Why Didn’t Anyone Tell Me? 
Examining Who is Ignored and Excluded in Work Groups
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Introduction
- When tangible forms of harassment are easy grounds for demotion or dismissal, deniability is especially useful in the workplace.
- Considerable evidence suggests that individuals who are ostracized—ignored and excluded—require only minimal evidence of such social exclusion.
- Co-workers may go so far as acknowledging the individual and conversing with him or her, but keeping that individual ignorant and excluded from crucial work-relevant information.
- Targets detect this exclusion quickly, respond with pain and distress, and report that their needs for belonging, self-esteem, control, and meaningful existence have been thwarted.
- Once the immediate pain subsides, ostracized and out-of-the-loop individuals report negative job-related attitudes, decreased psychological health, dislike and distrust of coworkers, and decreased performance.

Method

Participants:
- 1597 faculty members ($M_{age}=50.42$ years, $SD=12.00$)
- Average organizational tenure=12.67 years ($SD=11.05$)
- 924 male, 559 female, & 6 transgender (108 did not disclose sex)
- 53.7% White, 5.6% Asian, 3.2% multiracial, 2.6% Hispanic, 1.9% Black, .7% other (32.5% no response)

Measures:
- Information exclusion or out-of-the-loop experiences (6 items)
  - e.g., “Through no fault of my own, I seem to be one of the last to find out about information at work”
  - “I am kept up to date on any policy changes at work that are relevant to my professional success”
- Workplace ostracism (6 items)
  - e.g., “Colleagues ignored you at work”
  - “Colleagues shut you out of the conversation”

Results

Ostracism Targets

Gender
- “A woman makes a suggestion & it is ignored, a man repeats or slightly changes the woman’s suggestion and it is considered carefully.”
  - Respondent, 2015 TAMU Climate Survey
- Female faculty, compared to male faculty, report more ostracism experiences occurring at work.

Religious Affiliation
- Members of the religious minority report greater social ostracism on campus than those who identify as members of the religious majority.

Race/Ethnicity
- Faculty belonging to racial/ethnic minority groups report being out-of-the-loop or excluded from shared information more often than majority faculty.

Out-of-the-Loop Targets

Tenure Rank
- Assistant and Associate Professors, compared to Full Professors and non-tenure track faculty, report more out-of-the-loop experiences.
  - “Tenure standards were “secret” and kept from junior faculty… I have never received any advice on standards or status for promotion to full professor, or much else, frankly.”
  - Respondent, 2015 TAMU Climate Survey