WILLIAM & MARY
CHARTERED 1693

2021

Bullying In Student Affairs: Our Little Secret

April Joy Palmer
William & Mary - School of Education, ajpalmer01@wm.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wm.edu/etd

Part of the Education Commons

Recommended Citation

Bullying in Student Affairs: Our Little Secret

A Dissertation

Presented to the

The Faculty of the School of Education

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

By

April Palmer

August 26, 2021

BULLYING IN STUDENT AFFAIRS: OUR LITTLE SECRET

By

April Palmer

_____

Approved August 26, 2021 by

Dr. Virginia Ambler
Committee Member

Dr. Jeffrey Papa
Committee Member

Dr. Pamela L. Eddy
Chairperson of Doctoral Committee

Acknowledgements

I am not even supposed to be here. As a first-generation college student, as well as coming from a low socio-economic status from the South, the odds were stacked against me from the beginning. It is because of the people in my life, the people who encouraged and the people who discouraged me, who helped me get here. From my encouragers, my family, my sisters, caring faculty, my friends, and my mentors, I received the support I needed to continue on my collegiate journey. From my discouragers, those who told me I couldn't, shouldn't, or wouldn't achieve the dream of a college degree, or even a consider a doctoral degree, I received the drive and ambition to prove them wrong. I am grateful for both.

I would like to thank my family, my parents, John and Terri, my sisters, Amber and Melanie, and my in-laws, Ann and Jerry, who continually supported and applauded me through the entirety of this journey. Thank you to my friends, who continuously celebrated my successes and failures with me. To my family and friends, thank you for being my biggest cheerleaders. I am so fortunate and appreciative to have each of you in my life.

To my mentors, Dr. David Gilbert, Dr. Mark Sikes, and Dr. Tony Cawthon, thank you for your humor, your authenticity, and your readiness to supply a kind or challenging word, while always reminding me that my journey would be worth the sacrifice.

To my committee members, Dr. Virginia Ambler and Dr. Jeffrey Papa, thank you for joining in on this journey with me. You trusted me and your willingness to   is an example of the incredible leadership you provide to me and all those who are lucky enough to know you.

To my chair, an incredible mentor, Dr. Pamela L. Eddy, thank you for believing in me, even when others did not. You never doubted me, even when I doubted myself, and I am eternally grateful for your confidence in me. You inspire me to be better and do better.

A special thank you to the participants in this study who are courageous, honorable, and fearless. I am grateful and humbled by your bravery and trust in me to tell your stories.

Finally, to my husband Clayton and my daughter, Emma, this journey was for you, for us. To Clay, I am grateful to you, for never wavering in your faith in me and loving me, even on the long nights when you found me elbow deep in papers, highlighters, books, and articles while staring blankly at a computer, or when I would return home exhausted from a full day of attending classes and working, you were there—loving and supporting me. To my daughter Emma, thank you for the blessing of being your mom. It is a beautiful privilege to be your mom and no matter how messy life gets, being your mom is the most important person I can be. Clayton and Emma, I love you both.

To my family, friends, mentors, faculty, committee, and chair, thank you for believing in me-we did this together.

Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Abstract

The intent of this narrative dissertation was to uncover how staff members in divisions of student affairs experience bullying, how it has affected their trust for the profession and their colleagues and supervisors, and how the power dynamic within workplace bullying has an effect on the experience for professionals. It is important to recognize bullying does exist in student affairs, an area focused on positive development and growth for students, and to understand more about the effect of bullying in student affairs on staff. Bullying experiences can result in good student affairs professionals leaving the profession. The frameworks used in this study are guided by social identity and organizational culture as these frameworks are well suited for workplace bullying in Student affairs. Data collection included individual interviews with different participants within Mid-Atlantic universities. Social media and institutional contacts were used to solicit participants. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews were conducted virtually. Three findings emerged from the data collected:

1. Significant emotions and fear result from workplace bullying.

2. A power dynamic between the supervisor and supervisee exists.

3. Relationships and trust become damaged as a result of workplace bullying.

This study concluded the following:

1. Bullying exists in student affairs.

2. There is a gap in the literature for workplace bullying in student affairs.

3. More training needs to be done with HR and administrators.

BULLYING IN STUDENT AFFAIRS: OUR LITTLE SECRET

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In student affairs we have a secret. It is a secret we do not like to discuss. It is a secret we ignore and work diligently to hide. This secret is workplace bullying occurs within our profession. According to anecdotal evidence from student affairs professionals, both collegial and supervisory bullying occurs on campus. The question can be asked: What contributes to the level of secrecy with workplace bullying in student affairs? Many in student affairs enter the profession with the desire to support students and improve campus life (Taub & McEwen, 2006). Philosophically, the core values of the profession have remained the same throughout the last century (Evans & Reason, 2001). Juxtaposed to this caring role of the profession is the incongruence of bullying among professionals. How can professionals charged with caring for students partake in workplace bullying in student affairs does harm to others? To situate this problem better, a review of workplace bullying, including specifics on workplace bullying in student affairs, leads off this chapter.

Workplace bullying in higher education is on the rise, including in student affairs (Lester, 2013). Anecdotally, I have been privy to this issue, as other student affairs professionals have shared incidents of their bullying with me time and time again, and this results with the same question emerging; how does workplace bullying occur in a profession in which professionals are expected to lead, educate, and engage students? The paradox is the same professionals mentoring college students to become caring and engaged citizens are at the same time being bullied and are the bullies.

Unfortunately, not much literature exists focuses on collegial and supervisory bullying in the field of student affairs. Twale and DeLuca (2008) focused on bullying among faculty in higher education, but not on bullying within the ranks of staff. Their research focused on real life examples and suggestions were made on how to deal with bullying in academia. Their study with its focus on faculty rather than staff, is a prime example of the lack of literature which exists to identify concerns within staff members regarding bullying.

Researchers found workplace bullying is occurring more and more in higher education, and according to Lester (2013), workplace bullying in higher education is widespread as 80% of her study's participants experienced workplace bullying in their career. This research, however, did not disaggregate professionals in units and focused instead on the effect of their personal experiences with workplace bullying.

The student affairs professional will experience various types of emotions when they are being bullied. In many workplace bullying cases, the professional feels helpless and isolated. Often when the professional does seek help in Human Resources (HR), prior research shows only 17% of reported incidents helped stop the bullying, and another 31% experienced negative reactions, and 51% had HR units did nothing to stop the bullying (Namie, 2003). This backdrop further solidifies why professionals are often silent about their workplace bullying experiences.

Of concern, workplace bullying in the student affairs profession may drive competent student affairs professionals to leave jobs they love or leave the student affairs profession altogether. Understanding better the scope of workplace bullying and uncovering strategies to prevent bullying can help the profession. The loss of competent student affairs professionals affects not only the profession but also affects students due to staff turnover. This loss of personnel can become significant because student affairs professionals are known as

3

transformative educators who work to shift institutional cultures and establish ethical care for students (Rhoads & Black, 1995). This study of bullying in student affairs seeks to provide clarity on how bullying occurs in the profession and to learn how student affairs professionals can support one another if they have experienced bullying in their department or area.

For the purpose of this study, workplace bullying and workplace bullying in student affairs are defined differently. Workplace bullying is defined as "hostility that is deliberate" (Namie, 2003, p. 2). According to Namie (2003), "regardless of how bullying is manifested—either verbal assaults or strategic moves to render the target unproductive and unsuccessful—it is the aggressor's desire to control the target that motivates the action" (p. 2). This definition centers on the role of control of the bully over the person being bullied, and this distinction is important when defining workplace bullying in student affairs. For this study, workplace bullying in student affairs was defined as, "extreme, negative, and pervasive or persistent workplace abuse achieved through communication, experienced by targets as an imbalance of power, which can cause distress, humiliation, and other adverse consequences for the target and the organization" (Cowan & Fox, 2014, p. 119). It is important to understand and distinguish these definitions because the best working definition for workplace bullying in student affairs needs to focus on communication and the imbalance of power versus hostility and control. What remains unknown is how those being bullied would describe their personal experiences and how these narratives align with existing definitions of bullying.

Conceptual Frameworks

Power, trust, and relationships are important aspects of work for professional colleagues. Each of these components contribute to the level of harmony in the workplace (Bolman & Deal, 2013). In an ideal world, power and relationships can exist together. However, when power is

4

abused, trust is broken, and relationships turn sour. The dynamics of power, trust, and relationships are change when trust is broken, and there is a sense of betrayal from the harmed person (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). This study was guided by the frameworks of Social Identity (Stets & Burke, 2000) and Organizational Culture (Schein, 1984) to better understand workplace bullying in student affairs.

Social Identity

In social identity, a person's social identity means they belong to a social category or group (Stets & Burke, 2000). This means they can classify in the "in" or "out" group depending on the circumstances. An individual being in the "in" or "out" group has an effect on workplace bullying. This framework is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is often used to explain workplace bullying (Salin, 2003a). Organizational culture includes how beliefs, rituals, values, and institutional practices can affect the manner in which individuals interact and behave (Schein, 1984). Organizational structure is important in workplace bullying as it can shape behaviors which can lead to workplace bullying. The values of an organization are significant in how individuals can behave when they are experiencing workplace bullying. Because of the value system in place for professionals in student affairs which builds on an ethic of care, workplace bullying presents a particular paradox.

Trust and Relationships

In the student affairs profession, the focus on building trust and relationships with students is the very essence of the profession (American College Personnel Association [ACPA], 2021). The mission, vision, and core values of our professional associations, the ACPA and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), support the role of

5

professionalism and supporting students. According to the ACPA mission and values (2021), the intent of the student affairs professional is to focus on the education and development of the total student, to foster student-learning, inclusiveness, with a free exchange of ideas, and overall mutual respect. Even though the student affairs professional associations support and encourage mutual respect, student affairs professionals do not always follow this goal.

Problem Statement

Workplace bullying may be occurring more frequently than student affairs leaders would like to admit or recognize and the consequences are significant (Lester, 2013). When individuals experience bullying, not only is their work performance affected, their team is affected, and their relationship to their supervisor and/or colleague changes when trust has been betrayed (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). When bullied, individuals become hesitant to engage, contribute, or interact and often becomes isolated or withdrawn. The emotional and physical stress bullying causes can create long term psychosocial and physical consequences and can feel jarring and unsettling for individuals who experience it (Lovell & Lee, 2011). The paradox is the same professionals mentoring college students to become caring and engaged citizens are at the same time are bullying and being bullied. Of concern, workplace bullying is often not addressed and may be ignored by supervisors and administrators. Namie (2003) argued, "the time has come to treat workplace bullying the same as sexual harassment or racial discrimination, to identify the perpetrators, establish rules of conduct and penalties, and even pass laws prohibiting and penalizing bullying" (p. 1). Despite the arguments to increase consequences for bullying, student affairs workplace bullying seems to occur more and more and often with no consequences for the aggressor (Namie, 2003). While the literature is limited, any type of bullying occurring in student affairs is concerning.

Student affairs professionals strive to be respectful, empathic, and supportive towards their students (Evans et al., 2010). However, there is incongruity in how these same professionals treat one another. Even though student affairs professionals work diligently to support, encourage, and challenge students, the same may not be true in collegial and supervisory relationships. Student affairs professionals have reported not having the same supportive and respectful experiences as those provided to their students (Hollis, 2015).

Student affairs professionals have reported interactions and experiences with bullying with their supervisors or colleagues occurs throughout their careers (Hollis, 2015). The purpose of this research was understanding the frequency and severity of these interactions and their consequences and determining where bullying occurs amongst student affairs colleagues and supervisors. In a field in which civility, respect, and integrity are core values and where student affairs administrators are expected to practice empathy, respect, and support with their students and one another, it is important to understand better how and where bullying exists amongst colleagues and from supervisors. The problem is we do not know the extent of which bullying occurs in student affairs.

More critically, what is the effect on trust between a supervisor and a supervisee or colleagues, when bullying occurs in a collegial or supervisory relationship in student affairs? Proactively, how can we rebuild trust among colleagues and supervisors in student affairs when bullying is occurring? Using social identity and organizational culture as frameworks the research will focus analysis on how structure, culture, and identity have an effect on workplace bullying. These questions and frameworks guided the inquiry.

It might be because of workplace bullying, student affairs professionals are leaving their jobs and leaving the field of student affairs. The question of when, how, and where does bullying

occur is important, but it is also relevant and significant to ask the question of when bullying occurs, how is trust affected between a supervisor and supervisee? If trust has been compromised, is trust ultimately rebuilt and how? Trust in relationships matter, especially in student affairs and relationships are affected when these experiences occur (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Trust is also developed through an individual's identity, and feeling accepted is being a part of the "in" group, according social identity (Suzuki, 1998). When an individual does not feel accepted by the group or the organization, trust can be shaken and even broken which can affect the individual's personal and professional career and reputation.

If student affairs professionals maintain that workplace bullying does not exist, it is arguable then, that the professionals who make these claims are possibly newer to the profession or have not experienced bullying in their careers. The premise for this study built on the assumption that student affairs bulling does exist and that bullying often goes unreported. It is important to acknowledge that bullying in the student affairs field affects not only the individuals who experience this, but also the profession itself. Based on anecdotal information, student affairs professionals are leaving the profession and sharing their experiences with others who are not familiar with the field. Therefore, not only are there concerns about good, competent student affairs professionals leaving the field, but also concerns about the reputation of student affairs becoming tarnished. These reasons alone are worthy of a study. In student affairs relationships matter and when relationships are nurtured, trust is strong, and respect is given, effective and successful student affairs professionals are made (Cooper & Miller, 1998). When relationships and trust are broken or when a student affairs professional is treated poorly or bullied, the effect of that experience has a lasting effect on the professional's entire career, inside or outside of student affairs.

Research Question

Finding out how and where bullying occurs within student affairs is important and understanding the effects these experiences are having in regards to trust and relationships is critical. Knowing more about these answers provided a better understanding about how to be more proactive about how to navigate, assess, and even prevent bullying. Social identity was used for analysis and not necessarily as a question—trust and organizational culture are more aligned. The following primary research question and sub questions guided this study: How and where does bullying exist amongst colleagues and from supervisors to supervisee in student affairs?

1. How is power used in instances of bullying?

2. What changes to trust occur between the colleagues and supervisors from the perspective of the individual bullied?

3. How do supervisor/supervisee and collegial relationships change for the student affairs professional who is bullied?

4. What is the emotional effect of workplace bullying?

This study provided participants an opportunity to share their own lived experiences using their own narrative by describing the bullying they experienced, who they experienced the bullying from, and how these experiences shaped the professionals they have become. The setting for the research included colleges in a Mid-Atlantic region. The research focused on colleges representing different institutions with populations within each student affairs department to determine if the claim that bullying can occur in any student affairs department occurs in reality.

Methods Summary

This research focused on capturing the voices and narratives of student affairs professionals who have experienced bullying. This study was a narrative qualitative study that centered on interviews conducted with student affairs professionals (Creswell, 2014). A qualitative study is most appropriate for this research as the goal was to obtain personal narratives for determining whether there is an emerging pattern in bullying within student affairs and the power dynamic it can create. It is important to note, I did not know the complete scope of workplace bullying in the colleges in the selected regions as a quantitative study was not used for this research, and a quantitative study could be more generalizable. For the individuals who participated in this study and shared their personal stories and experiences, the stakes were very high. Their stories were personal, complex, difficult, and compelling. Participants were asked to share times in their careers in student affairs when they experienced bullying from their supervisors and colleagues with the goal of defining the essence of their shared experiences. As a result of bullying in student affairs between supervisors and supervisees, and colleague to colleague, not only are competent student affairs professionals leaving the profession, but the reputation of the profession is also at stake.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the study was to explore how bullying exists in student affairs and focused on how these experiences affect trust and relationships from those affected. Bullying does exist in student affairs. Evidence supporting this problem came from anecdotal experiences many student affairs professionals have experienced bullying from their colleagues and/or their supervisors. Little information exists beyond the primarily anecdotal comments and exchanges at professional meetings. Empirical studies have not yet documented the degree and consequences

that are direct results from workplace bullying in student affairs. As a result of this research, student affairs professionals can become proactive in recognizing and preventing bullying, not only by acknowledging that it does exist in the field but also identifying when it occurs. The audience for this research was mainly professionals who worked in student affairs in higher education.

Little research exists about bullying in student affairs; therefore, this study helps fill the gap. This lack of prior research may be due to student affairs professional's resisting admission that workplace bullying exists. For student affairs professionals, workplace bullying in a field that encourages challenge and support (Sanford, 1962) for its professionals, does not align with professional expectations of bullying behavior. For my research, I pursued a narrative study which assessed how and where bullying existed in collegial and supervisory relationships in student affairs. It was important to evaluate trust, broken trust, and the significance of trust the relationships which have been affected either directly or indirectly by workplace bullying.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the research lies in the concern bullying occurs within the student affairs profession and is not recognized as a problem. It is important to learn how prevalent bullying is in the profession. This study sought to assist student affairs administrators to recognize and possibly prevent bullying in student affairs. The purpose of the research was to show bullying exists in student affairs and focused on how these experiences affect trust and relationships from those affected. By doing this, student affairs professionals can become more prepared, aware, and understanding of workplace bullying. By understanding the existence of bullying in student affairs, professionals will be better prepared to attempt to prevent bullying or

when it is occurring, and have the tools, data, and research to support the individual who is experiencing bullying.

Student affairs professionals will better understand the importance of trust, power, and relationships and how each of these concepts are affected when an individual experiences workplace bullying. Adding to the limited research which exists about workplace bullying in student affairs, this research will also benefit the field. Identifying bullying in the student affairs profession will enable professionals to become better at recognizing issues of bullying at work and benefit the profession by not losing competent professionals who can contribute to the field. Through keeping these competent professionals in the student affairs field, the student experience benefits.

The findings from this research help identify how participants experienced bullying and their reactions to bullying. This information can provide student affairs professionals with information to become more proactive and knowledgeable in the event they experience or encounter bullying in the field. Through identifying when, how, and where bullying occurs in student affairs, leaders can have a better understanding of the effect of bullying on individuals and how these experiences affect them as student affairs professionals. These findings may help refine the definition of workplace bullying in student affairs and contribute to the larger literature on bullying. The outcomes from this study can provide insights into preventing bullying from occurring, and not after, when it has already occurred.

Definition of Terms

A range of terms are used in this research study. The following terms are defined and cases are noted for when terms are used interchangeably. Most work on bullying tends are associated with students in both secondary and collegial school settings (Young-Jones et al.,

2015). Bullying is mostly studied in workplace settings and likely to be associated with corporations and business contexts only (Namie, 2003. Workplace bullying is rarely associated within institutions of higher education (Lester, 2013), much less with student affairs. According to researchers,

> given the variability in definitions of workplace bullying in use by researchers, practitioners, unions and organizations, and the absence of agreed definitions of workplace bullying in workplace antiharassment policies, it is likely that every employee has a unique personal definition of workplace bullying. (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 346)

Abusive Behaviors

Abusive behavior is a form of emotional abuse and will be defined as "hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors that are not tied to sexual or racial content, directed by one or more persons towards another that are aimed at abuse undermining the other to ensure compliance from others" (Keashly et al., 1994, p. 341).

Harassment

It is important to distinguish the differences between bullying and non-sexual workplace harassment. Workplace harassment is defined as "repeated activities, with the aim of bringing mental (but sometimes also physical) pain and directed towards one or more individuals, who for one reason or another, are not able to defend themselves, will in the following be defined as harassment (Björkqvist et al., 1994, p. 173). This study focused on workplace bullying, which differs from harassment given the persistent abuse and imbalance of power which occurs in bullying. Workplace bullying does not encompass causing physical harm although the mental pain is directed at one or more individuals can be similar. Workplace bullying will often occur

within the department or college whereas harassment is defined as an illegal activity. Both workplace bullying and harassment may have similar lasting effects on the individual.

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is beliefs, rituals, values, and practices which can affect the manner individuals interact and behave (Schein, 1984). Because higher educational institutions are organizations, organizational culture can help explain the influence of workplace bullying in student affairs. In organizational culture, leaders can be the source of the beliefs and values which can motivate a group in navigating conflict and values in an organization. It is when these dynamics are in direct conflict with one another that problems arise (Schein, 1984). The values of an organization are important.

Power

The dynamics of power in workplace bullying play a key part in the imbalance of the effect of workplace bullying on a student affairs professional. As a central concept for Bolman and Deal's (2013) political frame, where power exists is the most important asset. In this frame, power is a central concept in creating and building organizational trust, agendas (hidden and transparent), and decision making. When a supervisor utilizes their power to establish a power base, create positive relationships within their team, utilize creative conflict resolutions, collaborative decision making, and compromise, the power dynamic in the team is fairly positive and effective (Bolman & Deal, 2013). However, when a supervisor is ambiguous, cohesive, competes for power or uses their power for their own self-interest, the significant power imbalance is felt by those who work with and for the supervisor. This shift in the concentration of power can be the beginning of the unraveling of the relationship and distrust from the supervisor's team.

14

Social Identity Culture

The analysis for study was guided by social identity culture as one of the conceptual frameworks to better understand workplace bullying in student affairs. In social identity, a person's social identity means that they belong to a social category or group (Stets & Burke, 2000). This means they can classify in the "in" or "out" group depending on the circumstances. An individual being in the "in" or "out" group has an effect on workplace bullying.

Student Affairs

For the purposes of this dissertation, student affairs were defined as a department within the college or university, and typically, the department is a standalone division where the senior administrator reports to the president (Dungy, 2003). It depends on the size of the institution as to whether the student affairs department is decentralized or centralized. In a more decentralized department, in larger institutions, each unit head manages the core functions of the department. In more centralized department, in smaller institutions, this is less common (Dungy, 2003). In student affairs multiple departments can co-exist, regardless of the size of the institutions, which include but are not limited to: Residence Life and Housing, First Year Experience, Dean of Students Office, and so forth.

Student Affairs Professional

A student affairs professional was defined as a post-secondary professional trained to understand a successful student experience and they are dedicated to supporting the academic and personal experiences of students attending a college or university (Best College Reviews, 2020). Student affairs professionals engage with students throughout the duration of their educational careers and work to ensure their success. Overall, student affairs professionals help students become better citizens.

Trust

Defining trust is difficult and complex. As Tschannen-Moran (2014) states, "trust is difficult to define because it is so complex. It is a multifaceted construct, meaning that there are many elements or drivers of an overall level of trust" (p. 17). For the purposes of this research, trust was defined as, an individual's willingness to be completely vulnerable to another individual in a relationship where there is confidence within the relationship that both parties are benevolent, honest, open, reliable, competent, and respectful (Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

Workplace Bullying

For the purposes of this study, workplace bullying was defined as persistent workplace abuse with an imbalance of power that does not focus on physical abuse. The term workplace bullying was defined as a form of bullying that involves "persistent mistreatment that endure for long periods of time" (Lester, 2013, p. 3). This includes but is not limited to, "workplace aggression, emotional abuse, incivility, psychological aggression, petty tyranny, abusive supervisor, social undermining, generalized work harassment, scapegoating, workplace trauma, counterproductive work behavior, and organizational misbehavior" (Lester, 2013, p. 3). Workplace bullying is not, any form of a reasonable action taken by a supervisor in a reasonable manner to counsel, redirect, or transfer a supervisee (Gaetano, 2010). It is important to note that workplace bullying can be subtler and "deliberately excluding a person from normal workplace activities or intimidating a person through inappropriate personal comments or unjustified criticism" (Gaetano, 2010, p. 2). This can also be done more covertly in behaviors that are undermining, disempowering, or the treatment of others in a less favorable manner. Many examples of this could be work overload, unrealistic timelines, and differing treatments regarding accessible professional development, leave, or limiting promotions (Gaetano, 2010).

Workplace Bullying in Student Affairs

In this study, workplace bullying in student affairs was defined as, "extreme, negative, and pervasive or persistent workplace abuse achieved through communication, experienced by targets as an imbalance of power, which can cause distress, humiliation, and other adverse consequences for the target and the organization" (Cowan & Fox, 2014, p. 119). While there are other variations and definitions of workplace bullying, this overarching description of this behavior has several consistent themes that align with the specificities of workplace bullying in student affairs.

Workplace Trauma

Workplace trauma was defined as "the disintegration of a professional's fundamental self, resulting from employers or a supervisor's perceived or real continual and deliberate malicious treatment" (Wilson, 1991, p. 47). The trauma the professional experiences can have a negative effect on the professionals physical, emotional, and psychological state (Sperry, 2009). Workplace trauma is not distress. According to Mirowsky and Ross (1986), examples of distress include headaches, lethargy, anxiety, and possible depression. Marich (2021) states that, "stress is not always harmful, while trauma nearly always is" (para. 4). Distress can also be anything that creates an imbalance in an individual's personal or professional life. However, traumatic experiences are always stressful, but distress or stressors are not always traumatic (Marich, 2021).

Summary

This study focused on power, trust, and relationships that are affected when a staff member in student affairs experiences workplace bullying. The effect on student affairs professionals who are bullied is concerning and long lasting. For those who do not work in the

field of student affairs, workplace bullying may not seem uncharacteristic. However, for student affairs professionals, workplace bullying in a profession that encourages and promotes development, engagement, and inclusion, is unacceptable.

This research provides student affairs professionals with the ability to be proactive when they either encounter bullying or see others who are navigating it. Chapter 2 provides a review of the current literature and Chapter 3 presents a description of the research methodology used. Chapter 4 provides the results and findings of the research and Chapter 5 provides recommendations for the future.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Bullying is a behavior typically associated with elementary school children (Beran &

Tutty, 2002). This association is why, when bullying in the workplace occurs among

professionals, it comes as a surprise because this type of behavior is dismissed as a problem

among adults. According to Rayner (1997), however, "bullying has been identified as being an

adult issue too, with workplace bullying being reported in a variety of publications" (p. 1). Yet,

scant academic study exists about bullying in institutions of higher education. Researchers have

found that workplace bullying is "difficult to compare to other literature due to lack of research

in this area" (Rayner, 1997, p. 205). A lack of study and focus on bullying in the workplace does

not diminish the fact that bullying does occur, rather, it can indicate that those who are

experiencing workplace bullying are not as vocal about their experiences (Cowie et al., 2002).

Since the initial research by Rayner in 1997, some updates in the literature have occurred and are

covered in this chapter.

According to Cowie and colleagues (2002), "people who are bullied may not always

report the matter and may only gradually become aware that their unhappiness is based in the

experience of being bullied" (p. 40). Silence from the professional who has been bullied is not

surprising and understandable due to the shame often felt from being humiliated and controlled

(Namie, 2003). Fear felt in the work environment can influence how the professional reacts to

being bullied and contribute to the silence around the occurrence of bullying. Even when

bullying was reported, research indicates only 18% of the time do positive responses occur

(Namie, 2003). Namie (2003) also reported, "in 43% of the instances the boss compounded the

problem and in 40% of cases, the boss did nothing" (p. 2). Therefore, those who have

experienced workplace bullying may be less willing to speak up and share their experiences given those outcomes.

The literature reviewed in this chapter focuses on an overview of bullying in the workplace, the emotional effect of workplace bullying in student affairs, as well as the role on gender in bullying. Also included in this review of the literature, is a review of how workplace bullying is violating the values of student affairs (ACPA, 2021). A review of the conceptual framework for the study is provided as well. Understanding better the various ways bullying occurs and the ways it differs based on gender contributes to understanding of the bullied professional's experiences.

Bullying in the Workplace

Workplace bullying has had an effect on professionals leaving them feeling humiliated, excluded, or punished by behaviors from their coworkers and supervisors. The effects of bullying can cause significant and severe personal damages and influence the culture of the workplace. Leymann (1990) defined the concept of workplace bullying as a growing and abusive behavior in which bullied professionals considers themselves as defenseless victims of the negative actions of their coworkers. According to some researchers, workplace bullying has become more prevalent with the occurrence of bullying influencing working relationships, the department, and ultimately, the institution or company (Hoel & Cooper, 2000). Existing research focuses on downward bullying that results in a supervisor bullying a supervisee, and to a lesser extent on horizontal bullying among colleagues (Branch et al., 2013).

It is important to note power is a fundamental factor in all social relationships, and the absence of power for some employees contributes to an environment for bullying (Vaillancourt et al., 2009). Vaillancourt and colleagues (2009) concluded bullies yield power over others and

have the enormous ability to, "influence and change the behavior, attitudes, goals, and values of others" (p. 211). This means that top down bullying occurs more often than horizontal. While horizontal bullying (i.e., collegial bullying) does occur, top down bullying occurs more often (Vaillancourt et al., 2009). Bullying creates a power imbalance due to positional authority of the supervisor who is the bully, which unintentionally provides an environment for intimidating behavior to occur given organizational reporting structures.

The supervisor bully can also be quite intentional in how they direct their power of position that leaves the professional who is being bullied feeling powerless and defenseless (Karabult, 2016). Power has multiple sources beyond position. Salin (2003a) posited that bullying is specifically defined type of conflict that forces the bullied individual involved into a "helpless and defenseless position" (p. 1219), which creates a victim/perpetrator dynamic. Essentially, this type of conflict creates a power imbalance in which the affected individual feels helpless and unable to defend themselves. While supervisor/supervisee relations are often the majority of bullying instances (Salin, 2003a), power imbalances can be created by situational and contextual differences in which perceptions are that the individuals who are bullied have less power and status. Thus, power imbalances can contribute to upward, horizontal, and downward bullying as well.

Power imbalances that create a bullying environment can happen between colleagues. Essentially, referent power, the ability to influence and change others behaviors, can be used by peers (Vaillancourt et al., 2009). This power dynamic can also be aligned with relational power, during which the power to lead has much more to do with the relationship between leaders and their followers and the influence those leaders have on their followers' choices, attitudes, and

decisions (Northouse, 2004). It can be difficult to distinguish whether the influence from this type of power leaders have over the followers comes from a place of fear or respect, or both.

Overall, workplace bullying is a growing global and local issue (Karabult, 2016). In fact, according to researchers that conducted a random sample of Michigan residents in 2000, "16.7% of respondents reported a severe disruption of their lives from workplace aggression" (Namie, 2003, p. 2). The professionals surveyed in this study had experienced workplace bullying at some point in their careers. These numbers are concerning and should be alarming. In university environments, "workplace bulling in higher education settings is a longstanding problem with a short history of research" (Lester, 2013, p. 33). Studies are limited regarding workplace bullying in higher education thus establishing even more the significance for this research study.

Gender in Workplace Bullying

Even though the literature and research on bullying is limited, the existing research indicates that bullying occurs frequently, with a little over 1 in 10 experiencing workplace bullying. Gender plays a role in bullying. According to Salin (2003b) gender in workplace bullying can be an issue that is often "associated with power or powerlessness" and has received almost no attention in research (p. 31). It is important to note that the definition of gender being used for this research is in reference to the social, societally, and cultural construct of gender differences, and is not static (Salin, 2003b).

Both women and men are bullies and have experienced workplace bullying. According to Namie (2003), "women comprised 58% of the perpetrator pool, whereas men represented 42% of bullies" (p. 3). Of note, in this study, when the professional being bullied was a woman, it was another woman who is the bully 63% of the time and when the professional being bullied was a

man, he was bullied by another man 62% of the time. This prior study highlighted that most bullying is same gender bullying.

Unfortunately, the negative stereotype that women are the weaker gender creates a portrayal where women are vulnerable, defenseless, isolated, and are more targeted for abuse, victimization, and bullying (Leigh et al., 2014). Yet, little research exists on workplace bulling with a specific consideration on gender. According to the scant existing research, women in more senior positions seem to experience more bullying in their supervisory role from their colleagues from both genders, and subordinates, compared to men in the same roles (Leigh et al., 2014). Thus, women who serve in more senior positions are experiencing bullying from all sides, which defies the norms of downward bullying overall. These same women in supervisory positions are also bullying other subordinates, most often women. This pattern of bullying highlights how women may experience bullying throughout the entirety of their careers from both their peers and supervisors.

In differentiating the types of bullying that men and women experience, men experience more gender/sexist based bullying while women tend to experience gender discrimination. Forms of discrimination for women range from not being given tasks, responsibilities, etc. based on their gender. It is important to note, that bullying and gender can be evaluated on multiple levels. Often, when women experience workplace bullying, they are less likely to report or complain due to the perception that they are less likely to defend themselves (Salin, 2003b). Namie (2003) also reiterates that workplace bullying tends to be more same gendered with both women and men using or experiencing different tactics while being bullied.

Any bullying in the profession is too much. It can be argued many professionals experiencing workplace bullying may not report the bullying or understand what may be

happening to them. Research released in 2014 estimates that 27 % of the workforce in the United States has been or is currently experiencing workplace bullying (Branch & Murray, 2015). It is important to note the level this is occurring specifically in higher education is unknown. Workplace bullying is often ignored or dismissed by employers because they often call workplace bullying "personality clashes" between the individuals (Namie, 2003, p. 2).

Bullying in the workplace does exist and is more prevalent than those in society would like to recognize. Overall, it can be concluded that workplace bullying has a negative effect on the individual, and severe consequences for the organization. The sheer percentages and numbers of how often professionals are being bullied at work is higher than most individuals realize and the massive effect of workplace bullying on the individual is enormous. Not only does the individual risk massive reputational repercussions if reported, but they also navigate their own emotional and physical wellbeing during and after their bullying experiences. Healing from this bullying experience is exhausting; both personally and professionally. Importantly, if the numbers reported above only represent the reported cases of workplace bullying of professionals, how many other professionals are experiencing workplace bullying in silence?

Emotional Effect of Workplace Bullying

Workplace bullying is emotionally and physically detrimental to those professionals who experience it. Branch and Murray (2015) use the example of an empty backpack to illustrate how even a small repetitive instance of bullying can take a toll. They use the illustration of a professional carrying an empty backpack that little by little, over time, more weight is added. The *weight* consists of insults, practical jokes, criticisms, or sarcasm from the professional's supervisor or fellow colleagues (Branch & Murray, 2015). The professional begins to feel not only the physical stress of carrying the backpack but also the emotional weight of not feeling

confident enough to carry the backpack. Over time, this weight has an effect on the professional causing an unmanageable emotional and physical burden that eventually becomes unmanageable for the professional to carry any longer. The effect of the emotional and physical weight the professional carries might not be a direct outcome of the growing power imbalance between the professional and the supervisor (or colleagues), but over time these bullying behaviors are a directly attributed to the professional's physical and emotional wellbeing (Branch & Murray, 2015).

The professional can experience bullying both directly and indirectly. Both direct and indirect bullying can create harm and a lasting emotional affect to the professional. Indirect bullying, includes forms of isolation, ignoring, gossip, lies, and so forth, whereas direct bullying uses forms of intimidation and threats more, such as yelling, belittling remarks, humiliation, and so forth (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011; see Table 1).

Table 1

Types of Indirect and Direct Bullying

Indirect	Direct
Isolation	Verbal Attack/Harassment
Gossip	Belittling Remarks/Personal Jokes
Lies	Persistent Criticism
False Accusations	Intentionally Demeaning/Humiliation
Undermining	Threats
Ignoring	Negative Eye Contact
Excluding	Intimidation/ Manipulation
Not returning communications	Yelling/Interrupting Others

Note. Adapted from "Workplace Bullying: An Integrative Literature Review", by J. E. Bartlett & M.E. Bartlett, 2011, *Advances in Developing Human Resources, 13*(1), pp. 69-84. (https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422311410651). Copyright © 2011, © SAGE Publications.

Both direct and indirect bullying align with the definition of workplace bullying in student affairs which is defined as, "extreme, negative, and pervasive or persistent workplace abuse achieved through communication, experienced by targets as an imbalance of power, which can cause distress, humiliation, and other adverse consequences for the target and the organization" (Cowan & Fox, 2014, p. 119).

Indirect and direct bullying, cause significant distress and create workplace abuse through verbal and nonverbal forms of communication and ultimately have a significant negative affect on the professional and the organization. The professional experiences an increase in personal and professional trauma and the organization loses creative potential and intentional or increased workplace errors (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011).

Workplace bullying, "creates stress, and decreases health, morale and job performance of the victim" (Karabult, 2016, p. 7). In fact, professionals who experience workplace bullying have a high prevalence of experiencing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD after their experiences (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011). Professionals who have been bullied often experience fear, anxiety, sadness, shock, and struggled with lower self-confidence with feelings of powerlessness. Researchers state that workers who experience workplace bullying have feelings of isolation and humiliation and emphasized that the stress and weight of experiencing workplace bullying on the professional often have clinical depression, psychological health issues, PTSD, or even suicide (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011). The argument that workplace bullying does not have a large effect on the professional just because of the limited existing literature and lack of reporting is not a credible argument as the scant research that does exist that exhibits a significant negative affect of workplace bullying on the affected professional's personal life.

In some cases, professionals may seek counseling or psychiatric treatment (Cowie et al., 2002). The emotional and physical effect on professionals from workplace bullying is lasting, damaging, and significant. The professional has to navigate the possibility of losing their job, the emotional and physical effects of workplace bullying, and the knowledge that their bully will likely not be held accountable for their behaviors (Namie, 2003). Namie (2003) reported that professionals navigate bullying, on average for 22 months prior to reporting or leaving the position. Sadly, when professionals do choose to report bullying, the professional is often blamed for being bullied and tend to live with it rather than leaders addressing the bully's behaviors. It can be assumed that student affairs professionals who experience workplace bullying are automatically taking the blame. Over time, the person who is bullied loses trust in leadership and others.

Workplace Bullying in Student Affairs

Some student affairs professionals may believe workplace bullying only occurs within large corporations outside of university settings and not in student affairs divisions. Even though research is limited, bullying in higher education does exist (Lester, 2013). As noted, my research uses the definition for student affairs workplace bullying as "extreme, negative, and pervasive or persistent workplace abuse achieved through communication, experienced by targets as an imbalance of power, which can cause distress, humiliation, and other adverse consequences for the target and the organization" (Cowan & Fox, 2014, p. 119). This definition aligns with anecdotal narratives I have heard from student affairs professionals who have experienced this type of bullying. Bullying does exist in student affairs.

Bullying of individuals occurs in multiple ways and to varying levels (Murphy, 2009), and a gap in the literature exists regarding the level and type of bullying occurring in student affairs divisions. At the core of this study is understanding better how and where bullying exists in student affairs. For example, to what extent does bullying occur between colleagues or between supervisors/supervisees? What are the power dynamics involved when bullying occurs? How are relationships and trust altered when bullying occurs? These questions represent the core areas of interest for this study. It is important to note the drastic negative affect on the institution, the student affairs professionals, the student, and the affected parties when bullying occurs. Understanding more about the relationship between the perpetrator and the person being bullied is important.

Critically, the development of the student affairs practitioners is influenced by relationships. Cooper and Miller (1998) state, "both the personal, affective development and the cognitive, conceptual development so essential to professional practice are similarly influenced

tremendously by those with whom the developing student affairs practitioner works" (p. 55). Even though practitioners are influenced by their relationships with students, the supervisory and collegial relationships the practitioners develop and sustains are significant to their work and professional development. These relationships ultimately can, do, and will influence the behavior and character of evolving practitioners (Cooper & Miller, 1998). Hopefully, mature, positive, and committed professionals will provide support to their colleagues and supervisees, but that is not always the case and differences in relationships and power dynamics all have an effect on the relationship.

Researchers state supervisory relationships are often task oriented in nature and focus on events, problems, concerns, or issues, instead of working to develop the professional (Cooper & Miller, 1998). These supervisory relationships are essential to the student affairs professional's development as a professional and within the field. Therefore, when these relationships are tainted by bullying, the professional is often not able to move forward in their development or they opt to leave the institution completely (Glasø et al., 2010). This stunted development means that the affected individual will be affected emotionally and professionally, possibly throughout the continuation of their careers. A key element of work relationships centers on differential power held by individuals.

Power is important, especially in work relationships when resources are scarce (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Underlying the concept of power, "scarce resources and enduring differences make conflict central and power the most important asset" (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 189). As student affairs professionals are expected to do more with less, resources become more limited, making the dynamic of power more prevalent. Who has power, who does not have power and how conflict is handled all contribute to the potential for bullying occurring. Student affairs

professionals, specifically in the supervisory position, are in a position of power and can easily influence, affect, and possibly bully the individuals they supervise. As a result, this powerful supervisory role becomes much more critical as resources diminish and can foster a climate in which bullying happens. Bartlett and Bartlett (2011) stated, "positional power creates opportunities for the bully to exert power over the target" (p. 71). It is noteworthy the dynamics of power in workplace bullying do not just exist in the supervisory role, but in collegial roles as well. Peers can exert power over others based on the power of their personality, their length of time in the position relative to others, and by the influence they hold in swaying others to act in certain ways.

It is important to remember all power is not negative. Power can be used positively and when alliances are formed due to the members of the organization having similar interests and goals and these outcomes can help move the organization forward. Here individuals can "do more together than apart" (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 195). This positive power influence can build trust within the organization between colleagues and within the supervisor/supervisee relationship which creates an environment of acceptance and support. However, when the power dynamic shifts, trust evaporates quickly and becomes hazardous to vulnerable individuals (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). It is this type of situation that builds an environment for workplace bullying to occur.

Negative power can build volatile work environments that creates conflict leading to constant infighting, bullying, and destructive power struggles (Lines, 2007). It is during this time that the professional may experience workplace bullying. As a result of these power shifts, the student affairs professional can experience an effect on how power influences them in multiple

30

ways. The professional feels this mostly when positional power and reputation are used as a means of workplace bullying (Salin, 2003a).

The supervisor has power over the supervisee. The supervisor can dictate responsibilities, given or taken away, communication routes, networking within the unit and institution and has substantial clout in promotional opportunities. If the supervisee is experiencing bullying by the supervisor, this positional power has a direct effect on their work. As the supervisee feels the direct effect of this positional power their responses and actions may vary. According to researchers, a target's diminished power to defend him/herself could be due to either formal and/or informal power structures in which they work or to the perpetrator's continuing inappropriate, negative behaviors, which wear down the target's ability to defend him/herself (Branch et al., 2013). The student affairs profession is a close, tight knit profession, and an individual's reputation in is significant. When a professional considers reporting their bullying experience, it can be argued that they must first evaluate the cost/risk analysis of raising concerns about being bullied, for fear of creating lasting repercussions on future employment and for being seen as a troublemaker.

Reputation is essential to the professional's promotional opportunities and moving forward (Nixon, 1996). Ultimately, the supervisor has the power to dictate these promotional opportunities, and this positional power also creates multiple opportunities for an exertion of power which will have a lasting effect on the professional's reputation. If the professional is experiencing bullying, their supervisor has the power to essentially determine their fate. Not only does the supervisor have the power to dictate promotional opportunities, but this positional power also creates multiple opportunities for an exertion of power. This can be done in multiple ways, both indirectly and directly as noted above. This behavior can vary from the professional

being given a heavier workload than their peers, refusing the professional's leave, removing responsibilities, delegation of menial tasks, or expectations to meet unrealistic goals (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011). These indirect and direct exertions or power have a negative effect on the professional's promotional advancements or growth (see Table 1).

Collegial bullying, often called horizontal bullying, may look different, but ultimately, the outcome is the same. The student affairs profession is small, and how the professional is perceived by their supervisors and colleagues matters. It has been shared with me, anecdotally, that some professionals have had the experience of them interviewer contacting individuals that they know either at the professional's current or previous institutions, who are not on their reference list. While these type of off list calls are common; this practice is further evidence that reputation in student affairs matters. The circle of student affairs is small and news travels quickly. Reputation matters. The student affairs professional reputation matters and can make or break a professional. This is most powerful when a professional experience bullying and the perspective of the bully is often the only perspective communicated.

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture includes beliefs, rituals, values, and practices that can affect the manner in which individuals interact and behave (Schein, 1984). Overall, organizational culture is a basic assumption,

> A given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation that have worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore, taught new members the correct way to perceive think and feel, in relation to those problems (Schein, 1984, p. 3).

A group can be defined as a given set of individuals who are together for a long enough period of time to determine and share significant problems and issues and have had the opportunity to solve those problems or issues together, observe the effectiveness of those problem-solving strategies, and invite new members into the group (Schein, 1984). The organizational culture relies on a group having a shared history. It is through this shared history that the group is able to define its organizational culture and assist any new members in sharing concepts, group perceptions, feeling, and thinking.

Values in Organizational Culture

In organizational culture values are especially important (Schein, 1984). These underlying assumptions about values, are often unconscious and determine how group members perceive, think, and feel. For example, if members of a group believe the purpose of college is to educate students to become better citizens inside and outside of the classroom, this is an assumption, even though it can be considered a basic value for student affairs professionals.

Essentially, the concept of organizational culture can be aligned with a type of group think mentality (Schein, 1984). Thus, the constructed environment the group finds itself in dictates the actions and behaviors of the individuals within the group. Bullying is a multi-casual phenomenon where leaders can influence the beliefs and values of an organization (Pilch & Turska, 2015). Often, members of the organization will comply with the leader especially when differences arise, and individuals and situations are in conflict. When conflict exists, problems arise. When evaluating the behaviors of the individuals in a group in organizational culture, it is important to note their values may differ from those of the group, however, their behavior is focused on what people say is the reason for their behavior and the rationalization for their behaviors towards others. For the success of the group in organization culture, the perceptions of

the group must be thought of as correct and valid, and these perceptions must be automatically taught to new members. While new members may bring new thoughts and ideas to the group, the group must decide whether the new members ideas will be evaluated and accepted by the group. Therefore, the new member must be accepted into the group before their ideas or thoughts will be evaluated and accepted as group perceptions.

Organizational Culture Influence

Bullying can also occur when a member does not share the same feeling and thinking of the organization, the new member will begin to feel isolated and separated from the organization (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011). The organizational culture can influence the frequency and effect of bullying in the workplace. Organizational culture may allow for bullying and may support more aggressive cultural behaviors, if the bullying behaviors are considered to be motivational in achieving the overall outcome of the organization (Pilch & Turksa, 2015).

According to Tierney (1988), in higher education, the organizational culture is what holds colleges together, what is done, how things are done, and who is involved in doing it and how those actions, decisions, and communications directly affect the internal and external factors is the organizational culture of the institution. The importance of knowing the role of organizational culture and how it affects higher education and how it can fragment universities is part of the issue of higher education today. When leaders in higher education make difficult decisions and are fully informed in their organizational culture and have a fuller understanding of how their decisions will affect their universities, they can receive the support of their universities and the individuals affected by their decisions (Tierney, 1988). Many times, however, leaders in higher education make decisions in a vacuum and expect their faculty and staff members to fall in line.

Understanding Organizational Culture and Workplace Bullying

Why is it important to understand organizational culture regarding workplace bullying? Organizational culture must be understood by administrators in higher education for effective decision making (Tierney, 1988). Understanding organizational culture enables administrators to implement effective strategies to support the university. Unfortunately, if ignored or unchecked, organizational culture can also allow for bullying to go unnoticed. If the understanding and communication of the organizational culture of the university is misunderstood or miscommunicated, workplace bullying can occur and a toxic culture can foster bullying.

Workplace bullying does not happen overnight, rather, it tends to be a gradually occurring phenomenon where organization culture has an effect on all parties involved with organizational culture being directly related to bullying behaviors (Pilch & Turksa, 2015). It is because of the effect of misinterpreted or miscommunicated organizational culture and the affect this has on the professional's social identity that the professional will feel that their trust in the organization is breaking.

Influence of Workplace Bullying in Organizational Culture

Workplace bullying can influence how a professional navigates within their organization and the levels of trust in work relationships. Trust is important and significant in all working relationships and tends to create more confidence when people believe that others have their best interests in mind (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). It is the glue that holds organizations together and allows professionals to work efficiently, effectively, and with more integrity (Tschannen-Moran, 2014, p. 15). Trust is built when expectations are communicated and met, care for the relationship is formed, and a commitment to a willingness of vulnerability without fear for both parties. When trust is broken, not only does the professional become distrustful of the supervisor

or colleagues' intentions, but the professional also feels betrayed, hurt, and wounded. When trust is broken, the relationship changes. According to Tschannen-Moran (2014), "if trust breaks down among any constituency, it can spread like a cancer eroding academic performance and ultimately undermining the tenure of the instructional leader" (p. 173). When trust is broken, everyone loses.

The sense of betrayal from an individual who has been trusted to guide another in the workplace environment can be emotionally scarring for the individual and may have a lasting affect as the professional moves forward in their career (Namie, 2003). Professionals seek a balance in their work relationships and look for reciprocity in their work relationships, that is, treat supervisors/colleagues in the manner in which they would like to be treated (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2014). Essentially when the trust in the workplace is broken, professionals feel the balance of give and take in the relationship has been broken. This can result in negative job satisfaction, lack of trust within the organization, intentions to quit, declines in job performance, employee deviant behaviors, and an overall violation of the professional's psychological safety. When psychological safety is violated, the professional feels that the trust in the leader, the organization, and other colleagues is damaged. As a result, the professional begins to question these work relationships and their discrepancies that emerge regarding what they were promised in their work setting and what was delivered (Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

Social Identity Culture

Individuals will self-categorize, identify, and form their identities based on a host of factors and then classify themselves in a particular way in relation to other social categories or classifications. According to Suzuki (1998), the central theme to social identity is "the idea that belonging to a group is largely a psychological state, which is distinct from that of being a

separate individual, that gives the person social identity" (p. 155). In social identity, a person's social identity means that they belong to a social category or group (Stets & Burke, 2000). Social groups and categories are a "a set of individuals who hold common social identities or view themselves as the same social category" (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 225).

To define themselves in these social groups or categories, individuals do a social comparison process. This grouping process is a part of the more structured society and often exists in relation to other contrasting categories in which each has a different power dynamic, economic status, etc. Often, individuals are born into an already structured society. Once born into this structure or category, these social identity categories are then broken into pieces from which people derive their sense of identity; that is, their sense of self, from the social categories to which they were born into and become members of multiple social identities over the course of their life that may differ from their born identities (Stets & Burke, 2000). Self-categorization, similar to self-grouping occurs when categorization is dependent on named classifications. These named classifications can vary depending on the symbols associated with the classifications, that is, professions, religious affiliations, and so forth. Both self-categorization and grouping make up the individual's social identity. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1

Social Identity Theory

Social Categorisation	→	Social Identification	→	Social Comparison
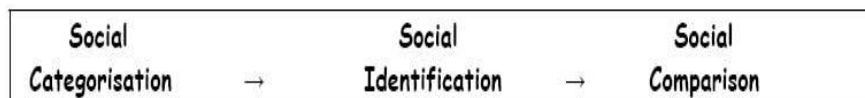
Note. Adapted from "Social Identity Theory," by S. McLeod, 2019, *Simply Psychology,* (https://www.simplypsychology.org/social-identity-theory.html). Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. Company Registration no: 10521846.

In developing social identity, the combination and incorporation of self-categorization and grouping, while occupying a role, is at the core. Tajfel (1972) defined social identity as "the individual's knowledge that he or she belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him or her of the group membership" (p. 32). According to Stets and Burke (2000), "different identities become active as the situation changes and as relevant stimuli for self-categorization change" (p. 231). It is when those situations occur that social comparison begins, and the "in" and "out" groups begin to form.

A social group is comprised of members who consider themselves as members of the same social category. As a result, those who consider themselves to be a part of the same social group are considered to be the "in" group and those who differ from this are considered to be the "out" group. For example, an "in" group professional considers themselves to be like others in the group and seeing things from the group's perspective. This means that there is an expectation for the "in" group professional to fulfill the expectations of the "in" group and they must learn to, "coordinate and negotiate interaction with the role partners and manipulating the environment to control the resources for which the role has responsibility" (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 226). This context is where the "out" group is formed. Individuals who are in the "out" group experience social distancing from the "in" group individuals and feel less accepted, less trusted, and isolated.

Essentially, when individuals are in the "in" group, they have positive evaluations of the group and find that they have a commitment to the group and less desire to leave the group (Stets & Burke, 2000). However, if individuals are in the "out" group, they are less accepted and distrusted. Ramsay and colleagues (2011) describe the "out" group experience:

The "out" groupers are less likely to receive 'the benefit of the doubt' or be given help in

ambiguous circumstances, and are more likely to be seen as provoking aggression.

Furthermore, Brewer (2001) believes the emotional significance attached to group

membership can precede "out" group hostility, particularly where intra-group trust is

combined with inter-group distrust. Additionally, bullying between work groups is more

likely to occur with greater levels of inter-group distrust, particularly during times of

organizational stress, threat, and change. (p. 804)

As a result of bullying, professionals can be placed into the "out" group by colleagues or

supervisors. It is important to note that the structure of organizations also affects individual

behavior. Thus, the behavior, leadership, and role modeling of the supervisor to the supervisee

has an effect on the supervisee's behaviors and which can relate to the organization's structure or

culture.

This type of interaction with the environment and organizational norms might be the

reason individuals who would not normally participate in the "in" group become more active in

the participation of workplace bullying given the passive nature of "in" group activities. The

institutional culture does have an effect on behaviors, which may explain why it is easier for

professionals to fall into the "in" group where disrespectful behaviors are tolerated and even

encouraged, which is where the bullying behaviors begin and occur. As a result of being in the

"in" group, which results in feeling accepted and worrying about isolation if not a part of the "in"

group, individuals may tend to stay silent or be active participants in bullying if the culture

supports this behavior. Here, the organizational structure makes it difficult for a person in the

"out" group to respond to being bullied due to their social identity (Stets &Burke, 2000). The

connection of being in the "in" group often leads to a stronger commitment to being a part of the

group where the individual is less likely to leave the "in" group (Stets & Burke, 2000). This connection may explain the reasoning behind why individuals take on the group-based identity and stay within the group, even when they disagree with the actions of the group (Stets & Burke, 2000) as the "in "group identity provides protection. In higher education, the connections with students, colleagues, and supervisors are paramount to the work that student affairs professionals do, and this may explain why being in the "in" group is so important. This may also explain why workplace bullying often goes unreported and ignored in student affairs. Even more disheartening, not addressing these workplace bullying leaves unquestioned the harm done to those effected.

Student Affairs

Why is bullying happening in student affairs? Most bullying goes under the radar, meaning that much of bullying occurs unreported, unseen, or ignored (Vaillancourt et al., 2009). According to Oliver-Sikorski (2016), "We don't talk about bullying in student affairs because it's uncomfortable. Because we are supposed to be people who care about one another and our students. Because it's embarrassing to admit that it's happened to you" (p. 2). Student affairs professionals make a commitment to students to treat them with respect, integrity, and role model professionalism and ethical leadership. NASPA's (2021) guiding principles are integrity, innovation, inclusion, and inquiry. When bullying occurs in the student affairs profession these guiding principles are not followed. As individuals experience workplace bullying in student affairs, it is likely that they will question the integrity of the profession. It is also arguable that many professionals choose to leave the profession as a result of these workplace bullying experiences and failure to really address these issues is detrimental to our profession. Oliver-Sikorski (2016), a student affairs professional who experienced workplace bullying, wrote:

It happened to me. And it's likely happened to you or someone that you know.

For months I dreaded going to work because I was being bullied by a coworker. They

made false allegations against me to supervisors and human resources; they talked about

me negatively to our coworkers and students. They encouraged others to stay away from

me, trying to align colleagues with their own position. Every Sunday night took the starch

out of me, knowing that the next day I would be faced with this person again. This wasn't

the normal slump of knowing I had to return to work. This was something bigger and

darker. (p. 4)

Oliver-Sikorski's experience, unfortunately, is one of many, and this is why it is important for this research so that we can be more proactive than reactive when it comes to bullying in student affairs. Oliver-Sikorski asked for guidance from a friend who encouraged her to take a break from the field for her own self-care. After his advice, even after a long career in student affairs, Oliver-Sikorski began browsing non-student affairs jobs. Eventually, she went to HR about the situation and documented everything that had happened between her and her bully. Eventually, the incident was resolved when her bully left and went to another institution. Once Oliver-Sikorski realized the effect of what happened to her and the affect it had on her professionally and personally, she wrote about her experiences and encouraged others to "be prepared for it, to feel more comfortable having these conversations so that others know there are safe places to report and respond to bullying" (Oliver-Sikorski, 2016, p. 4). Sadly, Oliver-Sikorski's experience is one many workplace bullying experiences that student affairs professionals are having in this field.

41

Summary

Workplace bullying is happening in student affairs. Unfortunately, workplace bullying in higher education is a "longstanding problem with a short history of research" (Taylor, 2013, p. 33). By not reacting to workplace bullying, the profession of student affairs is at risk. Not only are student affairs at risk of losing professionals who could have contributed so much to the profession, but also the financial implications due to the loss of productivity and ultimately the decreased faith in the values purported in student affairs as a result of workplace bullying will have a lasting effect. Taylor (2013) argued, "there is a compelling need for higher education leaders and employees to recognize, address, and prevent this problem [of bullying]" (p. 33). As administrators, it is our job, our duty, and our responsibility to address workplace bullying. Not only does workplace bullying violate trust, sever relationships, and create a toxic environment, when workplace bullying happens, a hypocrisy occurs within the fundamental guiding principles of integrity, innovation, inclusion, and inquiry in the student affairs profession (NASPA, 2021). These reasons point to the significance and timeliness of this research study. Oliver-Siokorski (2016) sums it up best, "We have a bullying problem in student affairs. And it's time to start talking about it" (p. 4).

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

The purpose of the study was to show that not only does bullying exist in student affairs but to focus on how these experiences affect trust and relationships from those affected. Currently only anecdotal accounts support the premise that bulling exists in student affairs. Yet, from the work of Lester (2013) and Oliver-Sikorski (2016), it is probable bullying exists throughout institutions. In this study, I hoped to add to the body of evidence by connecting with student affairs professionals who have experienced workplace bullying. Bullying may occur in a variety of settings thus a wide range of student affairs departments are sought to include in this study to understand better the extent of the problem. Implications from this research can provide strategies to become proactive in addressing bullying in higher education overall, and in student affairs in particular.

The definition used in this study on workplace bullying in student affairs was, "extreme, negative, and pervasive or persistent workplace abuse achieved through communication, experienced by targets as an imbalance of power, which can cause distress, humiliation, and other adverse consequences for the target and the organization" (Cowan & Fox, 2014, p. 119). This definition was shared with all participants during data gathering to assure participants' experiences aligned with the features outlined in the definition.

The following research question and sub-questions guided this study.

How and where does bullying exist amongst colleagues and from supervisors to supervisee in student affairs?

1. How is power used in instances of bullying?

2. What changes to trust occurs between the colleagues and supervisors from the perspective of the individual bullied?

3. How do supervisor/supervisee and collegial relationships change for the student affairs professional who is bullied?

4. What is the emotional effect of workplace bullying?

The setting for the research occurred in different colleges within multiple student affairs departments. Participants were selected from different institutions in the Mid-Atlantic region. All colleges were located in the Mid-Atlantic to assure a similarity among policy and context. Colleges were selected initially based off of my knowledge of key gatekeepers at each institution. The variety of settings was sought to determine how and to what extent bullying occurs in different institutional cultures and in different student affairs departments.

Methods Summary

This study used qualitative methods. A qualitative framework was the best choice because using a narrative approach allowed individuals who have been bullied an opportunity to tell their stories. By using a narrative qualitative approach, I was able to share participants' stories in a more personal way. A qualitative study was most appropriate for this research in an effort to obtain the most accurate information directly from the person with the experience and the collective narratives from the participants can help determine whether or not there is an emerging pattern in the bullying experience within student affairs (Creswell, 2014).

The study provided each participant an opportunity to share their own lived experiences of this phenomenon (Tan, 2009) by describing the bullying they experienced, identifying who was the bully, and sharing how these experiences have shaped the professionals they have become. The research focused on Mid-Atlantic colleges, and each college represented similar institutions with diverse populations. The listing of student affairs department was defined by the

39 NASPA (2021) functional area profiles. Due to the pandemic environment in 2020, all interviews were done virtually in an effort to protect myself and my interviewees.

This research focused on capturing the voices of student affairs professionals who have experienced bullying. This narrative study was centered on interviews conducted with student affairs professionals. A narrative study provides the ability to make sense of different perspectives with a focus on understanding the basic human experience with the concern being that the process of sharing the story is the ultimate product, with the narrative itself being the most important (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). In many ways, the narrative study of research is the best way to tell the human experience and scholars share that life itself is an education and narratives help in the process of meaning making for everyone (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). For research of this nature, a person's meaning making of their experiences was crucial to understanding the power dynamics, changes in trust, and changes in relationships while the student affairs professional was experiencing workplace bullying.

For the individuals who participated in this study and shared their personal stories and experiences, the stakes were very high. Their stories were personal, complex, difficult, and compelling. Participants were being asked to share times in their careers in student affairs when they experienced bullying, with the goal of defining the essence of their shared experiences. As a result of bullying in student affairs, institutions and the profession, we are losing competent student affairs professionals, seeing an increase in anxiety and nervousness, decreased self-esteem, and decreased satisfaction in the unit/department and organization; thus, the placing the reputation of the profession is at stake (Lester, 2013).

Participants

The population in this study targeted student affairs professionals in the Mid Atlantic area. Student affairs professionals were defined as staff members who work in student affairs. Within student affairs, units and divisions may exist and be configured differently at institutions. The 39 functional areas in student affairs can include but were not limited to, the overarching areas of Residence Life, Campus Life, Student Conduct, or Enrollment Services (NASPA, 2021). The initial case sites were intentionally chosen because of my existing relationships with gatekeepers at the institutions and because the sizes of each institution differ. As a result of the gatekeeper relationships, I believed I was going to be able to obtain access to participants and due to the topic, and it would be important to have easier access to recruit participants. I initially sought six participants total at each institution, with three being new to mid-level management, and three being senior level management. Participants specific roles were not as important for their narratives, rather, how long they were in the student affairs field, was more relevant because of the length of time in the field may translate to wider experiences with bullying behaviors. It is important to note the institutions were not identified in the outcomes of my research and if I received no participation in the initial chosen institutions, I was prepared with secondary and tertiary grouping for other selected institutions with the similar populations, size, and locations. Unfortunately, I received little to no participant responses from the initial, secondary, or tertiary sites and upon approval by the Institutional Review Board, utilized student affairs social media sites to obtain participants.

Data Sources

To obtain participants, initial contact for participation was requested via electronic communication. The Vice President/Dean of Students was contacted and information regarding

the research study was shared via email with an emphasis all participation was voluntary and results of the research study was used for this dissertation only. It is important to note the gatekeeper's role was to encourage participation in the study and the gatekeepers and the Vice President/Dean of Students were not the same individuals. This request to participate in research is in Appendix A. The initial plan was once a participant contacted me via email to agree to participate in the research, the participant would be sent an email with participant screening questions which would include the definition and consent agreement for the participant. The participant screening questions are in Appendix B. It was shared with the Vice President/Dean of Students and the participants, specific institutional names and participant names or identifiers would not be used in the research results.

After reaching out to my initial institutions and the gatekeepers, with little to no response, I reached out to my secondary, and tertiary institutions, again, with little to no responses. I submitted a request for review by my committee to utilize social media to acquire more participants. Upon approval from my committee and the William & Mary Education Internal Review Committee, I utilized social media to acquire participants. I posted a request to participate in the research (Appendix A) on various social media sites including but not limited to, Student Affairs Moms, Linked In, Student Affairs Doctors, Student Conduct Professionals, Student Affairs Professionals, and requested to be allowed to post on professional membership sites such as, NASPA and ACPA, social media sites. I was permitted to post on all sites, except for one Student Affairs professional membership site which required paying a membership fee to post anything on their social media site. Unfortunately, I was unable to post on this site due to this barrier.

After posting on multiple social media sites, I received responses from individuals from the Mid-Atlantic region who were willing to participate in my research study. All participants were sent the participant screening questions and consent forms. Not all participants who volunteered participated. Fourteen individuals volunteered; however, only 10 participated in the study. Some participants indicated they were interested in being a part of the research study initially and were non-responsive after receiving the participant screening and consent forms. This could be due to the nature of the research study or lack of time to participate.

Once consent forms were received, participants were contacted to schedule interviews and sent the interview protocol. All interviews were conducted virtually and recorded, due to the pandemic, for the protection of all parties.

Data Source 1

The first source of data were responses by participants to interview questions which were developed to focus specifically on the participant's experiences with workplace bullying in student affairs. Participants were notified that any information shared with me would be destroyed within one year after the data was collected. The participant could have selected their own pseudonym or I could have selected one for them. No participant selected their own pseudonym, therefore, I selected pseudonyms for all 10 participants. Participants were notified that the interviews were confidential and signed a consent form prior to the interview located in Appendix C. The complete interview protocol is in Appendix D.

Data Source 2

Initially, the second data source was going to be a web review of the mission, values, and vision of within each institution. It would have been important to evaluate how the mission, vision, and values of each institution as symbols of the culture of each institution. Due to the lack

of participation by the initial institutions, and attaining participants via social media, participants did not always indicate the institutions where they were located during their bullying experience, only that the institutions were confirmed to be in the Mid-Atlantic region. Therefore, knowledge of the institution where the participant was an employee during their bullying experience was not always known.

Data Collection

Prior to beginning my research, I conducted pilot interview to test my interview questions with an individual who was not a part of the initial research study. This participant was an individual I knew and has shared an anecdotal experience of their workplace bullying experience with me previously. By doing this pilot interview, I was able to have an opportunity to pre-test the interview protocol and questions. After the pilot interview, and reviewing the interview protocol and questions, I was more prepared to interview participants with my interview protocol.

When the pilot interview was complete, I then contacted the Vice President/Dean of Students (or their designee) of each of the three selected institutions via email (see Appendix A). This email shared specific background information with my request to seek voluntary participants in their units, described the goals of my research, and included the William & Mary Education Internal Review Committee approval to conduct the research. The email requested that the Vice President/Dean of Students share my prepared email with their student affairs departments (Appendix A). If the Vice President did not respond to my email, I followed up with the Dean of Students, and upon receiving little to no response from any voluntary participants, I eventually transitioned to my secondary and my tertiary institution. I requested the Vice President or their designee send information in an email, formulated by me, to their student

affairs staff members. At each institution, after contacting the Vice President or Dean of Students via email seeking participants, I followed up with the gatekeeper to continue to get information to possible participants via snowball sampling (Noy, 2008). The gatekeeper's role was to share my research study and to encourage student affairs staff members to consider participation in my research. Although I was not able to contact individuals directly, I did ask the gatekeepers at each institution to help spread the word about my research to encourage their fellow staff members to consider participation in my research study. It was important for the gatekeepers to also understand I could only take in participants who volunteered of which I communicated to them early in the process.

The email sent to the Vice President or Dean of Students included information about my research and requested voluntary participants. Unfortunately, I received only one participant from my initial institution. I can only assume this participant was encouraged by a gatekeeper to participate in the process, as no other individuals from the initial institution contacted me to participate in the research study. Upon receiving little to no participation from any institutions, I utilized student affairs social media sites to obtain participants.

The participants contacted me directly if they were interested in participating in the interviews. Participants who would have contacted me directly with any interest to participate receive an email with participant screening questions (Appendix B). All participants who consented to the research study were selected. These participants varied in the following qualifiers:

- Career stage. Participants were either new (1-4 years), mid-level (5-7 years) or seasoned professionals (7+). This information was important as a new professional and a seasoned professional can have varying workplace bullying experiences

depending on where they may be in their career. More seasoned professionals also

may have experienced workplace bullying at multiple institutions.

- Bullying was identified as supervisor to supervisee or colleague to colleague.

  Although I was looking for equal numbers in these categories all participants

  indicated their bullying experience was identified as supervisor to supervisee. Only

  one participant indicated they had an experience with collegial bullying but preferred

  to discuss their supervisor to supervisee experience as it had a larger effect on them

  and their career.

- Multiple genders and ethnicities.

- Diversity of student affairs department was defined by the 39 NASPA (2021)

  functional areas.

I sent the participants the consent form which is included with the participant screening

questions (Appendix B) and the interview protocol (Appendix D). Participants selected for the

interview were interviewed via video conferencing or via phone, whichever they felt comfortable

with. By allowing the participants to feel comfortable they were more willing to share their

experiences with me. In my researcher as an instrument statement (Appendix E) I acknowledged

my own limitations and experiences with workplace bullying and because of this experience I

was able to show empathy with the participants which also made them more willing to share

their experiences with me.

The interviews lasted 45-60 minutes, occasionally longer if the participant desired to

speak longer, and this time expectation was communicated to the participant prior to the

interview. I shared with the participants the interview will be audio recorded and the audio would

be destroyed after one year and remain confidential. I shared with the participants I would be

taking notes during our interview and the notes would be destroyed as well. The crosswalk table

with research questions, interview questions, and literature summary are in Appendix F.

Data Analysis

For researchers who use narrative studies, coding, or understanding the use of meaning

and symbolism in the narratives and defining how the narratives are analyzed will be an

important piece of the data analysis (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). The following coding was

used to manage the narratives and identified themes throughout the narrative. The participant

responses were transcribed (Appendix G) and coded and separated based on each question and

the responses given. The following codes were created for participant responses; trust,

relationships, culture, self-identity, power, connection, organizational culture or values, bullying,

workplace bullying, supervisor, colleague, gender, and ethnicity. Participant responses were

evaluated, coded, and highlighted line by line with different colors for each code and placed on

excel spreadsheets with the codes. I reviewed the emotional affect based on the codes and

identified direct/indirect bullying with all participants. I evaluated what themes arose from the

coding after reviewing the codes and looking for similarities and differences in responses from

the participants. It is important to note some participant responses had a singular response,

meaning t some participants only met one code rather than multiple codes. These experiences

were identified as a singular experience instead of grouping in with other participant experiences.

Delimitations, Limitations, Assumptions

It is important to note while narrative studies have much to offer, limitations and

challenges arise as well (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Narrative studies can be difficult to

interpret and share authentic participant experiences and researchers must be willing to protect

their participants at nearly any cost, even from themselves. The participant voice must not be

lost, especially during transcription and must represent the participant's narrative with the upmost integrity (Baden & Major, 2013). When writing, it is important to identify the delimitations, limitations, and assumptions, in order to present the participant voice with the most integrity.

Delimitations and Limitations

This study focused on the Mid-Atlantic region. The institutions were delimited to the Mid-Atlantic region. Student affairs social media sites were utilized in a call for participants. All participants were selected and sent the initial participant survey (which includes demographic information) which included a question regarding the type of bullying the person experienced. This survey was done so there were diverse participants with varying workplace bullying experiences. The overall purpose of the study was to show not only does bullying exist in student affairs but how these experiences affect trust and relationships from those affected. The size of the study was delimited due to the study being in the Mid-Atlantic region.

A limitation could be, I have experienced workplace bullying; however, this experience did help me empathize and relate to the participants because I experienced workplace bullying. As a result of my own experiences with workplace bullying, I could have introduced some form of bias as a potential limitation. However, according to Savin-Baden and Major (2013) sharing transcripts early in the research for participants review to evaluate the information passed between the participant and researcher ensures authenticity. I shared the transcripts with the participants and allowed them to review the transcripts obtained to ensure their narratives were shared accurately and with authenticity. While there were delimitations and limitations in the study, the significance of the research provided better practices of how student affairs professionals can navigate workplace bullying in the future.

Assumptions

One assumption was bullying occurred for student affairs professionals in the Mid-Atlantic region. Further, it was assumed all participants were being honest regarding their bullying experiences. It was also assumed participants who have experienced workplace bullying in student affairs were willing to participate in the research study to share their personal experiences. I assumed the type of institution may have had some influence on the workplace bullying experience based on different organizational cultures where the role of culture and management and performance may have had an influence (Tierney, 1988). By using a narrative approach, I was able to discover and allow the opportunity of a new discovery of information that participants themselves did not even realize may have affected them (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

Role of the Researcher

Creswell (2014) stated, "researchers need to protect their research participants; develop a trust with them; promote the integrity of the research; guard against misconduct and impropriety" (p. 92). It is my job as the researcher to ensure I am protective of my participants, develop and ensure trust with them, and ensure the integrity of my research. To do this, I need to identify my own workplace bullying experiences.

To ensure a non-biased approach to the research, I have attached a researcher as an instrument statement and biography in Appendix E to identify any biases or sensitivities I may hold due to my own previous experiences with workplace bullying. Knowing my own self-awareness and acknowledging my own experiences, allowed me more empathy for my research study for my participants. As a professional who has experienced workplace bullying, I have my own biases about workplace bullying on how, when, and where it occurs. I am currently still a

student affairs practitioner and have had the opportunity to engage with other student affairs professionals who have experienced workplace bullying. It was important for me to identify my own researcher bias I bring to the research study and document them.

Ethical Considerations

Institutional Review Board approval was sought before this study was pursued. Participants were ensured all documentation would be destroyed in a year after their participation in the interview. Pseudonyms and general statements were used in place of names for participants and institutions. All participant's information who choose not to be interviewed will be destroyed a year after their participation in each interview. Each participant was considered and treated in accordance with the guidelines within the American Psychological Association (2019) and the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Possible risks to each member were considered to be as minimal as possible and resources were provided before, during, and after each interview. Due to the nature of the topic, the risks of the participants surfacing contentious issues were higher, which is why it was important to provide the participants with support and resources.

- I followed and completed the College of William and Mary's Institutional Review Board process prior to engaging with participants.
- I offered a list of resources to all participants as the subject of bullying is difficult and can be triggering for participants.

Trustworthiness

Narrative research focuses on stories. Therefore, there must be a sense of trustworthiness within the stories shared. Trustworthiness the voice of the participant is heard when the story is presented by the researcher. In narrative research, there must be some form of flexibility as

participant stories and meanings may shift. I did ensure the participant stories were told with as much accuracy as possible.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the following characteristics need to be addressed to ensure trustworthiness in any research; credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability. Trustworthiness is an important point of any research so how does this come about in a narrative study?

According to researcher, Jason Loh, (2013) narrative studies are different types of research. Loh (2013) states it is vital to ask the following when doing a narrative research study,

How valid is this narrative approach? How valid is the analysis of the data? How valid and reliable is the collection of these "stories," and how can a story be valid as an analysis? If the data is collected through the participants' telling of their "storied experiences," how do I know if they are being truthful? What if they made up a story or embellish the retelling? Will the research be valid then? (p. 1)

I used questions to help guide this aspect of my research to ensure trustworthiness in my narrative research study.

I ensured the validity of my research through member checking, meaning the final themes are taken back to the participants. I did this after their narratives were transcribed to ensure they agreed with the transcriptions by using this member checking as a form of follow up data checking. Loh (2013) suggests by doing this, researchers allow trustworthiness in the narrative research where, "it is ethical to allow the participants to have a look at their data and the interpretations derived from it, and offer their views regarding them" (p. 6).

It is important to note a narrative study is not about facts, but an interpretation of facts which is an interpretation of a participants' experience. Essentially, a narrative study does not

seek to confirm historical truths, a narrative study seeks to learn the real meaning making of the historical truths by the participants (Loh, 2013). Therefore, it was my responsibility to ensure the participants voices are heard and presented credibly and honestly. It was also important for me to identify the truth from the fabrications. I did this by understanding the truth is in the details and as a narrative researcher, I sought specific details in the interviews with participants.

Due to the nature of this topic, it was absolutely essential to build trust between myself and the participants. This was established through ensuring the participants their information would be confidential and used only for purposes of my research. Trust was established through showing compassion and empathy while they shared their personal experiences with me. It was very important for me to show empathy but not influence answers or responses from participants. This was done by adhering to the interview questions and protocol and not asking leading questions. Ultimately, I desired to create a safe space for the participants to share openly and honestly with me regarding their workplace bullying experiences. I provided support and resources for them before, during, and after the interview.

Summary

Savin-Baden and Major (2013) stated narrative studies are varied and, "what is central to them is the sense that stories reveal much about societal and cultural contexts as well as about humans making meanings" (p. 241). At the heart of a narrative study is the meaning making of the participant experience which is the essence of this research. For my research study, doing participant interviews and using a narrative study, I was able to have a better understanding of the experience the participants had with workplace bullying in student affairs.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

In this study, workplace bullying in student affairs was defined as, "extreme, negative, and pervasive or persistent workplace abuse achieved through communication, experienced by targets as an imbalance of power, which can cause distress, humiliation, and other adverse consequences for the target and the organization" (Cowan & Fox, 2014, p. 119). What does this really mean in practice? How does this definition correlate with the narratives that were shared with me by individuals who have been affected and perhaps traumatized by workplace bullying? Essentially, how do I tell an individual's narrative of hurt and trauma? I share their narratives with care and compassion. This chapter reviews the findings from this research study.

Findings

Upon review, three findings emerged from the data collected from my participants: (a) emotion and fear, (b) a power dynamic between the supervisor and supervisee, and (c) relationships and trust that became fractured and often broken as a result of workplace bullying. In this chapter, I will discuss the results and findings of my research study based from the narratives of the participants, the connections I found between their experiences, their emotions and fears, the power dynamics they experienced and how their relationships with their supervisors and colleagues were affected including how their trust changed as a result of their workplace bullying experiences.

The narratives which emerged in the interviews had connections and patterns involving multiple factors, including but not limited to, a progression of bullying over time, participants experience in the "in" and "out" groups, bystander responses, and an overarching theme of

58

acceptance by university staff that explanations for the bullying behavior was that the behaviors of the bullies were just the way they are.

Sharing Their Stories

Lutgen-Sandvick (2006) describes bullying as, "adult bullying at work is an unbelievable and, at times, shattering experience, both for those targeted as well as for witnessing colleagues" (p. 406). For the participants in my research study, this statement rang true. Given their experiences, it was especially critical to listen, engage, and respect the narratives of the participants who took a risk by participating in this research study. To protect the anonymity of the participants, gender neutral names were used. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) stated, "educational research hold that humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives. Thus, the study of a narrative is the study of the ways humans experience the world" (p. 2). In this study, I allowed the participants to share their stories freely and honestly without concern of retaliation or risk, and allowed them to characterize the phenomena of their own human experience while experiencing workplace bullying in their own words.

As a researcher, I remembered the participants were re-living their experiences as they shared their narratives with me. They were often trying to tell their stories in, "words as they reflect upon life and explain themselves to others" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 4), in their narrative, they were reliving their stories in the retelling of them. Because they were reliving painful incidents, it was key to ensure that the participants felt safe sharing their workplace bullying experiences with me.

After the re-reading of the interview transcripts, the following codes emerged: trust, relationships, culture, self-identity, power, connection, organizational culture or values, bullying,

workplace bullying, supervisor, colleague, gender, and ethnicity. As I combed through the data, I sought to uncover the emotional affect incurred by the participants and identified direct/indirect bullying for all participants. It is important to note when recorded, men and women were both identified as bullies by participants. I evaluated what themes came from coding after reviewing the coded data and looking for similarities and differences in responses from the participants. All 10 participants chose to share a narrative of a time when they experienced workplace bullying with a direct supervisor. Even though one participant shared they had experienced workplace bullying by colleagues, they chose to focus on their experience with their supervisor in sharing their narrative with me.

Sharing the narratives of each individual who participated in my research study is critical to understanding how their workplace bullying experiences were similar, how they differed, and how their confidence, careers, and personal identities were affected by their workplace bullying experience. It was critical to share the individual narratives by each of the participants. Information was altered if there was a possibility of unmasking any of the participants.

Landry. Landry experienced workplace bullying when he was a mid-level professional by his direct supervisor. As an African American male, he shared his work environment at a predominantly White institution was:

> A very hostile environment where I felt like everything I did offended people, my
>
> presence offended people. I often was mixed up with the only Black person in the
>
> division, the only Black male in the division, so I was called by his name pretty often
>
> even though we look nothing alike. I was constantly told that there were too many
>
> students of color visiting me and that I needed to diversify the number of students who

were visiting me and that too many students of color were leaving my office crying which apparently to some folks meant that I was very mean to people.

Landry shared an example to illustrate how he was made to feel othered in his job. He was instructed not to continue to spend time with other staff members of color within his division. Specifically, a white colleague on his team told Landry he could no longer interact or have lunch with the other person of color on the team. Landry shared,

It was confusing and I would also say infuriating because I wondered what would cause someone to make statements like that especially knowing that we were the only two people of color on our team. It was surprising that our relationship made our white colleagues uncomfortable.

This initial order showcased how his workplace bullying experiences began with micro aggressions. Landry felt confused at first because diversity and inclusion values are taught in student affairs, and yet the way he was being treated was in direct conflict with these values. He experienced anger, hurt, and confusion, but continued to work within the university; and although instructed not to, continued to connect with his colleagues, specifically his colleague of color on his team.

Landry continued to work with his students even though he continued to experience workplace bullying by his supervisor. For example, Landry and his colleagues of color were belittled and, not given autonomy to execute their own ideas. He recalled how his supervisor "had no problem doing verbal reprimands in front of people or choosing to belittle you or calling other staff stupid and incoherent." When Landry expressed concerns to the Chief Student Affairs officer, he felt she did not hear anything he had to say and acknowledged the individual was

problematic but he "had a way of doing things," and as long as things were getting executed, the Chief Student Affairs officer had no concern about how he got it done.

Landry expressed the culture within his department was a toxic one in which fear was used regularly. The institution was known as a pink slip school, because when you were given a pink slip in your mailbox, it meant that you had to go. Landry further described the culture as one in which,

> No one would advocate for anything nor speak up for anything and that culture of fear was perpetrated outside of our department. It was even felt throughout the institution that you couldn't say anything bad about the institution or the senior leadership.

The pervasive feeling of fear and the inability to feel included on campus contributed to this toxic culture.

Landry continued to endure this workplace bullying for a duration of one to two years before he left to go to another institution. Landry shared that he was the first staff member to stand up and refused to be treated the way that he was being treated and was accused of starting a mass exodus of multiple staff members. Landry was transparent about the way he was being treated and left, and others followed suit shortly afterwards. Although the number who left is unknown, Landry's refusal to be bullied set a precedent. Landry described his leaving:

> I refuse to work in an environment that treats their employees like this and I refuse to work for a supervisor who calls his own team incompetent. And I made it very clear that I had no wishes to stay there and upon my exit I left pretty gracefully.

Because there was no change in the work culture at his institution, Landry opted to leave to seek out a better working environment.

Jordan. Jordan worked as a mid-level manager and experienced workplace bullying at the hands of a supervisor. Jordan differed from other participants because she was bullied for a lengthy amount of time by her direct supervisor at an institution in which she was a long-time employee. She did not identify the specific amount of time, she just shared it was for many years and lengthy. At first, she noticed that her supervisor began bullying her in small ways, which built up over several years and eventually resulted in Jordan leaving the institution she loved and the student affairs field completely. For example, her supervisor would belittle her in front of others, in individual meetings, or talk negatively about her to other staff members, to her Dean, or to her colleagues. Jordan shared,

> There were attacks behind my back and she [supervisor] would be very clear with me that
> I was difficult to work with and I was too nice and I was too just. Yeah, when I would
> fight for rules, or fight for fairness, or suggest change that perhaps the way it was in 1893
> is not the way it should be now. Supervisor would dig in. She would, again, call me
> difficult, insubordinate, things like that. Then, in two very specific incidents, she initiated
> the change and then took the credit for it.

This pattern of bullying behavior built up over time and negatively affected Jordan's personal and professional life.

Because of the gradual build-up of her supervisor's bullying, Jordan had a delayed reaction to the bullying. For a time, Jordan was in a state of questioning and shock that what she was encountering was problematic. She stated, "Once I recognized it, it was sad. I was frustrated. I felt helpless. I was angry. I was shocked, disappointed, and suddenly I had no trust in where I had dedicated my life's work to." Her trust in her supervisor was completely shaken and continued to dissolve over time.

63

Despite her workplace bullying, Jordan, continued to work with the students, staff, and faculty at her institution for a lengthy amount of time. Her fellow colleagues were also experiencing and observing workplace bullying by the supervisor. Jordan shared her colleagues were silent but observant and describes their shared experiences,

> Colleagues that really saw me, knew they could see the problem didn't lie with me and many of them had experienced some similar things, so they could emphasize, sympathize, relate. This person, who supervises the other two people in the department, looked at me, tears in her eyes, after a one on one, and said, "I don't know how you do it. I am going to my car to cry." I said, "Ok. I'll join you" [to cry]. She looked me dead in the face and said, "I don't know how you do it." So—I don't know.

She described the culture of the institution and the culture of her department as extremely divided and the upper-level leadership was checked out. There was a blatant unbalance between the decision makers and non-decision makers. Jordan shared, "It's just terrible. It's terrible which was part of the reason I had to leave because it was becoming such a conflict with my personal value system." Eventually, Jordan could no longer live with the dissonance she felt between her own value system and what she experienced in her work environment. She made the decision to leave. She decided to leave a position she loved, students she loved, and an institution she had loved.

Jordan did make several efforts over the duration of the years to try to follow the proper protocols to report the bullying, without success. She shared she went to the next person above her supervisor, after discussing her concerns directly with her supervisor, and had no success. A mediation occurred, which was again, unsuccessful. Jordan described the conversation with her workplace supervisor as "manipulated and dishonest." Next, Jordan went to HR, another

mediation was done which resulted in a small change from her supervisor. Over time, the workplace bullying became so severe that Jordan eventually left the institution. Jordan shared the following about bullying experience, "It affected my career. It basically ruined it. I do my best to avoid using her as my previous supervisor [on job applications]." Like Landry, Jordan ultimately left her position to avoid further workplace bullying.

Lee. Lee experienced workplace bullying two times in her career, once as a graduate student, and another time as an entry level professional. As a graduate student, Lee's experience was not within the Mid-Atlantic region, however, it was important to her to share both experiences, as both had a significant effect on her personally and professionally. In the bullying she experienced as an entry level professional, Lee shared her workplace bullying experience occurred with a high-level professional who was her supervisor's supervisor. Initially, Lee shared, the professional was incredibly friendly and offered dinners and drinks in the beginning of her employment. Over time, however, Lee noted this high-level supervisor began to target Lee's sexual orientation. Lee shared,

> [The supervisor's supervisor] was doing some things that were specifically related to [my sexual orientation] that were uncomfortable for me. She had a group of friends that she referred to as her gay husbands, and these were her best friends, they did everything together, and she wanted to talk about that all of the time. She shared that she knows how to best treat LGBTQ students because of her gay husbands. I confronted her on how saying that you are a part of this group, even though you are not, just because you have gay husbands is uncomfortable for people.

Lee described her workplace bullying began after she confronted the professional on this behavior. Lee shared the professional shifted away from being friendly to stern with a clear

65

expectation for Lee to not question them. Lee described the shift as, "I am the boss—it's not your job to correct me" attitude. At the same time, her workload changed with more work being added. The high-level professional began to constantly question Lee's direct supervisor about the things she felt Lee was doing, or not doing. Yet, her colleagues were not receiving the same attention and treatment by this professional. Lee shared their direct supervisor, "did not do anything about it, they were just like, "bear with it, she's like this." This statement made by her direct supervisor illustrates that the differential treatment Lee received was evident by others.

After the high-level professional made inappropriate comments about a person of color, Lee had enough. Lee went to HR regarding these statements and way she was being treated with inappropriate comments, additional responsibilities, and working more hours than her colleagues. While Lee was working with HR, she continued to work and support her students. She continued to experience workplace bullying as she was also located in the same building and on the same floor with the high-level professional who continued their bullying behavior. This professional began to monitor her. Lee shared,

> Again, the watching over your shoulder. I would catch her sometimes standing in the
> hallway listening to my conversations on the phone and she started making comments
> about my counterpart who also worked in that office who just so happened to be a black
> woman and she spoke about the way she spoke and the way she dressed.

Even though HR was somewhat helpful, the HR staff, and Lee's direct supervisor continued to provided excuses and explanations for the professional's behavior. Lee made the difficult decision to leave and submitted notice, adding, "I was out of there, so I submitted my notice, and to this day they still haven't changed their system and that person is still there."

Emerson. Emerson has experienced workplace bullying as a mid-level professional for over nearly three years by a direct supervisor. Emerson accepted her position even after hearing that the supervisor had a reputation for workplace bullying. She stayed in the position, despite the bullying, adding,

> I stayed. I needed a job. I had a young child and I was getting ready to either switch to being a nurse and then this opportunity came up that was really something I had worked for prior to having a child so I stayed because I needed money.

Emerson experienced belittling remarks directed toward her and her colleagues by her supervisor and responsibilities were withheld. For example, she was not placed on committees, or allowed to teach a course due to the assumption she could not teach because she had a child. Her requests for time off were constantly questioned, and she was subjected to inappropriate personal questions. Emerson was continually micromanaged by her supervisor and shared her direct supervisor had her favorites of the staff of whom she would treat significantly differently. Emerson described her experience as,

> She made things extremely unbearable so much so that she would belittle you during meetings, belittle staff in front of me, picking apart their job when it wasn't pertaining to the meeting. I wasn't allowed to teach classes because I was a mommy and she didn't' think I had time to do it. She wouldn't even look at my application—even though she desperately needed people to teach.

Emerson shared while her supervisor directly affected her work, Emerson would not allow for the workplace bullying experience to affect her work with her students. She continued to work diligently for her students, even though she was not allowed to teach and her supervisor continued to be intrusive regarding Emerson's work. Throughout the three years she was

67

experiencing workplace bullying, Emerson developed coping mechanisms. She shared, "I still like working with students and I still like seeing students succeed and I am able to put that whole [bullying] thing in a box."

Emerson described the culture of her unit as toxic. Despite the bullying, her supervisor garnered a "this is the way we do things in our unit" reputation because of her lengthy tenure at the institution. Emerson went into further detail and explained her supervisor was not allowed to go into different offices and departments because of the grievances filed against her. Even though the supervisor managed these other offices and departments, because of her workplace bullying, the supervisor was not allowed to enter those offices and departments. Thus, HR was aware of the behavior of Emerson's supervisor.

Despite the institutional awareness of her supervisors bullying of others, Emerson's workplace bullying continued. However, it became so difficult, with multiple complaints from students and staff members, that a higher-level administrator stepped into Emerson's role as her supervisor, this occurred, after three years of experiencing workplace bullying from her supervisor. Emerson did not connect with HR because she saw no changes of the bullying when other staff members went to HR for assistance. Unfortunately, the length of time the bullying was allowed to go unchecked created a hostile climate for Emerson. The offending supervisor eventually retired and left the institution but was not held accountable. Moreover, the supervisor and the higher-level administrator had a good working relationship that in many ways condoned the supervisors bullying. Emerson shared,

> They [supervisor and high-level administrator] knew each other prior to her [supervisor] coming here and he really bent over backwards to keep her and defended her and it really tarnished his name. And I think that she should have been dealt with and should have

been counseled and she should have not stayed in that position for as long as she did. She

was mean and everybody still knows and she hasn't been here for a while.

Even after the supervisor retired, the legacy of the bullying she did while employed at the

university lived on. The saga of her bullying included not being held accountable for the three

years she bullied Emerson despite multiple complaints. Finally, a high-level administrator

stepped in as Emerson's supervisor, but unfortunately, the damage was done.

Skylar. Skylar, a senior-level professional, experienced workplace bullying by both her

supervisor and another high-level administrator. She experienced workplace bullying by both

individuals over time which eventually led to her dismissal from her senior-level position. Skylar

shared the relationships unraveled even though her relationships with both her supervisor and a

high-level administrator initially were positive. She expressed sincere admiration and

appreciation for the high-level administrator and was jolted when the relationship changed. She

shares while she was experiencing workplace bullying she felt,

> Small. Like my work didn't matter. That I wasn't valued and the place where I open
>
> myself up about mental health I feel like it was used against me and I was treated
>
> differently because of it. They were afraid to deal with me.

Her feelings of inadequacy from continual workplace bullying from both individuals created a

long-lasting effect on her work during her experience and well after.

The initial good relationships Skylar had with both individuals changed when she

disclosed that she was having some mental health issues. After she identified and appropriately

documented the issues she had, her mental health was mocked, used against her, and not taken

seriously. After her disclosure, she noticed a change in the attitudes of both of her supervisors

towards her. For example, she was pulled from projects, her supervisor would treat her with kid

69

gloves, and no effort was made to build a relationship with her. Her supervisor made jokes in staff meetings about mental health and exhibited a sense of fear of interacting with Skylar. Skylar describes her response after being transparent about her mental health;

They started pulling me off a project because they didn't think I could handle it. Because you know "it would be too much for you; we don't want to overload you." Don't treat me differently. You know I have a documented disability, stop treating me differently. So, again they started to pull me off from more projects. Pull me off of more projects. I literally heard my boss and the higher-level administrator make fun of me down the hall, making fun of me about something they asked me to do.

This type of behavior is common in bullying relationships and although Skylar was being pulled from projects, the projects she was able to continue she felt she fulfilled with diligence and integrity.

As a result of her workplace bullying experience, Skylar's relationships and work with her students changed despite the commitment she felt to her job and ensuring a consistent student experience. Her supervisors were interacting with Skylar's students and created an environment where Skylar did not trust her students as she knew her supervisors asked her staff and her students' questions about her. She shared, "I got a lot more autocratic with my students. I was a lot harsher on them. I wasn't as relaxed and flexible as I was with students. It definitely changed that." Not only were her supervisors questioning her students, but they were also questioning her leadership with her staff. Skylar shares a moment that defined her workplace bullying experience,

And then, in a meeting in front of my entire staff, my supervisor asked me what I would do to recover from a situation [with a staff member]. And I was like, I need to talk to

people. I need to find out what's going on. I need to talk to my staff. I need to reconnect

with them [after time away] and then move forward. And then, a direct quote was, "I

don't have confidence in your leadership anymore." In front of my staff!

Skylar felt humiliated and undermined by her supervisor given these statements. Unfortunately,

this practice of deflation occurred regularly.

Skylar said her office work culture was like the Mean Girls Club. She shared that if you

were in the "in" crowd you were accepted, however, if you were not, it was obvious. She

described,

If [the higher-level administrator] liked you, you were in. I felt like it was the Mean Girls

club. Heavily female division. If you were in their office and up their butt and hanging

out with them all the time…they liked you. If they didn't, it was very obvious and you

could tell when things changed.

The role of the "in" group and "out" group status was apparent in Skylar's recounting of her

workplace bullying experiences. By being in the out group, Skylar was immediately isolated

from those in the "in" group.

Unfortunately, in the end Skylar was terminated. Although the stated explanation of her

termination was due to other circumstances, Skylar maintains that the reason why she was

terminated was due to her workplace bullying. She argued,

They were mad at me. They didn't like me. They didn't like that I had issues…more

people are getting cut [I] got cut beforehand. And it is the most difficult people to work

with on campus. So yeah, I lost my job.

Skylar was concerned about being unemployed after being in the student affairs field as a

seasoned professional for many years. She was fearful her workplace bullying experience would

affect her ability to get another job. Not only was she unemployed unexpectedly, losing her job made her doubt her confidence in her abilities. She shared,

> I was pretty hurt. Doubting my abilities for a long time. It took a few months of…why did they let me go? What did I do wrong? So., I spent a lot of time retracing my steps. What did I do wrong? Am I not good enough? It definitely hurt my confidence a good bit.

She explained that she did not report her workplace bullying experiences before or during the bullying due to being fearful she would lose her job. Ironically, she lost her job anyway and even though she chooses not to report to not ruffle any feathers. Skylar hopes for new employment but questions staying in the field and her commitment to the profession. More so, Skylar questions her reputation in student affairs due to her workplace bullying experience.

Marley. Marley, a senior-level administrator, experienced workplace bullying by a higher-level administrator. Marley shared he experienced several incidents of micro-bullying over time and admitted it was quite a long time before he finally stepped away from the job and student affairs completely. Although Marley articulated the challenges he experienced, which resulted in him ultimately leaving his job and the field, he stated his experience may not meet my definition of workplace bullying. Yet, much of his narrative aligns with the other participants narratives regarding their workplace bullying experiences. He explained those who were in leadership positions over him utilized their positions to amplify and exercise their authority in extraordinarily strong and direct ways with his position. He shared an example of how this higher-level administrator exhibited their positional power in their role in decision making, "[My higher-level administrator would say], 'This is my position,' or 'this is my authority and therefore this is what is going to happen.' It was stated. It was very obvious. It was noticeably clear." Despite Marley's reluctance to classify what he experienced as bullying, the actions

caused him to leave his job as a senior-level administrator as well as the student affairs field for a long time. It is important to note that Marley did recognize that the behaviors from the higher-level administrators was not acceptable, and his experience was difficult than others. Marley described a situation in which his administrator demanded Marley insert himself into an initiative underway that was in jeopardy of failing, even though the project was not in his area. Marley explained,

> I was told in no uncertain terms to fix it and it was impossible. In fact, in my opinion, it was a hundred percent contradictory to my responsibilities and the job responsibility I had. It was antithetical to the very work that I did. I was told to "fix it". And so, I looked at that and went ok… this is exactly contrary to what I see my job being based on. What I was hired to do and why I'm here. And yet I have someone else who is telling me to act contrary to what those responsibilities are.

This example highlights not only the pressure Marley was feeling to deliver but the contradiction he was feeling about what he was being asked to do versus what his job was.

Marley described the higher-level administrator as abrasive, abrupt, and very direct and how the administrator exhibited a false persona of deep caring and concern. Marley did recognize that the display of deep caring and concern may have been real for the administrator and others, yet Marley never experienced deep caring or concern from this administrator. Instead, the relationship Marley had with his higher-level administrator was based on the power of positional authority.

Marley shared his work ethic and work with his students did not change as a result of his bullying experience. Instead, he worked to be a buffer for the students and the actions of the administration so that these actions did not disrupt the students' lives. He described the culture

as, "a fairly authoritative environment. It was very much built on a culture of hierarchy and positional authority required respect for those in positional authority. That was the expectation." Marley expressed he worked to develop a counterculture within his department. He strove to create a space that was welcoming and inviting for students and responsive to the needs of students. Whereas, the culture of the larger division, "much more of a… 'here are the directions'… 'here's what you are expected to do'… 'toe the line'… 'don't step out of line'…kind of perspective." Although he was having these experiences, with the higher-level administrator, Marley did not share his troubles with anyone. He did not believe there was anyone he could tell.

Marley's experience with the higher-level administrator significantly affected his career. When asked about this, he stated,

> It did [affect my career]. It was one of several factors that played into my choosing to leave student affairs. It wasn't something that happened immediately. There were a lot of factors that went into me leaving the field. That was one of many that placed into it. And I left and when I left I didn't think I was ever going to come back. I figured I was done.

Eventually Marley did return to student affairs, but only after several years. He expressed that he needed time to unpack and figure out what was within his power and control to navigate during the experience, he had to revisit the experience from multiple perspectives, and kept asking the question, how do you deal with this?

Kai. As an entry level professional, Kai experienced workplace bullying by her direct supervisor and by members of the staff who were colleagues of her direct supervisor. Kai shared that she experienced humiliation and limitations in getting additional responsibilities, even when she expressed joining a committee. She and her friends who visited her office were monitored,

74

on social media and in person. Her direct supervisor would *check in* with Kai's staff without her knowledge to inquire about her progress as their supervisor. Kai shared,

> My supervisor pulled my staff in often to check on my progress, but it wasn't constructive… like "What is Kai doing well?" … it is "What is she not [doing well?]" "Does she need to improve it?" It was like "tell me all the things that Kai may have done".

This bullying behavior of seeking out information from her supervisors made Kai feel overwhelmed, and she wanted to leave her job. She shared how she felt miserable, helpless, and surprised to be treated this way at work. When she first arrived on campus, her fellow staff members welcomed her into the department. However, as Kai continued to experience workplace bullying by her supervisor, her initial excitement changed into misery, and she began to feel like an outsider.

Prior to starting in her entry-level position, Kai reflected that she loved the job she held in graduate school experience and in this position, she went well over the assigned required hours. She identified her initial reaction to her workplace bullying experience as imposter syndrome. Prior to her entry-level position, Kai had never questioned or had her work ethic or abilities questioned by her supervisors. Therefore, it was jarring when she began her position and began to experience workplace bullying. She described her reaction when she began to question her own abilities and confidence

> I definitely would be like…oh my gosh…is this actually happening or am I just an awful staff member and am I just really bad at this. A lot of it I internalized…again that imposter syndrome…where it must just be me…maybe I am actually really bad at this…I shouldn't be doing this.

75

In addition to the bullying from her supervisor, Kai also experienced additional bullying by the colleagues of her direct supervisors. She shared an example of this level of bullying occurring in a staff meeting when she was expressing a different opinion regarding a suggested change. A colleague of her direct supervisor's disregarded Kai's suggestion and replied in a hostile tone, "If you don't like it, you can get the fuck out." As a result of these types of comments and her work environment, Kai stated she felt miserable. However, she worked harder in her role to be an advocate for her students, even when her direct supervisor was contacting her staff and inquiring after her work ethic. This situation created a difficult dynamic with her staff as Kai had to tiptoe with her staff members knowing about her supervisor's action, all the while trying to be authentic and professional.

At first, Kai believed the culture in her department was a positive one. Yet, when she began to experience bullying by her supervisor, her thought process changed. She described the culture of the department as follows:

> The people that work there went to school there as well and could do no wrong and it's the happiest place on earth and they loved it there. So, then I came in and had thoughts and critiques [about how things were done] and I was the one who was kind of stirring things up and bringing an outsider perspective that wasn't appreciated at all.

As an entry-level professional, the imposter syndrome was real for her due to the responses from her supervisor and colleagues when she made suggestions and critiques.

Kai did not report the workplace bullying to HR until after she left the institution. She believed that she would not have been supported if she reported the incidents.

She shared her thoughts as,

> I thought I was going to run into more "this is the happiest place on earth" and we have
> all worked here so nothing…nothing…like that could happen here…this is the best
> university and our students love it. So, I thought I'd run into that.

She felt that HR is not there to protect people, it is there to protect the university. This perception
was confirmed as reality because after she resigned and shared with HR the workplace bullying,
she experienced by her supervisor, Kai reflected,

> I think cultural fit is a way of excluding people who often are different than you or think
> differently than you. I ultimately talked to HR after resigning. And they were like…
> "Well you can't do anything about it. You've been here less than a year. You're at will so
> it really doesn't matter what happens. They can decide to let you go for any reason."

After this response from HR, Kai's feelings about HR's intent to protect the university instead of
the individual was solidified.

Unfortunately, Kai was given the option to resign or be terminated. She made the
decision to resign, without having another job lined up. During her termination/resignation
meeting, her direct supervisor and a higher-level administrator told her that she was not a good
cultural fit for the institution. After some time, she reflected that being forced to resign was a
relief as workplace bullying experiences made her feel miserable and isolated. Kai left the field
of student affairs completely, with no plans to return.

Glyn. Glyn experienced workplace bullying as a mid-level professional by her direct
supervisor and higher-level administrators. In her interview, Glyn choose to focus on her
supervisor and higher-level administrator workplace bullying experience. Her direct supervisor
and higher-level administrators had a lack of trust in Glyn's ability to do her job. They gave an

illusion of autonomy by having projects given to her and then taking away the projects from her. Additionally, the administrators required Glyn to fulfill multiple jobs and tasks beyond her job responsibilities without additional compensation. The work situation involved the supervisors gossiping about Glyn and constantly comparing her to other staff. Glyn shared,

> I think the supervisory ones are tough because in those moments it feels like you don't have an out or ally. Ask for advice and guidance up the chain but you can't do that when the people up the chain are the ones that are causing it and it can feel isolating or it can kind of make you feel like you're crazy.

This feeling of isolation for Glyn occurred throughout her workplace bullying experience not only with her supervisor, but occasionally with her colleagues as well.

Glyn expressed she experienced anger and frustration given her additional responsibilities and inconsistent work environment, she had to navigate a lot of politics within her role which included a lack of trust within her department and from her supervisors, and the fact others received promotions based on who they know. Ironically, Glyn felt she was given additional responsibilities, even though projects were taken away from her, because she was so good at her job though she received no additional compensation or consideration for the expense those additional responsibilities are causing for her. Glyn felt stress from having additional responsibilities, time away from her family, and nearly unreachable expectations. Glyn felt there was a double standard justification by her direct supervisor. Glyn recalls her supervisor saying,

> Remember, this isn't your entire identity. You have to have stuff outside this, please don't let this eat you alive, you don't owe us anything type of thing. Meanwhile on the other hand it's like here's another seventeen hours of work to do today.

Espousing self-care at the same time demanding more work was inconsistent with what Glyn was experiencing and this expectation of overwork is common in the student affairs field as well (Bidner, 2017).

Glyn shared her work ethic with her students did not change, however, she expressed her work experience sometimes made her bitter towards her students and made her resent her work with them. Due to her significant increase in additional work responsibilities, Glyn became tired, frustrated, and burnt out and felt she had little patience for her students. She did recognize; however, her frustrations were the results of her workplace bullying experiences. She shared,

It's not fair to [the students] because it is their first time going through these experiences. Sure, I would think through it differently but I'm in my 30s and not 19…so I can't hold them to the same standards of how I would process things after years of experience but because I get bitter and because I'm tired and because I'm frustrated with how things are going from the top down…it is one more ridiculous question from a student that sets me off that makes me angry. And I think it's tough for me to really focus on that aspect of student development that many of us care about and want to be working on. But because I'm angry now that I am having to do additional student interaction on top of additional job responsibilities.

Glyn described a specific experience in which she was on leave and was contacted repeatedly by her students and staff about items they could not locate for an event,

My phone is blowing up and I am getting texts and calls because the food was late or they couldn't find something in the closet…so I was the person that they knew to reach out to so I couldn't be frustrated with them but I ended up being horribly frustrated with them because administration put me in a situation where I was told to "Suck it up buttercup and

79

deal... other people are going through stuff too... and we can't help you now"...type of thing.

Glyn describes the culture of her unit as showboating in which there is competition with other divisions, no matter what the cost. This backdrop results in the staff doing more with less, which was complicated by the fact that higher-level administration volunteered their staff for additional work responsibilities without asking them first. As Glyn shared higher-level administrators will demand that her department take tasks on that end up adding so many additional hours and work, all with the goal of receiving accolades and recognition from senior administrators or the president. Glyn commented,

> Very much our culture is just grind, grind, grind, grind, grind, and someone recently said…"Well… we're just going to keep going until people hit their breaking points and then when they hit their breaking points then we'll stop"… which the response is once people hit their breaking points, they're of no use to us or to our students… it's horrible…so why aren't we trying to fix things before then?

Unfortunately, what Glyn is experiencing is not uncommon within the student affairs field (Bidner, 2017). The question becomes, why do student affairs supervisors feel it is acceptable to push student affairs professionals to their breaking points in the first place?

Even though Glyn expressed feeling frustrated with her students, she did emphasize she is committed to student affairs, her job and supporting her staff and students. She stated she is not the type of person who would drop the ball because she has experienced workplace bullying and recognizes the students are still her clients. Yet, Glyn shared she is exhausted, "What…what would happen if I just said. No, I'm not. I'm not doing this. What would happen? And you know nobody really says no and you are an at will employee. All right. Fire me then. I don't know".

80

Despite her frustrations, Glyn was still employed at the institution and is still experiencing ongoing workplace bullying.

     Marlin. Marlin experienced workplace bullying as a senior level administrator by her direct supervisor. She shared that as she began to reflect on her workplace bullying experiences, she realized she experienced workplace bullying at multiple institutions. She stated,

> There has been workplace bullying in some form throughout my career which was interesting because when I initially responded to the call for participants, I had my previous institution in mind…but as I thought about it…I reflected on every institution I had been at and there was some form of bullying or another at every institution.

While Marlin experienced workplace bullying at every institution she had worked at, she chose to reflect on her most recent experience at her previous institution and the bullying that occurred by her direct supervisor and higher-level administrators.

     Marlin described her experience at her institution initially being a part of the in crowd. At this time, her direct supervisors and higher-level administrators, would gossip with her about other staff members. She shared,

> Initially, before I realized what was going on…they tell you… "Oh don't trust this person and this person's not good" … "They are not a good person" … and "Their office doesn't do anything right and if you see things that aren't right you have to tell us."

Marlin said her direct supervisor and higher-level administrators would speak negatively about the staff with students and they would often blame decisions that were made by university or the higher-level administrators on the staff.

     Eventually, Marlin found she was no longer a part of the "in" crowd. When she was not a part of the "in" crowd, she was treated distinctly differently. For example, at a meeting with the

division, in which Marlin presented an end of the year report, a higher-level administrator spent the entire time speaking negatively about her report. As a result, her direct supervisor and their colleagues also spoke negatively of her report stating that she had nothing to add to the team. Her judgement, position, and role in the team were questioned and belittled during the meeting, and this meeting signaled the beginning of Marlin now being a part of the "out" crowd. After the meeting, when she debriefed with colleagues, she realized the higher-level administrator had done the same type of belittling to others and that it was her time to be in the "out" crowd. The workplace bullying experience continued when a difficult and incredibly personal situation she experienced and shared in confidence was shared with others. Not only was this information shared with others, but her reaction to this difficult, private situation, was criticized.

Marlin shared that gossip about her continued and she was constantly being belittled by colleagues in the division. Her abilities and decisions were constantly questioned and overturned, projects and jobs were taken away from her, and she was in constant fear of losing her job. Marlin describes a situation when she was on vacation and she was contacted by her direct supervisor,

When you were out and would go on vacation, they would call you on vacation. And make you work. I stopped putting in vacation days because every time I would go on vacation I would get called. I got pulled out of my family member's birthday party. It was on a Saturday, and they called and said you need to do this. And I'm like... I'm not near a computer…Well… you need to find one…this needs to be done in an hour and I did it on my phone. There was such fear that if I didn't do it… what was gonna happen. And what was gonna happen… they were gonna fire me.

She was continually questioning her own abilities and was terrified to push back. Marlin shared she felt like she was in a submissive state and that she struggled to speak up for herself. She was constantly questioned by her direct supervisor and the higher-level administrators.

Despite her workplace bullying experiences, Marlin attempted to continue the level of work with her students, and yet she interacted with them with caution. She was now more cautious with students and always considering whether the student would go above her head to complain to her supervisor. She shared,

I know there were instances or times when I would meet with students, and I would be like this potentially is a student that's going to go above my head and then that's ammo for them [her supervisors] to bully you about stuff. Or there were students that were connected to people, and I learned quite quickly that you might be making the right decision, but your right decision isn't supported.

Marlin felt she continued to treat her students the same and was ethical in her position. Although her director and higher-level administrators made her job more difficult, she continued to be diligent in her role.

Workplace bullying was a common occurrence in her department and was done by higher-level administrators and by her direct supervisor. As Marlin reflected those in the "in" crowd participated in the workplace bullying, and those in the "out" crowd were subject to it. Marlin describes her experience as a member of the "out" crowd:

It really just reinforced that there was nothing I could do, and I was in this situation [of being in the "out" crowd]. When I could see it for the first time, how it switched persons…we would joke about it amongst the staff… and we would be like… "Who is on the shit list?" And it would be like… "This person is never on the shit list…And wouldn't

it be great if everything we did was perfect?" So. it was this weird thing… like where we would joke about it but then when you were the person it would be like honestly… there is nothing you can do.

The treatment of staff members was based on whether they were in the "in" crowd or the "out" crowd. The culture of the department was filled with fear and was influenced who was "in" and who was "out."

Marlin continued to experience workplace bullying until she was able to find a job at another institution. She conducted her entire job search secretly up until she submitted her resignation. At her exit interview with HR Marlin shared how she experienced workplace bullying by her direct supervisor and higher-level administrators. Marlin described the reaction from the staff from HR, "[they stated] We know it is horrible working there, but no one would do anything." Marlin remains concerned about how her workplace bullying experience will affect her career. Her concern is warranted because of what her former supervisors might say about her to other professionals in the student affairs field.

Corey. Corey experienced workplace bullying as a mid-level administrator from her direct supervisor. Her direct supervisor belittled her and yelled at her in front of other staff members, spoke negatively about her to staff members at the institution, and made demeaning comments directly to her. Corey shared she did not realize fully how much her workplace bullying experience affected her until she was discussing her experiences with a colleague and her partner. They argued staying in a position that Corey was miserable in was, "not a good work life balance if you are miserable all the time." Corey shared an example of the type of public belittling she experienced from her supervisor,

There was a time when [my supervisor] asked me to present to a group of people on something I thought I understood. And I was about halfway through the presentation and [my supervisor] interrupted and said to a group of about 40 of my colleagues, "[Corey] clearly shouldn't have asked me to present this and as she doesn't know what she is talking about and I would do it over for you." It was a pattern of asking me to do something then I would do it to the best of my ability and she would berate me publicly and privately for not doing it the way she wanted. [She] was also not providing the necessary structure or the appropriate tasks for me to be successful in that.

When Corey asked questions of her direct supervisor about the tasks she was given, she was often was belittled. This pattern of behavior began within the first 6 months of her employment. Corey shared during that time she began to slowly realize things were not going to get better for her. She shared one of her breaking points was when her direct supervisor yelled at her in front of her colleagues. Corey stated, "I knew things weren't good when she yelled at me in front of people and I finally said, we need to go into a conference room right now." In the conference room, Corey told her supervisor, "And I was like, don't ever yell at me in front of my colleagues. She would say mean and demeaning things, but [usually] she wouldn't yell."

Corey was initially confused about why her direct supervisor was being a bully to her. Corey reflected she had never experienced workplace bullying as an adult and did not recognize how she was being treated so poorly until nearly six months into her position. Corey was still trying to please her direct supervisor to obtain approval. She shared,

What took me so long to figure out this dynamic? There were times I felt really angry but honestly, I think I mostly felt confused. And ok I'll try and do better and I would try and do better and fail again.

85

Her professional confidence was affected, and it took a long time and supportive supervisors for her to regain it. Corey felt her direct supervisor had no sense of shame in humiliating others and that the supervisor became comfortable with directing offensive comments to Corey. Additionally, Corey felt punished because her direct supervisor pulled her from collaborations with campus partners and prevented her from doing substantive work on projects. As a result of her workplace bullying experience, Corey felt a deterioration in her confidence which made her question her competence and professional knowledge. The experience also made her less trusting of colleagues.

Corey's work was limited with students in her role. The interactions she did have with students were not affected by her workplace bullying experience. She expressed that as a direct result of her experience she has become a fierce advocate for recognizing bullying and shared,

> I will not put up with it from my colleagues, but I also won't put up with it with the students I work with and I'll name it much more quickly when I see it happening, including when I see people bullying my staff.

As a result of her workplace bullying experience, Corey stayed in her position for less than a year. She made the decision to leave her role, before securing another position. She shared,

> I just ended up sobbing over the phone and that's the night my partner said, "I don't think it's a good work/life balance if you're miserable." I said, "But I don't have another job!" [My partner said] "You'll find another job."

The following week she submitted her resignation to her direct supervisor. Corey shared she did connect with HR 1–2 months before she quit. When she shared her workplace bullying experience, the staff member in HR offered help but ultimately shared Corey had the option to

leave if she felt like the position was not worth it. Corey met with HR again when upon her resignation and emphasized that she did not go into much detail with HR. She only shared with HR that she had an "unsatisfactory working environment" and she struggled with her direct supervisor's leadership. After her interactions with HR, Corey offered that she did not have much confidence in HR and did not have a sense that HR really cared about her experiences.

After resigning, she had concerns that the decision to leave would ruin her career. After some reflection, she shares, "I think it ended up being really good for my career." Corey stated, "I'm just out of fucks to give when it comes to work environments that aren't supportive. It has made me really committed to a good work environment for the people who work for me."

Summary

Table 2 below provides a summary of the bullying experiences of the participants in this study. A total of 8 of the 10 participants experienced workplace bullying for 3 years or less and of these only one person, Emerson, experienced 3 years of bullying. The other seven participants experienced bullying in the 1–2-year range. The remaining two participants experienced longer term bullying, with one still having ongoing bullying occurring and the other was bullied between 3 and 7 years. A total of 8 of the 10 participants left the institution in which they experience being bullied with some ($n = 2$) remaining unemployed at the time of this study.

Table 2

Participant Bullying Duration, Employment Status, Outcome

Name	Bullying Duration	Employment Status	Outcome
Landry	1-2 years	Employed another institution	Left institution
Jordan	3-7 years	Left student affairs/Resigned	Left institution without another job/ Left Student Affairs
Lee	1-2 years	Employed at another institution	Left institution
Emerson	3 years	Remained at institution	Workplace bully left institution
Skylar	1-3 years	Unemployed	Was terminated
Marley	1 year	Left student affairs/eventually returned to student affairs	Left institution
Kai	1 year	Left student affairs/Resigned	Was encouraged to resign or would be terminated/Left Student Affairs
Glyn	Ongoing Colleague bullying	Stayed	Ongoing
Marlin	1-2 years Colleague bullying	Left institution	Left institution
Corey	10 months	Left institution	Left institution without another job

The narratives of each participant are unsettling and disquieting. As each shared their story of their personal workplace bullying experiences, the length of time they endured workplace bullying, and the outcome of their experience, the effect on them personally and professionally was apparent. Next, I reviewed the overall experiences of the participants due their workplace bullying experiences, including sharing how emotion and fear were prevalent in their personal and professional lives, how they described the power their bully had, and the significant affect their experience had on their relationships and trust with their supervisor, colleagues, and institutions.

Emotion and Fear

A student affairs professional posed a question on a student affairs social media site after a colleague had aggressively confronted them. After this experience, the professional posted to fellow student affairs professionals, "Why are we, as a people, our own worst enemy?" (Student Affairs Professionals, 2021). In the same statement, the professional added,

> Ya'll, I am so exhausted and I just want to cry. I got into this field to help and make a difference, not for office petty bullshit. Then I am second guessing, asking if I'm being too sensitive? But it's like, wtf, we're supposed to be numb to this shit?! It's toxic! I don't know what to do. (Student Affairs Professionals, 2021).

This professional's questions, alarm, surprise, response, and exhaustion from their experience provides a prime example of how student affairs professionals often react to workplace bullying and mirrors the narratives of the participants in my study. The person bullied is shocked, the bully continues to bully, and the institution takes no action. All 10 of my participants echoed the lament posted on Facebook (Student Affairs Professionals, 2021) in retelling their own reactions and response to their own workplace bullying experiences.

According to Namie (2003), "bullying is nearly invisible" (p. 2). For all 10 participants, not only was their workplace bullying experience mostly invisible to others, the bullying made them feel invisible and fearful. The participants felt isolated, and many addressed feeling a sense of concern and fear of losing their job, repercussions for reporting, and concerns for their careers. Landry shared his institution was,

> Very much a culture of fear, a culture of "we are just gonna pretend that everything is ok" and we smile and say everything is fine. I mean really behind the scenes people were miserable. Hated their jobs. I had a colleague that I worked with the closest, it got so bad

89

to the point that they had to be hospitalized for their mental health. It was just a very

toxic environment.

It may be difficult for anyone to understand the depth of emotion and fear the participants felt if

they have not experienced workplace bullying. Two participants indicated they were terminated

or forced to resign, and two participants chose to resign from their positions without any other

job options. For these four participants, not only were they experiencing continual workplace

bullying, they also decided, or were forced to decide their next steps, without any other job

options. Not having a job not only has an emotional affect but diminishes self-esteem,

confidence, competence, and increased levels of stress (Prussia et al., 1993). It is important to

acknowledge that the two participants that chose to resign their positions and leave, recognize

the place of privilege they were in to be able to resign without another job.

Jordan shared,

Not everybody has the privilege I have to be able to walk away, but the more—the

squeaky wheel did not get the oil in this case. The squeaky wheel was punished. What is

your level of tolerance? Can you just shut up and play along, change your course a little

bit just to appease said person? Of course, it would depend on the type of bullying. In my

case, if I had just shut up and said, "oh yes, [supervisor] that was a great idea, the one I

thought of 2 months ago, if I did not add that last piece, it becomes very hard to not stand

up for yourself and your values. Not everybody has that luxury.

Both participants who chose to resign acknowledged the privilege they had by having the *option*

to leave the job when they were not able to endure workplace bullying any longer. Yet, even

with this privilege, both participants endured workplace bullying for some time before opting to

leave their positions. Even though leaving evidenced some form of empowerment, the effect of

90

their workplace bullying experiences still left them with personal and professional scars. For example, Corey shares,

> I am so glad I left when I did because my own sense of my competence was deteriorating and I think it was making it harder for me to get other jobs because when people asked, "What do you think you are good at?" I felt so beat up that my answer might have been, "I don't know. Not much really?" Which just isn't the case.

However, for Skylar, the privilege to leave her job was not an option. Skylar was not as fortunate to have the resources to walk away. She was terminated and was left to pick up the pieces because of workplace bullying to an otherwise successful career. She needed to determine her next steps. Skylar explained the emotional affect, fear, and isolation, her workplace bullying experience had on her, "There's days I've come home from work and cried for hours." She continued to share,

> The minute I identified that I had mental health issues they were done with me. That whole department has written me off. They know what happened. Because nothing is secret in higher ed. Everybody knows all the gossip no matter how quiet you try to keep it.

Skylar feared not being able to find another position due to being terminated; as well she lacked the confidence in her own abilities that left an effect on her job search, not to mention that she still suffered from mental health issues. Skylar shared, "How do I use them as a reference when I am job searching? [Universities] ask why are you not using your current employer? Not comfortable with that currently." Her fears continued throughout her job search, Skylar added, "I would say until I started getting called back for interviews, I was feeling pretty low." Although Skylar did eventually get a position, it took her much longer than she anticipated.

Like Skylar, many participants' emotions and fears during and after their workplace bullying have long term and lasting effects. Farmer (2011) states, "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" (p. 198). The length of bullying has a direct health and emotional effect on the individual (Farmer, 2011). Thus, workplace bullying has long term traumatic and health effects on the individual who experiences it.

Trauma from Workplace Bullying

For the participants, the trauma they carry is real. They carry the trauma of their workplace bullying experience into their next roles and possibly throughout their careers. According to Rodríguez-Muñoz and colleagues (2010), "Workplace bullying can have severe consequences for employees and for organizations. On the other hand, bullying has also been found to be strongly associated with lowered psychological well-being and increased levels of stress and psychosomatic symptom" (p.2617). The consequences and trauma for the participants is brutal, during and after their workplace bullying experience. Due to continuing to experience workplace bullying with their direct supervisor by being forced to continue to interact, many participants had feelings of fear, depression, and in one instance, PTSD.

When the participants were bullied, their thoughts, beliefs, self-confidence, and values were affected. They questioned their self-worth, competence, and one participant even had to compartmentalize their workplace bullying experience because it was so unexpected.

For example, Emerson described navigating the emotional trauma,

> I am able to put that whole thing in a box. I really am able to compartmentalize things like that so I kind of put it in a box and I understood other people were having similar issues, so it didn't make me feel like I was alone.

Emerson found coping strategies to help with the emotional trauma inflicted by her bully. Marlin, on the other hand, felt isolated. She shared,

> I just really need to put my head down and deal with this. You did not want to go to work. You did not want to interact with anyone. You literally just wanted to stay in bed. And when you were out and were on vacation, they would call you on vacation. It was an anger of this is so messed up that this happening. But also, I am so terrified that if I push back of what could happen. And it was like they beat you into this submissive state where they could do anything. And lying the lies that they would tell about things, or they would like to your face about something and then you'd find out.

The trauma experienced by the participants resulted in fear.

    The participants met the definition for bullying used in this study (Cowan & Fox, 2014), and the persistent, repeated, continuous bullying behavior, and the longevity of the bullying experience on the participants had an emotionally shuddering effect on each participant personal and professional lives. Whether the participant left the student affairs field, or their job without having another, or stayed in their job and hoped that their workplace bully would be held accountable for their actions, all the participants have scarring that they will carry with them throughout, at the very least, their careers, as well as their lives.

    In looking for support from the trauma they experience, every participant navigated their workplace bullying trauma in their own way. For some, they reached out to HR for support,

though many of the participants shared they found HR to be of little to no help. They shared HR would not assist them and instead often had the HR professionals merely state, that's just the way they were. Corey shared, "HR wasn't going to solve my problem and [HR stated] that [supervisor] is not going anywhere." This lack of support from HR was a common thread throughout the interviews and exacerbated the trauma experienced as the participants found no recourse when they reported the bullying behavior.

This trauma individuals experience also may be cyclical and may be a reason why participants experience workplace bullying from their direct supervisors. Glyn shared,

I can't tell you how many colleagues I have had who have tried to "out trauma" one another. It is the craziest thing. It is like, "well, I have had this terrible experience and now I am gonna come back and use that against the staff that did it to me". People who come with a chip on their shoulder already because they want to make a change for the experience, they had but do not recognize the baggage they are carrying with them from previous experiences are hindering them from focusing on the current student experience and not their experience through the students' eyes.

This example shows that individuals who experience workplace bullying can affect not only the individual, but others in the student affairs profession, creating a vicious cycle. The influence on the student affairs profession as a result of workplace bullying involves decent student affairs professionals leaving the student affairs field and the creation of a cycle of bullying in which some student affairs professionals *may* bully other student affairs professionals. Of note, none of the participants in my study indicated they turned into bullies as a result of their own experience.

According to Salin (2003a), "bullying can often be described as self-reinforcing or spiraling process building on vicious circles" (p. 1217). Furthermore, this cycle can create

secondary bullying spirals in the work environment (Salin, 2003a). For that reason, student affairs professionals may continue the cycle of workplace bullying due to their own workplace bullying experience and having the mantra of I was bullied so I can bully others. The outcomes the participants felt from workplace bullying often transferred into their next role. For example, Lee shared,

> Even just with supervisors in general now, I have a lot of worry that I fully understand what's expected of me and I fully understand the process to do everything. I consistently asking anything that I can work on that you want me to know. I am really afraid of punishment.

The shadow of their bullying experience emerged as a lack of confidence and questioning of themselves in their new work position. Despite participants' diligent intent for this not to occur, this is an example of how the trauma of workplace bullying has a lasting effect on them in their careers.

Emotional Influence on Student Relationships

The negative relationships the participants had with their direct supervisors did not translate to their work with students. Even though some participants had difficulties with trusting their students due to their supervisors' direct interactions with the students, all the participants maintained that they did not let what they were experiencing affect work with their students. Participants continued their commitment to their students and work ethic, despite their circumstances. Landry shared,

> [This experience] made me want to work with students in a different capacity [other than the current work he was doing] and [for me] to understand what it's like, especially for our BIOPIC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), students to really help them

95

understand that the world is not kind and there are times that we will be in places and

situations where we truly do need to speak up and advocate for ourselves.

Eight out of 10 participants shared that because of their workplace bullying experience, they

would be better advocates for students who are experiencing bullying and aid the students in

speaking up for themselves. Two participants were unsure how to respond and could be an

advocate currently, but not at the time they were experiencing workplace bullying.

Power

Power in working relationships is important. When workplace bullying occurs in a

working relationship, that power between the supervisor and supervisee in their working

relationship changes and creates a dynamic where the supervisee feels powerless, creating a

"victim-perpetrator" structure. Salin (2003a) states,

[This structure] indicates that a perceived power imbalance is a prerequisite for the

bullying to occur, as without the person towards who the aggression is directed could

withstand the direct or indirect attacks and retaliate, thus preventing the bullying from

beginning (p. 1219).

For the following section, I will discuss the effect of social identity and the "in" and

"out" group for the participants, and the power imbalance and dynamics for the participants with

their supervisors and higher-level administrators.

The participants in this study addressed their bullying experience by a supervisor.

Inherent to this work relationship are power differentials, with the participants having less power

than their supervisors and feeling like victims when bullied. According to Namie (2003), "in an

individualistic culture, people tend to blame victims for the harm they endure and make them

responsible for solving their unprovoked problems" (p. 3). Several participants shared feeling

this sense of blame and an abuse of power from their supervisor during their workplace bullying experience.

"In "and "Out "Groups

A person's social identity translates to them belonging to a social category or group (Stets & Burke, 2000). A group classification can include in the "in" or "out" group depending on the circumstances. For all participants, the "in" or "out "group status influenced their workplace bullying. Many participants identified being knowledgeable of the "in" and "out "groups at their institutions, which often meant that the participants were in the "out" group and felt isolated. Marlin shared her experience as a member of both groups,

> I remember there was a staff member that was there before I started getting bullied who was bullied out of their job. And I didn't see it at the time. I was in the "in" crowd. And when it [workplace bullying] started happening to me, it was like, "what am I doing wrong?" and "how do I make this work?" Then it [workplace bullying] was really reinforced that there was nothing I could do and I was in this situation.

Marlin knew when she was in the "in" group and when she was in the "out" group.

Stets and Burke (2000) stated, "different identities become active as the situation changes and as relevant stimuli for self-categorization change" (p. 231). Social comparisons occurred for all the participants allowing, with "in" and "out" groups forming and reforming at their prospective universities. For example, two participants spoke in detail about the "in "and "out" group status of people at their institutions. Marlin described, in detail, her experience while she was in the "in" group, and her experience in the "out" group, and how common it was for staff members to cycle through the two groups regularly. This environment allowed for a breeding ground for workplace bullying to occur not only in supervisory roles, but also for collegial

bullying at her university. While Marlin describes collegial bullying occurring at her university, she did not describe experiencing it. She describes feeling isolated and feeling "terrified" about responding in a different way other than complete submission to their bully. Being in the "out" group left the participants without collegial support and was a common thread amongst all the participants.

Feeling Powerless

Marley spoke about the source of power: "Power comes from information. How are we using information? Are we using it as leverage? And we hold onto information so that what we know becomes leverage." When bullies leverage and abuse their power, it creates a feeling of powerlessness for those bullied. In Marley's workplace bullying experience, he had limited information which allowed the higher-level administrator to utilize information as leverage against him. Marley had not experienced workplace bullying in any prior role, therefore, when he began to experience workplace bullying by a higher-level administrator, he began to feel powerless to dispute the higher-level administrator.

Power and powerlessness are often relational in nature and fundamentally assumed in a working environment (Hodson et al., 2006). When a supervisor abuses their power, specifically through workplace bullying, the person bullied has little recourse in the relationship. It is important to note there is a power differential from the supervisee which is established by the supervisor. For example, a supervisor has the power to assign work, committees, promote, as well as has the power to take work away. Eight out of 10 of the participants experienced this dynamic of power from either their direct supervisors or higher-level administrators. Kai shared an example of this,

They were forming a committee and I expressed interest in that and wanted to take on

that additional responsibility but [supervisor] gave it to the one male staff member and

said, "men are just better at that sort of thing" and I wasn't really allowed to take on

anything else.

Kai was powerless to change the outcome of the supervisor's decision about whether Kai could

serve on a committee, she had no say in the matter. Another participant, Emerson shared

I wasn't allowed to teach classes because I was a parent and [my supervisor] did not think

I had the time to do it. So, [my supervisor] would not even look at my application even

though [they] desperately needed people to teach.

In these examples, the participants were powerless to change the decisions made by their

supervisors, as the supervisor determined whether opportunities were allotted to them or not. An

outcome of workplace bullying participants experienced by their supervisors included instances

when decisions were made for them about their roles in their institution's community.

All participants stated they felt that their direct supervisor dominated the

supervisor/supervisee relationship and used their position of power and influence to make the

participants feel small, vulnerable, and powerless. Jordan shared how she felt powerless with her

bully, and came up with advice to others to protect themselves, "Can you just shut up and play

along, change your course a little bit just to appease said person? In some cases, shut up; suck it

up. Find an alternative before you start squeaking too loud unless somebody's unsafe."

Unfortunately, Jordan's reaction of "shut up and play along" was after many years of workplace

bullying, the longest of all participants, from her supervisor. The power dynamic between Jordan

and her direct supervisor caused her to react with silence, apathy towards her role, and hesitation

to share her thoughts, opinions, and perspectives. Jordan's reactions of silence, powerlessness,

and hesitation was shared in some form by all participants. The sense of powerlessness occurred at different times for each participant, but it is evident that all participants felt their bully was "allowed" to exhibit their power as they desired.

Power of the Hierarchy

According to Salin (2003a), "the importance of power structures and power imbalances in organizations can partly explain the large number of victims being bullied by supervisors" (p. 1290). This power structure and hierarchy allows for supervisees to be more exposed and vulnerable to situations where they have less power. It is this power dynamic that allows for an imbalance of power in which supervisees can become victims of workplace bullying. All participants experienced this power dynamic either from their direct supervisor or from another higher-level administrator. How the bully levied this power varied. Participants shared that their supervisor or higher-level administrator would place limitations in what occurred in the participants' roles. Examples of this would include limitations on committee or professional assignments or were given additional work without an increase in pay. As well, decisions the participants made being overturned or made for them, the supervisors deliberately omitted or did not share critical information on work projects, and unrealistic or unreasonable expectations for participants.

By placing unreasonable limitations on what the participant could or could not do, the participants had limited agency or choices for participants. They had little to no autonomy in their professional roles and were micromanaged. Landry shared, "There was very much a big power dynamic in our office, and it was very much, the [supervisor] was at the top of the chain and the rest of the staff were doing whatever he said to do. No questions asked about it." The participants all identified being aware of the power dynamic in their staff, divisions, or

universities, and how their supervisor or higher-level administrator used this power dynamic to bully them.

Sometimes this power structure would be shown by mocking, belittling, yelling, inappropriate discriminatory comments, deliberately ignoring, or gossiping about the participants. This emotional bullying occurred for participants in front of colleagues, during presentations, meetings, or one on one. Nearly all participants experienced this emotional bullying in some form. Emerson shared,

> I think that I have tried to figure it out. I wanted to ask [my supervisor] "why are you acting like this?" And if I did not complete a task [that was not mine] they would yell at me about it.

The bullies were not reprimanded for these actions as it felt for the participants that others in power permitted the bullying to continue by offering excuses of the bullying behavior (e.g., "this is the way things are done here," "this is how [the bullies] are."). It was this power structure and the acceptance of workplace bullying by their supervisors and higher-level administrators that left the participants feeling powerless with a lack of agency or choices for the participants.

Student affairs professionals are often stuck in their positions with little recourse when the relationships with their supervisors become broken. Morrison (2008) stated,

> People do not choose to have foes in their social network; relationships with foes will be involuntary relationships. When a relationship degrades or turns sour in a workplace the individuals concerned often must continue to interact. The workplace is one of the few environments where people are "forced" into relationships with others and, as a result, it is an ideal environment to examine these negative relationships. (p. 332)

None of the participants chose to have a negative relationship in which they experienced workplace bullying, their workplace bullying experience was forced on them.

Bullying at each institution seemed to be condoned by the lack of institutional action, making the power dynamics favor the supervisor. All the bullying reported on in this study was by a supervisor, which further creates a power hierarchy, often leaving the participants feeling powerless and isolated. Collegial bullying did occur, however, the participants selected not to discuss their workplace bullying experiences with their colleagues, they chose to focus on their experiences with their supervisor or a higher-level administrator.

Relationships

As a result of workplace bullying, the relationships the participants expected to be safe, trusting mentorships, resulted in division, broken trust, disappointment, and occasionally, termination, at least 4 of the 10 participants left the field of student affairs altogether or remained unemployed. Relationships are the crux of the student affairs profession. Interacting with others is the essence of how student affairs professionals engage with students, and often is the reason for student affairs professional's involvement in the profession. A paradox exists when a student affairs professional is bullied given the foundation of relationship building in the work of these professionals.

Many participants shared they started their position believing that they would either build or have positive relationships with their direct supervisors. Their initial shock, confusion, and feeling of betrayal as their workplace bullying experience occurred made them feel deceived by their direct supervisor. Skylar shared,

> In both situations, I felt like I had complete trust in the supervisor. I felt like I could trust
>
> them completely. That they knew everything. I really looked up to the person. And I was

like, wow a person in that role that's really awesome. They are great. They are amazing.

And that changed. A lot. I could never trust either of those folks again. Ever.

Skylar's trust in her supervisors diminished because of her workplace bullying experience. In the end, all participants indicated that their relationships with their supervisors and sometimes colleagues suffered as a result their workplace bullying experience and all participants shared that once they were out of their situations, they ceased the relationship with their supervisor, and occasionally, colleagues from the institution as well. Landry shared, "I decided it was in my best interest to sever that relationship for my own personal health and sanity." Participants' relationships with colleagues varied. Some participants choose to share nothing with colleagues regarding their workplace bullying experience with their direct supervisor. Two participants choose to share limited details when they were in the "in" group. Overall, there was a wariness of trusting their direct supervisors or colleagues. What remains unknown is how many of the participants' colleagues were also experiencing workplace bullying as well.

A research study was done where the qualitative and quantitative study focused on the role that relationships had in employee flourishing, Colbert et al. (2016), stated,

> Results revealed unique associations between functions and outcomes, such that task assistance was most strongly associated with job satisfaction, giving to others was most strongly associated with meaningful work, friendship was most strongly associated with positive emotions at work, and personal growth was most strongly associated with life satisfaction. Our results suggest that work relationships play a key role in promoting employee flourishing, and that examining the differential effects of a taxonomy of relationship functions brings precision to our understanding of how relationships affect individual flourishing. (p. 1199)

103

Given the broken work relationships noted by the participants in this study, the flourishing of the organization suffered. The participants did not receive this opportunity to enhance their roles given their bullying experience and spent much of their time experiencing fear, worry, and concern for their jobs.

"The characteristic common to all bullies is that they are controlling competitors who exploit their cooperative targets. Most bullies would stop if the rules changed and bullying was punished" (Namie, 2003, p. 3). Relationships in all environments are important. Relationships in the working environment are crucial to the success of the individual. For the participants in this study, their relationships were torn, tattered, and broken by workplace bullying.

Their relationships were altered with colleagues, direct supervisors, higher-administrators, and the university. Participants shared they were not able to rebuild their trust within their relationships after they realized that they were experiencing workplace bullying. Jordan shared,

> I really thought (these individuals) who I had different types of relationships with, but I thought were really strong in the field, had the potential to be the way they were. I saw the back of the house. I saw how the sausage was made… and it was disgusting.

Jordan indicated not only was her trust completely broken after she experienced workplace bullying, but her perception of who she believed her supervisor to be altered.

Even after realizing their relationship with the person bullying them was not good, many of the participants had to continue in their roles and in interacting with their direct supervisor, despite the workplace bullying they received from their direct supervisors

Broken Trust

"Bullying by superiors can be devastating to the maintenance of trust in organizations" (Hodson et al., 2006, p. 385). Because of the conflict-based relationships the participants had with their direct supervisor's, trust was broken. Many participants shared that initially, they trusted their supervisors, however, as they began to experience workplace bullying, their trust in their supervisor, their university, and occasionally, their fellow staff members, quickly diminished. After his workplace bullying experience, Marley described trust in his relationship with an administrator,

> For me, I think when I have experienced that the trust diminishes, that's a condition of human nature that you no longer have the same trust you did before. I think the nature of the relationship changes. So, you are not sure what to expect going forward. Will I get that same kind of directive authoritative response the next time I am interacting with this person? Or will it be more social and friendlier? You know the trust definitely diminished. And you start questioning your own motives. You start to question your own interactions and whether you are doing something wrong. It certainly leads to a sense of uncertainty and doubt whenever something like that happens.

Marley's description of his feelings of uncertainty with trust with the administrator is not an anomaly, participants echoed feeling uncertain, fearful, and distrustful of their direct supervisors as a result of their workplace bullying experience.

It is reasonable to argue that all the participants had some degree of trust in their supervisors and higher-level administrators prior to their workplace bullying experience. Their reaction of confusion, shock, and anger is an indication that they did not come into their relationships with their supervisors or higher-level administrators with any preconceived

105

assumptions about them. It was when their supervisors and higher-level administrators'

behaviors of belittling, yelling, intimidation, gossip, that their trust began to crumble. Marlin

shares,

> There was a lot of trust and they sold me a line of goods in my interview. I thought it was
>
> gonna be a great opportunity. I was excited. I loved my staff, and I loved the office, and I
>
> was excited. The students were great. And there was a lot of trust in the beginning. It was
>
> not like an overnight where it just switched off. You got your hand smacked and I was
>
> like…ok…that is weird. Then it started to get worse. And it was the third or fourth time I
>
> was on the out and I was just getting yelled at for everything.

Marlin's experience is not an unusual one. The participants expressed feeling ready, excited, and

thrilled to be working for their supervisors, in their institutions, and with their students in the

beginning. For all participants, the workplace bullying occurred over time, not instantly. The

time did vary from the participants being in their roles for a month or several months, with some

participants knowing their supervisors or higher-level administrators for a year or longer before

they began experiencing workplace bullying by them. It is important to note one participant,

Skylar, had not only trust in her supervisor and the higher-level administrator prior to her

workplace bullying experience but admiration. When these individuals began bullying her, she

was stunned. Skylar shared,

> The [higher level administrator] is the coolest person ever. I want to work for them. They
>
> were articulate. Ballsy. The students loved them. They were real. I really appreciated
>
> them. I really liked them. I really admired them. I wanted to be them.

Skylar's initial admiration and trust diminished after her workplace bullying experience. As a result of the participants' workplace bullying experience, the participants are warier of trusting their supervisors, higher-level administrators and occasionally, their colleagues.

Hostile Work Environment

As a result of workplace bullying, the relationships the participants expected to be safe, trusting mentorships, resulted in division, broken trust, disappointment, and occasionally, termination (4 of the 10 participants left the field of student affairs altogether or remained unemployed). Relationships are the crux of the student affairs profession. A paradox exists when a student affairs professional is bullied given the foundation of relationship building in the work of these professionals. When professionals in student affairs do not develop healthy relationships with their colleagues, supervisors, or supervisees, it creates a hostile work environment.

Due to these fractured relationships, student affairs professionals who are experiencing workplace bullying, often view the student affairs profession as a do what I say, not what I do. The participants in this research study are good examples of this. As Jordan shared above,

> When I am being told I am too nice, too accommodating, to socially just, that completely contradicts what we are supposed to be in student affairs, and I have a supervisor telling me all these things, and its bad, it doesn't align with our vision or mission. I think work/life balance is crap. You're damned if you do; you're damned if you don't. If you work too late or work too hard, you get punished, but if something happens too late and you did not deal with it, you get punished.

Jordan's frustration and feelings of punishment for any of her actions reflects her feelings of powerlessness with her supervisor.

In the end, all participants indicated that their relationships suffered as a result of their workplace bullying experience and all participants shared that once they were out of their situations, they severed the relationship with their supervisor, and occasionally with other colleagues from the institution as well. Participants' relationships with colleagues varied.

This study highlights how poor work relationships affect the flourishing of the organization and toxic environments. If the participants did not experience workplace bullying, they would have had the opportunity to help contribute more to the university. Unfortunately, the participants did not receive this opportunity to enhance their roles or their universities, rather, they spent much of their time experiencing fear, worry, and concern for their jobs.

Summary

Recent research has implied that rude and uncivil behaviors may be becoming more common in the workplace (Morrison, 2008). Thus, the type of behaviors that constitute workplace bullying are becoming more conventional and accepted. This pattern was evident when participants would inquire after the behaviors of their supervisor from HR and other administrators, and the responses would be that their supervisors' behaviors were just the way they were.

This study found workplace bullying in student affairs influences the participants emotionally and that the bullying created trauma for the participants during and after their workplace bullying experience. This study also found the relationships that the participants believed would be positive, possible mentorships with supervisors and higher-level administrators, were severed and damaged due to the bully's behaviors towards them. The bully's used their power to isolate, belittle, and block opportunities for the participants. Finally,

108

this study found that trust dissolved and was not regained after the participant experienced workplace bullying.

Recently, a student affairs professional shared their workplace bullying experience via social media, "I can't even describe the feeling of fear people have as we try to make it one day at a time. How do I keep going like this? I feel like my soul is being ripped out little by little" (Student Affairs Professionals, 2021) When workplace bullying occurs and the student affairs professional experiences broken trust, powerlessness, and broken relationships, the students suffer due to loosing good student affairs professionals, the university suffers, and the student affairs profession suffers. When we have student affairs professionals who are experiencing workplace bullying and leaving the student affairs field, we need to recognize that student affairs have a problem, and we need to work together to ensure that no student affairs professional experiences workplace bullying.

CHAPTER 5: BE BETTER. DO BETTER.

In student affairs we have a secret—a secret that we do not like to discuss within the student affairs field or with each other. This secret is even in a helping profession like student affairs workplace bullying occurs. Student affairs is a profession which advocates for holistic student development as its mission, to make our universities better places for students to thrive. When workplace bullying happens in student affairs, student affairs professionals leave the field. In this chapter, I will discuss the answers to my research question, interpret the findings using the literature associated with workplace bullying, and discuss implications for practice for the future for student affairs and student affairs professionals.

This study found supervisory bullying and bullying by higher-level administrator's student affairs profession does exist. Participants understood the importance for the research study, especially after their own workplace bullying experiences. Lee shared,

> Because, like you said, you are studying [workplace bullying in student affairs] for a reason. It is clearly a well-kept secret for the field, but it definitely happens. [My workplace bullying experience] experience alone, many people across a decade [knew] that this [bullying by my supervisor] was going on.

Participants shared their stories with courage and vulnerability and many participants made a diligent effort not to allude to their previous or former institutions with me and rarely shared names, genders, or identities of their bully for fear of discovery. Despite assurance that information shared would be masked and no names provided in the final dissertation, participants were reluctant to say more to identify their bully even though many no longer worked at the institution in which the bullying occurred.

For this study, workplace harassment was defined as "repeated activities, with the aim of bringing mental (but sometimes also physical) pain and directed towards one or more individuals who for one reason or another are not able to defend themselves" (Björkqvist et al., 1994, p. 173). The participants in this study never stated they felt harassed but did share repeatedly they experienced workplace bullying. Based off of their understanding of the definition of workplace bullying which was given to them prior to the interviews, it can be assumed the participants understood the differences between harassment and workplace bullying. In the participant's narratives, no physical harm occurred but emotional trauma did. It is of note that, workplace bullying occurred within each participant's university and that the participants did not say they were harassed as harassment is defined as an illegal activity.

The narratives of the participants in this study shows, that workplace bullying exists in student affairs, despite the fact that student affairs professional associations (ACPA and NASPA) espouse the core values of respect, advocacy, professional development, engagement, and support. According to ACPA (2021) their core values are having, "a free and open exchange in context of mutual respect" with a mission of, "shaping critically reflective practice, and advocating for equitable and inclusive learning environments." The NASPA (2021) vision is, "fulfilling the promise of higher education" with a strategic plan for, "advocacy for student success, equity, inclusion, and social justice, research and scholarship with professional development and engagement." These core values, vision, and mission of these professional memberships are intended to guide and direct student affairs professionals. The fact that workplace bullying contradicts these values leaves those who are bullied shocked and confused.

The Overarching Research Question

Driven by concern for the secrecy and existence of workplace bullying in student affairs, the following primary research question guided this study: How and where does bullying exist amongst colleagues and from supervisors to supervisee in student affairs? The answer to this question is uneasily simple to answer based on the participants responses. The participants worked in a variety of positions, and at different universities, and included individuals with different ethnicities, sexual orientations, and religious affiliations.

Yet all participants had one thing in common, they were bullied by their supervisor. Two participants identified their bullying experience was due to their sexual orientation or race. Others experienced bullying that involved demeaning a participant's mental illness and use of positional power from their direct supervisors or higher-level administrators.

This research focused on institutions in the Mid-Atlantic area and included 10 participants. The discussion that follows relates to the experiences of the participants, which can shed light on the occurrence of bullying in student affairs even though the results of this study are not generalizable. All the participants were bullied by their supervisor or higher-level administrator. Some participants noted they had been bullied by colleagues, yet all opted to discuss the bullying they received from their supervisors.

The difficulty in getting individuals to participant in my study may signal a reluctance of student affairs professionals to share that they have been bullied, making the scope of this problem difficult to define. Individuals may simply choose not to share their narratives due to fear or shame. Although several attempts were made to obtain more participants through initial contact with Deans and Vice Presidents at specific institutions and a call for participants through social media. In the end, 10 individuals found the courage to participate in this research study.

112

One hypothesis for the difficulty in finding participants could have been fear. Fear of the participants being recognized and identified, or the fear of job loss should it become known that they shared their bullying experience with someone. Even though confidentiality was promised, the fear of sharing a narrative that may identify the bully is a reality and further solidifies the mystic of secrecy regarding workplace bullying in student affairs. The fact that nearly half of the participants left the field ($n = 4$) showcases the negative effect of bullying on the profession.

The Power of Bullying

The supervisors and higher-level administrators who bullied the participants used their positional power to manipulate the participants and to make them feel powerless. The bullies often used positional power to create an environment in which the participants felt helpless and felt a lack of ability to counteract the effects of bullying. For example, Lee shared how her supervisor's use of her power made her feel, "I wish that other people would have done more for me, too, especially looking into the power differentials of entry level or graduate students." Lee recognized that her position in the hierarchy did not afford her power to combat the power afforded to her supervisor, which was unequally weighted compared to her own (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2007). Lee lamented that others in power did not step if they knew, to intercede the bullying that was occurring.

The participants noted how the person bullying them was left unchecked and no repercussions happened, including no career consequences for the bully regarding promotion or career progression. Supervisors and higher-level administrators use their positional power to further their careers and manipulate situations and people to obtain what they want. According to Salin (2003a),

For bullying to occur enabling conditions must be in place and there must be additional motivating or triggering factors. There might also be further interaction effects between the three groups (restructuring or downsizing, organizational changes, and changes in the composition of the work group and management), for example, so that restructuring can lead to higher internal competition, thereby strengthening the motivation to bully and eliminate "competitors." (p. 1226)

Several participants identified that their supervisors and higher-level administrators' behavior was well known in the institution, and that their behaviors were justified regularly. Instead of acting to stop the bullying, excuses were made. Not being held accountable is an example of how these bullies use their power for their own progression. Many bullies were viewed as "invaluable" to the university, either due to longevity or positional power, and their behaviors were accepted and tolerated. Glyn shared,

I was always the kind of person who respected authority because I believe that people were in positions of power because they earned it and I learned pretty quickly in this field that's not always the case with how people are promoted or how things move around. A lot of it is longevity or who you know, not necessarily what you know.

Organizational Culture and Power

Organizational culture contributes to the acceptance (or not) of bullying in universities. Practices and values of individuals have a direct effect on the way individuals interact and behave within organizations (Schein, 1984). Ideally, in the participants' universities, their supervisors and higher-level administrators could have been sources of motivation, beliefs, and values that positively reflected the institution, which would have positively affected the participants. Due to subjecting the participants to workplace bullying behavior, the supervisors

114

and higher-level administrators instead created a culture in which they acted like a dictator using coercive power (French et al., 1959).

The emergence of a negative culture within departments and universities, made the participants (and fellow staff members) feel helpless and powerless in their positions. Marlin shared,

> [Supervisors and higher-level administrators] were trying to bend you to their will and doing what they thought was best even if it wasn't. There were so many times where I made an ethically wrong decision because the pressure was too much. I don't have the energy to fight this.

The toxic work culture resulted in some of the participants taking actions countered their own ethical beliefs. All 10 participants understood and identified power was used in their workplace bullying experience by their supervisors or higher-level administrators.

Kai described how her supervisor used his power during her workplace bullying experience,

> My direct supervisor worked there for almost a decade, maybe more, and he was there for a while, so it was his word against mine and so everyone was going to believe his word over mine. I was a brand-new staff member that had been there less than a year and there was no accountability because I can only imagine what he was saying about me. His position definitely affected who I talked to or who I thought would believe me.

The positional power of Kai's supervisor influenced how she perceived who she could confide or consult with when she was experiencing workplace bullying. Kai's story is not an abnormality in the participants' narratives. Many participants were very aware of the power their supervisor or higher-level administrator's power and their influence over others.

The various ways power manifested at the university contributed to institutional culture (Schein, 1984). The organizational culture of each of the participants' universities favored the positional power of the supervisors and higher-level administrators which influenced how departments operated and how, staff members, and colleagues perceived the participants. The participants were viewed in the "out" group (Stets & Burke, 2000), which positioned them with less access to informal power and fewer departmental allies. The acceptance of workplace bullying that existed within the participants' university or the department contributed to a toxic work culture. The social identity of the participants was affected and they felt a broken trust in the university and its leadership. The work culture involved a history of gossip, manipulation, and an understanding of supervisory power over others that contributed to how the participants were perceived by others too.

Social Identity and Power

Occasionally, the shared understanding of the supervisors and higher-level administrator's power unified the participants with colleagues who were or had previously experienced workplace bullying by their supervisors or higher-level administrators and were also in the "out" group. When the participants were not unified, one of the three things occurred. One, the colleagues would align or contribute to their supervisor's bullying behavior. Two, the colleagues would be silent bystanders. Three, the colleagues would ignore the behaviors with the understanding that it was simply the participants' time to be in the "out" group. It is possible that the values of the participants 'colleagues differed from the larger group, or that their behaviors towards the participants were rationalized through the fear of being in the "out" group or the possibility of their own job loss if they stood up to the bully. Participants shared their colleagues would observe their supervisor yelling or belittling them in a staff meeting or during a

116

presentation and would stay silent or other times contribute to their supervisor's bullying behaviors. Marlin describes, "[Supervisors] had their favorites and I would walk into a meeting early and [the supervisor and other staff] would be talking and I would walk in and they would stop talking. Are we in high school here?" The isolation from her colleagues were a part of Marlin being in the "out" group. Marlin's isolation may be an example of how organizational culture is used to explain workplace bullying because it was permitted and lead by her direct supervisor with her colleagues. If there are no policies or monitoring against bullying, there may be an interpretation that the organization accepts workplace bullying (Salin, 2003a). Jordan describes the organizational culture of her department and being in the in or out group,

> [The department] was extremely divided. Either you were treated well, or you were
> treated like garbage. [The supervisor] was so easily manipulated. They do not feel
> invested. That type of leadership is extremely disappointing. There is no accountability.
> The unbalance is blatant but not addressed. It is terrible, which was part of the reason
> why I had to leave because it was becoming such a conflict with my personal value
> system. It was becoming a stressor on me to watch what was happening aside from the
> bullying.

Ultimately, the powerlessness Jordan felt from her direct supervisor contributed to her leaving her position her university, and the field of student affairs permanently.

Power was used in workplace bullying in multiple ways for participants. Some examples of this power imbalance were intentional isolation from the participants supervisor or higher-level administrator, not allowing the participants to serve on the committees they wanted to serve on, or making or changing the participants decisions. As a result, the participants felt powerless

to change their circumstances and made difficult decisions that indefinitely affected the duration and direction of their careers in student affairs.

Bullies and Broken Trust

Trust, in any working relationship, is difficult. When bullying occurs, trust is affected. According to Busch and Hantusch (2000),

Trust is an essential value of all human relationships, but it is also a fragile good, which is hard to earn and easy to destroy… It is not easy to take the first step towards a trustful relationship but the only way to be trustworthy is to trust the other party. (p. 58)

For the purposes of this research, trust was defined as, an individual's willingness to be completely vulnerable to another individual in a relationship in which there is confidence within the relationship that both parties are benevolent, honest, open, reliable, competent, and respectful (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Trust was applied to the relationship the participants had with their supervisor or higher-level administrator, and even occasionally with their colleagues. The participants often commented how they went into their relationships with their supervisor or higher-level administrator with willing trust, confidence, and vulnerable. The participants noted how they started their position trusting (even tentatively) their supervisor, which occurred based on the participants' beliefs in the core values of student affairs (Long, 2012). Consequently, when each participant experienced workplace bullying with their supervisors or higher-level administrators, their trust did not merely change, it was broken. For example, Marley described his experience with the changes of trust with his higher-level administrator,

I don't think what I thought was a trusting relationship didn't exist or the way I thought it did. I think that was part of the issue. Maybe I believed I had been disillusioned before on how I thought the relationship was based and how it existed. And that experience that led

118

me to think maybe it wasn't what I thought it was and I need to reconsider how I engage

with this person.

Marley's reaction to the change in trust now evident between him and the higher-level

administrator was a common thread among the participants. Nearly all the participants were

unable to rebuild trust with their supervisor or higher-level administrator during and after their

workplace bullying experience. The only participant who indicated they were able to rebuild

some form of trust with their direct supervisor shared that they were able to rebuild trust

tentatively, slowly, and that they were initially very guarded. It is important to clarify this

participant did experience broken trust with their direct supervisor due to their workplace

bullying experience, yet they also indicated they rebuild some form of trust that still left them

guarded in their interactions with their supervisor over time.

In student affairs, trust and relationships matter, and trust was affected and changed when

workplace bullying experiences occurred (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). In fact, all five aspects of

trust for the participants; willingness to risk, benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and

competence, were affected because of their workplace bullying experience (Tschannen-Moran,

2014). With all 10 participants, it was clear that each participant's trust was changed because of

their experience with workplace bullying. Skylar discussed her experience when she was bullied

by her direct supervisor and her higher-level administrator. Skylar shared,

> In both situations, I felt like I had complete trust in the supervisor. I felt like I could trust
>
> them completely. That they knew everything. I really looked up to the person. And I was
>
> like, wow a person in that role that's really awesome. They are great. They are amazing.
>
> And that changed. A lot. I could never trust either of those folks again. Ever.

119

Skylar's trust in her supervisors diminished because of her workplace bullying experience. In addition to a loss of trust in their supervisors, there was altered, severed trust towards their colleagues, higher-level administrators, departments, and universities. This change was an implication that their relationship changed because their trust was betrayed (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). The lack of trust participants felt extend beyond the person bullying them to include others in the unit and on campus. The relationships participants had on campus changed because their initial trust in the supervisor and in others was betrayed (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). When individuals are bullied, they often become hesitant to engage, contribute, or interact and as a result, they become isolated or withdrawn (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). While it is true that all participants continued to contribute and engage with their students, they were hesitant to engage with their supervisors and higher-level administrators, occasionally with fellow colleagues. The feelings of isolation and betrayal led five participants to leave the student affairs field.

In each of these participants workplace bullying experiences, power was abused by supervisors and higher-level administrators, trust levels changed, and trust was broken, and relationships turned unfriendly. Lee described the change in trust she felt after her workplace bullying experience,

> I trusted information that senior leadership were giving me. Senior leadership. I trusted their leadership. I trusted what they said, trusted that they had my best interests in mind. I would definitely say a total 180 after that [workplace bullying] experience.

Lee's description of the change in trust she felt extended beyond her own supervisors and signified a change in trust for her for higher-level administrators as well and debatably even for future institutions. Tschannen-Moran (2014) argued; the dynamics of power, trust, and relationships are changed when trust is broken and there is a sense of betrayal from the harmed

120

person. This change in relationships and trust was certainly evident in the participants' workplace bullying experiences.

Often, the isolation participants identified made them feel like an outsider when they experienced workplace bullying. According to Suzuki (1998), trust often develops through an individual's identification with the workplace setting and being accepted and feeling a part of the "in" group. As seen by the participants' experiences, when they did not feel accepted by their colleagues, supervisor, or higher-level administrator, trust levels changed and relationships were shaken. These changes affected each participant's personal and professional's job, reputation, confidence, and self-identity.

Changing Relationships

According to Cooper and Miller (1998), when relationships are nurtured, trust is strong, and respect is given. These relationships help contribute to the development of effective and successful student affairs professionals. It is arguable that each participant was already successful when they experienced workplace bullying in their careers. For them, relationships mattered, and prior to their workplace bullying experience, they experienced trust, respect, and nurtured relationships in their working environments. For that reason, when they experienced workplace bullying, there was not only a change in their relationship with their supervisor or higher-level administrator, but there was a change in them. A complete shift in relationships occurred when the participants experienced workplace bullying. According to Erkutlu and Chafra (2014), a balance is sought in work relationships with a desire for a reciprocity by professionals looking to be treated the way that they seek to be treated. As a result of the change in their relationships with their supervisors due to bullying, the participants felt that this balance

was damaged. When workplace bullying is tolerated, the basis of relationships changes. For example, Corey shared,

> We [in student affairs] have a mission that is greater than the individuals like we are here to educate the world. I think a lot of people will use that as an excuse to engage in abusive and exploitative behavior because it is for the greater good and no it is not.

When excuses are made that show tolerance and acceptance of bullying behavior, relationships throughout the institution are affected.

All participants shared their relationships were adversely changed during and after their workplace bullying experience. Although their reactions varied, some experienced, shock, anger, frustration, etc., each participant indicated that their relationship with their supervisor or higher-level administrator completely altered. As a result, they felt less job satisfaction and stifled in their ability to make decisions, had a significant lack of trust with the university, HR, and the university leadership. As Tschannen-Moran (2014) shared, when a professional sees discrepancy emerges regarding what the professional was promised and what was delivered, the professional begins to question the work relationships and the incongruities. Participants observed discrepancies and inconsistencies with their supervisors and higher-level administrators and questioned their relationships.

Not only did the participants experience a damaged relationship because of their workplace bullying experience, there was an overall violation of the professional's psychological safety. Ultimately, when psychological safety is violated, the professional feels the trust in the leader, the organization, and other colleagues is damaged (Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

Emotional Effect of Bullying

Workplace bullying has had a lasting effect on the participants personally and professionally. Whether it was from having to make a difficult decision to leave a profession, job, and/or an institution they initially loved while not having another job, or making the decision to tough it out, desperately hoping someone, another colleague, or HR would hear them or that their supervisor or higher-level administrator would retire, leave, or be placed in another position, the participants carry the scars of their workplace bullying experience with them. As noted previously, the trauma the participants experienced was real and lasting. The emotional and physical stress that bullying causes can create long term psychosocial and physical consequences and can feel jarring and unsettling for individuals who experience it (Lovell & Lee, 2011). Supporting this prior research, Lee shared,

> Before the [workplace bullying], I was very confident. I felt like I had really good judgement in situations. I rarely had to call and ask for help of doing things step by step. I often was just already on the right track of doing what I was supposed to be doing. It was before I got knocked off that confidence horse.

The betrayal Lee felt resulted in a change in her confidence. Again, the betrayal from an individual who has been trusted to guide another in the workplace environment is emotionally scarring for the individual and may have a lasting affect as the professional moves forward in their career (Namie, 2003).

The emotional effect of workplace bullying does not stop when the professional leaves the job, or the supervisor or higher-level administrator becomes promoted, or leaves the university. Individuals carry the trauma of the workplace bullying experience with them into their next job. Morrison (2008) argued,

People do not choose to have foes in their social network; relationships with foes will be involuntary relationships. When a relationship degrades or turns sour in a workplace the individuals concerned often must continue to interact. The workplace is one of the few environments where people are 'forced' into relationships with others and, as a result, it is an ideal environment to examine these negative relationships (p. 332).

In this study, workplace trauma was defined as "the disintegration of a professional's fundamental self, resulting from employers or a supervisor's perceived or real continual and deliberate malicious treatment" (Wilson, 1991, p. 47). The participants experienced workplace trauma with their supervisors and the lasting effect of emotional trauma was definitely evident in the participants' narratives and that they carried their workplace bullying experiences with them long after their experiences.

Gender and Bullying

Gender does have a part in bullying. Relationships between gender and bullying are complex and ultimately shaped by power (Salin, 2003b). It is important to mention that literature on gender in workplace bullying is limited and only recently has received any attention. The effect of gender in workplace bullying is relevant and can be identified as a factor in workplace bullying (Wang & Hsieh., 2016). Gender, as a social construct, goes beyond binary considerations and this non-binary definition was used in this research study (Salin, 2003b).

Each participant indicated their workplace bullying experience that they discussed for this study was by their direct supervisor or a higher-level administrator and not by colleagues. Although there was reference of colleagues participating with supervisors or higher-level administrators in some aspects of workplace bullying, participants choose to share their workplace bullying experience with their supervisor or higher-level administrators with me.

124

It is important to recognize that I am not able fully able to speak to gender influences in workplace bullying in my study because of the ambiguity of the responses of the participants. In an effort to also protect their anonymity, I did not ask or inquire after the gender of their bully. Therefore, whatever pronouns they determined to use for their bully was their decision. Thus, I am making some assumptions based on their responses to discuss how my findings align with the literature regarding the role gender in workplace bullying.

According to the participant responses, four bullies were women and four were men, with two unidentified genders. Based off these responses, the participant experiences with gender in workplace bullying aligns with the literature. The participant responses confirm that both men and women are bullies. Namie's (2003) research indicated women were 58% of the perpetrator pool and men were 42% if the perpetrator pool. In this study it is relevant to note that the professional bully was of the same gender with five participants. For three of the participants, their bully was a different gender. The last two participants did not identify the gender of their bully. Like Namie (2003) found, half of the participants in my study experienced same gender bullying. It is important to note half of the participants had more mixed gender bullying that the literature would suggest. Because the gender of two of the bullies remains unknown, it is impossible to say with certainty that the majority of bullying is by an individual of the same gender. It is important to note that both genders engaged in both types of indirect and direct bullying with participants. This supports the literature that both men and women use or experience different tactics while being bullied (Namie, 2003). Participants experienced bullying by women and men and indicated that both genders engaged in direct and indirect bullying behaviors. Participants shared that they experienced direct bullying behaviors such as yelling, belittling, or persistent criticism and indirect bullying behaviors, such as isolation, gossip or

125

undermining from their supervisors or higher-level administrators, which were both genders. It is unfortunate that some participants experienced both forms of indirect and direct bullying from both genders. Both indirect and direct bullying caused participants distress, trauma, and had a lasting effect on them and their organization.

Participants did not name any of their bullies by name and this has implications. The participants may have made this decision to not name their bullies due to student affairs being an incredibly small field they may have been fearful of me finding out who their bullies were. This fact reiterates the fear felt by the participants and the lasting affect they felt because of their workplace bullying experience.

Profile of a Bully

Building a profile of a bully, in this section, I will discuss a profile of bully and the participants perspective of a profile of a bully. People most often think of playground bullies versus bullies in institutions of higher education. However, bullying is also an "adult issue" (Rayner, 1997, p. 199). In student affairs, workplace bullying is occurring, but is not openly discussed, or acknowledged. Bullying is destructive to workplace environments. Hollis (2015) describes workplace bullying in higher education as follows,

> Workplace bullying is like a petty thief, pilfering the resources of the organization. While the customary petty thief takes cash, the bully steals the productivity of the organization by causing employee disengagement. In an environment that can ill afford wasted resources, higher education would benefit from a critical look at the cost of workplace bullying and resulting employee disengagement. (p. 1)

Productivity represents one outcome of occurring due to bullying. Another is the longer-term effect on those bullied.

126

According to Dhar (2012), "bullying may either take a direct form, such as verbal abuse, or be indirect (e.g., libel and slander, the withholding of information)" (p. 81). As noted above, participants experienced both direct and indirect bullying from their supervisors or higher-level administrators. Indirect and direct bullying occurred for participants through verbal and nonverbal forms of communication. As seen in Table 1 (Chapter 2), examples of indirect bullying for participants were feeling undermined in their decisions, isolation, gossip, and examples of direct bullying as, manipulation, yelling, belittling, and verbal attacks.

With all of the participants, their supervisor or higher-level administrator used their positional power to bully them. Hodson and colleagues (2006) stated, "although power for some may provide at least a limited protective shield, it leaves those with less power all the more vulnerable to bullying" (p. 386). The participants' bullies used their positional power (Dhar, 2012) to limit committee opportunities, withheld information important to the participants' work, and amended or changed the decisions participants made without consulting them. These are some of the examples of how the participants' supervisors and higher-level administrators leveraged their positional power against them. Elangovan and Xie (2000) stated, "perceived coercive power of the supervisor will be negatively related to subornation motivation since coercive power is generally associated with reprimands and penalties" (p. 321). Supervisors and higher-level administrators who were bullies used their positions to exert coercive power against the participants (French et al., 1959), which had a harmful effect on the participants in their motivation to continue in their role or perform at their highest level.

This positional and coercive power by supervisors and higher-level administrators went unchecked and was ignored, tolerated, and even accepted at the participants' institutions. Pointedly, even when staff and HR were aware of workplace bullying, the supervisors and

127

higher-level administrators were allowed to continue their behavior. Because they were allowed to continue with workplace bullying behavior, a toxic climate and environment flourished in which staff members in departments were aware of the supervisors and higher-level administrators who were bullying participants. Lee shared,

> I think [bullies] in those positions are fully aware of that [positional and coercive power]. It's baffling. When I was going through it, it was one of those things that you hear about on the news and you are like, "How did this person do this to this many people?" It is a power thing. It is a power dynamic.

Lee's experience with workplace bullying helped her better understand the power dynamic between her and her direct supervisor. It is significant to note that this bullying behavior, and many of the participants supervisors and higher-level administrators bullying behavior went unchecked with seemingly no accountability for their actions.

The bullies in this study had several aspects in common. They 1. exerted power they had over others in coercive and negative ways; 2. used their power to take away some job responsibilities; 3. publicly humiliated the person they bullied; and 4. worked to get others to agree with the bullying comments-or at a minimum frightened bystander. Pointedly, the bully was not reprimanded by HR, and in some cases their behavior was condoned by the statements, this is just the way they are. In this study, all the bullies were supervisors.

According to Elangovan and Xie (2000), "future research needs to seek a fuller understanding of how perceptions of supervisor power may influence employee responses. There are a number of important questions that remain unresolved" (p. 326). It is of note that nearly 21 years later I have conducted a research study that focuses on one of these points exactly; how supervisor power may have an influence on employee responses and its affect. Through the

participant responses, we are more aware that supervisor power has a large influence and effect on how an employee responds and that, still, more research needs to be done.

Paradox: Bullies vs. Values of Student Affairs

Leaders in any organization play an incredibly significant role in the overall development, preservation, and duration of the organization's culture (Schein, 1984). This role is especially true in student affairs. Leaders in student affairs who engage in workplace bullying contribute to a negative organizational culture which affects not only the individual they are bullying but also the work environment. Namie (2003) identified that a characteristic that may be common to all bullies is that they are extremely controlling, and they exploit their targeted employees, and that many bullies would actually stop workplace bullying if they were held accountable and if the rules were changed. The mere fact that leaders in student affairs engage in workplace bullying in student affairs is baffling, much less that their behaviors may be accepted, tolerated, and explained away by the administration. These actions are incongruous with the values of student affairs. Thus, there is an irony and paradox of workplace bullying occurring in the helping profession of student affairs.

Each of the participants were asked about this existing paradox in student affairs. Participants were asked specifically what they believed was the paradox and contradiction of the assumption that student affairs professionals work in a supportive and caring environment, yet there are contradictions being uncovered because of workplace bullying. Participants were asked about their insight and thoughts as to why this contradiction exists. Although their answers varied, there was a common thread among all participants of them understanding the existence of this contradiction and having concerns about what this means for the field of student affairs. The final thoughts from the participants provide relevant insights into why workplace bullying still

exists in student affairs, and why it isn't spoken about and minimally addressed. Listed below are several of the participants' responses to this important question.

Lee

Lee shared that she believed this dichotomy exists between the values of student affairs and the existence of bullying in the profession because of the role that student affairs professionals play in supporting students but not each other. She shared, "I think it is easy to hide in our field because we do all these great things for our students but when we take off the hat, we are sometimes a different person for our colleagues." She discusses that the students are bill payers and that they are an important part of the business of a university and they are paying for services student affairs professionals are providing. Lee stated,

> I definitely think there is a correlation between holding ourselves to a higher standard with our students than we do with each other sometimes. We are taught not to burn bridges, don't make a scene, don't piss their own person [supervisor] off because they know people. I think the power cloaks our ability to handle that with each other because it is such a relational field. It is this thing that happens and it is really hard to describe why. I definitely think it is entry and mid-level people worrying about how do we get to the middle or senior level positions. It is usually without making a fuss and doing what we are told. I think power definitely changes everything with that.

Unfortunately, Lee has experienced workplace bullying twice in her career. Lee communicated that there is an expectation for student affairs professionals to treat other professionals the way that they treat students. This, however, is not the case.

Glyn

Glyn disclosed she believes this paradox exists because student affairs professionals who are bullies had their own workplace bullying experiences and because of their experiences feel that they have the *right* to do the same to other student affairs professionals. Glyn also described the environment that student affairs professionals is a perceived as a caring one, but caring people get taken advantage of. Glyn shared,

> I think a lot of time our field feels indebted to the jobs that we have earned like, "oh my God, I owe them so much because of this experience" and no, you earned that thing [job]. And there is this feeling, "I am working these 70 hours a week for minimum wage because we care and the place cares about me," and nah, it is still a business.

Glyn shared the paradox is also due to not only caring student affairs professionals getting taken advantage of, and also because the jobs that student affairs professionals are in should be they earned, not because they were given to them. She shared, "I earned the position I am in. Giving me this job wasn't doing me a favor." Glyn expressed that the passion and caring that put student affairs professionals in these roles is often used against them in order to convince student affairs professionals to work 70 hours a week because the university recognizes their passion and care. Working 70 hours a week, without compensation or overtime, is the expectation and new *normal* for a university that *cares* about them. According to Bidner (2017),

> In student affairs, we often compete for recognition of who is most overworked. For example, recognition for who worked the most overtime at Spring Weekend or who had the latest evening duty call. As a result, student affairs privileges overachievers and busyness. (p. 37)

131

This lack of concern for the student affairs professional's well-being, an unreasonable

expectation from supervisors and higher-level administrators that "if we are not doing

everything, we are doing nothing" (Bidner, 2017, p. 37) along with a competition for which staff

member has worked the most hours creates a prime environment for workplace bullying to

occur.

Corey

Corey discussed that the higher education environment has had budget cuts over the last

40 years and that has made being in the field harder for student affairs professionals as the needs

of students require more support and are done with fewer staff. Corey shared the incongruity in

higher education could be that higher education gets a reputation for being a supportive

environment that it does not deserve. She stated,

> I have this friend who works in higher education that says that higher education gets a lot
>
> of unwarranted praise for being a supportive work environment and it is not. There is
>
> nothing inherently supportive about higher education. And I think that is true. And I love
>
> working in higher education because I love the students and I love what a university
>
> stands for. But I have no more illusions about this is a workplace that cares more about its
>
> employees than corporations.

It is arguable that Corey believed at one time a university could be a supportive environment for

student affairs professionals. After her bullying experience, it is evident that her perspective has

changed and that she has no more *illusions* that higher education is a supportive environment.

Emerson

Emerson shared the contradiction of the values of student affairs and the tolerance of

bullying behaviors lies in that in higher education, there is a customer service mentality for

students, but not for student affairs professionals. She offered, "You and I both know the faculty are more important, so we are the customer service end of it and usually customer service jobs are not very pleasant. So, the college's main goal is to educate the students." Emerson felt faculty were treated as more important than the staff in higher education. Despite student affairs professionals playing important roles, they often are not treated well and do not treat one another well. Emerson further shares that bullying often occurs in silos and that the existence of silos allows for an environment for bullying to persist.

Marley

Marley, too, noted how the main focus of student affairs professionals' centers on giving attention, care, and compassion to the students. As a result, the focus is not on fellow staff members. Marley added, "When it comes time to deal with each other, we act like any other employee in any other business most of the time." Marley came to understand that student affairs was no different than the corporate workplace. Marley added,

> Because we don't take the things we know and the things we want to do as student affairs professionals and apply those towards each other or other professionals. Maybe it is part of that cliché' or adage of "physician heal thyself." We don't apply the same concepts to ourselves with each other.

Marley's understanding of how student affairs parallels with the corporate workplace is juxtaposed with the impression that the profession of student affairs is meant to be drastically different than the corporate workplace.

Summary

Student affairs professionals are meant to create a warm, welcoming, compassionate environment for students. However, it is evident from the bullying narratives of the participants

that student affairs professionals are not creating these environments for each other. Yoder (2019) argued,

> Student Affairs divisions, as we know, are charged with creating welcoming, inclusive, and positive environments for students on campus when they are engaged in out-of-class activities. If our main task is creating that welcoming and inclusive environment for students—including student conduct conversations and advisor-role–related conversations for the smooth running of groups and creating "good" environment for students—why, as professionals, are we so bad at creating it for ourselves? Why do we treat each other so badly at different points for different reasons? (p. 13)

The findings of this study show that indeed bullying is occurring in student affairs and is having negative outcomes on an individual level and also for the institutions given employee turnover and toxic work cultures.

HR and Consequences to Bullies

According to researchers, supervisor to supervisee bullying could be a product of the current HR management practices that allow bullying to flourish when higher level administrators abandon their responsibilities and do not intervene when workplace bullying is occurring (Salin, 2003a). Salin (2003a) argued that in some organizations, "bullying and other forms of harassment seem to be more or less 'permitted' as the way things are done" (p. 1220). This acceptance of workplace bullying was the perception of many of the participants of HR at each of their institutions. Throughout their workplace bullying experiences, participants shared their perception or experiences of the HR department was not positive. Many participants shared staff members in their departments knew HR were aware of their workplace bully's behavior and shared that their behavior was just the way they are. Participants shared it seemed that HR was

protective of the institution and was more interested in this role than in assisting staff members. An example of this would be when Emerson stated even though HR had multiple complaints about her direct supervisor, to her knowledge, no action was taken, and the workplace bullying continued. This acceptance of the supervisor's or higher-level administrator's behavior by HR left their behavior unchecked.

This acceptance or 'unchecked' behavior allowed for workplace bullying to continue and created a toxic environment for participants in their departments and at the university. Although the entire role of HR is meant to assist staff members with resources and support for difficult, toxic, hostile work environments, in the case of the participants in this study it did not. Namie (2003) reflected on the negative effects of workplace bullying:

> Witnesses know when bullying happens, whether or not it was behind closed doors. When a high performing employee is fired and humiliated by "exit parade"--given a box to take private belongings, escorted by HR and security--or simply disappears without explanation one day, fear dominates the workplace. Fear-driven workplaces with poor morale undermine employee commitment and productivity. (p. 5)

The mere fact that most of the participants saw HR as a place that would protect the institution instead of helping them contributed to the toxic work cultures they endured.

An example of this would be Jordan's experience with HR. Jordan shared that she and her direct supervisor eventually went to HR for a mediation. Prior to the HR mediation, Jordan had requested a supervisor change from a higher-level administrator due to the severity of her workplace bullying by her direct supervisor. She was denied this change. After that request, Jordan and her direct supervisor went to a mediation through HR. A mediation occurred, and Jordan shares, "Nothing resulted from it [the HR mediation]. Then I learned that she [the bully]

135

had been to several mediations prior with different people, who also left. Everything failed to change. It just got worse." Jordan's direct supervisor had multiple mediations and another mediation with Jordan, and this should have been a red flag for HR. However, rather than addressing the behavior through other actions for the bully, they allowed Jordan's direct supervisor to continue bullying other student affairs professionals, even after multiple mediations with their direct reports.

Three other participants—Lee, Landry, and Corey—also contacted HR for help. For Corey, a HR staff member asked her if she "really wanted to stay," and added that it was a hard work environment. In essence, Corey was told to stop complaining if she wanted to stay. For Lee, HR did help her. It was only after the intervention from HR that Lee's direct supervisor tried to help support and protect her from the higher-level administrator who was bullying her. Although HR did help Lee in some regard, she did state that it was only after she went to HR that HR discovered that the higher-level administrator was bullied three other individuals that experienced workplace bullying and left as a result. Even though HR is now aware of workplace bullying that was occurring, according to Lee, "to this day, they still haven't changed the system and this person is still a higher-level administrator." Landry shared, "I went to HR in my time with being there and that got me nowhere." When he did go to HR to report his direct supervisor's behavior, he shared that there were no changes and even when he went to a higher-level administrator, they acknowledged the issues with his direct supervisor and that as long as they "got things done" they were not really concerned with Landry's direct supervisor's behavior.

All three of these participants left their institutions, with Corey leaving her institution without another job. Fear was a factor for some of the other participants in not reporting their direct supervisor or higher-level administrator's behaviors to HR. Skylar shared,

> I spoke with my partner about it. And I spoke to a friend about it. And that is it. I was afraid to report it. Because I didn't want to lose my job. I felt shut up. It was awful.

Being fearful of a loss of job, damages to their reputations, and being aware that HR was accepting of workplace bullying at their institution left the participants with little to no choices.

The acceptance and tolerance of this behavior by HR with the perception that HR is not helpful creates a toxic culture with HR contributing to the negative culture instead of being a lever of change in the toxic culture.

Lasting Effect of Bullying

The effect of bullying goes beyond the direct bullying experience. Indeed, emotional scars are carried over into future positions. None of the literature reviewed discussed this aftermath in details, thus this study contributes new information to the field. For example, Skylar shared the long-term effects of her workplace bullying experience. She stated:

> I was bitter. Bitter and angry. I wish I were stronger to stand up for myself. I just kind of took it. I never experienced it before so if I were watching someone in my shoes, I would probably been like...you do not need to put up with that. Stop. You need to go to HR. It is easy to armchair quarterback with someone else's experience. But when you are going through it…I was so stunned.

Skylar's reaction and fear of losing her job and reputation was one of the reasons why she decided not to report her direct supervisor to HR. The use of the power a bully possesses, in particular a supervisor, contributes to this fear of job loss.

When bullies are not held accountable, people will not come forward when workplace bullying occurs. Not only will individuals not come forward, the bully will continue in their behaviors, deeming them as acceptable behaviors and continuing to create a cycle for those who have been bullied to bully others. Salin (2003a) argued,

> If there is no policy against bullying, no monitoring policy and no punishments for those who engage in bullying, it might be interpreted that the organization accepts it, and a possible perpetrator will see the costs and dangers of bullying as very low. (p. 1221)

Because of the negative perception of HR in not acting against bullies, the perception that there are no consequences for workplace bullying in student affairs persisted for the participants. Emerson offered,

> I think that even if there were policies in place [my supervisor] would have acted like that and when there are not stricter repercussions for your actions, people are allowed to act even when there are polices in place to protect the employees, it is very hard to get anything done and then why even report?

Emerson's reaction to HR was not uncommon among the participants. Namie's (2003) research supports the accounts of my participants. She found that "data to prevent bullying-related losses exist. Because the complaint system gatekeepers (in HR) hear all the stories, the employer has evidence of bullying's prevalence. Everyone knows who the repeat offenders are" (p. 5). Yet, despite this knowledge by HR, there were no consequences for the bullies in my study. The frustration of participants for lack of accountability for their bullies, even with HR, was evident throughout their narratives.

Ultimately, workplace bullying can have severe consequences for employees and for organizations. Dhar (2012) stated "consequences of workplace bullying included low levels of

motivation and morale of the employees, employees getting involved in counterproductive work behavior, in the process of taking revenge, and some even had developed the intentions to leave their organization" (p. 92). However, if administrators can address workplace bullying quickly, effectively, with an understanding to all staff members that workplace bullying will not be tolerated, administrators can role model appropriate behaviors for their departments and universities and prevent severe consequences for student affairs professionals. Colbert and colleagues (2016) stated **"work relationships play a key role in promoting employee flourishing, and that examining the differential effects of a taxonomy of relationship functions brings precision to our understanding of how relationships affect individual flourishing" (p. 1199) Allowing employees to flourish required that HR hold bullies accountable for workplace bullying behaviors, along with a zero-tolerance policy. If this culture existed, student affairs professional would not be fearful or hesitant to ask for help when workplace bullying occurs. Because HR was minimally helpful for my participants and did not hold bullies accountable for their actions, those that were bullied felt powerless due to the lack of support structures for them. The participants had little to no options when they experienced workplace bullying, with the exception of two participants noted above who did try to change their situation. One participant engaged in a formal mediation with her supervisor-bully (which was ultimately ineffective), and another participant noted they began to slowly rebuild their trust in their supervisor when the bullying behavior ended because she had to continue to work at her institution.

Implications and Future Research

If workplace bullying continues and is ignored or at times even accepted in student affairs, the implications of workplace bullying in student affairs has long term effects for both student affairs professionals and the field. First, workplace bullying is costly. Recruiting for

positions is expensive, thus losing personnel due to bullying represents extra costs for the institution. Second, when workplace bullying occurs, the immediate work environment, the professional, and the university are damaged. A toxic work culture effects productivity and teamwork.

The effect of workplace bullying in student affairs is like a pebble in water. Workplace bullying creates a ripple effect within the department and ultimately throughout the university. The ripple is created when the bully engages in indirect or direct bullying behaviors towards members of their division or direct reports and subsequently those members or direct reports engage in indirect or direct bullying behaviors with others, hence creating a vicious cycle of bullying. Salin (2003a) describes bullying as a "spiraling process building on vicious cycles" (p. 1217). Additionally, because this cycle is allowed to continue to exist in student affairs, these cycles can cascade and create secondary bullying spirals within the university (Salin, 2003a). Although it is unknown whether any of the participants bullies were bullied, research shows that this could likely be one of the reasons why the supervisor engaged in workplace bullying behaviors with the participants.

Consequently, not only does the institution and student affairs profession lose talented professionals, the reputation of student affairs of being a warm, welcoming profession with holistic values to guide and direct student affairs professionals is affected. According to Namie (2003), "employment practices liability can be substantial. Bullied targets, often the most talented employees, are driven from the workplace. Turnover is expensive. Increased health care utilization can result in heftier premium costs borne by employers" (p. 5). When staff turnover is high and frequent, the workplace environment can be in a difficult with staff members having difficulties building relationships (Yoder, 2019). Not only does workplace bullying result in

constant staff turnover, which can be costly, but workplace bullying also has long lasting traumatic effects for professionals who experience it.

It is important to mention that the purpose of this study was to show that not only does bullying exist in student affairs but to focus on how these experiences affected trust and relationships from those affected. Hopefully, the outcomes from this study will provide insights that help preventing bully from occurring and can inform setting up HR practices that have consequences for those who are bullies. Yet currently, I can confirm that workplace bullying exists in student affairs. The participants noted a range of outcomes from their bullying experiences, which could have been prevented if the bullying stopped due to HR intervention.

Throughout this study, I identified my own biases and limitations in the researcher as an instrument (Appendix E) and worked diligently to ensure that the participants were unaware of my own experiences, and their responses were authentic, honest, and unprompted. During my time with the participants, I found their responses to be trustworthy and genuine. The affect workplace bullying had on the participants is lasting, damaging, and life-altering. Lutgen-Sandvik (2006) concluded that "adult bullying at work is a shocking, frightening, and at times shattering experience, both for those targeted and for onlookers" (p. 406). These outcomes were certainly the case for the participants in this study.

Advice from Participants

Each of the participants shared how they would advise someone who was experiencing workplace bullying in student affairs. The participant responses varied with two participants encouraging staff members to shut up and play along and others sharing the qualification that individuals needed to know how much they are willing to put up with before leaving. These answers reflect the personal experiences of the participants and are based on how the trauma they

each experienced affected them differently. Listed below are the responses from several participants in how they would advise another staff member who was experiencing workplace bullying in student affairs.

Landry

Landry responded to the question of advice to participant with sharing that staff members need to understand how much they can tolerate from their workplace bullying experience. He shared,

> I would say first and foremost, assess what you can and cannot do. If it is a toxic environment—how much can you actually put up with? Are you in a situation where you can leave without another opportunity? Are you in a situation to where you have to stay because this is your means of survival? When I wasn't at work I was always spending my time fearful of community, fearful of interacting, fearful I made a mistake. So really assess the damage that has been done to you. Then create an exit plan. Whether that be an immediate plan or a long-term plan, be willing to take the time to understand and plan how you need to exit.

The trauma Landry experienced when he was not at work influenced how he would encourage his peers to establish a game plan to leave. Landry did not advise that staff members go to HR or another higher-level administrator, rather, he advised that the staff member leave when they experience workplace bullying.

Kai

Kai is another participant who encourages staff to leave when they experience workplace bullying. She does note that HR could be helpful but believes that HR is there to protect the university. Kai offered the following advice to others:

Just get out. Maybe HR is helpful but I also have to believe that HR is there to protect the company. I don't know if I would ever go that route. The whole year wasn't worth the stress. It wasn't worth the money. I should have left sooner. I should have trusted my gut. I should have gone home and redone my search and found somewhere better. I think trusting that what's happening to you is actually happening to you. You are not making it out is really important and getting out is important too.

Kai's advice relies on taking personal action to change the interaction by getting out of the harmful situation and reflects the ability to do this as a new professional without roots in the community. She reiterates the overall perception that HR has the interest of the university in mind above those of the employees.

Skylar

Skylar's advice was one of the few responses that included action to change the bullying situation. In her response she encourages staff members to take charge and not continue to endure workplace bullying. She shared,

Do something about it. Don't let it continue. Those policies are there for a reason. Don't be afraid to rock the boat. Have someone supportive to talk to about it. Definitely trauma therapy would help a lot. Employee assistance programs, take advantage of them. A good friend to kick your butt and say, "hey, you should report this." And I didn't have that there.

Even though Skylar was terminated, she advocated for others in the same situation to speak up for themselves, even when it is difficult. However, she also understands that one of the reasons why she endured her workplace bullying experience was because she did not have another staff

member encouraging her to address her experience and report it. Finding an internal ally is important.

Jordan

Jordan would advise student affairs professionals who are being bullied to keep documentation of what is going on. Based off of her experience, she advises staff members to document their experience. Jordan stated,

> Take good notes. Take good notes of your meetings. Put notes on your calendar. Even if it doesn't feel like bullying by definition but something just made you uncomfortable, write it down. Keep a journal. Keep notes, keep it on your calendar, whatever it needs to be. That was one of my fails. I just brushed it off for years.

Jordan's additional advice to shut up, suck it up no doubt is a product of her own lengthy workplace bullying by her direct supervisor. Advising others to be silent while they are experiencing workplace bullying is part of the reasons that workplace bullying goes unchecked.

Summary

The implications for workplace bullying in student affairs affect the student affairs professional and the student affairs profession because it is costly and has a long-lasting affect. In order to better understand these implications, further research needs to be done for workplace bullying in student affairs.

Actions for Campus Leaders and Student Affairs Professional Associations

Training and policy implementation must be a priority for universities. Thus, training and policy implementation must be a priority for campus leaders. Not only does more research need to be done, but universities need to implement HR and managerial training for campus leaders and supervisors, have better enforcement polices and processes to hold workplace bullies

accountable for their actions, and engage in a value driven policy which supports those affected by workplace bullying (Namie, 2003). By having HR and managerial workplace bullying prevention training, the university will establish a precedent and a commitment to understand and ultimately prevent workplace bullying. Included in this training should be how HR and administrators enforce polices, investigations, reporting, and implementation for accountability when workplace bullying occurs. It should be an expectation that these policies, investigations, reporting are created by and enforced by the university administrators and HR, to be effective. In fact, Namie (2003) stressed, "employee-led, voluntary solutions are the most likely to succeed" (p. 5).

By implementing these expectations, along with a value driven policy which focuses on workplace reporting protection for reporting parties, support, and resources for those affected by workplace bullying and reporting parties, and retaliation procedures in place, the university will be transparent about their stance on workplace bullying, how it is addressed, and protection for those affected. Without these polices and training, workplace bullying will continue to be secret that continues occurring more frequently than it is being reported.

The participants were also asked about what could have been done to prevent workplace bullying to them. Again, their answers varied with some participants stating that patterns need to be recognized with others encouraging staff members to keep their mouth shut. Their responses to prevention are disquieting as they seem to be less hopeful about policies and procedures that could have existed to help them with rather, in their statements, more distrusting and skeptical about prevention measures that could have existed to help them. Skylar shared, in response to what could have been done to prevent her bullying experience,

Personally, keep my mouth shut. Not be authentic, anyway. Not share who I was, not

share the struggles I was going through. Figure out a way to block it out and pretend that

everything was fine. Stop being transparent. Tell them everything is fine and everything

is great. And just do your job and get out. If I didn't trust people and look up to people I

think I would have done a lot better. I let my guard down.

Skylar's response to prevention measures are disappointing but not surprising given her

experience. If campus leaders understood more about the extent of bullying like Skylar's on

campus, steps to stop bullying from happening would occur more swiftly.

For Student Affairs Professionals Associations, not only is there a need to support and

offer opportunities for workplace bullying research in student affairs, but a push from

professional associations such as, NASPA and ACPA, to implement policies and statements that

do not condone workplace bullying in student affairs. Professional Associations could offer

workplace bullying trainings, certificates, and workshops for supervisors and higher-level

professionals. Professional Associations could also offer a confidential reporting system for

those who have experienced or are experiencing workplace bullying where resources and support

are given. At the very least Student Affairs Professional Associations could recognize and accept

that workplace bullying exists. The first step to preventing workplace bullying in student affairs

is to acknowledge that workplace bullying exists, even in student affairs.

Future Research

Trust and relationships were affected severely and significantly as a result of the

participants' workplace bullying experience and often spilled over into current and future

collegial, supervisor, and even personal relationships. As Namie (2003) found that, "The

characteristic common to all bullies is that they are controlling competitors who exploit their

cooperative targets. Most bullies would stop if the rules changed and bullying was punished" (p. 4). Unfortunately, the rules have not been changed and workplace bullying still exists.

As noted, literature is still limited on workplace bullying in higher education (Farmer, 2011). To further understand workplace bullying, more research must be done. Researchers share that qualitative and quantitative studies would be effective with even using peer reports as a form of study to obtain data to help understand workplace bullying (Salin, 2003a). Doing a quantitative national survey of bullying in student affairs could help provide information on the scope of the issue in the field. More research needs to be done about how administrators react when they are aware of workplace bullying and what occurs when systems are in place that do hold bullies accountable. Equally, it is important to research the outcomes of efforts in place for workplace bullying prevention

Conclusion

According to Namie (2003), "the time has come to treat workplace bullying the same as sexual harassment or racial discrimination, to identify the perpetrators, establish rules of conduct and penalties, and even pass laws prohibiting and penalizing bullying" (p. 1). If workplace bullying was taken as seriously as sexual harassment, hopefully we would see less secrecy and more resolution around preventing and addressing workplace bullying.

The resolution to workplace bullying in student affairs is simple. Student affairs professionals, all student affairs professionals, supervisors, supervisees, colleagues, etc., should follow the platinum rule and at the very minimum, the golden rule. Rönnedal (2015) states that, "according to the golden rule (GR) you ought to treat others as you want to be treated by them; and according to the platinum rule (PR), you ought to treat others as they want to be treated by you" (p. 222). If student affairs professionals would follow or even remember to treat their

147

colleagues, supervisors, supervisees with this rule in mind, workplace bullying would be minimal or even non-existent. However, this was not the case for the participants in this study.

What was learned in this study from the participants and through the literature are three simple items, 1. bullying exists in student affairs, 2. there is a gap in the literature for workplace bullying in student affairs and 3. more training needs to be done with HR and administrators to prevent, address, and hold bullies accountable while administrators and HR need to implement polices to support those affected by workplace bullying. Perhaps an easier way to define bullying is as continual, persistent workplace actions occurring through verbal and non-verbal communication, which exacerbates an imbalance of power for the person affected and causes emotional trauma and other consequences.

The participants in this study related how the secrecy of workplace bullying in student affairs resulted in trauma and long-term severe affect for them. The narrative Jordan provided summarized the experiences of the participants:

> My experience with bullying is that it can be very subtle and almost unnoticeable. It doesn't always stand up and smack you in the face. Sometimes it does, but it is this slow wearing down that I didn't even realize was going on and I was being manipulated. I think bullies are manipulators and bullies manipulate up but they also manipulate down and they can be very fake and it can be very dangerous. It wears on you without even noticing.

Jordan's experience of feeling manipulated and worn should not have occurred. For a profession with values based in encouraging professionals to serve students with compassion and value, workplace bullying towards one another is not acceptable.

Yoder (2019) admonished,

Friends in student affairs, we must do better. While it is realized that management

training is lacking for supervisors in our field, especially when a professional rise to the

director-level and above, avenues should be provided to introduce and develop effective

skills to lead a department. (p. 13)

This study highlighted how workplace bullying does occur in student affairs. Addressing this

problem requires a change in culture that holds bullies accountable, strong HR policies for

reporting bullying and providing support, and allies versus by-standers who call out bullying

behavior. Friends in student affairs, we must be better. We must do better.

REFERENCES

American College Personnel Association. (2021). *Mission, vision, and values*.

> http://www.myacpa.org/values.

American Psychological Association. (2019). *Publication manual of the American Psychological*

> *Association* (7th ed.). https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000

Aquino, K., Grover, S. L., Goldman, B., & Folger, R. (2003). When push doesn't come to shove:

> Interpersonal forgiveness in workplace relationships. *Journal of Management Inquiry*,

> *12*(3), 209-216. https://doi.org/10.1177/1056492603256337

Bartlett, J. E., & Bartlett, M. E. (2011). Workplace bullying: An integrative literature review.

> *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, *13*(1), 69-84.

> https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422311410651

Beran, T. N., & Tutty, L. (2002). Children's reports of bullying and safety at school. *Canadian*

> *Journal of School Psychology*, *17*(2), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1177/082957350201700201

Best College Reviews. (2020). *What are student affairs*?

> https://www.bestcollegereviews.org/faq/what-is-student-affairs/

Bidner, C. (2017). When we cannot be healthy: Chronic illness and self-care for student affairs.

> *The Vermont Connection*, *38*(1), Article 6. https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/tvc/vol38/iss1/6

Björkqvist, K., Österman, K., & Hjelt-Bäck, M. (1994). Aggression among university

> professionals. *Aggressive behavior*, *20*(3), 173-184. https://doi.org/10.1002/1098-

> 2337(1994)20:3<173::AID-AB2480200304>3.0.CO;2-D

Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (2013). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership*

> (5th ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Branch, S., & Murray, J. (2015). Workplace bullying. *Organizational Dynamics*, *44*(4), 287-295. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2015.09.006

Branch, S., Ramsay, S., & Barker, M. (2013). Workplace bullying, mobbing and general harassment: A review. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *15*(3), 280-299. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2370.2012.00339.x

Busch, J. S., & Hantusch, N. (2000). I don't trust you, but why don't you trust me? *Dispute Resolution Journal*, *55*(3), 56. https://www.proquest.com/docview/198123574?accountid=10919

Colbert, A. E., Bono, J. E., & Purvanova, R. K. (2016). Flourishing via workplace relationships: Moving beyond instrumental support. *Academy of Management Journal*, *59*(4), 1199-1223. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2014.0506

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, *19*(5), 2–14. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X019005002

Cooper, D. L., & Miller, T. K. (1998). Influence and affect: Professional development in Student Affairs. *New Directions for Student Services*, *1998*(84), 55-69. https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.8405

Cowan, R. L., & Fox, S. (2014). Being pushed and pulled: professionals' roles in bullying situations. *Personnel Review, 44(1),* 119-139. https://doi.org//10.1108/PR-11-2013-0210

Cowie, H., Naylor, P., Rivers, I., Smith, P. K., & Pereira, B. (2002). Measuring workplace bullying. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *7*(1), 33-51. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1359-1789(00)00034-3

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Dhar, R. L. (2012). Why do they bully? Bullying behavior and its implication on the bullied. *Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health*, *27*(2), 79-99. https://doi.org/10.1080/15555240.2012.666463

Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., & Cooper, C. (2003). *Bullying and emotional abuse in the workplace: International perspectives in research and practice* (1st ed.; pp. 3-30). CRC Press.

Elangovan, A. R., & Xie, J. L. (2000). Effects of perceived power of supervisor on subordinate work attitudes. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 21*(6), 319–328. https://doi.org/10.1108/01437730010343095

Erkutlu, H., & Chafra, J. (2014). *Ethical Leadership and Workplace Bullying in Higher Education. Hacettepe Universitesi Egitim Fakultesi Dergisi-Hacettepe University Journal, 29*(3), 55-67. http://hdl.handle.net/11693/48960

Evans, N. J., Forney, D. S., Guido, F. M., Patton, L. D., & Renn, K. A., (2010). *Student development in college: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Evans, N. J., & Reason, R. D. (2001). Guiding principles: A review and analysis of student affairs philosophical statements. *Journal of college student development*, *42*(4), 359-377. https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/edu_pubs/22

Farmer, D. (2011). Workplace bullying: An increasing epidemic creating traumatic experiences for targets of workplace bullying. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, *1*(7), 196-203. https://www.academia.edu/828014/Workplace_Bullying_An_increasing_epidemic_creating_traumatic_experiences_for_targets_of_workplace_bullying

French, J. R., Raven, B., & Cartwright, D. (1959). The bases of social power. *Classics of Organization Theory*, *7*, 311-320.

Gaetano, M. (2010). *Bullying: A View from the Corporate World. Journal of the International Ombudsman Association*, *3*(2). https://eds.s.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=7ce2cb40-c334-4dc0-ba27-24146b7f2a0f%40redis

Gerstenfield, J. A. (2016). *Understanding workplace bullying among staff in higher education* (Publication No. 10246368) [Doctoral Dissertation, Texas Christian University]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Glasø, L., Vie, T. L., Holmdal, G. R., & Einarsen, S. (2010). An application of affective events theory to workplace bullying. *European Psychologist*, *16*(3),198-208. https://doi.org/10.1027/1016-9040/a000026

Hodson, R., Roscigno, V. J., & Lopez, S. H. (2006). Chaos and the abuse of power: Workplace bullying in organizational and interactional context. *Work and Occupations*, *33*(4), 382–416. https://doi.org/10.1177/0730888406292885.

Hoel, H., & Cooper, C. L. (2000). *Destructive conflict and bullying at work*. Manchester School of Management, UMIST.

Hollis, L. P. (2015). Bully university? The cost of workplace bullying and professional disengagement in American higher education. *Sage Open*, *5*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244015589997

Jordan Dungy, G. (2003). Organization and functions of student affairs. In J. H. Schuh, S. R. Jones, & V. Torres (Eds.), *Student services: A handbook for the profession* (4th ed., pp. 339-356). Jossey-Bass.

Karabulut, A. T. (2016). Bullying: Harmful and hidden behavior in organizations. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *229*, 4-11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.07.108

Keashly, L., Trott, V., & MacLean, L. M. (1994). Abusive behavior in the workplace: A preliminary investigation. *Violence and Victims*, *9*, 341-341. https://doi.org/10.1891/0886-6708.9.4.341

Leigh, L., Robyn, R., Madelyn, G., & Jenni, G. (2014). The inferences of gender in workplace bullying: A conceptual analysis. *Gender & Behavior*, *12*(1), 6059-6067. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC154673

Lester, J. (Ed.). (2013). *Workplace bullying in higher education*. Routledge.

Leymann, H. (1990). Mobbing and psychological terror at workplaces. *Violence and Victims*, *5*(2), 119-126. https://doi.org/10.1891/0886-6708.5.2.119

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.

Lines, D. (2007). *The bullies: Understanding bullies and bullying*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Loh, J. (2013). Inquiry into issues of trustworthiness and quality in narrative studies: A perspective. *Qualitative Report*, *18*(33), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2013.1477

Long, D. (2012). The foundations of student affairs: A guide to the profession. In L. J. Hinchliffe & M. A. Wong (Eds.), *Environments for student growth and development: Librarians and student affairs in collaboration* (pp. 1-39). Association of College & Research Libraries.

Lovell, B. L., & Lee, R. T. (2011). Impact of workplace bullying on emotional and physical well-being: A longitudinal collective case study. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, *20*(3), 344-357. https://doi.org/10.1080/10926771.2011.554338

Lutgen-Sandvik, P. (2006). Take this job and...: Quitting and other forms of resistance to

workplace bullying. *Communication Monographs*, *73*(4), 406-433.

https://doi.org/10.1080/03637750601024156

Marich, J. (2021). How is trauma different from stress? *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*.

https://www.gulfbend.org/poc/view_doc.php?type=doc&id=55726&cn=109

McLeod, S.A. (2019, October 24). Social identity theory. *Simply Psychology*.

https://www.simplypsychology.org/social-identity-theory.html

Mirowsky, J., & Ross, C. E. (1986). Social patterns of distress. *Annual review of Sociology*,

12(1), 23-45. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.so.12.080186.000323

Morrison, R. L. (2008). Negative relationships in the workplace: Associations with

organizational commitment, cohesion, job satisfaction and intention to turnover. *Journal

of Management and Organization*, *14*(4), 330. https://doi.org/10.5172/jmo.837.14.4.330

Murphy, A. G. (2009). *Dealing with bullying*. Infobase Publishing.

National Association of Student Personnel Administrators. (2021). *Guiding principles*.

https://conference.naspa.org/about/guiding-principles

Namie, J. (2003). Workplace bullying: Escalated incivility. *Ivey Business Journal*, *68*(2), 1-6.

https://www.stoppestennu.nl/sites/default/files/uploads/workplace_bullying-

_escalated_incivility.pdf

Nixon, J. (1996). Professional identity and the restructuring of higher education. *Studies in

Higher education*, *21*(1), 5-16. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079612331381417

Northouse, P.G. (2004). *Leadership: Theory and practice*: Sage.

Noy, C. (2008). Sampling knowledge: The hermeneutics of snowball sampling in qualitative

    research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *11*(4), 327-344.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/13645570701401305

Oliver-Sikorski, S. (2016, March 6). We have a bullying problem in Student Affairs.

    http://www.stacyoliversikorski.com/journal/2016/3/5/we-have-a-bullying-problem-in-

    student-affairs.

Pilch, I., & Turska, E. (2015). Relationships between Machiavellianism, organizational culture,

    and workplace bullying: Emotional abuse from the target's and the perpetrator's

    perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *128*(1), 83-93. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-

    014-2081-3

Prussia, G. E., Kinicki, A. J., & Bracker, J. S. (1993). Psychological and behavioral

    consequences of job loss: A covariance structure analysis using Weiner's (1985)

    attribution model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *78*(3), 382-394.

    https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.78.3.382

Ramsay, S., Troth, A., & Branch, S. (2011). Work-place bullying: A group processes framework.

    Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, *84*(4), 799-816.

    https://doi.org/10.1348/2044-8325.002000

Rayner, C. (1997). The incidence of workplace bullying. *Journal of Community & Applied

    Social Psychology*, *7*(3), 199-208. https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1099-

    1298(199706)7:3<199::AID-CASP418>3.0.CO;2-H

Rhoads, R. A., & Black, M. A. (1995). Student affairs practitioners as transformative educators:

    Advancing a critical cultural perspective. *Journal of College Student Development*, *36*(5),

    413-421. https://myacpa.org/JCSD/

Rodríguez-Muñoz, A., Moreno-Jiménez, B., Sanz Vergel, A. I., & Garrosa Hernández, E.
(2010). Post-Traumatic symptoms among victims of workplace bullying: Exploring
gender differences and shattered assumptions. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*,
40(10), 2616-2635. https://doi:10.1111/j.1559-1816.2010. 00673.x

Rönnedal, D. (2015). The golden rule and the platinum rule. *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, *49*(1-
2), 221-236. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10790-014-9471-8

Salin, D. (2003a). Bullying and organisational politics in competitive and rapidly changing work
environments. *International Journal of Management and Decision Making*, *4*(1), 35-46.
https://www.inderscienceonline.com/doi/abs/10.1504/IJMDM.2003.002487

Salin, D. (2003b). The significance of gender in the prevalence, forms and perceptions of
workplace bullying. *Nordiske Organisasjonsstudie, 5*(3), 30-50.
http://hdl.handle.net/10227/290

Sanford, N. (1962). *The American college.* John Wiley & Sons.

Saunders, P., Huynh, A., & Goodman-Delahunty, J. (2007). Defining workplace bullying
behavior professional lay definitions of workplace bullying. *International Journal of Law
and psychiatry*, *30*(4-5), 340-354. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijlp.2007.06.007

Savin-Baden, M., & Major, C. H. (2013). Qualitative research: The essential guide to theory and
practice. *Qualitative Research: The Essential Guide to Theory and Practice Routledge*,
10, 11. https://doi.org/10.1080/14748460.2012.761820

Schein, E. H. (1984). Coming to a new awareness of organizational culture. *Sloan Management
Review*, *25*(2), 3-16. https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/coming-new-
awareness-organizational-culture/docview/206806372/se-2?accountid=10919

Sperry, L. (2009). Mobbing and bullying: The influence of individual, work group, and

    organizational dynamics on abusive workplace behavior. *Consulting Psychology Journal:*

    Practice and Research, *61*(3), 190. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0016938

Stets, J., & Burke, P. (2000). Identity theory and social identity theory. *Social Psychology*

    Quarterly, 63(3), 224-237. www.jstor.org/stable/2695870

Student Affairs and Higher Education Professionals. (2021). *Bullying Response* [Status update].

    Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/groups/SAPros

Suzuki, S. (1998). In-group and out-group communication patterns in international

    organizations: Implications for social identity theory. *Communication Research*, *25*(2),

    154-182. https://doi.org/10.1177/009365098025002002

Tajfel, H. (1972). Experiments in a vacuum. In J. Israel & H. Tajfel (Eds.), *The context of social*

    psychology: A critical assessment (pp. 69-119). Academic Press.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin

    & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33-53).

    Brooks/Cole.

Tan, K. (2009). Variation theory and the different ways of experiencing educational policy.

    Educational Research for Policy and Practice, 8, 95-109. doi 10.1007/s10671-

    008-9060-3.

Taub, D. J., & McEwen, M. K. (2006). Decision to enter the profession of Student

    Affairs. *Journal of College Student Development*, *47*(2), 206-216.

    https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2006.0027

Taylor, S. (2013). Workplace bullying in higher education. In J. Lester (Ed.)., *Workplace*

    bullying: Does tenure change anything? (pp. 23-40). Routledge.

Tierney, W. G. (1988). Organizational culture in higher education: Defining the essentials. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *59*(1), 2-21. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.1988.11778301

Tschannen-Moran, M. (2014). *Trust matters: Leadership for successful schools*. John Wiley & Sons.

Twale, D. J., & De Luca, B. M. (2008). *Faculty incivility: The rise of the academic bully culture and what to do about it*. John Wiley & Sons.

Vaillancourt, T., McDougall, P., Hymel, S., & Sunderani, S. H. A. F. I. K. (2009). The relationship between power and bullying behavior. In. S. R. Jimerson, S. M. Swearer, & D. L. Espelage (Eds.), *Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective* (pp. 211-222). Routledge.

Wang, M. L., & Hsieh, Y. H. (2016). Do gender differences matter to workplace bullying? *Work*, *53*(3), 631-638. https://doi.org/10.3233/WOR-152239

Wilson, C. B. (1991). US businesses suffer from workplace trauma. *Personnel Journal*. https://agris.fao.org/agris-search/search.do?recordID=US201301735044

Yoder, H. E. (2019). When the compassionate are abusive: Workplace bullying in student affairs. *About Campus*, *24*(4), 10-14. https://doi.org/10.1177/1086482219891296

Young-Jones, A., Fursa, S., Byrket, J. S., & Sly, J. S. (2015). Bullying affects more than feelings: The long-term implications of victimization on academic motivation in higher education. *Social Psychology of Education*, *18*(1), 185-200. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-014-9287-1

Email sent to Vice President/Dean of Students and Social Media Request

Vice President/Dean of Students
Greetings,

My name is April Palmer and I am currently a doctoral student at William and Mary. I am requesting your participation in a research study that I am doing for my current dissertation. Prior to requesting anyone's participation in this study, I have received William & Mary IRB approval and your institution or the participants will not be identified at any time during my study. The study results will identify universities in the mid-Atlantic region and all participants will be masked with pseudonyms and quotes from participants will only be used with participants approval.

Please note, the purpose of the study is to show that not only does bullying exist in student affairs but to focus on how these experiences affect trust and relationships from those affected. The outcomes from this study can provide insights into preventing bullying from occurring, and not after, when it has already occurred. Again, your institution or the participants will not be identified at any time during my study.

I am requesting that you send the email (attached) to your Student Affairs listserv with my request for willing participants to follow up with me for their voluntary participation in an interview.

In regards to specifics of the study, it will be important for you to know that my dissertation topic is workplace bullying in student affairs. For the purpose of this study, workplace bullying in student affairs is defined as, "extreme, negative, and pervasive or persistent workplace abuse achieved through communication, experienced by targets as an imbalance of power, which can cause distress, humiliation, and other adverse consequences for the target and the organization" (Cowan & Fox, 2014).

All participant responses are completely confidential and will only be shared with the committee chair supervising this research study, Dr. Pamela Eddy, William &Mary, Professor, Educational Policy, Planning and Leadership. Participants identity will not be disclosed in any written material from this study. Please note, not all participants will be selected.

If you are interested or have questions about participating in this research, please contact April Palmer at ajpalmer01@email.wm.edu or 757-903-5644.

If you feel the need to speak with a professional counselor please use the link listed below for available and free counseling services.

Best,
April Palmer
Doctoral Candidate, Education, Policy, Planning, and Leadership
William & Mary.

Social Media Request

Greetings,

My name is April Palmer and I am currently a doctoral student at William and Mary. I am requesting your participation in a research study that I am doing for my current dissertation on bullying in student affairs. For the purpose of this study, workplace bullying in student affairs is defined as, "extreme, negative, and pervasive or persistent workplace abuse achieved through communication, experienced by targets as an imbalance of power, which can cause distress, humiliation, and other adverse consequences for the target and the organization" (Cowan & Fox, 2014).

Please note, the purpose of the study is to show that not only does bullying exist in student affairs but to focus on how these experiences affect trust and relationships from those affected. The outcomes from this study can provide insights into preventing bullying from occurring, and not after, when it has already occurred.

I have received William & Mary IRB approval and you will not be identified at any time during my study. The study results will identify universities in the mid-Atlantic region and all participants will be masked with pseudonyms and quotes will only be used with participants' approval. All participant responses are completely confidential and will only be shared with the committee chair supervising this research study, Dr. Pamela Eddy, William &Mary, Professor, Educational Policy, Planning and Leadership. Participants' identity will not be disclosed in any written material from this study.

If you are interested or have questions about participating in this research, please contact me at ajpalmer01@email.wm.edu or 757-903-5644.

If you feel the need to speak with a professional counselor please use the link listed below for available and free counseling services.

Best,

April Palmer
Doctoral Candidate, Education, Policy, Planning, and Leadership
William & Mary

Appendix B

Participant Email and Screening Questions

Dear [NAME],

Thank you for your interest in my study on workplace bullying in student affairs and agreeing to be a part of this study. The purpose of the study is to show that not only does bullying exist in student affairs but to focus on how these experiences affect trust and relationships from those affected. The outcomes from this study can provide insights into preventing bullying from occurring, and not after, when it has already occurred.

The questions given to the participants will probe to learn more about the participants story of being bullied with their responses about their experiences, reactions, and outcomes of when they experienced workplace bullying.

In regards to specifics of the study, it will be important for you to know that my dissertation topic is workplace bullying in student affairs. For the purpose of this study, workplace bullying in student affairs is defined as, "extreme, negative, and pervasive or persistent workplace abuse achieved through communication, experienced by targets as an imbalance of power, which can cause distress, humiliation, and other adverse consequences for the target and the organization" (Cowan & Fox, 2014).

If you feel you have experienced bullying based on the definition above, you are invited to fill out the background information below and if selected will be invited to participate in a brief interview where you will be asked about your experiences with workplace bullying.

Please complete the participant screening questions listed below and if you are selected, you will be contacted regarding moving forward with an interview. Not all participants will be selected.

Your decision to participate or not participate will have no effect on your employment. Identifiable information about participants and the institution will be kept confidential and will not be shared. If you are interested in being a participant of this study, please email April Palmer at ajpalmer01@email.wm.edu.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at the above email address.

Thank you,
April Palmer

Screening questions:
For the purpose of this study, workplace bullying in student affairs will be defined as, "extreme, negative, and pervasive or persistent workplace abuse achieved through communication, experienced by targets as an imbalance of power, which can cause distress, humiliation, and other adverse consequences for the target and the organization" (Cowan & Fox, 2014, p.119).

Consent: I understand by participants in this screen survey that I grant my consent to participate in this study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may discontinue the study at any point and time. If I have questions on this study I can contact the Chairperson, Dr. Pam L. Eddy at peddy@wm.edu .

Participant Screening Questions:

1. My gender can be identified as:

2. My race/ethnicity can be identified as:

3. Please share the number of years you have worked in student affairs.

4. Please share your area/department (no title needed).

5. I can best be described as: a) <u>Senior</u> level b) <u>Mid</u> manager level c) <u>Entry</u> level

6. Please indicate to what extent you have experienced bullying on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being extremely bullied and 1 being only slightly bullied.

7. If you experienced workplace bullying, you would identify the bullying as coming directly from a: a) <u>Colleague</u> b) <u>Supervisor</u>

Name

Appendix C

Informed Consent for Participants

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of the study is to show that not only does bullying exist in student affairs but to focus on how these experiences affect trust and relationships from those affected.
The outcomes from this study can provide insights into preventing bullying from occurring, and not after, when it has already occurred.

Participants
You are being asked to participate because you agreed to participate in the study and were selected to participate after the initial participant screening survey. Please note, any full-sentence quotes will be reported to you for your approval prior to using in my findings to further protect your anonymity.

Procedures
If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following: participate in an interview to discuss your experience with workplace bullying, either by a colleague or supervisor. The interview will be via Zoom or phone. All interviews will be recorded and transcribed. The paid transcriber will be required to sign a confidentiality statement.

Benefits of Participation
There may not be direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. However, the research will benefit best practices and more research in student affairs for prevention of workplace bullying in the future.

Risks of Participation
There are risks involved in all research studies. Due to the intimate nature of this study, this study may involve risk. However, the risks are minimal. You may feel some disquiet in answering some of the questions from the interview, but the amount should be limited. Resources and support will be provided and you can discontinue your participation in the study at any time.

Cost/Compensation
There will be no cost or financial compensation for participating in this study. This study will take approximately 45-60 minutes of your time.

Contact Information
If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study you may contact April Palmer at ajpalmer01@email.wm.edu, or Dr. Pamela Eddy peddy@wm.edu. If you have any additional questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact, anonymously, if you wish, Dr. Tom Ward at 757-221-2358, chair of the William & Mary committee that supervise the treatment of all study participants.

Voluntary Participation
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. You may withdraw at any time without affecting your employment status. You can ask questions at any time throughout the research study.

Confidentiality
All information gathered in this study will be kept completely confidential. Pseudonyms will be used in place of names and institutions. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. All records will be stored for 1 years after completion of the study. After the storage time the information gathered will be destroyed.

Participant Consent
I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I understand that this interview will be recorded and destroyed after evaluation of the data. A copy of this form has been sent to me either via email or hard copy.

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Date

_____
Participant Name (Please print)

Participant Interview Protocol

Study: Bullying in Student Affairs
Time:
Date:
Location (email, Zoom, FaceTime, in person):
Interviewer: April Palmer
Interviewee:

The purpose of this study: The purpose of the study is to show that not only does bullying exist in student affairs but to focus on how these experiences affect trust and relationships from those affected. The outcomes from this study can provide insights into preventing bullying from occurring, and not after, when it has already occurred.

The information you provide will assist in helping me to understand your experiences with workplace bullying in student affairs. You can choose to stop participation at any time without any negative consequences. Unfortunately, there is no compensation allotted for the participants, and participation is completely voluntary. This interview will last approximately 30-45 minutes.

Please note, your responses are completely confidential and will only be shared with the committee chair who is supervising this research study, Dr. Pamela Eddy, Professor, Chair, Educational Policy, Planning and Leadership. Pseudonyms and general statements will be used when referring to participant's experiences or institutions.

{Interviewer reviews consent form to participate with Interviewee. The interview will email or mail a signed consent form prior to the interview. The interview will occur via phone, Zoom, email, or FaceTime, Interviewee can give verbal consent and Interviewer will note the consent date and time.}

Interview Questions:

1.   In a few sentences, please describe when and how in your career you

experienced workplace bullying. PROBES:

    a. Who was the bully in this instance? (supervisor, colleague, subordinate)

    b. Describe what occurred when you were bullied.

    c. Describe how you felt after the instance (s) of being bullied.

2.   How would you describe the type of trust that existed for you prior to this

instance compared to after the time you were bullied? PROBES:

    a.   Describe the relationship you had with your bully prior to the bulling

        instance.

    b.   Describe the culture of your unit/division with respect to how people are

        treated.

    c.   Were you able to rebuild a trusting relationship with the person who

        bullied you? With others who may have been bystanders?

3.   Describe your response after you experience workplace bulling. PROBES:

(Examples include but are not limited to, leaving the student affairs field, going to

Human Resources, or changing jobs).

    a.   Describe who you told about being bullied and what outcomes resulted

        when you reported the instance if you did?

    b.   Tell me why you opted not to report the bullying, if you did, what recourse

        did you feel you had after you were bullied?

4.   Describe how this experience affected your career? PROBES:

    a.   How would you describe your work context after you were bullied?

    b.   Did you opt to leave your position due to the bullying you experienced?

        Why/why not?

5.   Please describe for me in detail if this experience affected your work with

students. PROBES:

    a.   How did you feel you could help students learn about the ethic of care

after you were bullied?

b.   How did you approach the notion of bullying with students after your

encounter with bullying?

6.   How did this bully use their power when you were bullied? PROBES:

a.   Describe if your work responsibilities changed after the bullying

experience.

b.   Describe if opportunities for your professional advancement decreased

after the bullying experience.

7.   What could have been done to prevent workplace bullying from occurring to you?

PROBES:

a.   How could policy and processes change in the future to prevent bullying?

b.   How would you advise those who are experiencing bullying given your

experience?

8.   In student affairs, it is an assumption that we work in a supportive and caring

environment, yet we are uncovering contradictions with this assumption

with workplace bullying. Do you have any insight as to why this contradiction?

may exist?

9.   As I think about bullying in student affairs, is there anything else I should know

about your experience that can help me understand more clearly how bullying

occurs in the field?

Thank you for your participation in this interview. Please note, all responses will remain
confidential. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Researcher as an Instrument Statement

As an individual who has experienced workplace bullying in student affairs, it is

an understatement to say that this research is important to me. If I can support or

encourage another professional who is experiencing workplace bullying and who is just

as stunned as I was to be experiencing workplace bullying in a profession that I worked

hard to be a part of, valued as a supportive, challenging, and encouraging profession, I

will have done what I set out to do. My purpose behind my research is support for

affected student affairs professionals and prevention of workplace bullying in student

affairs in the future. Bullying exists heavily in student affairs and it is a topic that as

student affairs professionals, we ignore, and yet, nearly every student affair professional

that I shared my dissertation topic with, shook their head vehemently, and began sharing

their own narrative of workplace bullying by either a colleague or supervisor. As I

navigate through my research, it will be important for me to recognize my own biases in

my research as an affected person. I can prevent this by using my interview format, not

asking leading questions, and allowing the participant to share their own narrative with

me, not one that is prompted or created by leading questions.

My own Experience with Workplace Bullying

I experienced workplace bullying where and when I least expected it; in the job I had

always wanted, in a small college setting, close to my family, and was working in a role

that utilized all of my skill sets. When the bullying began by my supervisor, my narrative

and questions begin like most, Is this because of me? Are there things that I can

do better? How do I communicate what I am thinking/feeling/expecting? Why is this

happening? What have I done to create this… (insert action here)? After nearly two years

of experiencing workplace bullying, I left the institution, after trying to follow up with

Human Resources with no success, documenting, documenting, documenting, creating

programs, and leaving relationships with students, other staff members, and faculty, that I

had worked diligently to build.

Expectations of Research

With this study, by engaging in interviews with willing participants from student affairs,

and using the narrative qualitative format, I will be able to share how workplace bullying

occurs, and how power, relationships, and trust are affected by workplace bullying on

the student affairs professionals.

Appendix F

Crosswalk Table for Research and Interview Questions

Research Question	Interview Questions	Supporting Literature
How and where does bullying exist amongst colleagues and from supervisors to supervisee in student affairs?	1.In a few sentences, please describe how, who, and when in your career you experienced workplace bullying.	Bartlett, J. E., & Bartlett, M.E. (2011). Cowan, R. L., & Fox, S. (2014). Erkutlu, H., & Chafra, J. (2014). Gerstenfield, J. et al., (2016). Lester, J. (2013). Namie, J. (2003).
How is power used in instances of bullying?	2.Describe how this experience affected your career. 3.Is there anything else I should know about your experience that can help me understand how bullying occurs in the field?	Bolman, L.G., & Deal, T.E. (2013). Karabult, A.T. (2016). Leigh, L. et al., (2014). Northouse, P.G., (2004). Pilch, I., & Turska (2015). Salin, D., (2003). Schein, E.H., (1984). (2010). Tajfel, H., & Turner, J.C. (1979). Vaillancourt., T., et al., (2009).
What changes to trust occurs between the bullied and bully when bullying occurs in a collegial or supervisory relationship?	4.How did this bully use their power when you were bullied? 5.What do you think could have been done to prevent workplace bullying from occurring to you?	Einarsen, S., Hoel., & Cooper (2003). Lovell, B.L., & Lee, R.T. (2011). Tschannen-Moran, M. (2014).

How do supervisor/supervisee and collegial relationships change for the student affairs professional who is bullied?	6.How would you describe the type of trust that existed for you prior to this instance compared to the time you were bullied? 7.Describe your response after you experienced workplace bullying. 8.Please describe in detail if this experience affected your work with students. 9.It is an assumption that we work in a supportive and caring environment, yet we are uncovering contradictions with this assumption with workplace bullying. Do you have any insight as to why this contradiction may exist?	Branch, S., & Murray, J. (2015). McLeod, S. (2008). Rayner, C. (1997). Salin, D. (2003). Stets, J., & Burke, P. (2000).

Appendix G

TRANSCRIBER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I agree to participate as a paid transcriber in the doctoral dissertation for April Palmer. I agree to maintain confidence and security throughout the transcribing process by not sharing or disseminating in written or electronic form the transcription of the participant(s) in April Palmer's narrative research study or any information discovered through the review process without written consent from April Palmer. Additionally, I will destroy all transcription work in May 2021 after successful completion of her dissertation work.

_____

Name (Printed)

_____

Signature

_____

Date

Vita

April Joy Palmer, Ed.D., Assistant Dean/Director of Student Conduct
Florida Gulf Coast University

EDUCATION
Doctor of Education (Ed. D)/Educational Policy, Planning & Leadership
 William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia
 Dissertation topic: "Bullying in Student Affairs: Our little Secret"
 December 2021

Master of Education (M.Ed.)/Higher Education Administration
 Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina
 May 2005

Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)/English and Theatre Minor
 Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina
 May 2003

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Assistant Dean/Director of Student Conduct, Florida Gulf Coast University

Assistant Dean of Community Values and Restorative Practices, William & Mary

Area Director for Residence Life, William & Mary

Assistant Dean, Newberry College

Director of Residence Life, Coker College