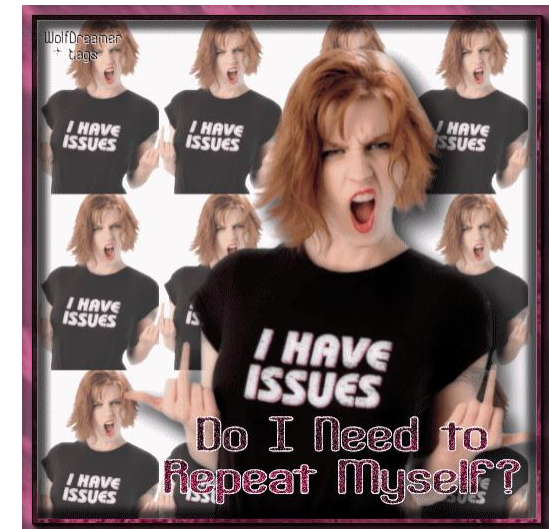


# Dealing with Difficult Personalities

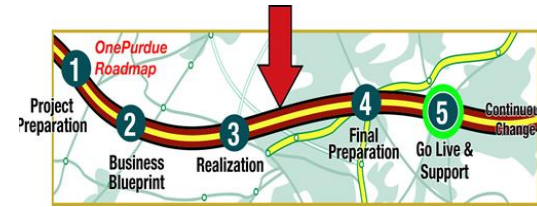
Aly McNicoll  
aly@lead.org.nz



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# The Plan



- “ The costs of toxic behaviours in NFP organisations
- “ Recognising toxic personalities in the team or the board room
- “ What does the research say?
- “ What to do about it
  - “ How to manager the abusive or difficult behaviours
  - “ Creating cultures of civility, respect and regard
  - “ 5 step tool for difficult conversations



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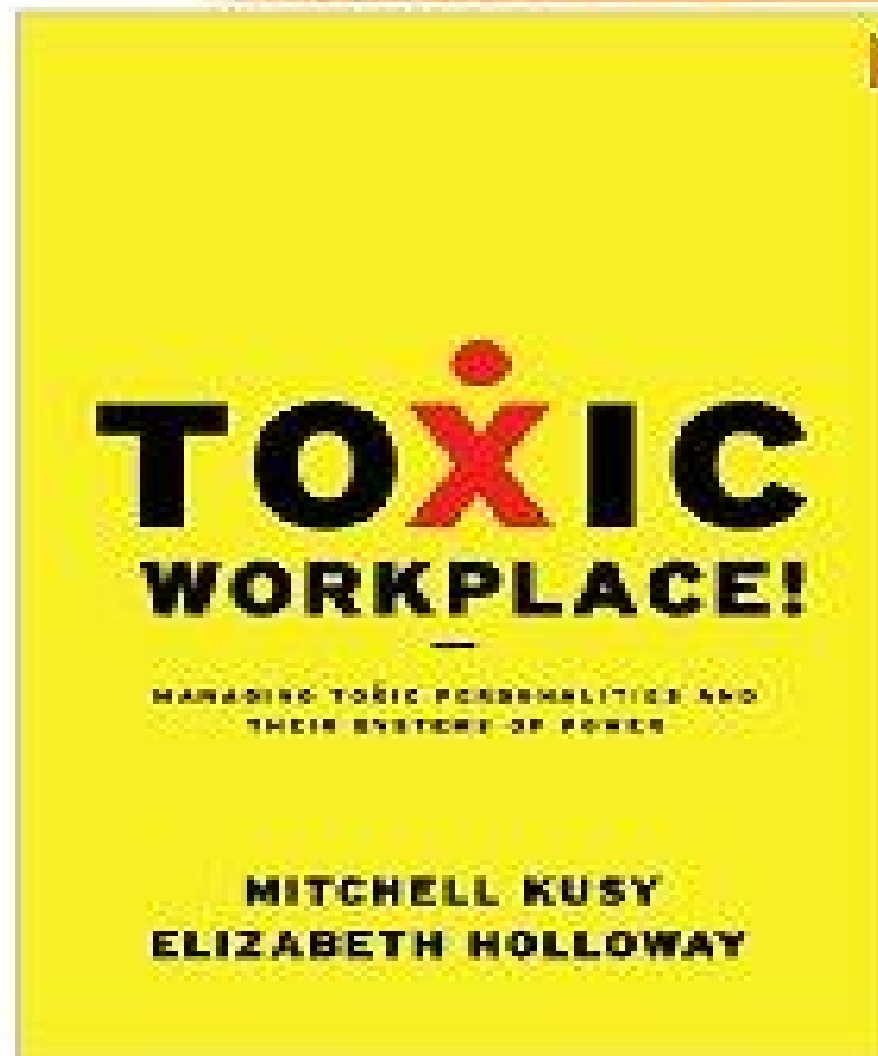
**Civility**  
**Respect**  
**Regard**



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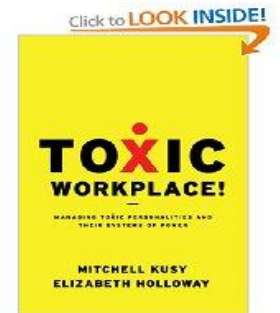
Click to **LOOK INSIDE!**



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# Toxic personalities



“Individuals who demonstrate a pattern of counterproductive work behaviors that debilitate individuals, work teams, and organisations.”

*Toxic Personalities at Work: A Call to Action for Leaders* , Dr. Mitchell  
Kusy,

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# Quote from the research

*Toxic Workplace! Managing Toxic personalities and their systems of power* Kusy & Holloway 2009

‘The day this person left is considered an annual holiday in our organisation!’



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# Groups of 3

- “ Group managers and board members
- “ Hear difficult personalities then handout
- “ What are the costs?
- “ Culture - Sinek turn up, enjoyed the process, feel safe, leave feeling they have made a contribution
- “ Slide or handout on over and under



# Psychological safety in teams

A team climate characterised by interpersonal trust and mutual respect in which people are comfortable being themselves.

*Amy Edmondson*



# Google research 2010

*In their research, they found that the safer team members felt with each other, the better they did in almost every area of work.*

*They were:*

*“ More likely to own up to their mistakes*

*“ Better partners to their colleagues*

*“ Less likely to leave Google*

*“ Innovation was higher and better products*

# MIT research from over 200 groups

- “ Group intelligence only marginally correlated with individual IQ
- “ 3 determining factors of group intelligence
  - “ Social sensitivity
  - “ Turn taking – sharing the air time
  - “ Presence of women
- “ Group intelligence diminishes when there is competition – leadership or power struggles

# High performing teams have



3-5

positive interactions

to



1

negative interaction

## Personal Responsibility

See it, Own it, Solve it, Do it

# Above the Line

---

# Below the Line

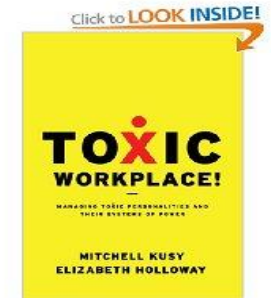
Avoid it   Blame others   Excuses  
Denial   Justify

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# Toxic Personalities in the workplace:

Toxic Workplace!: Mitchell Kusy & Elizabeth Holloway



1. **Shaming** Humiliation, sarcasm, pot shots, temper tantrums, bullying, over critical
2. **Passive hostility** passive aggressive, very agreeable to your face, works to your detriment behind the scenes, gossip, moody, doesn't do what they are asked, territorial, martyr
3. **Team Sabotage** not sharing information, surveillance, withdrawing efforts, usually controlling behaviours



Deficient  
dysfunctional  
type

Value  
adding  
type

Excessive  
dysfunctional  
type

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## Boards need to...

- “ Model the positive culture that they want to see in the organisation
- “ Be positive role models for leadership – humility, servant leaders, mission central...
- “ Always think – what is in the best interests of the organisation at this point in its development?
- “ Support the CEO to be the best they can be
- “ Build high trust relationships which enable them to have honest conversations



## What to do about it - Boards

- “ Get the right people on the bus – recruit well for skills, intentions and personality
- “ Create a strong, positive culture of civility, respect and regard around the Board table
- “ Set clear standards - Board codes of conduct or team agreements
- “ A Chair who will step up to problems early and ensure the agreement is upheld
- “ Regular meeting reviews
- “ Board evaluations including individual director evaluation (reflective self and peer evaluation)
- “ Director development

# Personal qualities

- ” Commitment to the cause
- ” Common sense and good judgement
- ” Openness
- ” Respect for (and skills in) group process
- ” Ability to raise difficult issues in a firm and helpful way
- ” Sense of humour
- ” Self awareness and emotional intelligence
- ” Able to manage themselves and their emotions and communicate with civility, respect and regard (no hissy fits, sarcasm, put downs, over riding, eye rolling...)

Be fun to be  
with and you  
will always  
have people  
with you.



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# What to do about it? *managers*

- “ Recognise it is **your** problem, step up early and address it
  - “ manage up’ or ‘manage out’
  - “ get the behaviour change you need or bite the bullet
  - “ Have a series of conversations and don’t drop it, document your process
- “ Create strong, positive cultures of civility, respect and regard
  - “ Set clear standards around important do’s and don’ts then challenge difficult **behaviours** immediately
  - “ Address toxic behaviours at an individual, team & organisational level
  - “ Have clear expectations around leadership – everyone deserves to be well led
- “ Talk to team members regularly, ask them how things are for them and LISTEN
- “ Get some support yourself

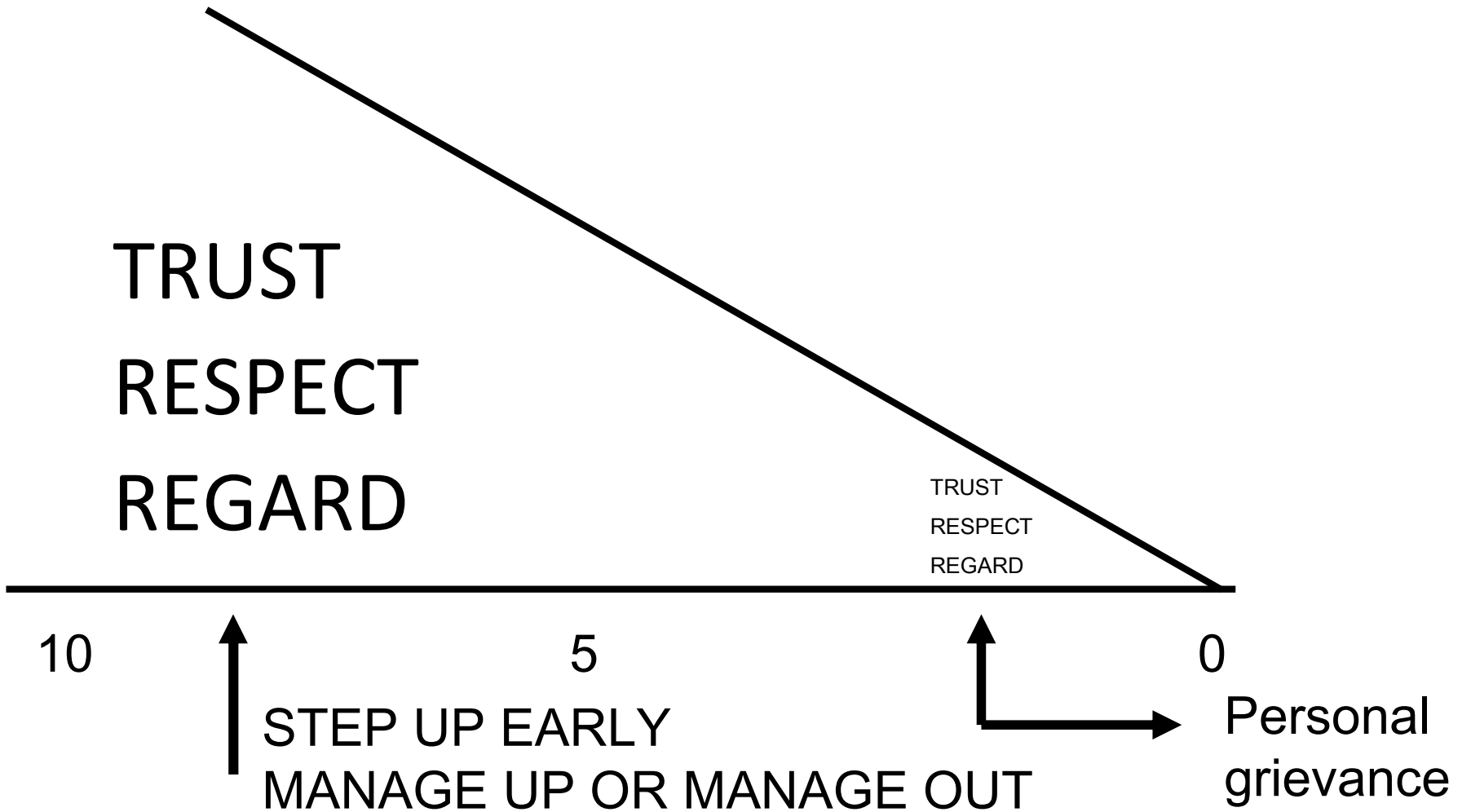
# Tough Minded &



# Tender hearted

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# Contact us...

For in house training, nfp management workshops and governance training.

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