Useful theory?

- Personality disorders in workplaces
- Leadership
- Ecology and psychological contracts

Dr Geoff Plimmer: gplimmer@futureselves.co.nz
Personality common disorders in the workplace

- No hits on psycinfo
- Commonly spoken of, identified by practitioners
- 1% women, 3% men
- Emerged as legal defence against plaintiffs in US
Some (relatively) common types (McDonald 2002)

- Anti-social – rule violations, disciplinary action, physically violent
- Borderline – Plays victim, inappropriate sexual behaviour, emotionally volatile
- Narcissistic – perceived personal slights, self centred, insensitive to subordinate needs
Narcissistic personality disorder (Dattner, 2002)

- **Benefits:**
  - Often driven, charismatic, visionaries

- **Risks:**
  - Emotionally volatile, can be exploitive, can ignore or deny reality to maintain self esteem, can create splits in organisations through strong loyalty to ingroup, opposition to outgroup
Leadership

Epitropaki & Martin 2004: Implicit leadership theories say

- Research traditionally focussed on leadership effectiveness and leader traits
- Staff perceptions, cognitions, relatively ignored
- Assumes people match leaders against prototypes (good) and antiprototypes (bad)
How staff use them

They represent schema

- Foundation for interpreting leader behaviour
- Guide for their own behaviour
- Associated with transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1989)
- Tend to be stable and hard to change – dialectical process in response to new information or experience
Schema

Totalitarian ego – generally positive and self reinforcing

- Look for confirming information
- Overlook disconfirming information
- Generally discredit sources of negative information
Dimensions of implicit leadership

Prototypes

- Sensitivity – understanding, sincere, helpful
- Intelligent – Intelligent, knowledgeable, educated, clever
- Dedication – Dedicated, motivated, hardworking
- Dynamism – Dynamic, energetic, strong
Antiprototypes

- Tyranny – Domineering, pushy, manipulative, loud, conceited, selfish
- Masculinity – Male, masculine

- Those in management jobs rate strong energetic/dynamic as more important
- Males rate anti-prototypes higher
- Women rate sensitivity higher
Masculine (M) traits and leader effectiveness

- Positively associated with leader emergence (Kent & Moss 1994)
- Negatively associated with leadership (Gurmann & Long, 1992)
- Both (M & F) related to transformational leadership (Hackman, Furniss, Hills & Patterson, 1992)
- F related to transformational (Offerman, 1997)
- M may predict leader emergence, but not necessarily provide developmental and constructive form of leadership
How useful?

- Training
- Induction
- Feedback and performance management
Organisational ecologies (Colarelli, 1998)

Evolutionary perspective:
- People have overt and covert agendas
- Managers have limited information processing ability

The competency model is based on:
- Command and control
- Stable tasks
- Fitting people to jobs, not jobs to people
- But people have varying strengths and weaknesses, and configure jobs in their own way
The psychological contract

“an individual’s belief in mutual obligations between that person and another party, such as an employer” (Rousseau, 1989)

Some types:

- Transactional – short term, based on economic exchange.
- Transitional – cognitive statement about organisational change – often characterised by mistrust, uncertainty and erosion.
Types of contract


- Balanced – dynamic and open ended – conditioned on organisational success – both parties contribute to each other’s learning and development. Individual and organisation based [performance based] contingencies. External employability, internal advancement