



# Analysis and Promotion of Psychological Safety in the Healthcare Setting

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# Objectives

- Participants will be able to define workplace bullying and lateral violence
- Participants can name three behaviors that may constitute bullying
- Participants will be able to identify two factors that perpetuate the cycle of bullying
- Participants can identify one framework for addressing bullying and lateral violence

# Background and Significance

- 35% of the U.S workforce report being bullied at work- An estimated 53.5 million Americans ( *The Workplace Bullying Institute, 2011*)
- **Nursing: Primary occupation at risk** (*Carter, 1999; Jacobs & Kyzer, 2010; Quine, 2001*)
  - 44% to 85 % of nurses are victims
  - > 90% report witnessing
  - Due to high prevalence, the behavior is considered normal and accepted within the nursing culture.
    - Overlooked and unreported
- Prevalence within the Veterans Administration

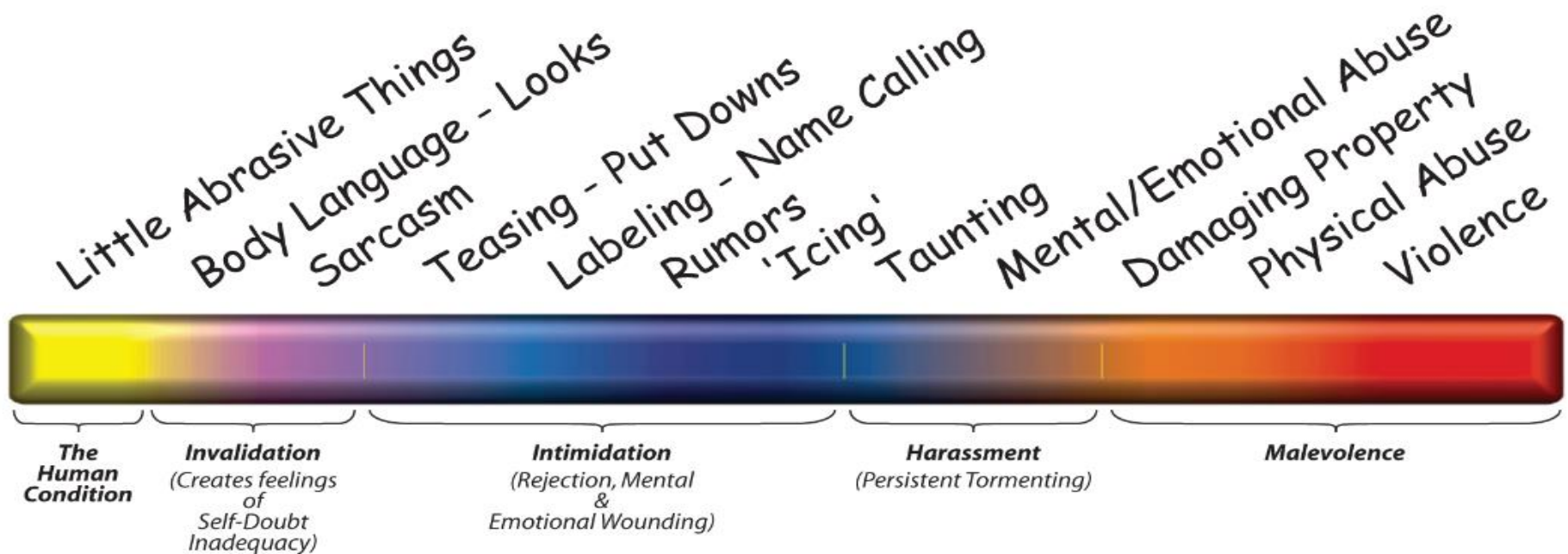
Complaints by Issue	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016 1st Q
Harassment: Non-sexual	873	980	862	941	1166	296

# What is bullying/lateral violence

- Covert or overt acts of verbal and non-verbal aggression causing psychological distress (Dellasega, 2009; Hutchinson, Vickers, Jackson, & Wilkes, 2006)
- Deliberate and harmful behavior
  - Can be openly displayed but
  - More commonly masked and subtle as it is repeated, often escalating over time



# Bullying as a Challenge to Psychological Safety



# Once You Feel Unsafe the Damage is Done

- Soldiers often describe their experience in combat where waiting around for an attack is harder on them psychologically than performing in an actual battle



- In a psychologically unsafe work environment, a person or a group of targets are facing visible or invisible attacks anywhere and anytime
- Knowing that a person or an entity cannot be trusted, these people are in constant fear of these attacks

# Impact - Personal

- Initiates Fight or Flight response
  - In its more severe forms,
    - It triggers a host of stress-related health complications
      - Hypertension, auto-immune disorders, depression, anxiety to PTSD (*The Healthy Workplace Campaign, 2011*)
- Victims feel rejection within the work environment

“Neuroscientists have discovered that the anguish of social rejection registers in the anterior cingulate cortex, the same part of the brain that processes physical pain. **Your brain responds to rejection much as it does to a punch in the gut:** Once hit, you resist cooperating, even if doing so goes against your rational interests, and attempts to resolve your conflict become far more difficult.” (*Shapiro, 2016, Page 51*)



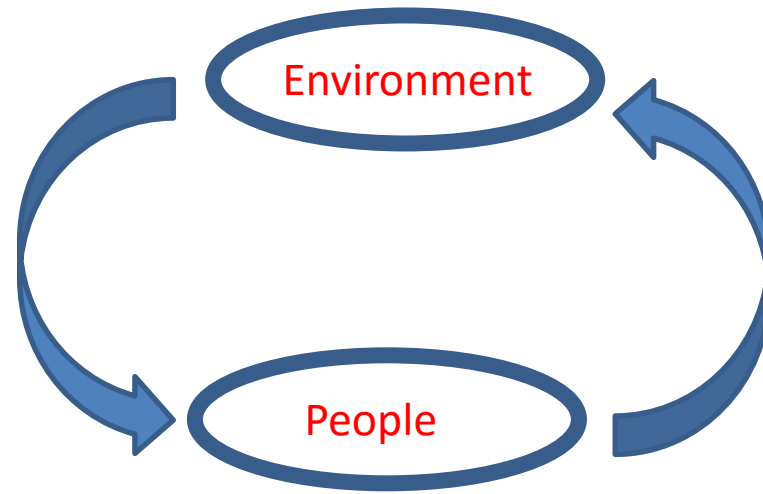
# Impact - Organizational

- Intimidation alters communication and negatively impact patient care and safety (Institute for Safe Medication Practices, 2004).
- Medical errors are a leading cause of death in the U.S
- Totalitarian type of an environment, the best qualified people may be seen as a threat and creativity can stifled

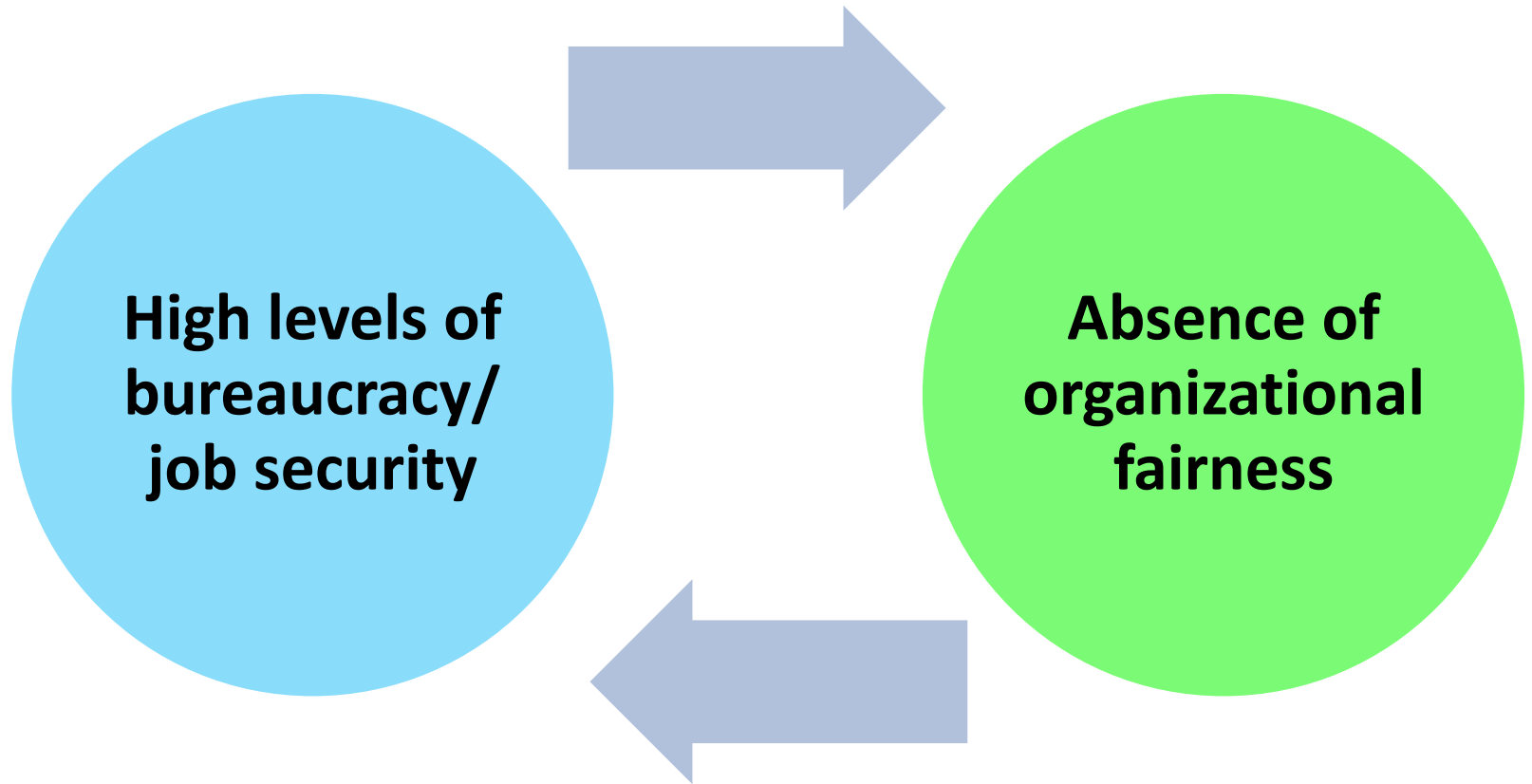




# Culture



# The Environment



# Theory of the Nurse as a Wounded Healer



# Sociopaths

- 1 in 25
- Lack empathy/remorse
- Manipulative
- Superficially charming
- Usually intelligent
- Attain success using unscrupulous methods
- Formally diagnosed if they meet the criteria listed in DSM V



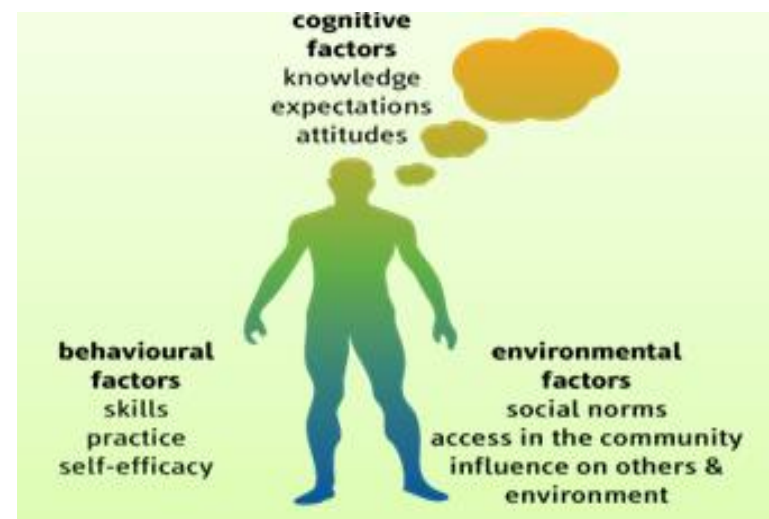
- If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping in a room with a mosquito-African proverb



# Social Cognitive Theory

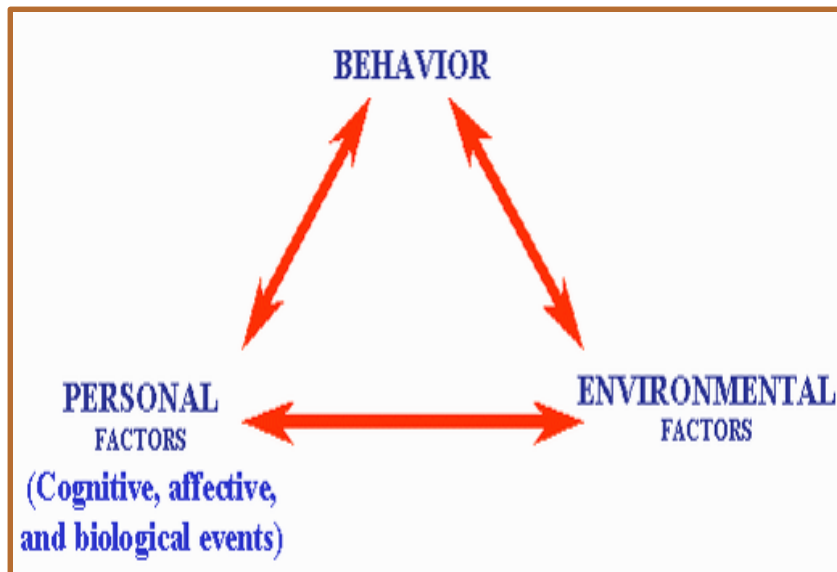
- There are three core concepts
  1. People can learn through observation
    - A live model
    - A verbal instructional model
    - A symbolic model
  2. Mental states are important to learning
    - External and Internal reinforcement
  3. Learning does not necessarily lead to a change in the behavior
    - Conditions necessary for Effective Modeling
      - Attention
      - Retention
      - Reproduction
      - Motivation\*\*\*\*
- Reciprocal Determinism\*\*\*

The world and the person's behavior cause each other



# Interventions

- A framework of Social Cognitive Theory developed by Albert Bandura permits targeted interventions



# Efforts at the Boston VA

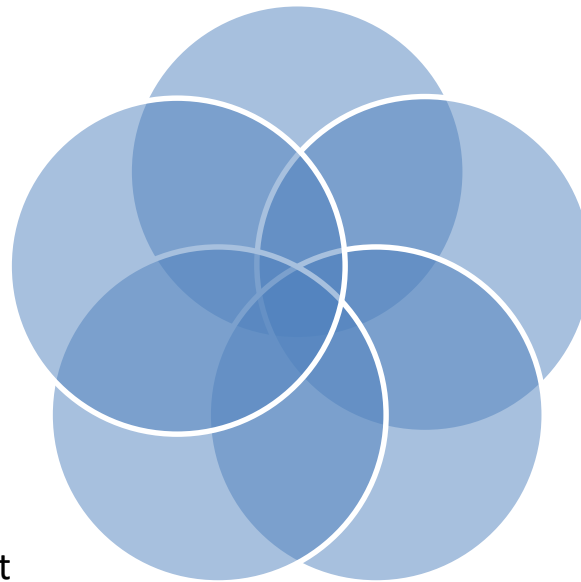
VA Central Office  
Publication  
“Psychological Safety:  
The Canary in the Coal  
Mine”

Multiple Reporting  
Avenues

Facility Policy Specific  
to Bullying and  
Lateral Violence

Leadership Support

Grass Roots  
Awareness and  
Reporting Efforts





# Conclusion



Acknowledge



Structure



Sustain

Admit there is  
an elephant in  
the room

Don't be the  
reed in the  
wind

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