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The Stalker as Antisocial Bully

By Sam Vaknin

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Stalkers have narcissistic traits. Many of them suffer from personality disorders. The vindictive stalker is usually a psychopath (has Antisocial Personality Disorder). They all conform to the classic definition of a bully.

Before we proceed to delineate coping strategies, it is helpful to review the characteristics of each of these mental health problems and dysfunctional behaviours.

I. The Narcissistic Stalker

The dramatic and erotomaniac stalker is likely to show one or more of these narcissistic traits:

Feels grandiose and self-important (e.g., exaggerates accomplishments, talents, skills, contacts, and personality traits to the point of lying, demands to be recognised as superior without commensurate achievements);

Is obsessed with fantasies of unlimited success, fame, fearsome power or omnipotence, unequalled brilliance (the cerebral narcissist), bodily beauty or sexual performance (the somatic narcissist), or ideal, everlasting, all-conquering love or passion;

Firmly convinced that he or she is unique and, being special, can only be understood by, should only be treated by, or associate with, other special or unique, or high-status people (or institutions);

Requires excessive admiration, adulation, attention and affirmation - or, failing that, wishes to be feared and to be notorious (Narcissistic Supply);

Feels entitled. Demands automatic and full compliance with his or her unreasonable expectations for special and favourable priority treatment;

Is "interpersonally exploitative", i.e., uses others to achieve his or her own ends;

Devoid of empathy. Is unable or unwilling to identify with, acknowledge, or accept the feelings, needs, preferences, priorities, and choices of others;

Constantly envious of others and seeks to hurt or destroy the objects of his or her frustration. Suffers from persecutory (paranoid) delusions as he or she believes that they feel the same about him or her and are likely to act similarly;

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Behaves arrogantly and haughtily. Feels superior, omnipotent, omniscient, invincible, immune, "above the law", and omnipresent (magical thinking). Rages when frustrated, contradicted, or confronted by people he or she considers inferior to him or her and unworthy.

(Adapted from "Malignant Self Love – Narcissism Revisited")

II. The Antisocial (Psychopathic) Stalker

APD or AsPD was formerly called "psychopathy" or, more colloquially, "sociopathy". Some scholars, such as David Hare, still distinguish psychopathy from mere antisocial behaviour. The disorder appears in early adolescence but criminal behaviour and substance abuse often abate with age, usually by the fourth or fifth decade of life. It may have a genetic or hereditary determinant and afflicts mainly men. The diagnosis is controversial and regarded by some scholar as scientifically unfounded.

Psychopaths regard other people as objects to be manipulated and instruments of gratification and utility. They have no discernible conscience, are devoid of empathy and find it difficult to perceive other people's nonverbal cues, needs, emotions, and preferences. Consequently, the psychopath rejects other people's rights and his commensurate obligations. He is impulsive, reckless, irresponsible and unable to postpone gratification. He often rationalises his behaviour showing an utter absence of remorse for hurting or defrauding others.

Their (primitive) defence mechanisms include splitting (they view the world - and people in it - as "all good" or "all evil"), projection (attribute their own shortcomings unto others) and Projective Identification (force others to behave the way they expect them to).

The psychopath fails to comply with social norms. Hence the criminal acts, the deceitfulness and identity theft, the use of aliases, the constant lying, and the conning of even his nearest and dearest for gain or pleasure. Psychopaths are unreliable and do not honour their undertakings, obligations, contracts, and responsibilities. They rarely hold a job for long or repay their debts. They are vindictive, remorseless, ruthless, driven, dangerous, aggressive, violent, irritable, and, sometimes, prone to magical thinking. They seldom plan for the long and medium terms, believing themselves to be immune to the consequences of their own actions.

(Adapted from my Mental Health Dictionary)

III. The Stalker as a Bully

Bullies feel inadequate and compensates for it by being violent - verbally, psychologically, or physically. Some bullies suffer from personality and other mental health disorders. They feel entitled to special treatment, seek attention, lack empathy, are rageful and envious, and exploit and then discard their co-workers.

Bullies are insincere, haughty, unreliable, and lack empathy and sensitivity to the emotions, needs, and preferences of others whom they regard and treat as objects or instruments of gratification.

Bullies are ruthless, cold, and have alloplastic defences (and outside locus of control) - they blame

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others for their failures, defeats, or misfortunes. Bullies have low frustration and tolerance thresholds, get bored and anxious easily, are violently impatient, emotionally labile, unstable, erratic, and untrustworthy. They lack self-discipline, are egotistic, exploitative, rapacious, opportunistic, driven, reckless, and callous.

Bullies are emotionally immature and control freaks. They are consummate liars and deceptively charming. Bullies dress, talk, and behave normally. Many of them are persuasive, manipulative, or even charismatic. They are socially adept, liked, and often fun to be around and the centre of attention. Only a prolonged and intensive interaction with them - sometimes as a victim - exposes their dysfunctions.

(Based on an entry I have written for the Open Site Encyclopaedia - Workplace Bullying)

Sam Vaknin (<http://samvak.tripod.com>) is the author of Malignant Self Love – Narcissism Revisited

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School Bullying Stopped: 5 Ways to Stop Bullies with the Facts!

By Paula McCoach

School Bullying Stopped: 5 Ways to Zap Bullies with Facts!

By Paula McCoach

So, there is a bully that you just can't catch! You have been trying for years and no luck!

Well, I have learned with good documentation, anything is possible even building a great case for catching that hardcore bully.

1. I keep a large file card on each student that I speak with, and the bullies are usually referred to me at some point.

On this card, I make note of the date of the conference and generally what the student and I spoke about. If the student is referred to guidance for peer mediation, that is documented also.

2. If this bully is tormenting tons of kids, I put out a memo to the team of teachers who have the bully in class, and ask them to jot down any bully or teasing behavior they see or hear from the bully.

3. The students who are reporting that the bully is bothering them are asked to write down "exactly" what the bully is saying with the date. Even if what the bully is saying is obscene or gross, I ask the students to write verbatim what the bully is saying to them.

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4. Most schools have students for more than one year. Our school has 5 grades, so we have students from 4th to 8th grades. You can pull out documentation from previous years to add to your information from the current year.

5. In my opinion, a bully does not start the school year with a "clean slate." Pull out your notes on this hardcore bully from past years and add it to your current facts for this school year.

Amazing documentation for zapping a hardcore bully might take you a few months to accumulate.

But, as we all know a bully "bullies" and eventually the staff will catch them and document their bullying.

Getting adequate documentation might take some time, but you will eventually get enough to either remove or rehabilitate the bully.

So, get out your file cards and start documenting! The more incidents of bullying you can cite, the better. And, thanks for helping kids deal with bullies!

Paula McCoach invites you to subscribe to the Bully Zapper Newsletter, which is published weekly with tons of tips on how to effectively deal with bullies in elementary and middle school. You will receive a free special report for your subscription. To subscribe, go to

Purchase the latest Bully Zapper publication, 11 SIMPLE STEPS TO ZAPPING BULLIES! Discover tips on working with the bully as well as the victim, talking to parents effectively, using behavior checklists with success, enabling teachers to deal with bullies in their classrooms, and much more practical and useful information you can use immediately to Zap the Bullies in your school! To order, go to



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