**Ccultivating a safer climate: Mistreatment intervention using the four pillars of education.**

**Abstract**

Workplace mistreatment damages employees and organizations and thus should be mitigated. In the current article framework, the UNESCO four pillars of lifelong learning were utilized to alleviate mistreatment and restore a safer and more ethical organizational climate in a public organization department. Utilizing a qualitative research method, employees were interviewed before a sequence of two workshops and a few weeks after completing the second workshop. The intervention was designed to promote civil behaviors through the four pillars of lifelong learning. While the first workshop provided knowledge on mistreatment, the second was aimed to provide the participants with practical and personal tools to cope with it. The training was found to enhance knowledge, understanding, and acquire competencies and tools which together enhanced the employee's ability to live together and better the social climate they are living in so that they can flourish personally and professionally. Practice, limitations, and implications for future research are discussed.

**Introduction**

Workplace mistreatment is a broad term which consists of a wide range of interpersonal harms that employees might confront while at work (Hodgins, Curtain and McNamara, 2014, p. 54). Sadly, the prevalence of workplace mistreatment is high – one in every three workers has experienced abusive behaviours at work (Itzkovich 2015; Sabbath, et al. .2018). Additionally, the negative impact of mistreatments at work is unquestionable (Hodgins et al., 2014; McCord et al., .2018; Yang et al.,2014).

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Indeed, Workplace mistreatment is associated with psychological distress, burnout, anxiety, depression and general reduction in well-being, outcomes named by Schilpzand, De Pater & Erez (2016) as *affective outcomes*. Schilpzand et al. (2016) observed two additional categories of effects. One of them is *Attitudinal outcomes* - mistreatment targets are less motivated, less committed, and their coworkers and managers' satisfaction is decreased. The other category is the *Behavioural effects* that can be triggered by mistreatment, e.g., a retaliation reaction (Itzkovich and Heilbrunn, 2016) when employees tend to damage the organization property and production processes a response to their victimization, or to leave the organization.

Due to its importance to both employees and organizations, in recent years, the academic field that is dedicated to the study of workplace mistreatment is inundated with different definitions and research tools.

While most of the literature on the different workplace mistreatment types dealt with mapping and understanding mistreatments' impact (Schilpzand, De Pater & Erez, 2016), some of these various definitions focus on the boundaries of adverse interpersonal behaviours (Itzkovich, 2015; Itzkovich et al., 2020), as in the case of workplace incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Schilpzand, De Pater & Erez, 2016) or emotional abuse (Penttinen et al.,2019). Other definitions are focused on the identity of the perpetrator, as in the case of abusive supervision (Zhao et al., 2019) or on customers' mistreatment (Sommovigo et al.,2020; Zhou, et al.,2020).

However, only scant amount of research dealt with identifying intervening factors (Arnetz, Fitzpatrick, Cotten, & Jodoin, 2019; Caponecchia, Branch, & Murray, 2020; Edwards & Blackwood, 2017; Murray, Branch & Caponecchia, 2019; Olsen, Aschenbrenner, Merkel, Pehler, Sargent & Sperstad, 2020; Salin et al., 2018). Of them, only a neglectable amount of research measured active interventions' effect (Howard & Embree, 2020) and typically overlooked the organizational level (Hodgins, Curtain and McNamara, 2014), that was noted as crucial for a successful intervention process (Hodgins, Curtain and McNamara, 2014; Olsen et al., 2020; Simpson, Farr-Wharton, & Reddy, 2020). Furthermore, most of the studies reported a weak impact (Hodgins, Curtain and McNamara, 2014) and none of the interventions used a clear theoretical framework, such as the four pillars of lifelong Learning.

The four pillars of lifelong learning framework presented by Delros (1996, 2002; 2013) is widely considered a key international reference for the conceptualization of learning in today’s world (Ghorbani, Jafari & Sharifian, 2018). The author presented four closely linked pillars that compose learning as a continuous process throughout life. The concept underlying the pillars is based on the notion that a holistic approach is needed in order to develop the knowledge and skills required for a sustainable future founded on changes in values, behaviours, lifestyles, and synthesis between individuals and societies (Shaw et al.,2009). The framework discusses the knowledge and understanding of the learned subject and the ability and desire to continue learning (i.e. *learning to know*), transferring knowledge to the professional and practical spheres and acquiring tools and patterns of behavior in order to act in the real world including in unforeseeable situations, formal and informal, (i.e. *learning to do*),to be able to fully develop the creative potential as individuals (i.e. *learning to be*) and finally, to be able to mutually cooperate as a society and use the knowledge and skills that can nourish the need to live together and the ability to do so (i.e. *learning to live together*) (Albalushi, 2013; Alt & Reichel, 2018; Delros, 2013; Ghorbani, Jafari & Sharifian, 2018)). Thus far, no utilization of the framework to mitigate various mistreatments were reported. However, the framework that initially was suggested as an educational framework was conceptually adopted in the organizational setting (Scheereset al., 2010), and consists of elements which have been noted to underlie effective organizational trainings (Chernis et al., 1998; Neale et al., 2009). Furthermore, as the framework is suggested as an adequate framework to cultivate moral education (Alt & Reichel, 2018; Zajda, 2020), it can be viewed as a framework to cultivate moral organizational climate.

Thus, the current study overarching goal was to develop, employ, and measure an intervention program in a public sector organization aimed to promote an ethical organizational climate. Using a clear and robust framework of lifelong learning, which consists of four pillars, namely learning to know, learning to be, learning to do and learning to live together (Delros, 2013) for the first time in the context of mistreatment, an intervention program was executed.

The current research contributes to both the knowledge concerning interventions of mistreatment and their impact and its nuances in the public sector, a sector which was overlooked thus far.

**Mitigation of mistreatment**

Although its importance, thus far, the mitigation of mistreatment was scantly addressed (Howard & Embree, 2020). Hodgins et al. )2014( reviewed mistreatment interventions. Their findings indicated that the impact of the limited number of interventions was weak, and that only four studies were controlled before-after studies. Additionally, out of the three interventions which were classified as ‘ moderate quality’, two were rated as effective, and one was rated partially effective. The authors attributed the weakness of these interventions to their overlooked organizational viewpoint. Indeed, Blackwood at al. (2017) noted several antecedents required for effective interventions, of which workplace's culture was one. Other researchers took a micro-level viewpoint and focused on enhancing resilience to effectively address incivility in the patient care environmentthrough cognitive rehearsal (Clark et al., 2019).

Similarly, other scholars used asynchronic learning models to decrease incivility (Howard et al., 2020). To the most part, these interventions were conducted in healthcare organizations and academia (Clark et al., 2019; Howard et al., 2020; King et al., 2019; Olsen et al., 2020; Simpson et al.,2020), overlooking other public service organizations. Moreover, although all these interventions were based on learning, none of them was founded on a holistic view, and aimed at a sustainable change based on lifelong learning viewpoint that was indicated as effective to cultivate change and increase individuals’ ability to react to change and flourish, such as the four pillars of lifelong learning (Delros 2013)

**The present Study**

The current study's overarching goal was to utilize an intervention program in a public sector organization based on the four pillars of education that address personal learning and social context in a comprehensive learning framework.

**Method**

**Sample and Tools**

Semi-structured interviews with 18 randomly selected employees were conducted before attending two sequential workshops which constituted the mistreatment training and a month after the second workshop was conducted.

The interviewees were part of Seventy-five employees attending the workshops worked in various roles in the organizational unit (typists, secretaries, paralegals and mid-management). Tenure ranged from 5-20 years, average 15 years). Most (16 of 18) interviewees were female, representing their rate in the department.

The first interview was aimed to understand the feeling, thoughts, perceptions and behaviours in the unit as perceived by the employees. Following the first interview, all the seventy-five employees attended the first workshop which aimed to expose them to the understanding of mistreatment and discuss past incidents of experienced mistreatment. The second workshop was conducted after three weeks and aimed to provide the employees with tools for dealing with future experiences and to promote safer organizational climate. Specifically, the second workshop was focused on personal skills such as empathy and its relation to mistreatments, self-awareness, self-regulation and stress tolerance mechanisms

This design was aimed at creating a sustainable impact as recommended by Cherniss et al. (1998) by adopting a lifelong learning framework (Delros, 2013), In particular, based of perceiving intervention as a process that spills over the dyadic relationship between perpetrator and victim to the social environment, the workshops were developed to emphasize group learning (learning to live together) to trigger a climate change.

**Procedure**

The public organization management chose to bring the training into the organization and selected the organizational unit that participated in the pilot training, with an aim to extend it to other units. Employees of the selected department were notified about the process, and before the interviews and workshop, an introductory session which announced the coming training, and its focus was delivered to all the employees and managers. Following this session, employees were randomly selected for the interviews. The purpose of the interviews was explained, discretion was assured, and informed consent was obtained from each of the participants.

The trainers were academics and practitioners specializing in mistreatment and organizational trainings. The organization legal entities and top management approved the process and tools before the workshops, and non-disclosure agreements were signed between the college and the public organization legal entity.

**Findings**

**The impact of the training**

The interviews' analysis revealed that the mistreatment-prevention training was perceived as dealing with an essential and relevant organizational topic that can take place in any organization, particularly within the public sector, given it highly hierarchical structure and tenure structure.

This view prevailed, although the department's climate in which the training was held was overall positive. The analysis of the interviews further revealed impacts of the training corresponding with the four pillars of lifelong Learning (Delros, 1996): learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together that created an overall positive view of the training, alongside points for improvement.

Table 1: themes related to the four lifelong learning pillars:-insert table X here-

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Pillar |  |  |
| Learning to know | Awareness of the phenomenon  Knowledge and understanding  Gauging expectations  A desire for further Learning |  |
| Learning to do | Permission to act  Knowing how to act  Paying forward |  |
| Learning to be | Awareness of personal skills  Self-awareness  Personal development |  |
| Learning to live together | Getting to know each other  Sharing experiences  Group learning  Solidarity and support |  |

**Learning to know**

***‘Learning to know’*** pillarrelates to the understanding and use of knowledge, as well as the ability to learn (Delros, 1996) constantly. In this sense, training should aim to provide knowledge and create understanding and encourage training participants to further learn about the topic at hand.

The interviews' analysis revealed high perceived gains on the **Learning to know** pillar, meeting participants’ expectations expressed in the pre-training interviews. Gains on this aspect were attributed to the training, which built a broad base of knowledge, coupled with the minimal knowledge at the start of the training (i.e. first interviews).

A few main themes related to this aspect emerged from the analysis of the interviews: **awareness of the phenomenon, knowledge and understanding, guiding expectations, desire to continue learning**

***Awareness***: The participants attributed a broad understanding of mistreatment as a workplace phenomenon to the training. Although the participants have heard of, witnessed, and experienced inappropriate behaviours at work in two cases, they consider it part of organizational life. They were not aware of its existence as a defined phenomenon.The training, therefore, allowed them to name their experiences and be able to label it as unaccepted organizational behaviour.

One participant, for example, confessed that: *“the truth is that I didn’t know the word mistreatment before, the term… and the best thing that came out of the workshops is that they created awareness, among both employees and managers” (P.A).* Another added that*: “ we are fortunate that we do not have this phenomenon here, but awareness is very, very important, and everyone has to be exposed to it” (O.B).* Awareness was perceived as the first step for change: “*it is a malicious phenomenon…and if it will not be given a place, and call it by name, it will never change. It is essential for the weaker employees, those who do not have support or power” (R.B).*

***Knowledge and understanding***: Based on their gained awareness, most participants noted significant gains in knowledge and understanding of mistreatment.

Main areas of gained knowledge concerned what mistreatment is, what behaviors it includes,(and what behaviors are not considered mistreatment), its frequencies, causes, manifestations, and likely effects, particularly the emotional toll it takes. One participant told that. “*In the workshops, we learned to see what mistreatment is, what behaviours are related to it and what happens to people who experience it*” (K.K). Regarding its boundaries, another participant explained: “*I have learned for example that not every anger burst once or twice is considered mistreatment…that only if you see that it is purposeful and frequent, then it is, you see? (O.M).*

In particular, participants discussed learning that it can happen to anyone and any organization and not the victims' fault. In one participant’s words: “*Most people think that such a thing will not happen to them because they are nice people, social people, who never fought with anyone before…until they see these people, who are just like them and hear their stories.” (H.V.).*

Knowledge and understanding were perceived as the prerequisite for dealing with mistreatment stances.Sara, who suffered severe mistreatment in the past noted that: *“When it happened to me (mistreatment), I was unprepared. I never thought that such horrible and difficult things exist in organizations. I think it is essential that everyone will be prepared and own knowledge about it*” *(R. B).*

***Gauging expectations***: Participants further gauged their expectations of proper management workplace behaviours, examining their reality through mistreatment lens, asking themselves whether they are experiencing mistreatment and setting personal boundaries. As one participant noted: “*Once you know what behaviors are considered mistreatment, you can examine if you are experiencing it” (O.M).* Another explained that*: "Perhaps we were aware that such behaviours exist, but we thought that if nobody talks about it, then it's ok and we have to put up with it. Now we realize that it is not so” (P.A.).* Mistreatment has become a topic of discussing in the organization “*We now all ask ourselves and each other: is this mistreatment? we can talk to mid-management about it too*“ (T.C.), and led some employees to reassess their work relations: *“I have been scared to take a break to eat or stay at lunch a few minutes late, so she [her boss] will not say something, or think that I am not dedicated enough. I realized that I should not walk around feeling like this all the time’ ( O.M.)*. Others extended their reflections and expectations to life more generally: “*Once you know what mistreatment is, you can examine whether you have been living like that all your life, putting up with abusive parents, spouse, bosses” (K.K)*.

The knowledge-based reflections led to expectations of a safe place and civil behaviours: “*After you become aware of mistreatment and understand what it is, you realize that, sorry, it doesn’t have to be like this at work and outside it, and that no one is allowed to talk to you like this” (D.M).*

Simultaneously, participants critically examined organizational reactions to mistreatment. They identified ignoring mistreatment stances, speaking to offenders but not taking any actions against them, or transferring either the victim or the offender to a different department in the same organization. “ *In my past position there was someone, my manager, who really abused us, especially me. And I was transferred, as a punishment, which turned to be a prize for me” (M.S.)*

Gauging their expectations of the organization, they noted that they expect the organization to take measures against the offender. One participant told that: *“We didn’t think about it much before because we didn’t think someone will do something about it. Now we expect that they will do something (M.L).* ”Another added that: “*Now [after the training], I know that the manager that used to mistreat her employees shouldn’t have just been transferred her to another unit, she shouldn’t have continued to work at all” (D.M)*. An employee who suffered severe mistreatment in another unit said: *“ I am glad that I am in this new department, and not there anymore, but how come I had to leave while he [the offender] is still in the same place and position? (R.B)*

**Desire to continue learning**: In line with lifelong learning aims, participants noted continued interest and involvement in the topic. This was expressed by discussing mistreatment after the end of the training, sharing mistreatment stories, examining workplace situations related to their workplace reality and outside of it, raising questions and looking for answers. “*Since the end of the training, we are all talking about mistreatment in the halls, coffee corner, offices. We joke: is this mistreatment? And we seriously examine it” (T.C). “I talk about mistreatment outside work, with family and friends, I am reading about it, I want to understand it more, it is present even that the workshops finished” (P.A).*

**Learning to do:**

**‘Learning to do’** pillar emphasizes transferring knowledge from the learning environment to the professional and practical sphere and to deal with formal and informal situations at work and elsewhere (Delros, 1996).

In the current studies’ context, ‘Learning to do’, both as an expectation at the pre-training level and after, referred to knowing how to deal with mistreatment. Both personally (what to do in such cases) and formally (what organizational mechanisms are available for them). As one participant described it: “*if, god forbid, such a thing will come my way, in our department, I need to be equipped with what it takes to deal with, and so should the organization” (O,B). “I expect the training to give us a process with a solution in its end, not just awareness” (R.B); “I expect to be introduced with a structured mechanism that will help me know what to do. If it would have happened until now, I may turn to …, or to….. and tell her: you know, he yelled at me. But I am not sure this is what I would do or if this would have been the right way to do it” (D.B) ;“People need to know that there is someone to turn to, and who it is, and what to do….because when something happens, they ask: why didn’t you say something? I didn’t have who to. Who should have I addressed? It has to be clear” (M.L).*

The themes which emerged related to the impact of the training on this aspect of the movement were: **permission to act, knowing how to act, Paying forward.**

***Permission to act*:** The training was experienced as providing the participants with the legitimacy to ask questions and discuss issues related to mistreatment, “*legitimate and illegitimate workplace behaviors” (R.D)* , and how to deal with them, and to act upon them. This was in contrast to the past, in which misbehavior was usually normalized, not discussed and not confronted: *“I, too, was hesitant to stand up and speak, but having a name for it, knowing that there is something behind it, I know I will now act if needed*“ (T.C). “*if it happened to me now, I would act, for sure. I would not let it slide, or think it is part of organizational life*“ *(O.B*).

The decision to bring the training to the organization and to pilot it in the unit provided the base for the permission to ask, discuss and act, as it was perceived as a testament of a general organizational commitment to preventing mistreatment and as a corporate act of care for employees’ overall safety and well-being. In the participant’s words: “*it feels good that the organization thought about it, took the initiative. Makes me feel safe, that they care about us” (G.V);* *“I now know that such cases will not meet deaf- ears. Such cases will be heard” (A.V)*; “*I think it is essential to know that if employees feel that something is wrong, they will have someone to turn to….that things are not swept under the carpet. If you have a problem, you can lay it on the table, and we will try to help you. I think we feel that now” (D.M).*

These feelings were enhanced by the participants’ perception of the training as a novel and **pioneering**, leading the way to others, which created feelings of pride in their department and themselves, and sense of partnership: “*Our department took a bold move in which we became involved in a ground-breaking training program” (H.S.); “it’s a huge thing which we were involved in, to create a wake-up call and put this important topic at the center of discussion” (M.S,); “It is like a wheel which we are the first to push and give it the power to keep rolling . The more other organizations will join, it will make a lasting change” (A.B).*

Furthermore, and not unrelated, permission to act was based on management involvement in the training: both in its design prior to the training and on mid-management management’s participation in the training itself: *“in all this process, superiors took part as coordinators, so the management team was exposed to the training to the same extent that the employees did” (K.K).*

***Knowing how to act***: Prior to the training, the majority of participants expected to receive clear guidelines for actions and supporting organizational mechanisms: *“I expect the training to give us a process with a solution in its end, not just awareness” (R.B); “I expect to be presented with a structured mechanism that will help me know what to do. If it would have happened until now, I may turn to …, or to …..and tell her: you know, he yelled at me. But I am not sure this is what I would do or if this would have been the right way to do it (L.L). “I want to know that there is someone who listens to me in the most serious and empathetic way, that is there to help me, and that will do its utmost to help…” (P.A.). “We need agents for this; every organization needs one, an agent that will know everything from A to Z, that will follow up on everything, make it percolate into the organization, that will echo it all the time, make it part of the daily discussion, see the little details. Designated groups should be formed that will know and be updated in new rules and regulations and will be active and passionate about it.” (O.M)*

However, and in contrast to the sense of permission to act, most participants felt that the training did not provide them with a clear and detailed view of how to act. This was attributed to the organization, which still has no clear plan, supporting mechanisms or a designated person or unit to turn to in such cases, rather than to the training itself. “*I sort of… in the end…I didn’t understand what happens with this mistreatment after it is revealed and exposed. Like, how does the organization deal with perpetrators, how will the office take care of the problem…because it wasn’t outlined in training and it was missing” (P.A).*

Interestingly, the participants did not view the training or the organization less favorably for this lack of clarity regarding ways of acting. They attributed it to the pioneering nature of the training and saw it as part of a process to which the organization is committed an in which the training was just the first step. In this, they demonstrated a lifelong learning mindset: “it *is still unclear what the organization will do, because it is all so new, and the organization still doesn’t know how to deal with it. But they are working on it, and I am sure it will come in the future (O.B): “I think that even if there is still not a structured way to do it, because this is in its infancy, and they do not yet know exactly how to do it, it is on the agenda and on its way” (T.C.); “it still didn’t happen, but it will in the future…I think that people will see that it is for real, that the organization takes care of such cases, and something is done, if one hears such a thing, they know the process” (M.L.).*

***Paying forward:*** While ways of acting were not entirely clear, many participants described “paying forward” the general knowledge and understanding gained in training to help and support others who experience mistreatment, to encourage them to act and make a positive change: “…*I feel that now that I know [of mistreatment], I can help others, relatives and friends and family, and it creates ripples of impact*” (D.B.); “*my sister-in-law, she has been under severe abuse from her boss. I told her that she is experiencing mistreatment and that she should not tolerate it, and advised her how to act” ….. Before the training, I didn’t know what to advice here because I knew nothing about it.” (K.K.); “ I tell family and friends. It creates ripples of effect, and they become stronger….they understand that such things should not happen, and that they may face this [mistreatment] too sometimes, and that they should do something now.”(M.L.)*

***Learning to be:***

Learning to be is defined as learning that aims to develop one’s personality and act with growing autonomy, judgment and personal responsibility (Delros, 1998). It emphasizes personal development (Alt & Reichel, 2018) with a broad social-emotional focus. in skills such as self-awareness, coping, self-esteem and confidence (Ghorbani, Jafari & Sharifian, 2018)..

While expectations for personal development within the training were limited, many participants described the training as addressing personal skills related to coping with mistreatment in the post-training interviews. This element was perceived as unique and highly valued, both in mistreatment and more generally.

Central themes that emerged related to training gains in this learning to be realm included: **awareness of the role of personal skills**, **self-awareness**, **personal development**.

***Awareness of the role of personal skills in coping with mistreatment:*** Prior to the training, very few participants discussed personal skills concerning mistreatment, which was typically viewed as an organizational problem. This was with the exception of the participant who suffered severe mistreatment in the past, who said: *“I consider myself a strong woman, not easy to break. However, after my mistreatment experienced in the previous department, I realized it takes more to cope. As I suffered a lot and paid the price, I would like to develop coping skills in the training. I think everyone should, in case it happens to them” (R.B.).*

The training was found to develop among participants who did not experience mistreatment awareness of the role personal skills play in coping with mistreatment:“ *It created awareness to personal skills, and how they act in such cases, made us notice things that we have not seen before” (O.M.).*

They also noted becoming aware of the concept of emotional intelligence and social, emotional competencies, which the majority was not familiar with, and the role they play in coping with mistreatment and succeeding in various life spheres*: “When we spoke about personal skills, emotional intelligence and empathy, it was valuable for us and contributed to us. It seems like all that we spoke about as a remedy for mistreatment applies to more areas in our lives. I felt it contributed to me outside work too“ (D.B.).*

**Personal - development:** Self-awareness was described to lay the foundation for self-development: “*If a person has basic awareness, and they hear the things that were discussed in training, they start examining themselves and making changes” (M.S.).*

Indeed, following the training, participants felt that they have begun developing skills, or are prepared for making change, although the time in which the interviews were held allowed: “*I think that consciously or unconsciously, once we were exposed to these topics of developing personal, social-emotional skills, it did change something in us, in every one of us, I think, even if some of us did not practice it much yet” (L.L) .*

Learning to be aspect was particularly valued, which can have an impact on their lives beyond work. Several Main areas of self-development emerged from the interviews.

Describing enhancing **self-awareness**, the foundation of EI, one participant told that*“learning about ourselves made us more aware of who we are, how we think and act and what we need to develop to cope” (R.D).*

In one of few references to personal a**ccountability** and **proactiveness**, one participant said: “*I now[ after the training] understand that if I have a responsibility regarding my work, I have to take responsibility for myself too, what was the word for it?...be proactive…and that I can do it*” *(D.M).* Adding **assertiveness** to the skills mentioned above, a participant shared: *“I realized it doesn’t have to be that way, I can influence situations, speak up, express my opinion and not accept everything that is being said or done to me. I am doing the first steps now” (H.S.).* Connecting assertiveness to self-awareness, another participant added*:” When you look at yourself, where you allow things to happen to you and where you don’t, today, after the training, I know that there is more chance that I will stand up for myself than before (J.F.).*

Discussing **social responsibility**, one participant said: *“In the past, if my child told me something that happened to a friend, I would think: what do I care? Lucky it didn’t occur to me. Now I feel that I think of it differently: like, what? Why do they do it to him? I realize I can make a difference, go to school and talk about it, express your opinion, and help.” (A.B.).*

While a change was described as in its infancy, the participants showed understanding to this pace. They viewed personal development as a long-term process, demonstrating a lifelong view of Learning: “*personal development and change is a process which cannot be achieved in a workshop or two, require long-term, consistent and overarching process” (O.B.): “ you cannot expect people to behave differently. To change people’s behaviours, much work is required, more intensive and consistent work, working on the foundations, following up in it, and rewarding. While it created awareness and laid the foundation, I don’t think you can expect change at that stage” (R.B).*

**Learning to live together:**

The Learning to live together pillar of lifelong Learning seeks to provide learners with the opportunity to participate in learning communities, work on joint projects, share knowledge and cooperate (Alt & Reichel, 2018H). Learning to live together implies feeling affiliated to a group, understanding other people, and respecting differences (Ghorbani, Jafari & Sharifian, 2018), appreciating interdependence, working together, and managing conflicts (Delros, 1996). These are all the foundation to respectful and ethical workplace climate and are particularly important in the public sector in which employee nod rates are low.

Prior to the training, participants spoke very little of expectations regarding the Learning to live together, which relates to feelings of being part of a group, understanding others, and working together. Mistreatment was typically viewed from a victim-perpetrator or organizational perspectives and not as a climate characteristic. Only two participants expected the training to bring together segmented groups who do not have an opportunity to interact in daily workdays or create solidarity among employees: “*I would increase the interactions between the different groups through the training, because to date they are very closed and separated to each other. There is no way that I will go to another group (i.e. internal subunit) to say hi, and how are you? This will never happen. And vice versa*” *(M.L)*; “[I expect the training] *also to educate for solidarity, solidarity among colleagues. That if you see that your colleague is being mistreated, you act and to not ignore and stay silent” (T.C.).*

Post-training interview analysis revealed that the training has contributed to this aspect, both with mistreatment and more generally.

The main themes emerged related to the impact of the training in this aspect: **getting to know each other better**, **sharing experiences**, **group learning**,  **environment for emotional support and solidarity.**

**Getting to know each other**: the participants felt that the training allowed them to connect and converse and thus to: get to know people from other units and roles and know people in their unit in a more profound sense:” *we got to know each other better. We don’t have time for that during regular work hours. We don’t get opportunities such as these in other occasions” (G.V).* Another added*: “it was like a break from work for us, allowed us to sit in a group and talk*” (M.K).

**Sharing experiences**: The training allowed for opportunities to share workplace experiences, and in particular mistreatment-related experiences. Hearing stories allowed for personalizing and understanding mistreatment on a deeper and more emotional level, while sharing stories helped those who experienced mistreatment feel less alone. Overall, the exchange of experiences allowed for providing and receiving sympathy and understanding from each other and created greater closeness and connectedness among the participants*: “You hear other people’s experiences, how it is in their office, and you hear someone jumps- it is the same by us. You hear people who walk around feeling hurt, still, feel the pain, you understand mistreatment and understand them” (D.M.).*

*“[the training allowed]* *to hear each other, to share. People think that it must be only in their unit, that other places have ideal relations. And then they hear about this colleague and this boss. It changes everything. It can change the way we work. It eases the stress” (A.B.).* The only exception was the participant who experienced severe mistreatment*:* “I *came with a lot of experience. I felt a big gap between my views regarding mistreatment and those of others…there were things said that I could not relate to, even made me angry and resentful, such as forgiving perpetrators….” (R.B.).*

**Group learning**: the training, which involved discussions in groups, has helped create a deeper understanding of workplace relations through hearing different views and questions, and through discussions of various aspects, in a big group and small groups. *“These workshops surface other things. There is dialogue. This one says one thing, and the other adds something else, and we discussed different topics. I learned from what others said, and shared ideas too” (L.L).*

**Solidarity and Support**: participants not only provided emotional support to each other within the training but also felt that they are more likely to support each other at work, emotionally and behaviorally in the future: “*I believe that we will help and support each other more when one of us will be mistreated, and more generally. And if someone will be afraid to speak for himself, others will encourage him or speak on his behalf. This is something else the training has helped with.” (M.K).*

**Discussion**

The predominant goal of the study was to build and evaluate a mistreatment-prevention intervention program based on two sequential workshops. This is one of the very few interventions that used a pre-post measurement model (Hodgins et al., 2014) and the only one that utilized the four pillars of lifelong learning framework.

The training aimed to enhance the four pillars of learning through a framework that brings a broader organizational view. The framework includes the learning to live together component that meets the view of mistreatment as a social problem that is nourished from the social context which in turn can help mitigate it creating a safe working climate.

The training was generally well-accepted at the outset, positively evaluated by the participants and was recommended to be distributed further.

Firstly, mistreatment was perceived as a prevalent issue in organizations, which may occur in any organization, regardless of its current climate. A mistreatment-prevention training was, therefore, perceived essential in an organizational context, and in particular in public sector organizations. Simultaneously, such training was perceived as innovative and novel, not typically part of formal corporate training. These perceptions created initial openness to and engagement in the training and created a sense of pride, . The training was viewed as starting a change process, even a revolution, similar to the anti-sexual harassment movement. Alongside personal pride in taking part of such “pioneering act”, a sense of pride in the organization and the department for demonstrating care for its employees and social responsibility by leading change were noted, enhancing sense of safe climate,

Looking at the results, we can generally see that the intervention cultivated most of the four pillars. At the same time, points for improvements emerged.

Concerning the *Learning to know,* training participants could identify mistreatment and point that not all behaviours can be considered mistreatment. They gained knowledge and felt that they were able to replicate it in future settings. Most of the knowledge came from the first workshop designed to promote the first pillar. Similarly, other intervention processes also identified knowledge transfer through training as a crucial component of an intervention (Clark et al., 2019; Olsen et al., 2020).

The second workshop was found to promote the learning to do and to learn to be pillars. The second, *learning to do* pillar, is about knowing what to do in case of mistreatment. However, although participants reported more willingness and confidence to react in case of mistreatment, they sensed they have not been provided with a solid organizational process that can be used in need. Indeed, the formal organizational procedures were indicated as crucial for good intervention programs (Hodgins et al.,2014; Olsen et al.,2020), yet interventions that examined anti-bullying procedures are scant, and results needs further support (Olsen et al., 2020).

The third learning to be pillar is aimed to increase individuals’ ability to cope with mistreatment. Clark et al. (2019) embraced a similar approach by emphasizing participants resilience as a critical competency for intervention, and Simpson at al. (2019 focused on organizational compassion. Similarly, the current intervention program emphasized self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, assertiveness and stress tolerance, all of which are socio-emotional competencies proven to be efficient in mistreatment mitigation (Itzkovich et al., 2020). Indeed, and while limited in scope, participants felt that the training benefited with regards to their personal skills, both for work and life, adopted a lifelong learning of development and demonstrated a desire to further develop

The most interesting component in our comprehensive training program was the *Learning to live together* pillar*.* Interpersonal relationships and communication create a respectful organizational climate. This element was essential as the participants came from various roles and positions within the organizational unit. The training provided them with the opportunity to get to know others' work reality and better understand them, which may contribute to better inter-role cooperation. Having that in mind, in both workshops, the importance of learning to live together was stressed through reflections, group work and discussions. Embedding this component means embracing a more comprehensive view of intervention that considers the social, cultural setting. Furthermore, relationships with colleagues during training processes were argued to promote collaborative inquiry (Zins et al., 1997), to allow for the sharing of ideas, concerns and doubts between peers, and to support peer learning (Anderson, 2004), thus supporting other pillars. Although Blackwood et al. (2017) stressed that the social context matters, it was not addressed thus far in the context of mistreatment.

While we answered Hodgins et al.(2014) call for a broader viewpoint of interventions, the training still suffered from a few shortcomings.

First, in line with previous notions and participants voice, we believe that including organizational mechanisms and procedures would benefit the intervention plan.

Furthermore, the training was noted to focus on victims’ understanding, coping skills and the ability to live together more than perpetrators' civil behavior competencies. Indeed, itzkovich (2021) indicated that viewing mistreatment as a managerial behaviour will allow tuned intervention processes. In this regard, although mid-managers took part in the training, higher management did not. As mistreatment trickles down the organizational hierarchy (itzkovich, 2015), their involvement in such training was deemed crucial. *“Higher management can benefit from the training and from hearing their employees’ experiences and thoughts of mistreatment” (L.L.* : “*If the training takes place also with people high in the hierarchy, leaders and not only mid-management, it will make a real change. They need to be a part of it” (D.M).*

Meeting the study’s methodical limitations*,* further studies could develop and follow longer trainings to assess sustainability, study larger and more diverse populations and from different types of public sector departments and organizations, and integrate quantitative measures with the interviews, using a mixed method approach.

Although these shortcomings, all in all, our comprehensive model that was utilized for the first time, did promote a better organizational climate and a commitment to promoting mistreatment-free climate in the organization and beyond. The findings can contribute to a wider integration of mistreatment prevention efforts and be used for designing effective trainings in an aim to create organizations in which employees are respected and are able to flourish.

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