Poster Presentation

Understanding and Addressing Toxicity in Organisations: A Multi–Level Examination

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ABSTRACT

In his groundbreaking book, Frost (2003) provided a general framework for understanding toxic events as sources of toxic or destructive emotions in organisations. He pointed out how prevalent these events are in organisations and shows how such events can generate destructive emotional responses and undermine the productivity of organisations and the health of individuals working in those organisations. In this presentation we outline a theoretical model building on Frost's work to specify the mechanisms through which toxic events impact on individual and organisational outcomes. In our model, toxic events are generated by managerial behaviours or structural processes within organisations and these events in turn generate toxic/destructive emotions in both workgroup employees and their first-level managers. Emotions generated by these events are experienced at the individual level and the group level, and both levels, in turn, impact on organisational outcomes (individual workers' attitudes, workgroup performance) and the health (psychological, physiological) of employees and managers. Finally, we argue that emotional intelligence skills may ameliorate this process by influencing managers to effectively address the emotional impact of toxic events, and proactively prevent the generation of toxic events within their domain of control. We argue that responses such as these by managers would positively influence employees' perceptions of toxic events and their emotional responses. Additionally, we argue that emotional intelligence abilities possessed by employees may moderate their perceptions about, and emotional responses to, toxic events.

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