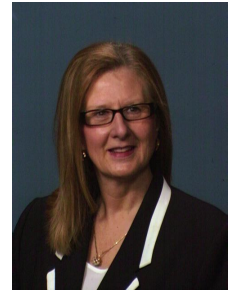


Are Human Dynamics Hurting Your Organization?



By **Brenda Kelleher-Flight Ph.D.**
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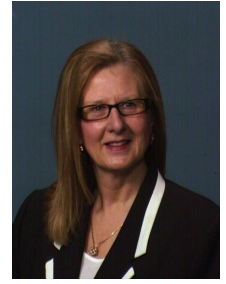
We like and dislike others for a number of reasons. One reason which affects the success in board rooms, team rooms, and on all work sites is what we classify as unacceptable behaviour. This behaviour affects our ability to recruit and retain board members and staff members. It may present for three different reasons. First, it may appear when an individual does not possess the knowledge and skills to perform the required tasks. In this case, the individual can be provided professional development opportunities to remedy the situation. Second, the individual may have a disease, habit or condition which may need intervention medically or via a support program in order to deal with the associated issues. Third, the person may not possess the skills or wish to possess the human relations skills required to work in harmony with others.

When a person demonstrates any of the following negative verbal, non-verbal or physical behaviours it affects everyone in that setting:

- Physically threatening actions
- Intimidating or condescending verbal language
- Non-compliance (or agrees to do one thing and actually does another). This person does not follow the organization's code of ethics and policies or s/he quietly does not follow through on assigned tasks

It's not how you feel that determines how you act. It's how you act that determines how you feel David Sandler

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These behaviours exist and persist where:

- The organization 's practices send the message that the behaviours are acceptable or condoned
- There is no written code of ethics
- There are no consequences for such behaviour or the consequences are applied situation by situation rather than based on an explicit set of rules
- There is no acceptable route to express emotions or the individual has never learned acceptable ways to express his negative thoughts
- There is an inconsistent application of the rules and individuals note that certain people are allowed to "get away with" certain behaviours because of their position, because they are extremely competent, or because they generate revenue or "get things done" for the entity
- Entities assume that all persons learned socially acceptable behaviours and can manage themselves by themselves.

More and more, individuals, professional associations and unions are demanding to work in a safe and caring environment. The question for many organizations is, "What do we have to put in place to ensure that every person feels safe?"

Review the following list and determine if the entity is doing everything in its spheres of control and influence to be supportive:

- There is a list of behavioural competencies for board members (see *Superior Governance for your governing body* for a comprehensive list)
- Employees' team enhancing behaviours are evaluated during the hiring process
- There is an enforced code of conduct
- There are written standards of behaviour
- There are consistent expectations for individuals at all levels within the entity
- There is an implemented process which focuses on organizational culture and it clearly outlines that bullying is unacceptable
- Practices promote a team approach and individuals are provided with the knowledge and skills needed to work in teams, and understand individual personality-style differences and working-style differences

