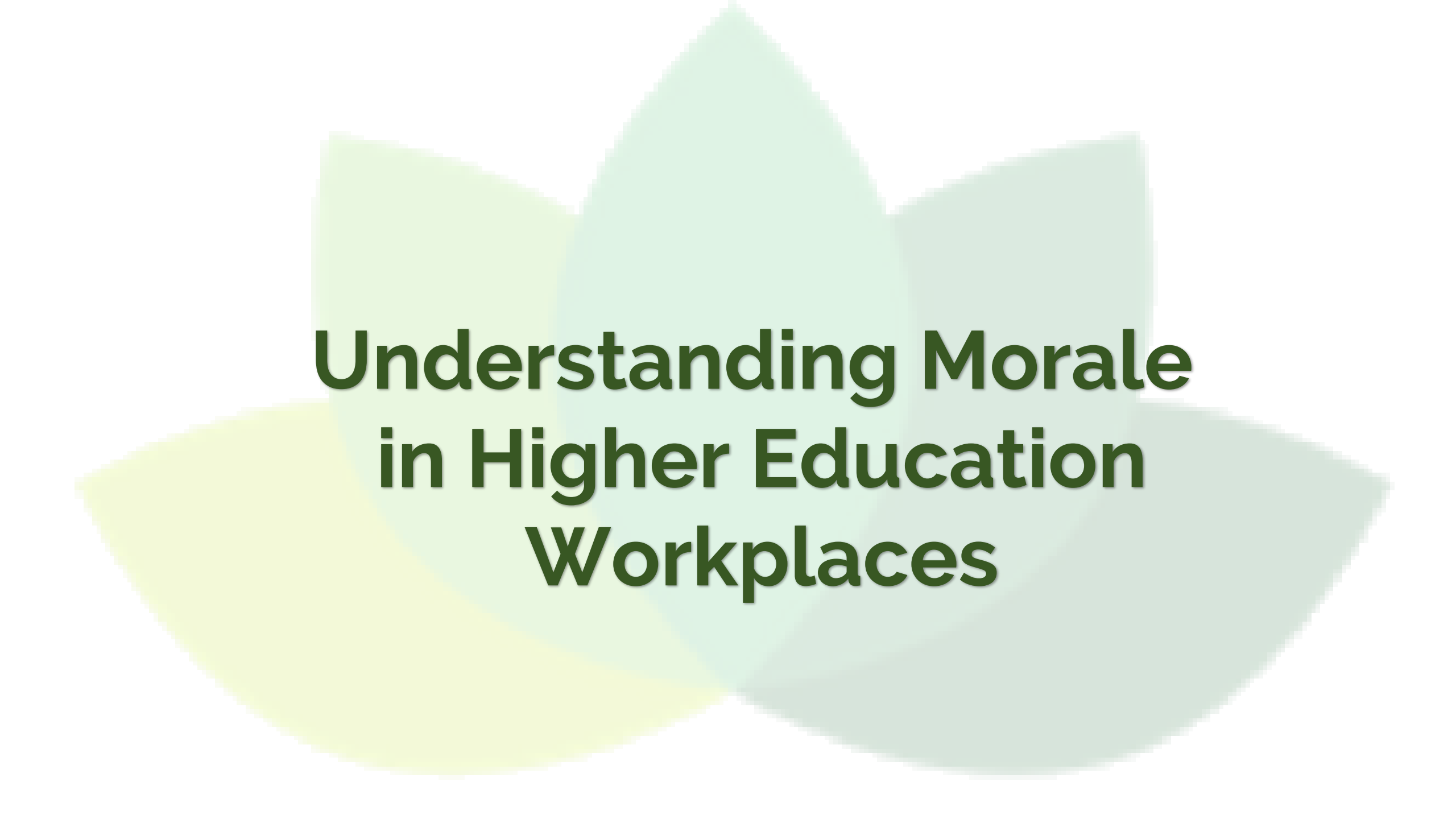




My mission is to inspire authentic collegiality, and to promote well-being, share the gifts of creativity, and cultivate empathetic, engaged leadership in the workplace.

Kaetrena Davis Kendrick, M.S.L.S.

The background features several overlapping, semi-transparent shapes in shades of green and yellow. The shapes are irregular and layered, creating a sense of depth and movement. The colors range from a pale, almost white green to a vibrant yellow-green.

Understanding Morale in Higher Education Workplaces

Today...

- **LOW-MORALE EXPERIENCES (LME)**
- **SUMMARIZE LME DEVELOPMENT**
- **DEFINE & CONTEXTUALIZE TERMS**
- **SHARE ASSOCIATED FRAMEWORKS**
- **HIGHLIGHT CHARACTERISTICS OF LOW MORALE WORKPLACES**
- **NOTE COUNTERMEASURES**



Low Morale Is...

Historically...

- **RESPECT**
- **LACK OF RECOGNITION**
- **UNCLEAR EXPECTATIONS**
- **LEADERSHIP PROBLEMS**
- **POOR COMMUNICATION**
- **ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES**

(BRUN & COOPER 2009)

What we know now:

LOW MORALE IS THE RESULT OF REPEATED AND PROTRACTED EXPOSURE TO EMOTIONAL, VERBAL/WRITTEN, AND SYSTEM ABUSE OR NEGLIGENCE IN THE WORKPLACE.

(KENDRICK 2017)

Low Morale Links

- **INCIVILITY / TOXICITY**
- **BULLYING / MOBBING**
- **RESILIENCE NARRATIVES**
- **VOCATIONAL AWE**
- **BURNOUT**

Resilience Narratives

- **“DOING MORE WITH LESS” “LEAN IN”**
- **STRESS INDIVIDUALISM**
- **ASSUME MONOLITHIC RESPONSES & ACCESS TO SUPPORT**
- **NORMALIZE INSECURITY**
- **ALREADY MARGINALIZED GROUPS ARE MOST VULNERABLE**

(BERG, GALVAN & TEWELL 2017)

Vocational awe

(HIGHER EDUCATION IS)

**"THE IDEA THAT ~~LIBRARIES AS INSTITUTIONS~~ ARE
INHERENTLY GOOD. IT ASSUMES THAT SOME OR ALL CORE
~~ASPECTS OF THE PROFESSION~~
(ACADEMIA) ARE BEYOND CRITIQUE, AND
(EMPLOYEES')
IT, IN TURN, UNDERPINS ~~MANY LIBRARIANS'~~ SENSE OF
IDENTITY AND EMOTIONAL INVESTMENT IN THE
PROFESSION."**

(ETTARH 2018)

Institutional Awe

John Warner is the author of *Why They Can't Write: Killing the Five-Paragraph Essay and Other Necessities* and *The Writer's Practice: Building Confidence in Your Nonfiction Writing*.

"Institutional Awe" Makes for Bad Leadership

When you privilege the institution over the people it's supposed to serve, you get what's happening at schools across the country (like UNC Chapel Hill) right now.

By [John Warner](#) // August 19, 2020

What is there to say about what has happened at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill? One week of classes and now a pivot to all online instruction because they have already been overwhelmed by COVID-19 infections.

The student newspaper, *The Daily Tar Heel*, called it a "clusterfuck." Lots of others are saying they told them so, because they did.

The administration has suggested that students disobeying "community standards" has led to this outcome, but these events at UNC, which seem likely to be repeated at many schools across the

ADVENTURE IS WAITING FOR YOU
BOOK NOW

Screenshot Added
A screenshot was added to your Dropbox.
Dropbox

Type here to search

10:16 AM 9/28/2020



The Low-Morale Experience

Low morale development

TRIGGER EVENT (UNEXPECTED, ID'S CO-WORKER AS ABUSER, SHORT-TERM EMOTIONAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS)

REPEATED, PROTRACTED ABUSE/NEGLECT EXPOSURE
(EMOTIONAL, VERBAL/WRITTEN, SYSTEM, NEGLIGENCE; INTENSE EMOTIONAL, PHYSIOLOGICAL, AND COGNITIVE RESPONSES)

Low morale development

COPING STRATEGIES: CONSCIOUS OR UNCONSCIOUS AND POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE BEHAVIORS VICTIMS ENGAGE IN TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF LMES. THE ACTIONS DO NOT EFFECT THE ABUSERS AND DO NOT AFFECT THE LME TRAJECTORY.

MITIGATION METHODS: CONSCIOUS AND DELIBERATE BEHAVIORS VICTIMS PERFORM TO END OR RESOLVE THE LME. THE METHODS DIRECTLY IMPACT THE ABUSERS OR THE ORGANIZATION AND ADDRESS OR ENGAGE ENABLING SYSTEMS.

ENABLING SYSTEMS: INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIORS OR ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURES, STRUCTURES, POLICIES, OR ETHOSES THAT INADVERTENTLY ENFORCE OR UNDERPIN LMES.

Low morale development

ENABLING SYSTEMS: PROMOTION & TENURE; HUMAN RESOURCES LIMITATIONS; STAFFING & EMPLOYMENT; LEADERSHIP; UNCERTAINTY & MISTRUST

RECOVERY: LONG-TERM; UNRESOLVED; PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Racial and ethnic minorities

ADDITIONAL ENABLING SYSTEMS

- **DIVERSITY RHETORIC:** COGNITIVE DISSONANCE, TOKENISM, PUSHBACK
- **WHITENESS:** WHITE PRIVILEGE, LACK OF INTERSECTIONALITY
- **WHITE SUPREMACY:** PATERNALISM, INSTITUTIONAL WHITEWASHING
- **RACISM:** STEREOTYPING, MICROAGGRESSIONS
- **COLLEGIALITY:** CREDIT-STEALING, EXCLUSION FROM PROJECTS

(KENDRICK & DAMASCO 2019)

Low morale IMPACTS

...ON PRACTICE: REDUCED COLLEGIALLY; REDUCED PROFESSIONAL CONFIDENCE;
INCREASED PROCRASTINATION; INCREASED ABSENTEEISM; REDUCED PROFESSIONAL
ENGAGEMENT.

...ON HEALTH: CARDIOVASCULAR CONCERNS, ANXIETY/DEPRESSION/PTSD,
EXACERBATION OF PREVIOUSLY DIAGNOSED CONDITIONS.

Low morale workplaces feature...

- **SILOS AND ISOLATION**
- **BULLYING AND RETALIATION**
- **INSULARITY (INCLUDING NEPOTISM AND CRONYISM)**
- **FIT OVER COMPETENCE**
- **COMPETITION OVER DEVELOPMENT**
- **COMPLIANCE OVER FLEXIBILITY**
- **HIGH TURNOVER**
- **INCONSISTENT POLICIES**
- **TRAINING GAPS**
- **CONDESCENSION / SUPPRESSION OF EMPLOYEE AUTONOMY**
- **CONFLICT AVOIDANCE / BROAD STROKE PROBLEM-SOLVING**

Countermeasures

SELF-PRESERVATION > SELF-CARE

**SELF PRESERVATION: TOOLS REQUIRED FOR
SURVIVAL AND DEFLECTION OF ACTS OF
WORKPLACE ABUSE AND NEGLECT AT THE TIME
THE EVENTS OCCUR.**

Countermeasures

- **PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY**
- **ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION**
- **BOUNDARIES**
- **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/ CONTINUING EDUCATION**
- **RESIST ISOLATION/SILENCE**
- **(IN)FORMAL LEADERSHIP**
- **MORAL COURAGE**

Research

Current Studies:

Low morale in formal leaders (data analysis)

Leaving low-morale experiences (undergoing peer-review)

Public Librarians:

Published in 2021: *Partnership: The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research*, 15(2): 1-32.

Racial/Ethnic Minority Academic Librarians:

Published in 2020: *Library Trends*, 68(2): 174-212.

Academic Librarians:

Published in 2017: *Journal of Library Administration*, 57(8): 846-878.

Works cited

- Brons, A., Riley, C., Yin, C. & Henninger, E. (2018). Catalog cards from the edge: precarity in libraries. Presented at the British Columbia Library Conference. Retrieved from <https://osf.io/sqvcm/>
- Brun, J.P. & Cooper, C. (2009). *Missing pieces: 7 Ways to improve employee well-being and organizational effectiveness*. Houndsmill, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ettarh, F. (2018). Vocational awe and librarianship: The lies we tell ourselves. *In The Library With the Lead Pipe*. Retrieved from <http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2018/vocational-awe/>
- Galvan, A., J. Berg, J. & Tewell, E. (2018). Responding to and reimagining resilience in academic libraries. *Journal of New Librarianship*, 3(1). Retrieved from <https://www.newlibs.org/article/3218-responding-to-and-reimagining-resilience-in-academic-libraries>
- Kendrick, K.D. (2017). The low-morale experience of academic librarians: A phenomenological study. *Journal of Library Administration*, 57(8): 846 –78.
- Kendrick, K.D. & Damasco, I.T. (2019). Low morale in ethnic and racial minority academic librarians: An experiential study. *Library Trends*, 68(2): 174-212. Retrieved from <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/746745/>

“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.” – Alice Walker

*when we speak we are afraid / our words will not be heard /
nor welcomed / but when we are silent / we are still afraid
So it is better to speak / remembering / we were never meant to survive.
– “A Litany for Survival,” Audre Lorde*

The background features three overlapping, semi-transparent shapes. The top shape is a light green triangle pointing upwards. The bottom-left shape is a yellow-green shape with a curved bottom edge. The bottom-right shape is a light green shape with a curved bottom edge, overlapping the other two.

Questions?

Thank You!

kendrickk@winthrop.edu