

Destructive Leadership: Its Origin, Impact, and Resolution

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Abstract

Destructive leadership can negatively impact organizations. By defining and describing destructive leadership, its evolution, and its impacts, organizations can identify ways of dealing with its implications. Definitions range destructive leadership from uncomfortable to illegal; from hurtful to unethical; from working towards organizational goals to working towards personal goals only. Several destructive leadership theories have developed and evolved over time, highlighting their common threads; two more recent ones include the leader-centric model, focusing on destructive leaders themselves, and the holistic model, focusing on key components leading to destructive leadership. Destructive leadership results from the confluence of three main components – a leader who makes the decision to become destructive, the follower who is susceptible in their work with the leader, and the environment in which they operate, including senior management, policies and procedures, and values and culture that are promoted. Impacts of destructive leadership can range from minor to severe, including abusiveness, theft or embezzlement, and exploitation. Since the impacts are significant, organizations should avoid hiring leaders with destructive tendencies. If a destructive leader has become part of the organization, they must be dealt with, through support to followers, retraining to the leaders themselves, and ensuring that the proper checks and balances are in place. Tools, such as feedback mechanisms, can help identify destructive leadership. Future research into destructive leaders' motivations as well as the impacts of destructive leadership beyond the organization would be beneficial to this area of study.

Keywords: destructive leadership, follower, environment, impact, coping

Destructive Leadership: Its Origin, Impact, and Resolution

You are starting a new job. Having heard good things about the company and overcome stiff competition to get the job, you are excited to start. You like working there and many co-workers seem friendly. But your boss is...awful! He makes your life, and those your co-workers, hell, leading to stress affecting your home lives. Some actions are unethical, and maybe illegal. Eighty percent of employees have experienced bad leaders or leadership in their careers at least once (Muller-Heyndyk, 2018). You are the norm.

Though leadership literature is focused on positive traits and strengths (Toor & Ogunlana, 2009), the “dark side of leadership” (Toor & Ogunlana, 2009) is gaining attention (Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007). When Lipman-Blumen (2005) coined the term *destructive leadership*, she described it as “those who act without integrity by dissembling and engaging in various other dishonorable behaviors, including behaviors such as corruption, hypocrisy, sabotage and manipulation, as well as other assorted unethical, illegal, and criminal acts” (p. 18). Although it can signify physical destruction, it can also damage relationships, reputations, and even organizational culture, leading ultimately to serious negative impacts on personnel and the organization (Holland, 2019). As such, it is important to identify organizational destructive leadership and deal with it accordingly (Winn & Dykes, 2019). To understand destructive leadership and its impacts, this paper’s objectives are to define and describe destructive leadership and its evolution, recognize its impacts, and identify ways of dealing with destructive leaders.

Senior managers need leaders and workers who will efficiently and effectively accomplish goals and objectives (Harvey, Martinko, & Douglas, 2006). A destructive leader may

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seek alternative goals and objectives that can run counter to those of the organization itself, poisoning the work atmosphere along the way (Gallus, Walsh, van Driel, Gouge, & Antolic, 2013). This may mean that the organization does not accomplish its goals and objectives (Krasikova, Green, & LeBreton, 2013). For followers, work could become dissatisfying and demoralizing, possibly leading to higher costs, such as absenteeism, lowered effectiveness, potential employee turnover (Schyns & Schilling, 2013), mental health issues (Matos, O'Neill, & Lei, 2018), and lower profitability (Erickson, Shaw, Murray, & Branch, 2015).

Destructive Leadership: Theories and Definitions (5-6 pages – page 8-9)

To build a stronger understanding of destructive leadership and its impacts, there must be greater understanding of its foundations, and the various perspectives. This section examines the history and definitions of destructive leadership and its evolution from capricious, oppressive and vindictive behaviour (Ashforth, 1994) through to strategic bullying (Ferris, Zinko, Brouer, Buckley, & Harvey, 2007) to current destructive leadership models.

Definitions and History of Destructive Leadership

Lipman-Blumen's definition above was adapted to provide context to the growing issues of destructive leadership. Krasikova et al. (2013) noted, for example, that it is "harmful behaviour embedded in the process of leading" (Krasikova et al, 2013, p. 1310). Also, destructive leadership spreads insidiously and unnoticed, equally affecting individuals, teams, and finally the entire organization (Vreja, Balan, & Bosca, 2016). This progress also highlights the change in perspective from analyzing what is seen, i.e. vindictive behaviours and actions (Ashforth, 1994), to what may not be seen, i.e. strategic bullying (Ferris et al, 2007).

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This broadening definition illustrates a relationship between leaders who establish the goals and objectives and followers who execute them (Padilla et al, 2007). These leaders build relationships to meet personal goals and objectives (Padilla et al, 2007). They work under the radar to meet personal goals and objectives within the organization and can build the necessary relationships to meet them (O'Boyle & Forsyth, 2012). Over time, theories of vindictiveness and oppression (Ashforth, 1994) led researchers to examine coercion and manipulation (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999) to hostile behaviour (Tepper, 2000) to selfishness (Ma., Karri, & Chittipeddi, 2004) to influence and control (Ferris et al, 2007). This echoes Krasikova et al (2013) stating that early research focused on actions of destructive leaders, but was silent on goals (Krasikova et al, 2013).

Leading to Lipman-Blumen's definition, Ashforth (1994) coined the term *petty tyranny* as using power and authority in capricious, vindictive, and oppressive manner (Ashforth, 1994). *Pseudotransformational leadership* was devised to speak to the leader's emphasis towards advancing their own self interests at the cost of their followers and the organization through manipulation, coercion, etc. (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). Tepper (2000 & 2007) then spoke to abusive leadership as the perception that supervisors can engage in displays of antagonistic behaviors (verbal and non-verbal), not including bodily contact (Tepper, 2000; Tepper, 2007). These definitions have a similar thread, in that they all examine leaders' behaviours from external perspective, i.e. what you can see. This period also coincides with the Krasikova et al. (2013) perspective on this research, focusing on destructive actions taken to achieve destructive goals.

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The period surrounding Lipman-Blumen's definition was an inflection point when perspectives move from the external towards the internal. For example, managerial tyranny referred to a leader's motivation by organizational objectives; but these may also be motivated by their own selfish ends. (Ma et al, 2004). Lastly, strategic bullying began examining the internal perspective by exploring leaders using influence tactics aimed at making followers submissive and powerless and more easily influenced and controlled (Ferris et al, 2007). This period concurs with Krasikova et al. (2013) perspective that this research focused on destructive actions to achieve destructive or constructive goals.

Research defines destructive leadership further, stating that it can consist of counterproductive leadership behaviours undermining trust and effectiveness (Johnson & Huwe, 2002), including inappropriate and unproductive behaviours through to illegal activities (Johnson & Huwe, 2002). To add to the difficulty, destructive leadership has also incorporated different terminology over time, such as toxic leadership (Winn & Dykes, 2019) and dysfunctional leadership (Hall, Blass, Ferris, & Massengale, 2004). Dysfunctional leaders stifle others by intimidating with power and ego; they can be unpredictable, and are often oblivious to their dysfunction's effects (Rose, Shuck, Twyford, & Bergman, 2015). Others define toxic leader behaviors to include divisiveness, promoting social exclusion, inequity, and threatening followers' self-esteem and security (Bhandarker & Rai, 2018). Some constantly place onerous structures in progress's path, intentionally or unintentionally disturbing psychological contracts, generally treating staff discourteously (Rose et al, 2015). Although a discussion of destructive leadership provides different perspectives on this topic, there is a lack of an integrated definition of what destructive leadership entails (Krasikova et al, 2013), as explained below.

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Parameters outlined in these definitions show destructive leadership ranging from the uncomfortable (Bhandarker & Rai, 2018) to illegal (Lipman-Blumen, 2006). It can range from the hurtful (Mette, 2020) to the unethical (Lipman-Blumen, 2006). It can use current organizational goals and objectives to the leader's benefit, through to working in opposition to organizational goals and objectives (Winn & Dykes, 2019). In considering the definitions together, there are common threads; destructive leadership propagates undetected when it has already caused damage. Ultimately, this can erode an organization from within (Thoroughgood et al, 2018; Sparks et al, 2015; Van Fleet & Griffin, 2006; Holland, 2019).

Two Perspectives of Destructive Leadership

The literature identifies two recent destructive leadership perspectives – leader-centric model, focusing on the leader and obstructions to them reaching their goals (Krasikova et al, 2013) and holistic model, examining different variables that can impact the leader in their environment (Padilla et al, 2007). Combined, the leader-centric and holistic models provide insights to identifying and analyzing important components of destructive leadership.

Leader-Centric Model. The leader-centric model focuses on the leaders' complexities (Krasikova et al, 2013), such as their characteristics and how they make decisions in given situations; this includes the decision to choose to act in a destructive manner (Krasikova et al, 2013). The model also outlines different decisions to make, including the leadership style, and issues/constraints that the leaders face, such as goal blockage and the organizational context, i.e. resource scarcity, etc. (Krasikova et al, 2013). An important predictor of a leader's choice to engage in destructive behaviour is goal blockage, as well as the leader's characteristics within the organizational context (Krasikova et al, 2013). The leader always has a choice to participate

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in destructive behaviour in responding to blockages (Krasikova et al, 2013). The organizational context in which the leader operates is considered but only from the leader's perspective; other stakeholders outside the organization are only mentioned and not discussed (Krasikova et al, 2013).

Holistic Model. This model discusses interactions among leaders, followers, and the environment in which they function (Padilla et al, 2007). It emphasizes negative outcomes for organizations and individuals (Padilla et al, 2007). This model is inclusive, identifying factors outside of leaders, including how leaders' characteristics, traits, and flaws interact with their followers and the organizational environment (Padilla et al, 2007). The model illustrates how interactions between these three components emphasize negative outcomes for organizations and individuals (Padilla et al, 2007). The leader is the decision-maker, but only within the organizational context in which they lead, i.e. the environment in interaction with followers (Padilla et al, 2007). Although it notes impacts from stakeholders outside the organization, it is not discussed (Padilla et al, 2007).

These two models, and the associated literature focus on toxic behaviour as a given. They do not take the next steps towards identifying "why" leaders act in this way. The models provide little information regarding the motivations behind the destructive leader.

Components Leading to Destructive Leadership

Leaders, when in a conducive environment, with susceptible followers, can result in destructive leadership (Padilla et al, 2007). Other models focus on leaders and how they react within their particular environment, given the situations in which they are placed (Krasikova et

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al, 2013). Toxic leaders adversely affect the organization's efficiency as well as employees' quality of working life (Fedorova, 2019).

The leader. Destructive leaders are described as charismatic, with a personal need to gain power, a level of narcissism, negative life themes, and a belief in the ideology of hate (Padilla et al, 2007). This may enhance a leader's control and permanency through relationships (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005) and affect employees' and citizens' quality of life (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). They use authority and position for personal gain (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005), including unfairly administering organizational policies, wilful hostility, public criticism, undermining the people around them, and even public outbursts (Ashforth, 1994).

To understand and better deal with workplace destructive leadership, organizations must first identify the inherent characteristics. These include unwillingness to listen to feedback, emphasizing their own desires and ideas; excessive self-promotion and self-interest, aiming at self-advancement; lying and inconsistency, backtracking or shuffling on rules they set; and lack of moral philosophy, lacking of values like social justice, fairness, and humanism (Winn & Dykes, 2019). Relationship-wise, these leaders reward incompetence, promote a lack of accountability; become blind to the incompetence, toxicity, and workplace poisoning; surround themselves with "yes" people; and bully and harass, becoming abusive and belittling toward others (Winn & Dykes, 2019).

The Environment. The leader's environment can negatively impact their leadership. Negative leadership is attributed to the working environment and the various organizational processes, resources, and structures (Schilling, 2009). Although leaders hold important roles in destructive leadership taking root, environmental factors can create fertile ground where

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destructive leadership can breed (Padilla et al, 2007). Organizational instability (unstable environment), perceived threats (from mistreatment to desperate social and economic situations), and a lack of cultural values (cooperation and group loyalty) can impact the development of destructive leadership (Padilla et al, 2007), as can resource scarcity or other constraints that impact the leader's ability to meet his/her goals (Krasikova et al, 2013).

The Followers. Susceptible followers can either help the destructive leader to further their own pursuits (colluders) or withdraw, due to low self-esteem among other possibilities (conformers) (Padilla et al, 2007). Reasons followers become susceptible can include basic needs that were never met, negative self-image, a lower maturity level, personal drive, congruency with the leader's values and beliefs (Padilla et al, 2007). However, followers are the recipients of leaders' actions, and can respond to harm if they so choose (Krasikova et al, 2013).

Shortcomings and Future Research

Research has focused on what is visible, i.e. actions and behaviours (Krasikova et al, 2013), but is moving towards what is under the surface, i.e. goals (Krasikova et al, 2013); research into the leader's motivation would be worthwhile, since this underpins why destructive leaders act the way they do. Taking this further, there has been significant focus on leaders and their impacts in the literature. This has focused on the leaders' impacts within the organizations; models generally present organizations as insular with little attention to stakeholders or events outside the organization. The environment should look beyond the workplace for the leader and the follower. The history and definitions of destructive leadership demonstrate that the breadth and depth of this topic is significant. However, common threads can be drawn. These include fundamental points regarding leaders' actions and behaviours, as

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well as the impact of those actions and behaviours on followers and the environments in which they operate. In analyzing this topic further, two important areas have not received much attention, including the impacts on external stakeholders.

Impacts of Destructive Leadership (1-3 pages)

Destructive leadership's impact includes negative follower perceptions, damaging their behaviour, and impacting organizational results (Schilling, 2009). Destructive leadership impacts can be far-reaching (Webster, Brough, & Daly, 2016). As noted earlier, destructive leadership results from leader, follower, and environmental interactions (Padilla et al, 2007; Krasikova et al, 2013). The range of impacts can span from minor to severe; research identified dysfunctional leadership impacts on employees from low severity, including avoidance behaviours, lower commitment/motivation, to moderate severity, such as lower self-esteem and aggressiveness towards coworkers, and high severity, with family destabilization, work/family conflict, and theft (Rose et al, 2015). This section examines impacts from the views of destructive leaders, followers, and the environment.

Destructive Leader

Schmid et al (2018) identified three important categories of destructive leadership: follower-directed destructive behaviours - genuinely abusive types of destructive leadership; organization-directed behaviours (stealing embezzling from the organization); and, self-interested destructive leader behaviour (leader exploits others to reach their goal) (Schmid, Pircher Verdorfer, & Peus, 2018).

With follower-directed destructive behaviours, the leader uses abusive forms of destructive leadership. Destructive leaders may also micro-manage and/or over-control work,

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provide unclear expectations, and may be unable to develop and motivate followers (Erickson et al, 2015). To this end, they may play favourites, tell people only what they want to hear, and even bully others (Erickson et al, 2015).

For organization-directed behaviours, leaders may steal from the organization or embezzle (Schmid et al, 2018). Destructive leaders can show workplace hostility, coercion, abuse, vindictiveness, and even sabotage (Thoroughgood, Padilla, Hunter, & Tate, 2012). They may be ineffective at negotiation, unable to deal with change, using information or the lack of information inappropriately, and overall communicating ineffectively (Erickson et al, 2015). They may also lie, engage in unethical behaviour or act inappropriately, exhibiting inconsistent and erratic behaviour (Erickson et al, 2015).

Self-interested destructive leader behaviours exploit others to reach their goal (Schmid et al, 2018). These leaders can show charisma (Padilla et al, 2007), which followers can find attractive (Matos, 2018). Projecting a highly confident and influential image aligns them with more influential individuals and potentially achieving short-term results which can gather people to them (Matos, 2018). Their charisma inspires, motivates, and elicits stronger pride, admiration, faith and performance by focusing on a compelling vision (Matos, 2018).

Interestingly, the models and literature on this subject provide scant information on the motivations of leaders to move along their destructive path. However, personal life impacts the work life and vice versa; the leaders' wounds in life change their perceptions, which can also blind them in their personal lives which influences how they see and interpret opportunities (Mette, 2020). As such, it is an important area for future research.

Followers

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Destructive behaviour impacts job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Gallus et al, 2013). This can lead to increased self-doubt, feelings of higher stress, anxiousness, depression, anger, fear, and physical symptoms (Webster et al, 2016). Negative follower perceptions, sub-optimal behaviour, and deteriorating organizational outcomes can result (Schilling, 2009). Employees may become silent due to role conflict, ambiguity, and overload when facing destructive leadership (Wu, Peng, & Estay, 2018). High job complexity can worsen the impact of destructive leadership (Wu et al, 2018). Leader abuse, coercion and vindictiveness (Thoroughgood et al, 2012) can negatively impact employee attitudes and overall well-being (Matos, 2018). This can lead to impaired well-being, low job and life satisfaction (Krasikova et al, 2013), and reduced ability to perform the job (Shaw, Erickson, & Harvey, 2011).

Destructive leadership can lead to social isolation, emotional hijacking and/or erosion, disengagement, exhaustion, depersonalization, as well as personal isolation and even mania (Shuck, Rose, & Bergman, 2015). Dysfunctional supervisors can increase employee psychological distress, leading to reduced organizational commitment and even retaliatory behaviour (Rose et al., 2015). Passive managing strategies, such as keeping distance, dodging communication, and suppressing pertinent information, can directly impact performance (Bhandarker & Rai, 2018).

Chronic stress can produce serious negative consequences in organizations (Tepper, 2007). Employees in this situation can transfer frustrations to family members by being indifferent and violent (Jha & Jha, 2015). It can lead to sustained negative emotions at home, with reduced family interactions (Bhandarker & Rai, 2018). With reduced effectiveness at work and home, employee performance efforts will be negatively impacted (Rose et al, 2015).

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Environment

Destructive leadership is frequently core to organizations' economic and social losses (Thoroughgood et al, 2012). The proportion of followers that are affected by abusive leaders before destruction in the organization ensues has yet to be determined (Thoroughgood et al, 2012). Unruly leader behaviour can often result in increased employee turnover and withdrawal of additional hard work resulting in decreased probability of attaining goals (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). Exhausting organizational resources, lowering goal attainment and even thwarting accomplishment of goals, and legal problems can result (Krasikova et al, 2013).

Through control and coercion (Padilla et al, 2007), the destructive leader will create a hostile workplace (Winn & Dykes, 2019). Dysfunctional leaders can seriously negatively depress an organization, which can result in several possible outcomes, including a higher risk of litigation (Clardy & Beadle, 2001), such as harassment in the workplace. As such, the organization can become toxic, negatively impacting culture (Erickson et al, 2015). Destructive leaders can increase employee turnover, with staff leaving toxic work environments (Rose et al, 2015). This can jeopardize the organization's purpose (Padilla et al., 2007).

Organizations are social entities, filled with interactions between units, processes, procedures, and the overall way that things are accomplished, i.e. the organizational culture (Thoroughgood et al., 2018). Destructive leadership negatively impacts group and organizational welfare (Thoroughgood et al., 2018). Ultimately, this may affect overall organizational performance (Shaw, Erickson, & Nasirzadeh, 2015).

Shortcomings and Future Research

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Destructive leadership can impact areas beyond the organization. These impacts can be detrimental, causing serious repercussions to employees and others. These will also impact employees' other work since the destructive leader's damage may spill into dealings with others inside (co-workers) and outside (suppliers, customers, unions, etc.). This degradation impacts other areas of the followers lives as repercussions spill outside the office (family, community, etc.). As such, an important area of potential study would be the impacts on external stakeholders.

Dealing with Destructive Leaders (5-6 pages)

In dealing with destructive leaders, there are generally two ways of resolving the situation. The first is to stop the destructive leader from entering the organization, by avoiding hiring destructive leaders. The second is to deal with the issue of destructive leadership if it is found in the organization (Winn & Dykes, 2019), by taking steps to limit any negative repercussions.

Avoiding Hiring Destructive Leaders

To ensure an organization does not have to deal with a destructive leader in the future, senior management should identify and stop that type of leader from getting into the organization in the first place, i.e. avoiding hiring them (Erickson et al, 2015). If an interview is designed appropriately, it can help identify destructive leadership during hiring and promotion processes (Padilla et al, 2007). This can be done by including narcissism assessments and those from dark side personality characteristics, selfish or socialized motives, as well as moral and ethical standards (Padilla et al, 2007), such as through the curriculum vitae, interviews, and detailed reference checks. If the leaders' style does not mesh or is not the best fit, the team

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may grow dissatisfied and individuals may leave, necessitating increased costs to recruit their replacements (Erickson et al, 2015). Those charged with selecting new organizational leaders must be trained in identifying destructive leadership traits, which can include narcissism and/or other dysfunctional tendencies (Erickson et al, 2015).

Dealing with the Destructive Leader

When a destructive leader joins an organization or has been promoted to higher responsibility, impacts can be felt throughout the establishment. The costs of dealing with their impacts can be significant, including counselling resources (Ellen III, Kiewitz, Garcia, & Hochwarter, 2019), retraining leaders (Rose et al, 2015) and staff as necessary, replacing departing staff, and even termination (Erickson et al, 2015).

As stated previously, the impacts of a destructive leader can be felt far and wide (Webster et al, 2016). Therefore, all organizational participants will need to decide how to handle destructive leadership (Webster et al, 2016). An important way to deal with destructive leadership is for senior managers to reliably represent and compensate expected constructive leadership (Erickson et al, 2015).

Followers. Coping strategies are behavioral efforts individuals use to understand, endure, or reduce taxing situations (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). With toxic leadership, followers cope with higher stress and deeper negative emotions by using three different handling strategies: assertive coping (reporting issues to higher authorities), avoidance (minimizing interactions) or adaptive coping (turning a blind eye) (Krischer, Penney, & Hunter, 2010). Followers can confront the destructive leader, aggressively or passively (Rose et al, 2015; Gallus et al, 2013; Webster et al, 2016; Krasikova et al, 2013). Strategies can include setting

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boundaries, knowing emotional triggers, building social support (Shuck et al, 2015), leaving the organization, or even challenging leaders directly (Webster et al, 2016). Finally, they can choose to stay and do nothing (Van Fleet & Griffin, 2006; Mette, 2020).

Research shows that employees seeking social support, through colleagues, mentors, family and/or friends; escaping, by bypassing/ignoring the leader; leaving the organization, departing, retiring, or transferring; or taking leave, reflecting and challenging the leader are important ways to cope when dealing with toxic leadership, through confrontation, managing communication, formal and informal complaints, and commencing health and well-being events (Webster et al, 2016). The follower can also reframe the situation by making accommodation, through positive thinking; seeking professional support and advice; working harder, maintaining professionalism and humour; and/or withdrawing, i.e. helplessness, shame and self-blame (Webster et al, 2016).

The environment. Examining the impacts outlined earlier, senior management will need to weigh the costs and benefits of different options, and how these will impact the overall environment (Sparks et al, 2015; Erickson et al, 2015; Webster et al, 2016; Jha & Jha, 2015; McCall, 2010; Bhandarker & Rai, 2018). As part of a strong environment, an excellent method would be to increase stability, ensuring that correct checks and balances are in place, and keeping the lines of communication open with internal stakeholders, reinforcing corporate values and removing perceived organizational threats (Padilla et al, 2007). Among the various tools available to work with destructive leaders are management training, placement prevention, and appropriate organizational structure and culture (Rose et al, 2015), as discussed later. Personality assessments can also provide helpful information to identify

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destructive leadership (Gallus et al, 2013). Performance evaluations, such as 360-degree assessments (Reed & Bullis, 2009) are also quite helpful in identifying destructive leadership, but also to reinforce important cultural norms. Job satisfaction and climate surveys are helpful to gauge the temperature within the organization (Erickson et al, 2015). To this end, the organization can perform exit interviews from those staff leaving to identify destructive leadership (Gallus et al, 2013).

With destructive leadership, senior management must deal with the situation (Erickson et al, 2015), as this can help followers understand that senior management is on their side. Destructive leaders can take advantage of several environmental factors affecting the organization, including organizational instability, potential threats, culture and values, as well as the lack of checks and balances (Padilla et al, 2007). The organization must therefore ensure that the governance rules are defined clearly and applied in a consistent manner (Padilla et al, 2007). When people feel that they are being threatened, they are more willing to agree with assertive leadership (Padilla et al, 2007); it is therefore senior management's responsibility to ensure that people do not feel threatened. Culture prefers social conditions that are certain; cultures emphasizing cooperation and group loyalty prefer strong leaders to bring them together (Padilla et al, 2007). Checks and balances are formed, based on the organization in place including establishing performance objectives and performance evaluations (Padilla et al, 2007). Feedback mechanisms are fundamental to gauging workplace situations, such as the 360-degree feedback (Erickson et al, 2015; Mette, 2020). This should also emphasize employee participation, leadership accountability, communication and feedback (Erickson et al, 2015); this completes a communication and accountability circle. Therefore, effective institutions,

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stability of the system, and proper checks and balances, along with committed followers, will deflate attempts to circumvent the system (Padilla et al, 2007).

The destructive leader. The destructive leader also has significant decisions to make in this situation. They can reinforce their standing within the organization, by building strong relationships with others in the organization (Harvey et al, 2006). They too can choose to leave the organization, or they can stay (Mette, 2020), hoping for the situation to improve for them.

If the destructive leader decides to stay and change, they will need to work with the organization to change their ways. Leadership development and coaching are effective ways of dealing with dysfunctional behaviour in providing for more tailored interventions, customizing organizational interventions, such as digital learning (Schmid et al, 2018). Leadership training and development provide an opportunity to promote reflection on ineffective or unacceptable behaviour (Schilling, 2009). If a destructive leader arrives in an organization, the resulting issues must be dealt with effectively and quickly to ensure that they do not permeate the organization, potentially causing damage (Krasikova et al, 2013; Sparks et al, 2015; Holland, 2019). Ultimately, the outcome of exchanges between destructive leaders, their followers, and the environment in which they work may ultimately cause termination, demotion, failure to progress, reprimands, criminal records, tarnished reputations (Padilla et al, 2007).

The organization must take the opportunity to ensure that all understand the organizational culture; it is important to develop organizational resilience. This can be done by helping followers improve self-awareness, such as Myers-Briggs Type Inventory, to assist individuals and supervisors understand interests, biases, preferences, and, values; thus helping to understand behaviours and build resilience (Winn & Dykes, 2019). Management can help

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subordinates avoid solo confrontations and even provide feedback and coaching during and after confrontations (Winn & Dykes, 2019). Management can encourage consultation with trusted colleagues interacting with that toxic leader, seeking advice to build resilience and strength (Winn & Dykes, 2019). They can also identify opportunities for experiential training to model appropriate behaviors, skills and attitudes (Winn & Dykes, 2019). Lastly, they can use peer evaluations of leaders' performance to help identify toxic leaders (Winn & Dykes, 2019). These can also provide exposure to proper group norms, not only those of destructive leaders. Participants learn how the organization should work, building resiliency (Winn & Dykes, 2019).

Modern Example of Destructive Leadership

The 2017 World Series winning Houston Astros baseball team were involved in an illegal sign stealing scheme (Axisa, 2020). Though not a typical example, it demonstrates its insidious nature. It highlights many elements of destructive leadership, including illegal activities (Lipman-Blumen, 2006), identifying and using colluders (Padilla et al, 2007), and turning a blind eye (Bhandarker & Rai, 2018). In doing nothing, team management played an active role in the destructive leadership. Also, every baseball season provides threats (Padilla et al, 2007) from other baseball teams; winning the World Series is every team's goal.

Baseball teams use an elaborate system of gestures (signs) to communicate with each other when they cannot speak with each other face-to-face. The Houston Astros utilized illegal methods to steal their opponents' signs, gaining an unfair advantage over them. The Commissioner of Major League Baseball investigated a former player's allegations. This investigation concluded that most position players on the team received sign information (Manfred, 2020). It also noted that "Players stated that if Manager A.J. Hinch told them to stop

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engaging in the conduct, they would have immediately stopped” (Manfred, 2020, page 5). The team’s General Manager, Field Manager, and Bench Coach were held accountable for the misconduct and for not ensuring that the players understood the rules and ensured that everyone adhered to them (Manfred, 2020). Stated differently, the Houston Astros players with the Bench Coach illegally stole signs and the General Manager and Field Manager did not manage the team culture and environment, leading to destructive leadership.

The environment was conducive to destructive leadership. Athletes, with superior abilities, are often narcissistic, especially the team leaders who excel at their positions and skills. New players, wanting to fit in and stay for the long term, colluded (Padilla et al, 2007); most players were involved (Axisa, 2020). Ultimately, the General Manager and Field Manager were suspended for turning a blind eye (Bhandarker & Rai, 2018) to the incident (Manfred, 2020) and were ultimately terminated; the Bench Coach was also terminated for his involvement even after moving to another team. The team was never stripped of its World Series title (Vigdor, 2020). A. J. Hinch and the Bench Coach have now been hired in manager roles with other teams. The ends justified the means since the impacts of cheating were minor.

Conclusion

The darker side of leadership exists and impacts the workforce. During its evolution, the focus of destructive leadership has shifted from the external and what can be seen to a more insidious perspective, which cannot be as easily seen. By doing so, leaders, followers, and the overall environment (senior management, stakeholders, etc.) everywhere can understand what constitutes destructive leadership, to learn and understand its impact on the organization, but also to plan and execute strategies to avoid or to deal with these issues in the future.

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When combined, the leader, the followers, and the environment all converge to create destructive leadership. The leader-centric and holistic models help explain destructive leaders' decision-making, though they do not fully explain the motivations behind those decisions. As well, the models tend to be insular, examining the situation within the organization; as such, there is limited stakeholder examination beyond the organization. The combination can impact followers from lower commitment/motivation, lower self-esteem to family destabilization.

To deal with toxic leaders, management can refrain from hiring destructive leaders through assessments tools. Once the destructive leader has come into the organization, management will need to make use of various mechanisms to maintain organizational stability, such as confrontation, professional support and advice, as well as other facilities.

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