



NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2019

RELIGIOUS BULLYING

Religious Bullying (W.Y. Alice Chan, 2017) occurs when a religious or religiously unaffiliated person chooses to intentionally or unintentionally degrade another person emotionally, mentally or physically. This occurs because it appears to the bully that the target has a perceived or actual religious or religiously unaffiliated identity, or it happens because the bully feels that the target believes in certain doctrines or practices regarding his/her belief. As a result this creates what is called a power imbalance between the bully and the target where the bully targets someone who is religious or non-religious.

Religious bullying manifests itself in many ways. It can be initiated or directed towards people not practicing a certain religion or it can be directed



**IT OCCURS
ACROSS
RELIGIOUS
GROUPS...**

against other religious individuals. It occurs across religious groups, within religious groups or between those who have religious affiliation with those without religious affiliation. It occurs like other forms of bullying through physical, psychological, verbal or online means--and can affect someone short-term or long-term.

As in general bullying, religious bullying can have many effects on the target (*DeLara, 2016; Nansel et al, 2004; Pan & Spittal, 2013; Totten & Quigley, 2003*):

- Lowers self-esteem
- Causes poor mental health
- Causes depression, social anxiety, difficulty sleeping, poor appetite, poor inattentiveness, poor academic performance
- Causes increased alcohol or drug use and possible suicide
- Causes increased alcohol/drug use and can cause possible suicide



For children and at school, religious bullying is alarming, and creates fear and anxiety. The religion of a child is just as much a part of him/her as nationality, appearance,

intelligence, skills and interests. One's religion should never lead someone to being targeted, bullied or ostracized. We should not be afraid of being bullied because of our beliefs.

If you are a teacher or administrator you **MUST** address religious bullying and prevent it from happening at your school. We have a responsibility to create a safe and nurturing

environment, both at school and on the job. One can do this by having



"One can do this by having discussions with your students or groups, about any misconceptions they may have about particular religions."

discussions with your students or groups, about any misconceptions they have about particular religions. If we are dealing with school age children, involve the parents, and with places of employment, involve the community. Schools and places of employment can develop special programs where people of different faiths come in and speak about their cultures. Keep everyone engaged so we can all do something about religious bullying.

As the effects of bullying coincide and lead to possible factors that can lead towards violent extremism like:

- **A threat to individuals and collective identities**
- **Marginalization from mainstream society**
- **Hatred and seeking revenge towards a group**
- **Underlying and enduring inequalities existing in society**

we need to do something about religious bullying immediately so that this does not escalate to greater forms. We need to work on peaceful solutions and mediate and work on resolving our conflicts. We need leaders who promote and advocate a dissolution of religious bullying-so that we can all better appreciate each other.

END RELIGIOUS BULLYING NOW!



CLARA WAJNGURT, PH.D.

Clara Wajngurt has written several peer-reviewed articles on workplace bullying prevention and has written two books on this subject. Her educational background includes a BS in both Mathematics and Psychology from City College of New York and a Doctorate in Algebraic Number Theory from City University of New York Graduate School. She has conducted many workshops at the college in math anxiety and in the encouragement of more diverse groups to enter STEM fields.

She has also observed many unfortunate instances of workplace bullying in her university, where she is proactive to prevent workplace bullying.

WWW.BULLYINGPREVENTIONCONSULTING.COM

