

*Workplace Bullying and
Harassment in Sweden:
Mobilizing against Bullying*

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Sweden as a welfare state

- Modern dwellings
- Unemployment about 8%
- Well-developed health care system
- Gender equality
- The average age life expectancy for women 83 years and for men 79 years
- Trends to promote a healthier lifestyle
- Infant mortality rates are among the lowest in the world
- Deaths from heart disease have decreased

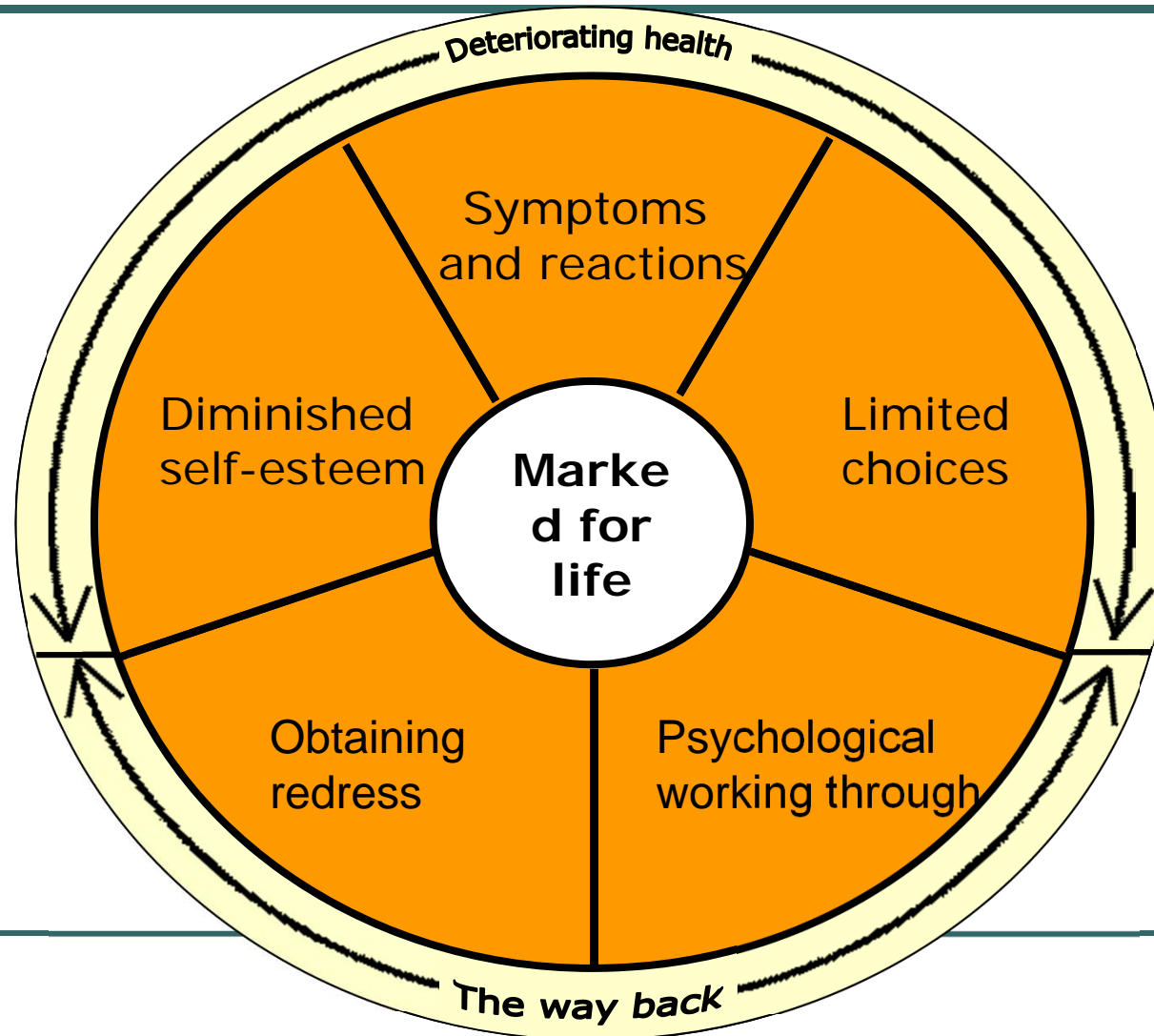
Sweden as a welfare state

- Mental ill-health has been increased recent years.
- The share of national sick leave costs is highest for psychological problems.
- The diseases of muscles and skeleton, and dementia require increasing attention.

Prevalence of bullying in Sweden (GullBritt Rahm et al. 2012)

- Prevalence from 3.5% to 11%
- 18.5% were bullied based on the criteria of one negative act per week during the last six months (Leymann 1996)
- 6.8% were bullied by two negative acts per week during the last six month (Mikkelsen & Einarsen 2001)
- 4% experienced self-labelled bullying
- 22% had witnessed bullying
- 38% had been bullied earlier in life
- 8.5% had been occupational bullied
- 2.3% had been exposed to severe bullying
- Employees in health and social care, assistents, hotell and restaurant personnel and cleaners make risk for bullying and harassment (Swedish Work Environment Authority 2012)

Health consequences of workplace bullying (Hallberg & Strandmark 2006)



Bullying problem in Sweden

- Bullying is a seriously problem at Swedish workplaces
- It causes a great suffering for the involved and take o lot of time from the work
- It urgent to mobilize all forces to prevent and eliminate bullying.

Attention to bullying in Sweden

- Media often writes about bullying
- The responsible leaders sweep the bullying problem under the carpet. Maybe due to feelings of shame or fear of bad rumors at the working place.
- There are no preventative work specifically directed against bullying.
- Only when the crises is a fact they take the problem seriously.

Insufficient national legal regulation

- The Swedish work and environment act
- Victimization at Work (AFS1993:17).
- Law against discrimination (SFS 2008:567)

Advantages and disadvantages in Swedish culture

- Bullying does not disappear because we pretend that the problem does not exist.
- Long tradition of negotiation and equality between the trade unions and the employer.
- Tall poppies (jantelagen). You shall not think you are superior to others.

Top down perspective

Complement the legislation of bullying and transfer a greater responsibility to the employer to show that the undertaken measures are enough to prevent and eliminate the bullying.

Bottom up perspective

- Illustrate the responsibility of the leader and the co-workers
- Work with participation and action plans
- Work with value-system
- Emphasize knowledge about bullying as well as reflection, in order to understand the complex phenomenon bullying
- Encourage voluntary organizations to force the questions
- Trade unions will be important resources in these work