



# Raising Engagement and Reducing Toxicity: Twin Values Created by Solid Local Leadership

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**Presentation by:**  
**John Yardley, Ph.D., Director, Brock University, WHRL & President, Metrics@Work**

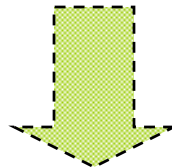
# Presentation Outline

1. Introduction
2. Local Leadership and Local Work Environments
3. Understanding Incivility / Psycho-social Toxicity
4. Understanding Engagement
5. What does Metrics@Work's Database Research say about HWE and Engagement and Incivility?
6. Prevention Processes
7. Response Processes
8. Wrap up and Reflection

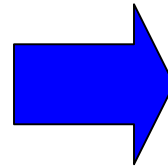
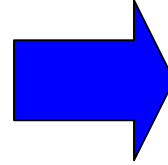
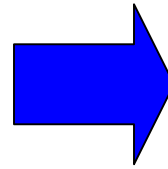
# Brief History of WHRL and Metrics@Work

## WHRL, Brock University:

- Emerged Sept., 2000 with HRDC \$ support
- Built on a business model
  - self funding from fee-for-applied research services
- Transferred I.P., Data, Systems etc. to Metrics@Work Aug/Sept., 2007

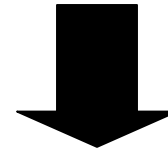


- Redefining WHRL by developing academic links and increasing the academic use of data, which, with permission, will still flow from M@W; N now approaching 100,000 respondents



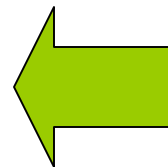
## Metrics@Work (formerly WHRL):

- Emerged Sept. 1, 2007
- For profit incorporated business
- Currently 7 Full-time staff
- Brock University and 4 previous WHRL Staff are shareholders
- 165 Client Companies: Nfld to B.C. 66% public sectors, 33% private for profit sectors



## M@W core businesses are Human Resources Management:

- surveying
- assessments
- data-mining
- consulting



# Leadership and Teams in Work Organizations

# Basic Assumptions in this Presentation (1)

1. Work Units (e.g. Work Teams) are:
  - a. where valued work products and services are created
  - b. where most public/client interactions occur
  - c. the foundation and the front of work systems as opposed to being the “lowest” and bottom part of them
  
2. Leadership:
  - a. is about group processes as opposed to a person or position and engaging individuals as part of work teams to work dynamically and collaboratively together to create the services of the work organization
  - b. requires fundamental elements to be present, e.g., positive relationships, trust, respect, engaging environment

## Basic Assumptions in this Presentation (2)

3. Collaboration is fundamental to Work Unit / Team productivity:
  - a. Rarely is one person's work not interdependent with others, particularly in service and knowledge industries
4. Frequent choices re: work behaviours and actions occur daily:
  - a. People in work teams have the option to behave and interact with others, e.g., clients, taxpayers, support staff, co-workers, and administration along a continuum from
    - i. Positively, i.e., energetic, collaborative, supportive, willing, showing initiative, being open .... all the way to:
    - ii. Negatively, i.e., slow, requiring constant direction, coercion, rules and policing, doing only what is requested, and being closed minded to new ideas or collaboration

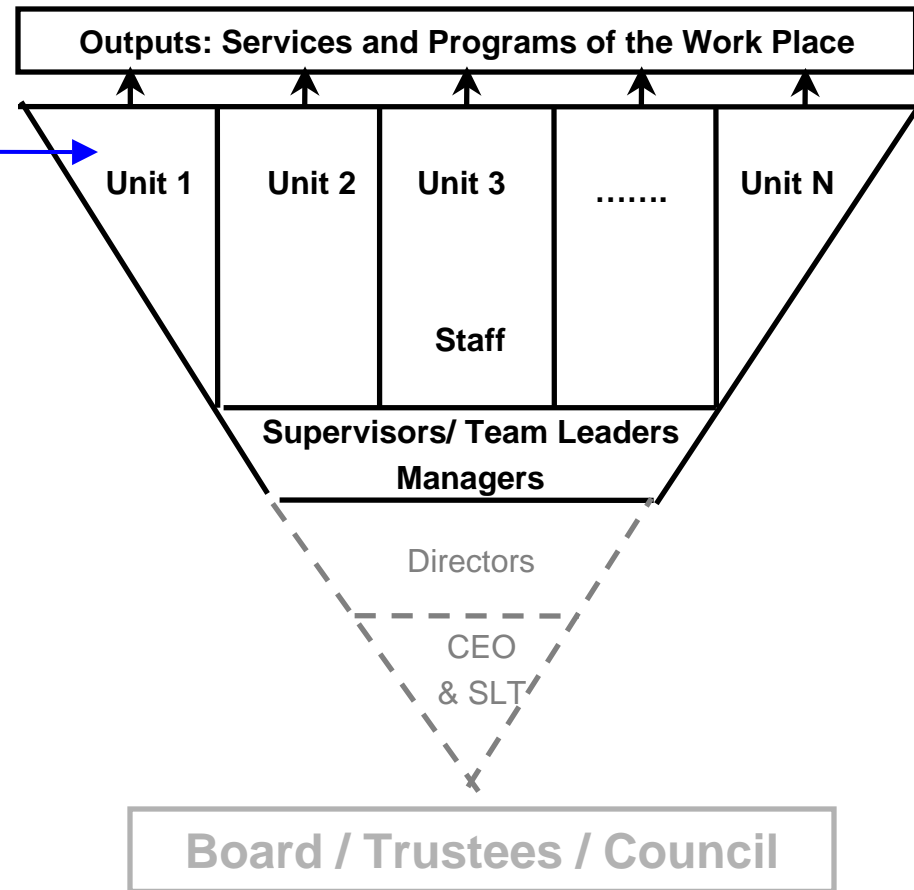
# Work Place Services and Programs are centred in the Front Line and not at the bottom!

Front-line Engagement directly affects programs and services of work organizations. – this is where a clear focus is required to create improvements in efficiency and effectiveness.

This is not to say the rest of the model is unimportant!

Quite the contrary, a basic requirement, antecedent to developing front-line engagement, is to ensure all management groups are working in an aligned and supportive way to create the front-line focus.

Units are the front line teams in your organizations – depending on the size of your organization it could be departments, divisions, sections etc.



## 3 Foundational Behavioural Determinants of Team Performance

- To improve team efficiency and process reliability with values of stability, control, rationality, analysis, and practicality: **REQUIRES TASK ORIENTED BEHAVIOURS (TOB)**
- To improve team innovation and adaptation with values of flexibility, vision, and creativity: **REQUIRES CHANGE ORIENTED BEHAVIOURS (COB)**
- To improve team human resource management and relations with values of trust, commitment, energy, and engagement **REQUIRES PEOPLE ORIENTED BEHAVIOURS (POB)**
- Balancing these three elements is critical to team performance
- Note: At times in a team there may be a focus on one behaviour but, overall, all teams (i.e, managers and supervisors and their staff together) must do all in order to be successful and sustainable

Adapted from Yukl and Lepsinger (2005): Flexible Leadership: Creating Value by Balancing Multiple Challenges and Choices. Jossey-Bass.

# Determinants of Team Engagement

Y Axis: Pull for being Better at Getting Stuff Done at Work, i.e., Task Oriented Behaviours

**Tension between Efficiency/Effectiveness and HRM**

**Tension between Efficiency/Effectiveness & Adaptability/Creativity**

X Axis: Pull for Better Adaptability and Creativity to improve effectiveness and efficiency, i.e., Change Oriented Behaviours

Z Axis: Pull Better Human Resource Management (HRM) and Relationships, i.e., People Oriented Behaviours

**Tension between Adaptability (Creativity) and HRM**

## Leadership Is About Teams (Bennis, 2007)

- “Psychologists still tend to see leadership as an individual phenomenon. But, in fact, the only person who practices leadership alone in a room **IS A PSYCHOTIC!**” (p. 3)
- Leadership is grounded in relationships and is formed by a tripod
  - 1. a leader or leaders,
  - 2. followers, and
  - 3. the common goal they want to achieve. **None** of these three elements **can survive without the others**. (p. 3-4)
- JY Interpretation: Bennis’s “leadership” is, therefore, clearly about group or team phenomena and it is about actions, behaviours and processes (that is, about “doing” stuff), not about a person (that is, not about traits or positions)

## Leadership is About Teams (Mintzberg, 2006)

- “Let us get rid of the cult of leadership, striking at least one blow at our increasing obsession with individuality. Not to create a new cult around distributed leadership, but to recognize that the very use of the word leadership tilts thinking toward the individual and away from the community. We don’t only need better leadership, we need less leadership!” (p. 2)
- JY Interpretation: Mintzberg’s main point is that, again, we should not be focusing on the individual, but instead on the “community”, which are the work team(s) charged with carrying out the work of your organization.

## Round Table Discussion

- How do you think leadership is interpreted at your organization?  
For instance:
  1. To what degree do staff and managers have to run decisions “up the flag pole” for approval?
  2. How hierarchical is your organization?
  3. Do your employees feel empowered to make work-related decisions in the front-line?
  4. Is there a clear “them” and “us” attitude displayed between staff and management?
  
- Challenges, opinions, statements, questions?

# Bullying / Incivilities in Work Organizations

# Bullying / Incivility at Work defined

- Relatively new area of research
- Major emergence from Europe 15-20 years ago, more recently in North America
- Variety of Labels:
  - Psychological harassment, Emotional abuse, Mobbing, Incivility

## What is Workplace Bullying / Incivility?

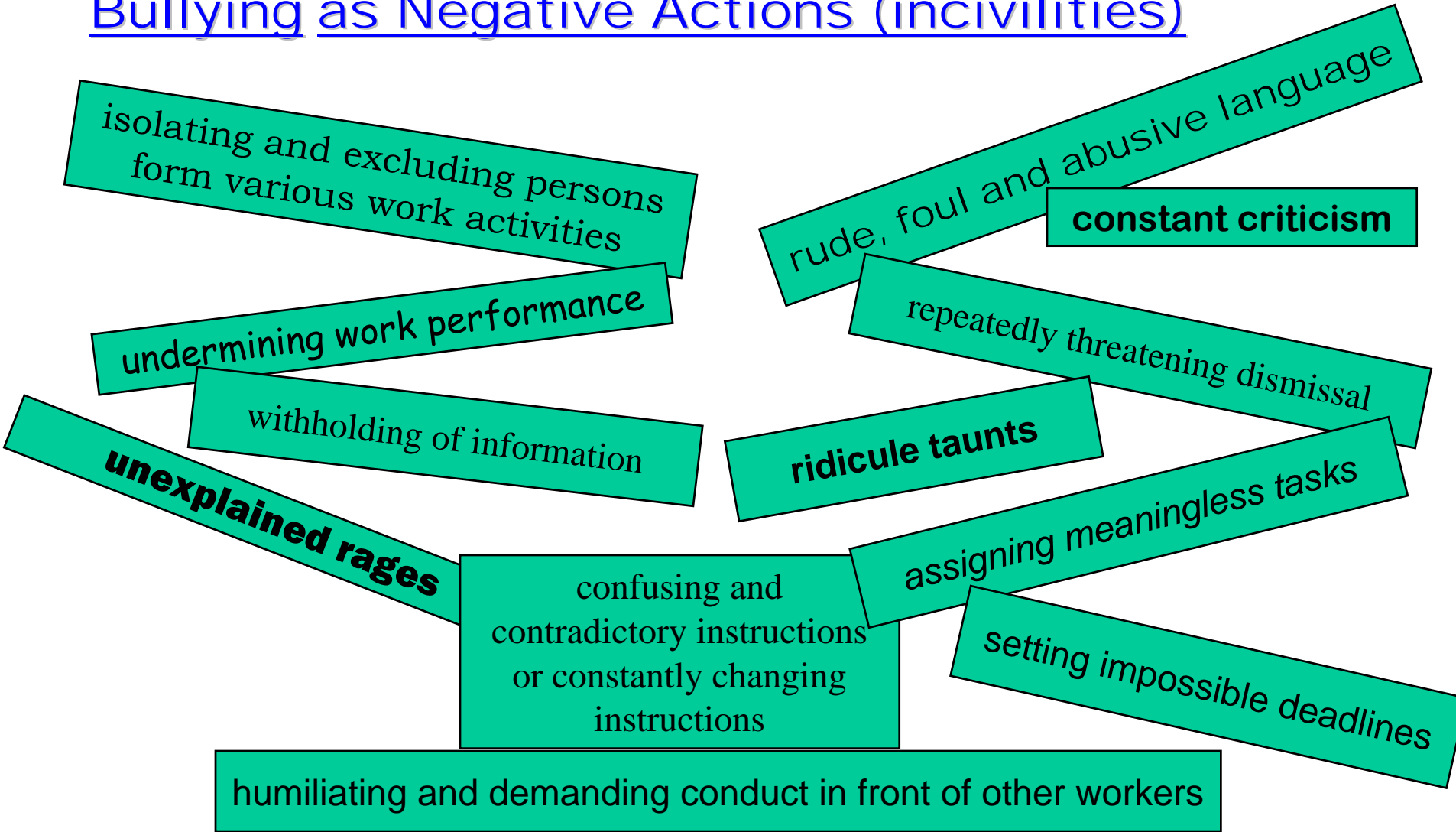
Two main features of most definitions (Einarsen, 1996) :

- (1) repeated and enduring aggressive behaviours (most frequently verbal and non-physical)
- (2) intended to be hostile and/or perceived as hostile by the recipient

Slide Adapted from Kelly, Yardley, & Noka (2007)



# Bullying as Negative Actions (incivilities)



Slide Adapted from Kelly, Yardley, & Noka (2007)

## Who is the bully?

- Research most often indicates there is a power difference between the bully and victim – often assumed it is authority / position based (Einarsen and Skogstad, 1996)
- European studies found 70-80% of victims reported being bullied by a superior
- Norwegian survey of 8,000 employees only 54% of victims bullied by a superior
  
- However, in a 2004 population-based study in Quebec (Brun, 2004)
  - Only 32% of victims identified their boss(es)
  - whereas 41% identified their peers/co-workers
  - a further 30% identified subordinates
  - and 15% identified clients, e.g., patients or families in healthcare settings

Slide Adapted from Kelly, Yardley, & Noka (2007)

# Bullying Typologies

## **5 Major Types of Bullying:** (Zapf, in press)

1. Work related bullying – changing work tasks or making them difficult to perform
2. Social isolation
3. Personal attacks or attacks on private life by ridicule, gossip, or the like
4. Verbal threats – criticized, yelled at, or humiliated in public
5. Physical violence or threats of such violence

## **3 Major Types of Bullying:** (Yardley & Noka, 2007)

1. Psycho-social bullying (work and personal formed one factor)
2. Discriminatory bullying (gender, age, race, ethnicity) “ism” type of bullying
3. Physical / Sexual violence or threats of such violence

## Bullying Backgrounder

- Definition of Bullying: exposure to negative acts on at least a weekly basis for 6 months or more - (*chronicity is important, particularly for ill-health effects*)
- Swedish study found that 3.5% of working population could be classed as victims of bullying – (*WHRL experience, seems low*)
- Canadian study found that 40% of a diverse occupational sample reported experiencing bullying on a weekly basis for at least 6 months – (*WHRL experience, seems high*)
- A US study reported 19% of staff reported harassment – unwelcome words, actions or physical contact not resulting in physical harm – (*just one time is reported, so “over-reporting”?*)
- Conclusion: Bullying happens, probably more frequently than we suspect, no good estimates of frequency! (*real problems agreeing on definition and frequencies needed to be labelled “bullying”*)

## Round Table Discussion

- Does bullying / incivility exist at your organization?  
For instance:
  1. Have you witnessed or been bullied along the lines of what has been presented?
  2. What do you think is the prevalence of bullying or incivility in your work place?
  3. Do you think there is a work authority basis to bullying or incivility in the work place?
    - Challenges, opinions, statements, questions?

# Employee Engagement in Work Organizations

# What is Employee Engagement ?

## 1. Clear Disagreement between and among Practitioners and Academics!

- a. First issue of *Industrial and Organizational Psychology* (March, 2008) devoted 80 pages to the construct and among the 28 writers there were markedly differing opinions!
- b. For instance, the opinions of James Harter (The Gallup Organization) and Frank Schmidt (University of Iowa) were clearly at odds with those of William Macey (Valtera Corporation) and Benjamin Schneider (Valtera Corporation and University of Maryland)
- c. In a sentence the 80 pages of debate can be reduced to the question, “Is engagement a new construct or merely a ‘new blend of old wines’?” (adapted from Newman and Harrison, 2008, p. 32)
- d. The Engagement Debate is far from over and likely to continue for some time, ..... so what should one do in the meantime (see next slide)

# Metrics@Work's Position on Employee Engagement

2. **Work Organizations & Consulting Industry can't wait for The Engagement Debate to be settled, so, ....**
  - a. There is a long history of organizational research clearly indicating that improving work place predictors or driver elements of engagement and other related “outcomes” (e.g., job satisfaction, organizational satisfaction, intention to remain, performance) is not only feasible, but it is the basis of a lot of the Industrial / Organizational Consulting Industry that exists today
  - b. Further, these predictor and driver elements are able to be modified by alignment and intervention within corporations, particularly, they can impact front-lines if they are aimed at local work elements and practices, which in turn impact valued personal, client and organizational outcomes
  - c. ... so why wait!

## What is Employee Engagement ?

1. Towers-Perrin has simplified the construct to 3 key behaviours
  - a. **Say: e.g., staff speak positively of their organization**
  - b. **Stay: e.g., intense desire of staff to be part of organization**
  - c. **Strive: e.g., staff exert extra effort**
2. The above mixes engagement types. Metrics@Work has evidence of two engagement levels, with some different predictors, which is consistent with recent academic work (e.g., Masson et al., 2008). The levels we have found are:
  - a. **Organizational Engagement**
  - b. **Local Work / Job Engagement**
3. But there are Common phrases describing Engagement Behaviours. Staff:
  - a. **“Frequently demonstrate innovative behaviours”**
  - b. **“Show initiative whenever possible”**
  - c. **“Proactively seek to contribute and don’t wait to be told”**
  - d. **“Go beyond what is typically expected or required of them”**

# But Engagement Takes Time ... sorry, no Consulting Silver Bullet!

## **1. First Create Clear and Consistent Agreement and Modelling across the Senior Leadership Team and then Rest of Management:**

- a. Alignment with Strategic Plan and creating Accountability
- b. Leadership Behavioural Consistency (e.g., Adoption of Transformational or Flexible Leadership Competencies)
- c. Championing Engagement and People Management with own Direct Reports

## **2. Then Creating a More Engaged Front-line Work Environment by Increasing:**

- a. Transparency through open communications (to and from front lines)
- b. The Building of Trust (based on key elements of fairness and respect)
  - i. Between hierarchies to front-line
  - ii. Among peers / colleagues, i.e, across groups
- c. Support and Recognition of positive behaviours
- d. Performance Management of negative behaviours
- e. Ensuring Accountability for Engagement in Front-line Teams

## Round Table Discussion

- What's your position on engagement? For instance:
  1. Is it “consultant marketing”, i.e., dressing up old wine in new bottles?
  2. Does what you already know, or maybe learned from the last few slides, make any difference in terms of how managing staff and work should be improved?
  3. Does it matter that there might be different types of engagement, e.g., job versus organizational?
    - Challenges, opinions, statements, questions?

# What are Metrics@Work's Survey Respondents Telling us about Bullying / Incivility in Work Organizations?

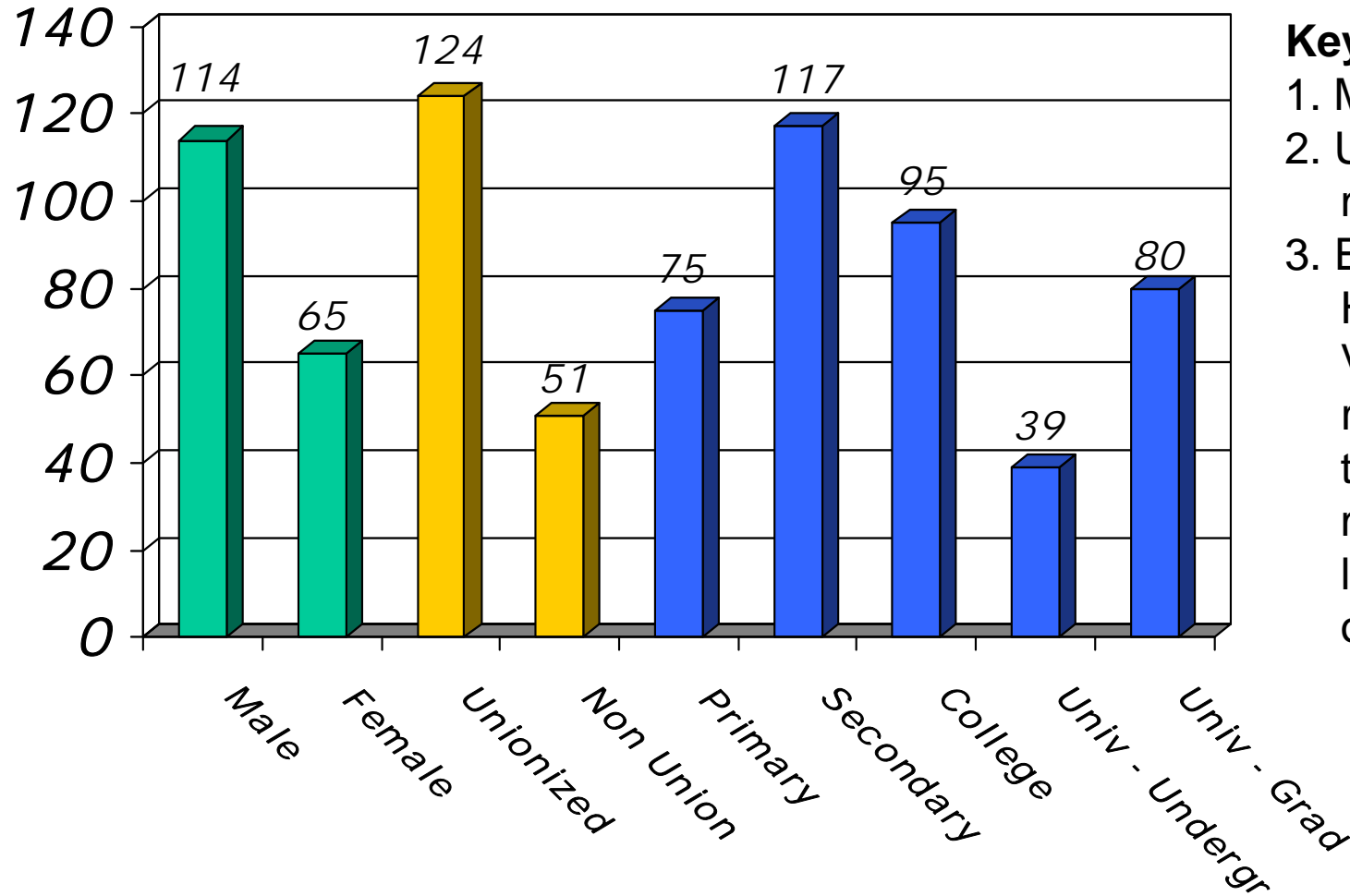
# Frequency of Negative Acts – Metrics@Work data

Someone withholding necessary information affecting job performance

	<i>Responses #</i>	<i>Response Rate %</i>	
<i>Never</i>	542	45.0%	<b>0 x 542 = 0</b>
<i>About monthly</i>	540	44.8%	<b>11 x 540 = 5940</b>
<i>About weekly</i>	91	7.6%	<b>48 x 91 = 4368</b>
<i>About daily</i>	32	2.7%	<b>250 x 32 = 8000</b>
<i>Total</i>	1205		<b>Total Incidents = 18,308</b>

**Total incidents: 18308 ÷ 250 working days in a year = 73.2 per day**  
**But only 50% response rate so 73.2 x 2 as = 146.4 per day**  
**8 hour work day then 146.4 ÷ 8 = 18.3/hr = once every 3.3 minutes**  
**Results of a 2500 person work organization**

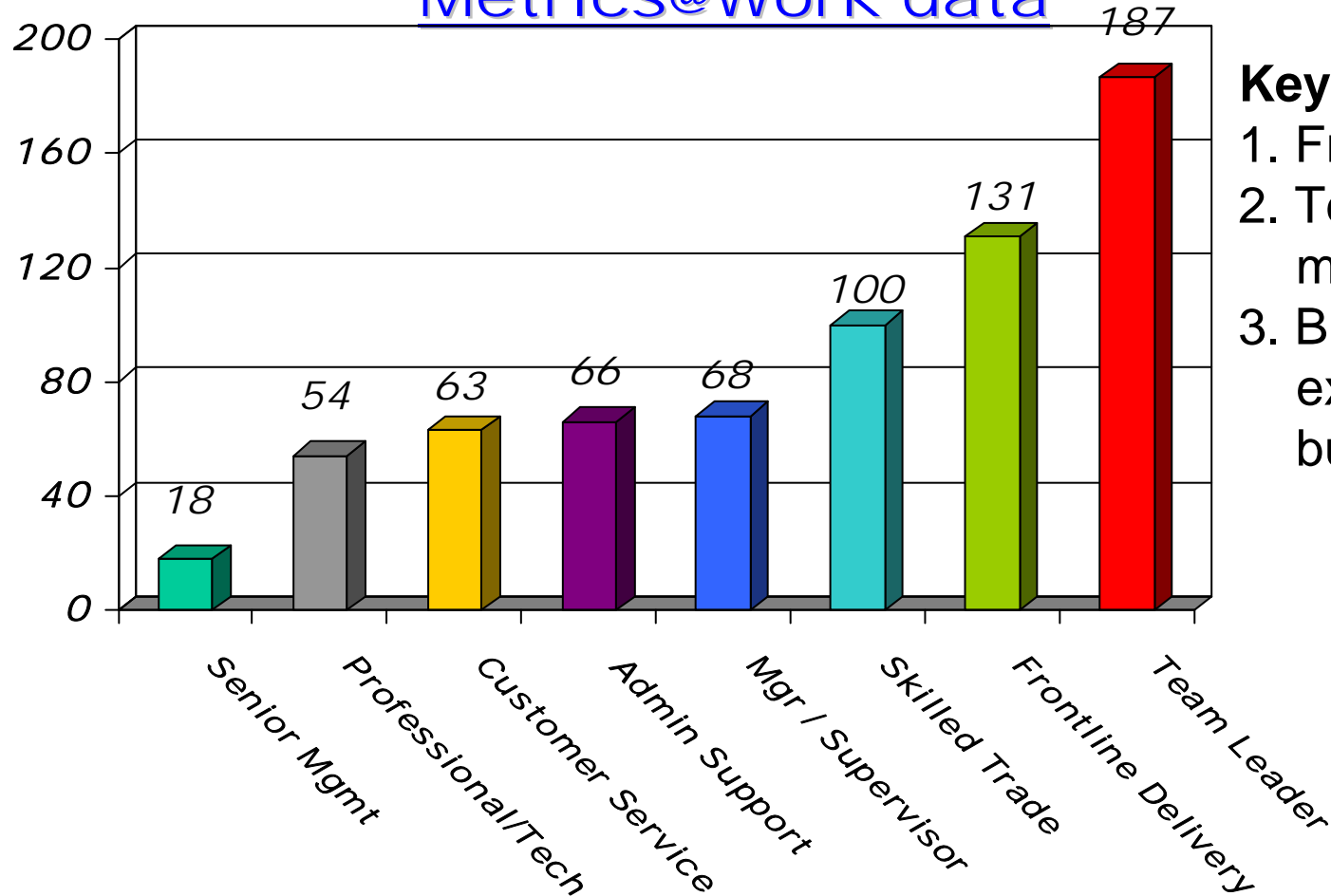
## Demographics and Bullying Intensity – Metrics@Work data



### Key Points

1. Male more
2. Unionized more
3. Education Highly Variable results, but tendency for more with lower levels of education

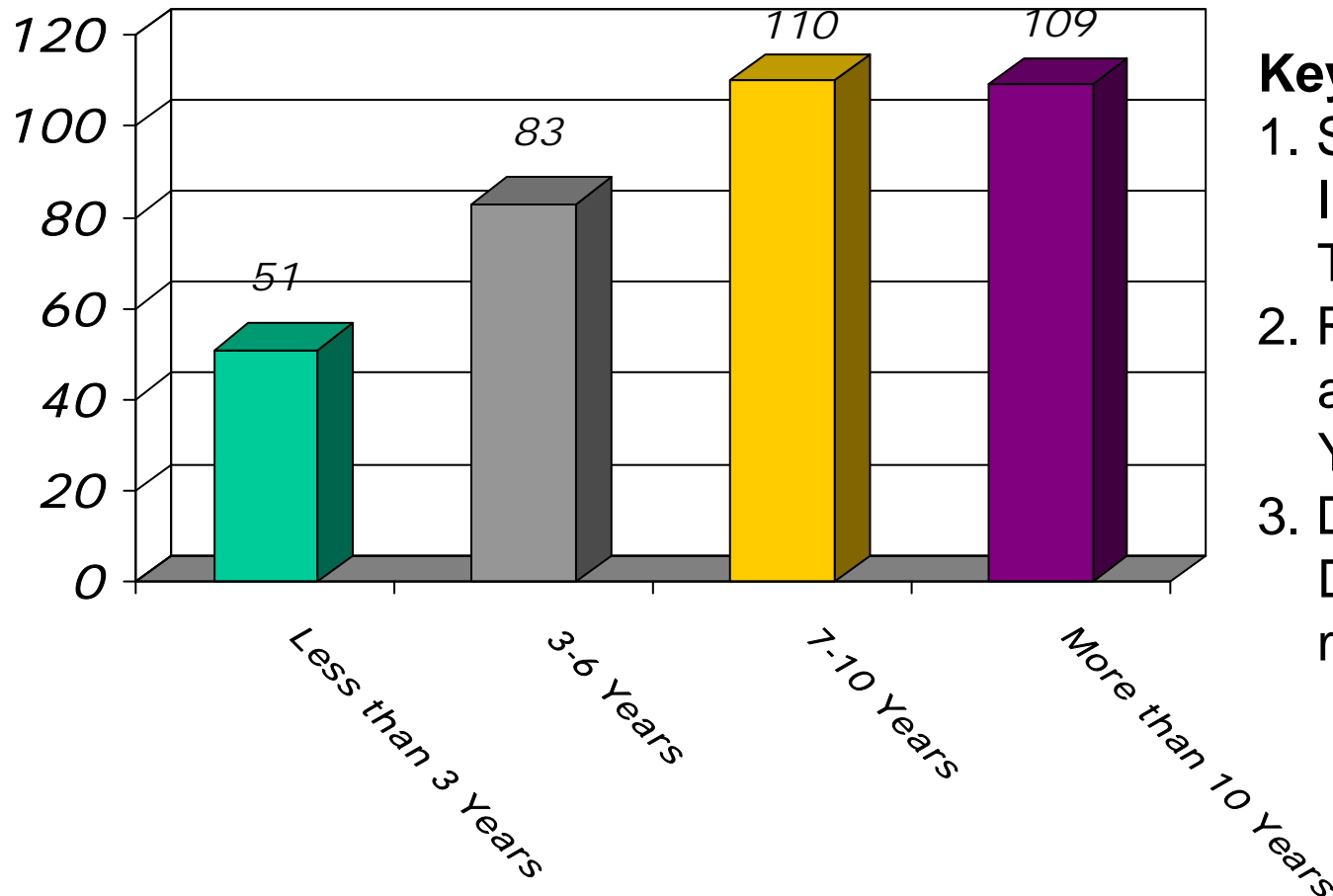
## Type of Job and Bullying Intensity - Metrics@Work data



### Key Points

1. Frontline more
2. Team Leader more
3. But all experience bullying!

## Tenure and Bullying Intensity - WHRL data



### Key Points

1. Steady Increase with Tenure
2. Reaches Max around 7-10 Years
3. Does not Decline with more Tenure

# Example of Perpetrator of Psycho-social Incivilities

## Coworker as Perpetrator

Verbal abuse, including swearing, ridicule, insults, negative teasing, bullying or being

Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Never	89	58.9%
Once or Twice	25	16.6%
A Few Times	18	11.9%
Once a Month	5	3.3%
Once a Week	8	5.3%
Daily	6	4.0%
		Total Responses: 151

## Manager as Perpetrator

Verbal abuse, including swearing, ridicule, insults, negative teasing, bullying or being

Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Never	126	84.6%
Once or Twice	14	9.4%
A Few Times	7	4.7%
Once a Month	1	0.7%
Once a Week	1	0.7%
Daily	0	0.0%
		Total Responses: 149

## Physician as Perpetrator

Verbal abuse, including swearing, ridicule, insults, negative teasing, bullying or being

Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Never	97	78.2%
Once or Twice	15	12.1%
A Few Times	7	5.6%
Once a Month	2	1.6%
Once a Week	3	2.4%
Daily	0	0.0%
		Total Responses: 124

## Patient/Family as Perpetrator

Verbal abuse, including swearing, ridicule, insults, negative teasing, bullying or being

Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Never	59	48.4%
Once or Twice	24	19.7%
A Few Times	18	14.8%
Once a Month	8	6.6%
Once a Week	8	6.6%
Daily	5	4.1%
		Total Responses: 122

# Example of Perpetrator of Violent Incivilities

## Coworker as Perpetrator

Sexual harassment whether verbal or physical

Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Never	146	96.7%
Once or Twice	2	1.3%
A Few Times	2	1.3%
Once a Month	0	0.0%
Once a Week	1	0.7%
Daily	0	0.0%
Total Responses:		151

## Manager as Perpetrator

Sexual harassment whether verbal or physical

Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Never	151	100.0%
Once or Twice	0	0.0%
A Few Times	0	0.0%
Once a Month	0	0.0%
Once a Week	0	0.0%
Daily	0	0.0%
Total Responses:		151

## Physician as Perpetrator

Sexual harassment whether verbal or physical

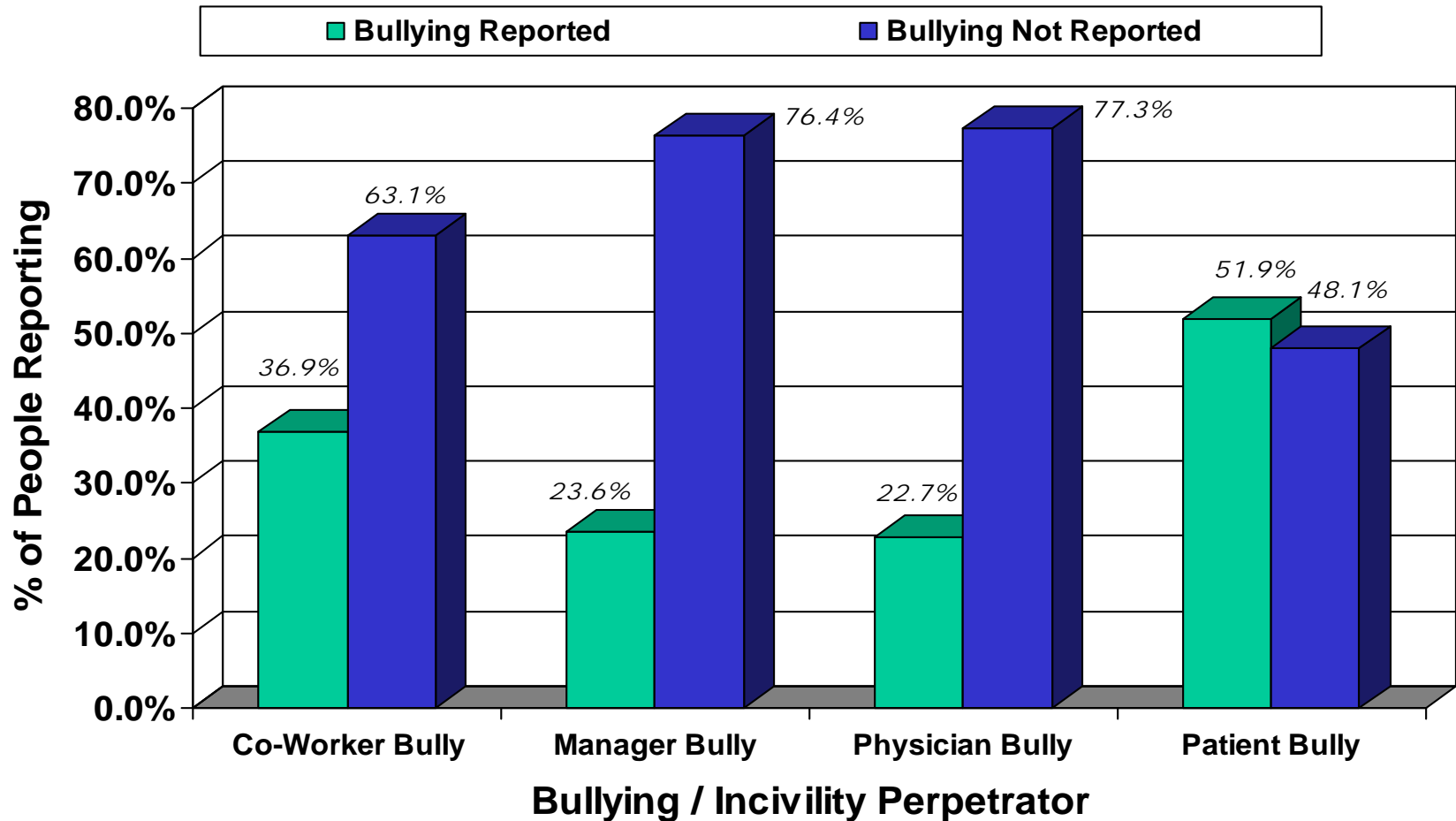
Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Never	118	94.4%
Once or Twice	6	4.8%
A Few Times	1	0.8%
Once a Month	0	0.0%
Once a Week	0	0.0%
Daily	0	0.0%
Total Responses:		125

## Patient/Family as Perpetrator

Sexual harassment whether verbal or physical

Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Never	104	83.9%
Once or Twice	11	8.9%
A Few Times	5	4.0%
Once a Month	3	2.4%
Once a Week	0	0.0%
Daily	1	0.8%
Total Responses:		124

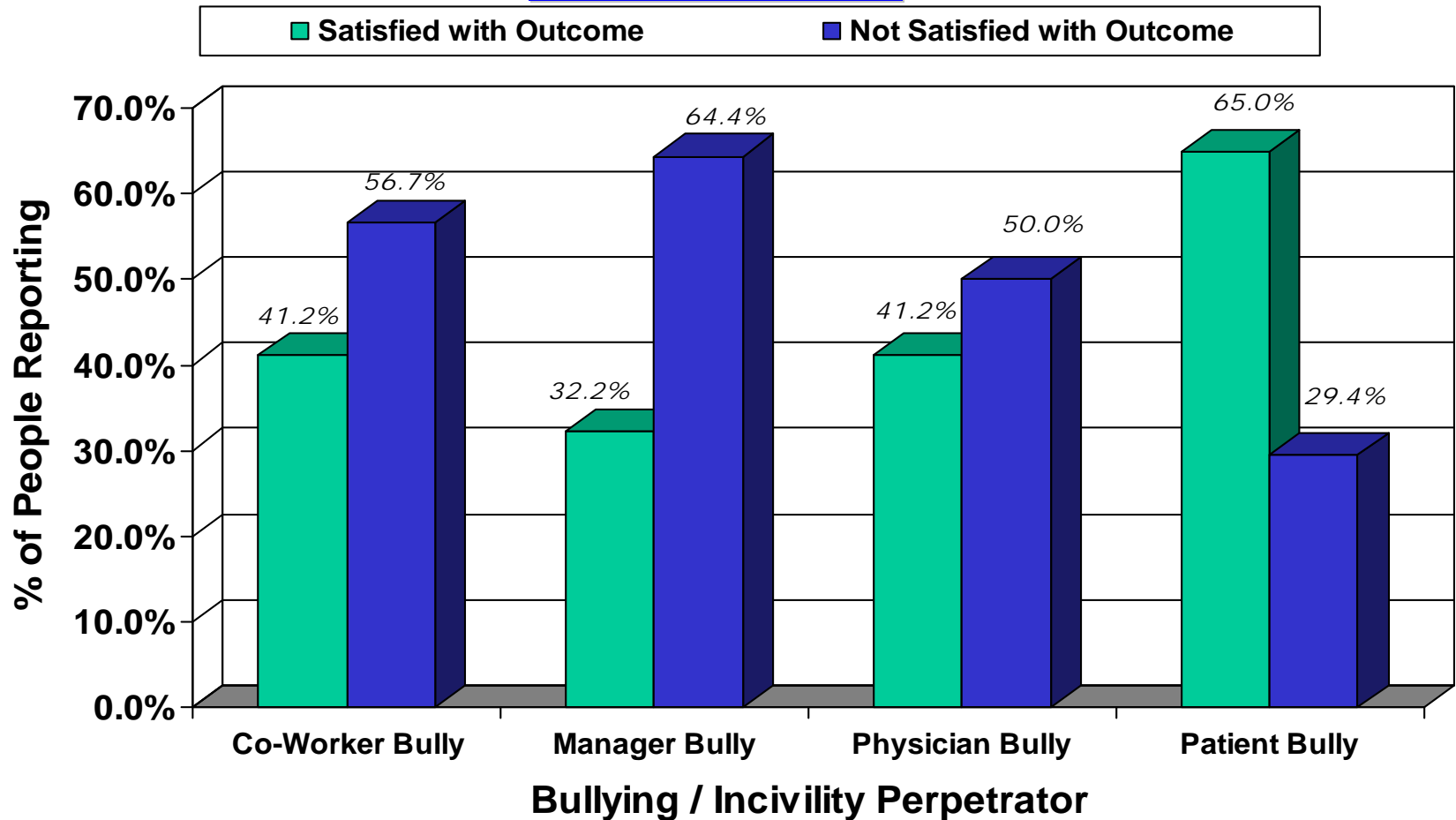
# Bullying / Incivility Reporting



Except for Patient Bully, unreported is higher, up to 3x higher. Clear difference in level of reporting based on position, patient most reported, mgr/physician least.

\* Caution: data from healthcare sector

# Reported Bullying / Incivility and Resolution Satisfaction



Satisfaction with resolution lowest with Mgr bully, physician and co-worker intermediate approaching half, clearest satisfaction with patient (not all yes that reported bullying reported resolution satisfaction so numbers do not add to 100%).

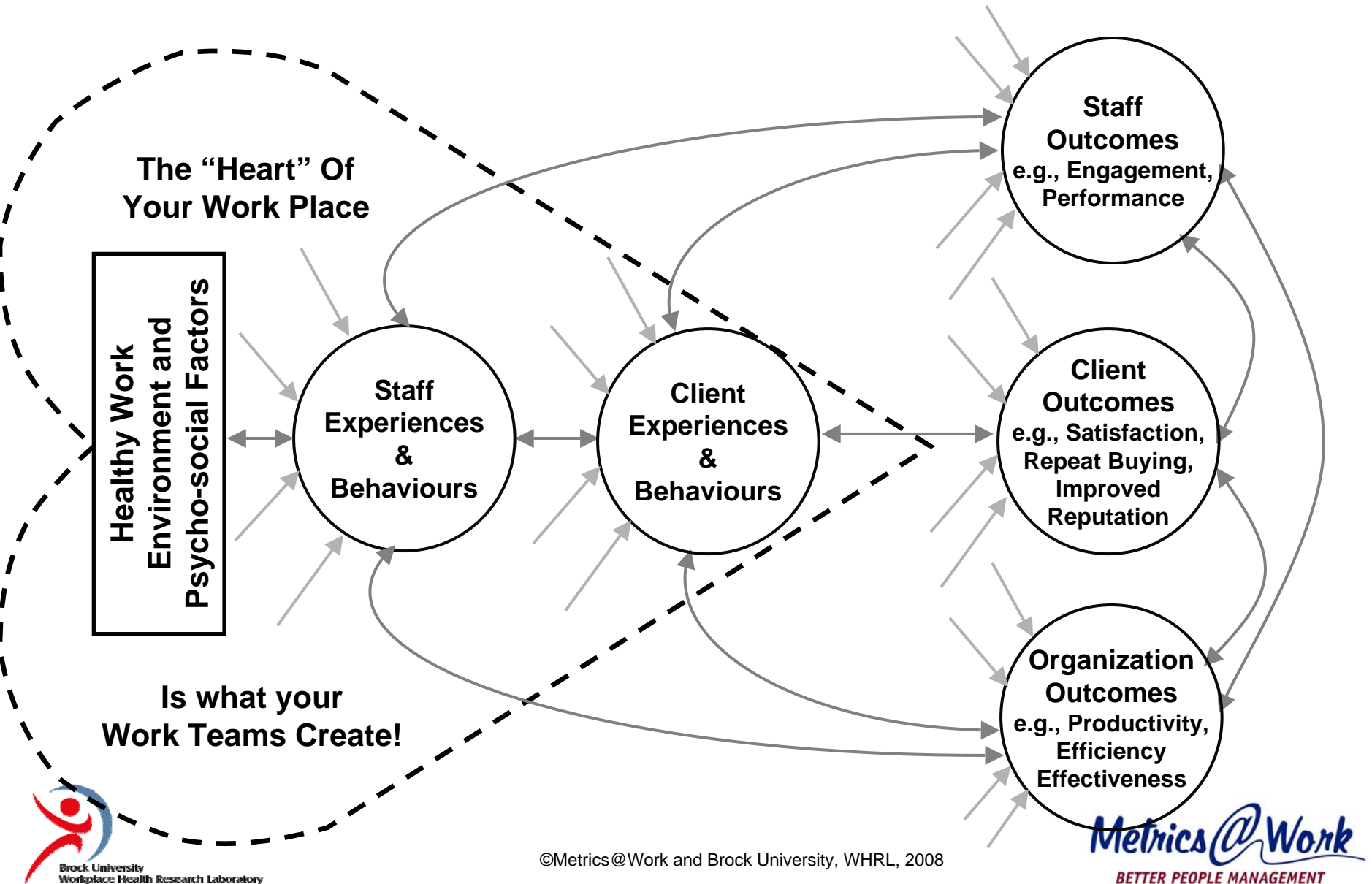
\* Caution: data from healthcare sector

# Emergence of Healthy Work Environment (HWE) Research and Practice

- Recent emergence of a focus on Positive Organizational Behaviour (POB) (e.g., Luthans, 2002; Wright 2003)
- Also, recently, the modeling of healthy workplaces and research probing the positive side of work has emerged (e.g., Browne, 2002; May, Gilson & Harter, 2004)
- At the same time as research and academic writing has been emerging, there are a host of phrases and terms that have swept into Human Resource Management literature:
  - Organizational Health – Magnet Hospital / Magnet Schools -  
Organizational Culture – Positive Work Environments – Employer of Choice – Work Engagement – Quality of Jobs, .....

# WORK TEAMS ARE THE HEART OF YOUR WORK PLACE:

## Staff – Client / Customer – Outcome Model



# Defining a Healthy Work Environment (Metrics@Work & Partner's Database)

## Healthy Work Environment (HWE) Elements – multi item constructs:

1. Respect, Fairness and Trust
2. Leadership and Management Quality
3. Manageable Work Stressors
4. Recognition and Opportunity
5. Safety at Work
6. Work Social Support

Essentially these are  
psycho-social elements  
that create and support  
collaboration, cohesion  
and strong teams

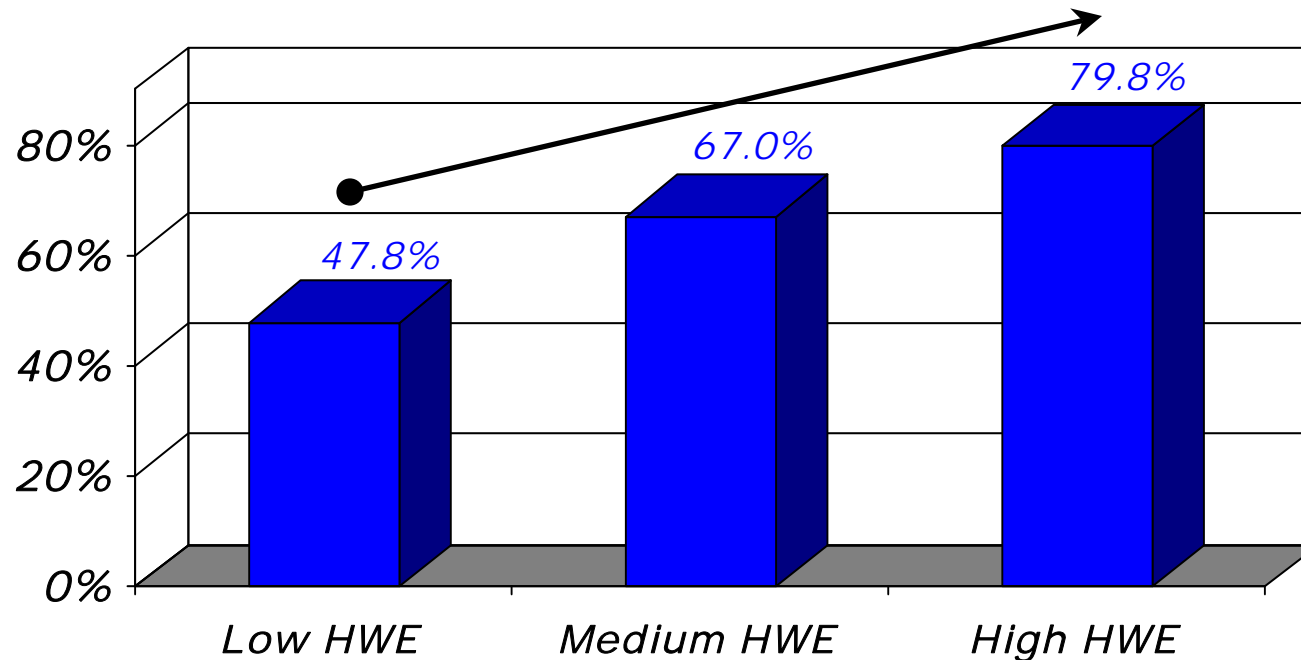
- Constructs compiled into one index, representing the organization's culture, climate & practices
- We labelled the index "Healthy Work Environment (HWE)"
- Classified into 3 levels of HWE: Low, Medium and High

# A Value of Getting Leadership Right in the Front Line: Job Engagement Improvements

Clear gradient, Consistent, Positive Relationship.

Healthy Work Environment is significantly related to higher staff engagement

## *Job Engagement*



If work environments were “High HWE” and if HWE was causally related to job engaged:  
 $79.8\% - 47.8\% = 32\%$   
 $32\% / 47.8\% = 66.9\%$   
 improvement in job engagement from low level HWE

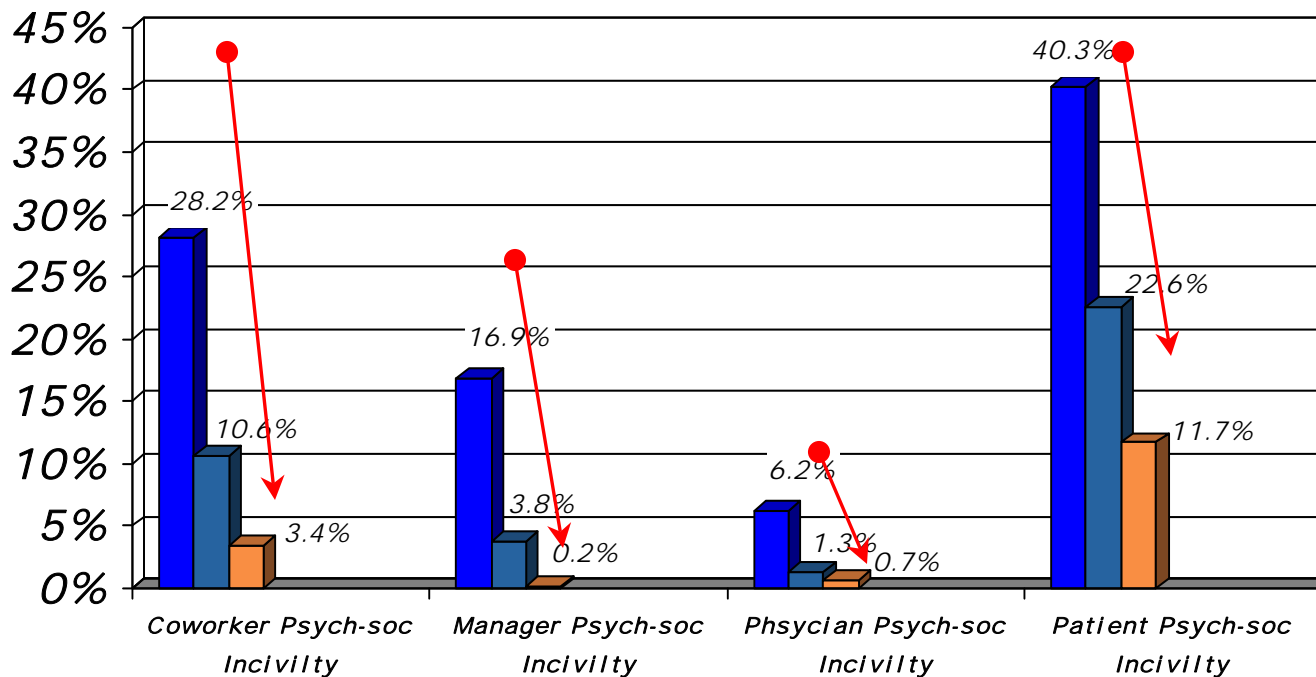
\* NOTE: data from healthcare sector

# A Value of Getting Leadership Right in the Front Line: Incivility Reductions

Clear gradient, Strong, Negative Relationship.

**Healthy Work Environment is significantly related to lower staff incivility**

## *Severity of Incivilities*



The results are crystal clear and very strong reductions in frequency of incivilities is shown for all perpetrators from low HWE, to medium HWE to high HWE work environments.

## Large Group Discussion

- I have just presented a fairly robust set of data that indicates:
  - Power differentials among work place participants and frequency of incivility
  - Results indicating very clearly that incivility occurs in all job types, though it appears more frequent for male, front-line, and less educated groups
  - Incivility is under-reported, especially against authorities and is low in satisfactory resolution, and
  - That the association of a healthy work environment is clearly associated with twin values:
    - Reduced incivilities
    - Raised engagement
- Challenges, opinions, statements, questions?

# Prevention and Response to Incivility in Work Organizations

# Steps an Employer Can Take to Reduce Bullying

## Prevention Processes

1. Make clear a “no bullying policy”, with commitment from Senior Management
2. Carry out an audit / assessment of existing behaviours / culture (e.g., part of a survey)
3. Develop procedures including behavioural standards, and disciplining consequences for violations
4. Communicate, train / educate all staff / management
5. Create a confidential, reprisal free, reporting process
6. Improve the psycho-social work environment, particularly local work cultures (which a survey can identify)\*\*

Adapted from Burr & Skaith, pp. 35-38, Sept. 2006 issue of Municipal World



# Steps an Employer Can Take to Reduce Effects of Bullying

## **Response Processes**

1. Set up competent, credible, prompt, objective and confidential investigation processes
2. Alternative dispute resolution processes for intervention into conflict situations
3. Implement change oriented remedies / interventions and follow up to evaluate level of success
4. Implement sanctions to offending party, if appropriate
5. Ensure counselling and supports are available to victims, observers, and perpetrators

Adapted from Burr & Skaith, pp. 35-38, Sept. 2006 issue of Municipal World

## Round Table Discussion

- Most workplaces have a policy in place for violence, but what about psycho-social incivility?
  1. What has your workplace got that they have put in place for a response to incivility?
  2. What can you learn from each other?
  
- Challenges, opinions, statements, questions?

# Summation

- The work of an organization is concentrated in its front line work units or teams
- Collaboration and leadership are team phenomena
- Incivilities are frequent in our work environments, perpetrated by all participants, but is under-reported and not very satisfactorily resolved.
- Yet, there is very strong evidence of real, valued outcomes associated with higher HWE
  - Increased engagement
  - Decreased incivilities
- So, ..... (next slide)

# Taking a “Leaf” from the Healthcare Book

The National Collaborative, Quality Workplace - Quality Healthcare Collaborative (QWQHC) stated in 2006,

“A fundamental way to better healthcare is through healthier workplaces:

it is unacceptable to work in, receive care in, govern, manage and fund unhealthy healthcare workplaces”

- The creation of a Healthy Work Environment is fundamentally and universally a responsibility of work organizations and the people who manage and staff them. The above statement is now part of Accreditation Canada’s accreditation processes (Version 6) for Healthcare Agencies in Canada. **It should, really, be the cornerstone of all strategic plans in Canadian Workplaces.**

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