. Informally educating peers can be done by distributing articles and talking about bullying in a manner that protects vulnerable persons (Macintosh, 2006). If and when individual conflict management tactics fail, which is often the case, workers may choose to quit or transfer, and we argue, should frame their exits as a victory rather than defeat.

Bystanders are very important in bullying conflicts. Although directly confronting bullies can be risky and make situations worse, there are other responses bystanders can take. Scully and Rowe (2009) suggest that bystanders can do two things that will reduce bullying, mobbing, verbal aggression, and so forth: "discouraging negative behaviors, and, … encouraging *positive* behaviors" (p. 89). This means helping "people in all cohorts to note—and to commend—the achievements of their fellow workers. Such commendations often matter to the person concerned and are thought to be useful in encouraging future, socially desirable behavior" (pp. 89-90). Bystander action also means "helping people in all job categories to react, and then act appropriately, when they see unsafe, unprofessional, offensive, discriminatory, or illegal behavior in the workplace" (p. 90).

In addition, bystanders can be very helpful for supporting targets' stories and breaking the bullying cycle (Macintosh, 2006); concerted voice simply increases believability (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006). Collective voice also reduces some of the risk of being labeled troublemakers, mentally ill, or problem-employees. Non-targeted workgroup members may not be as stigmatized, since they lack the victim-label. But even with collective resistance, there is the risk of being pejoratively branded when speaking out against abuse and oppression (Cowan, 2009). William Ury's book *The Third Side: Why we fight and how we can stop* (2000) outlines an instructive approach for building others' competence in workgroups, so that they can help prevent, handle, and in some cases stop aggressive communication behavior.

As for bullies, the organizational and communication literatures are sparse regarding what they could do to better manage conflicts and keep conflicts civil and constructive.[1] Infante et al. (1992; 1984) and Rancer and Avtgis' (2006) work does provide constructive pointers, however, regarding persons with high trait verbal aggressiveness—likely present in some degree with all bully profiles. Their scholarship suggests that one of the reasons people use verbal aggression is that they lack argumentation skills. Thus, if organizational members who bully others realize they tend to become aggressive in interactions that are conflictual, one

remedy could be to learn how to constructively argue. In fact, Infante (1995) has developed a curriculum specifically for this purpose. Another useful skill is improving one's ability to read others' emotions. Laura Crawshaw (2007), who coaches abrasive managers, argues that these individuals tend toward aggression because they have little ability to empathize with others so they do not fully see the effect their aggression has on others. And although learning empathy is not a simple task, persons in the medical profession often complete courses on this skill (e.g., La Monica, 1983). Indeed, the steps that high-verbal aggressive might take is an area needing more research.

Future Directions

One of the areas that has received little attention is studying the factors that have transformed workplace communication in the face of bullying. Although there are a number of models outlining organization-wide change (e.g., Di Martino, Hoel, & Cooper, 2003; Keashly & Neuman, 2005), researchers have yet to explore fully what organizations have done in circumstances in which bullying decreased as a result of less formal ways of responding and dealing with the problem. What situational, contextual, or cultural factors assist or thwart targets, bystanders, and perpetrators in resolving conflicts?

Although a substantial body of research focuses on targets' (usually ineffective) efforts to end bullying (e.g.,Richman et al., 2001; Zapf & Gross, 2001), what is needed is research on the experiences of bystanders, especially when bystander action has proven effective in the resolution of bullying. Bystanders are yet woefully understudied but critically important. Because of their once-removed status, they may have a particularly powerful, persuasive voice. They are neither stigmatized like the targets nor instigators of bullying like the aggressors. Ury argues (2000, p. 5) that the "vigilant, active, and constructive involvement of the surrounding members of the community" can prevent, resolve, and contain harmful conflicts. A number of workplace aggression scholars have shifted focus from what targets (which is exceedingly limited in the face of unequal power and influence) or upper-management can do to the pivotal role of bystanders. Scully and Rowe (2009), Ury (2000), Keashly (2010), and others are keen to develop the potential of this group to alter bullying conflicts, but more work is warranted.

As important as bystanders in bullying conflicts is learning more about the perpetrators' experiences, perspectives, and motivations. Interpersonal communication research about verbal aggression informs much of what we have presented in this chapter regarding perpetrators. As workplace bullying is currently in the news and of increasing interest to organizational leadership, researchers might creatively devise means of accessing the bullies' point of view. In the first author's experience, after presenting to professional groups about bullying, some audience members have approached her saying, in effect, "I can

see that I've been doing this to the people I'm supervising." These interactions could provide fruitful in-roads for examination.

Conclusion

We define workplace bullying as a unique type of conflict because it involves power disparities, aggression, and persistence that involves all employees in affected workgroups. An exploration of these parties' goals and tactics helps trace the likely motivations and how those differ for targets, bystanders, and bullies. Additionally, some motivations are at odds with others (e.g., targets and bullies want supporters, neutral bystanders want to stay neutral). If we say there are roughly three different types of target (provocative, rigidly conscientious, passive), three types of bystander (bully allies, target allies, neutral bystander), and three types of bully (accidental, narcissistic, psychopathic) and all nine of these general types have different motivations and tactics driven by those motivations, then we have some idea of how impossible it can feel to address bullying conflicts once they develop and how these conflicts can be a *nasty piece of work*.

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[1] Rather, there are various texts to assist upper-management dealing with bullies (e.g., Crawshaw, 2007; Namie & Namie, 2011; Twale & De Luca, 2008). Most of these are for acting upon the bully (interventions) rather than actions for actual or potential bullies.