

Special Article

## **Bullying: The Antithesis of Caring Acknowledging the Dark Side of the Nursing Profession**

**Lisa Y. Adams, RN, BN, MSc, PhD.**

Contractual Instructor, MN Program, Athabasca University, MN Program, Athabasca, Canada  
Assistant Professor, Psychiatric Nursing Program, Brandon University, Manitoba, Canada

**Colleen A. Maykut, RN, BScN, MN, DNP**

Assistant Professor, BScN Program, MacEwan University, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

**Correspondence:** Dr. Lisa Adams, 1176 Thorburn Road, St. Philips, NL, Canada A1M 1T5  
E-mail: lyadams@ualberta.ca

### **Abstract**

The act of professional caring is vital and serves many purposes; healing for the patient, growth for the nurse, and professionalism for the discipline. To truly understand and appreciate caring as the essence of our humanity and our professional expression within our practice, as nurses we must acknowledge the darker side when caring is absent; the antithesis of caring or uncaring. Workplace bullying reflects an uncaring encounter which has become more visible and prevalent over the years. Bullying in the workplace is characterized as the on-going health or career endangering mistreatment of an employee, by one or more of their peers or higher-ups and reflects the misuse of actual and/or perceived power or position that undermines a nurse's ability to succeed or do good, or leaves them feeling hurt, frightened, angry or powerless (American Nurses Association, 2015). As nurses, both individually and collectively, we have a responsibility to demand the creation of healthy workplace environments in which to ensure the expression of caring remains part of our nursing practice. Healthy workplace environments will initiate caring encounters between peers, as well as between nurses and patients; recognizing that everyone benefits. The essence of caring must be nurtured and valued by the nursing profession for it to continue to develop and flourish.

**Key words:** bullying, caring, nurse, patient, profession, reflection, workplace environments