



# Pete Chandler - Acting CE

*Healthy, thriving communities, Kia Momoho Te Hāpori Ōranga.*

27 May 2019

## Bullying, Incivility and Psychological Safety

With this being my last CE Newsletter in the Acting CE role (Helen is back on-board this week) I wanted to take the opportunity to talk about bullying, incivility and psychological safety.

A couple of weeks ago it was Pink Shirt Day which for me serves as an annual reminder of the journey we began in 2016 to eradicate workplace bullying from our DHB. Many of you will have seen that there has been much media attention on what is going on around behaviours in Parliament and an important statement of expectations from the State Services Commission around public sector organisations has been released. Peter Hughes, the Commissioner, states:

*"Public Servants must be able to raise concerns without fear of punishment or reprisal. If Public Servants raised genuine concerns through proper channels and were then disadvantaged in any way because of it, that would be completely unacceptable and something I view very seriously."*

Under the *Creating our Culture* strategic priority we've made some major steps forward in the last three years including:

- Many *Creating our Culture* workshops to explore together what we want our experience of work to be
- Redefining our CARE values and the behaviours that are not ok with us
- Launching our handbook on workplace behaviours
- Encouraging people to talk through issues and resolve early (e.g. using BUILD)
- Joining the Speaking up Safely programme

These are foundations for the future rather than solutions in themselves and now we're preparing to move into the next phase of *Creating our Culture* linked to the findings of our Evolution Discovery phase.

In my group sessions with teams at the end of last year it became evident that there is still confusion about what workplace bullying actually is and so this is a good time to clarify. At BOPDHB we use the national MBIE definition as our formal definition of workplace bullying which is:

**Workplace bullying is: repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or a group of workers that can lead to physical or psychological harm.**

- > Repeated behaviour is persistent (occurs more than once) and can involve a range of actions over time.
- > Unreasonable behaviour means actions that a reasonable person in the same circumstances would see as unreasonable. It includes victimising, humiliating, intimidating or threatening a person.
- > Bullying may also include harassment, discrimination or violence (see Section 4 of this guide for how these are dealt with).

**Note:** The bullying definition is adapted from Safe Work Australia's definition

### Workplace bullying is not:

- > one-off or occasional instances of forgetfulness, rudeness or tactlessness
- > setting high performance standards
- > constructive feedback and legitimate advice or peer review
- > a manager requiring reasonable verbal or written work instructions to be carried out
- > warning or disciplining workers in line with the business or undertaking's code of conduct
- > a single incident of unreasonable behaviour
- > reasonable management actions delivered in a reasonable way
- > differences in opinion or personality clashes that do not escalate into bullying, harassment or violence.

While this definition sets a clear and helpful benchmark for what constitutes bullying, it's also obvious that it does not include a range of situations that people might encounter at work that make them feel uncomfortable, hurt or distressed.

**Incivility**, defined as rude or unsociable speech or behaviour (including on email) is often labelled as bullying. It isn't bullying unless it's a targeted pattern, but it's still unacceptable and something we should apologise for if we're having a bad day and react or respond in a way that hurts someone.

A term that more people are talking more about is **Psychological Safety**. We're having a lunchtime Grand Round video on this topic tomorrow (Tuesday 28 May) from 12.30-1.30pm in the Tauranga Hospital Conference Centre (behind the library) and this is something we will be encouraging managers and leaders to grow understanding of. This video will be shown at a later date in Whakatāne, the details of which will be released later this week.

The essence of psychological safety is perhaps summed up by the question 'Do I feel safe here?'. A lack of psychological safety is evident when people don't feel free to share their honest thoughts, have a fear of reprisals or experience a low trust environment.

Google's huge worldwide workforce survey (Project Aristotle) on healthy, high performing teams who feel a sense of joy and fulfilment at work identified that the very best thing we can do as organisations is create an open, high trust environment where people feel safe and supported. This is psychological safety in a nutshell and something we all want at work.

Whilst every one of us plays a part in determining what it feels like to work here, managers have a special responsibility in shaping team culture and for doing our very best to ensure people feel valued, supported, listened to. One of the most important future markers of a manager's success will be creating a sense of openness, high trust and safety for the people they have taken on responsibility for.

As we begin to explore this more complex area of Psychological Safety in the months ahead we'll learn and grow together.

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**"Words have great power that could make or break others...so please be careful with them."**

*Timothy Pina (Born 1957) – American children's author of Bullying Ben*

# **Professor Peter Gilling completes visiting professorship in America and wins three awards**

Head of the DHB Clinical Campus Professor Peter Gilling has just returned from a prestigious visiting professorship in America and also recently picked up three international awards.

He was invited to be this year's visiting professor at the renowned Sidney Kimmel Medical College, Thomas Jefferson University, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania over 8-9 May. It was an invitation he described as "an honour".

Professor Gilling's time at the college included giving lectures, taking journal clubs (a forum in which students get an opportunity to discuss scientific papers and research-related issues), and speaking to resident students one-on-one about their research.

In recent months Professor Gilling has also picked up three international awards. These included two at The Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand (USANZ) conference in April: the Platinum Trophy for best endeavour presented at the meeting and the Low-Arnold Award for the best podium/poster presentation in the field of female or functional urology.

The third award was for winning a BPH (benign prostatic hyperplasia) debating contest at the American Society of Men's Health conference in Chicago earlier this month. Professor Gilling was declared the winner following an audience vote.

