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In my last columns, I focused on the light and dark sides of leaders, but employees also can have a dark side.

In fact, there is evidence that dark-side behaviors are increasing in the workplace, with 20 percent of those surveyed reporting being the target of workplace incivility at least once a week.

Based on conversations with managers and employees, professor Troy Denton and I are exploring incivility demonstrated by employees who are highly productive, but who are exploring incivility demonstrated by managers and employees, which contributes to the distorted view that the organizational reward system grossly under rewards their high level of performance. Their response to such perceived mistreatment is typically passive aggressive.

Rowling’s Dementor character flourish in oppressive and dark places, as do workplace Dementors. High-stress workplaces can actuate Dementor behavior when they are accompanied by a reward system that is truly unjust, by organizational norms that allow deviant behavior to persist and/or by a short-term management orientation focused only on immediate performance objectives. Dementor behavior affects the attitudes and behaviors of those around them.

Managing Dementors
A first step in managing Dementors is identifying them. All of us can have days when our bad attitude infects those around us, but Dementors always make one feel bad. Once identified, it is important for Dementors to know that performance expectations include not only task performance but also civil treatment of co-workers.

Modeling expected behaviors for them and building an open and transparent organization negates Dementors’ ability to convince co-workers of the nefarious intentions of management.

Finally, in managing Dementors, it may become necessary to challenge them publicly. For example, when a Dementor makes an obliquely derogatory statement in a public forum, such as a meeting, it may be helpful to paraphrase the statement and ask them to reiterate their ownership of it.

Constance Campbell is a professor of management at Georgia Southern University and can be reached via email at ccampbell@georgiasouthern.edu.

‘DEMENTORS’ AMONG US
You know them. The productive — but morale-killing — employees.

Based on conversations that matter.
following TED’s celebrated 
unveiled reporting by the number of affirmations 
and managers, Dementors attempt to enlist others to 
validate their belief system.

They display confidence, even narcissism, but they actually 
experience low self-esteem. Their low self-esteem propels them to seek positive feedback, but to recall it negatively, leading to high negative affectivity, seeing only the negative in themselves and others and viewing themselves as victims of their co-workers.

Their narcissistic tendencies imbue them with little ability to empathize with others and monitor their behavior accordingly, so they continue to complacent and resist authority, even when this is self-defeating.

They feel as if they are entitled to special treatment, which contributes to their disordered view that the organizational reward system grossly under rewards their high level of performance.

Their response to such perceived mistreatment is typically passive aggressive.

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Dementor behavior affects the attitudes and behaviors of those around them. Their behavior can increase incivility as co-workers fight rudeness and cynicism. Job satisfaction and motivation decrease.

Top employees may even leave the organization in search of a healthier work environment. Therefore, it is incumbent upon managers to curtail Dementor behavior.

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