WORKING WITH YOU IS KILLING ME . . .

The Contagion Effect of one bad apple on the group . . .

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Education Attorney
Federal Judicial Center
This program will help you:

- Recognize the symptoms and affects of a negative workplace environment.
- Understand the theory behind Group Contagion and recognize the role each of us plays in these situations.
- Coach your managers and team on how to proactively set boundaries and control reactions to co-workers who cross those boundaries.
- Coach your managers and team on how to proactively “unhook” themselves from difficult interpersonal situations at work.
What is the science behind the affect of one **bad** apple in the group...
Reconstruct:

POWER OF COLLECTIVES: PEOPLE CONFORM AND WANT TO BELONG

goals
behaviors
needs
BAD APPLES

Before the whole bunch spoils, train managers to recognize a bad apple and deal with poor performers

Episodic Negative Behavior

A Negative Member (chronic)
- Withholder of Effort
- Affectively Negative
- Interpersonal Deviant

Reactions
- Inequity
- Negative Emotions
- Damaged Trust

Moderators
- Intensity of Negativity Behaviors
- Team Interdependence
- Valence of Recent Outcomes
- Personal Coping Abilities

Negative Member Defensive Behaviors
- Explosions
- Covert revenge
- Mood maintenance
- Denial
- Slacking off
- Withdrawal

Group Process
- Motivation
- Cooperation
- Conflict
- Creativity
- Learning

Group Outcomes
- Low performance
- Low wellbeing
- Low viability

Relative Power

The Bad Apple Phenomenon: Aggregation, Spillover, Sensemaking

How, When, and Why Bad Apples Spoil the Barrel: Negative Group Members and Dysfunctional Groups, 2006, Felps, Mitchell, and Byington
Negative Members

Negative Response

1) Explosion
2) Revenge
3) Mood Maintenance
4) Distraction Denial
5) Withdrawal
WHERE IS THE EVIDENCE?

Teams = All Socially Anxious

M = 45.8

Teams = Mix of Socially Anxious and Socially Calm

M = 53.2

Teams = All Socially Calm

M = 85.5

Asymmetric Effect:

Low Group Efficacy

Group Personality = Lowest Member’s Score

- how low the lowest teammate is on the variables of conscientiousness, agreeableness, and emotional stability is usually a strong predictor of group-level variables

How, When, and Why Bad Apples Spoil the Barrel: Negative Group Members and Dysfunctional Groups, 2006, Felps, Mitchell, and Byington
In our knowledge based society, we will need highly skilled workers and half of the U.S. workforce will be working in teams.

How, When, and Why Bad Apples Spoil the Barrel: Negative Group Members and Dysfunctional Groups, 2006, Felps, Mitchell, and Byington
BAD PREVAILS OVER GOOD!

- Negative cognitions, feelings and events longer lasting effects than equivalent positive
- Romantic relationships - 5:1 for success
- Work 1-8% are negative greater impact on job satisfaction and organizational commitment – most pronounced for teams
## Types of Bad Apples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Withholders of Effort</th>
<th>Affectively Negative</th>
<th>Interpersonal Deviants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Not completing tasks</td>
<td>• Negative mood or attitude</td>
<td>• Making fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Not taking responsibilities</td>
<td>• Awkward interpersonal style</td>
<td>• Saying something hurtful</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Shirking</td>
<td>• Pessimism</td>
<td>• Inappropriate jokes</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Free riding</td>
<td>• Anxiety</td>
<td>• Mean pranks</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Social loafing</td>
<td>• Insecurity</td>
<td>• Publicly embarrassing someone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Irritation</td>
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</table>

**How, When, and Why Bad Apples Spoil the Barrel: Negative Group Members and Dysfunctional Groups, 2006, Felps, Mitchell, and Byington.**
Warning

There can be other causes of bad apple behaviors

Organizational Support
Unclear Direction
Work Family Issues
**Responses to Bad Apples**

**Motivating Actions**
- Withholding of praise, respect, or resources
- Not so subtle confrontations
- Formal administration of punishment
- Demands of apology and compensation

**Rejection**
- Eliminate or limit interaction with negative members
- Removing negative individuals from the group
- Ostracizing

**Defensiveness**
- Lashing out
- Revenge
- Unrealistic appraisals
- Distraction
- Mood Maintenance
- Withdrawal

Difficult teammates will be rehabilitated, ousted, or teammates will compensate for them.
Motivating Actions
If they work, both are fairly constructive responses to a negative individual.

Rejection

Minor Impact on Task Performance

When Motivation and Rejection Fail . . .

Cannot Change The Negative Member

Defensiveness
Low Power Situations

- Organizations tend to avoid hiring or promoting difficult individuals for leadership positions.
- Low Power do not have decision making authority, responsibility, adequate experience or confidence to take decisive action.
First Look to the Leader

- What is the affect?
  - If coworker has a lack of power to change others then they protect themselves
  - Withdraw or lash out
  - React strongly instead of rationally to protect themselves

- How do we manage and teach others to manage these relationships
DEFENSIVE BEHAVIORAL REACTIONS

• Exploding – dominate or attack a frustrating person

• Sabotage instead of confrontation

*How, When, and Why Bad Apples Spoil the Barrel: Negative Group Members and Dysfunctional Groups*, 2006, Felps, Mitchell, and Byington
Desire to restore perceptions of equity and justice

Managers tend not to confront each other but are ingenious at sabotage
Defensiveness

“The inclusion of defensiveness as a reaction to a negative member recognizes that peoples’ reactions to difficult circumstances are often less than rational.”

Two key factors that promote

1. A lack of power
2. Tendency to react strongly to negative behavior

Mood maintenance behaviors are efforts to improve one’s affect and can be either consciously or unconsciously motivated.
MOOD MAINTENANCE TAKES PRECEDENCE OVER TASK PERFORMANCE

- Positive social interactions
- Breaks
- Eating
- Smoking
- Drinking
M O D E R A T O R S  O F  T H E  B A D  A P P L E  E F F E C T

- Intensity
- Interdependence of group
- Outcomes
- Coping Skills
Group Transition Mechanisms

- Additive Defensive
- Spillover Effects
- Sensemaking Effects
Negative Effects on Group Processes and Outcomes

• Motivation
• Creativity and Learning
• Cooperation
• Conflict
• Group Outcomes
Five Dysfunctions of a Team

- Inattention to Results
- Avoidance of Accountability
- Lack of Commitment
- Fear of Conflict
- Absence of Trust
When You Find A Bad Apple:

1. 360 Degree Feedback
2. Act swiftly
3. Remove them from the group
4. Train Manager on conflict resolution
START WITH GROUP THEN MOVE TO THE INDIVIDUAL

1. Why take it seriously?
2. Pragmatic Approach
3. Work on solutions to fix the problem (conflict management skills)
**When Hiring Look At:**

1. Assessments
2. References
3. Work Group Simulators
4. Ask them to talk about previous employment
http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/370/Ruining-It-for-the-Rest-of-Us
Turnover Contagion

Working Toward Embedded & Secured Employees
Importance of Decreasing Turnover?

- Best employees have mobility
- Firms with high turnover significantly under-perform their rivals.

Hatch and Dyer 2004: 1155
“When outcomes are too low relative to the employee’s expectations, an employee becomes dissatisfied and motivated to leave the organization, increasing his or her “desirability of movement.” Turnover, then, becomes a function of the extent of this desirability combined with the perceived ease of movement (i.e. number of perceived job prospects.”

*The Psychology of Voluntary Employee Turnover*

2007 Harman, Lee, Et al.
CAUSES OF TURNOVER

Personal Embeddedness

Perceived Office Embeddedness

Turnover

Turnover Contagion: How coworkers’ Job Embeddedness and Job Search Behaviors Influence Quitting
2009 Academy of Management
“The more connected an individual is with the organization (e.g. belongs to work groups) and with the community (e.g., affiliated with local clubs, interest group, or churches), the more embedded he or she is.”

The Psychology of Voluntary Employee Turnover
2007 Harman, Lee, Et al.
“Throughout the history of psychology, many have argued that the act of perceiving another person’s behavior creates a tendency to behave similarly oneself.”

*The Chameleon Effect: The perception-behavior link and social interaction* 1999 Chartrand & Bargh
“...the tendency to quit spreads through a work group.”

“...turnover contagion is most likely to occur when the coworkers around a focal employee are not “embedded” in their jobs.”

Turnover Contagion: How coworkers’ Job Embeddedness and Job Search Behaviors Influence Quitting
2009 Academy of Management
Individual Voluntary Turnover

**The Turnover Contagion Model**

**Level 1 Variables**
- Individual Job Embeddedness

**Level 2 Variables**
- Coworkers’ Job Search Behavior (qualitative & quantitative)
- Coworkers’ Job Embeddedness (average job embeddedness score of employees in department or branch)

**Links**
- Organization
- Community
- Organization
- Community
- Fit
- Organization
- Community
- Sacrifice
- Organization
- Community

*Turnover Contagion: How coworkers’ Job Embeddedness and Job Search Behaviors Influence Quitting* 2009 Academy of Management
Paths by Which the Turnover Decision May Unfold Over Time

**Path 1**
- **Initiating Event**: Shock (e.g. pregnancy)
- **Cognitive/emotional process**: Prompts quitting script enactment
- **Search behavior**: None
- **Quit decision**: Automatic

**Path 2**
- **Initiating Event**: Shock (e.g. unpleasant new boss)
- **Cognitive/emotional process**: Comparison of shock to images leads to high dissatisfaction
- **Search behavior**: None
- **Quit decision**: Fairly Automatic

**Path 3**
- **Initiating Event**: Shock (e.g. unexpected job offer)
- **Cognitive/emotional process**: Comparison of shock to images leads to relative dissatisfaction
- **Search behavior**: Search for alternatives
- **Quit decision**: Deliberate

**Path 4a**
- **Initiating Event**: No Shock
- **Cognitive/emotional process**: Accumulating dissatisfaction
- **Search behavior**: None
- **Quit decision**: Fairly automatic

**Path 4b**
- **Initiating Event**: No Shock
- **Cognitive/emotional process**: Accumulating dissatisfaction
- **Search behavior**: Search for alternatives
- **Quit decision**: Deliberate

WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS: A TYPICAL DAY

- He is so incompetent it makes me crazy...
- When she does that it just gets on my nerves...
- He continually wastes my time by arriving late and missing deadlines.
- She invades my space and uses my stuff.
- He makes so much noise I can’t concentrate!
- She talks so much and tells me things I really don’t want to know.
MANAGEMENT HEADACHES

- Chronically Delayed
- MIA
- The Cynic
- The Passive-Aggressive
- The Attention Seeker
- The Bad Attitude
- The Slug
- The Addict
- The Thief
## Defining Some Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confining Roles</th>
<th>An unconscious way WE act that can typecast us</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boundary Busters</td>
<td>The things people do that intrude on our space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toxic Relationships</td>
<td>The way OTHERS act that gets us hooked</td>
</tr>
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</table>

- Unhook physically
- Unhook mentally
- Unhook verbally
- Unhook with a business tool
Confining Roles

- Hero
- Rebel
- Peacemaker
- Invisible One
- Caretaker
- Martyr
- Entertainer
When Is a Role a Hook?

Playing a role becomes a hook if it constricts you or limits your ability to move ahead.

- You may feel branded
- You may be overlooked for promotions or raises
- You are spending too much time on other people’s problems
BOUNDARIES

- Time
- Personal Space
- Keeping Their Word
- Personal Information
- Expressing Emotion
- Manners and Courtesy
- Noise
- Others?
FATAL ATTRACTIONS - TOXIC RELATIONSHIPS

- Empty Pit
- Chip on the Shoulder
- Exploder
- Saboteur
- Pedestal Smasher
SEVEN STAGES OF FATAL ATTRACTION

- Magnetism
- Consumption
- Rehearsal and recovery
- Conversion obsession
- Post-interactive heartburn
- Allergic reaction
- Imprisonment
There are 4 steps:

1. Unhook Physically
2. Unhook Mentally
3. Unhook Verbally
4. Unhook with a Business Tool
UNHOOK PHYSICALLY

- Exercise program
- Wellness program
- Oxygenize - Deep breathing
- Take a walk or walk the hallway
Unhook Mentally

- Examine the situation to understand how it occurred
- Reflect on how you can change your behavior.
- View the circumstances objectively to see what practical options are available.
Unhook Mentally

- What’s happening?
- What are the facts?
- What is his or her part?
- What is my part?
- WHAT “SHOULD” AM I OPERATING?
- What are my options?
- What is the result I want?
- What are the consequences of each of my options?
Think about what to say that will resolve the problem, not perpetuate it.

When setting a boundary with someone, state it clearly, without anger, in as few words as possible.

Don’t set a boundary unless you’re prepared to maintain it.

Use positive, inclusive language.
I felt tension between us when we were in our team meeting because you seemed to ignore my report – so I’d like to go through it with you.

I felt uncomfortable when I came back from lunch and found you digging through my desk drawers because that’s an invasion of my personal space. In the future, please just ask me for whatever you need, and I’ll be happy to find it for you.

I feel disrespected when you are late getting me your numbers because it causes me to be late with my report and look bad in front of my boss. We need to find a way to meet the deadline every month, so can we work out a new schedule?

I was very unhappy when we reviewed the project plan, because it left me with a lot of work and no time. Can we go over the plan again?
Business tools help you reduce the emotional level of your next interaction.

A business tool is any standard procedure or written document used in a business setting.
BUSINESS TOOLS

For Employees
- Memos, email, letters
- Employee goals or other benchmarks
- Meeting agendas to control use of time

For Supervisors
- Job descriptions
- Policies and procedures
- Performance reviews
- Disciplinary action forms
- Memos, email, letters
- 360-degree reviews
Expect slips or negative behaviors to reappear.

Restate the agreed-upon decision regarding the boundary.

Some people won’t change. You’ll have to detach yourself and depersonalize your behavior.

You have a right to enjoy your work - resolve things, talk to a manager or HR, or consider changing positions.
PROGRAM SUMMARY

- Recognize the symptoms and affects of a negative workplace environment.
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