Using Compassion to Meet the Challenges of Conflict and Violence:

A demonstrated, evidence-based, and effective approach
for responding to conflict and violence in college and university settings

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11 November 2012

Abstract

By combining a new, evidence-based, cognitive approach to violence response and prevention with effective environmental designs and administrative controls, college and university ombuds can achieve outcomes that significantly reduce conflict and violence, improve the quality of staff and student experience, lower risk, increase staff efficacy and on-the-job satisfaction, and elevate the quality of work life. The Violence Integrative Prevention and Restoration ("PAR") Model is a new, evidence-based, cognitive approach to violence response and prevention built upon a public health foundation. It is a significant departure from the traditional "punitive" and "defensive" models for dealing with violence or conflict. The PAR Model incorporates new thinking about and language for describing violence, provides a new framework for preventing and responding to violence, and presents an effective alternative to the commonly-used traditional punitive-based approaches for dealing with violence. The Model incorporates effective skills for dealing with the conflict continuum, from emotionally-charged and debilitating conflict to physical and emotional violence. By building a healthy "violence immune system" and treating the root drivers of violence before the onset of violent action, university ombuds can help create a safer workplace and increase the value of their profession to those they serve. Successfully demonstrated in a variety of settings (in schools, at a Level 5 Maximum Security[1] prison, on the India-Pakistan border), the PAR Model incorporates recent developments in neuroscience, breakthroughs in conflict resolution, and a new definition of violence. The model integrates a broad range of diverse disciplines including social theory, the public health approach, developmental theory, evolutionary science (archeology, biology, etc.), psychology, neuroscience, and physiology.

The Challenge to Post-Secondary Institutions

Compassion in the College and University Setting

Integrating compassion into college and university culture can provide significant benefits. There are a myriad of reasons why compassion is good personally, academically, and professionally.

One of the reasons is the need to respond to those within the institution who have experienced terror, violence, and neglect during childhood. There were 695,000 unique cases of child abuse in the United States in 2010.[2] Nearly 618,000 of those people will join the American workforce in adulthood.[3] With a work life of 40 years, that number translates into 24.7 million abuse survivors, or 18.6% of those employed at any one time — more than one in five.[4]

These people will not only work as employees, they are also customers, voting citizens, contributors to worthy causes, shareholders, board members, and elected officials. They also can be found among the faculty, staff, and students of every college and university in the United States. If they have not successfully resolved the great harm done to them, they are at risk for bringing the residue of that harm to the institution.

Colleges and universities may be uneasy with the notion of thinking of, much less dealing with this issue. Is this not "personal business" rather than organizational business? Should we not take the advice spelled out on a sign in the break room of one organization that read, "If you have problems at home, leave them there." Knowing that we have wounded, lost, despairing, depressed, and disenchanted coworkers can be unpleasant business. But the presence of the suffering is indisputable.

The US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that 9.1% of adults in America are depressed and notes that depression is the leading cause of disability in the United States for individuals ages 15 to 44.[5] This has a direct impact on workplace performance, political decision-making, organizational cohesiveness, creativity, and innovation.

Compassion demands that we engage the suffering of others. Doing so can be difficult and demanding. The need for compassion in the workplace will not go away until we recognize the nature and scope of the suffering of those among them who have endured neglect, abuse, violation, despair, and hopelessness.

The expression of compassion in an organization can be generated by faculty, staff, and students. All can cultivate an ethic of compassion, providing understanding, clarity, and support for those with whom they come in contact in the college and university setting. Someone going through a divorce, learning that they have cancer, grieving the disappointment of being turned down for a promotion, or other experiences leading to suffering will benefit by having others stand by them as they make their way through difficult times. Ombuds provide the similar support when difficulties spill over into conflict that requires professional mediation.

The college or university's leadership can make sure that compassionate processes are in place to meet the needs of those within their organization needing compassionate action. Grief counseling, time off to deal with divorces or funerals, and a "case management" approach to employee problems are examples of compassionate organizational activities. The Ombuds can play a pivotal role in this change of culture.

Those willing to engage the issue by making compassion a core organizational value and practice will reap significant rewards, including the loyalty of those with whom they work, the recognition that the organization that is committed to caring for people, and increasing productivity, creativity, and innovation.

The Cost of Conflict

In order to measure the cost of conflict in the college or university, we must know what to look for and what should be considered as conflict. Conflict can be the difference about how expected needs are going to be met; we recognize conflict from the emotional tension experienced. Either distancing or combative strategies are behavioral responses to conflict. It can be reflected in avoidance, shunning, filing complaints, grievances, or lawsuits, refusing to acknowledge another, or physical violence. There are several factors to measuring the full cost of conflict:

- Direct Costs — legal fees paid; insurance costs; theft and sabotage when associated.
- Hidden Costs — team members' commitment; resignation; presentism; absenteeism; stress; distorted judgment based on inaccurate data in conflicts between the decision maker and information source.
- Time Spent Dealing with Conflict — senior human resources executives spend about 20% of their time in litigation activities and about 40% of a manager's time is spend dealing with conflict; unmanaged conflict can consume massive amounts of time, energy, and dollars.
- Turnover — business costs and impact are reflected in severance costs, benefits costs, recruitment and staffing cycle time costs, training and development costs, and lost productivity; in chronic, unmanaged conflict the best talent often walks out the door.

There is no single sound method of calculating the cost-effectiveness of an organizational ombuds, however, the function and role of the office does add value to an organizational conflict management system. People hesitate to act when they see unacceptable behavior, but an organizational ombuds office that is trusted can encourage the reporting of serious problems timely and in-house. Some look for cost control when considering contributions of an ombuds office. Others first think of managerial control for internal dealings with serious problems. Still others think innovation and productivity where the workplace climate encourages conversations. Many more think first and last to fairness, equity, safety and justice when people are treated with respect and dignity within an organization. It is important that the Ombuds Office be seen as independent, impartial, neutral, and confidential.

A sampling of observations about the cost of conflict includes the following:

- Unresolved conflict represents the largest reducible cost in many businesses, yet it remains largely unrecognized.[6]
- A 2005 UK survey by Roffey Park found that 78% of managers are suffering from work-related stress, 52% have experienced harassment, 46% have seen an increase in conflict at work.[7]
- Employees who rate their managers as 'sensitive' miss an estimated 3.7 days of work, whereas employees whose managers are rates as 'non-sensitive' miss approximately 6.2 days of work.[8]
- A complaint that escalates to a lawsuit can easily cost $50,000 to $100,000 and take three to five years to settle. It doesn't stop there.[9]
- According to a nationwide study, the average jury verdict in wrongful termination cases is over $60,000 and companies lose 64% of the cases.[10]
- Corporations that have developed collaborative conflict management systems report significant litigation cost savings. Brown and Root reported an 80% reduction in outside litigation costs, Motorola reported a 75% reduction over a period of six years, NCR reported a 50% reduction and a drop of pending lawsuits from 263 in 1984 to 28 in 1993.[11]
- Chronic unresolved conflict acts as a decisive factor in at least 50% of departures. Conflict accounts for up to 90% of involuntary departures, with the possible exception of staff reductions due to downsizing and restructuring.[12]
- A team-member's commitment to the team and the team mission can decrease if intra-team conflict remains unresolved. ...if unhealthy conflict goes unresolved for too long, team members are likely to leave the company or use valuable time to search for alternatives.[13]
- Tension and stress reduce motivation and disturb concentration. A loss of simple productivity of 25% (doing things other than work related activities, such as discussing the dispute, playing computer games, finding reasons to get out of the area) reduces an average work week to fewer than 20 hours.[14]
- In a study of 50,000 Canadian employees nationwide Health Canada found that "the greater the number of sources of stress reported in the social environment at work, the greater the likelihood of reporting more than 10 days off as a result of ill health.[15]
- Employees who report the following sources of stress are more likely than others to be absent for six or more days...interpersonal relations; job control; and management practices[16]

Cultural Change

Colleges and universities are social systems in which people are strongly influenced by the prevailing culture. Therefore, the most potent tool for improvement is cultural change. The goal is to increase the long-term health and performance of the university, while enriching the lives of its members. Appropriate communication and listening skills can benefit workplace interactions and impact the bottom line. We assume we are better listeners than we really are, so, in a tense situation, despite our sincerity and selflessness others can’t read our mind or motives and our egocentric perspectives keep us from realizing people can’t measure our actions except by the signals we send, which aren’t as clear to them as they are to us.

Training in constructive conversation can be rewarding to the individual and the college or university. Good communication skills are mutual respect skills and each person should show respect for the other as well as respect for self. Not many aspects of human experience are as powerful as the desire to be understood. Core values to promote trust, diversity, personal and professional growth, mutual respect, and constructive communication are absolute requirements in a vibrant and healthy workplace or association of people. The preservation of workplace relationships, resolution of disputes, advocacy in conciliation and early intervention, and interest-based approaches to conflict are attainable through training, education, and coaching.

When the prevailing attitude in a workplace is more deceit than trust, that toxicity can directly impact the university's vision/mission and without integrity and principles of honesty and respect the university culture could become cynical and the psyche of workers reduced to rubble. Trust becomes pervasive when the values promoted by the university are identified, followed, and supported by senior leaders. When the college or university administration clearly communicate expectations, then defensiveness, uncertainty, and reactive negative responses are replaced with improved quality, cost reductions, and higher customer satisfaction. When the workforce is engaged emotionally and intellectually they respond with performance and commitment.

Colleges and universities must take seriously their efforts to attract and retain talented individuals. The institutional culture is a community of individuals, who collectively comprise the university and who, individually, are people with real human needs, concerns, and expectations. The environment in which they work to contribute their time, energy, creativity, and interaction is their community. The quality of their discretionary contributions affect the mission of the university as well as its members, and the value an organization places on its people should be a measure of enlightened administration's concern for a healthy and profitable workplace.

The definition of compassion is the Latin *passio*, which means to suffer, coupled with the prefix *com*, which reads to suffer together. Compassion has deep religious and philosophical roots involving humanity. Spiritual and social scientists and philosophers have always linked it to suffering. A recurring theme is the relationship between one's own suffering and self-oriented compassion and compassion for others.[17]

Kanov et al.[18] describe compassion as a three pronged process of interrelationship of self and other amid suffering. Specifically, compassion consists of 1) attention or notice of suffering; 2) empathic concern (a felt relation with the other); and 3) action to lessen or relieve suffering. This view defines compassion from the perspective of the provider of compassion and differentiates compassion from empathy.[19] It also isolates the notion of compassion as a trait[20] and moves past a view of compassion as an emotion.[21]

Compassion is a virtue of empathy for the suffering of others and is regarded as a fundamental part of human love and a cornerstone of greater social interconnection and humanism — foundational to the highest principles in philosophy, society, and personhood. Compassion is ranked a great virtue in numerous philosophies and is considered in almost all major religious traditions as among the greatest of virtues. What we know as the Golden Rule — Do unto others as you would have done unto you — should be changed into the Platinum Rule —

Do unto others as they would have done unto them — in order for compassion to be more fully realized.

When we believe others view us negatively or in a false light, we struggle as though to breathe in an oxygen-deprived atmosphere. The implications are huge since the more we feel devalued the more energy and effort we expend in defending and restoring our value, which allows less energy to create that personal value. When we express feeling about ourselves, others, the situation in which we are currently, or just about anything, a new level of dialogue is opened, and we can exchange and share authentic relationship data that could strengthen bonds and build trust. Empathetic communication links people and performance and forms the basis for common action, generates power to leverage communication to targeted goals, and gives relationships their foundation to empower rewarding and positive exchanges.

If collaboration is a sharing of responsibilities and resources to achieve a common goal, we do this all the time: but the extent and quality of those interactions often do not meet expectations. The shared reality of people at work depends on the structure of their relationships, the culture within their university including the sub-culture of their immediate workplace, and the degree of cooperation, communication, solidarity, and collaboration among them. In its broadest sense culture is a way of life but within an academic setting it means the shared attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and relationships that make up the college or university's norms and customs. Changing strategies and structures could prove ineffectual or detrimental if the culture, the surrounding sea in which we swim, remains unaltered.

Compassion in the workplace is essential for durable, satisfying, and rewarding relationships and is achieved through productive communication, understanding, and respect. It is an assessment that one will not deliberately, accidentally, consciously, or unconsciously take unfair advantage of another and a person's self-esteem, status, relationship, career, and even life are placed in the hands of another with full and total confidence for safety and protection. Parties must behave consistently over time to build trust and follow through on promises made. In order to achieve this level of compassion all parties must explain expectations, agree to necessary steps to complete expectations, sanctions for not meeting expectations, and procedures to measure outcomes. Compassion contains a strong emotional component, and parties should be able to share their expectations for one another, bargain for expected behaviors, and openly acknowledge mutual distrust. In the event of an irreparable breakdown of a relationship, a person should be capable of self-compassion and the ability to allow painful emotions to exit by kindness to oneself and the acknowledging of human foibles.

Rethinking Violence

The cultural response to violence is commonly punitive in nature. Traditional thinking about violence is most commonly seen as a moral issue. Harvard Medical School psychiatrist James Gilligan argues that acts of violence are "attempts to ward off or eliminate the feeling of shame and humiliation — a feeling that is painful, and can even be intolerable and overwhelming — and replace it with a feeling of pride."[22]

If the absence of pride — which can be characterized as power deprivation — is a significant antecedent to violence, then applying a punitive response (humiliation, degradation, shaming, social isolation, and further power-deprivation) only reinforces the drivers of violence. These dynamics suggest that we need to rethink the nature of violence, beginning with a workable definition.

What is violence?

For the purposes of this paper, “violence” as an extreme form of conflict defined as any action resulting from:

- An intention to do harm.
- Attempts to acquire inappropriate power and control for self-serving gain, which results in harm.

Violence can present in physical, emotional, mental, economic, racial, religious, political, and other manifestations.

Effectively Preventing and Responding to Conflict and Violence

Effectively dealing with violence in higher education settings requires rethinking how those working in those settings perceive, describe, and respond to violence. Early evidence suggests that the PAR Model may offer a number of advantages to conventional approaches to dealing with conflict and violence.

Perhaps the most widespread way of dealing with violence is the punitive approach — a commonly used method that is at least 13,000 years old.[23] As hunter/gatherer populations began the metamorphosis into agricultural societies, social structures became more complex, governance expanded, and social order became more important. The punitive model emerged from this seismic change in human development. The punitive model is so engrained into our experience of life that it is nearly completely transparent. It permeates our moral, legal, and political thinking.

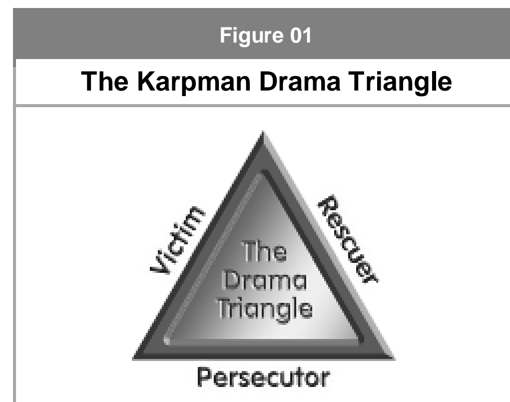


Figure 01
The Karpman Drama Triangle

The punitive model is built on the Karpman drama triangle.[24] The drama triangle (*Figure 01*) is a psychological and social model describing human interaction. It is a key concept in transactional analysis. The three “positions” on the triangle are 1) the victim, 2) the persecutor, and 3) the rescuer. These positions or “stances” are used to secure power – almost always at the expense of the other players on the triangle. The punitive model identifies “victims” (innocent and exploited good people) as those on the receiving end of

violence, the “persecutors” (criminal, predatory, and evil people) as those perpetuating the violence, and rescuers (heroic and noble people) who save the victim (when possible) and bring the persecutor to justice.

In the punitive model:

1. The responsibility for violence is solely the perpetrator’s.
2. Violence creates social positioning with the rescuer and victim holding the high ground the persecutor ostracized, condemned, and punished.
3. “Acceptable” (sacred) violence is often used as a method to respond to “unacceptable” (profane) violence.[25]
4. The focus is protection, not solution.

The punitive model is characterized by:

1. Establishing superior power.
2. Diminishing power for the “offender.”
3. Punishment.
4. Moralizing.
5. Righteousness, scapegoating, revenge, and more violence.
6. Compartmentalizing events (treating the violent episode as a single instance rather than as part of a continuum).

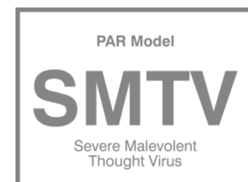
Since violence is about power and control, a new approach must counter the cycle of disempowerment (even well intended) found in the punitive model.

A Compassionate Approach: The Violence Integrative Prevention and Restoration Model

The Violence Integrative Prevention and Restoration (PAR) Model[26] is a new, evidence-based, comprehensive approach to violence response and prevention. Nonpolitical and nonreligious, the PAR Model is built upon a public health foundation. It is a significant departure from the traditional punitive model for dealing with violence. The model is not just another well-intended approach to ending violence, but a wholesale departure from the 10,000-year-old way we see, describe, and respond to violence.

The PAR Model incorporates the elements described in the next two sections.

The Severe Malevolent Thought Virus (SMTV)



Central to our understanding of violence is developing a workable definition of it. Organizations such as the Center for Disease Control and the World Health Organization recognize that violence is a strategy to gain power and control. It is learned and is often a reaction to real or imagined loss of power and control (for example, resulting from trauma). It is always driven by fear and commonly fed by ignorance and

superstition.

Within the framework of the PAR Model, violence is defined as arising from a "thought-borne pathogen" (the "Severe Malevolent Thought Virus," or SMTV) which emerges from a condition called Experienced Power Deprivation (EPD). In its milder forms, the SMTV creates conflict, dissension, unwarranted suspicion and related outcomes. Like a computer "virus," this virus disrupts brain processing and, in its extreme manifestation, can hijack brain function in service to acts of violence.

The SMTV is characterized by the following:

1. It is infectious, due in part to the loss of power and control by victims. A common reaction is to respond to violent episodes with violence ("profane" or "sacred").
2. It is self-replicating. Because of its infectious nature, violence drives more violence. Scapegoating and mob behavior are examples where violence infects those who have not been the direct recipients of violence themselves.
3. We are "acclimated" to violence; numbed, tolerant, and unaware. This allows violence to spread rapidly.
4. It is addictive. Although toxic, it can create an addiction which has its roots in power, control, and the need for stimulation.
5. It is often characterized by denial and lack of accountability on the part of the players on the "drama triangle" (persecutor, victim, rescuer).
6. It is fed by social systems including government modeling (violence as an effective strategy in response to crime and international relations), media (violent entertainment), prevailing negative cultural beliefs (bigotry, stereotyping, scapegoating), ethics (greed, avarice, exploitation, etc.), and the definition of heroic behavior.
7. It is seductive by nature – it invites more violence, even from those who abhor it.
8. It can result in a variety of presentation complaints ranging from the mild to the fatal — depression, paranoia, PTSD, headaches, bruises, puncture wounds, fractures, hearing degradation, digestive ailments, fetal injury, gunshot trauma, death.
9. It is preventable, using many of the same public health strategies used in increasing seat-belt and bicycle helmet usage and decreasing cigarette usage and chemical dependency.
10. It is widespread — presenting in epidemic proportions.

A serious outbreak of the Severe Malevolent Thought Virus (SMTV) presents as any action resulting from:

- An intention to do harm; and/or
- Attempts to gain inappropriate power and control for self-serving gain, which results in harm.

Harm can be physical, sexual, mental, emotional and economic. The actions can be "active" — such as hitting or intimidating someone, or depriving someone of rights — or "passive" — such as generating harm through exploitation or neglect. It can also be self-directed, as in the case of self-inflicted injury and suicide. A definition of violence allows us to move forward with an elementary sense of the nature of this disease.

Within the framework of the PAR Model, a distinction is made between “violent” and “injurious.” The center point of the differentiation is intention. For example, someone piercing one’s skin with a sharp object (a knife) while robbing that person would be committing an act of violence. Someone piercing one’s skin with a sharp object (a scalpel) to perform a surgery intended to save that person’s life is not committing an act of violence.

That harm can be physical, sexual, mental/emotional, and economic. The actions can be “active” — such as hitting or intimidating someone, or depriving someone of rights — or “passive” — such as generating harm through exploitation or neglect. It can also be self-directed, as in the case of self-inflicted injury and suicide. A definition of violence allows us to move forward with an elementary sense of the nature of this disease.

Experienced Power Deprivation

Violence — whether arising from fear or learned behavior — emerges from the experience of the absence or loss of power. It can be real or imagined loss that produces that experience. As seen through the focus of the Violence Integrative Prevention and Restoration (PAR) Model, people who are truly powerful are not violent. They simply have no need to be violent.

When human beings experience a loss of power, they have a number of ways to regain or reclaim power. Healthy processes such as getting support of friends and family, undertaking actions which quickly rebuild the experience of power (including rational and supportive internal dialogue), recognizing the presence of power which has been unaffected by the loss, and mentally and emotionally setting aside the experience until a sense of power is regained are examples.

When the experience of loss of power (power deprivation) is inappropriately translated into an imminent threat, it is a maladaptive attempt to deal with the fear. This is Experienced Power Deprivation (EPD). A person under the grip of EPD can be overwhelmed by the experience. They are unable to effectively regulate the anxiety and fear processes in their brain or to regulate their response to what they perceive as imminent threat. Someone who is free of the disorder may experience the same loss, but is able to manage and move through it.

Human beings have five basic responses to imminent threat. These are:

1. Fight — that is, violence.
2. Flight — escaping violence.
3. Freeze — physical inactivity, hyper vigilance (being on guard, watchful or hyper-alert).
4. Posture — present a threatening posture in order to motivate the threat to move away.
5. Capitulation — letting go of hope of escape and resigning one's self to enduring the consequences of the threat.

These reactions — appropriate in situations where there is an imminent threat — are inappropriate for most forms of power loss. Yet people who are violent experience their loss of power as threatening and imminent. They may react in any one or a combination of the five ways described above. When they use the fight reaction, they have turned to violence.

A New Understanding of “Reality”

A central concept in the PAR Model is the notion of “the construct” (*Figure 02*). In their normal state of consciousness, human beings are not consciously aware of every piece of information coming from the reality they are in moment to moment. This reality is called the “universal field.” We construct our experience of reality from this field. By reframing the construct about violence through a cognitive approach, violence is seen in a new way — one that differs significantly from the punitive way we've seen violence historically and one in which we can more effectively deal with and prevent violence.

The construct is the experience of reality one creates by selecting information (almost always unconsciously) from the “universal field” (the totality of reality), filtering it through the “discriminator” (also called the “the lens “) and projecting the interpreted and associated information selection as “reality.” This construct is commonly mistaken for complete reality, when in fact it is a partial representation of total reality (the universal field).

The way in which we view, prevent, and respond to violence is based upon the way in which we describe “the reality” of violence (e.g., a construct). The test of the validity of any construct is the congruency of that construct with the outcomes we want – most often peace, reduced crime, fewer injuries, and so forth.

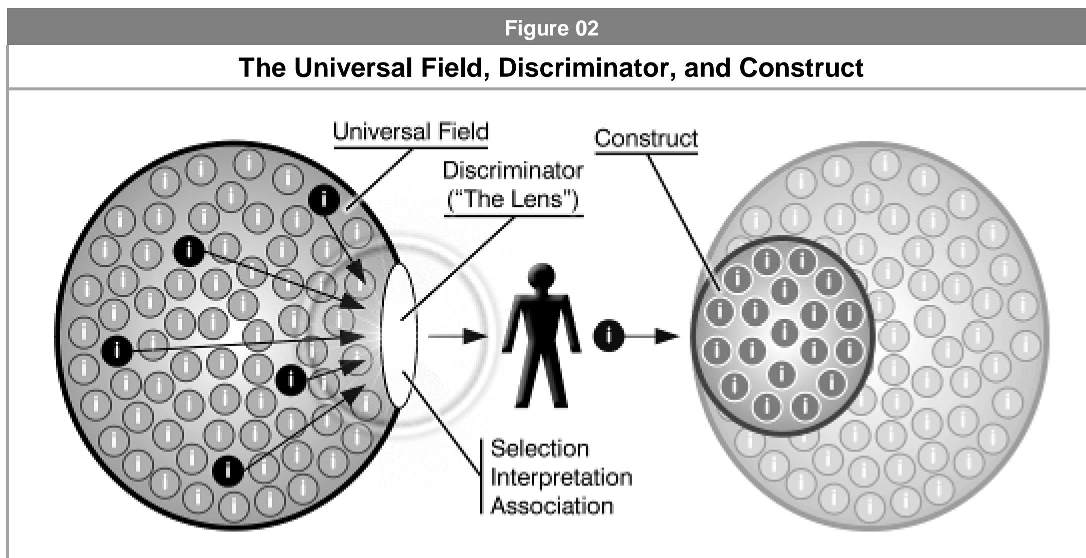


Figure 02

The Universal Field, Discriminator, and Construct

The notion that violence is an unhealthy strategy to get power and control is generally accepted. While the strategy is often effective over the short term, it is rarely sustainable (ask anyone incarcerated for a violent crime how it worked for them). Since acts of violence have the desire for power and control as an antecedent, the PAR Model recognizes the value of achieving the power goal, but in a healthy, long-term way. This requires interrupting that part of the construct of a person with violence so that the power sought in the violent act is nullified and a healthy alternative is substituted (referred to in the PAR Model as a “power swap”).

This is achieved by introducing “disrupter memes” into the construct. The PAR Model draws heavily upon memetic theory (originally described by Richard Dawkins in 1976 in The Selfish Gene – for an excellent summary, refer to the discussion by Anders Sandberg and others on the web). The model takes the position that existence must “make sense,” i.e., be congruent. Without congruency, one has the experience of insanity. Therefore, all constructs have a structure that is congruent. This is true of constructs which include violence as normative behavior. The disrupter meme is a widely accepted and comprehendible concept which causes the unhealthy part of the construct to lose its congruency – that is, the malignant part of the construct collapses. A common example of this process is when one's hypocrisy is brought to light.

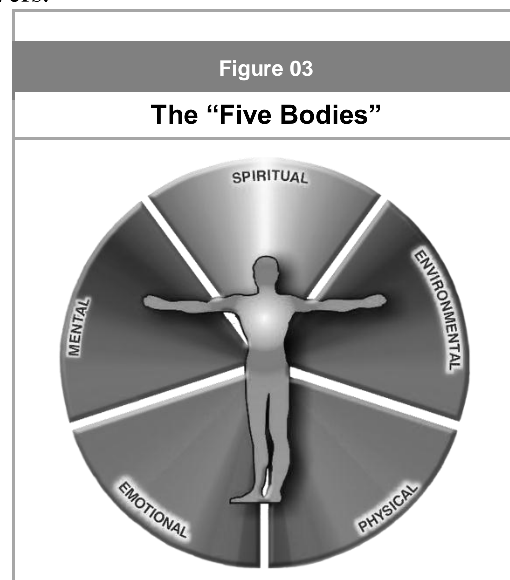
The Concept of the “Five Bodies”

A component of the PAR Model is the Five Bodies concept (*Figure 03*) — five manifestations or “bodies” to describe individual and collective human existence:

1. Physical body — The physical manifestation of a person. Risk factors include pre- and perinatal issues such as fetal alcohol syndrome, pregnancy complications, birth trauma, etc. It also can include genetic factors (such as a predisposition to Huntington’s Chorea) and birth defects (particularly brain related). Chemical dependency can be a factor in frequency and severity of violence.
2. Emotional body — The feeling nature of a person. Risk factors include child abuse and neglect, attachment disorders, abandonment, post-traumatic stress disorder, etc. Feelings of powerlessness and loss of control can be drivers.
3. Mental body — The creative and thinking nature of a person. Risk factors include violent socializing messages from parents, peers, community, media, etc. Impaired reasoning processes (thought disorders) and prevailing social conventions can be factors.
4. Environmental body — The physical, emotional, and mental environment in which a person exists. Environmental risk factors can be found in economic, social, cultural, communication (media), and ethical environments. Living environments (farm vs ghetto, for example) can be factors.
5. Spiritual body — The profound, transcendent knowledge, aspirations, and beliefs of a person. Some people incorporate religious practice into the regimen for their spiritual body. Risk factors include meaninglessness, fundamentalism, limited transcendent heroics, and nihilism.

Figure 03

The “Five Bodies”



The health of any one body directly impacts the health of the other bodies. When assessing the risk factors for violence or a violent episode, the bodies are “mapped” to determine the best approach for treatment.

Diet and TTI

To understand violence, we must appreciate what impacts each body. In the PAR Model, impact is seen in terms of diet and "TTI" — trauma, toxicity, and infection. We commonly associate diet with what we eat (the physical body). However, each body has a diet. Additionally, each body is impacted by various forms of trauma, toxicity, and infection. *Figure 04* illustrates examples of dietary components and TTI elements for each of the five bodies.

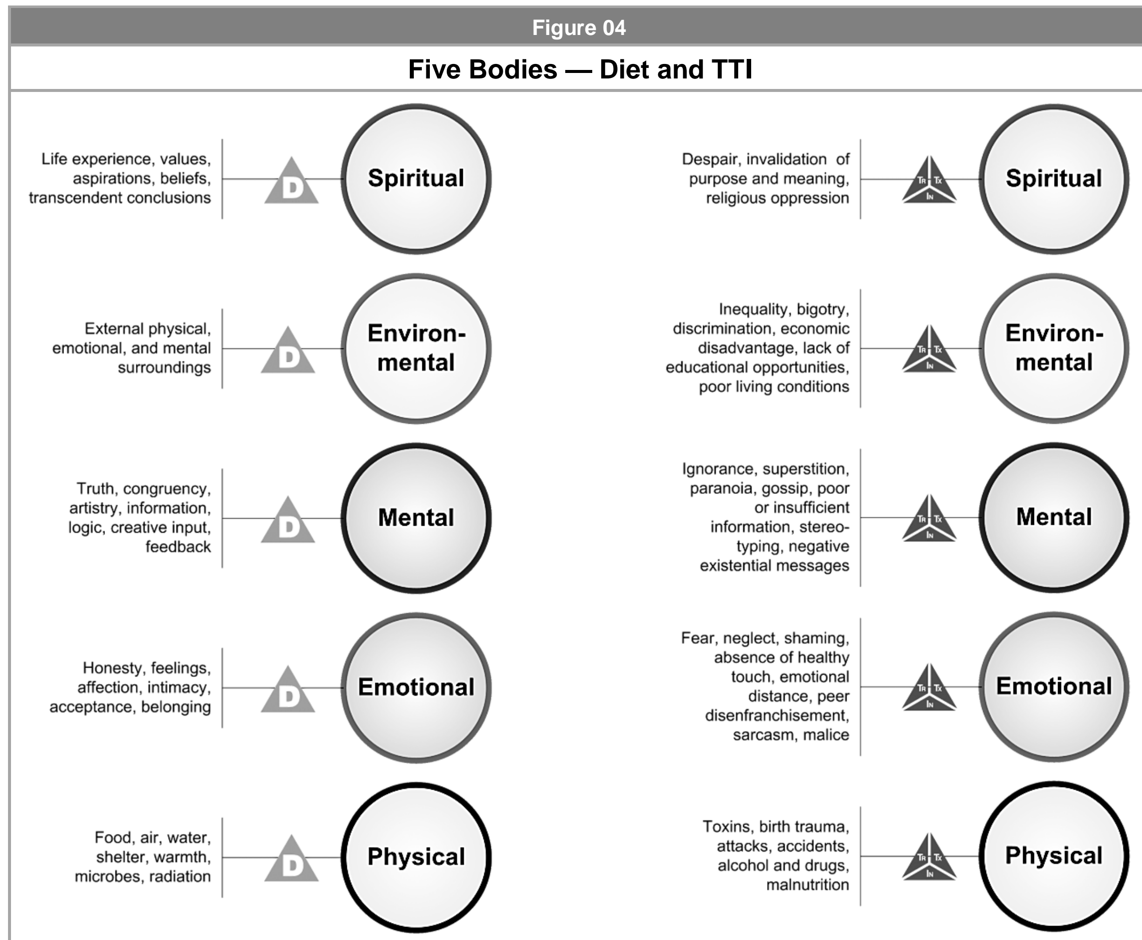


Figure 04

Five Bodies — Diet and TTI

Most observers may easily see how blows to the body, chemical poisons, or viruses can injure of kills our physical bodies. Less obvious is the direct and immediate impact of trauma, toxicity, or toxins on our other bodies.

The Objectification/Action Process

The objectification/action process (also called "the actualization process") – is one in which a progression of events must take place in order for those with five functioning bodies to commit acts of violence.

As proposed by the PAR Model, people do not injure or kill people; they injure or kill "things" — that is, they commit acts of violence against "objects." People (other than psychopaths) go through a five-step process to conceptually render people as objects and initiate acts of violence. The steps are:

1. Transaction — Experience real or imagined loss of power and control, resulting in fear.
2. Accusation — Characterize the action in perpetrator ("them") and victim ("us") terms, providing the justification for violent action.
3. Objectification — Objectify the other using object labeling which incorporates demeaning and derogatory terms rooted in race, religion, sexual preference, nationality, political, educational, economic, social, intelligence, and other identifiers. Common examples are — "them," "troublemaker," "queer," "criminal," "corporate-type," "tree-hugger," "enemy," "terrorist," "bum," "geek," "molester," "creep," "loser," "gun-nut," "liberal," "conservative," "idiot," "snob," "weirdo," "hick," "red-neck," and "perpetrator."
4. Condemnation — Passing sentence which is congruent with the above.
5. Execution — Delivery of the punishment.

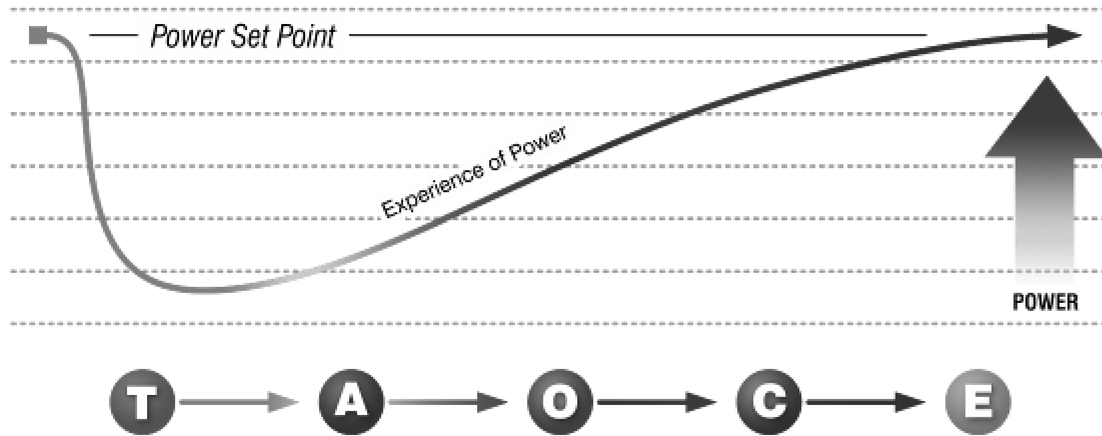
If the emotional body is severely damaged, malfunctioning, or nonfunctioning (as may often be the case in those classified as psychopaths), if the mental body is sufficiently injured, if there is alcohol or drug aggravation (drugs and alcohol are introduced through the physical body, then alter the emotional and mental bodies), or if there are certain types of brain damage, an individual can commit an act of violence without going through the violence actualization process.

There are healthy and unhealthy ways to recover from power loss. The following illustration (*Figure 05*) illustrates the unhealthy process as it moves through the experience of losing power to reestablishing it through acts of violence. Power is relative — the "normal" experience of power differs with each person. This normal level is the "power set point" — the point at which power must be maintained. Other points of power are the target power (the power goal of an individual) and the upper and lower power thresholds (or power tolerance zone).

Continued on the following page.

Figure 05

Example — Violence Objectification Action Process



Transaction	Accusation	Objectification	Condemnation	Execution
The experience of power drops immediately.	The experience of power begins to build.	The experience of power increases.	The experience of power continues to increase.	The experience of power returns to the set point.
— "What happened."	— "What you did."	— "What you are."	— "What you will get."	— "What makes things right (even)."
Example:[27]				
A professor is delayed in grading a final exam for a student waiting to graduate.	The student becomes frustrated at the delay.	The student regards the professor as "insensitive, thoughtless, and stupid."	The student is infuriated and decides that someone should teach the professor "a lesson."	When the student meets the professor he punches the professor in the face.

Once the process is complete, the student feels he has reclaimed some measure of his power, albeit in an unhealthy manner. However, the professor is now experiencing a loss of power (via injury, humiliation, personal violation, etc.). The circular nature of the process is interrupted when the professor reclaims power in a healthy way that does not involve action based upon objectification; seeing the student as someone presenting with the symptoms of violence. The shift comes in recognizing that the student is not someone who "is" violence, but rather one who "does" or "has" violence.

Power Swapping

There are three ontological questions incorporated into the Violence Integrative Prevention and Restoration (PAR) Model. They are:

1. Who am I?
2. What is the nature of the world?
3. What is my place in that world?

The answers to these questions frame the way in which human beings operate and establish meaning and value for their existence. Meaning and value are elemental forms of power, without which being in the world makes no sense. To support the answers to the three ontological questions, we accumulated power. We incorporate healthy, benign, or unhealthy forms of power (or a combination of the three) to perpetuate our existence. Violence is an unhealthy manifestation of power.

The PAR Model is used to identify and apply approaches which enhance healthy power and which reduce or eliminate unhealthy expressions of power such as conflict and violence. Examples of healthy power include: value, meaning, honesty, accountability, creativity, excellence, cooperation, compassion, responsiveness, determination, loyalty, reliability, belonging, and integrity.

A common response to acts of violence is to take power away from the person committing these acts. Violence is a strategy to get power and control. One applies this strategy because they experience a loss of power (refer to the discussion on Experienced Power Deprivation). Given that there is an experience of power deprivation, taking power away aggravates the condition.

If punishment is applied, two things happen. First the “offender” experiences further loss of power. Second, that person can adopt the role of the victim — that is, they can see punishment as something being done to them and, therefore, they are not required to own the consequences. Note that there is a big difference between punishment and negative consequences. They own consequences. They don’t own the punishment.

The answer to the problem of aggravating the experience of loss of power with punishment is to, instead, replace the unhealthy power (violence) with healthy power. This is the “power swap.”

Power swapping involves four steps.

1. The first step is to separate the behavior from the person.
2. The second is to take the power out of the unhealthy or destructive behavior.
3. The third step is to immediately replace unhealthy power with healthy power.
4. The fourth step is to reinforce the healthy choices.

At the core of this process is recognizing and accepting that patients, family members, visitors, staff, and others are human beings — not “human-doings” or “human-havings.” People are not what they do or have. By reframing violence (and its unhealthy antecedents) in a way that takes the unhealthy power payoff out of violent action and swaps it with healthy power, the objectives of violent action are achieved without the violence.

Applications in University Settings

In General

The PAR Model is applicable to both conflict and violence coming from those outside of the university and lateral violence (bullying) among faculty, staff, and students within the organization. Effectively managing the challenge of violence within one population segment (students, visitors, staff) — can produce positive outcomes for another. For example, bullying can be a significant factor in the deterioration of the quality of education to staff being distracted, unhappy, or intimidated.[28] A deterioration of the quality of managing conflict will be experienced by students, family, and visitors, thus increasing the risk of violence.

By reframing violence into an understandable and manageable phenomenon, the Model supports strategies fostering healthy expressions of power (rather than violence) that can contribute to preventing, responding to, and reducing violence.

An example of a component used in PAR Model education programs is the notion of the "5 P's." Staff are trained to respond to the experience of power deprivation that can lead to violence via the following process:

1. **Pause** — Check to see if an how you are affected (infected) by the unhealthy power transaction.
2. **Presentation** — Frame each episode of violence as an outbreak of disease, seeing those involved as people in need to assistance.
3. **Power Issue** — Under the PAR Model, violence arises from an experience of loss of power. Identify the power issue.
4. **Power Swap** — Support replacing violence (unhealthy power) with healthy power.
5. **Power Infusion** — Support others in creating an experience of health power (by listening, caring, modeling, responding with compassion, etc.).

The PAR Model is applied in a classic five-step public health process:

1. **Assessment** — Assess the physical, emotional, mental, environmental and spiritual bodies to diet, trauma, toxicity and infection.
2. **Response Development** — Develop a response that addresses the findings of the Assessment phase and that enhances or reestablishes power in a healthy way.
3. **Response Application** — Apply the response, monitoring impact, outcomes and related dynamics.
4. **Evaluation and Adjustment** — Evaluate the efficacy of the response protocols and to make adjustments based on what was learned during the application of the responses, as well as on new information and input.
5. **Reapplication** — Incorporate the adjustments in step four and to reapply the response protocols as part of a continuing process of refinement and application.

Early experience with the Model in violent environments internationally and at a Level 5 maximum security prison suggests that the Model can provide an opportunity to increase the efficacy of efforts to prevent violence involving students, staff, and faculty.

For example, McPhaul and Lispscomb[29] note that "there are very few violence prevention intervention studies on how to *prevent* violence toward health care workers." The same holds true for college and university faculty, staff, and students. They note, however, that "Carmel and Hunter examined the relationship between participation in training and aggressive behavior by inpatients on 27 inpatient wards in a California State hospital. They found that wards with over 60% of staff attendance at the training experienced much lower rates of injury (7.4/100 staff) than wards that had lesser staff attendance (injury rate of 20.0/200 staff). The ecologic design of this study makes it impossible to determine if the training influenced assault rates in the trained staff."

Comparing Results

The following illustrates and ranks how the traditional "punitive" model and "Violence Integrative Prevention and Restoration (PAR) Model" developed by Ari Cowan.

Positive attributes are marked with a: *

Figure 06				
Precursor/Outcome		**Punitive Approach**		**PAR Model**
Fear		Increases	*	Decreases
Hatred		Increases	*	Decreases
Rage		Is more likely	*	Is less likely
Resentment		Increases	*	Decreases
Scapegoating		Increases	*	Decreases
Retaliation		Is more likely	*	Is less likely
Polarization		Increases	*	Decreases
Confusion		Increases	*	Decreases
Creative solutions		Are thwarted	*	Are encouraged
Power sharing		Decreases	*	Increases
Compassion		Decreases	*	Increases
Reconciliation		Is less likely	*	Is more likely
Offender accountability	*	Increases	*	Increases
Societal accountability		Is not considered	*	Increases
Victims	*	Are empowered	*	Are empowered
Offenders		Are disempowered	*	Are empowered
Society	*	Is empowered	*	Is empowered
Hope		Decreases	*	Increases
Effective management		Decreases	*	Increases
Short term safety	*	Increases	*	Increases
Long-term safety		Decreases	*	Increases
Results are…		"I win."	*	"We heal."
RANKING	**4**		**25**	

Implementing PAR Model-Based Education in Post-Secondary Settings

The application of PAR Model-based education in post-secondary settings should be part of a larger strategy that includes environmental design, administrative controls, and behavior modification:[30] The Model is applied cognitively and included educational programs, materials, and, in some cases, advisory services and coaching. For example, establishing a "Chief Compassion Officer"[31] for on organization is one area of focus that incorporates the PAR Model. This individual is both an Ombuds, an independent, informal, neutral and confidential resource providing assistance to staff, students, families, faculty, and others in exploring options to resolve problems, complaints and conflicts.

Program implementation can take two forms:

1. Informal Implementation — Staff participates in professional PAR Model trainings, including those online, as well as draws upon pre-developed resources.
2. Formal Implementation — An assessment and recommendations are provided to the college or university.

PAR Model and PAR Model Resources Supporting a Violence-Free Workplace

Resources incorporating the PAR Model or relating directly to it can be found on the following website:

SpiritRidge Institute — http://www.spiritridgeinstitute.net/pgs/par/par-01.html

Notes

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1 A 2005 demonstration by the Washington State Department of Corrections.

2 Anon. (2010): *Child Maltreatment 2010* (p 22). Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services.

3 Calculated as total employed = 88.9% of all adults X 695,000 — source for percentage is the *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2012.*

4 Calculations = 40 X 618,000: total employed in 2012 in the United States = 132.9 million.

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[23] Diamond, Jared PhD (2005): in *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies.* New York: W.W. Norton. Diamond's fascinating and revolutionary examination of the evolution of societies provides a rich foundation for understanding power dynamics.

[24] A widely accepted concept developed by Stephen Karpman, MD. The drama triangle is a key notion in transactional analysis.

[25] The concept of "sacred" and "profane" violence comes from René Girard, the French historian, literary critic, and philosopher of social science who retired from Stanford University in 1995.

[26] A theoretical model developed by paper author Ari Cowan.

[27] Derived from Mayer, H. (2010, August 20). Violence against nurses on the rise in hospitals. Workplace Violence News. Retrieved May 7, 2012, from http://workplaceviolencenews.com/2010/08/20/violence-against-nurses-on-the-rise-in-hospitals/

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[31] A concept suggested by Heide Felton, the Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors of CAN International. Refer to http://www.compassion.is.