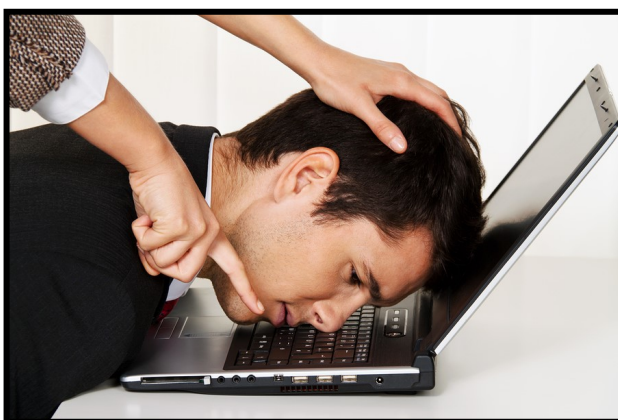


MANAGER TRAINING

Create a Bully Free Workplace



What is Workplace Bullying?

Workplace bullying refers to repeated, unreasonable actions of individuals (or a group) directed towards an employee (or a group of employees), which are intended to intimidate, degrade, humiliate, or undermine; or which create a risk to the health or safety of the employee(s). Workplace bullying often involves an abuse or misuse of power. Bullying behavior creates feelings of defenselessness and injustice in the targeted individual and undermines that individual's right to dignity at work.

Managers Need to Understand What a Bully is and What a Bully Does

A workplace bully uses intimidation and manipulation to attack his/her intended target. Learning to recognize the behavior patterns of a workplace bully is the first step in putting a stop to the bullying behavior and returning the workplace to an environment that is comfortable for everyone.

Recognize Bullying Behaviors

Workplace bullying is more than a simple misunderstanding or personal disagreement between coworkers. Instead, workplace bullying is a systematic campaign on the part of one employee (the "bully") to make the workplace completely intolerable for another employee (the "victim").

Workplace bullying by a coworker might include conduct like:

- Shouting at the victim, whether in private, in front of colleagues, or in front of customers;
- Name-calling;
- Making belittling or disrespectful comments towards the victim;
- Starting, or failing to stop, destructive rumors or gossip about the victim;
- Unfairly discounting the victim's thoughts or feelings ("oh, that's silly") in front of others;
- Staring/glaring at the victim and engaging in other nonverbal, intimidating, and hostile behavior;
- Excessively monitoring, criticizing, or nitpicking of the victim's work;
- Purposefully withholding information needed by the victim to perform a job efficiently;
- Actively excluding the victim from normal workplace/staff room conversations and making the victim feel unwelcome
- Using confidential information about the victim to humiliate him/her privately or publicly
- Making derogatory comments about the victim based on his/her gender, race, accent, age, language, or disability
- Retaliating against the victim after a complaint was filed
- Encouraging the victim to quit or transfer rather than to face more mistreatment

In many bullying cases, the workplace bully is a manager who is using his/her position to bully targeted employees. Workplace bullying by a manager might include the above-listed conduct, but can also include the following:

- Deliberately overloading the victim with work
- Undermining the victim's work by setting the victim up to fail
- Failing to acknowledge good work and value the victim's efforts
- Assigning the victim meaningless tasks
- Taking workplace responsibilities away from the victim without consultation
- Repeatedly reminding the victim of past mistakes
- Falsely accusing the victim of making "errors" that the victim did not actually make
- Abusing the performance evaluation process by lying about the victim's job performance
- Calling the victim "insubordinate" for failing to follow arbitrary commands
- Managing by threat and intimidation

What can you do to avoid workplace bullying?

1. Be a great manager. Set the tone for the employees you manage.
2. Speak to your employees about expected behavior and go over the Code of Conduct. The message to all employees should be "treat others the way you would like to be treated."
3. Train your employees not to react negatively towards a bully. Employees should report any misconduct immediately. If/when you respond to hostility with hostility, hostility escalates. When you respond with kindness, hostility disappears.
4. Do not play judge between employees. You will increase hostility between them as each one tries to convince you that they are right and the other is wrong. If employees have a conflict, instruct them to talk to each other directly, and guide them to do it like friends, without anger. If this is not possible, contact human resources for support.

Don't ignore bullying

It can be tempting to come up with excuses for why a certain employee is being singled out unfairly and/or is being picked on more than other employees. Thinking that "everyone gets treated this way," or "the employee deserved it" is inexcusable.

If you observe (or hear about) bullying in the workplace, take immediate action. Address the issue promptly and contact human resources about the issue as soon as it is discovered.

Conclusion

Bullying in the workplace should not be tolerated under any circumstance. As part of your Company's efforts to curb workplace bullying, we recommend you train your managers to recognize bullying in the workplace and teach all of your employees what constitutes bullying. In addition, if you become aware of a potential workplace bullying situation, we recommend that your HR department is made aware of the situation as soon as possible so that human resources can conduct an investigation and take steps to stop the unwanted bullying conduct.

Finally, we recommend you adopt a Workplace Bullying Policy, which is available in our updated Model Handbook. You can find this on our website in the HR Tasks tab under the sub-section Develop Your HR Program.