



BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE



INTRODUCTION

Bullying in the workplace is an issue that is not always addressed directly because sometimes victims will switch departments, leave the company, or keep quiet about the harassment. Employees should be free from harassment of any kind while at work, and bullying will not be tolerated. The following information is to be used as a guide to educate employees on how to respond to workplace “bullies”.

SIGNS OF BULLYING

Sometimes bullying, or psychological harassment, is subtle and difficult to distinguish between intentional or a simple personality clash. Some signs to look for if you suspect bullying in the workplace are:

- You get extremely anxious on Sunday night before your work week – you may even throw up.
- You seem to be constantly criticized despite putting forth your best efforts.
- You have been insulted, yelled at, or humiliated at work - in front of others or alone.
- A coworker seems to keep a mental record of your previous mistakes and often refers to them.
- There have been rumors spread around the workplace about you.
- You feel that you have been isolated or are often not invited to group lunches or meetings.
- You feel drained or lifeless on your days off, or you frequently take mental health days.
- A coworker has done something that has directly affected your progress – e.g., sabotage.
- There have been frequent last minute changes to your schedule or duties for no reason.
- A coworker seems eager to take the credit for work you have done.



Bullying does NOT include the following:

- A difference of opinion.
- Constructive feedback or work-related advice.
- A supervisor or employer assessing your work performance.

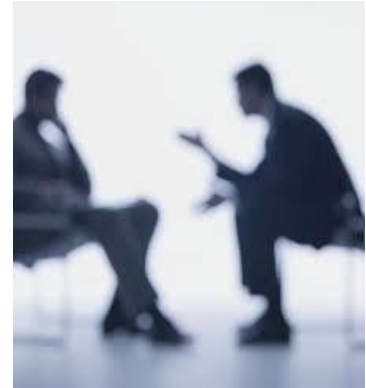


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HOW TO RESPOND TO A BULLY

The worst response to somebody who you suspect is bullying you is retaliation. Attempting revenge will only make it easier for the tormenter to accuse YOU of being the bully. Appropriate actions to take are:

- Firmly tell the tormenter to stop the unacceptable behavior.
- Keep a record of all events that suggest psychological harassment in as much detail as possible.
 - Witness names, if any, are important and should be documented.
- Keep copies of any malicious letters, emails, or memos received.
- Report the incident to your supervisor, or proceed to the next level of management if you suspect that your supervisor is the bully.



BULLYING WILL NOT BE TOLERATED

Psychological harassment of any kind is unacceptable and will result in an unhealthy workplace if continued. Possible effects of bullying may include:

- Decreased production and morale.
- Increased turnover or absences.
- Increased cost for employee assistance programs and recruitment efforts.
- Poor customer service.

CONCLUSION

If you suspect you are being bullied, it is imperative that you take appropriate action. Do not retaliate, keep adequate records of the bullying history, and report to the proper authority so that the issue can be resolved as quickly as possible.