Workplace Bullying: An increasing epidemic creating traumatic experiences for targets of workplace bullying

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Abstract

With workplace bullying continually increasing at an unprecedented epidemic rate around the world, it is now time for organizations and governments to establish zero-tolerance workplace bullying policies to end this dehumanizing behavior. Research has proven that targets suffer from an array of negative health effects such as depression, anxiety, and symptoms mirroring PTSD. This paper will examine why workplace bullying has become so prevalent, the traumatic impacts, and interventions to explore when working alongside targets of workplace bullying. Avenues such as zero-tolerance workplace bullying policies, advocacy, training of professionals, and education will also be discussed when looking to halt workplace bullying. This paper will conclude with recommendations for future action and how the profession of social work is capable of leading to increase advocacy efforts, in the hope of eradicating workplace bullying.

Keywords: Workplace bullying, workplace trauma, zero-tolerance anti-bullying policy, workplace bullying policy

1.0 Introduction

According to a 2010 survey conducted by the Workplace Bullying Institute, located in the United States, the results reported that one out of three American workers equaling 35% (53.5 million), have been bullied in the workplace. The United Nations International Labor Organization, has also alerted that the issue of workplace bullying is reaching epidemic levels based on the surveyed findings of 15 European Union countries (International Labor Organization, 2006). With statistics so prominent, this evidence now clearly suggests that workplace bullying is thriving throughout most parts of the world. This paper's purpose will look to discover if workplace bullying produces traumatic effects and experiences for bullied targets. Workplace bullying rise to prevalence will also be documented, along with interventions and avenues to investigate approaches with the hopes of abolishing workplace bullying. Concluding this paper, recommendations and future action steps will also be highlighted and how the profession of social work is best equipped in taking a lead role against this social injustice which affects millions worldwide.

2.0 What is workplace bullying?

Research looking into the impacts of workplace bullying was first conducted during the 1980's. Dr. Heinz Leymann (1990) was the first researcher at the time to explore the effects of "mobbing" (also known as workplace bullying) among respondents bullied. Leymann (1990), defined mobbing as hostile and unethical behavior in the direction of individuals who were unable to defend themselves. Leymann (1990), compared bullying in the workplace to the act of mobbing, as he likened the term mobbing to when animals in a pack attack a single or larger animal. Leymann (1990), identified through his research that individuals who had experienced bullying in the workplace were at higher risk of becoming depressed, exhibit signs of anxiety, and display symptoms similar to PTSD. Leymann (1990) also classified that an applicable bullying duration should consist over a six month period, with at least one interaction per week. Later in this paper, a shortened duration of workplace bullying will be proposed in order to classify bullying on an incident basis, rather than a set duration period.

Zapf and Gross (2001), define workplace bullying as consistent exposure to persistent, oppressive, offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious, or insulting behavior by a manager/supervisor or co-worker. Workplace bullying, can be seen as a continual purposeful behavior that sets bullying behavior apart from in-civil treatment (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, and Cooper, 2003). As these definitions above suggest along with the current literature, there are many different forms and characteristics which define workplace bullying. Mikkelsen and Einarsen (2002) reported that experiences from workplace bullying can be compared to that of losing a loved one due to an unexpected death. The Workplace Bullying Institute, found that results show males are more consistently in the role of the bully at 62%, while females comprise 58% of those targeted.

Workplace bullying can appear in many forms and characteristics. These forms and characteristics include (Leymann, 1996; Koonin and Green, 2005):

- Verbal or physical attacks
- Social isolation and exclusion in the workplace
- Ridicule and humiliation in front of work colleagues
- Verbal threats and gestures
- Assignment of demeaning work tasks
- Workplace gossip among workers behind a targets back
- Treated in a condescending manner
- Receiving "silent treatment"
- Belittling the opinion of others
- Staring, dirty looks, or other forms of negative eye contact

Reflecting on the characteristics above, an argument could be made for researchers in the field of workplace bullying to narrow the scope relating to which forms and characteristics constitute workplace bullying. One suggestion proposed when narrowing the scope of characteristics, may be for researchers to collaborate and come to a concise consensus as to what forms and characteristics exactly identify the face of workplace bullying. Another recommendation offered, is the Workplace Bullying Institute, located in the United Sates, headed by Dr. Gary and Ruth Namie, could work towards uniting forces with similar organizations, such as those in the United Kingdom. By establishing connections among organizations, this could potentially translate into a significant increase relating to awareness of workplace bullying and also further define what forms and characteristics exactly define workplace bullying. These global organization partnerships for example, could look to sway and exert pressure upon policymakers, which eventually could lead to policies adopted that don't tolerate workplace bullying.

3.0 Workplace bullying and its rise to prevalence

As a new decade begins and the exertion of forces such as globalization and the recent global economic crisis loom over society, competition for jobs and in the workplace is at an all time unprecedented rate. One might look to contribute the rise and prevalence of workplace bullying could perhaps be linked to the aspect of competitiveness among the United States and Western workplace culture (Duffy, 2009). Duffy (2009), believes the ideology centering on competition and being number one has spawned many overly competitive workplaces. According to Duffy (2009), competitiveness as a trait has spawned further traits such as, ruthlessness in organizational workplaces. Not only have these traits developed in organizational culture, but these traits are increasingly being swept into the values of organizations. Expanding on these newly forming traits and values embedded in organizations, further research could explore if bullying incidents have risen over the last number of years due to globalization and the financial crisis.

Kearns, McCarthy, and Sheehan (1997), offer that the prevalence of workplace bullying may exist due to when organizations restructure. Organizational restructuring, will thus produce eminent threats of job loss and uncertainty among workers. Kearns, McCarthy, and Sheehan (1997), further argue that organizational restructuring can foster workplace bullying due to the insecurities of employees, due to potential job losses. Apart from the threat of losing one's job, increasing demands among a worker's workload, may also produce the potential threat of workplace bullying. Van Heugten (2010), conducted a grounded survey into the impacts and interventions among social workers bullied in the workplace, and found that of the 17 social workers involved in the study (13 women and 4 men), organizations, were identified as the major culprit in permitting workplace bullying to rein supreme. Van Heugten (2010), resulted findings are summarized below

- A lack of job control over ones job which contributes to uncertainty of employees roles within the organization.
- Envy on the part of the bully, as bullied target's professional competence may exceed the bully's.
- Competition for positions between workers potentially may initiate bullying in the workplace.
- Organizations are becoming increasingly stressful and demanding, which can thus lead to an array of issues such as role conflicts, staff shortages, and role conflicts. This uncertainty can create a workplace where bullying can thrive.
- If organizational policies don't exist, workplace bullying in essence can blossom.
- Lack of improper training, poor leadership, and ineffective managerial and communication skills can fashion the escalation of workplace bullying.

And finally, one must call into question the media's influence concerning workplace bullying. The Emmy award winning television show Entourage, portrays its main character Ari God (actor Jeremy Piven),

on a consistent basis displaying many forms and characteristics of workplace bullying towards his executive assistant and staff he oversees. The character Ari, exemplifies perfectly a workplace bully, as he consistently dehumanizes and oppresses his assistant and staff in bouts of profanity laced tirades. Is it possible that network television shows such as Entourage, cultivate that the act of workplace bullying is and should be accepted in the workplace? An area of consideration for future research, could possibly look to further the media's connection to whether shows such as Entourage, promote the acceptance of workplace bullying among societal members.

4.0   The devastating and traumatic impacts of workplace bullying

As workplace bullying stats continue to intensify, there have been countless researched findings and associations suggesting workplace bullying can in fact, produce countless traumatic effects and experiences for those bullied. Since the 1980's, an increased body of literature has supported that those bullied are at a higher risk of experiencing traumatic symptoms. Namie (2003), found among a poll of self-described targets that the effects of workplace bullying ranged from negative adverse effects such as; severe anxiety (76%), disrupted sleep (71%), loss of concentration (71%), PTSD (47%), clinical depression (39%), and panic attacks (32%). Expanding on the effects of PTSD and workplace bullying, Leymann and Gustafsson (1996), found that in a study of 64 targets of long-term workplace bullying, the trauma experienced by those bullied far outweighed the PTSD symptoms of train conductors who were unable to successfully stop their train from crashing into a person committing suicide. Leymann and Gustafsson (1996), expressed symptoms of the train conductors were less extensive than those who suffered from long-term bullying in the workplace. Leymann and Gustafsson (1996), also correlated the longer the duration of bullying experienced, the more devastating the health impacts would be on individuals.

Contrasting these facts related to the traumatic experiences of bullying in the workplace, exists the argument of negative affectivity (NA) (Hansen et al., 2006). NA, occurs when individuals adversely experience emotions such as anxiety, depression, stress and self-esteem. Hansen et al. (2006), argued that individuals who experience higher levels of NA, as compared to those who don't may be more inclined to magnify potential threats such as, workplace bullying. For example, individuals with increased levels of NA, are more touted to react strongly of stressors such as bullying, than those with lower levels of NA, encountering similar conditions. The literature also suggests, individuals with low self-esteem are also more prone to experience workplace bullying and score lower on measures of personality such as, assertiveness, competitiveness, and extraversion (Matthiesen and Einarsen, 2001).   With the literature and research indicating and clearly drawing links to the traumatic effects produced by workplace bullying, this should be perceived as an awakening to organizations, policymakers, and society. Ultimately, it is now time to take notice and work towards ending workplace bullying.

5.0   Working with targets of workplace bullying: Interventions and avenues to explore

When working alongside targets that have and are experiencing workplace bullying, one must ask which coping strategies are most effective? Zapf and Gross (2001), found common coping strategies exercised by targets of bullying included; confronting the bully, asking a supervisor for assistance, and requesting a long-term sick leave. The only strategy deemed successful in the hopes of improving the outcome, was either transferring to another position or leaving the organization all together (Zapf and Gross, 2001). Whether you are forced to transfer or leave the organization altogether, this put forth the idea that workplace bullying is and continues to be an unnecessary social injustice. If policies reflected a zero-tolerance stance against workplace bullying, targets would not face the option of leaving their position. Van Heugten (2010), also stated that individuals in a majority of cases, turn to substances such as drugs and alcohol as a ways to cope and cast a band-aid over the wound of workplace bullying.

To date, there exists a gap in the literature relating to which established interventions, models, and best practices provide relief to targets of workplace bullying. Sespico, Faley, and Knapp (2007), cite that in order to bridge this gap, they recommend targets access services such as an employee's, Employment Assistance Program (EAP) provider. Sespico, Faley, and Knapp (2007), express that EAP professionals could look to counsel targets, as a measure to provide relief from the effects sustained due to workplace bullying. Sespico, Faley, and Knapp (2007), identified that one drawback seen when seeking the help of EAP services, is that EAP professionals may lack the appropriate training when counseling targets of workplace bullying. The recommendations and future action section, will seek to expand this argument as noted above, in which EAP providers need to be more aware of the severe consequences resulting of workplace bullying. One model that could be looked upon by EAP professionals and mental health professionals, is that of the Intensive Remedial Identity Work Model (IRIWM) (Sandvik, 2008). This model (Appendix, Pg. 19-21) is constructed into the three phases which targets of bullying may incur throughout the bullying process.

These phases include the pre-bullying phase, the bullying phase and the post bullying phase. For each of these three phases, Sandvik (2008), distinguishes the identity threat, identity work, and the remedial goals that assist targets in order to remediate and restore a sense of positive identity and sense of equilibrium. A brief example in the post bullying phase, would include targets of workplace bullying working alongside a therapist, in order to help restore and reconstruct a new self narrative during the identity threat phase. Sandvik (2008), explained that when targets became aware of the bullying they experienced was not their fault in the identity work phase, some individuals would then go on to successfully re-story their new narrative. In the remedial goals section of the post bullying phase, therapists and targets would work towards remedial goals. These goals consist of such things as, recreating a valued self-identity. The attached appendix tables look to visually explain the process therapists would utilize, when working alongside clients in the pre, post, or bullying phase.   The IRIWM model, a re-storied narrative, and interventions utilizing a cognitive restructuring approach, could be viewed as a beginning platforms when counseling targets. However, a model such as the IRIWM, would not have to exist if proper policies were in place to stop workplace bullying. The recommendations and future action section, will argue as to why establishing workplace bullying policies should be viewed with upmost priority, when seeking to end workplace bullying.

6.0   Recommendations for future action

In order to lessen and end the traumatic effects experienced by targets of workplace bullying, the following recommendations and future action section will hope to shed light of avenues that can be pursued, which end this social injustice. As noted above, If steps are not taken to abolish workplace bullying, then society as a whole will continue to witness the upward climb of statistics, companied with increased cases of targets presenting with anxiety, depression and symptoms of PTSD.   Much of the literature suggests that it is imperative to establish policies which stop bullying at its root. In order to attack workplace bullying at its root, Namie (2003), indicates policies with a blueprint action plan should be implemented when vying for success. Namie (2003), through his research has developed a four step blueprint action plan, in the pursuit of zero-tolerance workplace bullying policies. Namie's (2003), proposed policy model includes:

The creation of a values driven policy
- Zero-tolerance of actions which constitute workplace bullying.
- Placing workplace bullying in the health and safety domain realm of the organization.
  A zero-tolerance enforcement process
- A proper investigation and adjudication process when workplace bullying incidents occur.
- Progressive disciplinary action steps when bullying incidents occur.
  Restorative interventions for all parties involved during incidents of workplace bullying
- Interventions such as counseling and employment behavior contracts, for those who have been affected by workplace bullying (targets, bullies, and witnesses).
  Education and training dedicated to workplace bullying
- Education and training specifically addressing workplace bullying for entire staff and management.
- Education and training that focuses on policies and procedures surrounding workplace bullying. For example, recognizing the signs, symptoms, and procedures in filing a complaint.

Canada, is one country in particular taking workplace bullying seriously on a policy front (Namie and Namie, 2009). Currently, three provinces in Canada, which include, Quebec, Saskatchewan, and Ontario, now enforce zero-tolerance policies and legislation which prohibit workplace bullying (Legislative punch needed to curb office bullies, 2010). The federal government of Canada as an employer, has also directed its stance opposed to workplace bullying, establishing the Canada Labor Code (2008), to protect its employees (Namie, 2009). This labor code is based on actions, conduct, threats, or gestures towards an employee in the work environment than can lead to expected harm, injury, or other related illness.   The United States, is also currently taking pro-active steps under the direction of Dr. Gary Namie and Dr. David Yamanda, with the establishment of the Healthy Workplace Bill (Namie, 2011). Both Namie and Yamanda, have initiated a grassroots campaign state by state, to eliminate workplace bullying. This bill has been introduced in 20 states, and has passed committee votes in states such as Illinois, Washington, New York and Connecticut (Namie, 2011). Although there are no laws or policies enacted in the United States, the United States seems destined to one day enact workplace bullying policies compared to Canada. With provinces in Canada, adopting legislation to eliminate workplace bullying, along with the United Sates furthering state committee votes, the future seems to be slowly but steadily moving in the direction of ending this social injustice experienced by so many undeserving individuals. The next recommendation centers on educating mental health professionals such as social workers, psychologists, and EAP professionals, in hopes of becoming engaged and aware of the negative traumatic consequences suffered from workplace bullying.

Evidence suggests that professionals would benefit greatly from more in-depth educational training and resources (Sespico, Faley, and Knapp, 2007; Namie and Namie, 2003). In-depth educational training related to workplace bullying, could include the most current up to date information with regards to the current literature, symptoms, consequences, resolutions, coping strategies, and counseling interventions (Sespico, Faley, and Knapp, 2007; Namie and Namie, 2003).

Furthermore, it is argued that targets of workplace bullying, will look to seek relief by reaching out to services such as their own EAP program. Findings suggest that the majority of EAP professionals, are not aware of the severe consequences that workplace bullying can impose on those targeted (Sespico, Faley, and Knapp, 2007; Namie and Namie, 2003). These findings are backed, as the first major international symposium regarding workplace bullying of EAP professionals, was not held until 2005 (Sespico, Faley, and Knapp, 2007; Namie and Namie, 2003). As obvious gaps clearly exist surrounding the educational training of EAP and mental health professionals, the time is now for these bodies to update education and training resources in the area of counseling targets of workplace bullying. For targets to begin the recovery process, it is essential that the therapist pose the best tools possible to assist in a targets recovery. Although the first workplace bullying symposium for EAP professionals didn't take place until 2005, a positive that can be derived from this is that workplace bullying is now on the radars of clinicians.

The next recommendation calls for increases to advocacy and awareness, in the hopes of eliminating workplace bullying. Zapft and Einarsen (2001), suggest that avenues such as academic journal publications, have and will continue to demonstrate tremendous potential when creating advocacy and awareness encasing workplace bullying. Munoz, Jimenez, Vergel, and Hernandez (2010), offer that those interested in fighting for anti-bullying policies, can often raise awareness as to how targets of workplace bullying may be understood by society, their workplace, family, the legal system and mental health professionals. Dr. Gary Namie and David Yamanda, also offer that education of the public is key to heightening the awareness profile of workplace bullying (Namie, 2011). Both Namie and Yamanda, feel as the public is made more aware of workplace bullying and its negative consequences, workplace bullying will then less likely to be tolerated in society (Namie, 2011). Both Namie and Yamanda, feel that another positive outlet could be for those bullied to speak out and tell their stories, in order to educate the public through a local newspaper editorial as an example (Namie, 2011).

As the wave of workplace bullying continues to build in the public advocacy realm, Namie's, Workplace Bullying Institute, will later this year introduce a week dedicated to educating the public of the negative consequences encircling workplace bullying. *Freedom-From Workplace Bullies,* will be held the week of October 16-22, 2011. The advocacy week will look to educate bullied targets of ways to break their silence. Information will also be directed towards spouses, partners and friends of those targets who have been or continue to be bullied. Information directed at employers, will highlight the financial and traumatic consequences in which workplace bullying can have in the workplace. Information will also be put forth to mental health professionals, relating to how they can effectively support targets of workplace bullying. This week will also reach out to policymakers, citing how they can help to create bully free environments that consist of zero-tolerance policies. Not only will this advocacy week draw much needed attention to the subject, but this advocacy week should be seen as another milestone in the continued fight to end workplace bullying and its traumatic effects.

As workplace bullying continues to intensify its advocacy and awareness efforts in the public eye, Namie (2003), cites the past argument which links workplace bullying, in facing similar barriers to that of domestic violence many years ago. For years, domestic violence fought extremely hard to gain acceptance from the public, much the same now as workplace bullying campaigns for zero-tolerance policies. Namie (2003), cites that advocacy and awareness were vital elements which created movements helping to change society's view and attitude regarding domestic violence. Namie (2003), also described that the barriers domestic violence once faced could be looked on as building blocks, in the hope of furthering attention and acceptance of workplace bullying among organizations, society, and policymakers. Another recommendation that should draw attention from researchers is the classified duration currently of workplace bullying. For targets to be labeled as bullied, bullying must consist over a six month period with one bullying interaction per week (Leymann, 1996). It is now time to explore a reduced duration. Researchers and advocates of workplace bullying, should argue that workplace bullying should adopt an incident focus rather than that of a duration period. Classifying workplace bullying into incidents, similar to the process of sexual harassment in the workplace complaints, could end the behavior quickly before it ultimately flourishes. Thus, targets wouldn't have to endure workplace bullying over a six month period. Rather, an incident reporting basis would allow for targets to file a bullying incident immediately and forgo the suffering of a six month classification period.

Future research could also pay significant dividends to an already ever increasing state of knowledge. Zapf and Einarsen (2001), feel strongly there is a need for more descriptive information regarding workplace bullying, both from a conceptual and empirical view. Zapf and Einarsen (2001), note information pertaining to the causes and consequences of workplace bullying need to be expanded on from a theoretical and empirical information perspective. They also suggest that future interventions must look to end workplace bullying. Interventions as those noted above should address and develop theoretical and empirical models, paying attention to the causes and effects of workplace bullying (Zapf and Einarsen, 2001). Currently, a gap in the literature exists concerning the participation of "bullies" in many of the research studies published to date. Future research could look to include "bullies", in such avenues as focus groups when looking to discover why workplace bullying occurs. If recommendations such as those noted above, ranging from zero-tolerance workplace bullying policies, education and training, and advocacy and awareness are continued to be drawn upon in the fight against workplace bullying, then it is the hope with the persistence of researchers and advocates, workplace bullying will one day reach similar status to policies which prohibit sexual harassment in the workplace.

7.0   Social Works role in the fight against workplace bullying

When thinking of professions that are in a place to make a difference in helping to eliminate workplace bullying, the profession of social work should be highly viewed upon in this case. Social work offers unique expertise and approaches when helping to raise advocacy. A social workers expertise in advocating for clients could transcend into securing policies which could work towards implementing zero-tolerance of workplace bullying. Aside from being experts in advocacy and policy development, social workers place social justice as one of its main attributed values. Thus, workplace bullying should be recognized as a social injustice for practitioners of social work. Social workers strive to dismantle social injustices, and workplace bullying should be seen as no different. Workplace bullying can be classified as a social injustice because it is a behavior that should not have to exist if proper policies were in place to stop this injustice. Workplace bullying also contributes to creating unnecessary negative adverse health effects noted above such as PTSD, anxiety, depression, etc. If policies reigned supreme in the pursuit of justice, than targets of workplace bullying wouldn't have to experience this unwanted behavior.

Not only are social workers equipped with exceptional skills such as advocacy and policy development, social workers also posses the capability in offering assistance through a clinical setting. Clinical social workers, are in a tremendous place to offer their therapeutic skills when counseling those who have experienced trauma related to workplace bullying. Social workers can offer and provide interventions that allow for targets to reach a sense of homeostasis from their current or previous experiences. However, if social work is to become the leading professional body when advocating and partnering with targets of workplace bullying, social workers must then stay current and up to date with regards to the current literature available. Social work regulatory bodies and associations can and should play an important role through offering continuing educational training for its interested members.

Not only is continuing education through social work bodies a great idea in helping to bridge gaps with regards to workplace bullying, but continuing education can also look to disseminate the latest current evidence based practice findings. Social work bodies from these findings could highlight interventions, therapies, and the state of current literature, helping to aid clinical social workers who may find themselves working with targets. As workplace bullying continues to soar, social work can look to cease a tremendous opportunity and help pioneer awareness for ways to end workplace bullying. In order to take the reins and become a profession that leads for the advancement in ending workplace bullying, social work practitioners must gain the necessary tools through the means discussed above in order to advocate and work alongside targets of workplace bullying effectively.

8.0   Conclusion

With workplace bullying increasing yearly across the world, it is now time to enact policies which look to cripple this social injustice which has caused much pain and undeserved suffering among targets. It has been shown throughout this paper, that workplace bullying does produce an abundance of traumatic effects and experiences among targets of bullying. Such traumatic effects can include anxiety, depression, and links to symptoms similar to PTSD just to name a few. The trauma suffered of targets relating to workplace bullying is a clear wake-up that society must take full notice of the damaging results. Of the key recommendation offered, it is believed that policy creation is the key ingredient to establishing workplaces which promote a zero-tolerance workplace bullying environment. As was noted earlier, workplace bullying finds itself in a similar position to that of domestic violence. Through persistence, patience, advocacy, and policy developments, domestic violence was able to become entrenched in the public's eye resulting towards laws being enacted.

Workplace bullying should look to model after domestic violence struggles years earlier, as it is only a matter of time before organizations, government, policy makers and the public become more aware of the consequences produced from workplace bullying. Simply, it is now time to take a stance towards ending workplace bullying, so individuals no longer have to leave work at the end of the day feeling abused. Thus, work should be safe and not seen as a war zone from Monday thru Friday.

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Appendix

Intensive Remedial Identity Work Model
Pamela Lutgen-Sandvik (2008)
Table 1. Intensive remedial identity work: phases, types and remedial goals
Pre-Bullying phase
Identity Threat
Perturbations to psychological comfort and day-to-day predictability
Challenging Mental Perceptions; crazy-making; threats to cognitive ability to accurately perceive environment
Identity work
First-level
Stabilizing (trauma-focused
Sense making, in all phases (stigma and trauma-focused)
Remedial goals
Re-establishing sense of safety, security
Rebuilding comfort; reducing discomfort
Increasing stability
Confirming perceptions
Identifying causes of abuse and remedying
Validating self and value of self
Intensive Remedial Identity Work
Pamela Lutgen-Sandvik (2008)
Table 2. Intensive remedial identity work: phases, types and remedial goals
Bullying phase
Identity Threat
Targets response to abuse dissonant with identity and experience of being abused dissonant with past identity
Image seriously damaged by being targeted, other (upper-management) believe bully, blame target for being abused, minimize or disbelieve target
Disrupting, on a deep level, one's ontological security, including shaking/destroying important values and beliefs about the world in which one lives
Identity work
Reconciling (trauma and stigma-focused)
Repairing, also in post-bullying (stigma-focused)
Second-level
Stabilizing, also in post-bullying (trauma-focused)
Remedial goals
Reducing dissonance
Highlighting preferred identity and past success
Neutralizing, countering, accusations
Fortifying, reiterating preferred identity
Convincing others of one's value and veracity
Moving others to action based on value to organization
Overcoming, reducing shame/stigma
Convincing others to treat one accordingly to valued identity
Recovering from trauma, shock, surprise
Rebuilding self-narrative to include converted beliefs
Intensive Remedial Identity Work
Pamela Lutgen-Sandvik (2008)
Table 3. Intensive remedial identity work: phases, types and remedial goals
Post-bullying phase (target or bully may exit organization to reach this stage)
Identity Threat
Loss of valued position, career, identity as professional and 'good worker', and long-term loss of belief in justice, fairness, personal power, etc.
How to permanently merge the experience into restructured life narratives and self-perceptions
Identity work
Grieving, also in late bullying phase (trauma-focused)
Restructuring (stigma –focused)
Remedial goals
Working through/processing the loss
Accepting the loss
Incorporating loss into self-narrative
Recreating valued self-identity
Rebuilding work-related identity aspects
Learning or transforming from experience
Reaffirming specific aspects of identity
Converting evil to good
Healing from trauma, 'putting oneself back together again'