RACIST AND HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING IN ADULTHOOD: NARRATIVES FROM GAY MEN OF COLOR IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Bullying is a serious problem in contemporary American society. Many adults are now suffering from bullying, which has conventionally been thought of as a childhood behavior. While a general form of bullying has been focused on by contemporary scholars, specific types of bullying (racist bullying and homophobic bullying) have not well been studied. Furthermore, no study on the intersection of racist and homophobic bullying exists at this point. This article examines how racist- homophobic bullying is manifested in adulthood in the context of higher education. First, some concepts of general forms of bullying and bullying based on race and sexuality are stated. Then, narratives from two gay male college students of color are provided as examples to conceptualize racist-homophobic bullying. Last, implications for adult educators and Human Resource Development (HRD) practitioners are provided to lead anti-bullying initiatives in learning and workplace environments.

In the recent years, school violence, violence in the workplace, and bullying in childhood and adulthood have been increasingly reported. In American primary and secondary public schools, school violence and bullying are critical issues in terms of sustaining a safe campus climate. According to a recent national study, *Indicators of School Crime and Safety,* 86 percent of American public schools responded that at least one violent crime, theft, or other crime had occurred on their school campuses during the school year of 2005-2006 (Dinkes, Cataldi, & Lin-Kelly, 2007). The findings of the study indicate that almost all American schools have experienced some kind of violent behaviors or criminal actions each year.

While American schools at large have been experiencing violence on campus, individual students are also suffering from violence based on bullying or mobbing on campus. For the purpose of this article, the term *bullying* describes a behavioral phenomenon where one individual intentionally harms another individual while the term *mobbing* describes a colluded harmful behavior of a group of people toward one person. However, these terms are often utilized interchangeably by scholars in different countries, according to Olweus (1993). More detailed and specific definitions of bullying and mobbing will be addressed in later sections of this article.

According to DeVoe and Kaffenberger (2005), about 14% of students who were between 12 and 18 years old reported having been bullied at school. More recently, Dinkes, Cataldi, and Lin-Kelly (2007) found that 28% of students between 12 and 18 years old reported having been

bullied at school. Of these students (28%), more than half reported having been bullied once or twice within one month; about 11% responded that they had been bullied once or twice per week; and about 8% responded bullied on a daily basis.

While some scholars and researchers in education identified and reported how frequently bullying occurs in childhood in school, others outside and beyond the formal educational context reported that bullying is not only children's problem in school, but also a serious issue in adulthood in the workplace and community at large. In fact, bullying in adulthood has reached an epidemic in American workplaces (Namie & Namie, 2000). Recent research conducted by the Workplace Bullying Institute (2007) reported that about one in four adults had experienced being bullied at work, using a research population comprised of about 54 million U.S. workers. The survey also revealed that workplace bullying had affected almost half of America's 71.5 million workers. From such data, bullying can be understood as a lifelong issue, occurring from the playground to the boardroom (Lines, 2008; Middelton-Moz & Zawadski, 2002).

Although bullying has been identified by scholars and researchers in childhood environments like schools and adulthood environments like workplaces, bullying in higher education has not been well researched and even overlooked. For adults in higher education, the college campus serves as a place for education and work. Chapell et al. (2004) studied whether bullying exists among students and teachers in higher education. They found that bullying is endemic in higher education; more than half of students (60%) reported that they had observed a group of students bullying a student, and about 45% of students reported that they had seen a teacher bullying a student.

Westhues (1998, 2005, 2006) also looked into faculty and staff members' experiences of being bullied. Westhues (2006) described how higher education environments are places of academic mobbing for faculties. He pointed out that "tenured high-achievers on the faculty were ritually deemed corrupt, publicly discredited, dropped from the payroll, and formally dismissed, through impassioned collective attacks by administrators and colleagues—attacks that appear in retrospect to have been untruthful and wrong" (p. 3).

Gunsalus (2006) stated that students of higher education experience bullying because of the unique environmental characteristics. Some bullies "manipulate the concepts of academic freedom and collegiality with flair, and their colleagues are not well equipped, and not trained, to respond to their maneuvers" (p. 124). Also, bullying in higher education is a relatively implicit and *low-incidence, high-severity problem.* Gunsalus emphasized that "a low-incidence, high-severity situation is one in which the problems don't arise very often, but when they do they are so serious that they can threaten the integrity of the environment" (p. 124).

Twale and De Luca (2008) took a similar stance to Westhus's and Gunsalus's points. They described how higher education has institutionally fostered bullying, and stated that culture in higher education is highly political where bullying and incivility appear to be more subtle and hidden, rather than explicitly violent like a fist-fight. While bullying in higher education seems to be more subtle, it has also been explicitly fostered and encouraged institutionally. Twale and De Luca portrayed the development of U.S. higher education by reviewing the more than 370-year-history of higher education, which started with Harvard. They stated that "one of Harvard's goals

was to advance civility among its gentlemen graduates. In fact, the goal of early colonial collegiate education was to produce civil gentlemen, Christian men, and civic magistrates" (p. 33). So, the early years of higher education were created for men whose authority still greatly influences the production of knowledge in American higher education today. Twale and De Luca claimed that it is elitism when White men (as knowledge producers) protect their authority and ability to create standards of knowledge that govern people and society.

Yet, in modern higher education, the number of female students is greater than the number of male students in universities, and female students successfully graduate from four-year colleges and post-graduate institutions (Snyder, Dillow, & Hoffman, 2008). Nonetheless, higher education is still structured around the deeply embedded patriarchic systems that sustain traditional higher education. Furthermore, more and more diverse populations other than white males are entering higher education (Snyder, Dillow, & Hoffman, 2008). So, a number of questions must be reconciled about contemporary higher education: Who is actually producing and disseminating knowledge? What kind of people are leaders in higher education? What people are control the gate of higher education? Does higher education truly value diversity? How does higher education meet student needs in accordance with mission statements that value diversity and multiculturalism on campus?

Although adult educators and HRD practitioners understand how valuable it is to include diverse populations and multiculturalism to practice social justice in their teaching or at their workplaces, they need to look into how each individual treats other people when they strive to develop an inclusive and safer learning environment on campus (Misawa, 2009b). A pivotal part of creating and sustaining an equitable environment where bullying and other negative behaviors do not exist is knowing how positionality such as race, gender, and sexual orientation, operates in classroom dynamics or campus climate; and having a deep understanding of how people's sociocultural or socioeconomic positions such as race, gender, and sexual orientation influence how they interact with each other.

Feminist scholars and researchers in adult and higher education have studied how sociocultural positions influence people's interactions, extensively exploring how gender, race, class, and other sociocultural positions affect a person's journey through higher education (hooks, 2003; Johnson-Bailey, 2001; Maher & Tetreault, 2001) and how power dynamics and positionality influence teaching and learning transactions in classroom environments (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 1998, 2000; Tisdell, 2001). However, there is a lack of understanding of how adult bullying involves power dynamics and positionality particularly with regard to racism and homophobia; no study in adult and higher education or HRD has focused on the intersection of racist and homophobic bullying.

The chapter provides a contemporary understanding of bullying in adulthood, and particularly focuses on the intersection of racist and homophobic bullying among adult learners in higher education by providing an extensive literature review and through analysis of the narratives of two gay men of color.

Bullying: A Serious Societal Problem

Bullying necessarily involves bullies and victims and possibly bystanders in both physical assaults and psychological harassment. Olweus (1993) defined the behaviors of direct and indirect bullying. Direct bullying involves physical assaults or open attacks on a victim, and indirect bullying consists of a "form of social isolation and intentional exclusion from a group" (p. 10). When victims experience violence, bullying, or mobbing, they suffer from both a short-term injury, which is mostly from physical violence and a long-term injury, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) which often lasts one's lifetime after having a traumatic experience (Futterman, 2004; Leymann, 1990; Leymann & Gustafsson, 1996; Lines, 2008).

Bullying is a systematic abuse of power by perpetrators (Lines, 2008; Smith & Sharp, 1994). When two or more people come together as a group, they instinctively formulate power dynamics and hierarchies based on their sociocultural and socioeconomic statuses, which affect how people respectfully treat others (Maher & Tetreault, 2001). Race and sexual orientation influence people's behavior and perception of being a member of a particular group. At an individual level, for instance, people of color may experience racist bullying when they are ignored by a White waiter at a restaurant because of their race. Another example would be a situation where a gay couple attends a friend's party and overhear heterosexist comments from an attendee. Such power imbalances lead to domination and subordination at the highest levels of society (Newman, 2007).

Power dynamics based on positionality have become invisible in contemporary society, and consequently racist-homophobic bullying has existed but been ignored for a long time. Although it may not be possible to bring democratic equality to all people in society due to a complex multiplicity of identities in different situations (Harding, 2004), it is possible to teach individuals to get along each other even in moments of huge friction if they understand others and treat each other with respect (Yoshino, 2006). But the method of socializing taught in formal school systems often perpetuates negative behaviors and a lack of perspective by those in power. It seems to be a continuous problem in today's society because crimes based on prejudice or discrimination and hate crimes are enacted by all racial, gender, and age groups (Rand, 2008) who may not understand the importance of equality and equity, or who have been fostered in environments where ethics are not taught appropriately. The negative process of fostering unjust social behaviors is what Yoshino (2006) described as *covering*. Yoshino argued that our societal system, from parents at home to teachers in school, has been focused on teaching how to fit into society by disguising everyone's true-selves; a custom often described as assimilation:

> Everyone covers. To cover is to tone down a disfavored identity to fit into the mainstream. In our increasingly diverse society, all of us are outside the mainstream in some way. Nonetheless, being deemed mainstream is still often a necessity of social life. For this reason, [everyone] has covered, whether consciously or not, and sometimes at significant personal cost. (p. ix)

Covering influences people to hide their true selves in order for them to be accepted in society when they interact with other people.

Bullying is not a new phenomenon to our society (Field, 1996; Olweus, 1993; Randall, 2001). Bullying behaviors have been around for a long time and deeply pervade many dimensions of our culture, particularly in educational settings and at workplaces (Keashly & Jagatic, 2003; Namie & Namie, 2000; Randall, 1997; Schat, Frone, & Kelloway, 2006; Westhues, 2006). However, modern investigations on bullying only started in the late 1960s and the early 1970s in European and Scandinavian countries. Olweus is one of the first scholars in the modern era to pay attention to children's bullying behavior in school. The repeated finding has been that bullying is endemic and affects many people in contemporary global society (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2003). The following section will explore what bullying actually is. It is important for adult educators and HRD practitioners to understand how bullying is defined and what behaviors can be considered as bullying.

What is bullying?: Definitions of bullying

According to Agervold (2007), it is crucial to achieve a consensus on a definition of bullying among scholars and researchers, so the results and findings of one study can be compared with another. However, with so many independent investigations on bullying, particularly in the context of childhood school settings, there is no currently agreed upon definition of bullying (Agervold, 2007; Randall 1997). However, it is significant to look at different, but often very similar, definitions in order to capture the bullying phenomena.

Olweus's (1993) definition has been much cited by scholars in school bullying. His definition of bullying is that "A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students" (p. 9). He further explained what negative action implies in his definition. He stated, "it is negative action when someone intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort upon another…. Negative actions can be carried out by words (verbally)…. [and] by physical contact" (p. 9). In addition to Olweus's definition of bullying above, Smith and Sharp (1994) defined bullying as "the systematic abuse of power" (p. 2). They further stated, "Power can be abused…. If the abuse is systematic—repeated and deliberate—bullying seems a good name to describe it" (p. 2).

In the literature of workplace bullying, Adams (1992) described workplace bullying as "a malignant cancer. It creeps up on you long before you—or anyone else—are able to appreciate what it is that is making you feel the ill effects" (p. 9). Leymann (1990, p. 119) also described negative workplace phenomena as:

"Mobbing," "ganging up on someone" or psychic terror. It occurs as schisms, where the victim is subjected to a systematic stigmatizing through, inter alia, injustices (encroachment of a person's rights), which after a few years can mean that the person in question is unable to find employment in his/her specific trade.

Furthermore, Leymann (1990) stated that "psychical terror or mobbing in working life means hostile and unethical communication which is directed in a systematic way by one or a number of persons mainly toward one individual" (p. 120). So Leymann's definition of bullying in the workplace is psychological, implying one's individual suffering of hostility in the workplace.

North American scholars of bullying in the workplace, Namie and Namie (2000), defined bullying in the workplace as "the repeated, malicious, health-endangering mistreatment of one employee (the Target) by one or more employees (the bully, bullies). The mistreatment is psychological violence, a mix of verbal and strategic assaults to prevent the Target from performing work well" (p. 3). Further, Einarsen, Hole, Zapf, and Cooper (2003) provided a definition of bullying at work by integrating different authors' definitions of bullying in the workplace. They defined workplace bullying as:

> Harassing, offending, socially excluding someone or negatively affecting someone's work tasks. In order for the label bullying (or mobbing) to be applied to a particular activity, interaction or process it has to occur repeatedly and regularly (e.g. weekly) and over a period of time (e.g. about six months). Bullying is an escalating process in the course of which the person confronted ends up in an inferior position and becomes the target of systematic negative social acts. A conflict cannot be called bullying if the incident is an isolated event or if two parties of approximately equal 'strength' are in conflict. (p. 15)

Although scholars define bullying differently, there are some commonalities among the definitions of bullying: (a) negative actions and reactions are present; (b) imbalance of power relations exists between a bully (or bullies) and a victim; (c) intention of bullies is to hurt the victim; and (d) persistence of bullying. These elements seem to be widely accepted, but some scholars question whether those elements are absolutely necessary in order to call a phenomenon bullying. Randall (1997) approached bullying from a perspective of aggression in the workplace. He defined bullying as "the aggressive behavior arising from the deliberate intent to cause physical or psychological distress to others" (p. 4). His definition does not specify a threshold of frequency and duration. Rather, he argued a one-time incident of bullying could cause significant damage either physically or psychologically to the victim. Further, Randall stated, "Aggressive behavior does not have to be regular or repeated for it to be bullying behavior" (p. 5). This perspective leads other scholars to investigate the severity of damage to victims of bullying.

Specific Types of Bullying: Racist and Homophobic Bullying

Some scholars distinguish certain types of bullying from a general form of bullying (Fox & Stallworth, 2005; Lines, 2008; Sullivan, Cleary, & Sullivan, 2004). A general form of bullying is an incident of bullying that occurs to anyone and in any context. In a school context, for example, a physically strong boy finds a physically weaker boy and snatches lunch money from him. Another hypothetical classroom example is that of a girl who, on a particular day, wears a new pink skirt that her friends would like to have, but it was already sold out in the local store. Other girls are jealous and try to exclude her from the group. An instance of general workplace bullying would be a situation where a male worker must stay late to finish his boss's work lest his boss would chastise him and threaten to not provide a good recommendation for a future promotion.

Specific types of bullying are more focused than a general form of bullying, and include racial/ethnic bullying, homophobic bullying, bullying of special needs students, and sexual

bullying (Rigby, 2002; Sullivan, Cleary, & Sullivan, 2004). For example, Fox and Stallworth (2005) focused on race/ethnicity in their study of bullying in the U.S. workplace, and introduced racial/ethnic bullying. They defined racial/ethnic bullying as "the umbrella concept for… various conceptualizations of ill-treatment and hostile behavior" (p. 439) toward people of color. Racial/ethnic bullying is specific and "attacks the target explicitly based on race or ethnicity" (Fox & Stallworth, 2005, p. 439) because they look different, they have different values, they speak different languages (non-English language), they have customs, culture, and food that are unfamiliar and unknown to mainstream citizens (Sullivan, Cleary, & Sullivan, 2004).

While racial/ethnic minorities become the targets or victims of bullying (Fox & Stallworth's concept of racial/ethnic bullying), Misawa (2009a) argued that when researchers and scholars focus on victims of bullying based on race/ethnicity, they tend to define the phenomena as racial bullying. However, from the victims' perspectives, it is *racist bullying*, not racial/ethnic, because they actually experience racism. Sometimes when people of color are involved in situations of bullying, they are targeted because of their race, and they face discrimination and marginalization based on racist ideologies manifest in the phenomenon of bullying. In short, racist bullying is an intersection of racism and bullying (Misawa, 2009a; Sullivan, Cleary, & Sullivan, 2004).

Homophobic bullying is another specific type of bullying. O'Higgins-Norman (2008) also defined bullying and homophobic bullying as any conduct that:

> Intentionally harasses or physically hurts another individual. It can be carried out by one person or by a group of people and it can involve direct or indirect name-calling, exclusion, mocking or damage to a person's property. Where this type of behavior arises out of the fact that the victim is identified or identifies him/herself as being gay or lesbian, or if the language used in the bullying is such that it would be offensive to gay or lesbian people. (pp. 6-7)

Sullivan, Cleary, and Sullivan (2004) also defined homophobic bullying as a long-term relationship built on acts of repeated aggression performed by a more powerful subject against a victim who is somehow less powerful, which is related to the victim's and/or victimizer's actual or presumed sexual or gender identity. They stated that homophobic bullying occurs:

> When individuals are singled out and bullied because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation….Some students label other more vulnerable students whom they know to be heterosexual as gay so as to put their sexuality in question and to humiliate them. (p. 14)

Rigby (2008) reported incidents of homophobic bullying occur frequently and are serious issues in school settings:

> Homophobic bullying in schools is known to be common. In a large-scale study conducted in Canadian high schools, 3.6% of those attending were categorized from self-reports as sexual-minority adolescents, that is identifying as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, or as questioning their sexual identity. (p. 209)

In addition, Williams, Connolly, Pepler, and Craig (2005), reported that children who are not heterosexual were more likely than heterosexual youth to be victims of peer bullying.

Although those two types of bullying are examined in addition to general bullying, they cannot be thought of separately when researchers and scholars try to understand experiences of gay people of color regarding racist and homophobic bullying. From the review of literature above emerges an operational definition of the intersection of racist and homophobic bullying, which I developed and will utilize to analyze the data in the subsequent section of this article:

> *An incident of bullying involves a victim who is a gay person of color and somehow less powerful in terms of physical, psychological, or sociocultural positions than the bully or who fits the bully's racist homophobic stereotype, and a perpetuated recurrent or singular; unwanted or unwarranted; intimidating, humiliating, offensive, or threatening conduct on the part of the bully that sustains the bully's position of power and destroys the victim's well-being, dignity, and safety or is significant enough to cause the victim physical and/or psychological harm.*

Examples of Racist and Homophobic Bullying

This section will briefly highlight narratives which involve aspects of racist and homophobic bullying from gay men of color in higher education. This data is based on the author's previous work on the intersection of race and sexual orientation in higher education (Misawa, 2004) that explored how the identity of gay male students of color emerged and developed in a college environment and how the two identities intersected; and examined the learning environment for sexual minorities of color in higher education, which led to an informed understanding of how well gay men of color were treated. The words used in the descriptions and quotes are those of the participants themselves, although pseudonyms are used.

Sam's Story

Sam was a 28-year-old gay African American man who was a fourth semester transfer student. At that time, he lived off campus with his friend, and had lived in a residence hall one year prior to the interview. He described himself as African American and as a gay American separately. He was born and raised in South. He came to the university about two years ago.

Sam described his experiences in the residence hall where heterosexism was deeply embedded. He heard homophobic remarks many times during his residence there. He pointed out that the residence halls had been at times an unfriendly location for gay men of color.

> *Last year I had a roommate who I told that I was gay, and he made a couple jokes. Then, he made some comments on gay life styles. I did not think that was kind. I live on campus, so I am around a lot of youth. So I have heard some youth that say things.*

In addition to his experiences at the residence hall, Sam shared a negative experience that involved sexual orientation on campus.

> *I was told by some younger students, I guess I heard of their whispering, "he's a f---in' queer." Sometimes queer is used in a negative sense. "That queer" means "that's not cool." Sometimes when I hear that, I don't like it. I compromise because I think it is a part of the environment in which we live.*

From his experience, Sam started to feel that the residence hall was not welcoming. It had become a hostile place due to indirect statements by other students identifying him as a gay person; and how others had connected queerness with a negative connotation.

Gary's Story

Gary was a 25-year-old gay Native man who had attended two different campuses of the university. When he was interviewed, he had been attending the current university for 12 semesters. He changed his major a couple of times. He identified himself as gay and as Native Alaskan, but his racial identity is mixed because his ancestors are Russian, Aleut, and Northern European. He was actively involved with a Native village in his town, and the LGBT community in the town where the university is.

Gary had a similar situation to Sam's, and stated that campus environments including interactions with other people heavily influenced his campus life in higher education. He also spoke about his experience regarding race:

> *I don't look like a real Native person. I mean that I look more like a white person. When I lived in the dorm, I made a friend in an English class who was from Hawaii. One night I called him up and went to his room with one of my Native friends from a different town who had stopped at the university for the night, and this friend of mine from Hawaii told me that he didn't like that I had brought a drunk Native to his room. I was so offended that I broke off that friendship immediately.*

After talking about his experiences regarding racism and homophobia in higher education, Gary reflected on his overall college life:

> *I have always felt that being gay was something to hide, and I always get gawked at when I tell people I am part Native Alaskan. I think those two things are kept hidden at the university in the classroom and in the advertising of the university. My science classes are the worst for the anti-gay comments. Lots of the men in those classes use "gay" to mean "not good".*

The experiences of Sam and Gary show how gay people of color experience a combination of racism and homophobia from others, which is actually a form of racist-homophobic bullying. The sociocultural positions of race and sexual orientation negatively impacted their campus experiences. For them, higher education was a place where racist-homophobic bullying existed and often times it was hidden by the campus culture. White heterosexism extends throughout higher education, including the classroom, residence halls, and student commons, and impacts the lives of gay men of color.

Discussion

Sam and Gary unfortunately experienced the ubiquitous college environment in the United States where gay men of color have to face racism and homophobia (Kumashiro, 2001; Misawa, 2009a). The college environment that they described reflects how American mainstream society treats gay people of color. They spoke about incidents that were offensive, threatening, and manipulative. Since they experienced verbal remarks that consisted of racism and homophobia, their experiences were of racist and homophobic bullying. By the operational definition of racist-homophobic bullying in this article above, racist-homophobic bullying can be a verbal form which includes a racist and homophobic remark or joke. Field (1996) supports this argument and listed behaviors in bullying, and some of them included racist and homophobic bullying such as:

- Inappropriate remarks, comments, aspersions, suggestions etc about a person's gender, race, color, beliefs, sexual orientation, background, upbringing, etc; and
- Jokes of a sexist, racist, ageist or similar nature whose objective is to humiliate. (p. 45)

Gary's experience with his Native friend and his college peer showed how racism and stereotypes are intertwined in racist bullying. Such an offensive and hurtful experience made Gary discontinue his friendship with his college peer. Because someone *looks* White does not mean that the person supports racism. Racism is permeated in American society and it perpetuates tension among different racial communities (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Sam's experience hearing his roommate joke regarding his being gay was oppressive. Since Sam's roommate was the one who made such an inappropriate comment, Sam might have felt threatened and intimidated because he had to live with someone homophobic. Although Gary did not get hurt physically, he was wounded internally. Even though these two experienced singular homophobic bullying incidents, their perceptions of campus life were diminished.

Both men experienced homophobic bullying which involved stereotypes. Each stated that the words *gay* and *queer* were utilized offensively and negatively. This stereotypical ideology could be related to stigmatization of homosexuality. Although Sam internalized and accepted the usage of the terms because of where he is, it is important to deconstruct and relearn the terms as positive. In other words, it is important for gay people to normalize their sexuality in order for them to survive in this homophobic heterosexist society.

Conclusion and Implications for Adult Education and Human Resource Development

Critical race theorists stated that racism is embedded subtly in the United States (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). When scholars and researchers in adult education investigated contemporary demographics and experiences of students, they found that people who were of minority status experienced more negative incidents such as discrimination, harassment, and hate crimes (Grace & Hill, 2004; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2000; Rocco& Gallagher, 2004). At the same time, scholars and researchers in human resource development found very similar situations among adults in the workplace (Bierema, 2002, 2005; Gedro, 2006). Gay and lesbian scholars find

homophobia in education and the workplace in which heterosexism has been widely embedded and normalized (Mayo, 2007; Pinar, 1998).

In most colleges and universities in the United States, mission statements include developing and sustaining inclusiveness and safe campus environments for diverse populations. However, contemporary higher education is still experiencing resistance in creating such place for minorities. Furthermore, there is almost no place for people who are gay people of color to feel safe on campus. Gay people of color face both racism and homophobia in their campus lives. As the narratives demonstrate, when they encounter incidents of racist-homophobic bullying in higher education, they could be physically and psychologically hurt.

How can adult educators and HRD practitioners deal with racist-homophobic? What can they do to protect students like Sam and Gary who are the victims of racist-homophobic bullying in higher education and similar workplace victims? There are at least four actions that adult educators and HRD practitioners can take to combat racist-homophobic bullying and to develop safer learning and workplace environments for gay people of color, and perhaps eventually eliminate racist-homophobic bullying altogether. The first action is to be aware of racist-homophobic bullying. Acknowledging the existence of any kind of bullying, including racist-homophobic bullying is a significant step. Because studies about bullying in adult education and HRD are scarce, adult educators and HRD practitioners may encounter some difficulties identifying exactly what bullying behaviors are and how they affect people, schools, and organizations. Bullying is not always visible to people who are not involved in it directly (Randall, 1997, 2001); and often times victims of bullying do not realize at the time they are being bullied, and only come to realize it at a later time (Futterman, 2004). Bullying in adulthood is more often understood as more psychological, relational, and positional (Field, 1996; Futterman, 2004; Randall, 1997). While adult educators and HRD practitioners have identified that there is always some degree of power imbalance among learners, faculty, and administrators (Johnson-Bailey-Cervero, 1998; Tisdell, 2001), it is also important to examine how power imbalance and bullying by different sociocultural positions influence adults in adult education and HRD in order to create an anti-bullying environment.

Bullying creates hostile or uncivil environments. Bullies find a target by perceiving the target's excellent skills and ability in a context that the bullies do not possess and threaten the target with either a general form of bullying or a specific type of bullying such *racist-homophobic bullying* that targets specifically gay people of color. So, it is necessary to take into account that some gay people of color experience racism and/or homophobia daily (Misawa, 2007) when learning about the identities of individual learners in higher education. Since adult educators and HRD practitioners focus on equality, it is important for them to know how racist-homophobic bullying impacts the lives of gay people of color. Although bullying based on racism and homophobia is hard to identify, it is important for adult educators and HRD practitioners to have a critical eye that enables one to see through what is going on in gay people of color's lives in higher education.

The second action that adult educators and HRD practitioners can take to combat racist-homophobic bullying is to develop a safe and open environment where bullying can be discussed. A safe and open environment can be created in a faculty meeting, workshop, or classroom where

adult educators and HRD practitioners can provide an opportunity for colleagues and/or students to discuss the issues of power dynamics including bullying. Gunsalus (2006) pointed out that institutions of higher education are not equipped to address bullying as a problem. Although respectful professional interactions are expected and reinforced, those interactions are not always preserved among faculty members. So, it is significant for practitioners in higher education to create and maintain such professionally respected places (Gunsalus, 2006). Three steps to create and maintain such environments are to provide some definitions of bullying; help others understand what bullying is; and educate them that bullying exists in their own department or classroom. Specifically, adult educators should develop a class session around bullying when they introduce the concept of power dynamics in adult and higher education. Addressing positionality or other theories in educational contexts such as race, gender, and sexual orientation, is one example of creating a safer and open space in curriculum in adult education. Teaching about power imbalances and bullying in terms of different identities would provide an understanding of how individuals treat other people with respect which leads to creation of a more equitable learning environment for adults.

HRD practitioners can also develop a safe and open environment for adults by conducting a training session for other HRD practitioners and administrators. HRD practitioners can describe how to deal effectively with grievances and allegations of discrimination or harassment based on race, gender, and sexual orientation by faculty and staff. Because bullying is usually not included in policies for protecting students and faculty (Westhues, 2006), providing opportunities for the HRD practitioners to develop skills for dealing with bullying becomes a pivotal part in reducing and eliminating it.

The third action that adult educators and HRD practitioners can take to reduce and eliminate racist-homophobic bullying is to become activists for anti-bullying to promote bullying-free environments for all people. In order to create such environments, some activist works need to be practiced. One strategy that bullies utilize to attack victims is to isolate and exclude the victims from their colleagues. When the victims of bullying are isolated, they feel powerless, and they often do not know how they should deal with the situation of being bullied. In that case, for example, adult educators and HRD practitioners can act as supportive mentors or resource providers for the victims. One reason why bullying is often not being reported or is overlooked is because victims do not know where they can get resources and to whom they could talk about their negative experience (Namie & Namie, 2000; Watson, 2008). If adult educators and HRD professionals become more visible in terms of advocating an anti-bullying practice and creating safer learning and working environments for adults, silent victims may feel more courageous and express their concerns openly. Having someone with whom they can talk is important for the victims both physically and psychologically.

Adult educators and HRD practitioners should become informal or formal mentors for victims of bullying as activists in anti-bullying because victims suffering from stress often lose what they would consider their normal lives (Field, 1996). At the personal level, victims are demolished in both their physical and psychological health through the experience of being bullied. Bullying affects victims physically when they are exposed to physical violence by bullies (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2003; Namie, 2003; Randall, 2001; Watson, 2008). Also, victims are affected psychologically when they are exposing to threats and intimidation

from bullies. From the victim's standpoint, an incident of bullying can be perceived as a traumatic experience. In a severe case, Leymann and Gustafsson (1996) stated that bullying causes victim's post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which is hypervigilance that prolongs a victim's stress level and damages a victim's well-being. Because of a traumatic bullying experience, a victim's previous assumptions about the world and about themselves may have been shattered (Futterman, 2004). In their statistical analysis of 64 patients who suffered workplace bullying and were in the treatment of chronic PTSD, Leymann and Gustafsson (1996) concluded that "those 64 diagnoses shows a severe degree of PTSD, with mental effects fully comparable with PTSD from war or prison camp experiences" (p. 251). Rivers (2004) also studied PTSD in lesbians, gay men, and bisexual population. He found that that lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals who had experienced some sort of bullying related their actual and perceived sexual orientation when they were in school also experienced PTSD in their adulthood. That indicates that once victims experience bullying, they may relive their bullying experience for a prolonged period of time.

In addition to PTSD, bullying also brings about high risk of depression and suicide. Klomek, Marrocco, Kleinman, Schonfeld, and Gould (2007) found that "frequent exposure to victimization or bullying others was related to high risks of depression, ideation, and suicide attempts compared with adolescents not involved in bullying behavior" (p. 40). Remafedi, French, Story, Resnick, and Blum (1998) examined a correlation between suicidality and sexual orientation and found a strong relationship between sexual orientation and suicide risk in gay and bisexual males compared with heterosexual counterparts. While victims of bullying are suffering from PTSD, depression, or suicide ideation, they need to have someone to help either formal professionals such as psychiatrists, psychologists, or counselors or informal non-professionals such as family members, friends, and mentors (Fields, 1996; Spindel, 2008). Victims may be looking for someone to talk with about their painful experiences. Being an active listener as an activist for anti-bullying is important because the victims may feel safer to be on campus. Do not discount their stories when victims of bullying come to get help. Sometimes, they just need someone who listens. That may be a coping process for them. So, adult educators and HRD professionals can act as much needed agents of support as anti-bullying activists.

The fourth action that adult educators and HRD practitioners can take to reduce and eliminate racist-homophobic bullying is to become policy advocates. There are two ways to work as policy advocates. First, policy advocates need to be familiar with existing policies on campus such as anti-discriminatory policy, policies on harassment, and policies of social justice and multiculturalism on campus. There should be some kind of policies on campus to protect minorities from discrimination and harassment based on race, sex, national origin, disability, and language. Policy advocates may utilize such policies to develop an anti-bullying policy.

Even though many identities are protected under such policies, sexual orientation is rarely protected in higher education. Also, incidents that are perceived as bullying (not harassment per se) are mostly overlooked and dismissed or are not qualified as requiring further actions. In fact, bullying is still legal in the United States (Namie, 2003; Namie & Namie, 2001; Zogby International, 2007). In addition to the legal issue, since bullying is difficult to pinpoint, it is very challenging for victims to make a strong case to fight against bullies. So, higher education

is a perfect environment for bullies to continue their malicious actions and cause victims to suffer (Twale & De Luca, 2008).

In addition to understanding the existing current policies on academic conduct in higher education, adult educators and HRD practitioners as policy advocates must strive to develop anti-bullying policy to tackle bullies' uncivil actions so victims can be protected from bullying. It is significant for policy advocates to comprehensively review policies and develop one for anti-bullying in specific contexts including racism and homophobia to protect gay people of color.

In Gary's narrative, he said he felt he needed to conceal his identities on campus because the campus environment was not safe. To that end, support from a safer environment that is created by adult educators would sustain gay men of color like Sam and Gary. Sam and Gary's experiences also apply to the workplace where gay employees of color may be experiencing bullying based on racism and homophobia. HRD practitioners should also focus on providing support for victims of bullying in their workplaces. By creating anti-bullying environments and policies, adult educators and HRD practitioners would be actively implementing social justice in their own practice to develop and sustain more inclusive and safer environments for diverse populations.

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