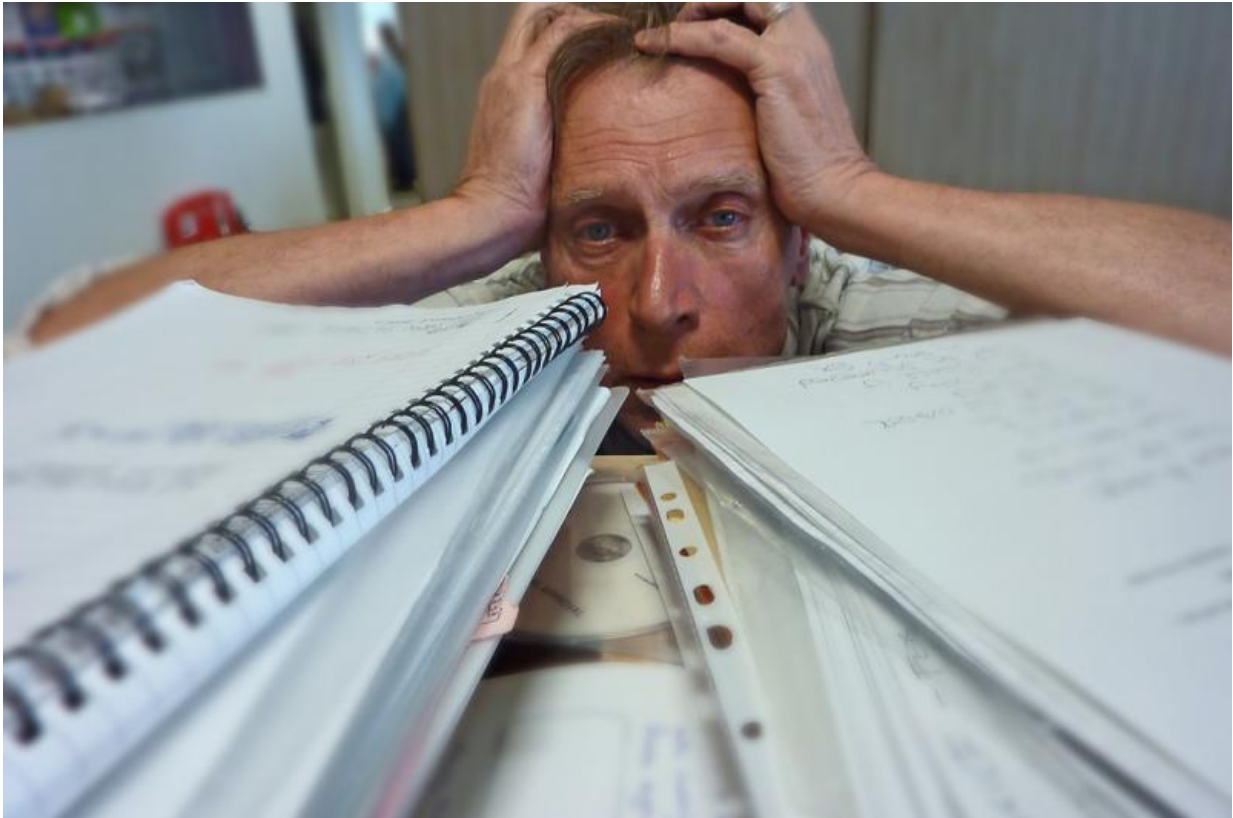


Optimism beats workplace cyberbullies

August 19 2015, by Kerry Faulkner



Ms Snyman's research focused on the important role of optimism in reducing employee stress and job satisfaction. Credit: Christian Guthier

Workers who see the 'glass-half-full' rather than half-empty, can cope better with the stress of cyberbullying in the workplace.

Emerging research identifies [cyberbullying](#) as a major workplace stress

which can end in serious psychological injury.

However, this latest finding, that optimism reduces the stress of cyberbullying in white collar workers, paves the way for improved workplace training that includes optimism coaching.

Murdoch University organisational psychology researcher Robyn Snyman says improved positivity builds employees' resilience against aggressive and repeated attacks using emails, videos, texting and social media.

However, it is also important that employers train staff in professional etiquette around emailing and other office communication tools.

She says traditionally bullies have had to be in the physical presence of their victims but technology like smartphones means they can do it from afar and anonymously.

She says most worrying though, is that this technology provides an 'open door' for cyberbullying to enter employees' homes.

"It's an age where technology is an increasing part of life with phones and computers and that's not going to diminish; it's only going to increase," Ms Snyman says.

"Being able to use those in a safe context is really important for mental health."

She says previously the majority of studies of cyberbullying focused on adolescents.

Adult cyberbully can lead to depression, suicide

However, emerging research shows cyberbullying is a phenomena in the adult population and they may be experiencing the same devastating impacts as teenagers, like depression and suicide.

Ms Snyman's research focused on the important role of optimism in reducing [employee stress](#) and job satisfaction.

She surveyed 146 white collar workers across a range of occupations like teaching, accountancy and health.

Optimism was defined as a positive outlook, that no matter what the challenge, the outcome would be good.

The study used multiple regression to investigate the relationship between cyberbullying and stress, a statistical methodology testing the relationship between a number of different factors.

"In our study, the outcome was stress and cyberbullying the predictor, so we used multiple regression to measure how much cyberbullying contributes to stress," Ms Snyman says.

"We predicted a positive relationship to [stress](#) that is, as cyberbullying increased, stressed increased.

"The next step was to add in optimism as a mediator and when we did that it showed the direct effect of cyberbullying was decreased.

The results suggest optimism is linked to cyberbullying and [job satisfaction](#), indicating factors like the job's hours, complexity and salary contribute to the person's outlook.

More information: "Cyberbullying at work: The mediating role of optimism between cyberbullying and job outcomes," *Computers in*

Human Behavior, Volume 53, December 2015, Pages 161-168, ISSN 0747-5632, [dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.06.050](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.06.050)

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