**Additional Resources for Dealing with Bullying**

Supplemental Digital Content for

“Bullying in Nursing: Roots, Rationales, and Remedies”

by Mary Pat Szutenbach, PhD, RN

*Journal of Christian Nursing, 30*(1)

**I. Reflective Practice:** Models of reflection can help nurses to analyze and deal with bullying. This table compares Gibbs’ Reflective Cycle, John’s Model for Structured Reflection using Carper’s Ways of Knowing, and Lim, Childs, and Gonsalves Debriefing approach.

**Reflective Practice Models Compared with Debriefing Model**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **John’s Model of Carper’s Ways** **of Knowing** (Smith & Loads, 2008) | **Gibb’s Reflective Cycle**(Wilding, 2008) | **Debriefing** (Lim, Childs & Gonsalves, 2000) |
| **Aesthetics (Art)** ***What was I trying to achieve?******Why did I respond the way I did?******What are the consequences of that*** ***for the patient, others, myself?******How was this person feeling?******How did I know this?*** | **Description of what happened.** | **Introduction****Establishment of group goals**  **and rules.****Reinforces the need for**  **confidentiality (no-attribution)**  |
| **What were/are your feelings/emotional response?** |
| **Fact Gathering*****Each staff member is asked to share***  ***what happened (individual*** ***descriptions)*** |
| **Personal*****How did I feel in this situation?******What internal factors were***  ***influencing me?*** | **What was good? Bad? There is space here for subjective judgment.**  |
| **Ethics*****How did my actions match with my liefs?*** ***What factors made me act in***  ***incongruent ways?***  | **What sense can you make of the situation? You may need some source material here.**  |
| **Empirics*****What knowledge did or should***  ***have informed me?***  | **What can you conclude generally from the situation?** **What can you conclude specifically about your individual response?** |
| **Reflexivity*****How does this connect with previous***  ***experiences?******Could I handle this better in similar***  ***situations?******What would be the consequences of***  ***alternative actions for the patient,***  ***others, myself?******How do I now feel about the***  ***experience?******Can I support myself and others*** ***better as a consequence?******Has this changed my ways of***  ***knowing?*** | **What will you do differently in the future?** **What is your plan of action?**  | **Reaction Phase*****Examination of feelings, thoughts and responses (in some cases it may be too early after an event to for participants to have experienced any of these)*****Symptom Phase*****Review of how feelings, thoughts and responses affect their personal and work lives*****Stress Response*****Identify individual responses to stress*****Suggestions*****Identify ways for coping with event(s)*** ***related to stress*****Incident Phase*****Individuals identify positive aspects of the event*** |
| **Referral Phase*****Schedule follow-up as needed******Arrange for individual support as needed*** |

**II. HOW TO SWIM WITH SHARKS**

In her 2008 article, Broome addressed bullying and provided a set of assertiveness steps drawn from rules prepared by Voltaire Cousteau in 1812 for sponge divers who swim in shark infested waters. Broome compared bullies to sharks saying because of their size and strength sharks “project a domineering and superior presence over others” (p. 29). Bullies are not necessarily large and physically strong but are often domineering and act as if they are better than those around them. Broome gave readers seven of Cousteau’s ten rules for swimming safely among sharks (Table 1).

***Rule one*** for working in the vicinity of bullies is “assume all unidentified fish are sharks” (Broome, 2008, p. 29), meaning beware because fish may not appear as they seem. Not all bullies appear to be bullies at first, and it may be difficult to identify who the bullies are initially, so remain on guard or cautious.

***Rule two*** is: “Do not bleed” (Broome, 2008, p. 29). Cousteau said it is imperative that if bitten you do not bleed, because the presence of blood will attract more aggression and potentially may draw in other bullies who initially seemed neutral. Showing your hurt or becoming defensive and reactive can provoke more attacks.

***Rule three*** tags onto number two and says you must employ diligent practice so you do not bleed! Cousteau said, “Admittedly, it is difficult not to bleed when injured. Indeed, at first this may seem impossible…[especially with a] serious laceration” (Broome, 2008, p. 29). If the injured cannot control their ‘bleeding’ then they should not swim in shark infested waters. This means it is necessary to stay in control of emotions that might lead to an angry outburst or defensiveness. When the victim stays calm and avoids defensiveness (Proverbs 15:1), it confuses the bully and diminishes the sense of power over the victim. It also reduces the level of satisfaction the bully gets from the attack.

***Rule four*** is: “Counter aggression promptly” (Broome, 2008, p. 29). In general the bully will ‘test the water’ before coming in for a full-scale attack, so it is important to be watchful for signs of this initial exploration. When early tentative aggression occurs, it is important to act promptly with assertive counter measures, identify the facts, and remain strong to combat the aggression.

***Rule five*** is: “Avoid ingratiating behaviors” (Broome, 2008, p. 29). When the victim appears weak to the bully, it increases the bully’s confidence in his or her own actions and provokes further attacks.

***Rule six*** instructs the victim to “use anticipatory retaliation” (p. 29). This rule supports the need of victims to develop strategies and skills to help them deflect all attacks in a professional and positive manner. The sixth rule also suggests victims must be prepared to repel bullies more than once because sometimes bullies are surprised when their prey is capable of thwarting them. Bullies may test the victim’s metal by staging another attack.

Broome (2008) finishes by providing ***the seventh rule***: “Identify disorganized and organized attacks” (p. 29). She warns that bullies sometimes work together and go at the victim in a coordinated attack. The approach she suggests for organized attacks was indicated in rule number six: confront (or carefront) the behavior and never accept unprofessional / unacceptable conduct from a colleague. If these actions do not stop unwanted behaviors, then file a complaint with superiors and obtain statements from any and all witnesses.

Broome, B. (2008). Dealing with sharks and bullies in the workplace. *Association of Black Nursing Faculty Journal, 19*(1), 28-30.

**TABLE 1: How to Swim with Sharks: A Primer**

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Assume all unidentified fish are sharks. |
| 2. Do not bleed. |
| 3. Admittedly, it is hard not to bleed when injured, and at first it may seem impossible…with diligent practice you can sustain a serious laceration without bleeding or loss of composure. |
| 4. Counter any aggression promptly. It is a prelude to a full-scale attack.  |
| 5. Don’t mistakenly be drawn into believing that an ingratiating attitude will dispel an attack. |
| 6. Get out of the water if someone is bleeding. |
| 7. No useful purpose is served by attempting to rescue the injured swimmer. [But you can gather all uninvolved staff and silently circle the shark and the injured] |
| 8. Use anticipatory retaliation. The sharks will forget and not recognize the skilled swimmer. They have poor memory in that regard, and may attack again. |
| 9. Repeat #4 counter all aggression promptly, and as necessary. |
| 10. Disorganized and organized attacks. Usually…sharks are sufficiently self-centered they do not act in concert against a swimmer…know how to handle an organized attack. Use diversion. |

Public domain.

From: Cousteau, V. (1812). *How to swim with sharks: A primer.* Retrieved from http://www.apor.org/html/how\_to\_swim\_with\_sharks.htm