

The queen bee syndrome: A violent super bee

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Women continue to be on the frontline of an increasing demanding and ever changing system in higher education. A unique role that is being seen as an evolving plague in academia is the “Queen Bee Syndrome”. Some educators and forensic specialists view this behavior as a form of bullying or woman cruelty perpetrated by women against other women while other environments label the behavior as systemic discrimination and narcissistic attitudes/behaviors at the expense of other competent female colleagues or subordinates. Regardless, the potential for more violent acts is always looming.

New comers to academia often believe that other women will provide attention and assistance for emotional and professional support out of mutual understanding and similar identity issues in the workplace. Rather, many are finding themselves more and more at the center of attacks by queen bees. Queen bees may not only make the lives of other women difficult, they may even prevent talented and worthy women candidates from gaining access to a work environment by systematically sabotaging their hiring or pressuring them to quit an existing position. This is because queen bees are threatened by highly educated, smart, successful, and competent women who work with or under them.

Queen bee syndrome is likened to a condition in the workplace to women who are usually in supervisory, tenured, or higher ranked positions of power. Queen bees can be regarded as having a “PICO” analysis mentality and persona. In essence, they are recognized and driven by “power, influence, control, and over the top feelings of importance resembling a unique form of narcissism”. This type of behavior can truly be detrimental to the overall success of a department or program and can lead to unfair and unhealthy consequences from any female that is or has been targeted.

It is often noted that in certain environments in higher education with queen bee supervisors, male employees are treated more professional and with more respect than females. In addition, there is evidence that supports the fact one’s gender in a leadership role is associated with their subordinates’ mental and physical health. Consequently, women who report working for a female supervisor report more distress and physical symptoms than women who work with a male supervisor.

As society in general continues to become more violent, the greater the potential risk of reverse physical abuse can occur to the queen bees. This presentation will discuss the queen bee syndrome, coping methods and skills needed to deal with this super bee, how best to dismantle the onslaught of attacks, and risk for more violent acts which are evident in this syndrome.

Biography

Yvonne D. McKoy completed her B.S. in nursing from North Carolina A & T State University in Greensboro, N. C., her Master’s in Community Health Nursing from East Carolina University in Greenville, N.C. and her Ph.D. in The Human Sciences from Florida State University. She is Diolomate and Life time Fellow of the American College of Forensic Institute. She is an Associate Professor in the School of Nursing at North Carolina State University where she developed the first forensic nursing course. She is an alumnus and three time presenter at The Oxford Round Table in Oxford, England. She has published several articles in reputed nursing journals and book chapters.

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