1-1-2015

The Lived Experience of Witnessing Bullying in the Workplace: A Transcendental Phenomenological Study

Angela E. Dash

Nova Southeastern University, angeladash@yahoo.com

The Lived Experience of Witnessing Bullying in the Workplace:
A Transcendental Phenomenological Study

by

Angela E. Dash

A Dissertation Presented to the
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences of Nova Southeastern University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Nova Southeastern University
2015
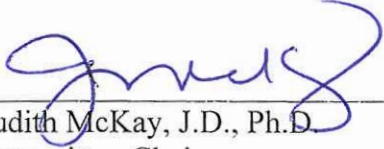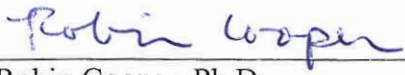
Nova Southeastern University
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences
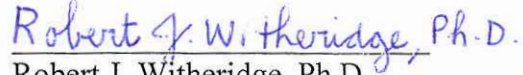
This dissertation was submitted by Angela E. Dash under the direction of the chair of the dissertation committee listed below. It was submitted to the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and approved in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved:
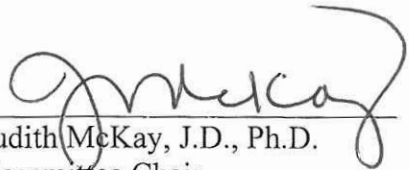
December 9, 2015
Date of Defense

Judith McKay, J.D., Ph.D.
Committee Chair

Robin Cooper, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Robert J. Witheridge, Ph.D.
Committee Member

7/30/16
Date of Final Approval

Judith McKay, J.D., Ph.D.
Committee Chair

Dedication

This dissertation study is dedicated to my mother who made it her job to pray and encourage me through this journey, to my father and maternal grandmother who stressed higher education, and to my children, whose mere being inspired me to finish what I started. And, a special dedication to my favorite aunt, who always made me feel proud to be working on my doctorate degree. After a short battle with cancer, she died only a few months before my final dissertation defense. However, as God designed it, my final dissertation defense was on what would have been her 70th birthday – December 9, 2015. Aunt Shirley Jeannette Dash Silas, I did it!

Acknowledgments

This has been a long journey. I decided to pursue a doctor of philosophy only months before I applied to this doctoral program in 2005. Prior to, a doctorate degree was not something that I had ever aspired to pursue. I have always had a yearning for new knowledge and to acquire new skills, but a doctoral journey was something in which I was totally unfamiliar. The coursework came with ease, but the process of conducting research was intimidating. I realized towards the end that I simply had to get out of my own way to recognize that this journey was open for me to fully explore and complete, just as it was for another. I thank my village for helping me through this realization by believing in my abilities when I did not, and for encouraging me along the way.

To my NSU classmates, Dr. Ovienloba, Dr. Rutledge, and Dr. Credle, thank you for your encouragement and for refusing to leave me behind. I appreciate the periodic check-ins and motivation. To Judge Adams, thank you for planting the seed in 1998 for me to advance my education. At that time, I only had an undergraduate degree. You gave me that initial push and I have always appreciated you for that. Your interest in my educational journey has meant a lot to me and has motivated me throughout my academic career. To Welby and my sister-friends, Ericka, Felecia, and Mary, thank you for helping me to see the forest for the trees when I became weary during this journey. You have been a blessing in my life. To my parents, you instilled a quality of tenacity in me that made it difficult to give up on what I started. Thank you for continuing to pour life into me. To my children, Chelsea and Chad, thank you for patiently sharing me with my studies for all of these years, and for being a constant source of motivation. I love you two, very much.

To the talented and dedicated professors of NSU, thank you for opening up a well of knowledge that I drink from every day. What I have gained from my academic journey at NSU has been significant. I have become a knowledgeable, skilled, and confident conflict management practitioner and my contribution to the scholarly literature has only just begun. I look forward to contributing to the field of conflict analysis and resolution as a practitioner and scholar and I thank you for the preparation. I am especially and forever thankful to my chair, Dr. Judith McKay. Thank you for your wise guidance, your patient and loving spirit, and for making sure that I did not get lost in my dissertation journey. You have been my angel. And to my committee members, Dr. Robin Cooper and Dr. Robert L. Witheridge, your contributions to shaping my study were invaluable and contributed meaningful insight into the possibility of my inquiry and scholarly contributions. Thank you for being on my team!

Finally, to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, thank you for giving me strength when I thought I had no more. Thank you for giving me clarity when my path became unclear. Thank you for carrying me through this journey and surrounding me with a village to help me along the way. Your love never fails, and I thank you.

Table of Contents

iv

List of Tables

List of Figures

Abstract

Bullying in the workplace is prevalent in the United States and its impact is harmful not only to targets, but to the organization and its members. Through exploring the experiences of employees who self- identify with having witnessed bullying in the workplace, this transcendental phenomenological study was guided by the following two-part research question: "*What is the experience of witnessing bullying in the workplace and how do participants describe their organizations where workplace bullying was witnessed*?" The carefully constructed wording of my research question indicates that I was not searching for causal relationships. Instead, I was open to whatever came forth from participants' comprehensive descriptions of their experience of witnessing workplace bullying and of the organizations where their experiences occurred. The study included a sample of 12 mid-career professionals drawn from numerous industries and from across various regions of the United States. Lengthy phenomenological interviews were conducted by telephone and the transcribed interviews were analyzed using The Modification of the Van Kaam Method (Moustakas, 1994). The analysis found four themes that weaved through all twelve of the participants. They are: 1) Making Sense through Metaphors; 2) Emotional Impact; 3) Taking an Intentional Stance; and 4) Awareness of Organizational Trustworthiness. By providing fresh understandings and perspectives regarding organizations where bullying exists and the impact that bullying has on the organization and its employees, the findings are valuable to the field of conflict analysis and resolution.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction to the Problem

Bullying in the workplace is prevalent in the United States and its impact is harmful. A 2012 study conducted by the Society for Human Resources Management found that fifty-one percent of surveyed organizations reported occurrences of workplace bullying incidents within their organizations (Workplace Bullying Institute, 2012). According to the most recent U.S. Workplace Bullying Survey conducted by the Workplace Bullying Institute (2014), "The number of U.S. workers who are affected by bullying – summing over those with direct bullying and witnessing experiences – is 65.6 million…" (p. 5), and over one quarter of adult Americans have personally experienced being the target of repeated acts of abusive behavior at work that was threatening, intimidating, and humiliating, including sabotage or verbal abuse.

There has been important scholarly research conducted on this growing epidemic. A considerable amount of the literature has focused on the prevalence and impact of workplace bullying and how bullying is experienced by targets. The literature has also offered specific strategies that organizations can take to respond to workplace bullying, such as training, coaching, and establishing anti-bullying policies (Namie & Namie, 2011; Branch, 2006; Bulutlar & Öz, 2009; Einarson, Hoel, Zapf & Cooper, 2005; Mayhew, McCarthy, Chappell, Quinlan, Barker & Sheehan, 2004; Petitpas-Taylor, 2009; Zeidner, 2008; Hodson, Roscigno & Lopez, 2006). There is also considerable literature that points to the organization as the problem (Bulutlar & Öz, 2009; Einarsen et al., 2005; Hodson et al., 2006; Petitpas-Taylor, 2009), while suggesting that there is a need to

expand the scholarly research and focus beyond the individual actors involved, so as to focus on the organizations whereby bullying takes place (Georgakopoulos, Wilkin, & Kent, 2011; Buttigieg, Bryant, Hanley, & Liu, 2011).

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the lived experiences of witnessing bullying in the workplace and the organizational contexts in which they occurred. A transcendental phenomenological method was used to collect, organize, analyze, and report the findings from lengthy interviews with 12 participants in examination of the following two-fold research question: *What is the experience of witnessing bullying in the workplace and how do employees describe their organization where workplace bullying was witnessed?*

The phenomenon that was studied was that of witnessing workplace bullying. The carefully constructed wording of my research question indicates that I was not searching for causal relationships. Instead, I was open to whatever came forth from participants' comprehensive descriptions of their organizations and of their experiences of witnessing workplace bullying. Therefore, my research question sought to qualitatively investigate the phenomenon.

Research Goals

Brinkmann and Kvale (as cited in Hays & Singh, 2011) opined that "it is important to consider how the knowledge produced will circulate in the wider culture and affect humans and society" (p. 70). The purpose of my study as well as the goals that I strived to fulfill supported my commitment to this responsibility as a researcher. As

such, this study was supported by three primary research goals that have societal implications. They are as follows:

RG₁. To advance individual, societal, and practitioner awareness of the range of impact of workplace bullying by providing insight from the experiences of employees who have witnessed it - adding a dimension to mean-making and voice-giving that will hopefully motivate individuals and groups to enter into this important dialogue and attend to this very important issue.

RG₂. To contribute to the body of literature by revealing "fresh points of view" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 80) from the perspective of witnesses, regarding organizations where workplace bullying occurs.

RG₃. To inform, challenge or support action at a practical level. As organizational leaders, policymakers, and practitioners devise and implement effective workplace bullying prevention and intervention efforts, they need to better understand workplace bullying in the context of the organization and understand the range of its impact.

Personal Significance

Moustakas (1994) opined that a researcher's "personal history brings the core of the problem into focus" (p. 104). This holds true with regards to the focus of this study and its significance to my personal experience. My past experience being a target of top-down workplace bullying fueled my interest in this study and sensitized my awareness of the attention that this problem warrants - as researchers, as a society, and as leaders in our

professions. Subsequently, I became committed to contributing to the literature aimed at understanding and addressing the problem of workplace bullying.

Definition of Terms

Although the definition of workplace bullying continues to be debated in the literature (Carbo and Hughes, 2010; Georgakopoulos, Wilkin, & Kent, 2011), for the purpose of this study, the operational definition of "*workplace bullying*" was the same as the definition used by The Workplace Bullying Institute, which is:

> the repeated, health-harming treatment of an employee by one or more employees through acts of commission or omission manifested as: verbal abuse; behaviors - physical or non-verbal - that are threatening, intimidating, or humiliating; work sabotage, interference, with production; exploitation of a vulnerability – physical, social, or psychological; or some combination of one or more categories (Namie and Namie, 2011, p. 13).

The term "*witness*" in this study refers to an employee who observed one or more employee within his or her organization being the target of bullying behaviors from someone else in the organization. And finally, the term "*target*" refers to an employee who was subjected to bullying behaviors within his or her organization.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

In conducting an integrative review of the literature, multiple channels were used. Electronic databases through the university's online library were searched to find relevant dissertations, abstracts, full text peer reviewed and scholarly reviewed educational literature. The following search terms were used: a) workplace bullying; b) workplace incivility; c) workplace abuse; d) workplace violence; e) workplace mobbing; f) workplace harassment; g) workplace aggression; h) organizational violence; i) employee abuse; j) witnesses to workplace bullying; and k) bystanders in the workplace. The search for relevant literature also included following up on references cited in various literature as well as general and specific internet searches, including a specific search of research studies listed on The Workplace Bullying Institute's website. Articles and dissertations published between the years of 2010-2015 were specifically targeted. Additionally, various books on the topic of workplace bullying were purchased and referenced in support of conducting the literature review. I also referenced textbooks specific to my graduate studies in human resources management and conflict analysis and resolution.

Conceptualizing Workplace Bullying

In reviewing the literature, it was found that there have been many characteristics used to describe the workplace bullying phenomenon. It has been characterized as psychological harassment (Petitpas-Taylor, 2009), toxic (Kusy & Holloway, 2009), emotional abuse, employee abuse (Bulutlar & Öz, 2009), victimization at work (Einarsen,

Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2005), psychosocial abuse (Branch, 2006), and an occupational

hazard (Johnson, Boutain, Tsai, & de Castro, 2015). The literature consistently

recognizes that workplace bullying includes the following key elements: a power

differential; can be covert as well as overt; and it is unwanted and harmful to the target

(Carbo & Hughes, 2010). However, the literature is not consistent as it relates to the

intent of the "bully." While some scholars opine that intent is a key element of bullying,

others advocate that the intent to bully is not a key factor, but rather the effect that it has

on the target is what is key (Carbo & Hughes).

Workplace bullying is also often identified by the intensity of the behaviors from

the bully. Some definitions advocate that a single egregious act can constitute bullying

(Maurer, 2014; Carbos & Hughes, 2010). Other definitions support that behaviors rise to

the level of bullying only after they are experienced by the target at a certain frequency

and duration, such as at least once a week for more than six months (Carbo & Hughes,

2010) or at least twice a week for a period of at least six months (Chipps, Stelmaschuk,

Albert, Bernhard, & Holloman, 2013).

The literature shows that addressing the problem of workplace bullying can be

difficult due to the lack of agreement on how it is characterized and the language used to

define it (Carbo & Hughes, 2010). This was supported in a study conducted at Nova

Southeastern University. Using focus groups, Georgakopoulos, Wilkin, and Kent (2011)

investigated why workplace bullying is a complex problem in need of being addressed in

contemporary organizations. By exploring the relationship of ideas generated by 112

male and female graduate students of Conflict Analysis and Resolution, findings from the

focus groups supported that "there is not a clear definition of workplace bullying, so it is a concept that is often misunderstood" (Georgakopoulos et al., p. 17).

The Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI) promotes what it refers to as a "working definition" for workplace bullying (Namie & Namie, 2011, p. 13). WBI defines workplace bullying as:

> the repeated, health-harming treatment of an employee by one or more employees through acts of commission or omission manifested as: verbal abuse; behaviors - physical or non-verbal - that are threatening, intimidating, or humiliating; work sabotage, interference, with production; exploitation of a vulnerability – physical, social, or psychological; or some combination of one or more categories (Namie and Namie, 2011, p. 13).

The Workplace Bullying Institute is an organization that has been recognized as leading the U.S. campaign against workplace bullying. Social psychologists Drs. Gary and Ruth Namie lead the Workplace Bulling Institute and are leading authors, advocates, experts, trainers, and consultants on the topic. On the Workplace Bullying Institute's (n.d.) website, Dr. Gary Namie's biography boasts that he is responsible for writing the largest and "most frequently cited" scientific study in the U.S. on workplace bullying and that he has been a part of over 1,000 interviews on the subject and regarded by the media and the legal community as an expert on workplace bullying issues. However, even though the highly regarded Workplace Bullying Institute and Drs. Gary and Ruth Namie have provided what they refer to as a "working definition" for workplace bullying, scholars and policymakers have yet to agree upon one definition. I agree with Carbo and

Hughes (2010) when they stated that "there appears to be no single strong, effective definition of workplace bullying" (p. 392). For the purpose of this study, however, I decided to use the working definition adopted by the Workplace Bullying Institute and the Healthy Workplace Bill.

Measuring Workplace Bullying

In addition to the various ways that workplace bullying is defined in the literature, the methods of measuring workplace bullying also varies. The two most frequent methods used in research studies to measure workplace bullying are the operational method and the self-report method (Carbo & Hughes, 2010). The self-report method allows a respondent to self-determine whether or not they have been bullied based on a presented definition of workplace bullying. The operational method, on the other hand, determines whether or not a respondent has been a target of workplace bullying based on their responses to a survey; it allows the individual to indicate whether or not they have experienced certain behaviors, and in some cases, how long they have experienced the behaviors (Carbo & Hughes, 2010). Commonly used surveys in the workplace bullying research are the Negative Acts Questionnaire (NAQ), the Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (NAQR), and the Leymann Inventory of Psychological Terror (LIPT) (Chipps, Stelmaschuk, Albert, Bernard, & Holloman, 2013; Carbos & Hughes, 2010).

In a quantitative study done by Chipps et al., a significant discrepancy was found between the self-report and operational methods. It was discovered that less than six percent of their study's respondents reported that they were bullied after being given a definition of workplace bullying and asked: "Have you been bullied at work?" (Chipps et

al.). However, 34% of the respondents in the same sample were determined to have

been bullied based on their scored responses to the Negative Acts Questionnaire Revised

(NAQ-R) (Chipps et al.). The NAQ-R is comprised of 22 behavioral statements and none

of the statements include the terms "workplace bullying" or "harassment." As cited in

Namie and Namie (2011), similar study results were reported by researcher Pam Lutgen-

Sandvik in 2007, whereas 28% of respondents in Sandvik's study were determined to

have been a target of workplace bullying when their responses to the Negative Acts

Questionnaire (NAQ) were scored; and in contrast, only 9.2% of the same sample

identified as having been a target when the self-report method was used. Although these

are only two examples, they highlight the challenge of measuring workplace bullying and

its impact on the scholarly research.

Shame and Stigmatization

There is an additional challenge in trying to measure workplace bullying, and that

is the challenge of overcoming the stigma. Some individuals are ashamed to identify

with being bullied, and this may partially explain why the self-report method has a lower

identification rate. The literature shows that targets do not want to be associated with

being a "victim" (Namie & Namie, 2011). Advocates and scholars are sensitive to this

and avoid using terminology that suggests victimization. Instead, the term "*target*" is

used. Namie and Namie (2011) opined that "*target*" "implies temporary mistreatment

and abuse with the good likelihood of triumph over the situation when no longer

targeted" (p. 13). They also argued that "conversely, victimhood implies a permanent

disruption of normal functioning [which creates feelings of hopelessness]" (p. 13).

Therefore, referring to those who have been the recipient of workplace bullying behaviors as "*targets*" instead of referring to them as "*victims*" seeks to empower and to remove any associated stigmas. However, because many individuals have been socialized to view those who are the target of bullying behaviors as "*weak*," it is still hard for targets to not feel shame and guilt for what they believe they allowed to happen (Namie & Namie, 2011).

In 2013, there was an example of society's shaming and stigmatization of workplace bullying targets in the midst of the NFL bullying controversy involving Jonathan Martin (the target) and teammate Richie Incognito (the bully) of the Miami Dolphins. In this example, Martin resigned from the Miami Dolphins' team in order to avoid the continuation of being a target of workplace bullying (Beck, 2013; Braziller, 2013; Manfred, 2013; Smith, 2013; Stafford, 2013). During the media fire storm involving the story, Jonathan Martin was characterized as having psychological issues, being weak, a coward, a bitch, a punk, and childlike (Myers, 2013; JRSportBrief, 2013; Smiley, 2013). And, the NY Daily News reported that New York Giants' legend Lawrence Taylor expressed that "…he would never accept Jonathan Martin back in his locker room because he's disgusted Martin didn't stick up for himself and now can't be trusted" (Myers, 2013, para. 1). This is not only an example of how targets are shamed and stigmatized, but an example that also highlights the need for more sensitivity and awareness regarding the phenomenon of workplace bullying, including the recognition that workplace bullying is a legitimate form of workplace abuse.

Public Policy

Although the research of workplace bullying has its complexities, the anti-workplace bullying campaign has continued to strengthen. Over the years, there have been campaigns led across the United States to bring awareness and provide guidance about workplace bullying, including attempts to pass The Healthy Workplace Bill. The Health Workplace Bill seeks to close gaps in the current civil rights legislation and it "protects conscientious employers from vicarious liability risk when internal correction and prevention mechanisms are in effect…hold the employer accountable…[and] compels employers to prevent and current future instances [of workplace bullying]" ("Quick Facts About," n.d). As supported by a focus group study that consisted of workplace bullying targets, the type of awareness that the Healthy Workplace Bill fosters is needed (Petitpas-Taylor, 2009), and "raising public awareness is key to prevention so that the bully gets the message; the target knows there is help, the bystanders know how to react, and bullying is recognized as a social, not just an individual problem" (p. 22).

The Healthy Workplace Bill was first introduced in 2003 and drafted by David Yamada, a Professor of Law at Suffolk University. To date, The Healthy Workplace Bill has been introduced in 29 states and two territories in the U.S. ("States that have introduced," n.d.). Although it has not been successfully enacted to date, workplace bullying has become what Yamada (2013) has referred to as a legal phenomenon. Professor Yamada reported in a 2013 legal research paper titled "Emerging American Legal Responses to Workplace Bullying," that since the Healthy Workplace Bill was first introduced in 2003, there has been a growing momentum across the United States to not

only pass the bill, but to implement anti-bullying policies in the workplace. Workplace bullying has gotten the attention of both human resources practitioners and the legal community and the experts are recognizing that abuse in the workplace is an organizational liability that cannot be ignored.

The increasing momentum in the United States' anti-workplace bullying campaign is a huge accomplishment and advocates and practitioners are continually making note of the progress. On September 4, 2014, Governor "Jerry" Brown of California approved an Act to amend Section 12950.1 of California's Government Code. Beginning January 1, 2015, the amendment required all California employers of 50 or more to add a component on "abusive conduct" to the already required interactive training and education regarding sexual harassment to all supervisory employees (Morris, 2014). The 2014 amendment of the State of California Government Code Section 12950.1 (g)(2), defines "abusive conduct" as follows:

> Conduct of an employer or employee in the workplace, with malice, that a reasonable person would find hostile, offensive, and unrelated to an employer's legitimate business interests. Abusive conduct may include repeated infliction of verbal abuse, such as the use of derogatory remarks, insults, and epithets, verbal or physical conduct that a reasonable person would find threatening, intimidating, or humiliating, or the gratuitous sabotage or undermining of a person's work performance. A single act shall not constitute abusive conduct, unless especially severe and egregious.

Although the recent requirement through California's legislation does not make it unlawful to bully/abuse in the workplace, it is a way that supervisors can become sensitized to the topic (Morris, 2014). This is progress. However, while there is demonstrated progress towards legislation in the United States that addresses bullying in the workplace, the literature shows that there are many legal experts who are critical of such attempts. Part of the opposition is because of the belief that workplace bullying is difficult to define. Although workplace bullying is recognized as being "more than mere incivility and rudeness" (Maurer & Snyder, 2014, para. 3), there is concern from some critics that anti-bullying legislation would in essence, be a form of "legislating civility" and will open the gates to frivolous lawsuits and claims that have no merit (Maurer, 2013, para. 8). Additionally, there is a concern that anti-bullying legislation would force organizations to have to weaken their expectations of their employees - expectations that are believed to foster necessary competition and productivity. For example, employment lawyers Patricia Mullen and Timothy Van Dyck argued the following:

> The United States has always prided itself on its rugged, even idiosyncratic, individualism. At a time when corporate America at least purports to celebrate diversity in the workplace, it is ironic that legislation is being considered which, if passed, would serve to clone workplace behavior…It is those who push us to excel to whom we often owe our greatest debt of gratitude. By labeling pushing as 'bullying', there exists a profound risk that high expectations go by the boards and employees are denied real opportunities for advancement. (as cited by Yamada, 2013, pp. 341-342)

In reflecting on the beliefs of attorneys Patricia Mullen and Timothy Van Dyck, I believe that Carbos and Hughes' (2010) would attribute this type of thinking to a capitalistic mentality. Carbos and Hughes conducted a research study that explored the stories of 16 targets of workplace bullying through written narratives and in-depth interviews. The purpose of their study was to "develop a better definition of workplace bullying and to begin to explore the reasons for the differences between self-report and operational incident rates of workplace bullying" (p. 387).   In their discussion of their study, they opined that "the capitalistic system [in the U.S.] is predicated on the master-servant relationship" and that employers seek ways that they can control their employees (Carbos & Hughes, p. 399). They also suggested that the American working class is more likely to be vulnerable to workplace bullying because they lack power in society and in their jobs (Carbos & Hughes). What I find to be the most interesting finding from Carbos and Hughes' research study is the theory that employees too, subscribe to these capitalistic ideals which causes employees to perceive employer control and bullying behaviors in the workplace as acceptable. This is a possible explanation of the low bullying identification rates when the self-report method is used, and perhaps this "system of capitalism" (Carbos & Hughes, 2010, p. 400) can be attributed to why the U.S. continues to lag behind other nations in anti-workplace bullying efforts.

The U.S. ranks last amongst the western democracies to pass anti-workplace bullying laws ("The International Legislative," n.d.). Lori Armstrong Halber, a partnering attorney at Philadelphia's Fisher & Phillips, expressed that passing anti-workplace bullying legislation would be the "boldest" change in the United States'

employment law since the 1964 passing of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (as cited in

Mauer, 2013). However, Yamada (2013) stated, "I am optimistic about the likelihood of

workplace bullying legislation eventually becoming a standard component of American

employment law…Perhaps my optimism is fueled by an appreciation for when and how

this [U.S.] movement began" (p. 349). Yamada (2013) also cautioned that even if the

U.S. starts to make bullying in the workplace unlawful, it would be very ambitious to

believe that it would mean more to employers than simply another liability issue to avoid.

Anti-workplace bullying legislation is still not enough to have a "pro-active impact on

America's Workplaces" (Yamada, 2013, p. 349). Therefore, it is important that the root

of the problem is understood and addressed, including managing systemic issues in

society and in organizations that breed bullying behaviors.

The Bully

Fortunately, researchers have been busy trying to better understand the underlying

issues associated with bullying behaviors in the workplace in order to support adequate

prevention and intervention efforts. Regardless of the challenges in the scholarly

literature regarding measurement methods and defining workplace bullying, the growing

research on the topic increases the understanding and awareness of the phenomenon, in

addition to raising more important questions to be answered. One question that remains

to be unanswered, is "Who are bullies and why do they bully?"

First, it is important to note that while most bullying in the United States is same-

gender (man to man or woman to woman), the majority of bullies are men, and women

are targeted at a higher rate ("2014 WBI," 2014). The data also shows that non-whites

are more likely to be the bully's target than whites and that bosses have a slightly higher rate of being the bully than peers and subordinates ("2014 WBI"). However, the literature also shows that when bullying occurs outside of a formal hierarchal relationship (supervisor-subordinate), there is still a real or perceived power differential that exists between the bully and target (Namie & Namie, 2003).

Although the data presents a demographic picture of the actors involved in workplace bullying, there continues to be a recognized gap in the literature when it comes to better understanding bullies. Rayner and Cooper posited that "finding and studying the bully is like trying to study black holes - we are often chasing scattered debris of complex data and shadows of the past" (as cited in Crawshaw, 2007, p. 19). One reason for this gap is that many workplace bullying studies only solicit interviews and survey responses from targets and/or witnesses – relying only on their accounts of the bully (Jenkins, Winefield, & Sarris, 2011). Although increasing, studies that seek to explore the accounts of accused bullies, including their experiences and perceptions, are limited.

The literature describes bullies as envious, having low self-esteem, and struggling for power (Namie & Namie, 2009; Namie & Namie, 2011; Bulutlar & Öz, 2009; Matthiesen, Aasen, Holst, Wie & Einarsen, 2003). There is also literature that supports the theory that bullies bully because they have been socialized to be aggressive, albeit through family upbringing and/or through their communities (Namie & Namie, 2011; Crawshaw, 2007). There are also descriptions of the bully in the literature that are sharply critical. For example, bullies have been referred to as psychopaths (Boddy, 2011; Clarke, 2005; Babiak & Hare, 2006). Namie and Namie (2011) boldly characterized

bullies as "jerks, weasels, and snakes" (p. 3) and "inadequate, defective, and poorly developed people" (p. 15). I imagine that the Drs. Gary and Ruth Namie's characterization of bullies is what clinical social worker, organizational psychoanalyst, and "*Boss Whisperer*" Laura Crawshaw, Ph.D. referred to as an "unprofessional", "irresponsible", and "demonizing" way of portraying "*bullies*" (Crawshaw, 2007, pp. 18-19). Dr. Crawshaw (2007) actually rejects the "bully" terminology and in an email communication on June 24, 2015 between myself and Dr. Crawshaw, she explained, "I object to calling people bullies, but I don't have a problem with using the term *workplace bullying* or *people who engage in bullying behaviors*" (personal communication, June 24, 2015).

Dr. Crawshaw concentrates on researching and educating others on abrasiveness - and more specifically, better understanding and managing the abrasive managers who might otherwise be referred to as bullies. In her book "Taming the Abrasive Manager," Crawshaw (2007) focused on the harm that abrasive managers create in the workplace and she explained that "abrasive managers are inadequate managers who use dominance to survive, including using attack strategies when they perceive their survival to be threatened. Crawhaw (2007) also explained that abrasive managers are "unskilled social communicators" who have difficulty reading others' emotions and understanding the impact of their abrasive behavior on others; she attributes this to being raised by empathetically inadequate parents (p. 93).

The Target

While the scholarly research is still working to better understand bullies, there is an abundance of research that sheds light on targets. However, the findings are still ambiguous. There are studies that differentiate between the characteristics of a target and non-target of workplace bullying, placing emphasis on these characteristics as the catalyzing reason for the conflict between the target and bully. For example, in "Who Gets Targeted: Why Me?," The Workplace Bullying Institute (n.d.) reports that many targets are independent, honest, well-liked, non-confrontational, talented, possess good social skills and are perceived to be "morally superior," which causes competition and envy from the bully. One study concluded that targets are "unsophisticated" and tend to "have an unrealistic view of himself and the situation in which he finds himself…" (as cited in Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2005, p. 235). These descriptions, in part, support the conclusion of Azpf and Buhler's study (as cited in Einarsen et al., 2005), which posits that these targets may become victims of workplace bullying because of the bully's attempt to conform them to the norms of the organization or to force them out.

Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf and Cooper (2005) conclude that it is the targets' deficient social skills, low self-esteem, and high propensity for feelings of anxiety and depression that make them targets of bullying or that influences their perception of being bullied. Namie and Namie (2011) found in their fifteen years of research that the target's non-confrontational approach makes him or her an easy target to be bullied; whereas, if a target responded to the bully's initial aggression with aggression, the targeted behaviors would less likely evolve into bullying. However, in a study conducted by Matthiesen and

Einarson (2007), they found that some targets are in fact aggressive and that their

aggression provokes the bullying behaviors from the perpetrator.

The Organization

The literature shows that organizations where bullying is present are perceived as

unhealthy and toxic (Murphy, 2013) and have poor leadership (Murphy, 2013; Regnaud,

2014). For example, a grounded theory research conducted "to generate a theory about

how targets of workplace bullying in academe may begin to heal from the aftermath of

their ill-treatment," found four conditions that contribute to the bullied experience of

faculty members at a university (Wilkin, 2010, p. viii). Those conditions were:

"university cultural norms, abuse of power, change, and attributes of bully" (Wilkin,

2010, p. 110). According to findings from the study, "participants consistently believed

that the university culture created an environment that allowed the bullying to not only

exist, but also to thrive" (p. 110).

Wilkin's (2010) study also found that the top leaders were most often the bully

and that they abused their power and even "used money, position, and power to recruit

some 'vicious' people" (p. 112). The characterization of the top leaders in Wilkin's study

was supported by another study. Using observer-rated assessments with 84 participants

who were human resources professionals reporting directly to the top leader of their

organizations, one study found a strong relationship between workplace bullying and

observed narcissistic behaviors from top leaders in the organization (Regnaud, 2014).

The grounded theory study concluded that narcissistic leaders may create or impact the

presence of workplace bullying (Regnaud).

Narcissism is also a descriptor revealed in a mixed-method study performed by Kusy and Holloway (2009) that employed a quantitative and a grounded theory design. In their study, Kusy and Holloway examined the experience of leaders working with toxic individuals in their organizations. They defined a toxic individual as "anyone who demonstrates a pattern of counterproductive work behaviors that debilitate individuals, teams, and even organizations over the long term" (Kusy & Holloway, p. 4). Kusy and Holloway found that "many leaders assume that the toxic person is a narcissistic, ego-centered control freak who wields power that freezes many in their tracks" (p. 190). However, Kusy and Holloway (2009) posited: "This may be true for some. But no matter what the behavior, the uncanny truth is that toxic personalities often don't do this alone. It's likely that someone shields this individual from others, and this individual is the protector" (p. 190). They found that the protection of the toxic individual in an organization is motivated by three factors: 1) the toxic individual has a special relationship that gives them power or makes them connected; 2) the toxic individual is valued because of his or her expertise; and 3) the toxic individual is valued because of his or her productivity and skills (Kusy & Holloway). Therefore, as Kusy and Holloway explained, it is the "status, prestige, or skill" of the toxic individual that unfortunately allows their behaviors to continue and it should be "the organization's commitment to uphold high standards of conduct and protect employees from inappropriate actions from others in the organization…" (p. 64).

The organization's responsibility in adequately managing workplace bullying continues to be echoed quite consistently throughout the literature. In 1976, Brodsky

posited that bullying exists in organizations because organizations allow it to exist (as

cited by Einarson, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2005). In the Workplace Bullying Institute's

2014 WBI U.S. Workplace Bullying Survey, it was found that over 70 percent of

Americans are aware that workplace bullying exists, but less than 20% of American

employers take actions to stop workplace bullying. It was also found that 72 percent of

American employers "either condone or explicitly sustain" bullying by defending it,

rationalizing it, discounting it, and even denying that it exists ("2014 WBI," 2014, p. 12).

Lewis L. Maltby, President of the National Workrights Institute, stated that "bullying is

the sexual harassment of 20 years ago; everybody knows about it, but nobody wants to

admit it" (as cited by the Society for Human Resources Management, 2008, p. 2).

The Impact

The research overwhelmingly shows that targets' physical and psychological

health are impacted by their experience of being bullied (Einarson, Hoel, Zapf & Cooper,

2005; Mayhew, McCarthy, Chappell, Quinlan, Barker & Sheehan, 2004; Petitpas-Taylor,

2009; Hallberg & Strandmark, 2006; Keashley & Harvey, 2005; Jenkins, Winefield, &

Sarris, 2011; Namie & Namie, 2009; Namie & Namie, 2011; Hodson, Roscigno, &

Lopez, 2006; Sartain, 2013). According to a peer reviewed study, workplace bullying is

more harmful to targets than sexual harassment (Ziedner, 2008) and has been identified

as a form of psychological violence (Einarson, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2005; Mayhew,

McCarthy, Chappell, Quinlan, Barker and Sheehan, 2004; Petipas-Taylor, 2009) which

can erupt into physical violence (Namie & Namie, 2011).

Studies show that employees bullied are prone to develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Hodson, Roscigno, & Lopez, 2006; Jenkins, Winefield, & Sarris, 2011; Sartain, 2013), and the PTSD can last as long as five years after the experience (Sartain, 2013). According to Leymann and Gustaffson (as cited by Hodson, Roscigno, & Lopez, 2006), the impact is "fully comparable with PTSD from war or prison camp experiences" (p. 383). Research shows that many employees who have been bullied become disengaged due to the stress and depression and they eventually resort to resigning from their jobs, even without another job secured (Namie & Namie, 2011; Bulutlar & Öz, 2009; Daniel, n.d.; Matthiesen, Aasen, Holst, Wie, & Einarsen, 2003; Petitpas-Taylor, 2009).

The bullying does not only impact the target. For example, upon being accused and investigated, bullies suffer too. An Australian study sampled 24 participants who were accused of bullying while in a managerial/supervisory capacity; and through interviews and survey questionnaires they found that over 50 percent reported that they took sick leave as a result of the stress, depression, and anxiety that they experienced from the bullying accusation and resulting investigation process (Jenkins, Winefield, & Sarris, 2011).

The harmful impact of bullying in the workplace is a ripple effect that extends beyond the dyadic relationship between the bully and the target. The friends, family members, as well as the witnesses within the organization are also harmed (Emdad, Alipour, Hagberg, & Jensen, 2013). The Workplace Bullying Institute (n.d.) has referred to this ripple effect as a "vicarious experience."

An example of this ripple effect or vicarious experience was supported by a quantitative study conducted in Sweden that found that employees who witnessed their coworkers being bullied actually experienced depressive symptoms, similar to that of targets (Emdad, Alipour, Hagberg, & Jensen, 2013). Witnesses have been found to experience feelings of fear, out of concern for being the next target (Olive & Cangemi, 2015), and have felt disrespected, helplessness, devalued, and disappointed (Risk, 2015). Similar to targets, the Workplace Bullying Institute (n.d.) posited that "witnesses suffer anxiety, depression and, in worst cases, PTSD-like symptoms of trauma."

Witnesses' job satisfaction and how they feel about their organization has also been found to be negatively affected by workplace bullying (Rayner, Hoel, & Cooper, 2002; Peng & Randi, 2012; Emdad, Alipour, Hagberg, & Jensen, 2013; Murphy, 2013; Olive & Cangemi, 2015; Risk, 2015; Houshmand, O'Reilly, Robinson, & Wolf). A survey of 150 employees in a Chinese manufacturing company found a link between witnessing workplace bullying and lower employee morale and commitment to the organization (Sims & Sun, 2012). Supported by another study, Canadian researchers Houshmand, O'Reilly, Robinson, and Wolf (as cited in Williams, 2015) found that the mere exposure to a work environment where workplace bullying exists, will change witnesses' attitudes about continuing to work in the organization. Their study "found that nurses not bullied directly, but who worked in an environment where workplace bullying occurred, felt a stronger urge to quit than those actually being bullied" (as cited in Williams, para. 17). As a result of the findings in their study, Houshmand, O'Reilly,

Robinson, and Wolf (as cited in Williams, 2015) argued that workplace bullying has "significant implications for organizations…" (para. 17).

Organizations suffer from a decrease in employee morale, an increase in levels of stress and/or depression, and a decrease in the level of trust among employees ("The WBI website," 2012). This impacts productivity and an organization's economic bottom line. Asfaw, Change, and Ray (2014) analyzed the responses of 13,807 employed adults from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's 2010 National Health Interview Survey and found that being mistreated in the workplace "was associated with a 42% increase in the number of missed workdays" and cost employees $4.1 billion…." (p. 202). And, Richard and McCord (2011) posited that bullies

> stifle productivity and innovation throughout the organization, they most often target an organization's best employees, because it is precisely those employees who are the most threatening to bullies. As a result, enterprises are robbed of their most important asset in today's competitive economic environment - precious human capital. (para. 1)

Bullying in the workplace can also cost an organization its reputation. Thomlinson and Thomlinson (2013) emphasized that "organizations that become known for their bullying culture can hurt themselves in terms of their recruitment prospects and also in terms of public opinion and confidence" (para. 6). All of these factors make organizations less competitive in their market.

With the cumulative threats to employee morale, organizational trust levels, productivity, innovation, reputation, competitiveness, and an organization's bottom-line,

there should be a huge incentive for organizations to better understand the phenomenon of workplace bullying and to scan their environments to better manage the problem.

Summary

In the preliminary review of the literature, I found that more research is being done that brings attention to the prevalence and impact of workplace bullying. However, there are gaps in scholarly research and literature. Survey based studies have frequently been conducted to investigate workplace bullying, but there has been little qualitative research to study the phenomenon. And, there appears to be even fewer qualitative studies that rely on comprehensive descriptions of participants' experiences.

In addition to these gaps in the literature, I found that while there is an abundance of research that focused on the targets, there is a paucity of research that focused on witnesses and the organizations where bullying occurs. Christianson (2015) too, saw these as gaps in the workplace bullying literature and she addressed this in the discussion of her non-experimental quantitative study with witnesses. Christianson (2015) opined that further research is needed to better understand the lived experiences and the perception of witnesses using a qualitative, rather than a quantitative method. Specifically, Christianson recommended the following:

> ….utilizing face-to-face interviews may enable future studies to gain a deeper understanding about the perceptions of indirect victims of workplace bullying. While the current study revealed the correlation between witnessing of workplace bullying, perceived organizational support and work engagement, the

methodology lacks details and insights from the participants who responded. (p.

68)

This was not the only study that identified gaps in the workplace bullying literature as it

relates to the perspective and the experience of witnesses. In 2013, Nielson and Einarsen

concluded in their study that "in order to fully understand the nature and consequences of

the workplace bullying phenomenon, future research should therefore increase the focus

on being a bystander of bullying" (p. 720). Considering the gaps that have been

identified in the literature, this study will be valuable to the scholarly discussion and to

the advancement of individual, societal, and practitioner awareness of the phenomenon.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Background and Introduction

In the pursuit to discover and generate new knowledge, there are various ways that we might study the human experience. The choice of inquiry depends largely upon the research question (Patton, 1990). As posited by Yin (2009), "…the form of the question can provide an important clue regarding the appropriate research method to be used" (pp. 10-11).

The form of the two-part research question that guided my study indicates that my quest was to understand the "what" of the lived experiences of employees who witnessed workplace bullying as well "how" they describe the organizations where the bullying was witnessed. The underpinning research question of this study was, "*What is the experience of witnessing bullying in the workplace and how do participants describe the organization where workplace bullying was witnessed*?" As indicated in this study's research question, I was interested in gaining in-depth descriptions of what it is like to witness workplace bullying in the context of the organization. As I decided on a choice of qualitative inquiry for my study, I considered these aims.

Among the choices of qualitative inquiry that I considered is the grounded theory approach. Grounded theory is used within various disciplines including education, marketing, social anthropology, sociology, psychology, economics, and medicine and health (Bitsch, 2005; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Goulden, 2005; May, 2009). This approach has also been used in the field of conflict analysis and resolution to study workplace bullying. For example, Wilkin (2010) applied grounded theory "to generate a

theory about how targets of workplace bullying in academe may begin to heal from the aftermath of their ill-treatment" (p. viii). The purpose of grounded research theory is to generate substantive and formal theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As cited in Moustakas (1994), Addison explained the following:

> Grounded theory researchers continually question gaps in the data - omissions and inconsistencies, and incomplete understandings. They continually recognize the need for obtaining information on what influences and directs the situations and people being studied. (p. 5)

The belief of grounded theory is that theory is grounded in data. It seeks to understand the relationships and patterns among "causes, contexts, contingencies, consequences, covariances, and conditions" of social processes in their environments (Starks & Trinidad, 2007, p. 1374). An example of a research question using grounded theory is "What environmental behaviors explain how witnessing bullying is experienced?" This question indicates that it is looking for explanations and causations. However, the aim of my study was not to question or explain the phenomenon of witnessing bullying in the workplace. Yet, it was to gain knowledge of what it is like to witness it. Therefore, a grounded theory approach was not used.

A second method of qualitative inquiry that I explored was the case study. As described by Creswell (as cited in Hays & Singh, 2011), "a case is a specific, unique, bounded system… (p. 44). A case study is often used to investigate phenomena related to groups, organizations, politics, and individuals (Yin, 2009). Hays and Singh explained that the case study approach is also used to investigate events and processes and it

emphasizes the examination of a phenomenon "in its natural context" (p. 44) in order to be able to recognize the boundaries between the phenomenon being studied and the context of the phenomenon. Although my study was interested in understanding how participants described the context of their organization, the aim was not to understand the "bounded system" (Hays & Singh, p. 44), but to understand the phenomenon of the experience of witnessing workplace bullying, itself. Therefore, a case study was not used.

Ethnography was another qualitative inquiry that I considered and quickly eliminated because it was an approach that would not support my research question, nor the aims of my study. According to Willis (2007), an ethnographic approach is "used to study everything from the social climate of an inner-city school classroom to the behavior of executives in a large corporation" (p. 235). Its' aim is to describe and interpret cultural behavior (Hays & Singh, 2011). However, the aim of my study solicited a descriptive approach only and was not focused on cultural behavior, but on lived experiences. Also, in ethnography, field notes are used, and as Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2007) highlighted, the field notes text is very selective, in that the ethnographer "writes about certain things that seem significant [to the ethnographer], [while] ignoring and hence leaving out other matters that do not seem significant" (p. 353). They go on to argue that "fieldnotes are an expression of the ethnographer's deepening local knowledge, emerging sensitivities and evolving substantive concerns and theoretical insights" (Emerson et al., p. 355). However, the form of my research question indicated that I was not looking to rely upon theoretical insights, but that I was interested in the expression of the participants.

Therefore, employing an approach that emphasized their voice, instead of my voice, better supported my study.

Lastly, I considered phenomenology as an approach of qualitative inquiry for my study. As Kafle (2011) emphasized, "phenomenology is an umbrella term" (p. 181) that not only encompasses a range of approaches, but also has philosophical underpinnings. Moustakas (1994) explained that a phenomenological approach seeks to better understand experiences, meanings, perceptions, and "not explanations or analyses" (p. 58) and "it does not seek to predict or determine causal relationships" (p. 105). Moustakas (1994) further explained that the phenomenological approach seeks to gain a better understanding of a phenomenon from participants who share a common experience, such as the common experience of witnessing workplace bullying. The word phenomenon originated from the Greek word phaenesthai, which means "to flare up, to show itself, to appear" and "any phenomenon represents a suitable starting point for an investigation" (Moustakas, p. 26).

In my research, I discovered two major schools of phenomenology: descriptive and interpretive. (Figure 1: Two Major Schools of Phenomenology). Edward Husserl, a German mathematician turned philosopher, is considered to be the father of descriptive phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994). Husserl explained that "phenomenology is the study of the lifeworld" (as cited in Van Manen, 1990, p. 9). Husserl believed that knowledge is gained from descriptions of an individual's lived experience with a phenomena, and not gained from the researcher's interpretation of that individual's description. Moustakas (1994) emphasized the value of participants describing their experiences in

phenomenological research, and opined that doing so, keeps the phenomenon "alive, illuminate[s] its presence, accentuate[s] its underlying meanings…. [and] retain[s] its spirit…" (p. 59). Transcendental phenomenology is referred to as descriptive phenomenology.

Martin Heidegger was a student of Edward Husserl and the father of interpretive phenomenology, which is also referred to as hermeneutic. A sharp contrast to Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is that Heidegger's school of phenomenology is interpretive rather than descriptive and it rejects the idea that it is possible for a researcher to bracket his or her suppositions, biases, prejudgments, and knowledge about the phenomenon (Kafle, 2011). Kafle explained the following about interpretive/hermeneutic phenomenology: "This school believes that interpretations are all we have and description itself is an interpretive process" (Kafle, pp. 186-187). Kafle also posited: "To understand the life world we need to explore the stories people tell of their experiences, often with the help of some hermeneutic or method of interpretation" (p. 191).

As a reminder, one of the aims that I purposed for this study was to advance individual, societal, and practitioner awareness of workplace bullying by providing insight from the experiences of employees who have witnessed it. It was important for me that the essence of the witnesses' described personal experiences be preserved and illuminated - absent of my own interpretations and judgments about the phenomenon. Therefore, I decided that a descriptive rather than an interpretive phenomenological approach would best support the dimension of mean-making and voice giving that I

hoped for this study to provide – an approach and practice that is consistent with my own philosophical beliefs. As such, transcendental phenomenology was chosen as the qualitative inquiry for my study.

Descriptive Pheneomnology *(transcendental)*	• Edward Husserl • The researcher suspends personal opinions and biases • The *description* of the personal experience is the source of knowledge
Interpretive Phenemnology *(hermeneutic)*	• Martin Heidegger • Rejects the idea of the researcher suspending personal opinions and biases • The *interpretation* of the description of the personal experience is the source of knowledge
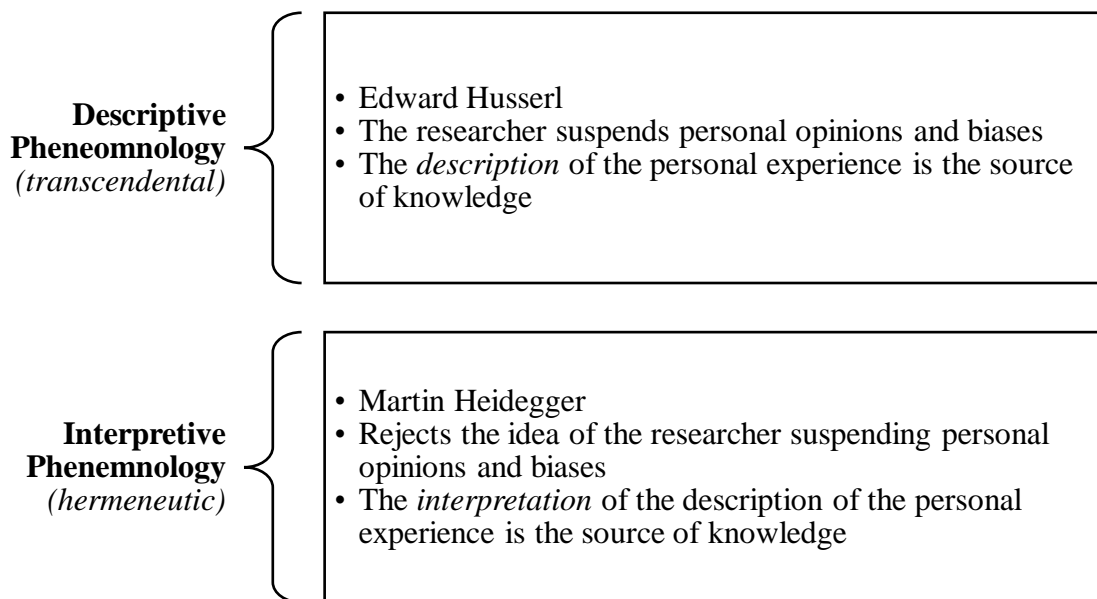
Figure 1. Two major schools of phenomenology

To better understand a descriptive phenomenological approach, I reviewed several phenomenological studies. Comparably, in each study, the investigators were interested in seeking the participants' descriptions of their lived experiences. One phenomenological study that I read was "Facing Up to Hopelessness: A Dialogal Phenomenological Study" (Beck, Halling, McNabb, Miller, Rowe & Schulz, 2003). In this study, it was the researchers' goal to better understand hopelessness and to show that it is a common and legitimate human experience (Beck et al). Through a series of interviews with eight participants who had experienced hopelessness and who ranged in age from 30 to 78 years, the participants were asked to describe a time in particular when

they experienced hopelessness, including the circumstances and feelings surrounding the experience (Beck et al., p. 341).

Prior to formulating their central research question, Beck et al. reviewed the literature related to the topic; primarily literature focusing on depression and despair – both of which are human experiences likened to hopelessness and most often categorized as a psychological problem (Beck et al.). The goal of their "integrative review" (Moustakas, p. 112) of literature was to acquire adequate knowledge related to the research topic prior to beginning the interviews, which was an indicator of their openness to understanding this phenomenon. Their openness was also evidenced by the wording of the central research question. Similar to my research question, their research question did not steer the study in any one direction and it was designed to understand the participants being studied. Beck et. al.'s (2003) study found that hopelessness is a common and natural response to tragedy. Also found was that those experiencing this condition respond positively to finding metaphors to describe their feelings (Beck et al.). They opined that this finding was a significant contribution for care professionals who provide support to individuals experiencing this human condition (Beck et al.)

Theoretical Framework

According to Moustakas (1994), in its early beginnings, phenomenology was referred to as the "knowledge as it appears to *consciousness*, the science of describing what one perceives, senses, and knows in one's immediate awareness and experience" (p. 26). Phenomena is the foundation for which all knowledge is built upon and phenomena is what emerges in the *consciousness* (Moustakas). Edward Husserl's concept of

consciousness in phenomenology is one of complexity and has been difficult for many to explain (Moran, 2002). However, Moran (2006) attempts to explain it as follows:

> Phenomenology is best understood as a radical, anti-traditional style of philosophising, which emphasises the attempt to get to the truth of matters, to describe phenomena, in the broadest sense as whatever appears in the manner in which it appears, that is as it manifests itself to consciousness, to the experiencer. (p. 4).

Because knowledge is gained by what is manifested in the *consciousness*, as Moran (2002) explained above, we are not to rely on hypotheses - whether philosophical or scientific, but rather "we should attend only to the phenomena in the manner of their being given to us, in their modes of givenness" (p. 11). Husserl theorized, the concept of *giveness* "sums up the view that all experience is experience to someone, according to a particular manner of experiencing" (as cited in Moran, p. 11).

Moustakas (1994) explained that "what appears in *consciousness* is an absolute reality while what appears in the world is a product of learning" (p. 27). To understand this, it is important to also understand *intentionality,* or otherwise, the "intentional experience" (Moustakas, p. 78). There is agreement that "*intentionality* directs *consciousness* toward something (real or imaginary, actual or nonexistent)" (Moustakas, p. 68). Kockelmans posited (as cited in Moustakas), that "in Aristotelian philosophy the term intention indicates the orientation of the mind to its object; the object exists in the mind in an intentional way" (p. 28). Moran (2002) explained that it was Husserl's fundamental understanding of the "intentional structure of consciousness" that helped

him to elucidate the conception of "objectivity-for-subjectivity" (p. 16), also referred to as intersubjectivity (Moustakas, 1994). Simply explained, intersubjectivity is the subjective perception of what is objective, or otherwise, "of what is real" (Moustakas, p. 36). Shultz (as cited in Moustakas, 1994) clarified the concepts of inter-subjectivity as it relates to intentionality and the lived experience, as follows:

> If I look at my whole stock of your lived experiences and ask about the structure of this knowledge, one thing becomes clear: This is that everything I know about your conscious life is really based on my knowledge of my own lived experiences. My lived experiences of you are constituted in simultaneity or quasisimultaneity with your lived experiences, to which they are intentionally related. It is only because of this that, when I look backward, I am able to synchronize my past experiences of you with your past experiences. (p. 38)

Two concepts embodied in *intentionality* are the *noema* and *noesis,* which Moustakas argued are perhaps the most complex concepts of transcendental phenomenology. He tried to simplify it by stating that these two terms "refer to meanings" (p. 70). He further explained,

> When we look at something what we see intuitively constitutes its meaning. When we reflect upon something and arrive at its essence, we have discovered another major component of meaning. To the extent that the perceptual meaning of an object refers to a reality, we are describing a real thing. The description of a thing incorporates its meaning. Thus the Husserlian "back to things themselves"

is a way of emphasizing knowledge that is rooted in meanings rather than in an

analysis of physical objects.

What is important to highlight, according to Moran (2002), is that for Edward Husserl,

"noesis and noema are correlative parts of the structure of the mental process" (p. 155).

Moustakas (1994) explained, that "the *noesis* refers to the act of perceiving,

feeling, thinking, remembering, or judging - all of which are embedded with meanings

that are concealed and hidden from consciousness" (p. 69). The *noesis* is "that which is

experienced, the 'what' of the experience, the object-correlate" (Moustakas, p. 69). The

term *noesis* comes from the ancient Greek term "what is thought" (Moran, 2002, p. 155).

The *noema* also has its roots in ancient Greek terminology. It comes from the

term "act of thinking" (Moran, 2002, p. 155). Moran (2002) stated that in Husserl's

Ideas I, he claims that grasping and mastering the doctrine of the *noema* are "of the

greatest importance for phenomenology, are indeed decisive for the legitimate grounding

of phenomenology" (p. 155). Moustakas (1994) expanded on the concept of the *noema*

by summarizing from Gurwitsch's 1967 writings. Gurwitsch (as cited in Moustakas)

explained,

> the noema is not the real object but the phenomenon, not the tree but the
>
> appearance of the tree. The object that appears in perception varies in terms of
>
> when it is perceived, from what angle, with what background of experience, with
>
> what orientation of wishing, willing, or judging, always from the vantage point of
>
> a perceiving individual. (p. 29).

Moustakas (1994) further explained that "the noema corresponds at all points to the noesis…the noema, in perception, is its perceptual meaning or the perceived as such…noema is that which is experienced, the what of experience, the object-correlate" (p. 69). And in Moran's (2002) "Introduction to Phenomenology," he eloquently explained this object-correlate, as Moustakas mentioned. Moran stated,

> to examine the structure of this 'perceived as perceived' is to examine the noema. The bracketing has changed our relation to this object. As Husserl says, the object, the apple tree, can be destroyed but the noema cannot be destroyed. (p. 157)

He also explained,

> the noema is not the object towards which the act is directed, but rather provides the vehicle which connects my occurrent thought to the intended object. The noema is that through which the object is grasped; it is the route to the object. (pp. 156-157)

In summary, "wherever a noesis exists it is always directly related to a noema. The noema, in perception, is its perceptual meaning or the perceived as such…" (Moustakas, p. 69).

Major Processes

Epoche

A major process of transcendental phenomenology is Epoche (pronounced epokhē). Epoche is the German term for bracketing, and these two words are used interchangeably in the research literature. Husserl referred to Epoche as "suspension of

the natural attitude" (Moran, 2002, p. 16). It requires that the researcher sets aside his or

her presuppositions, biases, prejudgments, and knowledge about the phenomenon in

order to be free to explore the lived experienced with open and fresh eyes (Moustakas,

1994). It allows the researcher to see the phenomenon that is being investigated through

a fresh and naïve lens so that the researcher's biases that have been gained from what he

or she has learned to know as fact is cleared away or tabled in order to make room for

obtaining new knowledge (Moustakas, 1994). Epoche is how we "invalidate, inhibit, and

disqualify all commitments with reference to previous knowledge and experience"

(Moustakas, p. 85). This means that theorizing and hypothesizing violates the process of

Epoche because it "requires a judgment to be made about the potential outcome…"

(Turner, 2009, p. 190).

Moran (2002) used the following analogy to explain Husserl's process of Epoche,

or bracketing:

> This bracketing meant that all scientific, philosophical, cultural, and everyday
>
> assumptions had to be put aside - not so much to be negated as to be put out of
>
> court (in a manner not dissimilar to that of a member of the jury who is asked to
>
> suspend judgments and the normal kinds of association and drawing of inferences
>
> in order to focus exclusively on the evidence that has been presented to the court).
>
> (p. 11)

As Turner (2009) explained, "Epoche occurs through bracketing the phenomenon,

removing it from the world such that the lived experience becomes the sole focus of the

researcher's attention as the means to elicit meaning" (p. 163). It is "a way of creating an

atmosphere and rapport for conducting the interviews" and begins prior to the primary

review of the literature (Moustakas, p. 181). It is the first major process of a

transcendental phenomenological study.

Phenomenological Reduction

Phenomenological reduction is a concept that Husserl had a difficult time trying

to articulate, and one that he also referred to as 'eidetic' and 'transcendental' reductions

(Moran, 2002). It is important to note that phenomenological reduction is a process of all

phenomenological research, however, the process differs based on the phenomenological

philosophy driving the research. Guided by the philosophy and method of transcendental

phenomenological, there is the assumption in the process of phenomenological reduction,

that "the hidden essences are intuited by the researcher through repeated reflection of the

collective recollections" (Turner, 2002, p. 211). It is through phenomenological

reduction that "we strip away the actual character of the experience and grasp it as pure

phenomenon" (Moran, 2002, p. 150).

Phenomenological reduction requires that the researcher describe "in textural

language," what he or she sees (Moustaks, p. 90). However, the process of

phenomenological reduction "is not only a way of seeing but a way of listening with a

conscious and deliberate intention of opening ourselves to phenomena as phenomena, in

their own right, with their own textures and meanings" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 92). The

focus in phenomenological reduction is on the experience's qualities, while the goal is to

discover the "nature and the meaning of the experience" and it is a process that "involves

a prereflective description of things just as they appear and a reduction to what is

horizonal and thematic" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 91). In doing so, as Moran (2002) highlighted, it requires that the researcher shift his or her focus to the "essential, necessary features of the experience" (2002, p. 78). Turner (2009) best explained phenomenological reduction and this 'shift' of focus when she explained that the process involves the researcher shifting his or focus from the "natural world view" towards "intentionality" and that "this shift actually reframes the phenomenon in the researcher's mind such that the experiences becomes new and fresh, suspended in time for us to examine, and allowing that the manifolds to come out of their hiding places" (p. 217). Turner further explained that from the manifolds of appearances and experience, the "new textures and structures begin to coalesce" (p. 220) and "with this coalescence, the researcher can, through reflection, reduce the phenomenon down to its essential themes, separating the incidental themes, those for which in the absence of, the phenomenon could not exist" (p. 221).

Imaginative Variation

Following the process of transcendental phenomenological reduction, is the process of imaginative variation (Moustakas, 1994). Husserl (as cited in Moustakas) opined that the purpose of imaginative variation is to come to a "structural differentiation among the infinite multiplicities of actual and possible cognitiones, that relate to the object in question and thus can somehow go together to make up the unity of an identifying synthesis" (p. 35). As Moustakas summarized, the aim of imaginative variation "is to grasp the structural essences of experience" (p. 35). The process of imaginative variation results in a description that portrays the conditions and context of

the experience, or otherwise "a structural description of the essences of the experience is derived" (Moustakas, p. 35). Through this, as Husserl posited (as cited in Moran, 2002), "we can arrive at new essential truths about an object" (p. 382).

Synthesis

Finally, after imaginative variation, is the process of synthesizing the meanings and the essences of the lived experience. This is the last major process of transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994). Husserl (as cited in Moustakas) posited, that the process of synthesis "is the guiding direction of the eidetic sciences, the establishment of a knowledge of essences (p. 100). It is the belief that arriving at this 'knowledge of essence' is an arrival that is "never totally exhausted" (Moustakas, p. 100) for "the fundamental textural-structural synthesis represents the essences at a particular time and place from the vantage point of an individual researcher following an exhaustive imaginative and reflective study of the phenomenon" (p. 100).

Locating and Selecting Participants

Selection Criteria

Criteria for selecting participants was intentionally established and was determined prior to recruiting and selecting participants. Using a self-reporting method, the following criteria was used to determine interested participants' eligibility:

- *Must be English speaking*. Ensuring that participants were English speaking supported ease of communication between myself and each participant since English is my only language.

- *Must be at least twenty-five years old.* A minimum age requirement of 25 added assurance that participants had enough workplace experience and age maturity to substantively respond to the interview questions.

- *Must have worked for at least twelve months, in a U.S. organization where they witnessed workplace bullying.* This criteria gave added assurance that participants had enough insight into the organization where the bullying occurred in order to respond to questions that asked them to describe the organization.

- *Must have witnessed the bullying in their U.S. organization take place for more than six months.* Some of the scholarly literature argues that duration is important in the characterization of workplace bullying. For example, Carbos and Hughes (2010) and Chipps, Stelmaschuk, Albert, Bernhard, and Hollomon (2013) posited that events are characterized as bullying if it lasts for more than six months.

- *Must not currently be a witness to the workplace bullying, and the experience of witnessing workplace bullying must have ended at least twelve months ago.* The literature has shown that experiencing workplace bullying can cause stress and anxiety for targets, accused bullies, and witnesses/bystanders (Hodson, Roscigno, & Lopez, 2006; Jenkins, Winefield, & Sarris, 2011; Sartain, 2013; Murphy, 2013). The goal was to reduce the risk of emotional harm by avoiding interviewing participants during a possible heightened time of distress.

Sample Size

The goal was to have a sample size that would contribute in-depth to answering the two-part research question. I anticipated a sample size of 10 to 20 volunteer participants who self-identified with having witnessed bullying in the workplace. The sample size was determined by considering the theoretical underpinnings of phenomenological research. In phenomenological research, the emphasis is not on the number of participants interviewed. Instead, the emphasis is on the ability to collect rich data from the samples (Moustakas, 1994). Richness is obtained when enough data has been collected from the participant interviews to generate themes and to synthesize a textural and structural description that comprise the participants' experience as a whole (Moustakas, 1994). The interviews in phenomenological studies are long and comprehensive (Moustakas, 1994) and a small sample size permits the researcher to have the time and space to be in-depth.

Polkinghorne (as cited in Creswell, 2007) recommended that five to twenty-five individuals who share in the experience of the phenomenon, be interviewed by the researcher. In Andrew Ahimieiiese Ovienloba's (2014) phenomenological study of the experience of single parents of children with autism, his sample resulted in nineteen participants, although he proposed a sample of thirty. Dana T. Baduna (2006) used a sample size of five in his phenomenological study of "clinician's experiences in dealing with their personal hardship and recovery process" (p. xi). And, in the phenomenological study, "Facing Up to Hopelessness: A Dialogal Phenomenological Study" (Beck,

Halling, McNabb, Miller, Rowe, & Schulz, 2003), the researchers interviewed eight participants who had experienced hopelessness.

Sampling Method

I relied on a snowball purposeful sampling method (Hays & Singh, 2011) that allowed the easy identification of participants of interest who have experienced the phenomenon and who met the pre-established criteria. The quest was to have a sampling method that contributed richly to the study. Hays and Singh (2011) posited that "purposeful sampling - sometimes called judgment sampling - requires that you develop specific criteria for the sample of your study prior to entering the field" (p. 164).

A snowball strategy is one way to conduct a purposeful sampling method and it is convenient for the researcher because it capitalizes on the network of identified or potential participants by relying on them to help the researcher identify others who meet the criteria (Hays & Singh, 2011). Although it is a convenient method, it has been criticized because it makes it more difficult to have a diverse sample (Hays & Singh). However, one way to build more diversity into a snowball purposeful sample method, is to capitalize upon multiple and diverse networks to help identify potential participants (Hays & Singh). The following discussion explains how I sought to gain a diverse sample by relying on a diverse network through my recruitment.

Recruitment

Interested participants were recruited through my diverse professional, civic, and social networks. My specific recruitment efforts included: 1) making announcements and distributing the recruitment flyer during membership meetings of professional and civic

organizations in which I am actively involved; 2) using my diverse professional and social online networks (Linkedin, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook) to post and circulate a .jpeg formatted version of the recruitment flyer; and 3) asking friends and family to share the recruitment flyer with individuals within their diverse networks. The recruitment flyer can be found in Appendix A: Recruitment Flyer.

Obtaining Consent

It was my ethical responsibility to make sure that each interested participant clearly understood the detailed "nature, purpose, and requirements of the research project" and that there was a clear agreement established, with informed consent, prior to their selection and prior to the collection of data (Moustakas, 1994, pp. 109-110). For the purpose of discussing the study and the consent process, a pre-interview meeting that lasted 20-30 minutes was scheduled and held at a mutually convenient time with the potential participants who responded to the recruitment advertisement.

The pre-interview meeting was scheduled with each potential participant to describe the voluntariness and to allow me to screen the participants for the selection criteria as well as determine whether or not they were psychologically or cognitively able to give and reject consent. Prior to the pre-interview meeting, an electronic version of the consent form (Appendix B: Consent Form) was emailed to each potential participant on Nova Southeastern University letterhead. Having the consent form prior to the pre-interview meeting allowed the interested volunteer participants to be able to refer to it as consent was discussed. The pre-interview meeting occurred over the phone and was not recorded. It was conducted at a mutually agreeable time and privacy was protected.

The style of the meeting was an informal dialogue and interested participants were also informed of the expected contributions of the study. I allowed each participant sufficient opportunity to ask questions and I provided explicit details and clarification of concepts not understood. Each interested participant was duly informed that he or she was at liberty to discontinue or withdraw consent at any point if so desired, without liability. Coercive strategies were not used to gain the agreement of volunteers. Participants were not offered anything tangible in return for participating in the study. Out of the fifteen pre-interviews conducted with interested participants, twelve met the criteria and signed and returned their consent form. Those twelve became the sample for this study.

Selected Participants

The participant sample in this transcendental phenomenological study consisted of three male and nine female mid-career professionals who self-identified with the phenomenon. The median age of the participant sample was 48 and the level of education ranged from "some college" to terminal degrees. The sample was representative of one Afro-Latina, two Caucasians, and nine African-Americans and the industries of the organizations where they experienced the phenomenon were varied. The organizations were located across multiple regions of the United States of America. The following is a demographic listing of the participants.

Table 1

Demographic Listing of Participants

Pseudonym Assigned	Type of Organization	Education Level	Level in Organization
Delia Rodriguez	Private Company	Bachelors	Non-Management
Dorothy Perkins	Government Agency	Bachelors	Non-Management
Iris Newman	Private Company	Masters	Non-Management
Janis Washington	Private Company	Masters	Management
Laurie Henry	Private-Hospital	Some College	Management
Linda Barton	Government-Higher Ed.	Doctorate	Non-Management
Luz Clayton	Private-Higher Ed.	Bachelors	Non-Management
Oliver Fuller	Private Company	Masters	Management
Russell Robinson	Private Non-Profit	Bachelors	Non-Management
Seth Woods	Government-Military	Masters	Management
Tamara Farmer	Government Agency	Doctorate	Non-Management
Vanessa Wilson	Private Company	Bachelors	Non-Management

Data Collection

Following the review of the literature and obtaining consent, I engaged in a lengthy conversational and informal interview with each selected participant by phone. The shortest interview time was 31:32 minutes, the longest was 2:41 hours, and the average was 66 minutes. The informal interview consisted of open-ended questions and statements used to investigate the phenomenon. The interview began with the following broad statement that helped participants to focus on their experience and helped to set the stage for a relaxed and interactive dialogue: *"Reflect on a specific workplace bullying situation that you witnessed and try to remember the context, the incidents involved, the people intimately connected and anything that you can remember including what you felt, and what thoughts you had."*

During the conversational style interviews, I asked unscripted follow-up questions whenever there was a response from a participant that needed a fuller understanding. I

used a prepared general interview guide as a reference. The interview guide included a list of interview questions and statements (See Appendix B: Interview Guide). However, to support an informal, conversational, and relaxed climate, the interview guide was only referenced when the natural development of the conversation did not produce in-depth descriptions of a participant's lived experience. As supported by Moustakas (1994), the interview guide is used "when the co-researcher's [(the participant)] story has not tapped into the experience qualitatively and with sufficient meaning and depth" (p. 116).

To safeguard confidentiality during each telephonic interview, participants were asked to make sure that they were in a private room during the interview. To ensure privacy on my end, I conducted each interview either in my private office or in my private apartment. I always assured that no one else was present or in listening proximity.

While conducting the phone interviews using my Apple iphone, I utilized the phone's speaker feature. Each participant was aware that they were on "speaker." Using the speaker feature on the phone allowed for the total conversation to be captured by the audio recorder. A second Apple iphone device was used to record the interviews and the audio recorder feature in Microsoft OneNote 2013 on my laptop was also used as a backup. Both audio recording instruments ensured that the information provided by each participant was accurately obtained for transcription and made room for me to give adequate attention to the emotional expression manifested during the interviewing process as demanded by the phenomenological research method.

A pseudonym was generated for each participant using a web-based random name generator found at https://random-name-generator.info/. This online tool uses data from the United States Census to randomly generate male and female names. Pseudonyms were also used for other identifiers in the each participant's transcript.

I personally transcribed the recording of each audio recorded interview on my password protected laptop, resulting in 277 pages of double-spaced typewritten data. I purchased Express Scribe Transcription Software and downloaded it on my laptop to assist with the transcription. Express Scribe has helpful playback features that can be easily controlled by the computers "hot" keys. To guard for privacy, I conducted the verbatim transcriptions in a private room. Both the audio recordings and the transcripts were backed-up providing three access points: 1) a secured password protected external drive; 2) a secured password protected laptop; and 3) a password protected web-based Dropbox file storage. Dropbox is a web based personal data storage that files and secures data using encryption and an SSL/TLS secure tunnel.

Reflexivity

Morrow (as cited in Hays & Singh, 2011) explained that "reflexivity is one of the major distinguishing factors between quantitative and qualitative research; it is viewed as being a critical researcher role to self-reflect throughout the research process" (p. 137). Hays and Sing argued that a researcher's reflexivity "becomes one of the benchmarks for how credible and trustworthy a qualitative research design is for its audience" (p. 137). I recognized that self-reflection was key to supporting credibility in this study. Throughout the research process, I leaned on three foundational principles of reflexivity

presented by known psychologist Carl Rogers in his 1961 book, "On Becoming a Person" (Hays & Singh, 2011).

Authenticity

The first principle of reflexivity is *authenticity* (Hays & Singh, 2011). Carl Rogers (as cited in Hays & Singh, 2011) explained that authenticity is "the congruence between the inner and outer world" (p. 138). Because I was being guided by the school of transcendental phenomenology, my quest was to be remain open and unbiased. To do this, I had to be authentic with myself about my pre-existing knowledge, biases, and past experiences regarding the topic. Doing so supported Epoche, which is a major process of a transcendental phenomenological research method and begins prior to the literature review (Moustakas, 1994).

The literature shows that there are various ways that the process of Epoche can be practically applied. Chan, Fung, and Wai-ton (2013) posited that one strategy is through reflexivity. As I initially engaged in Epoche, and prior to engaging in this research study, I reflected on authentic thoughts and feelings that I had about workplace bullying and organizations where workplace bullying occurs. My goal was to freely review the literature and listen to and hear the experiences of the participants without distractions from my experiences and pre-existing knowledge. The process of authenticity continued throughout the research study. For example, during my preliminary review of the literature, I found literature that characterized workplace bullying targets in a way that appeared to be unfavorable as well as uncharacteristic of myself, a former target of workplace bullying. My initial response was to minimize the information that I read and

to not include it in the literature review. This was an early reminder of the importance of looking before judging and clearing a space within myself so that I can actually see what is in myself and what is before myself and to accept the reality that my "personal history brings the core of the problem into focus" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 104). This highlights the importance of being authentic in the Epoche process.

In being authentic about my thoughts regarding the topic of workplace bullying, I also became concerned that too much review of the literature would make it difficult for me to set all things aside. Schmitt emphasized (as cited in Moustaks, 1994), that in transcendental phenomenology, "We 'invalidate,' 'inhibit,' and 'disqualify' all commitments with reference to previous knowledge and experience" (p. 85). Moustakas (1994) added that it is important to be able to examine the phenomenon being studied "naïvely and freshly through a 'purified' consciousness" (p. 85). Therefore, I determined that the goal of my integrative review of the literature prior to collecting my data should be to simply acquire adequate knowledge related to workplace bullying and to not be exhaustive. This was an indicator of my openness to understand this phenomenon.

Unconditional Positive Regard

A second principle of reflexivity is *unconditional positive regard* (Hays & Singh, 2011). This requires the researcher to remain open to hear and accept each participant's descriptions, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings, without judgment. This is a principle that I demonstrated during the data collection and analysis process and is a principle that supports the assumption in transcendental phenomenological research that the study is a collaborative process and that the participants are co-researchers (Moustakas, 1994).

In following the principle of unconditional positive regard, I demonstrated respect for each participant's thoughts and feelings and I remained open to any possible suggestions and ideas from the participants regarding the research process. Before analyzing each transcribed interview, I shared the transcripts with the participants to provide them an opportunity to clarify anything that they believed to be unclear or to add any additional insight. During the analysis process, if I was unsure of anything, I followed up with participants – requesting that they expand on their experience, including requesting that they verify the accuracy of the individual textural-structural description in which I arrived. The purpose of this collaborative process was to ensure that their experiences and thoughts were fully captured.

Throughout the data analysis process, I committed to an unconditional positive regard as I maintained a "ground up" approach by surrendering to the data. I allowed the data and my naïve imagination to lead me to an unknown destination. During this journey, I began to see patterns as it related to the participants experiences. As I continued to be led, I also saw possible meanings that structured those patterns. I could hear their voices, feel what they felt, and see what they saw as I reflected over and over on the participants' transcribed interviews. Through my unconditional positive regard, I opened the gate for the surfacing of additional authentic thoughts and feelings that I may have had about the topic that I had not yet discovered, and that I therefore needed to be accountable. This allowed me to delve deeper into my investigation.

Empathy

The third principle of reflexivity is *empathy* (Hays & Sing, 2011). Carl Rogers (as cited in Hays & Singh) described empathy as the "ability to accurately identify the thoughts and feelings of the client" (p. 139). In the role of researcher, I relied on the principle of empathy to guide my tone, questioning, and all interactions between myself and each participant. I was also careful to rigorously protect the identity, health, and well-being of each participant including refraining from including any information from the data collected in this written study or subsequent publications that can possibly be damaging to the participant, including information that could potentially jeopardize a participant's anonymity. It was also important that I handle the research process with care because I realized the possibility that a participant's recollection of his or her experience may generate strong emotions about sensitive issues – which is also why one of the eligibility criterion was that each participant's experience of witnessing workplace bullying must have ended at least 12 months prior. Being sensitive to this, I made sure that I was prepared for the possibility of a participant terminating the interview or the need for a participant to be referred to a therapeutic resource for support.

Organization and Analysis of Data

Aligned with the theoretical framework of transcendental phenomenology, the analysis of the data was "ground up" rather than "handed down" (Creswell, 2007, p. 19). It was not influenced by theory or my preconceptions, but by the knowledge that transcended from the descriptive narratives of the participants. Clark Moustakas (1994) offers two methods as guides for analyzing data in phenomenological research in a

"ground up" fashion. They are The Modification of the Van Kaam Method and The Modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method. I used the Modification of the Van Kaam Method. This method involves seven steps of phenomenological analysis in order to arrive at the composite meaning and essence of the group's experience as a whole. The following outlines the steps and explains each in detail.

Step 1: Listing and Preliminary Grouping

I read the individual participant's verbatim transcript and reflected upon each statement - one word, one phrase, and one line at a time. As I reflected upon each statement, I considered its' relevance to the study's two-part research question: *"What is the experience of witnessing bullying in the workplace and how do participants describe the organization where workplace bullying was witnessed?"* If a statement was relevant, I captured it and listed it. This process is referred to as Horizonalization. Horizonalization contributes to understanding the nature and the meaning of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas' (1994) emphasizes that although we may come to a stopping point in horizonalizing, "[h]orizons are unlimited" and "[i]t is a never-ending process…" (p. 95).

To support the organization of the horizons, I listed the relevant statements using NVivo11 software. As I listed the relevant statements, I also began to construct and assign labels or "codes" to the relevant statements, or horizons, using an open coding process. Using open coding is consistent with the "ground up" rather than "handed down" (Creswell, 2007, p. 19) approach and it allowed the descriptions of each participant to reveal its own meaning and guide how I organized the data.

I also organized the statements into one of two preliminary groups: 1) the experience of witnessing bullying in the workplace; or 2) the description of the organization. The preliminary groupings helped me to stay focused on the two part research question as I reflected upon the words, phrases, and sentences in each transcript. A sample of horizons for the preliminary group, "The experience of witnessing bullying in the workplace", is outlined below:

Delia Rodriguez. "It made me very uncomfortable."

Dorothy Perkins. "It caused me to be compassionate to the individual."

Iris Newman. "It was draining; it was depressing; it gave me anxiety to have to go there every day."

Janice Washington. "It was a sense of helplessness at first."

Laurie Henry. "It made me feel scared – like fear in a sense – for one, my patients."

Linda Barton. "That's the other thing. I stood up for Mona. Nobody stood up for me."

Luz Clayton. "Sometimes I felt like I was in the middle."

Oliver Fuller. "I think that was the time when I reached my final straw and moved on. I remember speaking up and saying, 'we can't do this – we told people that it was going to be anonymous – we told people to give their honest answers and you can't go in now and try to hunt the person down and get rid of them'."

Russell Robinson. "I guess it impacted me because I made sure I had everything completed and done and I don't think it was a fear factor, I just didn't want to be called out in front of everybody."

Seth Woods. "The particular level of the individual who was doing it, was what was probably most disturbing."

Tamara Fuller. "I told them that the environment had become toxic – I don't work in a very good environment. And, normally when things get a little tight like that, I would rather make provisions for myself than for me to just get crazy and cuss somebody out, you know. I call it my lily pad. I found a lily pad to jump off on so I can go somewhere else."

Vanessa Wilson. "I stepped in with my manager and told my manger what was going on and if she could find her a position, because, you know, she has kids, she has a family, and, and, you know, and since she wasn't willing to completely stand up for herself and go to HR and get all of this stuff documented, I mean…we got her transferred out of there."

Step 2: Phenomenological Reduction and Elimination

Next, I went through a process of reducing the list of horizons by eliminating those relevant statements that did not meet a certain criteria. The criteria for reduction and elimination was also guided by Moustakas' (1994) Modification of the Van Kaam Method. The criteria used were:

1. Does it contain a moment of the experience that is a necessary and a sufficient constituent for understanding it?

2. Is it possible to abstract and label it? If so, it is a horizon of the experience.

   Expressions not meeting the above requirements are eliminated. Overlapping,

   repetitive, and vague expressions are also eliminated or presented in more

   exact descriptive terms. The horizons that remain are the invariant

   constituents of the experience. (p. 121).

After re-analyzing the participant's relevant statements using the above criteria,

the result was a reduced listing of the relevant statements - a listing that consisted of

relevant statements that were non-repetitive and that significantly and uniquely brought

meaning to the participant's experience. It allowed for the remaining statements, or

otherwise the significant statements, to be "linked thematically..." (Moustakas, 1994, p.

96). These significant statements are called "invariant constituents" (Moustakas, p. 96).

Step 3: Clustering and Thematizing the Invariant Constituents

I clustered the invariant constituents, and as I continued to use an open-coding

process, I assigned them thematic labels to portray the core themes of the participant's

experience as it relates to the two-part research question of this study. In order to cluster

the invariant constituents into themes, I carefully considered each significant statement so

that the meaning of the textural qualities that parallel with the participant's experience

could be understood. Arriving at the core themes of each participant's experience was

guided by imaginative variation. Moustakas (1994) explained that "through imaginative

variation the researcher understands that there is not a single inroad to truth, but that the

countless possibilities emerge that are intimately connected with the essences and

meanings of an experience" (p. 99). Imaginative variation also "enables the researcher to

derive structural themes from the textural descriptions that have been obtained through Phenomenological Reduction" (Moustakas, p. 99).

Step 4: Final Identification of the Invariant Constituents and Themes

Conducting the final identification of the invariant constituents and themes by application involved checking the invariant constituents and their associated themes against the complete record of the participant. I checked to see if the invariant constituents were explicitly expressed in the participant's transcript. If they were not explicitly expressed, I checked to see if they were compatible. If they were neither explicitly expressed nor compatible, I eliminated the statements/expressions because they were not relevant. The result was a final list of core themes constructed from each participant's transcript. These core themes and the associated invariant constituents gave meaning to each participant's experience of witnessing bullying in the workplace and how they described the organization where workplace bullying was witnessed. They can be found in Appendix D: Individual Core Themes and Invariant Constituents.

Step 5: Individual Textural Description of Experience

Using the participant's invariant constituents and their associated themes, I constructed a textural description of the participant's experience. This means that I constructed a description of "what" the participant experienced as it relates to the phenomenon. The individual textural descriptions, when later composited (See Appendix H: Composite Textural Description), helped to answer the first part of this study's two-part research question: "*What is the experience of witnessing bullying in the workplace?*"

The individual textural description for each participant can be found in Appendix E: Individual Textural Descriptions.

Step 6: Individual Structure of Experience

Using imaginative variation and the participant's textural description, an individual structural description was constructed for each participant to provide a "frame of reference" for the participant's experience (Moustakas, 1994, p. 98). This translated to constructing a description of "how" the participant experienced the phenomenon. The structural description presents an "understanding of the underlying structures" that account for the participant's experience (Moustakas, 1994, p. 137) in terms of context or setting, situations, or conditions (Creswell, 2077). A structural description is "the underlying and precipitating factors that account for what is being experienced"; and by speaking to the conditions that were present during the experience, the structural description "illuminates the 'what' of [the] experience" (Moustakas, p. 98). When all of the individual structural descriptions were later composited, representing the group as a whole (See Appendix I: Composite Structural Description), it answered the second part of this study's two-part research question: "*How do participants describe the organization where workplace bullying was witnessed*?"

The following two figures are visual representations to show my interpretation of the difference between a textural description and a structural description. In addition, the individual structural description for each participant can be found in Appendix F: Individual Structural Descriptions.

The **Structure** is

experienced.

The **Texture** is
what was actually experienced
as it relates to the phenomenon.

what frames

how the phenomenon is
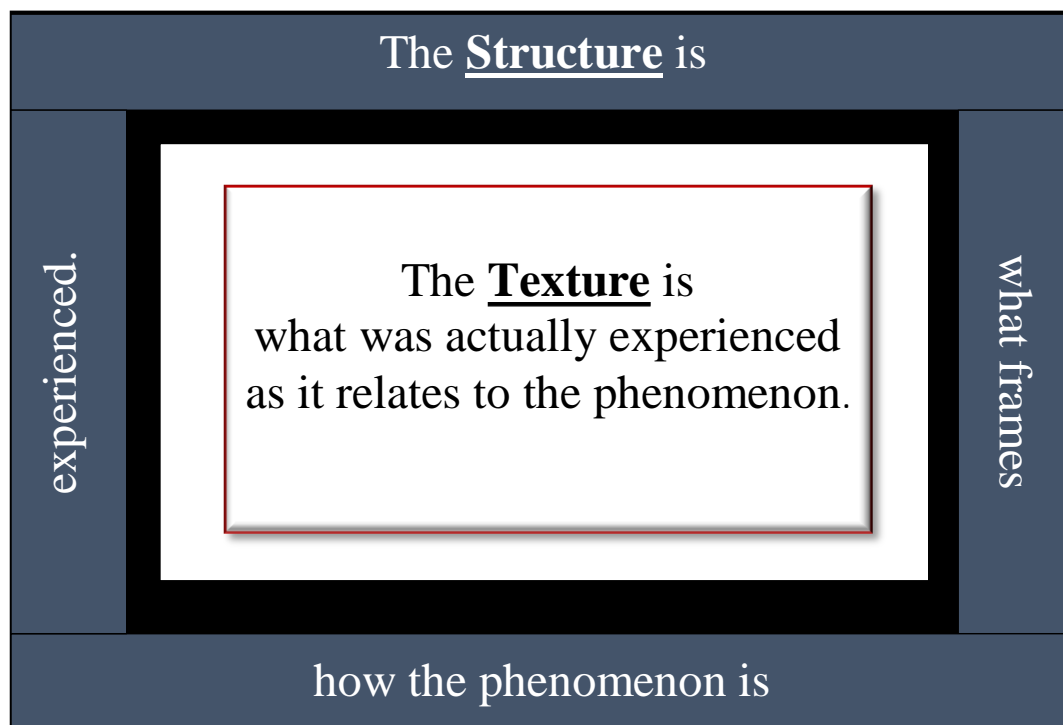
Figure 2. Conceptual of Textural and Structural Descriptions

Example of Textural
"The What"

Bullying Witnessed
•Specific incident(s)
•Bullying behaviors
•Individuals connected

Response to Witnessing
•Cognitive response
•Affective response
•Behavioral response

Example of Structural
"The How"

Organizational Description
•Mission, Values, Structure
•Policies and procedures
•People and individuals

Attitude about the Workplace
•About the organization
•About the staff
•About leadership

Figure 3. Examples of Textural and Structural Descriptions

Step 7: Individual Textural-Structural Description of Experience

After constructing the textural description (the "what") and the structural description (the "how") of the participant's experience, I constructed a textural-structural description of the participant's experience with the phenomenon. The textural-structural description summarized what the participant experienced as well as how the participant experienced the phenomenon. The textural-structural description also integrated the invariant constituent's from the participant's transcript along with the associated themes. The individual textural-structural description for each participant can be found in Appendix G: Individual Textural-Structural Descriptions.

The Final Product: The Essence of the Experience

Finally, I synthesized all of the individual textural-structural descriptions "into a universal description of the experience representing the group as a whole" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122). Constructing a composite textural-structural description is the final step in the process of phenomenological reduction and "represents the essences at a particular time and place from the vantage point of an individual researcher following an exhaustive imaginative and reflective study of the phenomenon," regarding the phenomenon itself (Moustakas, p. 100). As Husserl opined (as cited in Moustakas, 1994), this final step is "the establishment of a knowledge of essences" (p. 100). This final step represents the findings of this study as it relates to what it is like to witness bullying in the workplace, and is presented in Chapter 4: Findings.

Chapter 4: Findings

The Essence of the Experience

Witnessing bullying in the workplace was a profoundly memorable experience for the participants. It left them with vivid recollections of the individuals involved and of the specific incidents and contexts related to the experience. It also left participants with a memory of the emotional and sometimes the physical harm that it caused the targets. They tried to make meaning of it all.

Participants witnessed repetitive and harmful bullying behaviors, including intimidation, manipulation, threats, belittling, alienation, public humiliation, unfair treatment, and gossiping. Witnessing this was not easy and participants too were emotionally harmed by the experience. They experienced a range of emotions – some more intense than others. Emotions ranged from contempt towards the bully, sympathy for the target, and disappointment in the organization for not addressing the problem.

This was an experience heightened by a level of awareness regarding their organizational environment, including the leaders within. For a few, their awareness of their environment provided ease as they navigated through their experience. But for most, their awareness added to their emotional turmoil. Participants were able to clearly connect how the context of the organization weighed on how they resolved to coping or responding to what was witnessed. Many found it necessary to protect themselves from harm as a result, and often resolving to leave the organization. And only a few, intervened.

In essence, there are four common themes that portray the experience of witnessing bullying in the workplace that weaved through all twelve of the participants. They are: 1) Making Sense through Metaphors; 2) Emotional Impact; 3) Taking an Intentional Stance; and 4) Awareness of Organizational Trustworthiness. The first three themes address the first part of the two-part research question that guided this research study, which is "*What is the experience of witnessing bullying in the workplace?*," and the fourth theme addresses the second part of the two-part research question that guided this research study, which is "*How do employees describe their organization where workplace bullying was witnessed?.*" These four themes that were common to all participants, are explicated throughout the remainder of this chapter and are outlined in Appendix J: Table Core Themes and Sub-Themes by Participant.

Theme 1: Making Sense through Metaphors

Participants gave vivid descriptions of their experience witnessing bullying in their organizations. The descriptions were narrated with the support of powerful metaphorical expressions – expressions that they used to convey, at a deeper level, how they made sense out of what was witnessed and the impact of it all. I have divided this theme into four subthemes, which are: 1) making sense of the bullying behaviors; 2) making sense of the bully; 3) making sense of the emotional impact; and 4) making sense of the structural impact.

Making Sense of the Bullying Behaviors

Dorothy Perkins. When trying to convey how the bully would interfere with the target's ability to do her job - resulting in the target feeling unsure of herself, Dorothy

stated, "It was if she was her mother and not her supervisor." Dorothy was trying to convey how the bully would interfere with the target's ability to do her job, including diminishing her ability to make decisions and contribute.

Iris Newman. Referring to how the bully treated the target, Iris described that the bully "would nearly bite his head off." This was a bullying situation in which the target was a supervisor and the bully was the target's subordinate.

Russell Robinson. Russell referred to the management style of the leaders as "bully pulpit." Russell used other metaphors to explain what he meant. He explained, about one of the bullies, "He would just go off on people – he would call out individuals…"

Making Sense of the Bully

Laurie Henry. When discussing how she was uncomfortable when she had to communicate with the bully – someone who she viewed as very intimidating and powerful, Laurie referred to the bully as a "beast." She shared, "…I was going to have to target a beast, where that she was very strong with management."

Oliver Fuller. Oliver shared that the bully was likened to "Kim Jong-Un." He stated "…you know, the leader of North Korea, because of sort of a cult personality that is expected."

Vanessa Woods. Vanessa tried to make sense of the bully and she also tried to help the target also make sense of the bully and what she was experiencing as a target. The target was also her friend. Because it was nothing like anything Vanessa had

encountered before, Vanessa drew upon what she and the target had seen on television to help make sense of the bully. Vanessa explained,

> We watch this show called Pretty Little Liars, and it's based around a girl who is the leader of the pack, and she's 'A,' and she intimidates and bullies and does everything to all the other girls. And so, I told her [the target] one day, 'Oh my God, it's like she's 'A' or something,' and she was like 'I know.'

Making Sense of the Emotional Impact

Delia Rodriguez. Delia described how the fear and anxiety from thinking that she could be the next target, caused her to be "on pins and needles." She also shared, "my stomach would be in knots when I was there." Towards the end of the interview when thinking about the possibility of reliving such an experience, Delia stated, "my stomach is in knots now, because I'm thinking, 'Oh my God, I just started a new job'."

Iris Newman. Iris became exhausted by the various workplace bullying situations that she witnessed and the overall environment that perpetuated these behaviors. Her will and interest to work there had become depleted by the experience and it was depressing. In conveying this, she stated, "It was draining."

Janis Washington. Janis was the human resources director, the target was her colleague, and the bully was their supervisor. As the human resources director, Janis tried to intervene in order to address the mistreatment that her colleague was experiencing. Her attempts were challenged and the target eventually left the organization. Janis and her staff were later targeted by the bully in retaliation for Janis' attempted intervention. Janis' misery from the overall experience of witnessing her

colleague being bullied intensified as a result. Using a metaphor, she explained that "…it was a year of hell."

Linda Barton. In conveying the intensity of anger that she had for one of the two bullies, Linda shared "she was repellent to me."

Luz Clayton. Luz shared that she experienced pressures and stress from witnessing her supervisor being bullied by two senior directors. She had to be "the middle man." Being "the middle man" was an awkward space for Luz and gave her grief. It caused her to have to be vigilant about being neutral between the bullies and the target.

Oliver Fuller. Oliver used a metaphor to describe how he felt anxiety when around the bully. He shared, "It was just a repetitive walking on egg shells…"

Tamara Farmer. Tamara had become anguished by the bullying that she was witnessing. In conveying the feeling of urgency that she had to get away from the environment, she stated, "I found a lily pad to jump off on so I can go somewhere else."

Making Sense of the Structural Impact

Janis Washington. Janis shared about the bullying, "It's really maligning behavior…It's like this cancer that keeps going and when you don't stop it, it just continues to grow. So, we need chemotherapy - whatever it takes to stop it."

Linda Barton. Linda also used a cancer metaphor to describe the two bullies in her department. "They were sort of like, cancerous," Linda shared. She also stated, "These two people are just poisonous."

Luz Clayton. In conveying how she viewed the impact of the bullying that she witnessed, Luz shared, "To me that becomes a virus in that department and or division."

Russell Robinson. To make sense of the bullying in his organization, Russell referred to the bullying behaviors exhibited by the leaders as "generational." The top leaders passed down a bullying management style to their successors. Russell shared, "It's almost like generational - like in a family - generational poverty, generational drop outs - generations in projects - I think it's the same way with this agency here."

Seth Woods. Seth used several metaphors to convey how destructive the bullying was or had the potential to be. He shared, "It created fault lines within the unit [and] it's like a free fire unguided rocket." He also shared, "It is a cancer. It starts off small, and then it manifests itself and it starts metastasizes and it kind of erodes the whole fabric of the organization."

Tamara Farmer. Tamara shared, "the environment had become toxic."

Theme 2: Emotional Impact

All of the participants, in describing their experiences, were found to have been affected emotionally by what they witnessed. While the majority of participants described a negative emotional impact that was significant, others' were less impacted. In all, four sub-themes were found in analyzing the emotional impact of the group as a whole. They were: 1) Emotions associated with anger; 2) Emotions associated with sadness; 3) Emotions associated with fear; and 4) Emotions associated with surprise. It is important to note that the majority of the participants experienced a range of emotions that are reflected within and across the four sub-themes.

While the greatest number of participants experienced emotions associated with sadness (n=11; 92%), the analysis found the least amount of participants recounted

experiencing emotions associated with surprise (n=2; 17%). Emotions associated with

sadness included: sadness, sympathy, disappointment, depression, humiliation, regret,

helplessness, misery, grief, and anguish. And, emotions associated with surprise included

both surprise and astonishment. The emotion of fear and the emotion of anger were each

experienced by seven participants (58%). Emotions associated with fear included fear,

anxiety, and worry. Emotions associated with anger included anger, contempt,

frustration, and hate. Organized by each of the four sub-themes, I will provide specific

excerpts from the participants' transcripts in support of the thematic findings.

Emotions Associated with Sadness

Delia Rodriguez. Delia described experiencing *sympathy* for the target and

disappointment in the organization where she witnessed bullying. On her first day on the

job, she got her first glimpse of the bullying that was going on within her department. A

colleague was gossiping to her about another colleague's sexual orientation. This was

only the beginning of what Delia would observe, as she would later witness the target

being constantly subjected to gossiping, public humiliation, and unfair treatment. Delia

got to know the target professionally and as a person. She sympathized with what she

was going through, and believed that she was targeted because colleagues thought that

she was a lesbian. Delia shared about the target,

> She was a decent person - that was just her, whatever she chose, how she chose to
>
> live her lifestyle, you know, that was her choice. You know, but it had no
>
> reflection on her work. She was very knowledgeable - very knowledgeable in the
>
> area, her area of expertise, very knowledgeable, but was never acknowledged for

it…She was so knowledgeable to the extent that our colleagues in another country would call her because they wanted guidance from her. So, she was just totally targeted because of her sexual orientation.

As Delia witnessed these behaviors and the culture that supported the bullying, she became disappointed. Prior to her employment, this was an organization that she had much regard for and an organization where she had originally desired to have a lasting career. In conveying her disappointment, Delia shared,

I have to go back from the beginning where I was first offered the opportunity. I looked at the company's name - looked at their reputation within the industry. I felt like I was going into a company that was going to be fair…I was really excited about the opportunity when I first came on because of the company itself – the organization itself. And I was really very hopeful that perhaps that it could be a long term working relationship with the company - because this opportunity - when I tell you - all over the entire globe. But, I think because of what occurred - I know because of what occurred now, I'm okay. I don't have to do that, because I don't ever want to be exposed to anything like that again.

Dorothy Perkins. Dorothy described the *sympathy* that she had for the target who was being subjected to job interference, as well intimidation and manipulation tactics from her supervisor. Dorothy was disapproving of the way that the bully was treating the target and she described the target favorably. She stated, "I mean the person, the employee was very knowledgeable. I thought that the employee was very

knowledgeable." In sharing how what she witnessed impacted her, Dorothy shared, "It caused me to be compassionate to the individual."

Iris Newman. Iris described experiencing *depression, sympathy,* and *regret* as a result of the various workplace bullying situations that she witnessed. She described three different bullying situations, one of which involved her male supervisor as the target, and her female colleague as the bully. She also described a bullying situation that involved a female colleague who was being bullied by several other colleagues. Iris sympathized for this particular target. She shared,

> You know, again, it made me feel kind of bad that she was a nice lady. She was kind of a know it all, but I don't think that was any reason to pick on her. I felt really bad for her. I just felt like them picking on her was needless. They didn't need to do that.

Iris characterized the ongoing bullying behaviors that she witnessed as informal and unprofessional. In continuing to explain how it impacted her emotionally, she shared, "It was draining, it was depressing…," and she expressed regret for not leaving the company sooner than she did. In reflecting on this, she stated, "I worked there way too long. I should've got out earlier. It took me a while to get out of there. I think maybe I got a little comfortable."

Janis Washington. Janis conveyed feelings of *sympathy*, *helplessness,* and *misery* as a result of her experience witnessing bullying in her organization. Janis was the human resources director in the organization and shared her experience of witnessing her director level colleague being bullied by a senior officer. The bully was Janis'

immediate supervisor as well as the supervisor of the target. She watched her colleague

being subjected to constant barrages, belittling, as well as being publicly humiliated in

meetings by their supervisor - someone who Janis described as behaving like a "pit bull."

Janis shared a specific incident that she witnessed in a staff meeting with over fifteen

people. The senior officer embarrassed the target by stating, "Your style is too blunt, the

board doesn't like you, the directors don't like you, you need to be more cooperative."

Janis shared,

> [The bully] denied her vacation time - demanding that she keep her phone on her
>
> twenty four hours every day so that she could be reached. So, she was denied
>
> some of the same privileges that her less senior team had.

Janis expressed, that in the bully's eyes, the target could not do anything right. Janis

sympathized for what her colleague was experiencing. She shared the following about

the target:

> She was black and white as far as her managerial style, but very effective as to
>
> what she was doing. She was very open to feedback…So, there was a need to
>
> elevate her professional presence and her ability to communicate with others
>
> effectively. However, she got the job done and she did a very good job at the end
>
> of the day.

Janis also conveyed the sympathy that she had for the target when describing how the

target was adversely impacted by the bullying. The target's behaviors started to change,

leading to her becoming aggressive in the workplace. Janis was sympathetic as to what

contributed to this aggression - aggression that ultimately led to the target's dismissal. Janis shared,

> She began to lose weight over a year period of time with the badgering and the put downs in front of the board as well as in front of the staff and in front of the directors. These barrages - these put downs and shut downs were just thrown at her constantly. She couldn't do or say anything right. As a result, she started to lose weight. Her health began to fail. So, she had a really bad outburst. It was a meeting where we were giving her a written reprimand for some work that didn't get done. And, it was a legitimate reason, however, I believe that part of the reason that she was failing to get some of the work done was because of the barrages, and because of how she was feeling about herself and the constant stress that she was under. She just broke. She started screaming at the CAO that she was mean that she was intolerant, and you know, and we tried to calm her down and it didn't work… So at some point, she just totally lost it.

During the time that the target was being bullied, Janis was not only a witness to these behaviors, but as the human resources director, she was also in a position to intervene. Janis took that responsibility serious. However, she felt helpless when trying to address the bullying. First, she felt helpless because she was having difficulty trying to make sense out of the bullying that she was witnessing, and it was important to her to appropriately intervene and appropriately communicate her concerns as the human resources director. She knew that it was harmful. She shared,

It was a sense of helplessness at first. I was trying to define the behavior. I've

seen this off and on throughout my career, but bullying was still something rather

new in terms of how we all looked at it in terms of HR professionals.

As Janis began to make sense of the bullying and moved forward with intervening, she

encountered resistance. Her concerns and attempts to address the bullying were

diminished by an outside investigator and the Chief Administrative Officer. This

continued her feeling of helplessness. She shared, "There were days that I would just go

to my car and just cry uncontrollably."

Janis explained that as a result of her speaking out against the bullying, she and

her staff later became targets. As a result, the emotional impact became one of misery.

To convey how she felt, she shared, "it was a year of hell."

Laurie. Laurie experienced feelings of *disappointment* and *sadness* and she also

experienced *sympathy* for the two nurses who she witnessed being bullied. Laurie

described a situation where the two targets, who were not a part of the "clique," were

being bullied by their nurse manager, who was a part of the "clique." Laurie also

considered herself a part from the clique and explained how the bullying situation made it

more difficult for her to do her job as the patient care representative. The situation

adversely impacted the service needs of the patients.

To convey her sympathy for the two nurses who were being targeted, she

described her thoughts about the mistreatment of the nurses and the concern that she had

for them. Laurie expressed that the nurses were given "unsafe" and "unfair"

assignments." She stated, "I just felt like they were taking advantage of…and they were

really good nurses – I mean very caring." Laurie also expressed sympathy for the

circumstances that created a challenge for the nurses to report their mistreatment. She

shared,

> One was a single mother and I knew for a fact that she couldn't afford to not have her
>
> job and the hours. She always was afraid to speak up because she felt like they
>
> would take hours away from her shift and things like that. So, she never spoke up.

In also showing concern for the challenges that the two targets faced, Laurie further

explained,

> And also, at the hospital, with the union, there's always like a head leader. So,
>
> onsite, you have a head leader of that union. And sadly there, it was one of the 'in
>
> crowd' that was one of the union reps – so they probably didn't feel comfortable
>
> going to them.

Witnessing all of this, and the culture that promoted these behaviors, made Laurie sad and

disappointed. Her pride in her role and her pride in the hospital where she served was

diminished. All Laurie wanted to do was to do her job, take pride in her new

administrative position, love the organization that she worked for, and support patients in

receiving the best care. Instead, the experience made her feel like the title and all that

came with it, was worthless. It was sad and disappointing to rise to that level in the

organization and to witness these behaviors and the challenges that they presented. She

shared,

> It's really sad. You really feel like - wow, this must be like high school. Like, you
>
> got to be a part of a clique or you feel unsafe. It was strange. It was like - I'm
>
> thinking I should be happy that I have the career I want - you're in part of that

administration so you get looked at like - 'wow, that's administration' - you know, respected and leadership proficient - you should feel good, but in true honesty, people only see the title, but do not think about the risks you take, the daily activities - you don't only have the stress of your patients not being satisfied.

Linda. Linda vividly conveyed both *sadness* and *sympathy* in witnessing two faculty colleagues who was bullied by two senior level faculty members. She expressed that the only thing that saddened her was witnessing what one of the two targets experienced as a result of the bullying. In conveying both feelings of sadness and sympathy for the target, she explained how the target was ill during the time that he was being bullied, and because of this, and because of the wonderful characteristics that he possessed, she was impacted greatly by what she witnessed. She shared,

I never met anyone who was completely malice free, if I ever had - it was him. How people would go after him is just, I don't, it's just...I just can't imagine being ill and have someone attack me. It's just so hard to phantom.

Linda also expressed sympathy for how the other faculty member was being bullied and treated unfairly by the two senior level faculty members. Linda shared,

Mona had two babies, and they were complaining about no printer paper. And then they started complaining about Mona was never there. And, I would say that that was probably a legitimate complaint in the sense that it wasn't inaccurate, but it was also petty, because, you know, we are all grown-ups, we don't have to, you know, if we needed to contact her, we could contact her…I mean, she had two

little babies. She shouldn't have had to be chair anyway. You know, it was, it was just kinda of a - it was not inaccurate, but it was unfair.

Luz Clayton. Luz's experience of witnessing her supervisor being bullied by upper management gave her *grief* and she also experienced *sympathy* for the target. In conveying the grief that she experienced as a result of witnessing the bullying and as a result of her having to take the role of the "the middle man," she explained, "it makes you almost emotionally distraught. It's parallel to the people who are literally going through it." Luz also used terms such as "challenging" and "stressful" to convey the grief that that she experienced.

In conveying the sympathy that she had for the target, she described how she witnessed the target, who was her supervisor, being subjected to unrealistic deadlines and condescending and disrespectful behaviors from a senior leader. However, what concerned her the most was how the target was treated in the process of being terminated. Luz shared, "I thought that that was the most disheartening and disrespecting thing that you could ever do to a person."

Oliver. Oliver experienced *sympathy* as a result of the bullying that he witnessed. The bully was one of the partners in the firm. As Oliver described a specific incident that impacted him the most, he conveyed sympathy for the employee who was targeted. He shared, "she was a very sweet, kind, sort of selfless person." Oliver witnessed the bully scream at the target in front of others, including a very wealthy client who was visiting at the time. He shared,

I remember as soon as the meeting was over, I went after her to make sure that she was okay and I told her that I was sorry that happened to her. She was a really sweet person. I mean, unbelievably nice person - never would hurt a flea.

Oliver imagined how embarrassing this was for the target, who was the administrative assistant. However, although he realized that he was not responsible for how she was treated, as a top leader in the firm he was humiliated that a client was a witness to such a horrible display of behaviors. He shared, "I was embarrassed as well. It was horribly embarrassing for a client to see that sort of stuff."

Seth Woods. Seth conveyed *sympathy* for the target. He witnessed a high level leader in the military bullying a junior leader. He shared, "What I witnessed was the personal disdain for the individual, a lot of the verbiage and kind of how he described the individual, you know, the character assassinations, which I think was probably more detrimental." It was *disturbing* for Seth to witness someone at a high rank mistreat one of their subordinates. He shared, "I don't like for people to be picked on…I mean, in my capacity in both jobs, both now and then, you know - one of my real tasks is to help ensure that there is a level playing field…"

Tamara Farmer. Tamara vividly remembers the emotional *anguish* that she experienced while witnessing the bullying in her organization. She also felt *sympathy* for the target. She witnessed her senior level supervisor, who she described as "very knowledgeable," being bullied by two more senior level leaders who were new to the organization. Not only did Tamara witness some of these behaviors, but Tamara's

supervisor - the target, would constantly share with Tamara the mistreatment that she was experiencing. Tamara shared,

> I felt sympathy for her. She had a brand new CFO and a brand new leader. All of the people in her previous network were gone. The people who knew who she was and how she did her work and the value that she brought, were no longer there. These folks had a different management style and she couldn't get used to it. She had some fear that if she really came out directly to them to share how she felt, she would lose her job…She was more silenced, because she didn't feel comfortable because trust wasn't established. They were asking her for things, that they really didn't know what they wanted…I had sympathy, because no one wants to experience this. I could feel and see the tears in her eyes and saw what was going on.

Tamara's repeated exposure to the situation, including her supervisor repeatedly venting to her regarding her experience, wore heavily on Tamara. She shared, "it was so stressful, I told my husband, 'I gotta get out of here!'" In conveying the level of emotional anguish that she was experiencing, she described how it got to the point where she had to leave. She referred to it as her "lily pad." She stated, "I found a lily pad to jump off on so I can go somewhere else."

Vanessa Wilson. Vanessa felt *sympathy* for her close friend who was being targeted. She worked in the same organization, but in a different department. Vanessa witnessed her friend suffer anxiety from being bullied by her supervisor and colleagues. Although Vanessa was frustrated about Vanessa's lack of inaction in defending herself

against the bullying, she expressed that she was also sympathetic to what she was going through. In conveying the sympathy that she felt, she shared, "I just hated to see how upset the whole bullying thing made her feel and there was truly nothing I could do to help her until another position opened." Vanessa's concern for what her friend was going through resulted in Vanessa being instrumental in her friend getting transferred to another department. She shared,

> I stepped in with my manager and told my manger what was going on and [asked] if she could move her into a position, because you know, she has kids, she has a family, and you know, and since she wasn't willing to completely stand up for herself and go to HR and get all of this stuff documented, I mean….we got her transferred out of there.

Emotions Associated with Anger

Dorothy Perkins. Dorothy's sympathy for the target ignited *anger*. The target was a knowledgeable employee and was being subjected to her supervisor interfering with her ability to do her job through intimidation and manipulation tactics. Dorothy shared, "It causes you to be angry at the supervisor whose doing the bullying. It caused me to be angry."

Iris Newman. Iris experienced feelings of *hate* towards her organization for the bullying culture that it perpetuated - a culture that she described as filled with unprofessionalism, insubordination, and informal behaviors. She stated, "It was horrible. It was really bad. I hated that place."

Janis Washington. The bully's mistreatment of others and her abuse of power *angered* Janis. She saw how the target suffered both emotionally and physically as a result of the constant barrages and public humiliation. The bully later targeted Janis and Janis' subordinate staff in retaliation for Janis speaking out against the bullying that she witnessed. This intensified Janis' anger. She stated, "…and there are times when I still feel anger. I still feel the residue, but not only for myself, but for all of us who were targets."

Linda Barton. Linda felt *anger* as well as *contempt*. She shared that she became "very, very angry" as she watched how one of the senior faculty bullies treated a junior faculty colleague who was ill during his time of being targeted. She also expressed contempt for both of the bullies. In conveying her feeling of contempt for one bully, Linda stated, "…and she became repellent to me," and in conveying her feeling of contempt for the second bully, she shared, "…and, truthfully, I couldn't even be in the same room as him."

Oliver Fuller. Oliver too, experienced intense *anger*. He recalled an incident that was most upsetting for him out of all of the bullying incidents. It was when the bully, who was a managing partner, screamed at one of the targets for not following an insignificant and unclear directive. The bully's screaming was so impactful that a client in the room jumped out of his chair in an attempt to try to stop the screaming. It angered Oliver to watch this "sweet, kind, and selfless woman" being mistreated. It was an experience and feeling that has stuck with him through time. He shared, "It's probably what upset me the most."

Seth Woods. Witnessing the bullying *angered* Seth. It reminded him of when he was bullied as a child. He also was bothered to see a higher ranking individual mistreat a subordinate. He shared,

> So, I, I, experienced a little bit of bullying when I was a kid. So, it kind of brought back some of those memories for me, and I don't like for people to be picked on…It pissed me off, and it brought back some painful memories…And you know, it makes the particular level of the individual who was doing it, was what was probably most disturbing…

Vanessa Wilson. Vanessa experienced *frustration* when her friend, who was being targeted, would not intervene on her own behalf to stop the mistreatment. She was frustrated that her friend would allow herself to be subjected to these behaviors when their organization had a supportive human resources department who appropriately handled problematic issues. She explained, "This is a mother with two kids who is letting these two - I don't know, it seems so foreign to me." Vanessa shared, "I was telling her, 'you have to speak up for yourself'."

Vanessa did share with this researcher, during a follow-up interview, that going through the process of telling the story as a participant, also gave her an opportunity to learn more about workplace bullying and what it is like to be a target. She shared that the process of her participation, therefore, was educational for her. It increased her understanding of why her friend did not stand up for herself.

Emotions Associated with Fear

  Delia Rodriguez. Delia described how the feelings of *fear* and *anxiety* caused her to be "on pins and needles." She would say to herself "because all it takes is for someone to have a bad day here, and I could be the next target." She described how it impacted her to watch the bully, who was her colleague, walk frequently by her cubicle to go in and out of their supervisor's office. She shared,

> So, my desk was very close to that manager's office. And, I would see the person who was constantly messing with the target, go in and out her office [the manager's office] and close the door. Multiple times a day. That would bother me. I would be like - and she tried to become my friend. And, you know, I was kind of like, 'okay, I gotta say hi and have a little conversation with her, cause I don't want to get on her bad side, but I don't trust you.'

Delia also shared about her experience,

> I was so stressed out that physically I got sick. And, it was to a point where, my position in this department, I didn't have to stay in-house all of the time. Sometimes I had to travel out and do monitoring…So, that was a relief to have to travel. But, when I came back in the office, my stomach would just be in knots, and I was kind of just, 'be cordial with people.' I was very cautious

It has been years since Delia was a part of the organization, but because of the fear and anxiety that the experience caused, the thought of finding herself in a similar situation haunts her. At the end of the interview, she shared, "My stomach is in knots now, because I'm thinking, 'Oh my God, I just started a new job'."

Dorothy Perkins. Dorothy was not fearful of being targeted, however, she was *worried* about compromising her positive working relationship with the bully. She did not want her relationship with the bully to be damaged as a result of her trying to support the target through the bullying situation. She said, "I did not want to make friction with the supervisor, who was the bully."

Iris Newman. Iris was also not fearful that she would be targeted; however, she did experience emotional *anxiety* as a result of the bullying environment. She stated, "It gave me anxiety to have to go there every day."

Laurie Henry. Laurie experienced *fear* for her job and for the patients, whose care was being impacted by the bullying situation. Laurie explained,

> It made me feel scared - like fear in a sense - for one, my patients. But, then I know that I had patients that I know really needed to be advocated for and for me to advocate for … and I was going to have to target a beast [the bully] where that she was very strong with management. But I mean, as a patient relations representative, I was also a part of management. But they were bigger, you know, in leadership there. I was in fear that I also was putting my job at jeopardy for speaking up for these nurses [the targets].

Luz. Luz experienced being *worried* about maintaining a positive working relationship with the target, who was her supervisor and someone who she had later developed a friendship. She also worried about ensuring that she maintain a positive working relationship with the bullies, who were more senior level directors. She described it as being "the middle man" and explained,

I've always been a person in the middle… I've been one to have friends and get

along with everyone who doesn't get along with each other…in all the groups,

cliques, the likes - I've always been able to move between all of them.

However, Luz explained that because of the dynamics of the relationships

involving the bullies and the target, including the hierarchal dynamics, it was more

challenging in this situation. She worried about making sure that she "always kept a level

of professionalism with all of them." In conveying the worry that she had, she explained,

It required me to be thoughtful and intentional at all times as best as I could and

choose what I say and what I do wisely. Naturally you have your moments and

your times, but I guess I was an individual who could learn how to do that, better.

Because, it's work - and work is work and you have to deal with work first and

personal later. So on one end and in a cognizant sense, it taught me how to do

that much better - I kind of perfected that aspect of myself better. On the other

side of it I would say, it was stressful, it was challenging. I had to sit, listen, and

observe - 'here is what I can and can't share to the other party' – and you know –

that's why I don't lie well, I just can't do it - it's too much energy. It's a lot of

stuff that you have to remember.

Oliver Fuller. Oliver experienced emotional *anxiety* and described the "never

ending" bullying behaviors that he witnessed. Oliver had also experienced being on the

receiving end of the bullying behaviors of this partner in his firm. Conveying the *anxiety*

that he felt in interacting with the bully, Oliver shared, "It was just a repetitive walking

on egg shells, knowing that as the conversation progresses, at some point it's going to go south."

Russell Robinson. Russell witnessed how the leaders would curse and scream at targets for not meeting expectations. While Russell conveyed that he was not scared of the bullies, he did convey that he was *worried* about making sure that he met his job expectations, because he did not want to be the target of such public humiliation. He stated,

> I made sure I had everything that I was supposed to do, done, or been where I was supposed to be when I needed to be there... I made sure I had everything completed and done and I don't think it was a fear factor, I just didn't want to be called out in front of everybody.

Russell shared that he had also been bullied as a child and remembered how it felt to be embarrassed or humiliated in front of others. He expressed that he did not want to experience that again; however, he made it clear that if it did happen, he would not let the bully get away with treating him in that way.

Emotions Associated with Surprise

Delia Rodriguez. Delia described her *astonishment* as a result of what she witnessed. She explained that the bully would gossip about the target being a lesbian, and in staff meetings, jokes would be made about sexual orientation in front of the target and in the presence of the manager. She was astonished by these behaviors as well as other incidences of bullying that she would witness involving the same bully and target. Most of all, she was astonished that that her manager did nothing to stop or address the

behaviors, even as the bullying continued to go on outside of the staff meetings. Delia would say to herself, "I can't believe this is going on." She also shared,

> There were always these comments that were made, like when we were in staff meetings, about people's sexual orientation. It made me feel very uncomfortable, because, to be in staff meetings and have management in there, and they felt like it was a joke. It just made me look at the entire company, like, what kind of culture is this, that this is accepted.

Vanessa Wilson. Vanessa's *surprise* in what she was witnessing was two-fold. She had never witnessed bullying behaviors in her organization before, and she had no clue that adults exhibited these types of behaviors. She shared, "This was my first time seeing it in real life…" She thought that things like this only happened in high school and on television. Vanessa stated, "I was really just like, really shocked and baffled by that…it's just foreign to me… I've never in my life seen that."

Theme 3: Taking an Intentional Stance

Being intentional about the stance or position to take as a witness was a common theme throughout the entire group of participants and was the last of the three core themes that helped to answer "*What is the experience of witnessing bullying in the workplace,*" which is the first part of the two-part research question that guided this study. As they lived through the experience of witnessing bullying in their organizations, the participants assumed various stances, or positions, and they were conscious about their decisions to do so. There were five types of stances identified – representing the sub-themes of Theme 3: Taking an Intentional Stance. They were: 1) The Stance of Self

Preservation; 2) The Stance of Advocacy; 3) The Stance of Responsibility; 4) The Stance

of Neutrality; and 5) The Stance of 'Unintimidation.'

I provide excerpts from the transcripts that support this theme that was common

to all participants. What is shown, is that the majority of the twelve participants (n=9;

75%) were found to have taken a stance of self-preservation. The stance of self-

preservation included trying to avoid the perceived threat of possible harm from the

workplace bullying situation, and/or intentionally withdrawing from the damaging

experience to reduce further harm. The other four sub-themes were each representative

of less than half of the participant sample. Four participants (33%) were found to take a

stance of advocacy for the witness. Two participants (17%) were found to take a stance

of responsibility in addressing the bullying - meaning that they saw it as their duty to

intervene. One participant (8%) took a stance of neutrality. And finally, one participant

(8%) was found to have taken a stance of 'unintimidation' with the bullies – meaning that

the participant found ways to communicate to the bullies that he was not intimidated by

their behaviors.

Stance of Self-Preservation

Delia Rodriguez. Delia is one of the nine participants who took the intentional

stance of self-preservation. She was fearful and experienced emotional anxiety about

becoming a target herself, and as a result, she tried to stay out of the path of potential

harm. She became hypervigilant in making sure that she did not adversely arouse the

attention of the bully. One strategy that she used was to engage in casual niceties with

the bully. She shared, "I was kind of like, 'okay, I gotta say hi and have a little

conversation with her, because I don't want to get on her bad side." Finding opportunities to handle business outside of the office was another strategy that she took to self-preserve. She would at times consume herself with these self-preserving strategies in her thoughts. She would say to herself,

> When is the next time you got to get out of this building? When is the next time you have to travel…'cause all it takes is for someone to have a bad day here, and I could be the next target.

Delia's final stance of self-preservation was making a decision not to renew her contract. She had endured enough through her experience and could not bear any additional harm. She stated, "I did not want to renew. It was the environment. It was a relief to be leaving there…I don't ever want to be exposed to anything like that again."

Dorothy Perkins. The value of Dorothy's established working relationships with those in her office, was important to her. As a result, she was careful that her relationship with the bully was not compromised as she showed the target support throughout the situation. Dorothy stated, "I did not wanna make friction with the supervisor who was the bully." As a way to preserve what she valued, she was careful to support the target in private. She shared,

> You have to have secret meetings, you know, you have to meet outside, as if you are going to lunch at a certain time as that individual, you have to either talk at work, or talk when we were on our way home…

Iris Newman. Iris found it necessary to self-preserve her emotional health because of the impact that the experience had on her. To protect herself from continual

emotional harm, she became consumed with the idea and plans of leaving the organization, and eventually she did leave. She explained,

> I was just buying my time until I found something that was better. I worked there way too long…It took me a while to get out of there…It was always kind of in the back of my mind, looking for something else.

Janis Washington. Janis also chose to preserve her emotional health. After trying to address the bullying as the human resources director - with no support of the chief executive officer, she had enough. She no longer wanted to feel helplessness and cry in her car in the parking lot. She stated,

> At some point I just said to the CEO –'I am looking for another position. I need for you to know that, you hired me, I've enjoyed thoroughly working with you, but it's time for me to look at the next step in my career'… at some point I just shut it down and I said 'I will consult with you all on a consultant basis, but I need to go.' So, that's the arrangement that we made, and I moved on out of the organization.

Janis shared, "I was fed up…but, I was resilient." In an effort to self-preserve - to reduce being harmed any further, she withdrew from the damaging experience. She left the organization.

Laurie Henry. Laurie observed how the bully's behaviors negatively impacted the targets. She also experienced how the bullying situation created challenges for her to do her job - challenges that also impacted the patients whom Laurie served as the patient care representative. Laurie found it necessary to preserve herself from being harmed in

the process of doing her job. She was careful in her interactions with the bully, whom she characterized as a "beast." In conveying how she self-preserved from being harmed, she stated, "I had to be very diplomatic when it came to how I handled my cases [with the bully]."

Laurie also found it necessary to take a stance to self-preserve the security of her job as it relates to how she responded to her concerns of the bullying situation. For example, she wanted to address her concerns about the bullying situation, but she was fearful that it would put her job in jeopardy. Therefore, she was also very careful in how she warned about what she was witnessing. She explained,

> I never openly shared the details with my office. However, I did make them aware - and they know - even when something is known without being said - but, I made it known that I love my job and I want to keep my job and I would follow everything that I find on my job description. And, I did make her aware that, I said - 'somebody have asked me to brush off some complaints'.

In essence, Laurie wanted the bullying environment to stop, but she also had to preserve her emotional well-being and the security of her job. She chose to self-preserve by remaining silent and trying to survive the environment. She stated, "We all just try to keep quiet and try to be supportive of one another." Ultimately, Laurie found another way to self-preserve, after experiencing the harmful impact of the environment. Laurie made a decision to leave the organization.

Luz Clayton. Luz was protecting herself from being harmed professionally and personally. Although she was grieved by the bullying that she witnessed, she did not

want to appear to take sides. This was important to her. Luz was adopting a stance of self-preservation. She did not want to be harmed either professionally or personally as a result of appearing to either side that she was more partial towards the other. She explained, "It required me to be thoughtful and intentional at all times as best as I could and choose what I say and what I do wisely…I had to sit, listen, and observe - 'here is what I can and can't share to the other party'…" She also shared, "I still always kept a level of professionalism with all of them…and still have achieved the fact that I was friends with [the target]."

Oliver Fuller. Oliver witnessed the bully mistreat employees for years and it caused him emotional harm. To self-preserve from being harmed any further, he decided to withdraw from the environment. He left the firm. He shared, "I looked at the environment I was in and said [to myself], 'Do I really want to be a partner here?' And, the answer to that question was 'No!', and I quit…" He chose the preservation of his emotional health over becoming a partner with the firm.

Russell Robinson. Although Russell shared that he was not afraid of the bullies, he did worry about being "called out" in front of his peers if he did not do what he was supposed to do as it related to his job expectations. He witnessed how questionable job performance was often the catalyst of an employee becoming a target of bullying. Targets would get screamed and cursed at in front of other employees. He did not want this to happen to him. In conveying how he self-preserved from being harmed in this way, he stated,

I made sure I had everything that I was supposed to do, done, or been where I was supposed to be when I needed to be there...I just didn't want to be called out in front of everybody.

Tamara Farmer. Tamara had to get away from the harm that the environment was causing her. She shared,

…the environment had become toxic…and normally when things get a little tight like that, I would rather make provisions for myself than for me to just get crazy and cuss somebody out, you know. I call it my lily pad. I found a lily pad to jump off on so I can go somewhere else.

Tamara looked for a way out and solicited the help of her supervisor - the one who was being targeted. She stated,

I told her specifically these words, 'I think this is a toxic environment, and I don't work good in this type of environment'. I asked her, 'Can I get a detail somewhere else?' and she said, 'I will let you get another detail if you promise to come back.' So, I told her whatever she needed to process that.

Tamara never went back to that department. She was committed to finding another job outside of the organization before she had to return, and she did. She made a decision to self-preserve from being harmed by the bullying environment that she was witnessing.

Stance of Advocacy

Dorothy Perkins. While also taking a stance of self-preservation, Dorothy took a stance of advocacy. Behind the scenes, Dorothy organized support for the target and helped to coach her through the process of asserting her rights. She explained,

So, we just began to share with her, her rights, and, how she could voice her rights in mediation - how she could voice her rights in steps before she had to take the final steps to file against this person. You know, we gave her pointers…

Linda Barton. Linda was very outspoken about her thoughts regarding the bullying behaviors that she witnessed and she openly spoke out against the mistreatment of one of the targets. Her stance of advocacy was apparent to her peers. Linda described in detail, the following:

We had a departmental meeting of the full time faculty. And when I heard about that she was being accused of these things, and then I heard that I had been included in that - I just thought it was just non sense…I knew if they were making that complaint about me and it was factually inaccurate, that, you know, whatever complaint they had about Mona, I doubted there factual accuracy…So anyway, I went to the vice president of the college, and I told him, 'you know, they are making the same complaint about me and I am here all the time.' And, he knew what I was doing, actually. I said that 'this is absurd, and the complaints against her are just, you know, I doubt there accuracy, because they are clearly being inaccurate with me.' So, we had this department meeting of just the full time faculty…and they sat there and made these complaints that she wasn't there, and I defended her…and I defended her overtly. And I know this because, hum, later I said to Roderick [the other target], hum, 'you know, I guess I was pretty overt in my defense of her.' And he smiled…and he said 'You think?' I guess I came off pretty strong.

Oliver. Oliver spoke out against the bullying that was going on in the firm where he worked - bullying that impacted him both indirectly - as a witness, as well as directly - as a target. The bully was one of the firm's partners. He explained that in his communications with the other partners regarding his concerns, he advocated for the bullying to be addressed. One particular partner, however, responded by saying, "hey, that's just the way he is, don't let it bother you." Oliver expressed,

> Well, when you're a 35 year old guy trying to build your career, or you are a 50 year old woman just trying to make a living, you don't want to put up with that crap, you know. So, to say that's just the way it is - to blow it off, now he's attacking our lives and do something about it.

Oliver shared another incident in which he advocated for an employee who was at risk of being fired as a result of constructive feedback that the employee provided to the leaders – feedback that was actually solicited. Oliver advocated against this mistreatment, and spoke out during a meeting. He shared the following: "I remember speaking up and saying, 'we can't do this – we told people to give their honest answers and you can't go in now and try to hunt the person down and get rid of them'." He also added, "I think that was the time when I reached my final straw and moved on."

Vanessa Wilson. Assuming a stance of advocacy, Vanessa sought a resolution to end the bullying, on behalf of the target. She shared,

> I stepped in with my manager and told my manger what was going on and [asked] if she could move her into a position because, you know, she has kids, she has a family, and you know, and since she wasn't willing to completely stand up for

herself and go to HR and get all of this stuff documented, I mean….we got her transferred out of there.

Stance of Responsibility

Janis Washington. Janis was the human resources director in her organization. As a witness to her colleague being bullied by their supervisor, and as someone who the target came to for support, she took a stance of responsibility to address the situation. She explained,

> I couldn't defend that. I had to address it with the CEO as well as the CAO [the bully]…I said that my role is to ensure that there is a neutral party - that there is someone who is a conscience - someone who is opposite of both sides - and say, this is the behavior that I see - this is our policy - this is the law - this is our liability - and you know that, I will continue to report those incidences even though I encouraged Belinda to work it out to the best of her abilities.

Janis explained how she also assumed the responsibility of better understanding the phenomenon of what she was witnessing. She knew that understanding what she was witnessing, was necessary for her to appropriately address it as the human resources director. She shared,

> I was trying to define the behavior. I've seen this off and on throughout my career, but bullying was still something rather new in terms of how we all looked at it in terms of HR professionals. And so I did some research, because that's what I do when I don't understand something. I started talking with different lawyers, professionals, I went to Live Law updates, and just began to dialogue

that out - just to say 'this is what I observed, what is this, how do we take care of,

how do we deal with effectively?' So I armed myself with some knowledge and

some strategies on how to address it.

Seth Woods. Like Janis, Seth also held a compliance position in his organization

- a military organization. And, he also took a stance of responsibility as a witness to the

bullying and as someone to whom the bullying was reported. He shared,

I intervened. I ended up going higher to my boss…and he ended up initiating an

investigation into the allegation… I mean, in my capacity…one of my real tasks is

to help ensure that there is a level playing field, where people are evaluated on

their own character and merit, as opposed to, you know, other things that are not

productive - to have a productive workplace…

Stance of Neutrality

Luz Clayton. Luz adopted a stance of neutrality that involved her being

"thoughtful and intentional at all times," as she described it. Although she was grieved

by the bullying that she witnessed, she did not want to appear to take sides. This was

important to her. Therefore, she became "the middle man" between the bullies and the

target. She made sure that she was careful about not repeating nor responding to certain

things and behaviors that she was witnessing. She said, "I had to learn how to keep a

balance…I had to sit, listen, and observe – [and think to myself], 'here is what I can and

can't share to the other party.'" She also shared, "I still always kept a level of

professionalism with all of them…and still have achieved the fact that I was friends with

[the target]."

Stance of Unintimidation

Russell Robinson. Russell took an unintimidated stance in response to the bullying that he witnessed. He took opportunities to display to the bullies that he was not scared of them and was not intimidated by their behaviors. He described a communication exchange that he had with one of the bullies after witnessing the bully verbally abuse and publicly humiliate one of the targets. He stated,

Allen called Caleb everything under the sun except Caleb, and Caleb was just shaking - he was scared…and then Allen came to my door and said to me, 'Boy, I ripped him a good one, didn't I?' I told him, 'Yeah, better him than me – 'cause you couldn't talk to me like that.'

Russell was making it clear to the bully that he would not stand for being treated in that way.

Russell provided another example that conveyed how he took an unintimidated stance with the bullies in his organization. He described a climate where employees feared the bullies/the leaders. Because of the employees' fear, they would avoid sitting close to the bullies in staff meetings. Russell took an intentional stance to show that he was different - that he was not afraid - that he was not intimidated. He shared, "I would purposefully sit up front in meetings just to let them know that they did not scare me." Russell explained that he experienced emotional harm as a child from being bullied and learned that you have to stand up to bullies. He attributed his stance to what he learned as a child.

Theme 4: Awareness of Organizational Trustworthiness

The fourth and the last theme that was found in the analysis of the data was "Awareness of Organizational Trustworthiness." This is the single common theme that weaved through all twelve participants that answered the second part of the two-part research question, which was "*How do employees describe their organization where workplace bullying was witnessed?*" In describing the organizations where they witnessed bullying, each participant focused on aspects of the organization that contributed to their perception of the organization's trustworthiness. The levels of trust in the organization ranged from total distrust, to partial trust, to trust. Five of the twelve participants either trusted the organization (42%) or partially trusted the organization and seven out of the twelve participants (58%) conveyed distrust of their organization. It is interesting to note that all but one of the five participants who found the organization to be trustworthy or partially trustworthy maintained employment with the organization and all of the seven who did not trust the organization, are no longer with their organization.

Untrustworthy Organization

Delia Rodriguez. Delia did not trust the organization where she witnessed workplace bullying. She explained, "There was a lack of confidence in the management team from the level of experience, expertise, and just confidence in supporting their team." Although Delia stated that "the other departments were wonderful" in the organization, her negative experience in her department gave her an "overall view of the entire organization."

In describing the organization, she gave examples of aspects of the organization that made it untrustworthy. One example was in the context of the workplace bullying situation. She shared how her manager witnessed the target being bullied by a colleague, and her manager did nothing in response. She stated,

> She heard it! The multiple times that this occurred in the staff meetings, the manager caught it. But, she would kind of act aloof when it was something, like if I looked at her funny, she would, you know, she would go on to another subject like that didn't happen.

Delia further explained, "There were other conflict resolutions that she should have been involved in and she would basically step away. So basically, the department was running itself, when it comes to conflict resolution."

Not only did Delia not trust her manager to support her staff to appropriately manage problematic issues, Delia also did not trust her manager's level of job knowledge. Delia stated, "I was constantly teaching her." Delia also shared, "…they decided to put her in that role because she was one of the employees who had been there the longest…She was not managerial material." Knowing that the organization would make such a poor hiring decision for a management position, contributed to her distrust in the judgment of top leadership.

Although integrity was one of the company's listed values, Delia did not trust the integrity of leadership. She shared, "…there were people in upper management that was doing all kinds of things to the point of - they were even having relations with each other. And they were outward with it." She conveyed how the "relations" that upper

management had with one another also created a climate of distrust in management's ability to be fair and objective. She stated,

> The manager was sleeping with the associate director…Even when I think about the target and the manager and HR - well, HR and the manager has a relationship…I know of a situation where they went through the chains of command - associate director, nothing was done, they went to HR, and nothing was done…It's almost like it has to be outsourced – to someone who has no relationship with either party, to be able to look at it objectively, and really make a determination.

> **Iris Newman.** Iris described a dysfunctional environment filled with informal, insubordinate, and unprofessional behaviors. She shared,

> I really feel like very few people there were professional. People were defensive. It was a ton of insubordination going on…People were pointing the finger at other people for a variety of things. So, there was definitely, as far as the culture goes, a lot of frustration. There was absenteeism, very low morale, high turnover, gossip, lots of gossip…

Because management allowed these behaviors, Iris did not trust them to ensure a positive work environment or to hold problematic people and behaviors accountable. She shared, "It seems like what they would do is sweep it under the carpet. It didn't exist. No one was ever reprimanded. They never changed. Even if you did go to management and speak to them, nothing ever changed." And, employees did not have an outlet to express and remedy their concerns. She stated, "There was no HR [Human Resources]

department. HR was home based [in another US Region], which I think that was also an issue, that was a problem."

More specifically, Iris also did not trust the judgment of her supervisor. Her supervisor was being bullied by a subordinate employee. Iris saw this as weakness and it contributed to her lack of respect for her manager. She stated,

> …it actually made me lose a little bit of respect for him as well, because, he never did address it, he never pulled their coat tail on any of these behaviors that they were displaying to him. I mean, that just kind of showed me in a way that he was kind of weak as a manager. A real manager would do something about that. They would fix the problem.

Iris not only found it difficult to trust her supervisor to be a strong leader in addressing problematic behaviors, she did not trust his judgment due to problematic behaviors that he too exhibited. She shared, "He would make, I don't know, sexual inappropriate, sexual jokes. He tried to be everybody's buddy, just trying too hard to make people like him."

Iris did not trust that the organization valued its employees. She expressed that the organization was all about making money. For example, employee performance was only measured by their production. And, employees were required to produce, even with challenging resources, such as antiquated computer systems that slowed down production. Iris shared,

> People were angry and frustrated with things like our computer systems which were kinda antiquated, and, I don't know, you know, I guess that kinda led to

employees' frustration about their lack of production, which in turn made them even more upset because they weren't able to produce lots of business or policies - and they would get reprimanded for that.

Iris shared, "Money and high producing employees was the end all and be all over employees' happiness."

Janis Washington. Janis did not trust the organization where she witnessed the bullying. She stated that it was a climate of "institutional racism" and there were no checks and balances nor accountability for upper management. Directors did not feel secure that the officers were held at the same level of accountability as the directors. Janis stated, "At the officer level…none of them were ever terminated or released. But, a director could be released. At the director level and down - we were all at risk. So you have this perpetuation of the system at the top."

Additionally, the system was not structured to support appropriate checks and balances. The officers reported to the Chief Executive Officer, and the Chief Executive Officer was not aware of what was going on from day to day - so much so that she did not realize when her officers were not carrying out her directives. She was inaccessible, and as Janis described it, she was in an "Ivory Tower." It was an environment where the officers could do what they wanted to do and could discredit employees, including director level employees, without the Chief Executive Officer knowing any better. Janis described the environment as chaotic with "disengaged upper level management and a group of renegade directors - in this case - officers who controlled all of it."

Laurie Henry. Laurie described an organization that was dominated by fear and cliques. She described it as "an uneasy environment." Laurie did not trust her organization to provide stability for its employees and to live up to its values. She gave an example. She explained,

> The culture is advertised as if we are a family. But every year, at the end of the year when the budget is being done, it's like management and administration is breathing hard - because everybody is like, 'okay, who is going to be fired.' If you're family and that's the culture in the organization, you should believe in giving stability to your employees - we shouldn't have fear year after year after year - and it wasn't even about your job performance…when you're giving it your all - you are there - you shouldn't have to fear. And, if you really believe that you're giving something positive to the organization, then you shouldn't have that fear. But, my experience was, it's very sneaky and it's who likes you and who you know. You have to be into who you know, to feel job security here.

She also stated, "And it's ridiculous to me that people with these degrees and professionals would be worried about being liked, being accepted, instead of doing the right thing."

Laurie stated, "That clique environment needs to break - that clique environment….it's poisonous especially in that type of environment." Laurie explained that the union representative was a part of the clique and could not be trusted by those on the "outside," meaning, outside of the clique. She stated,

With the union, there's always like a head leader. So, onsite, you have a head

leader of that union. And sadly there, it was one of the in-crowd that was one of

the union reps - so they probably didn't feel comfortable going to them.

The clique environment that Laurie described led to a lack of accountability for those

who were socially included, which not only impacted team relations, but patient care.

She emphasized, "We're not talking about working with machinery, we're speaking

about lives, patients, families - people come in sick with emotions, and - it's just - no!"

In responding to what would have made the organization better, she said "proper

leadership and making people accountable for their actions."

Luz Clayton. Luz described an organization where employees were

micromanaged. Employees had to "lobby and jockey" to get needed information. She

explained,

It was the issues of Sandra being a micromanager - wasn't allowing us to make

decisions and grow and develop - kind of doing things the same way. We tried to

push the envelope - very challenging - all of that.

In reflecting about how this impacted her specifically, she stated, "I had no

growth, no support or development." Luz did not feel valued and appreciated. She stated

"there was never any compensation for the work, time and effort that we put in - anything

- never - just not appreciated for who we were."

Luz also shared, "We really had no way of expressing what our challenges were

as a team and a division…we did not have an outlet, because there was no trust."

Employees also did not trust human resources. Luz explained,

Employees complained specifically about the fact that HR was not supportive at all. People would always keep it from them and not share things with them - and that was the culture - because they felt like every single time they sided with the manager as opposed to being neutral.

Luz described the entire "inner workings" of this organization as "dysfunctional" and she attributed the dysfunction to a lack of leadership accountability. She opined, "We could have all the classes and consultants come in to tell us this, this, and this is happening - you need to do it this, this, and this way - but it's the accountability that has to go along with it."

Oliver Fuller. Oliver did not trust the organization. It was led by partners who did not value employees. Oliver explained that the partners were "short sighted" to not recognize how the climate was impacting morale and how the organization was impacted by the high turnover. He stated, "…it was about nothing but money, and that really was true. It was a very cold environment. It was all about the dollar."

He explained that the organizational values were not communicated; however, "the subterranean tone was…'work a lot and you may have a chance to make a lot of money someday.'" And when employees did work long hours, which was expected, they were still unappreciated. Employees would get criticized for taking small amounts of time off. Oliver stated, "…when you're working your tail off for a long period of time, and when you hear about when you take a small break - people don't want to hear about that."

There was no one to go to for concerns. The partners in the firm did not respond to problematic behaviors, including holding the bully, who was also a partner, accountable for his behaviors. In discussing this, Oliver shared, "I definitely lost respect for the individual and I also lost respect for the organization, because the organization knew this sort of thing was going." Oliver did not trust that anything would every get better. He explained that the partners of the firm had reached the "pinnacle of success," and unfortunately, there was "very little motivation for them to see to it that anything change."

Tamara Farmer. Tamara shared frustration with the lack of accountability that the organization had for leaders and staff. She described that this lack of accountability promoted an environment where leaders and staff were allowed to not pull their weight in the organization, which impacted those who took their jobs seriously. Tamara shared,

> …there is twenty percent of the government employees who take their jobs seriously and work really hard to do great work, and they are overworked. And then there's about an eighty percent - they work, and often times - and I know I'm generalizing, but in that environment, the generalization holds true. Because I was in a certain environment where I worked in a certain division, and in that division it certainly holds true.

Tamara spoke specifically about the lack of accountability for her supervisor's deputy to meet the standards of her job. It was Tamara's supervisor who was being bullied. Tamara shared about her supervisor,

> ….and she has a deputy, but the deputy, I don't even know how she made it as

deputy, I think she was just a friend - I don't know - she doesn't know anything about anything. So, I think, given that situation, she had to be here to make sure that it all goes smooth and do it herself.

Partially Trustworthy Organization

Linda Barton. Linda trusted the positive richness of her institution, as a whole. She valued the diversity of the campus. She stated, "The diversity is unlike any you would ever see anywhere…What that is, is a really freeing experience because - you can't even begin to categorize people."

Linda also trusted the competency of the professors who the college hired. She stated, "Professors are dedicated - really, really, dedicated. The best professors are professors I've seen here…"

Linda experienced administrators to be concerned. In speaking specifically about the bullying in her department, she shared, "I get the impression that the administration was very concerned…" She also felt a sense of concern from administrators about her and her work. She stated,

I had the impression that the vice president was very concerned about me. You asked if anybody knew about my work - the person who really knew about my work was the vice president - so, he knew what I was doing and he thought it was great.

However, Linda did not trust the culture of her department. She stated, "It wasn't a supportive department…It was at best, an indifferent department. Superficially cordial,

but indifferent." It was the long lasting behaviors of the two bullies that contributed to this climate the most.

Russell Robinson. Russell described an organization where employees' opinions did not matter. He shared, "I think the culture there was basically, you might have an opinion, but you better keep your opinion to yourself if it goes against what leadership wanted you to do." And, he described an organization that was absent of a trusting resource, at any level, to report concerns. This made it difficult to hold leaders accountable. Russell explained,

> I knew the board were all of his buddies and I knew how they would do…I mean
> I guess our staff coordinator was the person we were supposed to go to [if we had
> concerns], but we didn't trust him so we didn't say nothing.

However, for Russell, his perception of the organization's trustworthiness extended beyond these factors. He recognized the harm in the organizational climate, but he still respected and trusted the integrity of Dave, the "father" bully. He explained,

> He was black and white and you can trust him. He meant what he said and there
> was no hidden agendas. That's one thing that I liked about Dave, because there
> was no hidden agenda. He was true to his word.

He also trusted Dave's mission focused competency to get things done, and this was something that contributed to Russell's trust in the organization during Dave's leadership. He shared,

> I know we're talking about Dave being a bully, but one thing about Dave, he
> made sure we were doing what we were supposed to be doing. If his bullying

contributed to that, then I guess it really worked…I think Dave was the most thorough Director I've ever had.

Russell eventually left the organization. This was a time after Dave had retired. He shared, "I saw that the organization wasn't doing what it was doing when I first started." Russell left, as a result. He eventually lost too much trust in the competency of the organization to continue to stay.

Seth Woods. Seth specifically spoke about the trustworthiness of his organization. As an employee, he has witnessed a lot of problematic behaviors from leaders. He shared, "So, a leader comes in - and I've seen it - yells, cusses, belittles them in front of people, and you know, talks about them, you know, excessively, and all those kind of things." He explained that problematic behaviors do not always get the appropriate response from leaders in the organization, and that is a concern for him. He stated, "Some leaders are apathetic and they will say 'Don't bother me if it's not important.'" However, he explained that some leaders are responsive. Seth shared, "Some bosses will take immediate action, because they don't want it to spread, because it's like a cancer." For example, in the bullying situation that he witnessed, leadership was responsive. However, because leadership does not always hold people accountable and intervene when needed, Seth's trust of the organization is not whole. He is not totally trusting of the organization. He explained, "Organizational trust is predicated upon leadership to address these type of issues…some leaders are better than others." Seth also shared, "overall, it's a great organization."

Trustworthy Organization

    Dorothy Perkins. Dorothy respected her organization and appreciated the tools that it offered - the support, the training, and the policies in place that protected its employees. Dorothy shared, "I loved being an employee there." Dorothy's organization exemplified an environment that was nurturing. She described it as a family environment where people cared for each another, at all levels. She shared, "We have a lot of senior managers that come out, and they mingle with employees so that you will have a connected source outside of the job, outside of your division." Dorothy also shared,

> And they always let us know that we are human, and we're going to go through things, and we're going to have things happen, and we promote family in our organization. We're a family, and we try to handle things as best and quiet as we can, but we expect everyone else to continue working in the operation while we handle our family business.

    Leaders also made sure that employees knew what was going on within the organization, made sure that employees knew their rights, and knew the processes in place for voicing concerns. The organization created a protective environment for its employees. Dorothy explained,

> I think that in our agency we spend a lot of time making sure that new people coming in are familiar with EEO [Equal Employment Opportunity] rights. We even have it in our orientation class. We're familiar with the tools that are in HR [Human Resources]. Those are the two things that we're gonna make sure that our employees know about.

In speaking specifically about the bullying situation, she shared, "I think that when you utilize the tools that the agency has in place, for this type of thing, that the agency, will protect the individual."

There was also trust in the organization to effectively manage issues. Dorothy stated, "I think if I could tell you how good our track record was, I could say 85% of the time, our track record was not messy." Both the union and leaders, including human resources, supported such an atmosphere. And, employees were not afraid to make a mistake. Dorothy shared, "they always let us know that we are human, and we're going to go through things, and we're going to have things happen."

Vanessa Wilson. Vanessa also trusted her organization. She trusted the organization to be welcoming of employee feedback. She shared, "They really promote open communication. They're really big on open communication." She also stated,

> The CEO, they have a suggestion box. It's anonymous, where you put how you're feeling about the company and your observations and they post it - we get an email or something every month letting us know the things that are going on in the company with people having issues with.

Vanessa also trusted the organization to be responsive to concerns that impact employees. She explained,

> It's not a company that just tells you, 'well deal with them.' They're trying to, you know, make it as easy as possible…If you have some issues, HR [Human Resources] will sit down with you and your supervisor to try and work this out. Like, we've had some workers who just don't get along - and you go to HR and

then they figure a seating arrangement so you don't have to, you know, just be

next to each other. Because, they don't want an uncomfortable working

environment.

Leaders also demonstrated respect for employees. Therefore, Vanessa trusted that she

can come to work and not be mistreated. Vanessa stated,

It's an easy place to go to work…It's not a place to go to work where you're

expecting to be yelled at, or talked down to, or disrespected. It's not that type of

company…It's more centered around family. They really try to sell the idea that

we are family, we're a family that works together.

Finally, Vanessa explained that the bullying that she witnessed was isolated and

something that she had never seen before in the organization. She stated, "In my

department, we don't act like that."

Summary

The purpose of Chapter 4 was to present the data findings from this

transcendental phenomenological study which answered the two-part question: "*What is

the experience of witnessing bullying in the workplace and how do participants describe

the organization where workplace bullying was witnessed?*" The findings were a result

of researcher Epoche as well as a seven step transcendental phenomenological process

using Moustakas' (1994) Modification of the Van Kaam Method which incorporated

phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis. The findings,

including the four themes that were portrayed, represent the essence of the experience

common to all twelve of the participants, or rather, the composite textural-structural

description of the experience of the group as a whole.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusion

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the lived experience of witnessing bullying in the workplace. The underpinning two-part research question of this study was, "*What is the experience of witnessing bullying in the workplace and how do participants describe the organizations where workplace bullying was witnessed?*" The carefully constructed wording of my research question indicates that I was not searching for causal relationships. Instead, I was open to whatever came forth from participants' comprehensive descriptions of their experience of witnessing workplace bullying and of the organizations where their experiences occurred. Therefore, my research question sought to qualitatively investigate the phenomenon.

This study and its findings has personal significance for this researcher. Although I have not directly witnessed bullying in the workplace, I have been a target of workplace bullying. As a result, I became interested in studying the workplace bullying phenomenon, and more specifically, I grew an interest in better understanding organizations where bullying behaviors occur. As supported by Moustakas (1994), a researcher's "personal history [with a phenomenon] brings the core of the problem into focus" (p. 104).

There is also social significance. Brinkmann and Kvale (as cited in Hays & Singh, 2011) opined that "it is important to consider how the knowledge produced [through research] will circulate in the wider culture and affect humans and society" (p. 70). The purpose of my study as well as the goals that I strived to fulfill supported my

commitment to this responsibility as a researcher. As such, this study was supported by three primary research goals that have societal implications. They were:

RG₁. To advance individual, societal, and practitioner awareness of the range of impact of workplace bullying by providing insight from the experiences of employees who have witnessed it - adding a dimension to mean-making and voice-giving that will hopefully motivate individuals and groups to enter into this important dialogue and attend to this very important issue.

RG₂. To contribute to the body of literature by revealing "fresh points of view" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 80) from the perspective of witnesses - regarding organizations where workplace bullying occurs.

RG₃. To inform, challenge or support action at a practical level. As organizational leaders, policymakers, and practitioners devise and implement effective workplace bullying prevention and intervention efforts, they need to better understand workplace bullying in the context of the organization and understand the range of its impact.

Considering these aims, as well as the underpinning two-part research question, it was important that absent of my own interpretations and judgments about the phenomenon, that the essence of the participants' described personal experiences with witnessing workplace bullying, be preserved and illuminated. Therefore, I decided that a descriptive rather than an interpretive qualitative research method would best guide this study. As such, a transcendental phenomenology approach was chosen as the qualitative

inquiry for my study - an approach and practice that is consistent with my own philosophical beliefs.

Edward Husserl, a German mathematician turned philosopher, is considered to be the father of descriptive phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994). Husserl explained that "phenomenology is the study of the lifeworld" (as cited in Van Manen, 1990, p. 9). Husserl believed that knowledge is gained from descriptions of an individual's lived experience with a phenomena, and not gained from the researcher's interpretation of that individual's description.

The word 'phenomenon' originated from the Greek word phaenesthai, which means "to flare up, to show itself, to appear" (Moustakas, p. 26). Therefore, it makes sense when Moustakas (1994) emphasized that a transcendental phenomenological approach helps to keep the phenomenon "alive, illuminate its presence, accentuate its underlying meanings…. [and] retain its spirit…" (p. 59). Moustakas (1994) also explained that a transcendental phenomenological approach seeks to better understand experiences, meanings, perceptions, and "not explanations or analyses" (p. 58) and "it does not seek to predict or determine causal relationships" (p. 105). The transcendental phenomenological approach seeks to gain a better understanding of a phenomenon from participants who share a common experience, such as the common experience of witnessing workplace bullying.

Based on a theoretical framework of consciousness and intentionality, there are four major processes of transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994). These four processes are Epoche (pronounced epokhē), phenomenology, imaginative variation, and

synthesis (Moustakas). Epoche is the German term for bracketing and it requires that the researcher sets aside his or her presuppositions, biases, prejudgments, and knowledge about the phenomenon in order to be free to explore the lived experienced with open and fresh eyes (Moustakas, 1994). That means that there is no hypothesizing or theorizing. The second major process is phenomenological reduction. As Moustakas (1994) explained, this "is not only a way of seeing but a way of listening with a conscious and deliberate intention of opening ourselves to phenomena as phenomena, in their own right, with their own textures and meanings" (p. 92). The focus in phenomenological reduction, is on the experience's qualities, while the goal is to discover the "nature and the meaning of the experience" and it is a process that "involves a prereflective description of things just as they appear and a reduction to what is horizonal and thematic" (Moustakas, p. 91). Following the process of transcendental phenomenological reduction, is the major process of imaginative variation (Moustakas, 1994). As Moustakas summarized, the process of imaginative variation results in a description that portrays the conditions and context of the experience, or otherwise "a structural description of the essences of the experience is derived" (Moustakas, p. 35). Through this, as Husserl posited (as cited in Moran, 2002), "we can arrive at new essential truths about an object" (p. 382). And finally, after imaginative variation, is the major process of synthesizing the meanings and the essences of the lived experience. Moustakas explained that "the fundamental textural-structural synthesis represents the essences at a particular time and place from the vantage point of an individual researcher following an exhaustive imaginative and reflective study of the phenomenon" (p. 100).

I began Epoche, the first major process of a transcendental phenomenological study, prior to the preliminary review of the literature. This was a process that continued throughout the study. It involved me setting aside my presuppositions, biases, prejudgments, and knowledge about workplace bullying so that I could see the phenomenon through a fresh and naïve lens (Moustakas, 1994). The literature shows that there are various ways that the process of Epoche can be practically applied, and one such way is through reflexivity (Chan, Fung, & Wai-ton, 2013). Morrow (as cited in Hays & Singh, 2011) explained that "reflexivity is one of the major distinguishing factors between quantitative and qualitative research; it is viewed as being a critical researcher role to self-reflect throughout the research process" (p. 137).

As I engaged in Epoche through reflexivity, I reflected on authentic thoughts and feelings that I had about workplace bullying and organizations where workplace bullying occurs. My goal was to freely review the literature and listen to and hear the experiences of the participants without distractions from my experiences and pre-existing knowledge. In doing so, it was important that I examined the phenomenon being studied "naïvely and freshly through a 'purified' consciousness" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85). Therefore, my preliminary review of the literature was only enough to acquire adequate knowledge related to workplace bullying. My goal was not to conduct an exhaustive literature review. This was an indicator of my openness to understand this phenomenon.

In the preliminary review of the literature, I found that there has been important scholarly research conducted on workplace bullying. A considerable amount of the literature has focused on the prevalence and impact of workplace bullying and how

bullying is experienced by targets. A 2012 study conducted by the Society for Human Resources Management found that fifty-one percent of surveyed organizations reported occurrences of workplace bullying incidents within their organizations (Workplace Bullying Institute, 2012). And, according to the most recent U.S. Workplace Bullying Survey conducted by the Workplace Bullying Institute (2014), "The number of U.S. workers who are affected by bullying - summing over those with direct bullying and witnessing experiences - is 65.6 million…" (p. 5), and over one quarter of adult Americans have personally experienced being the target of repeated acts of abusive behavior at work that was threatening, intimidating, and humiliating, including sabotage or verbal abuse.

The research overwhelmingly shows that targets' physical and psychological health are impacted by their experience of being bullied (Einarson, Hoel, Zapf & Cooper, 2005; Mayhew, McCarthy, Chappell, Quinlan, Barker & Sheehan, 2004; Petitpas-Taylor, 2009; Hallberg & Strandmark, 2006; Keashley & Harvey, 2005; Jenkins, Winefield, & Sarris, 2011; Namie & Namie, 2009; Namie & Namie, 2011; Hodson, Roscigno, & Lopez, 2006; Sartain, 2013). Studies show that employees bullied are prone to develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Hodson, Roscigno, & Lopez, 2006; Jenkins, Winefield, & Sarris, 2011; Sartain, 2013), and the PTSD can last as long as five years after the experience (Sartain, 2013). According to Leymann and Gustaffson (as cited by Hodson, Roscigno, & Lopez, 2006), the impact is "fully comparable with PTSD from war or prison camp experiences" (p. 383).

The literature shows that organizations reported that the most harmful effects that workplace bullying had on their organization is a decrease in employee morale, an increase in levels of stress and/or depression, and a decrease in the level of trust among employees ("The WBI website," 2012). There is also a significant economic factor associated with workplace bullying. Asfaw, Change, and Ray (2014) analyzed the responses of 13,807 employed adults from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's 2010 National Health Interview Survey and found that being mistreated in the workplace "was associated with a 42% increase in the number of missed workdays and cost employees $4.1 billion…" (p. 202).

The literature also addresses specific strategies that organizations can take to respond to workplace bullying, such as training, coaching, and establishing anti-bullying policies (Namie & Namie, 2011; Branch, 2006; Bulutlar & Öz, 2009; Einarson, Hoel, Zapf & Cooper, 2005; Mayhew, McCarthy, Chappell, Quinlan, Barker & Sheehan, 2004; Petitpas-Taylor, 2009; Zeidner, 2008; Hodson, Roscigno & Lopez, 2006). There is also considerable literature that points to the organization as the problem (Bulutlar & Öz, 2009; Einarsen et al., 2005; Hodson et al., 2006; Petitpas-Taylor, 2009), while suggesting that there is a need to expand the scholarly research and focus beyond the individual actors involved, so as to focus on the organizations whereby bullying takes place (Georgakopoulos, Wilkin, & Kent, 2011; Buttigieg, Bryant, Hanley, & Liu, 2011).

There were also gaps found in the literature. There is a recognized gap in the literature when it comes to better understanding bullies. Rayner and Cooper posited that "finding and studying the bully is like trying to study black holes - we are often chasing

scattered debris of complex data and shadows of the past" (as cited in Crawshaw, 2007, p. 19). One reason for this gap is that many workplace bullying studies only solicit interviews and survey responses from targets and/or witnesses - relying only on their accounts of the bully (Jenkins, Winefield, & Sarris, 2011). Although increasing, studies that seek to explore the accounts of accused bullies, including their experiences and perceptions, are limited. However, the limited research that has been done on bullies has found that bullies, once accused, also suffer. For example, an Australian study sampled 24 participants who were accused of bullying while in a managerial/supervisory capacity; and through interviews and survey questionnaires they found that over 50 percent reported that they took sick leave as a result of the stress, depression, and anxiety that they experienced from the bullying accusation and resulting investigation process (Jenkins, Winefield, & Sarris, 2011).

I also found a paucity of scholarly literature that seeks to understand workplace bullying from the perspective of witnesses. In a non-experimental quantitative study to determine if a correlation exists between witnessing workplace bullying, witnesses' perception of the organization, and their work engagement, Christianson (2015) opined that further research is needed to better understand the lived experiences and the perception of witnesses using a qualitative, rather than a quantitative method. Specifically, Christianson (2015) recommended the following:

…utilizing face-to-face interviews may enable future studies to gain a deeper understanding about the perceptions of indirect victims of workplace bullying. While the current study revealed the correlation between witnessing of workplace

bullying, perceived organizational support and work engagement, the

methodology lacks details and insights from the participants who responded. (p.

68)

This was not the only study that identified gaps in the workplace bullying literature as it

relates to the perspective and the experience of witnesses. In 2013, Nielson and Einarsen

concluded in their study, "In order to fully understand the nature and consequences of the

workplace bullying phenomenon, future research should therefore increase the focus on

being a bystander of bullying" (p. 720). I also found this to be a needed perspective to

gain. Therefore, the quest of this study was to respond to the gaps identified as it relates

to the experience of witnessing workplace bullying.

Following the preliminary review of the literature, using a snowball sampling

method, participants were recruited through my diverse professional, civic, and social

networks. The recruitment method was also purposeful, in that participants had to meet

pre-established eligibility criteria. Participants had to be English speaking; must have

been at least 25 years old; must have worked for at least twelve months in a U.S.

organization where they witnessed workplace bullying; must have witnessed the bullying

in their organization take place for more than six months; and must not have currently

been a witness of the bullying in their workplace and the experience of witnessing

workplace bullying must have ended at least twelve months prior.

For the purpose of determining eligibility and obtaining consent, an informal pre-

interview meeting that lasted 20-30 minutes by phone was conducted at a mutually

convenient time with the potential participants who responded to the recruitment

advertisement. The pre-interview meeting was also an opportunity for me to determine whether or not interested participants were psychologically or cognitively able to give and reject consent. Participants were also informed of the expected contributions of the study and I allowed each participant sufficient opportunity to ask questions. Coercive strategies were not used to gain the agreement of volunteers and participants were not offered anything tangible in return for participating in the study. Prior to the pre-interview meeting, an electronic version of the consent form (Appendix B: Consent Form) was emailed to each potential. Having the consent form prior to the pre-interview meeting allowed the interested volunteer participants to be able to refer to it as consent was discussed.

Out of the fifteen pre-interviews conducted with interested participants, twelve met the criteria and signed and returned their consent form. Those twelve became the sample for this study. The sample consisted of three male and nine female mid-career professionals. The median age of the sample was 48 and the level of education ranged from "some college" to terminal degrees. The sample was representative of one Afro-Latina, two Caucasians, and nine African-Americans, and the organizations in which their experiences occurred were representative of various industries and were located across multiple regions of the United States of America. The list of the participants can be found in Table 1: Demographic Listing of Participants.

The sample size was determined by considering the theoretical underpinnings of phenomenological research. The goal was to have a sample size that would contribute in-depth, to answering the two-part research question. In phenomenological research, the

emphasis is not on the number of participants interviewed. Instead, the emphasis is on

the ability to collect rich data from the samples. A small sample size permits the

researcher to have the time and space to be in-depth (Moustakas, 1994). Richness is

obtained when enough data has been collected from the participant interviews to generate

themes and to synthesize a textural and structural description that comprise the

participants' experience as a whole (Moustakas, 1994).

For the purpose of data collection, I engaged in an in-depth conversational styled

interview with each selected participant by phone. The shortest interview time was 31:32

minutes, the longest was 2:41 hours, and the average was 66 minutes. The interviews in

phenomenological studies are intended to be long and comprehensive (Moustakas, 1994).

Each interview consisted of open-ended questions and statements used to investigate the

phenomenon. The interview began with the following broad statement that helped

participants to focus on their experience and set the stage for a relaxed and interactive

dialogue: *"Reflect on a specific workplace bullying situation that you witnessed and try*

to remember the context, the incidents involved, the people intimately connected and

anything that you can remember including what you felt, and what thoughts you had."

During the conversational style interviews, I asked unscripted follow-up questions

whenever there was a response from a participant that needed a fuller understanding. I

prepared a general interview guide to use as a reference. The interview guide included a

list of interview questions and statements (See Appendix B: Interview Guide). However,

to support an informal, conversational, and relaxed climate, I referred only to the

interview guide when the natural development of the conversation did not produce in-

depth descriptions of a participant's lived experience. As supported by Moustakas (1994), the interview guide is used "when the co-researcher's story has not tapped into the experience qualitatively and with sufficient meaning and depth" (p. 116).

Aligned with the theoretical framework of transcendental phenomenology, the analysis of the data was guided by a "ground up" rather than a "handed down" approach (Creswell, 2007, p. 19). It was not influenced by theory or my preconceptions. Instead, the data analysis was guided by the knowledge that transcended from the descriptive narratives of the participants.

Moustakas (1994) offers two methods as guides for analyzing data in transcendental phenomenological research from a ground up approach. They are The Modification of the Van Kaam Method and The Modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method. I used the Modification of the Van Kaam Method. This method involves seven steps of phenomenological analysis. The steps are outlined in Table 2: Steps of the Modification of the Van Kaam Method.

The result of the data analysis using the seven steps of The Modification of the Van Kaam Method was a synthesis of all of the individual textural-structural descriptions of the participants "into a universal description of the experience representing the group as a whole" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122). Constructing a composite textural-structural description is the final step of phenomenological research, and as Husserl opined (as cited in Moustakas, 1994), this final step is "the establishment of a knowledge of essences" (p. 100). Therefore, the composite textural-structural description of the twelve participants, represents the data findings of this study, and represents the group as a whole.

Table 2

Steps of the Modification of the Van Kaam Method

1. Listing and Preliminary Grouping (Horizonalization)

2. Reduction and Elimination.

3. Clustering and Thematizing the Invariant Constituents

4. Final Identification of the Invariant Constituents and Themes by Application

5. Using the relevant, validated invariant constituents and themes, construct for each co-researcher an Individual Textural Description of the experience. Include verbatim examples from the transcribed interview.

6. Construct for each co-research an Individual Structural Description of the meanings and essences of the experience, incorporation the invariant constituents and themes.

7. Construct for each research participant a Textural-Structural Description of the meanings and essences of the experience, incorporating the invariant constituents and themes.

From the Individual-Textural Structural Descriptions, develop a Composite Description of the meanings and essences of the experience, representing the group as a whole.

Note. From "Phenomenological Research Methods," by C. Moustakas, 1994, pp. 120-121.

In essence, the data findings identified four common themes that portray the experience of witnessing bullying in the workplace and that weaved through all twelve of the participants. They are: 1) Making Sense through Metaphors; 2) Emotional Impact; 3) Taking an Intentional Stance; and 4) Awareness of Organizational Trustworthiness. The first three themes address the first part of the two-part research question that guided this research study, which is "*What is the experience of witnessing bullying in the workplace?*," and the fourth theme addresses the second part of the two-part research question that

guided this research study, which is "*How do employees describe their organization where workplace bullying was witnessed?*"

In the remainder of this chapter, I will compare the findings of this study to the existing literature. I will also discuss the implications of the findings of this study and provide practical recommendations for conflict management and human resources professionals. Chapter 5 also provides recommendations for future research and provides a critique of my research methods and procedures, including the limits and advantages of my research design and methodology, and what I would do differently in future studies of this nature. The chapter ends with closing comments.

Discussion

Having collected and analyzed my data, I will now position my study and its findings in relation to my review of the literature. In Chapter 3: Literature Review, I presented my preliminary review of the literature. My review of the literature prior to collecting my data, was simply to acquire adequate knowledge related to workplace bullying. The goal at that time, was not to be exhaustive. This was an indicator of my openness to understand this phenomenon. I was concerned that too much review of the literature prior to conducting the study would make it difficult for me to set all things aside. It is important to be able to examine the phenomenon being studied "naïvely and freshly through a 'purified' consciousness" (Moustakas, p. 85). As posited by Schmitt (as cited in Moustaks, 1994), in transcendental phenomenology, "we 'invalidate,' 'inhibit,' and 'disqualify' all commitments with reference to previous knowledge and experience" (p. 85).

However, a more exhaustive review of the literature was conducted after the study was completed. Now that my investigation has been completed and I have done a thorough review of prior research, I will discuss how my findings differ from the existing literature. I have organized this discussion based on the two-part research question that guided this study and the core themes that were found to be common to all twelve participants.

Research Question One

There were three themes that helped to answer the first part of the two-part research question, "*What is the experience of witnessing bullying in the workplace*?" These three themes, which were common to all twelve participants' comprehensive descriptions of their experience, are: 1) Making Sense through Metaphors; 2) Emotional Impact; and 3) Taking an Intentional Stance. I will discuss these three themes in comparison to prior studies.

Making Sense through Metaphors. While conducting this research study, beginning with the first time I heard a participant's use of a metaphor to convey their experience, and upon each reflection thereafter, my senses awakened to what it was like to experience what they experienced. I was able to sense what was before them, what was around them, and what was upon them as a witness of bullying in their organizations. I found that the use of metaphors provided a powerful conveyance of the witnesses' understanding of their experiences. I believe that absent those metaphors, the essence of those experiences would have been diminished.

Lakoof and Johnson (1980) argued that metaphors are a fundamental conduit for understanding experiences and constructing our reality and are "as much a part of our functioning as our sense of touch, and as precious" (p. 240). The work of Lakoof and Johnson in "Metaphors We Live By" sought to provide linguistic evidence that supports the shortcomings of the Western and Anglo-American philosophies as it relates to metaphors. In their paper, they posited, "Metaphor has traditionally been viewed in both fields as a matter of peripheral interest…it is, instead, a matter of central concern, perhaps the key to giving an adequate account of understanding" (p. 69). I found Lakoof and Johnson's conceptualization of metaphors to be aligned with the findings of my study as well as other research findings relevant to the workplace bullying literature.

A search of the workplace bullying literature showed that metaphorical expressions have been used to characterize bullies and the impact of bullying. For example, bullying has been labeled by researchers and authors as *toxic* (Kusy & Holloway, 2009; Murphy, 2013), which is consistent with metaphorical expressions used by some of the participants in this study. And, Namie and Namie (2011), founders of The Workplace Bullying Institute, boldly characterized bullies as "*jerks*, *weasels*, and *snakes*" (p. 3). These metaphors are actually incorporated into the title of their 2011 book, "The bully-free workplace: Stop jerks, weasels, and snakes from killing your organization" (Namie & Namie).

The review of the literature also showed that there has been research studies that specifically focused on metaphorical analysis to better understand the emotional dimensions experienced as a result of being a target of workplace bullying (Sheehan,

Barker, & McCarthy, 2004; Tracy, Lutgen-Sandvik, & Alberts, 2006; Thirwell, 2014).

Targets have been reported to use metaphors in an attempt to conceptualize their

experience of being bullied in their workplace and to clearly communicate their

perceptions and feelings. One such research study was conducted by Sheehan, Barker,

and McCarthy (2004) in Australia. Eleven participants who had reported repeated

incidences of being bullied at work, were asked to respond to 12 questions, either through

a telephone or face-to-face interview, an emailed response, or through a survey response.

The ten open-ended and the two-closed ended questions sought to gain participants'

feelings and perceptions regarding their overall experience of being a target of workplace

bullying, how they felt about themselves regarding the experience, how they responded to

being bullied, the bully, and the organization (Sheehan et al.). It was the researchers

hope "that the use of metaphors would aid participants in describing their traumatic

experience(s), and enable others to gain a deeper understanding of the emotional

experience of each participant" (p. 28). The participants' use of metaphors to describe

their perceptions and feelings was not a part of their natural communication. Instead, a

forced method was used, whereas participants were specifically asked to respond to the

12 questions using metaphors (Sheehan et al.). According to the authors (Sheenan et al.),

some of the participants did not understand the concept of metaphors, and therefore,

needed coaching in the process.

Sheehan, Barker, and McCarthy (2004) found that the metaphors used by the

targets in their research, ranged from "simple and concise" to "sophisticated, dramatic,

and intense" (p. 30). The study found that participants most commonly used metaphors

to describe their feelings of helplessness while being bullied, for example, "it was like drowning and calling for help" (p. 28). Metaphors were also frequently used to convey how participants felt insignificant, vulnerable, and trapped, such as "it was like being stuck to the bull's eye on an archery target while a very good archer was shooting arrows" (p. 29). Alternately, metaphors were used to describe the bully as controlling, uncaring, tyrannical, and insincere. And finally, Sheehan et al. found that participants used metaphors to convey how they felt that their organization was inactive and inconsistent in bullying management and prevention, such as "turning a blind eye" and "putting his head in the sand" (p. 29). However, Sheehan et al. believed that the metaphors that the participants used to describe their feelings about the organization were not as informative as the metaphors used to describe the bully and themselves.

Another study was the work of Tracy, Lutgen-Sandvik, and Alberts (2006). This study was conducted in the United States. Relying on a qualitative research approach through the use of focus groups, drawings, and in-depth interviews, Tracy et al. used metaphor analysis to "articulate and explore the emotional pain" (p. 148) described and expressed by 17 targets of workplace bullying. The research question that guided their study was "*What does workplace bullying feel like*?" (Tracy et al., p. 154). In their data analysis, they found that targets used metaphors to describe their experience. The targets in their study used metaphors such as dictator, evil, and demon to describe the bully. Targets also used metaphors that suggested that bullying is "an active process apart from specific actors" - metaphors that characterized bullying as feeling "like a fight or battle, a nightmare, water torture, and a noxious substance" (p. 166). Their study also found that

targets used metaphors to describe how they saw themselves in the context of the bullying that they experienced. Targets expressed that they felt like "slaves and animals, prisoners, children, and heartbroken lovers" (p. 167).

The third and final study that I reviewed as it relates to metaphor analysis, was that of Thirlwell (2014). Using a qualitative approach, she interviewed 31 participants from the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics in New Zealand. The guiding research question was "*How do targets use metaphor to construct the emotional experience of bullying*?" Participants consisted of both men and women and the metaphors they used to describe their experiences were not forced, but rather a result of natural communication (Thirwell, 2014). Thirwell found there were a range of emotions expressed through metaphors, and the most prominent metaphors indicated that there were concerns regarding "power, danger, and unpredictability" and the metaphors painted a picture of "powerful, dangerous and unpredictable bullies and powerless, vulnerable targets" (p. 11). Targets used metaphors that compared the experience to a battle and games, similar to metaphors found in the study conducted by Tracy, Lutgen-Sandvik, and Alberts (2006). Thirwell also found that participants used metaphors with a cultural construct based on the natural environment or geography landscape of New Zealand. For example, Thirwell found that targets used metaphors that likened the bullying to natural forces and the metaphors they used to describe the bullies characterized them as "dangerous animals, volcanoes, and waterfalls" (p. 13).

In reviewing the metaphor analyses from these three research studies, I found both similarities and differences in comparison to the metaphorical theme found in my

study. Similar to my study, the participants in the prior studies used metaphors to characterize the bully and the bully's behavior as tyrannical and dictator like (Sheehan, Barker, and McCarthy, 2004; Tracy, Lutgen-Sandvik, & Alberts, 2006). Similar to my study, participants also used metaphors to characterize the bully as intimidating, overpowering or powerful (Thirwell, 2014; Sheehan, Barker, & McCarthy, 2004). For example, in my study, metaphors such as "a beast," Kim Jong-Un," and "A" on "Pretty Little Liars," were used to describe the bully. Kim Jong-Un is the leader of North Korea, who is often portrayed as tyrannical, and 'A' is a character on the television series "Pretty Little Liars," whose character bullies her female classmates through intimidation.

Another similarity is that participants in my study and prior studies used metaphors to describe the emotions that they experienced as a result of the bullying. For example, metaphors such as, "I used to be on pins and needles," "my stomach would be in knots," "it was a repetitive walking on egg shells," and "she was repellent to me," were used by witnesses in my study. And one participant conveyed through a metaphor, the misery that she experienced after she and members of her staff later became the bully's targets as the bully proceeded to retaliate against the participant for intervening in the original bullying situation. The participant, who was the human resources director, shared, "it was a year of hell." However, while the witnesses in my study used metaphors to describe feelings of fear, anxiety, contempt, grief, misery, and anguish, the literature from the three studies found that targets used metaphors to primarily describe feelings of helplessness, vulnerability, and powerlessness (Sheehan, Barker, & McCarthy, 2004; Tracy, Lutgen-Sandvik, & Alberts, 2006; Thirwell, 2014). For example, "it was

like drowning and calling for help" (Sheehan et al., p. 28) was a metaphor used in a prior study, and references to feeling like a slave, prisoner, and a child were used by targets in the study conducted by Tracy et al.

There were also major differences between the metaphor findings in my study and the findings in the three studies discussed. It is significant to distinguish that the three research studies analyzed the use of metaphors from the perspective of the targets of workplace bullying, while my study focused on the perspectives of witnesses. To my knowledge, there is little or no research that has been conducted that employs a metaphor analysis relevant to the experience of witnessing workplace bullying. To my knowledge, there has also been little or no research that focuses on the use of metaphors and the experience of workplace bullying that has been conducted in the United States.

And finally, another major and interesting difference, is that the literature shows that targets in prior studies used metaphors to primarily describe or makes sense of the bully, the bully's behaviors, and how they, as targets, were emotionally harmed (Sheehan, Barker, & McCarthy, 2004; Tracy, Lutgen-Sandvik, & Alberts, 2006; Thirwell, 2014). However, while the majority of witnesses in my study also used metaphors to makes sense of the same, a greater percentage of the witnesses in my study used metaphors to makes sense of the structural impact of the bullying - meaning how bullying causes widespread harm within the organization. For example, one participant in this study, who had a military background, shared, "It created fault lines within the unit [and] it's like a free fire unguided rocket." Cancerous metaphors were frequently used by participants in my study to convey the widespread destruction of the bullying in the

organization and the urgent need for it to be treated. One participant shared, "It's really maligning behavior…it's like this cancer that keeps going and when you don't stop it, it just continues to grow. So, we need chemotherapy - whatever it takes to stop it." And, another participant who used a cancer metaphor portrayed a vivid picture when he stated, "It is a cancer. It starts off small, and then it manifests itself and it starts metastasizes and it kind of erodes the whole fabric of the organization."

A fourth participant tried to make sense of the structural impact of workplace bullying by explaining how the bullying style of management was passed down to succeeding leaders. To convey this, he referred to it as "generational bullying." He explained, "It's almost like generational - like in a family - generational poverty, generational drop outs - generations in projects…" I found his metaphor to support the social learning theory as discussed in the workplace bullying literature (Randall, 2001; Salin, 2003; Samnani & Singh, 2012). According to Bandura's social learning theory (as cited in Salin, 2003), "individuals who operate in a work environment where others are rewarded for aggressive behaviour are more likely to engage in similar acts themselves" (p. 1221). Salin (2003) explained that social learning may influence the prevalence of bullying within an organization and that "bullying seems to flourish where new managers are socialised into a culture that treats bullying as a 'normal' and acceptable way of getting things done. Bullying can also be an initiation ritual or part thereof" (p. 1221).

In summary, while all of the participants used metaphors to make sense of their experience, nine of the twelve participants in my study used metaphors to specifically make sense of the structural impact. It was clear that they were trying to convey that they

saw bullying not as a localized problem. They did not see it as confined only to the target and the bully. They recognized that the bullying affects various parts of the organism, which in context, is the organizational body. The result, as they were trying to convey, is that workplace bullying has the ability to cause major harm throughout the organization.

Emotional Impact. *Emotional Impact* was the second thematic finding in this study that helped to answer "*What is the experience of witnessing bullying in the workplace*?" My findings showed that all participants were emotionally impacted by the experience. This thematic finding supports prior studies, although limited, that have found that witnessing workplace bullying causes emotional harm (Rayner, Hoel, & Cooper, 2002; Emdad, Alipour, Hagberg, & Jensen, 2013; Murphy, 2013; Olive & Cangemi, 2015; Risk, 2015).

Participants in my study described emotions associated with sadness, fear, anger, and surprise. The majority of the twelve participants (n=11; 92%) in my study experienced emotions associations with sadness as a result of the sympathy that they had for what the target was going through. Although Jarvis (2011) opined that witnesses are "…compassionate at the scene of a workplace collision," the sadness that participants experience as a result of sympathizing with the target, is not a dimension that is often discussed in the workplace bullying literature.

Although there is few discussions of sympathy from witnesses in the literature, the literature does show that witnesses often experience depression. The Workplace Bullying Institute (n.d.) posits that "witnesses suffer anxiety, depression and, in worst cases, PTSD-like symptom s of trauma" ("Impact of Workplace," para. 10). And, a

quantitative study conducted in Sweden found that employees who witnessed their

coworkers being bullied actually experienced depressive symptoms, similar to that of

targets (Emdad, Alipour, Hagberg, & Jensen, 2013). There are similarities in these

findings and the findings of my study. Although only one participant in my study

specifically noted feeling depressed, the majority did describe emotions that conveyed a

traumatizing experience. One participant explained that what the witness goes through is

"parallel to the people who are literally going through it." The emotions described by

participants included anxiety, sadness, misery, grief, helplessness, anguish, and even

significant frustration and hate towards the organization and contempt towards the

bullies. There were several participants in my study who continue to be emotionally

impacted years after they have left the organization. One participant described still

getting knots in her stomach to think about what she experienced. A separate participant

shared that she "still feels the residue." And finally, with another participant who

continues to be employed with the organization, the contempt that she maintains for the

bullies was evident in her voice and in her words. In that particular situation, the bullies

left the organization years ago. The residual impact as a result of what these participants

witnessed was similar to the experience of targets, for studies show that employees

bullied are prone to develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Hodson, Roscigno, &

Lopez, 2006; Jenkins, Winefield, & Sarris, 2011; Sartain, 2013) and the PTSD can last as

long as five years after the experience (Sartain, 2013).

The majority of participants in my study also experienced fear, including anxiety

and worry. The literature does suggest that witnesses are impacted by fear, and it

suggests that the fear is linked to their fear of also being bullied (Vickers 2006).

However, although the majority of participants (n=7; 58%) in my study conveyed

emotion association with fear, including anxiety, and worry, not all who were fearful,

were fearful of becoming a target. It is important to note that another reason that some of

the witnesses experienced fear was out of concern for their relationships and out of

concern for others. For example, one participant was so worried about maintaining a

positive relationship with the bullies and the target that she made sure that she appeared

neutral. Another participant feared that her good working relationship with the bully

would be compromised if the bully knew that she was advising the target; therefore, she

was careful to be discrete in her advocacy. A third target was fearful for her patients,

because she saw how the bullying situation was impacting their care and satisfaction.

She explained, "It put a lot of stress on me…It made me feel scared – like fear in a sense

– for one, my patients…I had patients that I know really needed to be advocated for."

Unfortunately, the limited research on the experience of witnesses provides little

opportunity to compare and contrast the findings regarding the emotional impact that

workplace bullying has on witnesses. However, I can imagine that some of the

differences in the emotional impact of my study and those of others, can be attributed to

the research approach. Perhaps it was because the data in my study was collected

through in-depth interviews - allowing participants to give rich details of their experience

- that illuminated additional insight - insight that highlighted the various reasons in which

witnesses experience fear as well as the sympathy that they feel for the targets.

Taking an Intentional Stance. Finally, *Taking an Intentional Stance* was the last theme that helped to answer **"***What is the experience of witnessing bullying in the workplace*?**"** Being intentional about the stance or position taken as a witness, was a common theme throughout the entire group of participants. Participants were conscious about the stance that they took and were also explanatory as to why they chose the stance that they did. It was found that while the majority of participants (n=9; 75%) chose to take a stance of *self-preservation* in order to protect themselves from becoming harmed or from continuing to be harmed, less than half were found to take a stance of either: 1) *advocacy* (n=4; 33%), where they advocated for the target or against the bullying; 2) *responsibility* (n=2; 17%), where they believed it was their duty to address the bullying because of their role in the organization; 3) *neutrality* (n=1; 8%), where they wanted to appear to the bully and the target as impartial; or 4) '*unintimidation*' (n=1; 8%), where they conveyed to the bully(ies) that they were not scared of their behaviors.

The findings of my study support the literature regarding the roles and behaviors of witnesses to bullying, in that prior studies show that witnesses' often do not intervene. The literature also argues that witnesses are important to managing workplace bullying; however, there are many variables that influence how and whether they intervene (D'Cruz & Noronha, 2010; Paull, Omari, & Standen, 2012). One theory that has been presented to explain witnesses' response behaviors, in both the workplace bullying and school bullying literature, is the 'bystander effect' (Fischer, Krueger, Greitemeyer, Vogrincic, Kastenmüller, Frey, & Kainbacher, 2011; Riggio, 2011). The bystander effect is a concept developed in the 1960's by social psychologists John Darly and Bibb Latane´

who posited that "in certain circumstances, the norms favoring intervention may be weakened, leading bystanders to resolve the conflict in the direction of nonintervention. One of these circumstances may be the presence of other onlookers" (Darly & Latane´, 1968, p. 377). Darly & Latane´ argued that when a bystander is amongst other bystanders, they are less likely to intervene to assist the victim in an emergent situation because they either assume that another bystander has already taken or will take the responsibility of intervening, or they may be comfortable with knowing that the blame of nonintervention will be shared amongst other onlookers who have also chosen not to intervene. They found, however, that when the bystander perceives him or herself as the only onlooker, there is more pressure and likelihood that they will intervene, even when there is concern for personal safety (Darly & Latane´).

The bystander-effect concept that argues that witnesses' sense of responsibility and whether or not they intervene is influenced by the presence or absence of other witnesses, was not found in the analysis of the data in this study. Instead, I found participants' stance to be structured by how they saw themselves - primarily in the context of the organization, and/or how they perceived their organization. It was found that the six participants who either took a stance of responsibility to intervene or a stance of advocacy on behalf of the target or against the bullying, either: 1) trusted the leaders in the organization (n=3); 2) were in a compliance position that included the responsibility to address workplace and employee concerns (n=2); or 3) were very high in the organizational hierarchy - one level from partner (n=1). Conversely, the six of the twelve participants who neither took a stance of responsibility or advocacy, expressed either

total distrust (n=5) or partial distrust (n=1) in the organization and described an organizational environment where there were no checks and balances or accountability, and where there was an absence of an internal outlet to voice concerns.

Although the research in this regard is minimal, the findings in my study support, in part, the findings of a phenomenological research conducted in India by D'Cruz and Noronha (2010) in which seventeen witnesses were interviewed to gain insight into their actions and decisions in the context of witnessing bullying in their organization. Similar to the findings in this study, D'Cruz and Noronha found that the witnesses' efforts to intervene was curbed by "supervisory reactions and organizational positions (p. 276), or rather, "the professional character of the organization" (p. 279). Participants in their study who assisted the target, did so covertly and they expressed that there covert responses were influence by an instinctual response to self-protect. In my study, nine of the twelve participants took a stance of self-preservation in order to protect themselves from harm. However, the nine included one participant who advocated covertly, as well as two participants who advocated overtly, and one who assumed an overt stance of responsibility. Therefore, my study shows that participants taking a stance of self-preservation is prevalent out of concern for being harmed, but self-preserving does not preclude them from being overt about intervening in response to the bullying.

Research Question Two

The second part of the two-part research question of this study was "*How do employees describe their organization where workplace bullying was witnessed?*" Overwhelmingly, all of the participants, in their descriptions of their organizations,

conveyed their awareness in the trustworthiness of their organizations. The majority of participants (n=7; 58%) conveyed through their descriptions, that their organizations were not trustworthy. It was also clear that participants equated the trustworthiness of the organization with the trustworthiness of the leaders. This finding is supported by Starnes, Truhon, and McCarthy (2010) who posited that a trust-based organization depends on leadership; "it's a product of the outcomes of leadership actions" (p. 9).

Participants provided vivid details of the organizational environment that led to their perception of the organization's trustworthiness. They also described how their awareness of the organization's trustworthiness structured their experience as a witness. For example, participants who had a total distrust in their organization experienced a more negative emotional impact than the five who either found the organization to be totally or partially trustworthy; and, with the exception of one, the participants who had total distrust in the organization did not take a stance of either advocacy or responsibility. Conversely, the majority of the participants who found the organization to be totally or partially trustworthy did intervene through a stance of advocacy or responsibility. It is also interesting to emphasize that 100% (n=7) of the participants who described their organization as untrustworthy, left the organization, and their decision to leave was significantly influenced by their experience witnessing the bullying and the environment that perpetuated the bullying behaviors. However, only 20% (n=1) of the participants who described their organization as either trustworthy or partially trustworthy, left the organization, for a reason unrelated to the bullying witnessed. This shows the depth of the impact for the organizations and is supported by the literature. As a result of the

findings in their study, Houshmand, O'Reilly, Robinson, and Wolf (as cited in Williams, 2015) argued that workplace bullying has "significant implications for organizations…" (para. 17) and the Workplace Bullying Institute argued that organizations suffer from a decrease in the level of trust among employees ("The WBI website," 2012).

Christianson (2015) conducted a non-experimental quantitative study with witnesses of workplace bullying to determine if a correlation exists between witnessing workplace bullying, their perception of the organization, and their work engagement. They found that witnesses' negative experience as it relates to witnessing workplace bullying was more so due to their perception of organizational support, or rather, "the employee's perception relating to the degree to which the organization values the employee's contribution and is concerned about his or her well-being" (Christianson, p. 13). Similar to Christianson's findings, I found in the findings of this study that participants' awareness of their organization's trustworthiness was highly influenced by how the organization valued and cared for its employees. The two employees who conveyed total trust in their organizations, both described their organization to be like a family - a place where people supported one another, listened to one another, and communicated freely with one another. These two participants were the only two participants who described their organization in this way.

However, the participants who conveyed total distrust in their organizations described their organizations quite differently. They described organizations that allowed incompetent and unethical leaders to remain in positions and described organizations that were void of a trusted resource for employees to voice their concerns. In some cases, the

organizations were void of any designated resource for employees to voice concerns. They also described organizations that valued money over people and that had a lack of checks and balances. And finally, they described organizations that failed to effectively manage problems and hold problem individuals and behaviors accountable, including the bully. Dysfunctional, unhealthy environment, and toxic, were descriptors used by participants to describe their untrustworthy organizations.

Consistent with the majority of the participants' descriptions of their organizations, the literature shows that organizations where bullying is present are perceived as unhealthy and toxic (Murphy, 2013) and have poor leadership (Murphy, 2013; Regnaud, 2014). Prior research studies also show that targets perceived their organizations similar to how the majority of the witnesses in this study perceived their organization. For example, a grounded theory research conducted "to generate a theory about how targets of workplace bullying in academe may begin to heal from the aftermath of their ill-treatment," found four conditions that contribute to the bullied experience of faculty members at a university (Wilkin, 2010, p. viii). Those conditions were: "university cultural norms, abuse of power, change, and attributes of bully" (Wilkin, 2010, p. 110). According to findings from the study, "participants consistently believed that the university culture created an environment that allowed the bullying to not only exist, but also to thrive" (p. 110).

Implications

The resulting findings from the in-depth interviews have individual, social, and professional implications. The development of the workplace bullying literature has been

limited due to a lack of qualitative research and a lack of insight into the phenomenon through the lens of witnesses (Nielson and Einarsen; Christianson, 2015). By examining the experience of witnessing workplace bullying, the findings of this study builds on prior scholarly literature to construct a more comprehensive understanding of the workplace bullying phenomenon, including the range of its impact. Gaining a richer understanding of the experience of workplace bullying is indeed of significant interest to the field of conflict analysis and resolution and human resources professionals and can contribute to the collection of comparative data on workplace violence issues (Bowie, 2005). More specifically, the findings of this study can be used to contribute to policy and program development and workplace bullying prevention and intervention efforts.

Individual Implications

This study provided an opportunity for the individual participants to make meaning of their experience and for their experience to be acknowledged and valued. Participants, who were also viewed as co-researchers in this study, appreciated the opportunity to tell their stories and to be heard. For most, this was their first opportunity to share what they experienced and to discuss how it impacted them. It opened up an important dialogue. For some, it provided an opportunity to gain a more comprehensive understanding of what they experienced. Dialogue and understanding is important for healing and for both individual and societal awareness of workplace bullying, including its antecedents and its impact.

Societal Implications

The findings of this study supports that witnesses of workplace bullying are impacted adversely. They suffer from a range of emotions associated with anger, sadness, fear, and surprise and they are distracted by having to self-preserve and from having to intervene. This awareness underscores that the harm of workplace bullying is not limited to the bully-target dyad - rather, the harm is multiplied. According to the most recent U.S. Workplace Bullying Survey conducted by the Workplace Bullying Institute (2014), "The number of U.S. workers who are affected by bullying – summing over those with direct bullying and witnessing experiences – is 65.6 million…" (p. 5). Therefore, there are a lot of employees, both targets and witnesses, who are suffering as a result of bullying in the workplace. This insight can be used to contribute to societal awareness efforts of this harmful phenomenon and to advocate for proper attention to be dedicated to addressing the harm experienced not only by targets, but by witnesses. If not, the impact from the harmful experience threatens millions of employees' health, finances, and lives. When this happens, organizations and families suffer too.

It is important for witnesses to have a voice and to not be viewed simply as a bystander who negligently ignores the bullying that they observe. I purposefully did not refer to witnesses as bystanders in this study. The findings of this study reflect that witnesses too are vicariously impacted by the toxicity of workplace bullying. They too need to be considered and need attention and care.

Professional Implications

Although the analysis of the in-depth interviews of the twelve participants are not meant to be generalized, it contributes to our understanding of what it may be like for some employees to witness workplace bullying and the organizational factors that may structure a witness' experience and response. This insight supports the work of conflict management practitioners, human resource professionals, and care providers, and educators. Below outlines specific implications and recommendations for each field:

Conflict Management Professionals. The topic of workplace bullying is being discussed by many organizations as they struggle with how to respond and how to promote an environment that discourages such behaviors. Conflict management professionals can use the findings of this study to support organizations in their efforts to resolve and manage this harmful workplace phenomenon. As a conflict management professional myself, below is a list of practical strategies that can be employed using the thematic findings of this study:

1. *Training.* Conflict management professionals can use the findings of this study to build awareness of workplace bullying through training. For example, through discussion and case studies, incorporating the experiences and perceptions of witnesses, in workplace bullying training, can help to emphasize that workplace bullying is a problem that extends outside of the bully-target dyad, and therefore, creates a stronger argument and sense of urgency that organizations need to effectively prevent and manage the problem. Also, incorporating the metaphors that witnesses used to make meaning of their experience may strengthen this

critical message and may also help the training audience make better meaning of workplace bullying, including its antecedents and the impact experienced as a result. As Lakoof and Johnson (1980) argued, metaphors are a fundamental conduit for understanding experiences.

2. *Mediation*. Often, a complaint that is initiated from a target being bullied is viewed as a simple dispute or personality conflict between the bully and the target. Therefore, mediation is sometimes used as an intervention method. Conflict management professionals who find themselves mediating such an issue could use their insight from the findings of this study to craft curious and reality questioning that can be asked in both joint and separate sessions with the parties. For example, during a separate session, the mediator can ask the respondent to the complaint (the accused bully), "*Has the situation between you and the other party become an issue for others in the organization?*"; "*How has this problem affected others?*" or "*How do you think other employees feel about what they witnessed?*" Posing such questions to the party accused of bullying can serve as a reality check that others may be adversely impacted by the situation. This may not only generate an awareness of the broad impact of their behaviors, but it may also generate compassion within the bully – compassion that may motivate a desire to change. Bush and Folger (1996) posited that "The critical resource in conflict transformation is the parties' own basic humanity – their essential strength, decency, and compassion, as human beings" (p. 54). Similar questions can also be asked of the target. When targets do not see their colleagues getting involved,

they may feel a sense of aloneness and may grow resentment towards witnesses – viewing them as simple passive or contributing bystanders. However, asking a target during a separate session similar questions may allow him or her to consider how others may be impacted, and suffering as well.

3. *Systems Design*. When designing a comprehensive organizational conflict management/resolution system, including when establishing an organizational ombudsman program, the conflict management professional should make sure that the system is designed with witnesses in mind as well. The findings of the study showed that witnesses too, are impacted by workplace bullying, and more so when they do not trust that there is any where to go within the organization to voice concerns. If an alternative dispute resolution system was designed to be inclusive of handling concerns from witnesses as well as those directly involved in an issue, this may contribute to more bullying incidents being reported and addressed and less employees suffering in silence. Not only should the system be designed with witnesses in mind, in any communications advertising such programs it should be apparent that the interests and concerns of witnesses are valued and can be addressed through such means. The data collection for such programs should also be established to report issues addressed that were brought forth by witnesses to distinguish from issues brought forth by parties directly impacted by a situation. This program information can be used to tailor outreach throughout the organization.

Human Resources Professionals. The findings of this study also has

implications for human resources (HR) professionals. As shown in the data analysis of

the study, witnesses' perception of their HR office or about the organization's lack of an

HR office, were part of several factors that structured their experience. The role and

reputation of the HR professionals is critical to the perception of the organization's

trustworthiness and in responding to workplace bullying. It is imperative that HR

professionals respond with a comprehensive understanding of workplace bullying and

with a sensitivity towards all parties who are impacted. Below are recommendations for

HR professionals as a result of the findings of this study:

1. *Investigations.* As witnesses are interviewed during the investigation process,

   HR professionals should not only be interested in finding out from witnesses

   what they have observed, but they should also be interested in how the

   situation has impacted them. An interview guide, much like the guide used

   for this study (Appendix C: Interview Guide), could be used to facilitate such

   an exploration.

2. *Organizational Development and Change.* When HR professionals are

   addressing workplace bullying, they should not only be attentive to the

   bullying behaviors, but also the organizational environment that may be

   perpetuating the problem. Having this understanding can assist HR

   professionals in developing appropriate policies and procedures as well

   supporting an organizational climate that discourages certain behaviors and

   increases employee trust. Paying attention to hiring practices, standards of

behavior, checks and balances, issues of procedural justice, and manager

accountability and development, are all factors that HR professionals should

focus in preventing and responding to workplace bullying issues.

Educators. Educators in institutions of higher learning across various disciplines

have the opportunity to integrate the topic of workplace bullying within their course

design. Especially those who are being trained to lead organizations, need to be educated

on what workplace bullying looks like, how it harms employees and organizations, and

how it can be prevented through better leadership practices. The findings of this study

can support their learning and can also provide a framework for additional academic

inquiry.

Care Professionals. The findings of this study supported prior studies that found

that the harmful emotional impact of workplace bullying can be vicariously experienced

by witnesses. It is important for care professionals to understand the experiences of

witnesses and to be able to appropriately care for their psychological and emotional

needs. In addition, care professionals' understanding of the powerful medium of

metaphors in making meaning of one's experience can assist their integration of

metaphorical usage techniques that will support witnesses in articulating what they have

witnessed and its impact.

Limitations and Future Research

The purpose of this study was to investigate the lived experience of witnessing

bullying in the workplace and the organizational contexts in which it occurred.

Therefore, my sample consisted of individuals who have witnessed workplace bullying.

However, three of the twelve participants in this study not only witnessed workplace bullying in their organizations, but they also experienced being a target of workplace bullying. Each of the three experienced being targeted by the same bully whom they witnessed bully their colleague. Although I was careful to ask questions during the interview process to distinguish their experience as a witness from their experience as a target, and although I considered the relevance of each statement in their interview to the study's two-part research question, it may have been difficult for the three participants as they relived their experience as a witness, to distinguish between their thoughts and feelings from their two experiences. Therefore, it is possible that the essence of the experience for these three participants were influenced both by their experience as a witness as well as their experience as a target, thus posing possible limitations of the findings of this study.

If I were to repeat this study, I would add to the eligibility criteria that participants must not have been a target of workplace bullying. However, as the study was conducted, the descriptions provided by all twelve participants were very insightful and richly supported the goals of this study. I believe that a transcendental phenomenological approach best supported this. To provide a greater understanding of the themes found in this study as a result of the rich descriptions from the participants, the following is recommended for future research:

- An interpretive study analyzing the role of positioning theory in how employees manage their actions as a witness. A similar study with a sample of targets can also contribute to the workplace bullying literature.

- A longitudinal study that investigates the impact of workplace bullying on witnesses in their future workplace;

- A quantitative study that investigates how employees' level of organizational commitment after experiencing being a witness or a target, is influenced by their perception of organizational trustworthiness prior to their experience; and

- A quantitative study to investigate possible correlations between witnesses' response to workplace bullying and their exposure to training within the organization on communication, conflict management, diversity, inclusivity, discrimination and harassment.

Conclusion

It is my hope that the findings of this study contribute to organizations' realization that workplace bullying is real, that it hurts, and that it distracts from the focus of the mission. The vivid descriptions of the participants in this study make it difficult to deny the harmful impact of workplace bullying and that organizational leaders have the power to stop the suffering. It is unwise to view workplace bullying simply as a problem between the bully and the target. It is a problem that is vicariously experienced by other employees - employees who are very aware of how their organization not only bear the responsibility of their experience as a witness, but also in contributing to and remedying the problem.

Whether the issue is workplace bullying or any other problematic behaviors or issues in an organization, the responsibility is on leaders to create an environment of trust

so that issues can be surfaced and addressed, when they are present. I challenge not only

organizational leaders, but academics and practitioners, to focus attentively on the

workplace bullying epidemic. Become committed to spreading knowledge and

developing new knowledge. Become committed to supporting policy change. Become

committed to supporting healthy workplace environments. Finally, become committed to

ensuring that all employees have a voice to express and address concerns.

References

Asfaw, A.G., Change, C.C., & Ray, T.K. (2014). Workplace mistreatment and sickness from work: Results from the 2010 National Health Interview Survey. *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, Vol 57, pp. 202-213. Retrieved from http://ccrwh.org/wpcontent/uploads/2014/01/Workplace-mistreatment-and-sickness-absenteeism-from-work-Results-from-the-2010-National-Health-Interview.pdf

Babiak, P., & Hare, R. (2006). *Snakes in suits: When psychopaths go to work*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.

Baduna, D.T. (2006). A phenomenological inquiry into clinicians' life-altering experiences. (Dissertation). Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, FL.

Beck, B., Halling, S., McNabb, M., Miller, D., Rowe, J.O. & Schulz, J. (Winter, 2003). Facing up to hopelessness: A dialogal phenomenological study. *Journal of Religion and Health*, Vol. 42 (No. 4), pp. 339-354. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/27511706

Beck, I. (2013, November 13). *Incognito scan drags NFL bullying culture into the limelight*. The State Press. Retrieved from https://www.statepress.com/2013/11/13/ incognito-scandal-drags-nfl-bullying-culture-into-the-limelight/

Bitsch, V. (2005). Qualitative research: A grounded theory example and evaluation criteria. *Journal of agribusiness, 23(1)*, pp. 75-91.

Boddy, C.R. (2011). Corporate psychopaths, bullying and unfair supervision in the workplace. *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 100(3), pp. 367-379.

Bowie, V. (2005). 'Organizational violence: A trigger for reactive terrorism', in Bowie, V., Fisher, B.S. and Cooper, C.L. Workplace Violence: Issues, Trends, Strategies, (pp. 163-183). Portland, OR: Willan Publishing.

Branch, S. (2006). Upwards bullying: An exploratory study of power, dependency, and the work environment for Australian managers (Dissertation). *Griffith Business School*, Australia. Retrieved from https://www120.secure.griffith.edu.au/rch /file/d681dc3b-64d8-9968-14d2-8089fcd1637d/1/02Main.pdf

Braziller, Z. (2013, November 7). Ex-Dolphin: Coaches lying if they say they missed bullying. *New York Post*. Retrieved from http://nypost.com /2013/11/07/ex-dolphin-coaches-lying-if-they-say-they-misssed-bullying/

Bulutlar, F., & Öz, E. (2009). The effects of ethical climates on bullying behaviour in the workplace. *Journal of Business Ethics, 86*(3), 273-295.

Bush, R. A. B. & Folger, J. P. (1994). The Promise of Mediation. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Buttigieg, D. M., Bryant, M., Hanley, G., & Liu, J. (2011). The causes and consequences of workplace bullying and discrimination: Results from an exploratory study. *Labour & Industry, 22*(1), 117-141. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com /docview/964019214? accountid=38769

Carbo, J., & Hughes, A. (2010). Workplace bullying: Developing a human rights definition of workplace bullying from the perspective and experiences of targets. *Working USA, 13*(3), 387-403.

Chan, Z.C.Y., Fung, Yuen-ling, & Wai-tong, C. (2013). Bracketing in phenomenology: only undertaken in the data collection and analysis process? *The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. The Qualitative Report, 18*(59), 1-9. Retrieved from http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR18/chan59.pdf

Chipps, E., Stelmaschuk, S., Albert, N. M., Bernhard, L., & Holloman, C. (2013). Workplace bullying in the OR: Results of a descriptive study. *Association of Operating Room Nurses. AORN Journal, 98*(5), 479-93.

Christianson, M. (2015). Bystander effect of workplace bullying, perceived organizational support, and work engagement. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/1739212258?accountid=38769

Clarke, J. (2005). Working with monsters: How to identify and protect yourself from the workplace psychopath. Random House Australia.

Crawshaw, L. (2007). Taming the abrasive manager: How to end roughness in the workplace. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Creswell, J.W. (2007). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five Approaches. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Daniel, T.A. (n.d.). Workplace bullying in American organizations: The path from recognition to prohibition. Retrieved from http://journals.isss.org/index.php /proceedings53rd /article/viewFile/1209/400

Darly, J. & Latane´, B. (1968). Bystander intervention in emergencies: Diffusion of

    responsibility. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 8*(4), 377-383.

    Retrieved from http://www3.nd.edu/~wcarbona/darley%20and%20latane%20-

    %20bystander%20intervention.pdf

D'Cruz, P. & Noronha, E. (2011). The limits to workplace friendship: Managerialist

    HRM and bystander behavior in the context of workplace bullying. *Employee*

    Relations, 33(3), 269-288.

Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., Zapf, D., & Cooper, C.L. (2005). '*Workplace Bullying: Individual*

    pathology or organizational culture?', in Bowie, V., Fisher, B.S. and Cooper,

    C.L. Workplace Violence: Issues, Trends, Strategies, (pp. 229-247). Portland,

    OR: Willan Publishing.

Emerson, R., Fretz, R. & Shaw, L. (2007). 'Participant observation and fieldnotes', in

    Atkinson, P., Coffey, A., Delamont, S., Lofland, J., and Lofland, L. (eds),

    Handbook of Ethnography, (pp. 352-368). London: SAGE Publications.

Emdad, R., Alipour, A., Hagberg, J., & Jensen, I. B. (2013). The impact of bystanding to

    workplace bullying on symptoms of depression among women and men in

    industry in Sweden: an empirical and theoretical longitudinal study. *International*

    Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health, *86*(6), 709–716.

    http://doi.org/10.1007/s00420-012-0813-1

Fischer, P., Krueger, J. I., Greitemeyer, T., Vogrincic, C., Kastenmüller, A., Frey, D., & Kainbacher, M. (2011). The bystander-effect: A meta-analytic review on bystander intervention in dangerous and non-dangerous emergencies. *Psychological Bulletin, 137*, 517-537.

Georgakopoulos, A., Wilkin, L., & Kent, B. (2011). Workplace bullying: A complex problem in contemporary organizations. *International Journal of Business and Social Science, 2*(3).

Gillies, V., & Alldred, P. (2002). 'The ethics of intention: Research as a Political Tool', in Mauthner, M., Birch, M., Jessop, J., & Miller, T. Ethics in *Qualitative Research*, (pp. 32-52). London: SAGE Publications.

Glaser, B.G., & Strauss, A.L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research.* Chicago, IL: Aldine Publishing.

Goulding, C. (2005). Grounded theory, ethnography and phenomenology: A comparative analysis of three qualitative strategies for marketing research.

Hallberg, L., & Strandmark, M. (2006). Health consequences of workplace bullying: experiences from the perspective of employees in the public service sector. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health & Well-Being, 1*(2), 109-119.

Hays, D.G., & Singh, A.A. (2011). *Qualitative Inquiry in Clinical and Educational Settings*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

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.

Impact of workplace bullying on coworkers. (n.d.). *Workplace Bullying Institute*. Retrieved from http://www.workplacebullying.org/individuals/impact/coworkers/

Jarvis, C. (2011). Workplace bullying – The triad: Bullies, victims and bystanders. *Workplace Bullying Institute*. Retrieved http://www.workplacebullying.org/ workplace-bullying-the-triad-bullies-victims-and-bystanders/

Jenkins, M., Winefield, H., & Sarris, A. (2011). *International Journal of Workplace Health Management, 4*(1), 33-47.

Johnson, S., Boutain, D., Tsai, J., & de Castro, A.B. (2015). An investigation of organizational and regulatory discourses of workplace bullying. *Workplace Health & Safety, 63*(10), 452-461.

JRSportBrief (2013, November 8). Is Richie Incognito a Bully, or is Jonathan Martin a Punk? Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6vL0VAHX2M

Kafle, N.P. (2013). Hermeneutic phenomenological research method simplified. *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, [S.l.], v. 5, n. 1, p. 181-200, may. 2013. ISSN 2091-0479. Retrieved from http://www.nepjol.info/index.php/BOHDI/article/view/8053

Keashly, L., & Harvey, S. (2005). 'Emotional Abuse in the Workplace'. In S. Fox, P. E. Spector (Eds.), *Counterproductive work behavior: Investigations of actors and targets* (pp. 201-235). American Psychological Association.

Kusy, M., & Holloway, E. (2009). Toxic workplace!: Managing toxic personalities and their systems of power. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.

Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980). Metaphors we live by. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Manfred, T. (2013, November 7). This paragraph from an Ex-NFL player explains a lot about the Dolphins bullying fiasco. *Business Insider*. Retrieved from https://www.businessinsider.com/ex-dolphins-player-on-incognito-martin-bullying-feud-2013-11

Matthiesen, S.B., Aasen, E., Holst, G., Wie,K. & Einarsen, S. (2003). The escalation of conflict: A case study of bullying at work. *International Journal of Management and Decision Making*, 4(1), pp. 96-112.

Matthiesen, S. B., & Einarsen, S. (2007). Perpetrators and targets of bullying at work: Role stress and individual differences. *Violence and Victims, 22*(6), 735-53.

Maurer, R. (2013, July 6). Workplace-Bullying Laws on the Horizon? *Society for Human Resources Management.* Retrieved from https://www.shrm.org. hrdisciplines/safetysecurity/articles/Pages/Workplace-Bullying-laws.aspx

Maurer, T.J., & Snyder, J. (2014). Workplace bullying: Some progress but still a ways to go. *Society for Human Resources Management*. Retrieved from http://www.shrm.org/ legalissues/employmentlawareas/pages/workplace-bullying.aspx

May, C. (2009). Opinion piece: From grounded theory to the practice of theory building. *Medical sociology online, 4(2)*, pp. 46-49.

Mayhew, C., McCarthy, P., Chappell, D., Quinlan, M., Barker, M., & Sheehan,

 M. (2004). Measuring the extent of impact from occupational violence and

 bullying on traumatized workers. *Employee Responsibilities and rights*

 journal: The traumatized worker: A concern for employers and, *16*(3), 117-134.

Mitchell, C.R. (1989). The structure of international conflict, fourth edition. New York:

 St. Martin Press.

Moran, D. (2002). Introduction to phenomenology. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis

 Books Ltd.

Morgan, G., & Smircich, L. (1980). The case for qualitative research. *The Academy of*

 Management Review, 5(00004), pp. 491-500. Retrieved from

 http://cleo.ics.uci.edu/teaching/Spring08/163/readings/Morgan.pdf

Morris, D. (2014, September 8). Calif.: New anti-bullying law likely to have wide-

 reaching impact. Society for Human Resources Management. Retrieved

 https://www.shrm.org/legalissues/stateandlocalresources/pages/calif.-anti-

 bullying-impact.aspx

Moustakas, C. (1994). Phenomenological research methods. London: SAGE

 Publications.

Murphy, S.V. (2013). *Perceptions of bullying in the workplace: A phenomenological*

 study. Retrieved from http://pqdtopen.proquest.com/doc/1372292007.html?

 FMT=ABS

Myers, G. (2013, November 10). Sunday Morning QG: Lawrence Taylor says Jonathan
    Martin wouldn't be allowed back in his locker room. NY Daily News. Retrieved
    from http://www.nydailynews.com/sports/football/sunday-morning-qb-
    giants-great-lt-martin-ain-article-1.1511668

Namie, G., & Namie, R. (2009). The bully at work, Second Edition. Naperville, IL:
    Sourcebooks, Inc.

Namie, G., & Namie, R.F. (2011). The bully-free workplace: Stop jerks, weasels, and
    snakes from killing your organization. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Nielsen, M. B., & Einarsen, S. (2013). Can observations of workplace bullying really
    make you depressed? A response to emdad et al. *International Archives of
    Occupational and Environmental Health, 86*(6), 717-21.

Olive, K., & Cangemi, J. (2015). Workplace bullies why they are successful and what can
    be done about it? *Organization Development Journal, 33*(2), 19-31. Retrieved
    from http://search.proquest.com/docview/1692916283?accountid=38769

Ovienloba, A. A. (2014). A phenomenological consideration of conflicts and crisis
    impacts of autism on single parenthood: A hermeneutical transformative
    approach. (Dissertation). Nova Southeastern University. Retrieved from
    http://search.proquest.com.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/docview
    /1629025005?accountid=6579

Paull, M., Omari, M., & Standen, P. (2012). When is a bystander not a bystander? A
    typology of the roles of bystanders in workplace bullying. Asia Pacific Journal of
    Human Resources, 50(3), 351-366.

Patton, M.Q. (1990). Qualitative evaluation and research methods (2nd ed.). Newbury

Park, CA: Sage.

Petitpas-Taylor, G. (2009). Naming workplace bullying: Women workers speak out.

Canadian women's health network, 11(2), 20-22.

Pronk, J., Olthof, T., & Goossens, F.A. (2016). Factors influencing interventions on

behalf of victims of bullying: A counterfactual approach to the social cognition of

outsiders and defenders. The Journal of Early Adolesence, 36(2), 267-291.

Quick facts about the Health Workplace Bill. (n.d.) Retrieved from

http://www.healthyworkplacebill.org/bill/

Randall, P. (2001). Bullying in adulthood: Assessing the bullies and their victims.

London: Brunner-Routledge.

Rayner, C, Hoel, H, & Cooper, CL. (2002). Workplace bullying: What we know, who is

to blame, and what can we do? London: Taylor and Francis.

Regnaud, D.A. (2014). The relationship between top leaders' observed narcissistic

behaviors and workplace bullying. Retrieved from http://pqdtopen.

proquest.com/doc/1611960348. html?FMT=ABS

Richardson, J.E. & McCord, L.B. (2001). Are workplace bullies sabotaging your ability

to compete? *Graziadio Business Review, Pepperdine University, 4*(4). Retrieved

from https://gbr.pepperdine.edu/2010/08/are-workplace-bullies-sabotaging-your-

ability-to-compete/

Ricks, S. B. (2015). Witnesses of U.S. workplace bullying: A phenomenological study of organizational culture, leadership, and unsafe environments. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com.ezproxylocal. library.nova.edu/docview/1727757779? accountid=6579

Riggio, R.E. (2011, January 26). Why workplace bullies thrive: The bystander effect. *Psychology Today*. Retrieved from https://www.psychologytoday.com /blog/cutting-edge-leadership/201101/why-workplace-bullies-thrive-the-bystander-effect

Salin, D. (2003). Ways of explaining workplace bullying: A review of enabling, motivating and precipitating structures and processes in the work environment. *Human Relations, 56*(10), 1213–1232.

Samnani, A. & Singh, P. (2012). 20 years of workplace bullying research: A review of the antecedents and consequences of bullying in the workplace. *School of Human Resources Management, Aggression and Violent Behavior, 17*, 581-589.

Sartain, S.S. (2013). Workplace bullying: Protective mechanisms between bullying and post-traumatic stress disorder. (Dissertation). *Capella University*, Minnesota.

Sheenan, M., Barker, M., & McCarthy, P. (2004). Analysing metaphors used by victims of workplace bullying. *International Journal of Management and Decision*, *5*(1), 21-34. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292915902_ Analysing_metaphors_used_by_victims_of_workplace_bullying

Sims, R.L. & Sun, P. (2012). Witnessing workplace bullying and the Chinese manufacturing employee. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 27*(1), 9-26.

Smiley, G. (2013, November 5). Jonathan Martin and Richie Incognito: Bullying between

    300 pound children. *Chicago Now*. Retrieved from

    http://www.chicagonow.com/sick-tired-worlds-fair/2013/11/jonathan-martin-and-

    richie-incognito-bullying-between-300-pound-children/

Smith, S. (2013, November 5). ASC 2013: Workplace Bullying – Even the NFL isn't

    immune. *EHS Today*. Retrieved from http://ehstoday.com/health/asc-2013-

    workplace-bullying-even-nfl-isn-t-immune

Society for Human Resources Management. (2008*).* Confronting Workplace Bullying

    Training for Supervisors. Retrieved from http://www.shrm.org/templatestools

    /samples./powerpoints/documents/09-ppt-confrontingbullyingatworkd

    lacy_final.ppt

Stafford, D. (2013, November 5). In the NFL or in the office, workplace bullying is tough

    to find and stop. *The Kansas City Star*. Retrieved from

    https://www.kansascity.com/business/

Starks, H., & Trinidad, S.B. (2007). Choose your method: A comparison of

    phenomenology, discourse analysis, and grounded theory. *Qualitative Health*

    Research, Vol. 17, No. 10, 372-1380, DOI: 10.1177/1049732307307031,

    retrieved from http://qhr.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/17/10/1372

Starnes, B.J., Truhon, S.A., & McCarthy, V. (2010). A primer on organizational trust.

    Human Develop & Leadership Division, 1-16. Retrieved from

    http://asq.org/hdl/2010/06/a-primer-on-organizational-trust.pdf

State of California Government Code, codified as amended by Stats. 204, Ch. 306, Sec.

    1, § 12950.1 (g)(2)). Retrieved from http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov

    /faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV&sectionNum=12950.1

[States that have introduced the Healthy Workplace Bill]. (n.d.). Retrieved from

    https://www.healthyworkplacebill.org /states.php

The International Legislative Movement. (n.d.) Retrieved from http://www.healthy

    workplacebill.org/international.php

Thomlinson, C., & Thomlinson, R. (2013). Lexology: Let's talk billions – The hidden

    cost of bullying. The Workplace Bullying Institute. Retrieved from

    http://www.workplacebullying.org/lexology/

Thirlwall, A. (2011). Workplace bullying in New Zealand Institutes of Technology and

    Polytechnics: Prominence, processes, and emotions. Dissertation. The University

    of Waikato. Retrieved from http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/bitstream

    /handle/10289/5537/thesis.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

Tracy, S. J., Lutgen-Sandvik, P., & Alberts, J. K. (2006). Nightmares, demons, and

    slaves: Exploring the painful metaphors of workplace bullying. *Management

    Communication Quarterly*, *20*, 148-185.

Tracy, S.J., & Redden, S.M. (2016). 'Markers, Metaphors, and Meaning,' in Elsbach,

    K.D. & Kramer, R.M. *Handbook of Qualitative Organizational Research:

    Innovative Pathways and Methods*, (pp. 238-247). New York, NY: Taylor &

    Francis.

Turner, B. (2009). 'The phenomenological research method as a valid human sciences

research tool in to the investigation of human behavior', in The refractive thinker:

An anthology of higher learning volume II: Research methodology. Las Vegas,

NV: The Lentz Leadership Institute LLC.

Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action

sensitive pedagogy*. Ontario, Canada: The University of Western Ontario.

Vickers, M. H. (2006). Towards employee wellness: Rethinking bullying paradoxes and

masks. *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal, 18,* 267-281.

Wilkin, L. (2010). Workplace bullying in academe: A grounded theory study exploring

how faculty cope with the experience of being bullied. (Dissertation), Nova

Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, FL.

Williams, R. (2015). How workplace bullying destroys well-being and productivity.

Psychology Today. Retrieved from https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/

wired-success/201502/how-workplace-bullying-destroys-well-being-and-

productivity

Willis, J.W. (2007). Foundations of Qualitative Research: Interpretive and Critical

Approaches. London: SAGE Publications.

Workplace Bullying Institute. (n.d.). Who gets targeted: why me? Retrieved from

http://www.workplacebullying.org/individuals/problem/who-gets-targeted/

The WBI website 2012-H Instant Poll: Workplace bullying perpetrators' rank and

numbers. *Workplace Bullying Institute*. Retrieved from

http://www.workplacebullying.org/multi/pdf/WBI-2012-IP-H.pdf

2014 WBI: U.S. Workplace Bullying Survey. (2014). *Workplace Bullying Institute.*

Retrieved from http://workplacebullying.org/multi/pdf/WBI-2014-US-Survey.pdf

Yamada, D.C. (2013). Emerging American legal responses to workplace bullying.

Suffolk. *University Law School*, pp. 329-354. Retrieved from

http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2242945

Yin, R.K. (2009). Case study research design and methods (fourth edition). Thousand

Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Zeidner, R. (2008, May). Bullying Worse Than Sexual Harassment? *HRMagazine,*

53(5), 28.

Appendix A: Recruitment Flyer

RESEARCH STUDY

Payments, incentives, or gifts will not be provided.

RECRUITING RESARCH STUDY
VOLUNTEER PARTICIPANTS

WHO HAVE WITNESSED BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE

Title of Research Study:

The experience of witnessing bullying in the workplace: A phenomenological study

Goals:

This is a qualitative research study conducted by the primary research investigator in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The goals of this research study are to: 1) increase the understanding of organizations where workplace bullying occurs; 2) to inform, challenge or support workplace bullying prevention and intervention efforts; and 3) to advance individual and societal awareness of workplace bullying and reinforce that it is a serious problem and a legitimate human experience.

Participant's Involvement:

Participants will participate in one (1):

- Pre-interview meeting that will last 20-30 minutes
- In-depth interview that will last 60-120 minutes
- Follow-up interview (if needed) that will last 15-30 minutes

The meeting and interview(s) will be conducted by the Primary Research Investigator either by phone or through Skype. Skype is a secured software application of Microsoft that enables its users to make free video calls over the Internet and can be accessed through a desktop, laptop, or mobile device with a webcam.

Criteria:

To participate in this study, you:

NOVA
Institutional Review Board
Approval Date: JUN 1 8 2015
Continuing Review Date:
JUN 1 7 2016

- Must be English speaking.
- Must be at least twenty-five years old.
- Must have worked in a U.S. organization where you witnessed workplace bullying, for at least twelve months.
- Must have witnessed the bullying in your organization take place for more than six months.
- Must not currently be a witness to the workplace bullying – and the experience of witnessing workplace bullying must have ended at least twelve months ago.

Affiliated Academic Institution
Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, Florida
Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences
Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution

For more information about participating in this study, please contact:

Angela E. Dash, MPA, SPHR©
Ph.D. Candidate & Principal Research Investigator
winfrey@nova.edu
770-256-0961

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 58
Rootstown, OH 44272

Appendix B: Consent Form

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

Consent Form for Participation in the Research Study Entitled
"The experience of witnessing bullying in the workplace: A phenomenological study"

Funding Source: N/A   IRB protocol #: _____

Principal Investigator:
Angela Dash, M.P.A., SPHR®
Ph.D. Candidate @ Nova Southeastern University
P.O. Box 58
Rootstown, Ohio 44272
770-256-0961
Skype Name: angela.dash15

Co-investigator/Dissertation Chair:
Judith McKay, J.D.,Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Nova Southeastern University
3301 College Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33314
954- 262-3060
mckayj@nova.edu

Site Information:
Village at NEOMED Apartments
Private Home Office of Principal Investigator
275 State Route 44, Apt. 102
Rootstown, Ohio 44272
(770) 770-256-0961

For questions/concerns about your research rights, contact:
Human Research Oversight Board (Institutional Review Board or IRB)
Nova Southeastern University
(954) 262-5369/Toll Free: 866-499-0790
IRB@nsu.nova.edu

What is a research study?

A research study is a scientific way to improve or develop new methods and new understanding regarding a topic or issue and it is designed to answer specific questions. There are many types of research studies, however, all are voluntary. Only those who want to participate, do so. This consent form describes this study and seeks to answer the following two-part question: What is the experience of witnessing bullying in the workplace and how do participants describe the organization where workplace bullying was witnessed?

Why is this study being done?

The goals of this research study are to: 1) increase the understanding of organizations where workplace bullying occurs; 2) to inform, challenge or support workplace bullying prevention and intervention efforts; and 3) to advance awareness of workplace bullying and reinforce that it is a serious problem and a legitimate human experience that impacts those directly and indirectly involved.

Initials _____ Date_____

Why are you asking me?

You are being invited to participate because you meet the eligibility criteria. There will be up to 19 other volunteers participating in this study, who also meet the criteria. You have reported that you are English speaking, at least 25 years old, and that you have witnessed as an employee -- bullying take place in a U.S. workplace for at least six months and that your experience of witnessing workplace bullying ended at least twelve months ago. You have also reported that you worked in that organization for at least twelve months.

What will I be doing if I agree to be in the study?

Once you agree to participate in the study and you have signed the informed consent form, your participation will involve:

- one in-depth interview with the principal investigator that is expected to last 1-2 hours;
- a possible follow-up interview with the principal investigator after you have had a chance to review the transcript of your interview. A follow-up interview is expected to last 15-30 minutes.

You will be interviewed by principal investigator, Ms. Angela Dash. The interview that Ms. Dash will conduct will be more like a conversation that explores what your experience was like — your experience of witnessing workplace bullying take place. The conversational style interview will also explore your perception of the organization where you witnessed workplace bullying.

The interview will either be done by phone or by Skype. Skype is a secured software application of Microsoft that enables its users to make free video calls over the Internet and can be accessed through a desktop, laptop, or mobile device with a webcam. If you agree to be interviewed via Skype, the principal investigator will email you information to assist with a Skype account setup and software download. For more information about Skype, visit www.skype.com.

Is there any audio or video recording?

The one in-depth interview conducted by the principal investigator – Ms. Angela Dash, will be audio recorded using an Apple voice recording device (ipad/iphone). Outside of the principal investigator -- Ms. Angela Dash, only the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the researcher's dissertation chair -- Dr. Judith McKay, may listen to the audio recording.

The audio recording will be transcribed by the principal investigator on her password protected computer. To guard your privacy, the principal investigator will transcribe the audio recording in a private room while using earphones. The audio recording will be electronically backed up providing three secured access points to the audio data. They are: 1) a secured password protected external drive belonging to the principal investigator that only the principal investigator has the password to; 2) a secured password protected laptop belonging to the principal investigator that only the principal investigator has the password to; and 3) a secured password protected ipad or iphone belonging to the principal investigator that only the principal investigator has the password to. Throughout the research project, all three of these secured access points used for storage will remain in the possession of the principal investigator, Ms. Angela Dash, and the stored audio recording will be deleted permanently from the all three secured access points 36 months after completion of the research.

Initials _____ Date_____

Because your voice will be potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the audio recording, your confidentiality for things you say on the audio recording cannot be guaranteed although the principal investigator will safeguard confidentiality by limiting access to the audio recording as described in the two paragraphs above.

The transcript of your audio-recorded interview will also be electronically backed up providing three secured access points to the data. They are: 1) a secured password protected external drive belonging to the principal investigator that only the principal investigator has the password to; 2) a secured password protected laptop belonging to the principal investigator that only the principal investigator has the password to; and 3) a secured password protected Dropbox account belonging to the principal investigator that only the principal investigator has the password to. The electronic transcripts will be maintained for 36 months after the end of the study, after which they will be deleted permanently from the all three secured access points. Any hard copies of the transcripts or notes created during the analysis of the transcripts, will be stored in a locked cabinet in the principal investigator's office that only the principal investigator has the key to and will be shredded using the principal investigator's personal shredder, 36 months after completion of study. Direct links to identifiers will marked out before shredding.

What are the dangers to me?

Risks to you are minimal, meaning they are not thought to be greater than other risks you experience every day. Being audio recorded means that confidentiality cannot be promised. Sharing your experience about witnessing bullying in the workplace may make you anxious or bring back unhappy memories. If this happens, the principal investigator, Ms. Angela Dash, will try to help you. If you need further help, Ms. Dash will provide a list of resources that could assist you with your discomfort in recounting your experience. However, any use of outside services that you may utilize that require payment will be your responsibility. Additionally, if you expressed an interest to participating in this study directly on a social media site in response to a posted recruitment flyer that you saw on that site, your anonymity was reduced.

If you have questions about the research, your research rights, or if you experience an injury because of the research please contact Ms. Dash at 770-256-0961. You may also contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the numbers indicated on the first page.

Are there any benefits for taking part in this research study?

There are no benefits to you for participating.

Will I get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything?

There are no costs to you or payments made for participating in this study.

How will you keep my information private?

Maintaining participants' confidentiality is highly important to this study. Therefore, the principal investigator will not use your name and will not use any identifying information linking you to this study. Your identity will be kept anonymous and only a pseudonym (made up name) will be used in order to protect your identity. Additionally, all information in this study is strictly confidential unless

Initials _____ Date_____

disclosure is required by law. Outside of the principal investigator -- Ms. Angela Dash, only the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the principal investigator's dissertation chair -- Dr. Judith McKay, may review the research records. In order to keep your information private, the principal investigator will take the following additional steps:

1. <u>If you agree for your interview to be done by Skype</u>: Skype may collect information about you including (but not limited to) your name, address, phone number, email address, age, gender, IP address, etc. You can visit the Skype privacy policy website @ http://www.skype.com/intl/en/legal/privacy/general/ if you would like further information. While Skype may not know that you are participating in this study, they may be collecting identifiable information.

2. The principal investigator will make sure that she is in a private room when conducting the pre-interview meeting and interview(s). You will also be asked to make sure that you are in a private room during this time.

3. The interview will be audio recorded with a password protected ipad/iphone device owned by the principal investigator. The digital audio recording file from the interview will be securely saved and only the researcher will have knowledge of the password. It will be maintained by the principal investigator for 36 months after completion of the study. After that time, it will be permanently deleted.

4. The principal investigator will transcribe your audio recording in a private room, using earphones. The electronic transcript file will be securely saved and only the principal investigator will have knowledge of the password. It will be maintained by the principal investigator for 36 months after completion of the study. After that time, it will be permanently deleted.

5. All hardcopy information (i.e. written notes created during interview(s), analysis of the interview(s), and the informed consent form) will be saved in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office that only the principal investigator has the key to and will be shredded 36 months after completion of study in the researcher's personal shredder. Before shredding, any identifying information will be marked out first.

6. All email correspondence sent to you by the principal investigator or received by the principal investigator from you during the course of the recruitment process and study will be maintained for 36 months after completion of the study. After that time, the principal investigator will permanently delete any emails.

7. During the period when information is maintained during the study and during the 36 months after completion of the study, with the exception of the informed consent form, all direct links to identifiers will be removed for purposes of data analysis or for any aspect of the final published research report or any derivative publications.

8. With the exception of the informed consent form, a pseudonym (fake name) will be used in any notes, throughout the study, and in the final published research report or any derivative publications.

Initials_____ Date_____

NOTE: The principal investigator will not be held accountable for any information related to the study that you choose to share outside of the research study interviewing sessions.

What if I do not want to participate or I want to leave the study?

You have the right to leave this study at any time or refuse to participate without given a reason. If you do decide to leave or you decide not to participate, you will not experience any penalty or liability. If you choose to withdraw, any information collected about you before the date you leave the study will be kept in the research records for 36 months from the conclusion of the study and will be deleted/shredded immediately after. You may request that any data collected not be used and that request will be granted.

Other Considerations:

If significant new information relating to the study becomes available to the researcher that might lead you to change your mind about your willingness to continue to participate in this study, the researcher will provide this new information to you.

Voluntary Consent by Participant:

By signing below, you indicate that

- this study has been explained to you
- you have read this document or it has been read to you
- your questions about this research study have been answered
- you have been told that you may ask the researchers any study related questions in the future or contact them in the event of a research–related injury
- you have been told that you may ask Institutional Review Board (IRB) personnel questions about your study rights
- you are entitled to a copy of this form after you have read and signed it
- you voluntarily agree to participate in the study entitled *"The experience off witnessing bullying in the workplace: A phenomenological study"*.

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant's Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Date: _____

Initials _____ Date_____   Page 5 of 5

Appendix C: Interview Guide

1) Reflect on a specific workplace bullying situation that you witnessed. Please tell me about it.

2) What contexts, incidents and people intimately connected with the experience stand out to you?

3) How did the experience of witnessing workplace bullying impact you?

4) Please share some of your feelings/thoughts about the organization where you witnessed workplace bullying, including what it was (or is) like to be an employee there?

5) Tell me about the organization. How would you describe the organization – its' vision, its' values, its' culture?

6) How would you describe the principal industry of the organization where you witnessed workplace bullying?

7) How would you describe your job level in the organization where you witnessed workplace bullying?

8) Describe, if any, the organization's efforts to educate employees on effective communication, inclusivity, conflict management, etc. And, if any, what was your exposure to these type of educational programs?

9) Describe how *employees* respond to bullying in the workplace and what you perceive to be influencers of how employees respond.

10) Describe how the *organization* responds(ed) to bullying in the workplace and what you perceive to be influencers of how the organization responds(ed).

11) Describe any communication that you or others have had with organizational leaders (including HR) regarding workplace bullying that occurred. What were your thoughts, perceptions, and feelings regarding the communication and the organization's response?

12) How, if any, are individuals held accountable for bullying?

13) Have you shared all that is significant about your experience witnessing bullying in the workplace?

Appendix D: Individual Core Themes and Invariant Constituents

Participant Delia Rodriguez

I. Participant witnessed a colleague being bullied by another colleague
    A. Unfair treatment
    B. Gossiping
    C. Public humiliation
    D. Manager knew of bullying, and did nothing
II. Emotions connected with experience
    A. Sympathy for target
    B. Fear and anxiety – concerned about being the next target ("knots in stomach" and "pins and needles")
    C. Disappointed in organization – not what she imagined
    D. Astonished by the behaviors that she witnessed and management's lack of response
III. Avoided being the next target
    A. Took advantage of opportunities to stay out of office
    B. Made sure she was nice to bully
    C. Left organization to remove herself from environment
IV. Distrust in the organization
    A. Organization did not support employees
    B. Organization did not manage issues
    C. Overt unethical behaviors amongst upper management
    D. Incompetent management
    E. Was not confident in human resources and manager to be objective
    F. Lack of structure
    G. Organization's stated values not compatible with actions
V. Changed Commitment/View of Organization
    A. Experience caused participant to lose respect for company
    B. Left company; decided not to renew contract

Participant Dorothy Perkins

I. Participant witnessed colleague bullying a subordinate
  A. Bully would treat target like she was her mother
  B. Bully interfered with target's ability to do her job
  C. Bully intimidated and manipulated target
  D. Target started to feel unsure of herself
  E. Target reported bullying, and bully was held accountable

II. Emotions connected to experience
  A. Sympathy/compassion towards target
  B. Anger towards bully
  C. Worried about jeopardizing her relationship with bully

III. Intervened Behind the Scenes
  A. Secretly coordinated others to help advise target on asserting her rights
  B. Served as target's confidante and secret advocate

IV. Trust in Organization
  A. Organization was like a "family"
  B. Organization made sure employees knew their rights
  C. Organization kept employees informed of important information
  D. Organization held people accountable for their behaviors, while treating them humanely
  E. Employees felt protected by organization
  F. Senior managers build rapport with employees
  G. Employees were not afraid to make mistakes

Participant Iris Newman

I.   Participant witnessed bullying across the organization
- A. Supervisor repeatedly ignored and talked down to by subordinate - the bully would nearly bite the target's head off
- B. Colleagues repeatedly belittled other colleagues and gossiped behind colleagues' backs
- C. No intervention by management, even when reported

II.   Emotions connected to experience
- A. Hated organization
- B. Sympathy for colleague being bullied
- C. Depression from environment – "it was draining"
- D. Anxiety from environment that promoted bullying
- E. Regret that she worked there as long as she did

III.   Focused on Escaping
- A. Could not wait until she found a better job

IV.   Poor Employee Morale
- A. High employee turnover
- B. High employee absenteeism rate

V.   Distrust in Organization
- A. Organization valued money and high-producing employees above anything else
- B. Employees not held accountable for widespread insubordinate, uncivil, and informal behaviors
- C. There was no one or no office to address complaints
- D. Manager's judgment not respected because of inappropriate behaviors
- E. Manager was not knowledgeable
- F. Employees did not trust organization to provide them with the proper resources to effectively do their job
- G. High employee turnover and absenteeism rate

Participant Janis Washington

I.   Participant witnessed a senior officer bully less senior managers
   A. Bully was like a "pit bull"
   B. Bullying was like cancer and needed chemotherapy
   C. Barraging behaviors
   D. Public humiliation
   E. Unfair treatment/denial of common privileges
   F. Target suffered emotionally and physically
   G. No intervention by upper leadership, when reported
   H. Bully later targeted participant and target's direct reports for intervening as HR Director

II.   Feelings connected to experience
   A. Sympathy for targets
   B. Helplessness – would cry uncontrollably in car
   C. Misery – "a year of hell"
   D. Frustrated due to organization's lack of response and wanted organizational leaders to acknowledge the bullying and its impact

III. Duty to respond
   A. Intervened as HR Director
   B. Told CEO she was leaving as a result of unaddressed behaviors

IV.   Distrust in organization
   A. Lack of checks and balances and accountability
   B. Institutional racism
   C. Renegade Officers
   D. Disengaged CEO - CEO was in ivory tower

Participant Laurie Henry

I.   Participant witnessed a manager bullying two subordinates
  A. Bully treated targets unfairly, including giving unsafe assignments
  B. Targets afraid to report behaviors
  C. Leader afraid to address behaviors
II.   Feelings connected to experience
  A. Sympathy for targets
  B. Fear of jeopardizing job security, to approach the "beast" like bully, and for others impacted (patients and targets)
  C. Disappointed that organization wasn't living up to its mission of putting patient care first
  D. Sad that her pride in her role and organization was diminished by her experience
III. Cautious in responding to bullying
  A. Subtly informed her manager of what was witnessed
  B. Cautiously interacted with bully, while advocating for patient care
IV. Distrust in organization
  A. Lack of accountability for those socially included
  B. Well performing employees not treated fairly
  C. Organization's stated values not compatible with actions
  D. The clique environment was "poisonous"

Participant Linda Barton

I. Participant witnessed two older faculty target younger faculty
   A. Mobbing
   B. Aggressive behaviors – "like a snapping dog"
   C. Spreading of rumors on targeted faculty - "poisonous"
   D. Participant was later targeted by bullies
II. Feelings connected to experience
   A. Sympathy for one of the targets
   B. Sadness towards one of targets
   C. Anger and contempt towards bullies
III. Overtly came to target's defense
   A. Spoke out against behaviors to leader, and openly in a meeting
IV. Positive regard for institution
   A. Positively diverse
   B. Dedicated professors
   C. Concerned administrators
   D. Love the students
V. Distrust in department where bullying occurred
   A. Department was unwelcoming
   B. Department was unsupportive
   C. Department was unhealthy - toxic

Participant Luz Clayton

I. Participant witnessed a senior level manager bully a less senior manager
   A. Bully campaigned for others to bully target as well
   B. Unrealistic deadlines
   C. Condescending and disrespectful behaviors
   D. The bullying was like a "virus"
   E. Bullying ended with target being fired
II. Feelings connected to experience
   A. Grief
   B. Sympathy for target
   C. Worried about maintaining a relationship with both sides – had to be "the middle man"
III. Thoughtful and intentional about playing a neutral role
   A. Careful not to show that she was siding with bully(ies) or target
   B. Important to protect the relationships she had with all parties
IV. Distrust in organization as an employee
   A. Dysfunctional culture
   B. Staff not appreciated and valued
   C. Unsupportive human resources
   D. Staff were micromanaged and not allowed to grow and develop - Staff had to "lobby and jockey" to get needed information because of micromanagement
   E. Lack of accountability

Participant Oliver Fuller

I. Participant witnessed a bully targeting several subordinates
   A. Bully was a senior leader – a partner in the firm
   B. Condescending and belittling behaviors
   C. Public humiliation
   D. Tyrannical behaviors – like "Kim Jon-Un"
   E. Participant was also targeted by the same bully
   F. Behaviors reported, but not addressed
II. Feelings connected to experience
   A. Sympathy towards targets
   B. Anger towards bully and organization that allowed it to continue
   C. Anxiety – "walking on egg shells"
III. Spoke out against behaviors
   A. Expressed concerns in team meeting
   B. Reported behaviors to other partners
   C. Confronted bully
   D. Left company due to experience
IV. Distrust in organization
   A. Company valued money over employees
   B. A "cold environment" and high turnover rate
   C. No accountability for problematic behaviors and bully

Participant Russell Robinson

I. Participant witnessed organizational leaders bullying several employees
    A. Fear and intimidation tactics – like a "bully pulpit"
    B. Cursing and yelling at employees
    C. Leaders passed down bullying style to succeeding leaders – "generational"
II. Feelings connected to experience
    A. Worry
III. Defended against being targeted
    A. Thoughtful and intentional about ensuring proper job performance to avoid being targeted/"call out"
    B. Communicated to one of the bully leaders that he would not tolerate being bullied like the others
IV. Distrust in Organization
    A. Lack of structure
    B. No accountability for problematic behaviors
    C. Nowhere to voice complaints
    D. Employees' opinions not valued
    E. Organizational culture of "management by fear and intimidation"
V. Trust for the "father" bully
    A. Respected the "father" bully for his knowledge and competence in getting the job done, regardless of the means
    B. Trusted the "father" bully for his forthrightness and honesty

Participant Seth Woods

I.   Participant witnessed a leader bullying a subordinate
   A.   Bully showed overt personal disdain for target
   B.   The bullying "creating fault lines within the unit"
   C.   Bullying like "cancer" and "a free fire unguided rocket"
   D.   Bullying "erodes fabric of organization"
   E.   Character assassinations
   F.   Bully was held accountable

II.   Feelings connected to experience
   A.   Sympathy for target
   B.   Anger towards bully - brought back negative feelings from childhood bullying experience

III. Duty to respond
   A.   Intervened as a compliance officer
   B.   Initiated a fair investigation and made recommendations

IV.   Partial Trust in organization
   A.   Leaders do not always respond appropriately to problematic behaviors – leadership apathy
   B.   Organization for the most part, cares about fairness and due process
   C.   There are some leaders who are responsive

Participant Tamara Farmer

   I.   Participant witnessed senior leaders bullying a less senior leader
- A. Bullying by threats and intimidation
- B. Assertion of power through aggression – "bulldozer"
- C. Assigned unreasonable duties
- D. Environment was "toxic"
- E. The target was the participant's direct supervisor

   II.   Feelings connected to experience
- A. Anguish
- B. Sympathy for target

   III.   Defended against being exposed to bullying that was being witnessed
- A. Informed supervisor (the target) that she didn't work well in a toxic environment
- B. Inquired through organization, regarding her options for reporting her experience
- C. Requested a change in assignment/department - found a "lily pad" to jump off on to escape situation

   IV.   Distrust in organization
- A. Lack of checks and balances
- B. Lack of accountability for underperformance and incompetence
- C. Lack of voice with leadership

Participant Vanessa Wilson

I. Participant witnessed a colleague being bullied by supervisor and colleagues
   A. Intimidation tactics – like 'A' on "Pretty Little Liars"
   B. Alienation
   C. Unfair treatment
   D. Bullying did not happen in participant's department
   E. Impacted the target psychologically
II. Feelings connected to experience
   A. Surprise that the bullying was occurring
   B. Frustrated that target allowed it to occur and did not use trusted organizational reporting mechanisms
   C. Sympathy for the target's experience
III. Stepped in to save the target
   A. Target intervened on target's behalf
IV. Trust in organization
   A. Human resources can be trusted to handle issues
   B. Organization promotes family environment
   C. Employees are respected by leadership
   D. Leadership welcomes feedback and open communication

Appendix E: Individual Textural Descriptions

Participant Delia Rodriguez

Delia characterized her experience of witnessing her colleague being bullied as uncomfortable and difficult to observe. She was subjected to watching her colleague being publicly humiliated in meetings and maliciously talked about to others by another colleague. Her experience started on her very first day on the job. She was astonished by what she was witnessing and the organization's lack of response. She shared, "I couldn't believe that. It just made me look at the entire company, like, what kind of culture is this, that this is accepted." She was disappointed that the organization was not what she had believed it to be and she had sympathy for the target for what she was going through.

The fear and anxiety that she experienced as a result of what she was witnessing gave her knots in her stomach whenever she would come into the office. She feared being a target herself and was cautious and intentional about staying out of harm's way. She would make sure that she was cordial to the bully and looked for opportunities to stay out of the office. She tried to make sense of it all and tried to comfort herself by thinking of reasons why she would not become the next target. She would say to herself, "Okay, I'm just consulting here. I'm just a contractor here. Alright…I'm one of the only ones who does regulatory and, and clinical…I'm a black lady…okay, just sit here and do your work." However, the fear was persistent, and for Delia, it was like being on "pins and needles," because she knew that "all it takes is for someone to have a bad day," and she could become the next target.

She had hoped to have a long lasting working relationship with the organization. However, she was relieved when she left after deciding not to renew her contract. The experience still impacts her. As she recounted her experience during the interview, she got knots in her stomach after thinking about having to possibly experience something like that again.

Participant Dorothy Perkins

Dorothy's experience witnessing bullying in her workplace involved a colleague bullying her subordinate through acts of intimidation, manipulation and job interference, causing the target to question her worth. As Dorothy shared, the bully treated the target like she was her mother, with no respect for her competence and role identity. To witness these behaviors caused Dorothy to feel sympathy for the target and angry towards the bully. Dorothy's compassion for the target led to secretly intervening behind the scenes by coaching and advising the target on how she could respond to the bully. Dorothy also organized the help of others who could privately assist the target in initiating a complaint. She did not want to make things worse for the target and she did not want to jeopardize her relationship with the bully. Therefore, discretion was important. She shared,

> You have to have secret meetings, you know, you have to meet outside, as if you are going to lunch at a certain time as that individual, you have to, either talk after work, or talk when we were on our way homes.you don't want to make the environment worse for the individual going through it. So, you have to also understand, well I did – I did not wanna make friction with the supervisor who was the bully.

Dorothy was proud of how the organization handled the situation. The bully was held accountable and the process was handled fairly. She shared, "…I can tell you the twenty years that I have been in the [XYZ agency], that's the best way I've ever seen anything like that handled."

Participant Iris Newman

Iris experienced witnessing several bullying situations, including a colleague who was belittled and gossiped about by other colleagues, and her manager being bullied by his direct report through alienation and aggressive responses that she characterized as nearly biting his head off. Although Iris sympathized for how her colleague was being treated, she did not sympathize with her manager. She did not understand why he was allowing himself to be bullied by a subordinate.

Witnessing all of the bullying that was going on in the organization caused Iris to grow hate towards her organization. She could not wait until she found another job. She shared, "I was just buying my time until I found something that was better…it was draining, it was depressing, it gave me anxiety to have to go there every day, and deal with the attitudes, the informal behaviors." Iris also shared that "everybody was very hopeful that things were going to change for the better. Although I knew I was kind of on my way out, I was hopeful that for the people who were going to stay there, that something would change for them." In hindsight, Iris regrets not leaving sooner.

Participant Janis Washington

Janis shared her experience of witnessing her director level colleague being bullied by a senior officer. The bully was Janis' immediate supervisor as well as the supervisor of the target. She watched her colleague being subjected to constant barrages, belittling, as well as being publicly humiliated in meetings by their supervisor, who Janis described as behaving like a "pit bull." She sympathized for the target. Janis shared a specific incident that she painfully watched in a staff meeting with over fifteen people, when the senior officer embarrassed the target by stating, "Your style is too blunt, the board doesn't like you, the directors don't like you, you need to be more cooperative". Janis shared that the bully "denied her vacation time – demanding that she keep her phone on her twenty four hours every day so that she could be reached. So, she was denied some of the same privileges that her less senior team had." In the bully's eyes, the target could not do anything right.

Janis watched the target begin to lose weight over a year period of time with the "badgering and the put downs." As the human resources director, Janis knew that she had a duty to respond, and she did. She spent time researching what she was witnessing, because at that time, she did not have a name for it – for this "bullying" that was taking place. She used the information that she learned about these behaviors, including information about its impact, to try to raise awareness and have the behaviors addressed. However, despite Janis' attempts to address the behaviors, she did not have the CEO's support in recognizing them as problematic and in need of intervention. In fact, the bully's behaviors escalated and Janis experienced feeling frustrated and a sense of

helplessness. There was a time that she cried in her car uncontrollably at work because of the emotional strain that it was causing. She felt helpless and was miserable. It was "like being in hell," Janis stated.

The target eventually left and Janis then became a target as a result of the bully's retaliation against Janis for intervening. She shared, "It's like this cancer that keeps going and when you don't stop it just continues to grow. So, we need chemotherapy; whatever it takes to stop it." However, Janis' experience, was that it did not stop and she found herself then advocating for her direct reports who had also become the bully's targets in an effort to target Janis. Janis became fed up and did not hold back in informing the CEO of her dissatisfaction. Her helplessness turned to resilience and she eventually made a decision to leave. She got to the point where she "just shut it down" and told the CEO that she had to go. She made a decision that she would no longer work in such an environment, and she left. She left still frustrated that she or others never received an apology or acknowledgement from the organization about what was experienced.

Participant Laurie Henry

Laurie, who was a patient relations manager in a hospital, experienced witnessing two "very compassionate" and "caring" nurses being bullied by their nurse manager. She witnessed the bully treating the nurses unfairly, including giving them unsafe assignments. She described that whenever she went to the nurse manager about a complaint about her "favorites," the nurse manager would "brush it off" and ask her to overlook the complaints. But, when it was about the other two nurses who were being targeted, the nurse manager managed it differently and harshly. Witnessing this caused Laurie to feel fearful, as the behaviors made it more challenging for her to do her job, which was to investigate and address patient complaints – a job that she was committed to perform despite the challenges from the bullying situation. Laurie was fearful for her job security as well as for the targets and the patients who were being impacted by the bullying situation. This caused Laurie to be cautious in her interactions with the bully, who she described as "beast" like. Laurie subtly warned her director of what was going on without giving names - still, fearful for her job. At the same time, she reminded her director that she wanted to keep her job. She sensed her director's fear to address the situation. Laurie shared, "My director wasn't stupid – she know – she know…she would say, 'be careful that you don't get me fired.'"

Laurie did not see a means to an end. She took pride in her role and wanted to give the best care that she could in ensuring patient safety and customer service. However, because of how the bullying impacted her role, her pride in her identity within the organization became diminished and she eventually left. She shared, "You want to

believe that, in that type of work, patient care is the priority." She was sad and

disappointed to realize that in her organization, it was not.

Participant Linda Barton

Linda's experience witnessing her "brilliant" faculty colleagues being bullied by two older faculty colleagues caused her anger and contempt. She described the bullies as "poisonous" and she characterized one as behaving like a "snapping dog." They would spread rumors and accusations about the targets, causing the targets emotional harm. She became angry at the way the bullies treated one of the targets – a target who she sympathized with greatly. Linda conveyed contempt regarding the bullies. She shared that one of the bullies became "repellent" to her.

At times, Linda too would be the subject of these unfair and untrue accusations and she experienced being compelled to take a stance. She brought the concerns to a university administrator in defense of one colleague who was the primary target. She also spoke out against the unfair and untrue accusations regarding her colleague, openly in a staff meeting. She recalled, "I defended her. And I defended her very overtly." Unfortunately, Linda later became a target of the same colleagues' bullying tactics. And when she did, no one came to her aid or defense, in return.

Participant Luz Clayton

Luz's experience of witnessing her supervisor being bullied by upper management caused her grief. It was disheartening and disturbing. She sympathized for the target. She witnessed her supervisor being subjected to unrealistic deadlines and condescending and disrespectful behaviors from a senior leader. The bully later campaigned through other leaders, to bully the target. Luz tried to stay neutral in the midst of witnessing this, causing her to feel "caught in the middle." This was a position that was awkward and stressful for Luz. She shared,

> I had to learn how to keep a balance…it was stressful, it was challenging. I had to sit, listen, and observe – here is what I can and can't share to the other party. That's the middle man. They don't directly receive it from the person, but they do receive the pressures and stress under it – and how you manage it and deal with it – it makes you almost emotionally distraught.

The bullying came to an end with the target being fired. Luz shared that how the target was fired was "the most disturbing thing on the planet"; something that she will never forget. While disheartened by what she witnessed, she continued to try to preserve her relationship with all parties even after she was no longer with the organization - remaining as the "middle man." Luz explained that what the witness goes through is "parallel to the people who are literally going through it," and to her "that becomes a virus in that department and or division."

Participant Oliver Fuller

Oliver witnessed one of the partners in his firm bully several people in the organization. He described the bully as "profoundly demeaning" and recalled most how he publicly humiliated one particular employee who was "sweet, kind, and selfless." The particular incident involved the bully screaming so loudly at this particular target that a client who was also present "nearly fell out of his chair" because it startled him. Witnessing this was what was most upsetting to Oliver. He sympathized for the target.

Oliver described that what he witnessed was "never ending" bullying behaviors towards this individual and other individuals. For years, he witnessed this bully's "very condescending, very controlling" tyrannical behaviors. The bully was likened to Kim Jong-Un, the leader of North Korea, because of the cult personality that the he portrayed. Oliver shared, "It was just a repetitive walking on egg shells, knowing that as the conversation progresses, at some point - it's going to go south." It angered Oliver to know that the other partners did nothing to stop the behaviors. Oliver was not spared from being targeted as well.

The experience of witnessing the bullying caused him to lose respect and trust for the bully, the other partners, and the organization as a whole. He was fed up from continuing to witness and experience these behaviors and nothing being done. He was fed up with trying to address these behaviors with the other partners, and nothing was being done. For peace of mind, he was willing to end his career with his firm where he had progressed tremendously. He shared,

I had just had it and I wasn't going to put up with it for the rest of my life...The organization clearly, in my opinion, didn't have the courage to do the right thing… I'm not one to sit by when I see others being victimized…I would have thought the same thing [even if I wasn't being targeted as well]…Would I have lost as much respect as I did? Probably not…without personally experiencing something, it's probably hard to appreciate it at the same level…

Participant Russell Robinson

Russell watched generations of leaders in the organization lead with a "bully pulpit" management style. Russell witnessed the bullies use fear and intimidation tactics with employees. The bullies would humiliate targets openly in meetings and cursed and called them out of their names. Russell witnessed targets being so fearful, that some would cry and many resorted to hiding their mistakes, including falsifying information to avoid being targeted.

Because he recognized that employees became a target of these bullying behaviors when they made mistakes or their competence was in question, witnessing this made Russell cautious in the performance of his job. He worried about doing what he was supposed to do, because he did not want to become a target. He shared, "I made sure I had everything completed and done." He also said, "I don't think it was a fear factor, I just didn't want to be called out in front of everybody."

In addition to being attentive to his performance to make sure that he was not targeted, it was also important to him to let the bullies know that he was not a candidate to be targeted. He showed assertiveness when interacting with the bullying leaders. For example, he shared that others were scared to sit near one of the bullies in a staff meeting; however, he was deliberate about sitting near the bully. To him, this sent a message to the bully that he was not intimidated. There was also one occasion when Russell overheard one of the bullies screaming and cursing at one of the targets across from his office. After it was over, he let that bully know that he would not tolerate such behavior. Russell shared,

My office was near his office. Allen called Caleb everything under the sun except Caleb, and Caleb was just shaking – he was scared. At this time, Allen was the Director. And, it's funny how it happened because Allen used to be scared of David. But he learned that technique from David and then turned and used it on Caleb. When I was witnessing it, I was saying to myself "Caleb, say something back – don't' take that" – because I wouldn't. And then, Allen came to my door afterwards and said to me, "Boy, I ripped him a good one, didn't I." I told him, "Yeah, better him than me – 'cause you couldn't talk to me like that."

Participant Seth Woods

Seth experienced witnessing a high level leader in a military organization bullying a junior leader. He shared, "What I witnessed was the personal disdain for the individual, a lot of the verbiage and kind of how he described the individual, you know, the character assassinations, which I think was probably more detrimental." Witnessing this created feelings of anger for Seth as it resurfaced memories from his personal experience being bullied as a child. It was disturbing for him to witness someone at a high rank to mistreat one of their subordinates. "I don't like for people to be picked on. I mean really, you're setting an organizational climate where that type of things is okay. It was a bad situation," Seth shared. And because of his compliance role in the organization, witnessing this was a call to duty to respond. He explained that when you see smoke, there is fire, and that bullying in the workplace is like "a free fire unguided rocket." Therefore, it is important to put an end to it.

As a result of the intervention from Seth and his leader, the bully was removed from his leadership role. Throughout the investigation and disciplinary process, it was important to Seth that the process was procedurally fair for both the bully and the target. He was satisfied to know that it was fair and that the bully was held accountable and the target was no longer mistreated.

Participant Tamara Farmer

Tamara witnessed her senior level supervisor, who she described as very knowledgeable, being bullied by two more senior level leaders. Her supervisor was subjected to aggressive "bull dozer" like threats and intimidation tactics. She sympathized for her supervisor. Not only did Tamara witness some of these behaviors, but Tamara's supervisor – the target, would constantly share with Tamara the mistreatment that she was experiencing. This repeated exposure to the situation, including her supervisor repeatedly venting to her regarding her experience, wore heavily on Tamara. Tamara was so anguished by the experience that she searched for a way out - away from the department. Her goal was to escape to a safer place - a place that she described as her "lily pad." In search for her 'lily pad,' she asked her supervisor for a temporary transfer to another department. It was granted, and shortly after her transfer, Tamara voluntarily left the organization. Tamara found her 'lily pad.'

Participant Vanessa Wilson

Vanessa had a close friend who worked in the same organization, but in a different department. Vanessa witnessed her friend suffer anxiety from being bullied by her supervisor and colleagues. However, it was not until she started to see the behaviors herself, that Vanessa understood what was really happening. Realizing that the bullying was going on, was surprising to Vanessa. She thought that things like this only happened in high school and on television, like on the show "Pretty Little Liars." In addition to being surprised by the intimidation, alienation and unfair treatment towards her friend, Vanessa also became frustrated. Vanessa could not come to any rationale as to why her friend would continue to be subjected to these behaviors when their organization had a supportive human resources department who appropriately handled problematic issues. Vanessa shared, "I was telling her, 'you have to speak up for yourself.'" Although Vanessa was frustrated about Vanessa's lack of inaction, she also was sympathetic to what she was going through. And, since her friend did not intervene on her own behalf, Vanessa intervened for her and was instrumental in getting her transferred to another department – Vanessa's department. Reflecting on her personal knowledge of her friend, Vanessa saw this as yet another situation in which her friend allowed someone in her life to mistreat her. And again, Vanessa was frustrated by this lack of inaction.

Appendix F: Individual Structural Descriptions

Participant Delia Rodriguez

Delia's experience of witnessing bullying in her workplace was structured by several factors. This was an organization that she once held a high regard for its reputation. She was excited about going to work there, but on her first day, she immediately realized that the company did not live up to her expectations. Her view of the organization once she arrived was impacted not only by her experience with witnessing her colleague being bullied, but also by the overall dysfunction of the department's environment. Although Delia knew that other departments did not have the same level of dysfunction, it gave her an impression of the entire organization.

Delia had a manager who was a poor selection for the job. Delia shared, "she was not managerial material. It was not because she was put in that role because she was experienced to handle it. It was just that they needed someone in the management role." The manager even admitted to not being a good manager. The manager provided poor guidance, did not properly manage conflict situations within the department, and was not knowledgeable. Delia shared that the manager was so incompetent, that Delia actually found herself giving guidance to her manager instead of the other way around.

There were also "people in upper management that were doing all kinds of things to the point of, they were even having relations with each other. And they were outward with it." For example, the manager was known to be having an affair with the Associate Director. And, there were other relationships that created challenging dynamics. Not only was the manager sleeping with the Associate Director, but she also seemed to be

friends with the Human Resources Director as well as friends, or at least influenced, by

the bully.

The lack of competency, the inappropriate relationships, and the alliances, created

an environment of distrust in leadership, and therefore, a distrust in the organization. If

the manager is sleeping with the Associate Director, and is friends with Human

Resources, and also seems to be friends with the colleague who is doing the bullying,

who do you go to for help? Who will protect you? Who can you trust? What happens if

you are the next target? Even though the company had a hotline for employees to make

anonymous complaints, there was still a climate of distrust and fear. As Delia shared,

there was an entire "lack of confidence in the management team from the level of

experience, expertise, and just confidence in supporting their team." This made the

experience of witnessing the bullying even more difficult. And for Delia, the irony was

that the value that the company stated that it stood on, was 'integrity'.

Participant Dorothy Perkins

Dorothy's organization exemplified a family environment where people cared for one another, and at the same time, people were held accountable. Employees of all levels, looked out for one another. "We have a lot of senior managers that come out, and they mingle with employees so that you will have a connected source outside of the job, outside of your division," she shared. The organization made sure that employees knew what was going on within the organization, made sure that employees knew their rights, and knew the processes in place for voicing concerns. And when complaints and issues needed to be addressed, "85% of the time" the organization handled it pretty well.

Both the union and leaders, including human resources, supported such an atmosphere. Employees were not afraid to make a mistake. Dorothy stated that "they always let us know that we are human, and we're going to go through things, and we're going to have things happen." Dorothy respected her organization and appreciated the tools that it offered to employees – the support, the training, the policies in place that protected its employees. During her reflection, Dorothy shared, "I loved being an employee there."

Participant Iris Newman

Iris' experience of witnessing bullying in her workplace was structured by several factors. She described this as an organization where money was valued over people. Employees were held accountable for production standards, and nothing else. Iris stated, "Money and high producing employees was the end all and be all over employees' happiness." For example, employee performance plans only set standards related to production. Employees were required to produce, even with challenging resources, such as antiquated computer systems that slowed things down. This angered and frustrated employees, because they were unfairly reprimanded for slow production even though the slow production was due to the inadequate computer resources.

Iris described the organization as one full of "insubordination," "informal" and "unprofessional" behaviors. And, management would do nothing about it. The climate was so bad, as Iris described it, employees would argue in front of a manager and the manager would walk by without saying anything. This contributed to employees' lack of respect for management. Iris did not respect her manager and her colleagues did not as well. Her manager, who was being bullied by a subordinate, added to this informal and unprofessional environment. Iris shared, "He would make, I don't know, sexual inappropriate, sexual jokes. He tried to be everybody's buddy, just trying too hard to make people like him. They just really didn't respect his judgment." This manager was also not respected because people believed that he was not knowledgeable.

This was an organization where morale was low and they did not have anywhere to turn for aid. The low morale also caused a high turnover rate and absences in an

environment where production was highly emphasized. The company's headquarters was in another state and there was not a presence of human resources for employees to voice their concerns. In reflecting on the organization, Iris shared, "I think that was also an issue. That was a problem. There was no specific person to handle these kind of problems."

Participant Janis Washington

Janis came to the organization with years of executive level experience in the public sector. When she was hired as the human resources (HR) director, she walked into complete dysfunctional organization. Janis described, "HR was very dysfunctional for probably two to three years before I arrived." Personnel matters were not being handled fairly, employees did not trust the system, and filing an EEOC complaint became the norm when employees were seeking resolution to grievances. "We also had one of the highest levels of EEOC complaints in an organization that I have ever witnessed in my entire career," Janis shared. Janis had to come in and construct a human resources department as if it was from scratch, including a vibrant training and employee engagement program that reduced EEOC complaints. Her department facilitated focus groups, and provided training on diversity, conflict management, ethics, harassment, and discrimination, and diversity. However, later the training programs were suspended for a period of time at the directive of the Chief Administrative Officer (the bully) because she did not recognize the value.

There was also a climate of "institutional racism." This was detected by Janis as well as others, including another Director who brought it to Janis' attention. Janis shared, "I was told once that we had too many African Americans. Now mind you, the demographics showed nine percent in the community and about 12 percent in the organization – which usually amounted to one or two people."

Directors did not feel secure that the officers were held at the same level of accountability as the directors. Janis stated, "At the officer level…none of them were ever terminated or released. But, a director could be released. At the director level and down – we were all at risk. So you have this perpetuation of the system at the top." Additionally, the system was not structured to support appropriate checks and balances. The officers reported to the Chief Executive Officer, and the Chief Executive Officer was so removed from what was going on from day to day, that she did not realize when her officers were not carrying out her directives. She was inaccessible, and as Janis described it, she was in an "Ivory Tower." It was an environment where the officers could do what they wanted to do and could discredit employees, including director level employees, without the Chief Executive Officer knowing any better. Her officers had her ear, and no one else. Janis described the environment as chaotic with "disengaged upper level management and a group of renegade directors – in this case – officers who controlled all of it."

However, the Chief Executive Officer was not always disengaged. When she first arrived, she showed a strong presence and things appeared to be moving in a good direction. The organization began to rebrand itself and attend to its mission, vision, and values which focused on being the best in the industry. There was an effort to change the "this is the way we've done it" type of culture that had been in place for years. The CEO also led the organization through a process of trying to improve better performance management tools, creating benchmarks, and metrics. Janis shared that all of this was the focus during her first few years there and "It was a lot of work trying to legitimize the

organization and giving the appearance that this is corporate." However, she noticed that once the CEO became disengaged, things got off track, making it possible for the bullying that she witnessed and experienced.

Participant Laurie Henry

Laurie's experience witnessing bullying in her workplace was structured by an organization that was dominated by fear and cliques. As Laurie described, if you were not a part of the clique, you feared for your job regardless of your performance and this fear impacted both leaders and non-leaders. Employees had to be very careful and had two choices: to gain protection by aligning themselves with the clique; or for those who were not in the clique, to resolve to keeping quiet and being supportive of one another because they had nowhere else to turn. Even the union representative was a part of the clique and could not be trusted by those on the "outside." This led to a lack of accountability for those who were socially included, which not only impacted team relations, but patient care. The organization was opposite of what it promoted. It promoted that it valued patient care and a family environment. However, the behaviors allowed throughout the organization jeopardized quality patient care and was divisive instead of familial. Laurie stated, "That clique environment needs to break – that clique environment…it's poisonous especially in that type of environment."

Participant Linda Barton

Linda's experience witnessing bullying in her institution was structured by a departmental climate that was always "unwelcoming," "unsupportive," and "at the best, an indifferent department." Linda characterized this departmental environment as "toxic" and "unhealthy." It was a departmental climate where less senior faculty members, including herself at the time, were not regarded with the value that they deserved from the more senior faculty members, including the value in the knowledge and the work that they contributed. And, it was the more senior faculty members who ended up being the bullies, and the less senior faculty - the targets. Linda did not trust these senior faculty members. However, Linda had a different regard for the institution as a whole. She described it as one that was progressive and positively rich with student diversity; an institution with dedicated professors and where administrators were supportive and trustworthy.

Participant Luz Clayton

Luz's experience witnessing bullying in her institution was structured by what she described as a dysfunctional organizational culture – an environment where staff did not feel appreciated and valued, where there was a lack of accountability for leadership, where human resources was known to be unsupportive and biased in favor of management, and where staff were micromanaged to the point where they had to "lobby and jockey" to get needed information and they were stifled from growing and developing. Experiencing such a dysfunctional organizational culture was confusing for Luz. She did not understand how it expected so little of itself as for as in its management and operations, but succeeded in instilling such high standards of excellence for its students and graduates. Luz stated, "It's like what we do for our students – in how we handle our students in wanting them to be the best and in excellence, it's like we didn't do that for ourselves." This dynamic added to the complexities of the environment for Luz as she witnessed the bullying take place.

Participant Oliver Fuller

Witnessing bullying in his workplace was structured by the experience of working in a "cold" organization climate that "was all about the dollar." The organization placed a low priority on employees and treated them with little regard. As a result, the company had a high turnover rate. Oliver explained that the partners were "short sighted" to not recognize how the climate was impacting morale and how the organization was impacted by the high turnover. The goal in his field was to become a partner and to make lots of money. This was Oliver's goal as well, but he was not willing to forgo his value of people to reach that goal. However, this was not true for the partners of his organization. They had reached the "pinnacle of success," and unfortunately, there was "very little motivation for them to see to it that anything change."

Participant Russell Robinson

The culture in Russell's organization was one where it was understood by employees that you keep your opinion to yourself if it goes against the opinions and plans of leadership. Opinions were not valued. Russell explained, "Everybody there knew that there were certain things you just don't say. You just go with no matter what it is." There was nowhere to voice complaints at any level, making it difficult to hold leaders accountable for the problematic behaviors that they exhibited. There was no human resources office. The staff coordinator, who was the closest thing to a human resources representative, could not be trusted, and the "father" bully was buddies with the board. There was also a lack of structural policies and procedures which caused operational problems. However, although Russell lacked trust in the organization as a whole, he had respect for the "father" bully – for his knowledge and competence in getting the job done, regardless of how he got it done. Most of all, he trusted the "father" bully for being forthright and keeping his word. Russell believed that although he was a bully, he could be trusted to do what he said that he would do. As Russell explained it, the "father" bully had "no hidden agendas," and for that, he respected him and did not fear him as many others did.

Participant Seth Woods

Seth's experience of witnessing bullying in his military organization was structured by his attitude towards the organizational unit where the bullying occurred. He saw the particular organizational unit as a hostile place to work. There was a lack of respect, comradery, and cohesion. According to Seth, "it was a place where people highly and truly did not want to come to work" and attention to diversity, inclusion, and human relations was not a priority. However, Seth's experience was also structured by his position in the organization and he saw how some leaders demonstrated apathy for some problematic behaviors and would not intervene. However, Seth was in a compliance role, and he was in a position to take bullying seriously. Seth shared, "...it is a cancer. It starts off small, and then manifests itself…and erodes the whole fabric of the organization." Although some leaders failed to appropriately respond to such problems, he also saw how the organization tried to uphold a culture where wrong doers were held accountable and where everyone was afforded an impartial process when complaints were investigated. And, he was able to be a part of leading that process and in promoting a healthy work environment.

Participant Tamara Farmer

Tamara's experience of witnessing bullying in her workplace was structured by an already existing frustration in the organization, as a whole. As an employee, Tamara takes her job and her contributions seriously, and she saw this as an organization where the burden of the work fell on the shoulders of a small percentage of the employee population. Employees were allowed to underperform and people were placed in positions without demonstrating the necessary competencies. There was a lack of accountability and checks and balances. And, in her specific department, there was a lack of voice with leadership. This was an organizational culture that Tamara saw as problematic, and when she began to experience being exposed to her supervisor being bullied by upper management, this added to her frustration and her lack of overall trust in the organization to provide a suitable environment for her to thrive.

Participant Vanessa Wilson

Vanessa's experience of witnessing her friend being bullied in their workplace was structured by the trust that she had in her organization to protect employees from such behavior. From her experience, the organization promoted a family environment, and leadership welcomed feedback and open communication. Employees were respected by leadership and human resources could be trusted to address complaints. Witnessing the bullying was the first time she had seen anything like that happen in her organization. It was an isolated situation – and a situation that she believed would have never happened if her friend had used the protections that the organization provided. As Vanessa shared, "It's not a place where you're expecting to be yelled at, or talked down to, or disrespected…if you go to HR, they will step in and try to figure something out. They are an accommodating company to work with."

Appendix G: Individual Textural-Structural Descriptions

Participant Delia Rodriguez

Delia's experience of witnessing her colleague being bullied through gossip and public humiliation caused her fear and anxiety and she sympathized for the target. Being on "pins and needles," she was consumed with the thought of possibly being the next target. She became hypervigilant in making sure that she did not adversely arouse the attention of the bully. Being away on company travel and ensuring that she engaged in casual niceties with the bully, were strategies that she used to avoid being next. The possibility of being next was a reality for Delia. Leaders could not be trusted to protect and lead with integrity. She knew about her manager sleeping with the associate director. She would see the bully casually go in and out of the manager's office. She knew that the manager and the human resources director had a relationship. And, she saw how managers made poor decisions and could not be respected for their leadership, nor for their knowledge.

This was an organization that Delia once highly regarded – a company with a good reputation in its' industry. This was a disappointment and she wondered, how did this happen to her and how did she, a skilled and experienced professional in her field, end up in an environment like this? She was astonished by what she was witnessing and was relieved to get away from the organization when she decided not to renew her contract. She cannot imagine ever experiencing something like that again. And still, she gets knots in her stomach thinking about it.

Participant Dorothy Perkins

When Dorothy witnessed her colleague being intimidated and being made to feel useless by her supervisor, it was a call to action for Dorothy to be supportive of her colleague. The compassion that she had for what her colleague was going through, combined with Dorothy's conviction that it could be a fair and just resolution, sparked an intervention to remove the target from under the bully's supervision. Dorothy's only worry was to ensure that the intervention would not cause more harm for the target or create friction in her relationship with the bully. Although Dorothy felt anger towards the bully for her behaviors, she valued the working relationship she had with her and did not want it to be jeopardized. This caused Dorothy to have to intervene, along with others, behind the scenes – unknowingly to the bully.

The result of the secret intervention that Dorothy helped to initiate was that the target was transferred to another department and the bully was reprimanded for her actions without being humiliated. Dorothy was pleased in how things turned out, but not surprised. In Dorothy's organization, people were held accountable for their behaviors, and at the same time, they were treated humanely. The organization promoted a family like environment and employees trusted the organization to protect them, to inform them, and to develop them. This experience added to her pride in the organization - an organization where she loved to work.

Participant Iris Newman

Iris hated the organization where she witnessed her supervisor being bullied by a subordinate employee, and where she saw another colleague being repeatedly belittled by others. Iris saw these bullying situations as yet another example of the informal and inappropriate behaviors that infested this organization. The rude and verbally aggressive behaviors went unaddressed. Iris described an environment where people walked around defensively, argued in front of managers, and where the only standard, was to produce and generate money. Nothing else mattered to the organization. This made it easy for employees to get away with inappropriate behaviors if they were high producers. Employee morale was low and this was evident by the high turnover rate and absences. Iris described the environment as "horrible." She became depressed from being exposed to the environment. And, there was no one to go to address the concerns of staff. There was no presence of human resources and no managers who would hold people accountable for their uncivil behaviors. The experience drained Iris. She began to just buy time in this organization that she hated, until she finally escaped. She wished that she had left sooner and she hoped that things would change for those who she left behind.

Participant Janis Washington

Witnessing bullying in her organization became a duty to respond. Janis took pride in developing and operating a functional human resources department and could not ignore concerning behaviors that she witnessed or that were brought to her attention. The bully was the Chief Administrative Officer and also the supervisor of both Janis and the target. Janis described her as a "pit bull" who constantly barraged the target with criticisms and aggressive belittling behaviors and unfair treatment. Janis was frustrated that the CEO minimized the CAO's behaviors and sympathized for the target. Janis saw her colleague losing weight due to the emotional harm that the treatment caused and Janis knew that there was substance to the concerns and that the behaviors were damaging. Janis did diligent research to learn more about the phenomenon to better respond and inform; however, the CEO minimized the reported concerns and the bullying behaviors continued. This led to feelings of helplessness. She was the human resources director, and she was watching an employee being harmed by bullying, and nothing was being done to stop it and to hold the bully accountable. Janis' colleague eventually left the organization, and following, Janis became the bully's target as a result of retaliation for Janis' attempted intervention. What came next was a year of hell for Janis. Not only was Janis now being targeted, so was her staff, as another way for the bully to target Janis. Again, Janis complained to the CEO about the CAO's behaviors. And again, nothing was done. This was frustrating for Janis. She contributed her experience and the experience of others to a disengaged CEO. The organization was perpetuated by a lack of accountability – one that lacked checks and balances, and one that created a bunch of

"renegade" officers. Janis believed that the CEO's "Ivory Tower" positioning in the organization was detrimental. Janis had been a part of the period when the organization was trying to progress, and now she was witnessing the reversion of what they tried to build. In that system, she did not trust that she could gain a resolution that would address what she and others were experiencing. Where was the protection? Where was the accountability? The experience of witnessing the bullying, the experience of later being a target as a result of retaliation for intervening, and the lack of response, continued feelings of helplessness and made her miserable. She described the bullying as "maligning" – a cancer that spreads in the organization until it is treated. She would sometimes cry uncontrollably in her car. She was fed up and ready to leave at any moment. Her feelings of helplessness, however, did not last. She was resilient and eventually told the CEO that she was leaving. And, she did, and never received the acknowledgement she needed. Ultimately, for Janis, apologizing would have shown that they acknowledged the legitimacy of the concerns that she brought to the organization's attention – that they acknowledged her experience and the experience of others who had been bullied - and that they recognized that the experience could not have been easy. The residuals from what Janis lived through remain. She hopes that "over time, the managers, the supervisors, the directors, the board – will understand the true meaning of what was going on" and that "they will look back at it and say 'you know, Janis was ahead of her times, she alerted us to it and we didn't buy in on what the effect is.'"

Participant Laurie Henry

Laurie's experience witnessing bullying in her organization was filled with sadness, fear, and disappointment. She saw how the bullying compromised patient care and accountability in the emergency room. This made Laurie sad and disappointed to realize that she was affiliated with an organization that behaved in a way that did not support its purposed mission. It also caused fear for Laurie because the bullying that she witnessed presented challenges for her to do her job as a patient care representative – a job that she took great pride in doing. She wanted the best for the patient and she feared that the situation jeopardized them receiving the care that they needed.

Laurie admits that out of fear, she was not bold about expressing her concerns about the bullying situation, but she did try to subtly alert her supervisor of how the bullying situation was impacting patient care. It was an organization poisoned by cliquish behaviors at all levels. This poison not only impacted patient care, but the job security of well performing employees who were regarded as outsiders instead of insiders. It created an environment of distrust and constant fear amongst those who were not a part of "the clique." And, neither Laurie, Laurie's supervisor, nor the individuals who were being bullied, were a part of "the clique." Therefore, Laurie's supervisor was fearful to intervene - providing no support for the situation. The culture of keeping quiet in order to stay safe was further highlighted. Navigating these dynamics was not easy for Laurie; however, she was committed to doing her job even though it meant engaging with "the beast"/nurse manager, who was the bully – and whose bullying behaviors towards two nurse managers made it challenging for Laurie to do her job.

Supporting the mission for the hospital was important to Laurie. She was a part of the same local community of the patients who were served by the hospital, and she wanted to feel proud of the value that she contributed to the community in her role. She wanted to be a part of something great. Unfortunately, she discovered that she was not, and eventually she left. Her pride in her role and her pride in the hospital where she served was diminished due to her knowledge of its inner workings. All Laurie wanted to do was to do her job, take pride in her new administrative position, love the organization that she worked for, and support patients in receiving the best care. Instead, the experience, including the overall culture of the organization, made her feel like the title and all that came with it, was worthless. It was sad and disappointing to rise to that level in the organization and face adversity that had nothing to do with the job, but everything to do with leaders not being held accountable for ensuring an environment that was fair and that supported patient care as a priority.

Participant Linda Barton

Linda's experience of witnessing her colleagues being bullied by two senior faculty members in her department was filled with emotions of anger and contempt. These feelings were magnified after she later became their target as well. Due to the poisonous behaviors of the two senior faculty bullies, this was a department that was never supportive or welcoming to herself or the targets. This was the experience from the time that the three of them joined the college as young faculty members. The bullies' behaviors contributed to an unhealthy and toxic departmental climate. Watching the impact of the bullies' actions made Linda angry and she was most repelled by the lead bully who she characterized as a "snapping dog." Linda was sickened by the bullies' mistreatment of the targets through their mobbing, rumor spreading, and attacks and accusations – so much so that she spoke out boldly and openly against their behaviors in defense of one of the targets. She was especially sympathetic towards one of the targets. The bullies have since retired, but the contempt that she carries towards the experience and towards them remain. Damage was done. However, she is proud of her institution as a whole – a college institution rich with diversity, concerned administrators, and dedicated faculty members. It is the love for the students that keeps her going.

Participant Luz Clayton

Witnessing her supervisor being bullied was a paralleling experience for Luz. She was disheartened by what she witnessed and characterized workplace bullying as a "virus." She saw her supervisor being targeted through a bullying campaign led by a top leader, which included subjections to unrealistic deadlines, condescending and disrespectful behaviors, and an eventual termination. Luz shared that the way the target was terminated was "the most disheartening and disrespecting thing that you could ever do to a person."

Being a witness to the bullying caused Luz to feel "caught in the middle" between the target and the bullies. Although she was not a direct target, she experienced grief from being "the middle man." Being "the middle man" was an awkward space for Luz. But, it was important to Luz that she maintain a positive relationship with everyone – the bullies and the target. It is common for Luz to be the balance in her relationship circles when there is conflict amongst its members. Therefore, being caught in the middle was very familiar to her; however, very challenging in this situation. She shared that being in the middle of workplace bullying "makes you almost emotionally distraught" and that "it's parallel to the people who are literally going through it."

There were things that challenged this balance that Luz was trying to maintain. Being caught in the middle required her to be "thoughtful and intentional at all times" and she had to choose what she said wisely. It was conflicting for her to have to be careful about not repeating or not responding to certain things and behaviors that she was witnessing. This position that she was in made her feel less than transparent, a space that

she was not used to experiencing. The entire experience was conflicting and emotionally upsetting.

Witnessing the bullying was very stressful and challenging for Luz and it was confusing to Luz that the institution expected the best out of its students, yet not out of itself as an organization. The organization was dysfunctional. There was micromanagement from leaders that caused staff to have to "lobby and jockey" to get needed information and support. Luz felt that her growth and development was stifled in this environment. She felt undervalued and unappreciated, and other employees felt the same. Luz attributed the dysfunction to a lack of leadership accountability and development. As a result, there was a lack of trust within the organization which included a lack of trust in human resources to be fair and impartial. Luz eventually left the organization. She was in search of a professional experience that gave her the satisfaction of appreciation and reward that she needed and desired.

Participant Oliver Fuller

Witnessing a managing partner in his firm bully employees was very upsetting for Oliver. The repeated observations of the condescending and publicly humiliating behaviors made Oliver anxious – it was like "walking on egg shells." The bully was tyrannical. He was likened to Kim Jong-Un, leader of North Korea. He would scream in anger at his targets, once causing a witnessing client to become alarmed. And Oliver too, had become a target of the bully's behaviors. The bullying angered Oliver and he became fed up that the other partners did not intervene.

The organization was "cold" and "all about the dollar." This reality was highlighted for Oliver when nothing was done to stop the bullying after he spoke out against the behaviors to the other leaders and after boldly confronting the bully, himself. The organization cared more about making money than the welfare of its employees. As a result, the company had a high turnover rate.

Oliver was very close to being a partner which is considered "the pinnacle of success" in his field. Yet the cold environment within this firm and the lack of accountability for the partner's abusive behaviors from the other partners, made Oliver lose respect for the partners and for the organization. It was no longer worth it to remain in this environment that clearly devalued the well-being of its people. Oliver was willing to give up what he had worked for, possibly forfeiting his progress towards reaching "the pinnacle of success," in order to be away from that environment. And, he did. He left.

Participant Russell Robinson

Russell's organization was one that bred bullying behaviors in its leadership. It was "generational" bullying, as Russell described. There was a "father" bully, who was the founder of the organization, and who Russell respected for his forthrightness and honesty.

Russell valued the fact that the "father" bully was knowledgeable and competent in getting things done – regardless of the means. However, he recognized the damaging ways of the bully's behaviors as well as in the bullying behaviors that he bred in succeeding leaders. Targets were bullied through fear and intimidation tactics, including cursing and yelling. It was an organizational culture led by a "bully pulpit" management style and targeted employees had become fearful. This was an organization that lacked structure and where employees' opinions were not valued. There was nowhere to voice complaints or no measures in place to hold problematic behaviors or leaders accountable. This made targeted employees even more fearful.

The bullying that he witnessed did not cause fear for Russell; however, it did cause him to be cautious. He was worried about making sure that he met performance standards in order to avoid being targeted or "being called out." And at the same time, he was intentional to let leaders know that he was not intimidated of them and their ways. For Russell, it was important that they knew that he was unafraid, and he believes that he was successful in projecting this and avoiding being another target or victim of fear.

Participant Seth Woods

Witnessing bullying in his organization brought back memories of when he was bullied as a child. This contributed to Seth's anger towards the bully and his sympathy towards the target. As a compliance person in the organization, Seth had a duty to respond, and he acted upon that duty without hesitation. He had witnessed how this leader had assassinated the target's character and exhibited overt personal disdain towards him. He likened the bullying to "a free fired unguided rocket" and saw how it was "creating fault lines within the unit." This was a unit that lacked comradery and cohesion. It was a hostile environment. He knew that the bullying had to stop. As Seth described it, "when there's smoke, there's fire."

In responding, it was important for Seth to ensure a fair and impartial intervention. Although there were some leaders who were apathetic and unresponsive of problematic behaviors, fairness was something that the organization as a whole, promoted in its processes. As a result of the investigation and Seth's recommendations, the bully was held accountable. That particular fire was extinguished.

Participant Tamara Farmer

Witnessing her supervisor being bullied caused her anguish. Tamara saw how top leaders would threaten and intimidate her supervisor, assign her unreasonable duties, and use their "bulldozer" like power. She sympathized for her supervisor. She also knew that she did not work well in such an environment and that she had to defend against being exposed to such toxicity.

She had become fed up and in search for a "lily pad" to jump off on - an opportunity to escape the situation. This was an organization that she already doubted – an organization that lacked checks and balances, and that lacked accountability for under and incompetent performers. And in her department, there was a lack of voice with leadership. After a deliberate search and attempt, Tamara found her "lily pad." She was able to remove herself from the experience and find a safer space. She left the organization.

Participant Vanessa Wilson

Witnessing bullying in the workplace was an experience that was unfamiliar to Vanessa. She was surprised to find these behaviors in her workplace – a workplace where leaders were supportive and open to feedback and where human resources were trusted to attend to the concerns of staff. This was an organization that behaved like a family, and yet her friend was being bullied in another department by her supervisor and colleagues through the use of intimidation tactics, alienation, and unfair treatment. To Vanessa, this was like the high school bullying scenes from the show "Pretty Little Liars." She could not understand how her friend would allow this to happen to her. This frustrated Vanessa, for this was an organization that was responsive to concerns. The bullies had no real power. So "Why?," Vanessa would ask herself, would her friend not intervene on her own behalf. Vanessa's frustration with the target did not diminish her sympathy for her situation, however. When she saw that her friend would not self-advocate, she saw it as her role to intervene on her behalf. The result, was that Vanessa facilitated an opportunity for her friend to be able to move into another position, in another department.

Appendix H: Composite Textural Description

Witnessing bullying in the workplace was a profoundly memorable experience for the participants. It left them with vivid recollections of the individuals involved and of the specific incidents and contexts related to the experience. It also left participants with a memory of the emotional and sometimes the physical harm that it caused the targets. They tried to make meaning of it all.

Participants witnessed repetitive and harmful bullying behaviors, including intimidation, manipulation, threats, belittling, alienation, public humiliation, unfair treatment, and gossiping. Witnessing this was not easy and participants too were emotionally harmed by the experience. They experienced a range of emotions – some more intense than others. Emotions ranged from contempt towards the bully, to sympathy for the target, and disappointment in the organization for not addressing the problem. As they too were emotionally impacted, they were faced with having to be intentional about the stance or position taken as a witness. Participants were conscious about the stance that they took and explanatory as to why they chose the stance that they did. They were able to clearly connect how the context of the organization weighed on how they resolved to coping or responding to what was witnessed. Many found it necessary to protect themselves from harm as a result, and often resolving to leave the organization. And only a few, intervened.

Appendix I: Composite Structural Description

Witnessing workplace bullying was an experience heightened by a level of awareness regarding their organizational environment, including the leaders within. Participants were able to provide vivid details of the organizational environment that led to their perception of the organization's trustworthiness. They also described how their awareness of the organization's trustworthiness structured their experience as a witness. For a few, their awareness of their environment provided ease as they navigated through their experience. Their organization was supportive and leaders were trusted. But for most, their awareness of the organization's untrustworthiness, added to their emotional turmoil, and included an awareness of an organization that was led by incompetent and unethical leaders, that was void of a trusted resource for employees to voice their concerns, and in some cases, void of any designated resource for employees to voice concerns. Dysfunctional, unhealthy environment, and toxic, were characteristics of untrustworthy organizations. It was clear that participants equated the trustworthiness of the organization with the trustworthiness of the leaders.

Appendix J: Table Core Themes and Sub-Themes by Participant

Participants \ Sub-Themes	Theme 1: Making Sense through Metaphors				Theme 2: Emotional Impact				Theme 3: Taking an Intentional Stance					Theme 4: Organizational Trustworthiness		
	Making Sense of Bullying Behaviors	Making Sense of Bully	Making Sense of Emotional Impact	Making Sense of Structural Impact	Emotions Associated with Anger	Emotions Associated with Sadness	Emotions Associated with Fear	Emotions Associated with Surprise	Stance of Self-Preservation	Stance of Advocacy	Stance of Responsibility	Stance of Neutrality	Stance of Unintimidation	Untrustworthy Organization	Partial Trustworthy Organization	Trustworthy Organization
Delia			◉			◉	◉	◉	◉					◉		
Dorothy	◉				◉	◉	◉		◉	◉						◉
Iris	◉		◉		◉	◉	◉		◉					◉		
Janis			◉	◉	◉	◉			◉		◉			◉		
Laurie		◉				◉	◉		◉					◉		
Linda			◉	◉	◉	◉				◉					◉	
Luz			◉	◉		◉	◉		◉			◉		◉		
Oliver		◉	◉		◉	◉	◉		◉	◉				◉		
Russell	◉			◉			◉		◉				◉		◉	
Seth				◉	◉	◉					◉				◉	
Tamara			◉			◉			◉					◉		
Vanessa		◉			◉	◉		◉		◉						◉
Total	**3**	**3**	**7**	**5**	**7**	**11**	**7**	**2**	**9**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**7**	**3**	**2**

Appendix K: Researcher's Biography

A native of Atlanta, Georgia, Angela E. Dash has over seventeen years of experience serving in various leadership roles in the public sector. She is a seasoned and trusted leader and conflict management specialist and contributes to organizations' strategic initiatives by helping to promote positive workplace environments and improved team and organizational effectiveness. She uses her knowledge of theory and practice to provide facilitation, mediation, and coaching services and delivers customized and curricula based trainings and workshops geared towards soft skills' development.

Since 2002, Angela has been a registered mediator through the Georgia Supreme Court's Office of Dispute Resolution Dash as well as a member of the Association for Conflict Resolution – a professional membership organization where she currently serves as co-chair of the Workplace-Ombuds Section. She is also an active member of the International Ombudsman Association, the California Caucus of College and University Ombuds, and ATHENA Akron. Committed to the field of conflict management, while a doctoral student at Nova Southeastern University, Angela founded The Pace Institute, LLC, where the motto is "*strengthening relationships and setting the course in times of conflict, change, and opportunity.*" She continues to serve as the company's President.

In 2014, Angela was appointed as the first Director, Ombudsperson at Northeast Ohio Medical University in Rootstown, Ohio. As an organizational ombudsperson, she serves as an independent and confidential neutral resource available to informally assist all faculty, staff, and students in the alternative resolution of university-related issues, concerns, and disputes. In support of appropriate systems change, she also provides proactive feedback to university leaders when problematic trends are identified.

Angela holds several professional distinctions, including the Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR®) certification and Society for Human Resources Management - Senior Certified Professional (SHRM-SCP) certification. Angela is also a certified facilitator of the Real Colors® personality instrument as well as the Conflict Dynamics Profile® I and 360 assessment. In addition to her Ph.D, Angela earned a Bachelor of Arts in Child Development from Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia, and a Master of Public Administration with a concentration in Public Personnel Management from Troy State University in Troy, Alabama.

Twitter: @AngelaEDash
Instagram: @AngelaEDash
Linkedin: AngelaEDash
Email: angeladash@yahoo.com