Assessing Humiliation

Ideas and an Approach
Twelfth Annual HumanDHS Conference
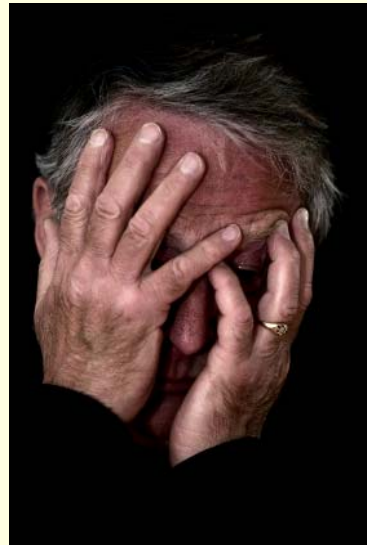Leland R. Beaumont

EmotionalCompetency.com

Overview

- Problem Statement
- Candidate Solution Proposals
- Systematic Solution Development
- Recommended Next Steps

Problem Statement

"Find a way to measure humiliation in societies so that we can show to policy makers that humiliation is relevant and needs to be included into public policy making."

Problem Seeking

- Measure *Causes* of Humiliation (Humilators) and *Effects* of Humiliation (Humiliated)
- Scope: World, Nation, State, Region, Community, Organization, Family, Personal, . . .
- Macroscopic (summary) and Microscopic (diagnostic) ?
- Who collects data, compiles reports, publishes results, reads the reports, works to effect change, benefits from the results, opposes the results, pays the bills?
- Easy to administer and easy to interpret?
- Quantitative and Qualitative Assessment?
- Relative and Absolute measure?
- One time snapshot and ongoing assessment?
- . . .

Candidate Solution Proposals

- Measure Human Rights
- Embrace Narratives
- Develop a Humiliation Impact Rating Scale
- Measure the Cost of Humiliation
- Fueling the H-Bomb – Develop an Integrated Model
- Characterize the Neurobiology and Physiology of Humiliation
- Many more ideas . . .

#1: Measure Human Rights

Premise: Human rights deficiencies lead to humiliation.

- Use the UN Declaration of Human Rights as the standard definition for Human Rights.
- Two Approaches:
  - Report on Protecting Human Rights
    - 75-Page report prepared by the assessed organization according to clear and detailed guidelines.
    - Example Report Item: Describe the approach your organization takes to protecting freedom, preserving equality, and recognizing dignity for all people.
    - Report is assessed and scored by HDHS Team using published guidelines. Results returned privately, publicized only if permitted.
    - Veracity assessed by various cross checks.
    - The integrity and prestige of the process, the constructive interactions it provides, and the privacy it preserves all encourage countries around the world to participate in this voluntary activity.
  - Questionnaire on Human Rights
    - Approximately 150 questions covering the 30 sections of the *Declaration* each rated on a 5-point scale.

#2 Embrace Narratives

Humiliated people need to tell their story and have it heard.

- This helps to identify the most highly leveraged change that could reduce humiliation.

- Ask: "What single change (in the social, political, or physical environment) would be most effective in reducing the humiliation you experience."

- This helps identify simple changes that can provide an important and rapid improvement. This also focuses priorities for the improvement efforts while it humanizes the process.

#3 Humiliation Impact Rating Scale

- A landmark event early in the study of stress was the publication of the Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS) which identifies and quantifies concrete examples of common stressors.

- Humiliators—events causing humiliation—could be quantified by an analogous scale called the *Humiliation Impact Rating Scale*.

- This Scale can help disentangle and sort out the experiences and behaviors of the perpetrator, humiliated victim, and the observer.

- It can help victims of humiliation avoid blaming themselves for how they feel about conditions they experience in their environment.

- It can help overly sensitive people "just get over it" for the inevitable trivial insults we all experience.

- The scale may need to be modulated by variables such as power differential, degree of injustice, and the vulnerability of the victim.

#4 Measure the Cost of Humiliation

Premise: 1) Humiliation has real Human and Financial costs, 2) Money Talks

- Document the direct financial costs attributable to Humiliation:
  - Mumbai Attacks, 9/11 Tragedy, WWII . . .
  - TCH – Total cost of Humiliation
- Present these costs as potential savings
  - Reducing humiliating makes good business sense

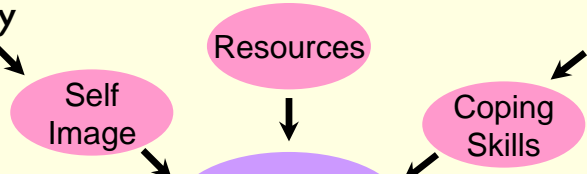# #5 Fueling the H-Bomb – A Tentative Integrated Model

Limited Coping Resources,
Stressed,
Learned Helplessness,
Accumulated Humiliation

Timid,
Self-esteem,
Lack of Humility

Naive, Thin Skin,
Inexperienced,
Emotional Competency

Resources

Self Image

Coping Skills

Vulnerable

Teased →
Bullied →
Scorned →
Excluded →
Laughed at →
Put down →
Ridiculed →
Harassed →
Discounted →
Embarrassed →
Cruelly criticized →
Called names →

Insult (Loss) → **Humiliation** ← **Powerless**

Applying Power

← Injury
← Abuse
← Threat
← Terrorism

Power Sources

← Asymmetry
← Strength
← Resources
← Alliances
← Position
← Reputation
← Image
← Weapons
← Information

Unjust

Uninformed

Unfair

Unreliable

Poor fact-finding,
No Due Process

Delays, Arbitrary,
Ineffective Rule of Law,
Erratic, Unpredictable

Asymmetrical, Biased,
Corrupt, Arbitrary, Partial,
Disproportionate, Inconsistent

Observer's Actions:
- Passive
- Support Victim
- Support Perpetrator

#6 Characterize the Neurobiology and Physiology of Humiliation

- The neurobiology of stress is described in Robert Sapolsky's book *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers*.

- The neurobiology of fear is described in Joseph E. Ledoux's book *The Emotional Brain*.

- Humiliation is such a powerful effect it probably also has a distinct physiological and neurobiological signature.

  - Discovering and describing that signature can help clarify and align our efforts.

  - Perhaps that signature can be objectively measured.

Systematic Solution Development

- Problem Seeking, Problem Definition
    - What problem are we solving?
    - How will we evaluate candidate solutions?
    - How will we know when we have succeeded?
- Enumerate Candidate Solutions.
    - Generate a wealth of alternatives.
    - Expand the promising ideas into <u>proposals</u>.
- Choose Most Promising Proposals.
    - Staff, develop, deploy, and refine these
    - Help heal our world

Recommended Next Steps

- **Focus Efforts:**
  - Identify the team members and team leaders ready to continue systematic development of this work.
- **Unleash Egalization:**
  - Choose a leader who is dedicated to egalization, collaboration, and results.
  - Adopt a team governance structure that unleashes and combines the creative energies of all contributors, and
  - Use tools that ensure collaboration and promote progress
- **Measure Humiliation:**
  - Deploy our chosen assessment instruments.
- **Effect Change:**
  - Use assessment results to reduce humiliation in the world.
  - Continue to evaluate and improve our approaches and results.