Check for updates

OPEN ACCESS

EDITED BY M. Walid Qoronfleh, Q3 Research Institute, United States

REVIEWED BY Joachim Duyndam, University of Humanistic Studies, Netherlands Antoni Barnard, University of South Africa, South Africa

*CORRESPONDENCE Jolita Vveinhardt ⊠ jolita.vveinhardt@vdu.lt

RECEIVED 20 September 2023 ACCEPTED 03 November 2023 PUBLISHED 17 November 2023

CITATION

Vveinhardt J and Deikus M (2023) The use of religious resources in helping victims of workplace mobbing. *Front. Psychol.* 14:1288354. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1288354

COPYRIGHT

© 2023 Vveinhardt and Deikus. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY). The use, distribution or reproduction in other forums is permitted, provided the original author(s) and the copyright owner(s) are credited and that the original publication in this journal is cited, in accordance with accepted academic practice. No use, distribution or reproduction is permitted which does not comply with these terms.

The use of religious resources in helping victims of workplace mobbing

Jolita Vveinhardt^{1,2*} and Mykolas Deikus³

¹Vytautas Kavolis Transdisciplinary Institute for Social Sciences and Humanities, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania, ²Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Management, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania, ³Department of Theology, Faculty of Catholic Theology, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania

Research shows that in providing assistance to individuals who have experienced psychological traumas, it is beneficial not only to take into account the specific religious spiritual needs but also to employ religious resources. Although the role of religious counsellors using various psychological theories in helping to cope with traumatising experiences is acknowledged, there is still a lack of a conceptualising approach to the possibilities of employing religious resources used in Christian spiritual assistance, seeking to help cope with the effects of workplace mobbing. Therefore, this study aims to conceptualise the perspective of integrating Christian spiritual assistance resources in overcoming the individual consequences of workplace mobbing. This review is based on an interdisciplinary approach and abundant literature of psychology, psychotherapy and theology sciences. The article details the main physical, psychological and social aspects of damage to the person, caused by mobbing, which provide for a corresponding triple assistance perspective. After highlighting the essential resources provided by the Christian religion for coping with traumatic experiences, the necessity to consider the religious needs of the victims of mobbing is reasoned and the possibilities of using religious spiritual resources are discussed. In the context of helping victims of mobbing, two main functions of Christian spiritual assistance are distinguished and discussed: auxiliary and main. The results of this review are a useful resource for lay and religious counsellors and encourage their collaboration. The research findings also provide a basis for further research on the use of religious resources in the context of helping victims of mobbing.

KEYWORDS

workplace mobbing, victim, consequences, assistance, religiosity, Christian spiritual assistance

1. Introduction

According to psychiatrist M. Scott Peck, quoted by Davenport et al. in the book "Mobbing: Emotional Abuse in the American Workplace," evil is a force that resides both inside and outside the person. Evil people use force, wishing to destroy the spiritual growth of others in order to defend and preserve their own disturbed integrity (Davenport et al., 1999: 59). The question of why the innocent suffer from evil has always concerned people. Not only the search for the answer but also the psychological states experienced when evil invades one's life were aptly described in the Old Testament Book of Job as early as some two and a half thousand years ago. It highlights experiences such as anxiety, insomnia, the pain caused by abandonment and injustice, existential emptiness and helplessness (*cf.* Job 7, 3–4, 6), which essentially describes

what the victims of mobbing also experience [e.g., anxiety and insomnia (Vartia, 2001), helplessness (Krishna et al., 2023), etc.].

Workplace mobbing refers to incidents such as verbal harassment, aggressive words, sarcasm, slander or social isolation directed at a specific person (Tatar and Yüksel, 2019). This phenomenon differs from other forms of harmful behaviour in the workplace in that assaults last for a long period of time, are systematically repeated, and more than one co-worker is involved in the harassment of the individual (Leymann, 1996; Nielsen et al., 2015; Pheko, 2018; Tatar and Yüksel, 2019). The term "bullying" is also used in the literature to refer to this phenomenon. According to Leymann (1996), the connotation of "bullying" is related to "physical aggression and treat," while workplace violence manifests itself more subtly (e.g., by social isolation). He therefore proposed that the term "bullying" should be retained to describe the behaviour of pupils. Meanwhile, Einarsen et al. (2011) believe that the terms bullying and mobbing can be used interchangeably. However, it has to be considered that the term "bullying" is used not only to describe the relationships between employees but also between children and pupils. Therefore, in order to avoid confusion, the term "mobbing" proposed by Leymann is further followed in the cases under consideration, when the person becomes the target of long-term and systematically repeated unwanted behaviour of colleagues. All of this is accompanied by severe prolonged stress, which the target is usually unable to cope with (Leymann, 1990; Lee and Lim, 2019). Regardless of which term is used, studies emphasize severe consequences for the target, such as PTSD (Nielsen et al., 2015; Tatar and Yüksel, 2019) or burnout (Karsavuran and Kaya, 2017; Aristidou et al., 2020).

Although traditionally the largest scholarship on workplace mobbing studies is associated with such scientific fields as psychology, law, sociology and management, a broader interdisciplinary approach, which would be useful for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, is still needed (Fahie and Dunne, 2021). In this context, it is significant that a quarter of a century ago the World Health Organization (WHO) acknowledged the importance of an individual's spiritual needs and religious beliefs for health and quality of life (World Health Organization, 1998) and that further research has confirmed that religiosity helps to cope with stress, fear, and anxiety (Prazeres et al., 2021), to overcome depression (Bakır et al., 2021) and psychological trauma accompanied by post-traumatic stress disorder (Harris et al., 2021). However, despite the existing evidence, religious spiritual assistance for the victims of mobbing, which responds to the person's specific needs, remains underresearched in the scientific literature, both theoretically and empirically (Vveinhardt and Deikus, 2022a).

A study conducted more than 10 years ago by Vensel (2012) demonstrated that some Christian spiritual practices helped in coping with burnout, which could also be a consequence of workplace mobbing. Still another study states that workplace chaplains are also approached when experiencing bullying, emotional or mental health problems (Gilliat-Ray et al., 2023). Thus, although indirectly, this demonstrates that Christian resources can be useful for employees affected by mobbing; however, episodic excursions into this painful topic do not cover the possibilities of applying Christian spiritual assistance strategies to help victims. Effective application of Christian spiritual help to the victims of mobbing requires broader research of conceptualizing nature, modelling various assistance strategies. Therefore, this study aims to conceptualize the perspective of

integrating Christian spiritual assistance resources in coping with individual consequences of workplace mobbing.

This paper analyses individual consequences of mobbing for the victims of mobbing and how these consequences can be facilitated by integrating religious resources in practice. The study is based on an interdisciplinary approach, reviewing the literature in psychology, psychotherapy and theology. Its findings broaden the understanding of assistance to the victims of mobbing, accentuate the role of religious faith and provide a basis for further empirical research on Christian spiritual assistance for the victims of mobbing.

2. Methods

A narrative approach was applied, which is valuable "when one is attempting to link together many studies on different topics, either for purposes of reinterpretation or interconnection" (Baumeister and Leary, 1997, 312). A narrative literature review is used to expand understanding in a certain area (Greenhalgh et al., 2018) and highlights key findings about the phenomenon rather than provides a systematic assessment of the research area (Nielsen and Einarsen, 2018). This does not necessarily involve a systematic literature search strategy (Snyder, 2019); therefore, in response to the criticism that "random evidence" may be taken, Greenhalgh et al. (2018) emphasize that producers of narrative reviews gather evidence in a deliberate and purposeful way, considering what is important in addressing key issues (Greenhalgh et al., 2018).

A search for conceptual and empirical research was carried out in the Web of Science, SCOPUS, PubMed, ProQuest databases, with an additional search in Google Scholar. The search, which was limited to years 1990–2023, was performed using various combinations of keywords such as "workplace mobbing," "workplace bullying," "individual consequences," "Christian," "spirituality," "support," "assistance," "counseling," "pastoral care." Studies using the keywords "mobbing" or "bullying" were included in cases where they corresponded to the definition given in the introduction of this article (taking into account the systematicity and duration of actions). When examining the religious aspect of assistance, we have included works on practices used in the Christian religion. In addition, the main focus was on articles that appeared first and were cited more often.

3. Areas of personal life, affected by mobbing

The archaic mechanism of group persecution, which Girard (1986) identifies as scapegoating, emerges in the workplace as a unique and particularly harmful form of aggression in the workplace (Nielsen and Einarsen, 2018). Compared to the outbursts of physical violence, which occur when a crowd persecutes a "perpetrator," workplace violence manifests itself in more subtle forms (for more see Leymann, 1996). However, the behavior of persecutors in a group means that the force of the violent act "is increased with the addition of each individual quotient of violence" (Girard, 2005, 35), while systematic, long-lasting hostile and offensive behavior at work leads to various negative health consequences, including somatic and psychological symptoms (Nielsen et al., 2015).

On the one hand, research shows that, depending on the type, time and intensity of the irritant, stress can cause physiological changes ranging from homeostatic changes to life-threatening health disorders and death (Yaribeygi et al., 2017). On the other hand, the experience of mobbing stands out from the stress that is often experienced in various situations by its traumatic multifaceted nature. Therefore, Nielsen et al. (2015), in a meta-analysis of research on mobbing and post-traumatic stress disorder, highlighted not only worsened physical health but also persistent tension, burnout and psychological suffering experienced by both adult and adolescent victims of mobbing. The physical and psychological suffering experienced by victims according to aspects and noticeable signs is detailed in Table 1.

It should be noted that division of consequences into physical and psychological is rather conditional, since the impact on the individual is not merely psychological and goes beyond personal suffering. On the one hand, the experienced attacks and social isolation cause spiritual pain for the person, while physical ailments are often psychosomatic in origin (de Pedro et al., 2008). That is, disorders of the human body manifest themselves as physiological reactions to prolonged and severe stress.

On the other hand, the victim's social ties are disrupted, which causes suffering to both the victim and the surrounding people. Research shows that the person experiencing mobbing transfers negative emotions to the family; therefore, quite often these families experience conflicts, relationship breakdowns or eventually break up (Duffy and Sperry, 2007; Hillard, 2009). This is influenced by change in the victim's behaviour, health disorders, and deteriorating material situation or abuse of alcohol, psychotropic drugs, drugs used when trying to cope with the crisis. Loved ones and friends see the change in the suffering person's behaviour but do not always understand what is happening (Davenport et al., 1999). In addition, although mobbing influences deteriorating marital relations (alienation, conflicts, changes in sexual behaviour), the family also plays a protective role (Pellegrini et al., 2018).

The consequences of mobbing go beyond the clearly visible and felt physiological and psychological reactions. Some research on bullying among school-age young people show that a part of former victims later become abusers (Rivers and Noret, 2010). Thus, a certain process of learning dysfunctional social relationships takes place, which also allows to treat the bully as an injured person who needs help. Violence and suffering as a visible event therefore have deeper roots, going back to the past injuries of both the perpetrator and the victim (Twemlow et al., 1996).

4. Directions for assistance to persons who have experienced mobbing

Research shows that as the process of mobbing continues, the feelings of helplessness and disappointment arise, since attempts to defend oneself do not produce the expected results (Leymann, 1990; Pheko, 2018; Krishna et al., 2023). This means that the person becomes unable to overcome the situation on his own. Although it is important that opportunities should be ensured for affected employees to consult with the organisation's internal and external professionals, receive long-term support, legal assistance or rehabilitation (Chappel and Di Martino, 2006), emotional support is equally significant. According to

TABLE 1 Aspects of consequences of mobbing for the person.

Aspects	Disorders	Kind of research	Source
Physical	Sleep disorders	Qualitative research and systematic review	Vartia (2001) and Nielsen et al. (2020)
	Constant fatigue, nervousness	Quantitative	Vartia (2001)
	Changes in attention span, body weight (increase or decrease)	Overview of research	Davenport et al. (1999)
	Disability	Overview of research	Hogh et al. (2019)
	Eczema	Case study	Duffy and Sperry (2007)
	Digestive disorders, high blood pressure	Overview of research	Davenport et al. (1999)
Psychological	Avoidance, intrusion, hypersensitivity	Meta-analysis of PTSD symptoms after mobbing experience	Nielsen et al. (2015)
	Suicidal ideation	Case study and quantitative research	Duffy and Sperry (2007) and Vartia (2001)
	Post-traumatic stress disorder	Overview of research and meta-analysis	Leymann (1996); Nielser et al. (2015)
	Distress, tension, fear.	Quantitative research	Vartia (2001)
	Self-doubt, shame and humiliation leading to increased self-isolation from the natural social relations network, depression.	Case study and quantitative research	Duffy and Sperry (2007) and Vartia (2001)
Social	Social isolation, stigmatizing, voluntary unemployment, social maladjustment	Case study	Leymann (1990)
	Adversely affects family relationships	Empirical research	Machado et al. (2021)

Mhaka-Mutepfa and Rampa (2021), emotional support and encouragement provided by co-workers is invaluable, as it can save the persecuted person's life and career. It gives strength to start using existing assistance resources.

Although the problem of mobbing should first be tackled within the organisation itself, employing special preventive and intervention measures, in practice, the protection of employees is not always adequately ensured (Davenport et al., 1999; Turner, 2018). Since the victim is involved in the dangerous process gradually and does not always notice the first signs, opportunities of making rational decisions are sharply declining in the later stages of the process, when the damage has already been done (Leymann, 1996; Davenport et al., 1999). In addition, the victim needs external assistance both experiencing terror of co-workers and recovering from the trauma. The forms of individual assistance to the victim, identified in the literature, are presented in Table 2.

According to Tatar and Yüksel (2019), the opportunity to use social support resources can help people to perceive the need to demand justice and to oppose injustice rather than succumb to helplessness and resignation in the face of oppression. A proper perception of mobbing and of the victim's situation is also required; therefore, Duffy and Sperry (2007) stress that instead of understanding mobbing as a reversion to a more primitive aggressive state common to all animals, it is necessary to perceive that most often, the person who has been mobbed has received little support, has been isolated, and has constructed a meaning of experience as a shameful personal failure. Victims therefore need support, appropriate treatment and sometimes, vocational rehabilitation.

Since the victim often feels betrayed and abandoned, this loss can be compensated by the attention of the immediate environment: co-workers, family members, friends, etc. It is significant that the support of co-workers and the immediate social setting is necessary both during the entire mobbing process and after it ends, while the help of different specialists can be used depending on the circumstances of a particular case. Meanwhile, psychological help can be effective if the specialist knows what mobbing is and is able to recognise its consequences (Ferris, 2009). This knowledge is also needed for the specialist to find additional sources of assistance, for example, of a lawyer from a professional organisation, etc., (Looi et al., 2023).

TABLE 2 Forms of assistance to the victim of m	nobbing.
--	----------

Forms of assistance	Nature of assistance	Source
Social support	Intervention in the	Farley et al. (2023)
	mobbing process (stopping	and Rossiter and
	the persecution, public	Sochos (2018)
	intercession, etc.) and	
	various forms of emotional	
	support (listening, sharing	
	experiences,	
	encouragement, etc.).	
Psychological counselling/	Psychological counselling	Duffy and Sperry
treatment	(also for family members)	(2007), Ferris (2009),
	and/or inpatient assistance.	Hillard (2009), Looi
	Referral to primary care if	et al. (2023), and
	somatic symptoms are	Pellegrini et al.
	noticed.	(2018)
Legal	Component of assistance,	Hillard (2009) and
	manifesting itself by	Tatar and Yüksel
	information, counselling	(2019)
	and representation in	
	court.	

5. A Christian perspective on spiritual assistance

Christian spiritual help responds to the religious and spiritual needs of persons who have found themselves in difficult situations (Wells et al., 2021) and is grounded on a holistic approach to the person, acknowledging the importance of biological, psychological, religious and social aspects of human existence (Vveinhardt and Deikus, 2022b). This perspective combines the achievements of psychological science and religious resources (spiritual advice, listening, prayer, religious rituals, community support, etc.; Vensel, 2012; Turner, 2018; Haţegan, 2021; Vveinhardt and Deikus, 2022b). Two distinct but intertwining perspectives can be distinguished in such assistance. These perspectives include various crisis coping practices that can be carried out (1) individually by the person with the help of a religious counsellor, and (2) together with the community and its support (Table 3).

The overview of religious practices, the effectiveness of which has been confirmed by scientific research, presented in Table 3, shows a broad arsenal of religion-based ways of coping with crisis situations. According to Hunsinger (2011), personal trauma and losses during the liturgy should be empathetically embraced and woven into the losses of a larger community; for this reason, personal suffering turns into part of the communal grief of God's nation throughout the ages. Rituals, psalms, hymns, worship and participation in the mystery of the Lord's Supper serve this purpose. Although Christians often associate the adversity with God's punishment, Bible stories (e.g., Job's, Jonah's) teach us to be careful about trying to associate personal suffering with God's punishment and to be open to any help (Entwistle et al., 2018). Meanwhile, psychoeducation that teaches forgiveness can be useful not only in Christian congregations but also in individual and group psychotherapy, employee assistance programs (Worthington et al., 2016).

Paraphrasing Vensel (2012), religion-based coping describes how persons, based on their faith, behave while attempting to cope with the consequences caused by a situation they have encountered. Research shows that important factors in such coping are faith-based hope and optimism (Sanken, 2017; Prazeres et al., 2021), acceptance and regulation of complex emotions (Entwistle et al., 2018; Jueckstock, 2018; Harris et al., 2021) as well as making sense of painful experiences (Hunsinger, 2011; Sanken, 2017). According to Jacobsen (2017), the context of the Apostles' Creed in Christian narratives and its Christian statements become the site of transforming the identity determined by trauma, considering the identity of Christ, since such identity is linked to the promise of salvation.

6. Discussion and conclusions

This article explored the perspective of integrating Christian spiritual assistance resources in coping with the individual consequences of workplace mobbing. The conducted research review has shown that mobbing is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that affects not only physical and psychological but also social aspects of human existence. In the scientific literature, three forms of individual assistance to victims of mobbing are usually distinguished (see Table 2), but our review of the literature shows that when helping religious persons who have found themselves in crisis situations, their

TABLE 3 Perspectives on religion-based coping with the crisis.

Perspective	Methods	Key features	Source
Individual	A prayer	Colloquial and meditative styles of prayer help to freely experience unprocessed and difficult emotions without feeling abandoned by God. This allows to effectively cope with grief experiences, leads to gratitude and hopeful disposition, enhances the emotional regulation ability, and provides more opportunities to meaningfully establish supportive and caring relationships.	Jueckstock (2018)
	The Holy Bible	The cross becomes the Gospel of traumatised people only if they see the divine love there, which is willing to bear what mortal, fallen people cannot endure.	Hunsinger (2011)
	Forgiveness	Forgiveness can be an effective response to disaster-related injustices, which promotes resilience.	Worthington et al. (2016)
	Reconciliation	The believer's confession shapes the narrative about trauma, encompassing perception of the trauma and empowerment to alter memory. The idea is not to forget but to direct memory to a proper perspective that will allow the penitent to move forward.	O'Donnell (2018)
Communal	Community support	Family, friends, neighbours and the community at large can be an extremely important support in times of suffering and help bear each other's burdens.	Entwistle et al. (2018)
	Rituals	The method of the pastoral community's care constitutes rituals, psalms and songs, worship and the mystery of the Lord's Supper.	Hunsinger (2011)
	Intercession	The prayer is a common approach, modelled throughout the Holy Scripture, as a means of intercession, expressing compassion and accepting grace.	Entwistle et al. (2018)
	Homily	Homilies that are based on the whole experience of Jesus, by identifying oneself with His resurrection, open up the possibility of hope for those who are experiencing traumas.	Sanken (2017)
	Humble listening	Those who provide spiritual and emotional care should listen without judging the stories and emotions of those who have experienced them. In doing so, humility is important.	Entwistle et al. (2018)

religious and spiritual needs must also be taken into account. Therefore, for victims of mobbing who identify themselves as Christians, we propose to include a dimension based on Christian spirituality when providing legal aid, social support and counselling/ treatment. It is also significant in that religious people who are going through traumatising experiences seek assistance from God and people, which has a positive effect on post-traumatic growth (Harris et al., 2008). In addition, a recent study in which the majority of respondents were Christians demonstrated that the experiences of mobbing were a strong stimulus to seek religious spiritual help (Vveinhardt and Deikus, 2023). Therefore, considering the research results, Christian spiritual assistance can be meaningful in two ways: (a) performing an auxiliary function and (b) performing a direct function in a certain limited scope related to satisfying religious spiritual needs. Auxiliary and direct functions mean the recognition of competences in a certain field and collaboration. Providers of social support (e.g., trade unions, victim support groups), psychological assistance/treatment and legal services should recognize the specific needs of victims and collaborate with representatives of the religious community (clergy, chaplains, religious counsellors). According to Prout et al. (2021), Christians who consider themselves particularly religious prefer to discuss their difficulties in a counseling environment that affirms their Christian faith. In this case, Christian spiritual assistance performs an auxiliary function, and in order to recognize and satisfy the spiritual needs of clients, lay professionals particularly need religious and spiritual literacy (Maximo, 2019). Meanwhile, the direct function is related to religious rituals, spiritual practices, religious counseling, etc. That is, practices that require specific religious preparation or consecration (Table 4).

Social support. It should be noted that both providing psychological or medical assistance and when the religious counsellor is involved in assistance provision, community participation remains equally important. According to Drescher and Foy (2010), when the pastoral counsellor acts together with the community, such personal needs as physical and psychological safety, which the victim and his family experience as members of the church community, are met, excessive sensitivity decreases, learning to trust and build social relationships takes place, and a sense of meaning is discovered in serving others. In other words, authors identify problems of persons who have gone through traumatising psychological and social experiences, which are similar to those of the victims of mobbing (cf. Table 1). In addition, Doehring (2019) points out that, in the context of the experienced trauma, religious rituals performed by the community improve spiritual integrity, integration of individuals, families and the community, and promote flexible ways to share suffering, meanings and sources of hope. This means that in practice, lay counselors or public organizations helping victims of mobbing should consider the value of the support provided by the religious community. That is, alongside secular assistance, the support that the Christian community can provide will perform an auxiliary function. Meanwhile, it falls to the leaders of Christian communities to perform the task of preparing the community to be ready to fulfill its direct function and to accept the vulnerable person (as well as the family members who feel the consequences) with specific experiences caused

Directions for	Christian spiritual assistance		
help	Auxiliary function	Direct function	
Social support	Recognition of specific religious spiritual needs that can be met by the religious community in secular aid organizations.	Community support for the victim of mobbing and his / her family members (rituals, intercessory prayer, listening, homily, etc.), integrating it into the community's religious and social life.	
Psychological counselling/treatment	Recognition of religious spiritual needs in psychological counselling/treatment. Collaboration with a clergyman or spiritual counsellor.	Counselling using religious resources (prayer, the Holy Bible, etc.). Religious meaning- making of mobbing experience. Guidance towards forgiveness and reconciliation. Referral to health care professionals.	
Legal	Support during and after the process.	Referral to a legal assistance specialist.	

TABLE 4 Integrating Christian spiritual assistance in overcoming the consequences of mobbing.

by mobbing. It is important that if secular help is limited in time (while the problem is being addressed), the social relations created in the community do not have such limitation and are related to the very essence of the Church.

Psychological counselling/treatment. According to Larson and Larson (2003), scientific research confirms the importance of active spirituality or religiosity as a potential health factor, since it can provide resources for coping with suffering, improve pain management and treatment results. In the first case (auxiliary function), it makes sense in psychotherapy to consider the victim's religiosity as an additional factor facilitating recovery. The benefit of such recognition of religious spiritual needs in psychotherapy is supported by the results of a meta-analysis of research, conducted by Captari et al. (2018). They show that psychotherapy tailored to clients' religious and spiritual values resulted in greater improvement in clients' psychological and spiritual functioning, protection against depression, and reduced risk of substance abuse and suicide. In addition, it has been found that forgiveness is an effective response disaster-related injustices, which promotes resilience to (Worthington et al., 2016). Because specific religious knowledge may be required, it may be helpful to collaborate with a religious counsellor in this case, either through counselling or referral to a clergyman. That is, the counsellor must be prepared to make an appropriate referral to a spiritual healing specialist who would correspond to the theology of the victim (Vensel, 2012). For example, dealing with the issues of forgiveness or reconciliation may require an authoritative theological explanation or a sacramental celebration of reconciliation. Forgiving the wrongdoer is extremely difficult, but the Gospels contain inspiring examples that help us to understand that forgiveness comes from the fact that every person enjoys God's mercy, which he or she extends in his relationships with others (*cf.* Matthew 18: 21–35), and forgiveness is possible in the most radical situations (*cf.* Luke 23:24). This can be applied through Lectio divina (reading, reflection, prayer, contemplation) or other methods. On the other hand, although religious counsellors commonly use general counselling techniques, grounding on the theories of one or several schools of psychotherapy (Billings, 2000), specific treatment may be required, which can be provided only by a specialist of a particular field.

Legal assistance. Mobbing cases usually require decisions that require legal knowledge (disciplinary sanctions, dismissal, compensation for damages, etc.). The religious counsellor should be prepared to refer to a legal professional and simultaneously provide spiritual support throughout the process or even after it has ended. Thus, not only openness to the needs of the victim of mobbing, flexibility, but also specific knowledge is required: for the psychotherapist, about the possibilities of religious spiritual assistance, and for the spiritual assistant, about the process of mobbing and its consequences for the person.

This study has several limitations. We have focused exclusively on the spiritual resources of the Christian religion and shown the possibility of integrating them. In other words, Christianity is used as one of many possible examples; therefore, other studies should additionally examine the spiritual resources of other monotheistic and polytheistic religions, not leaving out non-religious spirituality as well. In addition, the inclusion of other databases could also increase the reviews sample. Also, this article did not examine the specific religious needs of victims of mobbing and methods of religious assistance, which could be the subject of further research.

Author contributions

JV: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Project administration, Supervision, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. MD: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Resources, Writing – original draft.

Funding

The author(s) declare financial support was received for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article. This project has received funding from the Research Council of Lithuania (LMTLT), agreement no S-MIP-23-34.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

The author(s) declared that they were an editorial board member of Frontiers, at the time of submission. This had no impact on the peer review process and the final decision.

Publisher's note

All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated

References

Aristidou, L., Mpouzika, M., Papathanassoglou, E. D., Middleton, N., and Karanikola, M. N. (2020). Association between workplace bullying occurrence and trauma symptoms among healthcare professionals in Cyprus. *Front. Psychol.* 11:575623. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.575623

Bakır, N., Irmak, V., and Demir, C. (2021). Relationship of depression, anxiety and stress levels with religious coping strategies among Turkish pregnant women during the COVID-19 pandemic. *J. Relig. Health* 60, 3379–3393. doi: 10.1007/s10943-021-01391-7

Baumeister, R. F., and Leary, M. R. (1997). Writing narrative literature reviews. *Rev. Gen. Psychol.* 1, 311–320. doi: 10.1037/1089-2680.1.3.31

Billings, A. (2000). Pastors or Consellors? in *Spiritual Dimensions of Pastoral Care – Practical Theology in a multidisciplinary context (136-142)*. eds. D. Willows and Swinton (Kingsley Publishers).

Captari, L. E., Hook, J. N., Hoyt, W., Davis, D. E., McElroy-Heltzel, S. E., and Worthington, E. L. Jr. (2018). Integrating clients' religion and spirituality within psychotherapy: a comprehensive meta-analysis. *J. Clin. Psychol.* 74, 1938–1951. doi: 10.1002/jclp.22681

Chappel, D., and Di Martino, V. (2006). Violence at Work. Geneva: International Labour Office.

Davenport, N. Z., Schwartz, R. D., and Elliott, G. P. (1999). *Mobbing: Emotional Abuse in the American Workplace*. Ames: Civil Sociaty Publishing.

de Pedro, M. M., Sánchez, M. I. S., Navarro, M. C. S., and Izquierdo, M. G. (2008). Workplace mobbing and effects on Workers' health. *Span. J. Psychol.* 11, 219–227. doi: 10.1017/S1138741600004261

Doehring, C. (2019). Searching for wholeness amidst traumatic grief: the role of spiritual practices that reveal compassion in embodied, relational, and transcendent ways. *Pastor. Psychol.* 68, 241–259. doi: 10.1007/s11089-018-0858-5

Drescher, K., and Foy, D. W. (2010). When horror and loss intersect: traumatic experiences and traumatic bereavement. *Pastor. Psychol.* 59, 147–158. doi: 10.1007/s11089-009-0262-2

Duffy, M., and Sperry, L. (2007). Workplace mobbing: individual and family health consequences. *Fam. J.* 15, 398-404. doi: 10.1177/1066480707305069

Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., Zapf, D., and Cooper, C. (2011). "The concept of bullying and harassment at work: the European tradition" in *Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace: Developments in Theory, Research, and Practice.* eds. S. Einarsen, H. Hoel, D. Zapf and C. Cooper. *2nd* ed (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press), 3–40.

Entwistle, D. N., Moroney, S. K., and Aten, J. (2018). Integrative reflections on disasters, suffering, and the practice of spiritual and emotional care. *J. Psychol. Theol.* 46, 67–81. doi: 10.1177/0091647117750658

Fahie, D., and Dunne, G. (2021). Standing by or standing up?—how philosophy can (in)form our understanding of bystander behaviours in workplace bullying dynamics. *Societies* 11:28. doi: 10.3390/soc11020028

Farley, S., Mokhtar, D., Ng, K., and Niven, K. (2023). What influences the relationship between workplace bullying and employee well-being? A systematic review of moderators. *Work Stress* 37, 345–372. doi: 10.1080/02678373.2023.2169968

Ferris, P. A. (2009). The role of the consulting psychologist in the prevention, detection, and correction of bullying and mobbing in the workplace. *Consult. Psychol. J. Pract. Res.* 61, 169–189. doi: 10.1037/a0016783

Gilliat-Ray, S., Smith, G., Cadge, W., Sampson, H., and Turgo, N. (2023). 'Here today, gone tomorrow': the risks and rewards of port chaplaincy. *J. Beliefs Values* 44, 173–187. doi: 10.1080/13617672.2022.2039982

Girard, R. (1986). The Scapegoat. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Girard, R. (2005). Violence and the Sacred. New York: Continuum.

Greenhalgh, T., Thorne, S., and Malterud, K. (2018). Time to challenge the spurious hierarchy of systematic over narrative reviews? *Eur. J. Clin. Investig.* 48:e12931. doi: 10.1111/eci.12931

Harris, J. I., Chamberlin, E. S., Engdahl, B., Ayre, A., Usset, T., and Mendez, D. (2021). Spiritually integrated interventions for PTSD and moral injury: A review. *Current Treatment Options in Psychiatry* 8, 196–212. doi: 10.1007/s40501-021-00248-w

Harris, J. I., Erbes, C. R., Engdahl, B. E., Olson, R. H., Winskowski, A. M., and McMahill, J. (2008). Christian religious functioning and trauma outcomes. *J. Clin. Psychol.* 64, 17–29. doi: 10.1002/jclp.20427

Hațegan, V. P. (2021). Spiritual and philosophical practices: together for community using the counseling. *Religions* 12:603. doi: 10.3390/rel12080603

Hillard, J. R. (2009). Workplace mobbing: are they really out to get your patient? *Curr. Psychiatr. Ther.* 8, 45–51.

organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers. Any product that may be evaluated in this article, or claim that may be made by its manufacturer, is not guaranteed or endorsed by the publisher.

Hogh, A., Clausen, T., Bickmann, L., Hansen, Å. M., Conway, P. M., and Baernholdt, M. (2019). "Consequences of workplace bullying for individuals, organizations and society" in *Pathways of Job-Related Negative Behaviour*. eds. P. D'Cruz, E. Noronha, E. Baillien, B. Catley, K. Harlos and A. Hoghet al. (Singapore: Springer), 177–200.

Hunsinger, D. V. D. (2011). Bearing the unbearable: trauma, gospel and pastoral care. *Theol. Today* 68, 8–25. doi: 10.1177/0040573610394922

Jacobsen, D. S. (2017). ""Introduction" in theologies of the gospel in Kontext" in *The Crux of Homitetical Theologie*. ed. D. S. Jacobsen (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Boocs), 1–14.

Jueckstock, J. A. (2018). Relational spirituality and grief: a qualitative analysis of bereaved parents. J. Psychol. Theol. 46, 38–51. doi: 10.1177/0091647117753902

Karsavuran, S., and Kaya, S. (2017). The relationship between burnout and mobbing among hospital managers. *Nurs. Ethics* 24, 337–348. doi: 10.1177/0969733015602054

Krishna, A., Soumyaja, D., Subramanian, J., and Nimmi, P. M. (2023). The escalation process of workplace bullying: a scoping review. *Aggress. Violent Behav.* 71:101840. doi: 10.1016/j.avb.2023.101840

Larson, D. B., and Larson, S. (2003). Spirituality's potential relevance to physical and emotional health: a brief review of quantitative research. *J. Psychol. Theol.* 31, 37–51. doi: 10.1177/009164710303100104

Lee, J., and Lim, J. J. (2019). Workplace bullying and job attitudes: the moderating role of coping strategies. *Int. J. Bus. Inform.* 14, 1–24. doi: 10.6702/ijbi.201903_14(1).0001

Leymann, H. (1990). Mobbing and psychological terror at workplaces. *Violence Vict.* 5, 119–126. doi: 10.1891/0886-6708.5.2.119

Leymann, H. (1996). The content and development of mobbing at work. *Eur. J. Work Organ. Psy.* 5, 165–184. doi: 10.1080/13594329608414853

Looi, J. C., Allison, S., Kisely, S. R., and Bastiampillai, T. J. (2023). Clinical update and commentary on psychiatric care for patients experiencing workplace bullying. *Australas. Psychiatry* 31, 178–181. doi: 10.1177/10398562231153021

Machado, I. C. K., Bernardes, J. W., Monteiro, J. K., and Marin, A. H. (2021). Stress, anxiety and depression among gastronomes: association with workplace mobbing and work–family interaction. *Int. Arch. Occup. Environ. Health* 94, 1797–1807. doi: 10.1007/s00420-021-01745-4

Maximo, S. I. (2019). A scoping review of ethical considerations in spiritual/religious counseling and psychotherapy. *J. Past. Care Couns.* 73, 124–133. doi: 10.1177/1542305019848656

Mhaka-Mutepfa, M., and Rampa, S. (2021). Workplace bullying and mobbing: autoethnography and meaning-making in the face of adversity in academia. *Int. J. Qual. Stud. Educ.* 1–18, 1–18. doi: 10.1080/09518398.2021.1991028

Nielsen, M. B., and Einarsen, S. V. (2018). What we know, what we do not know, and what we should and could have known about workplace bullying: an overview of the literature and agenda for future research. *Aggress. Violent Behav.* 42, 71–83. doi: 10.1016/j.avb.2018.06.007

Nielsen, M. B., Harris, A., Pallesen, S., and Einarsen, S. V. (2020). Workplace bullying and sleep–a systematic review and meta-analysis of the research literature. *Sleep Med. Rev.* 51:101289. doi: 10.1016/j.smrv.2020.101289

Nielsen, M. B., Tangen, T., Idsoe, T., Matthiesen, S. B., and Magerøy, N. (2015). Posttraumatic stress disorder as a consequence of bullying at work and at school. A literature review and meta-analysis. *Aggress. Violent Behav.* 21, 17–24. doi: 10.1016/j. avb.2015.01.001

O'Donnell, K. (2018). Broken Bodies - The Eucharist, Mary and the Body in Trauma Theology. London: CSM Press.

Pellegrini, P. G., Gonçalves, J., and Tolfo, S. D. R. (2018). Repercussions of workplace bullying on marital relationships. *Qualit. Res. Organ. Manag.* 13, 98–120. doi: 10.1108/ QROM-10-2016-1431

Pheko, M. M. (2018). Rumors and gossip as tools of social undermining and social dominance in workplace bullying and mobbing practices: a closer look at perceived perpetrator motives. *J. Hum. Behav. Soc. Environ.* 28, 449–465. doi: 10.1080/10911359.2017.1421111

Prazeres, F., Passos, L., Simões, J. A., Simões, P., Martins, C., and Teixeira, A. (2021). COVID-19-related fear and anxiety: spiritual-religious coping in healthcare workers in Portugal. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 18:220. doi: 10.3390/ ijerph18010220

Prout, T. A., Magaldi, D., Kim, E. E., and Cha, J. (2021). Christian therapists and their clients. *Spiritual. Clin. Pract.* 8, 1–15. doi: 10.1037/scp0000238

Rivers, I., and Noret, N. (2010). Participant roles in bullying behavior and their association with thoughts of ending One's life. Crisis. J. Crisis Interv. Suicide Prev. 31, 143–148. doi: 10.1027/0227-5910/a000020

Rossiter, L., and Sochos, A. (2018). Workplace bullying and burnout: the moderating effects of social support. J. Aggress. Maltreat. Trauma 27, 386–408. doi: 10.1080/10926771.2017.1422840

Sanken, J. S. (2017). "Introduction" in Theologies of the Gospel in Kontext: The Crux of Homitetical Theologie. ed. D. S. Jacobsen (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books), 114–117.

Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: an overview and guidelines. J. Bus. Res. 104, 333–339. doi: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039

Tatar, Z. B., and Yüksel, Ş. (2019). Mobbing at workplace -psychological trauma and documentation of psychiatric symptoms. *Noro Psikiyatr. Ars.* 56, 57–62. doi: 10.29399/ npa.22924

Turner, L. (2018). Help and hindrance: clergy talking about bullying. *Pract. Theol.* 11, 450–461. doi: 10.1080/1756073X.2018.1536354

Twemlow, S. W., Sacco, F. C., and Wiliams, P. (1996). A clinical and interactionist perspective an the bully-victim-bistander relationship. *Bull. Menn. Clin.* 60, 300–301.

Vartia, M. A.-L. (2001). Consequences of workplace bullying with respect to the wellbeing of its targets and the observers of bullying. *Scand. J. Work Environ. Health* 27, 63–69. doi: 10.5271/sjweh.588

Vensel, S. R. (2012). Mobbing, Burnout, and Religious Coping Styles among Protestant Clergy: A Structural Equation Model and Its Implications for Counselors. A Dissertation Florida Atlantic University. Available at: http://fau.digital.flvc.org/ islandora/object/fau%3A3989

Vveinhardt, J., and Deikus, M. (2022a). The new testament and workplace mobbing: structuring of victims' experiences. *Religions* 13:1022. doi: 10.3390/rel13111022

Vveinhardt, J., and Deikus, M. (2022b). Religious and non-religious workplace mobbing victims: when do people turn to religious Organisations? *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 19:12356. doi: 10.3390/ijerph191912356

Vveinhardt, J., and Deikus, M. (2023). Strategies for a Nonviolent Response to Perpetrator Actions: What Can Christianity Offer to Targets of Workplace Mobbing? *Scientia et Fides* 11, 175–195. doi: 10.12775/SetF.2023.021

Wells, Y., Fetherstonhaugh, D., and Hunter, N. J. R. (2021). Pastoral Care in Aged Care Settings: role and challenges. *J. Relig. Health* 60, 2077–2091. doi: 10.1007/s10943-020-01172-8

World Health Organization. (1998). WHOQOL and Spirituality, Religiousness and Personal Beliefs (SRPB). World Health Organization. Available at: https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/70897

Worthington, E. L., Griffin, B. J., Toussaint, L. T., Nonterah, C. W., Utsey, S. O., and Garthe, R. C. (2016). Forgiveness as a catalyst for psychological, physical, and spiritual resilience in disasters and crises. *J. Psychol. Theol.* 44, 152–165. doi: 10.1177/009164711604400206

Yaribeygi, H., Panahi, Y., Sahraei, H., Johnston, T. P., and Sahebkar, A. (2017). The impact of stress on body function: a review. *EXCLI J.* 16, 1057–1072. doi: 10.17179/excli2017-480