

Bully At Your Job

What is workplace bullying?

1) Workplace bullying is **NOT** a disagreement or conflict at work. 2) Workplace bullying is **NOT** sexual harassment or discrimination, which are focused on race, gender, or disability. Workplace bullying is **an unending mind game against a worker (called the target)** that focuses on destroying target's: emotions, self-worth, and work abilities with repeated events. Workplace Bully Institute defines workplace bullying as: Health harming treatment towards a target such as: 1) emotional abuse; 2) verbal abuse; 3) acts that threaten, embarrass, or intimidate (frighten); 4) workplace sabotage (attempt to damage the target's work reputation); or 5) acts that prevent the target from getting work done.



Why do workplace bullies bully? Who are the targets?

A workplace bully will bully for two reasons: 1) to target workers who are a threat to the bully's power or position; or 2) to further the bully's own agenda (what they want) at the expense of others. **Targets of bullies** tend to be independent workers that bullies want to make subservient (under bully's control). Targets usually have better work skills than bullies. Targets tend to be liked, have better social skills, and even feel sorry for the bully. Targets are honest workers who may try to correct a situation. Targets are usually nonaggressive (do not want to fight back).



How do workplace bullies behave?

Bullies will — spread rumors or jokes about the target; steal credit for the target's work; not give information or give wrong information to the target that causes a mistake; unfairly blames the target for mistakes; insult or put down the target; blocks target's request for training or time off; blames, scolds, criticizes target's work ability in front of others; invade the target's privacy by spying or tampering with social media, personal belongings, or work equipment.

How can you tell you are a target of a bully?

Good supervisors: a) treat all workers the same to get the work done; b) provide positive feedback to each worker. Bullies use repeated bad behavior to humiliate (embarrass) one target worker. Bullies may make you feel: 1) like throwing up the night before work; 2) sick with headaches, depression, or high blood pressure; 3) ashamed to tell your friends what is happening at work; 4) exhausted on your days off with no desire to do anything fun; 4) you are responsible for the workplace cruelty. Ask yourself 2 questions if you think you may be experiencing a bully at work: Would good people consider the behavior unacceptable (ok)? Am I spending a lot of time defending my work actions and asking for support from coworkers? If your answers to the questions are "yes," talk to a trusted adult or teacher about the situation.

What Can You Do?

1. **Start to a journal** to document (write down) 6 facts about each bullying incident: date, time, what bully said and did, what you said and did, the result, and witnesses names.
2. **Save** all texts, notes, and social media posts from the bully that are about an incident.
3. **Stay friendly with your coworkers** and avoid being alone with the bully.
4. **After documenting seven incidents**, talk to the bully. You must have a coworkers or



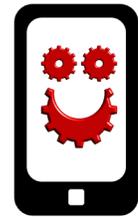
friend nearby to witness the talk. Take these 4 steps in the meeting with the bully:
 (1) **Describe the offensive behavior** and why it is unacceptable to you. (2) **Focus on the problem, not the person.** Do not say, "You always criticize me." Instead say "When you criticize me in front of customers, I feel that the customer loses confidence in my abilities." (3) **Tell the bully that you want the behavior to stop.** (4) **Document what happened** at this conversation: date, time, place, what you said and did; what the bully said and did; the result, and name of witness.



5. **If the bullying continues**, ask for a private meeting with your supervisor (or your supervisor's supervisor if the bully is your supervisor). Tell this person the meeting is about "a sensitive issue."
6. **Take your journal and evidence to the meeting.** Important: Use the bully's name in the meeting. Do not say the word "bully" or call the person a "bully" during the meeting.
7. **Explain the problem calmly and politely.** This supervisor needs to stay neutral (is not automatically on your side) and has not seen the bullying behavior. Act professional — calm tone of voice, peaceful body language, and business-like words (no crying, screaming, or impolite words).
8. **Give this supervisor copies (not originals)** of your journal, evidence, and report of trying to talk to the bully. Remain calm and professional when asked questions. The supervisor needs to understand the situation, think over the situation, and decide on an action.



A worker who show business-like skills handling a bully and crisis situation is often promoted to a supervisor job in the future!
 Supervisors must understand how to successfully deal with bullies.



The consequences of bullying behavior are verbal warning, written warning, suspension, or termination (fired). If the bullying situation does not stop, you may: ask a higher supervisor for a meeting to discuss the situation; ask for a job transfer; or start looking for a new job. Remember:
 1) Your physical and emotional health are more important than a job. 2) Bullies do not change — bullies can only be controlled by a strong supervisor. If there are no strong supervisors at your job, it is best for you to transfer to another department or find a new job with strong supervisors.

QUICK CHECK:

1. a) What is **not** workplace bullying? List 2.
 b) What is workplace bullying?
2. List 5 health harming treatments towards target.
3. For what 2 reasons will bullies bully?
4. List 5 characteristics of most targets.
5. List 5 ways workplace bullies behave.
6. List 2 things good supervisors do.
7. a) List 3 ways bullies may make you feel.
 b) List 2 questions to ask yourself.
8. List 6 facts to document for each incident.
9. What should you save about the incident?
10. With whom should you stay friendly?
11. Who must you have nearby to witness you talk with the bully?
12. List 4 steps to take in the meeting.
13. What should you do if the bullying continues?
14. What do you take to the meeting?
15. What is "important"?
16. a) How should you explain the problem?
 b) How does your supervisor need to stay?
 c) List 3 ways to act professional.
17. What 3 things should you give this supervisor?
18. How should you remain when asked questions?
19. What often happen to a worker who show business-like skills in handling crisis situations?
20. List 4 consequences of bullying behavior.
21. What 3 things can you do if the bullying does not stop?
22. What 2 things should you remember?