

Coaching for workplace bullying

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What is workplace bullying

Employment New Zealand

Workplace bullying is repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or a group of workers that can be physical, verbal or relational/social (e.g. excluding someone or spreading rumours)

Unreasonable behaviour includes victimising, humiliating, intimidating or threatening a person. A single incident of unreasonable behaviour isn't considered workplace bullying, but it could escalate and shouldn't be ignored.

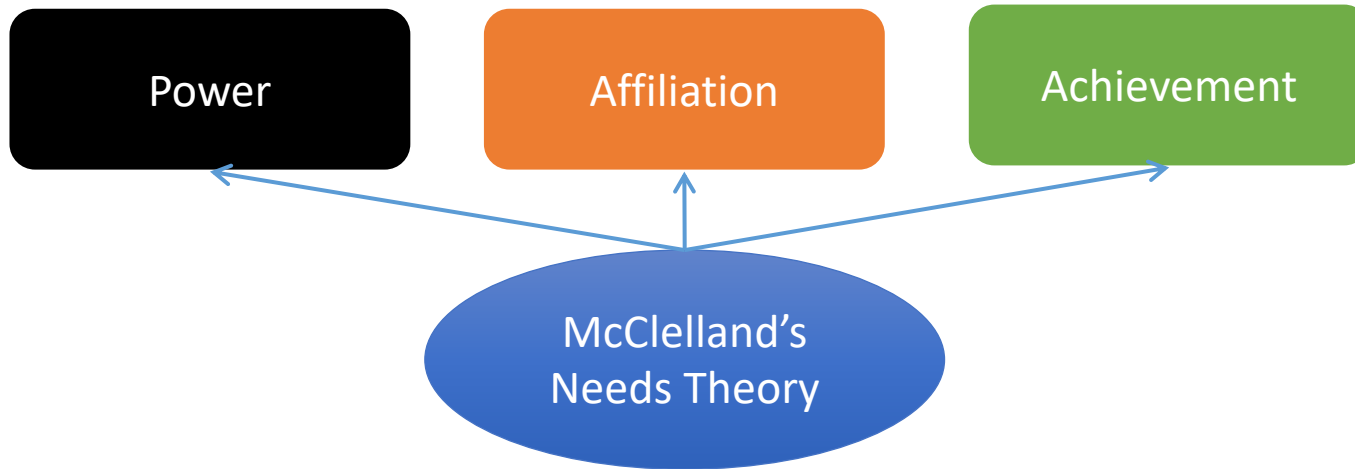
Beware

1. Coaching for workplace bullying is not a substitute for a sound investigation and appropriate discipline
2. That coaching does not increase the tolerance of the organisation for bullying
3. Coaching does not simply increase the sophistication of the bully
4. The coach needs to encourage the organisation to offer the victims support before the perpetrator

Coaching the workplace bully

- Typical comments “I set high standards for myself and expect the same with my staff!” “I do not tolerate fools!”
- It can be uncomfortable for the coach
- Developing empathy for the bully takes time and mindfulness – compassion mediation for the coach can be useful *“Just like me, he or she made mistakes and suffers. Just like me, he or she wants to be happy.”*
- Empathy training for the bully – *“Describe the victim” “What motivates this person?” “How can you get what you want and satisfy his or her needs?” “How can you build a better relationship?”*

Coaching the workplace bully



- Advanced empathy training *“Were you bullied?” “How did it make you feel?” “How do you think it makes the other person feel?” “How do you want to change?”*

Coaching the peer of a bully

- Coaching approach
 - Listen, build empathy, support and provide compassion
 - Practical suggestions:
 - Take great care and keep your distance
 - Try to stay calm and not be intimidated
 - Do not get drawn in by their stories
 - Quietly collect data until you are confident to take it further
 - Explore your protection and confidentiality before making any disclosure
 - Draw on your social support
 - You do not own either the problem or solution

Team coaching for incivility

- Maintenance contract had turned sour and all sides wanted an independent perspective on what to do
- My view was that both sides had difficult intransigent individuals
- The executive from the funder had been accused of bullying but I could see no evidence – incivility was clear
- I recommended the provider change their Project Manager and we ran a Foundation Workshop when the new PM had arrived
- The workshop went well with appropriate work behaviour defined - surveyed perceived collaboration by both sides – 180 type review
- Fed collaboration review findings back and used this for a lessons learned workshop
- Result was a substantial improvement with improved behaviour on both sides