



Bullying in the Workplace

Workplace Bullying

Workplace bullying refers to repeated, unjust acts of individuals, or groups of individuals that are directed towards an employee, or group of employees. These acts may consist of intimidation, degradation, humiliation, and can be a risk to the health or safety of the employee to which the acts are directed. Workplace bullying often involves an abuse or misuse of power. This behavior can create feelings of worthlessness, defenselessness, and may cause you to lose your dignity at work and in your personal life.

Bullying is Different from Aggression

Aggression is defined as a single act of attack, offensive action, or procedure that encroaches on the rights of another individual. In contrast, bullying is not characterized by a single act of aggression, but rather repeated acts against the same individual that create an on-going pattern of aggressive behavior.

Type of Bullying

- Unwarranted or invalid criticism
- Blame without factual justification
- Being treated differently than the rest of your work group
- Being sworn or cursed at
- Exclusion or social isolation
- Excessive monitoring or micromanaging
- Being given unrealistic work deadlines

The primary objective of leaders/supervisors should be to promote the best performance from their employees while maintaining workplace safety.

How Bullying Can Affect You

Many who find themselves as victims of bullying may suffer from both mental and physical health problems such as:

- Financial problems due to absence from work
- Reduced self-esteem
- Phobias
- Increased depression
- Sleep and digestive disturbances
- Family tension and stress
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Ways to Respond in the Workplace

First, you must regain control of the situation rather than continue to be a victim and target of the bully. Second, you must take action to ensure that further bullying will not take place.

- Recognize that you are being bullied.
- Realize that you are not the source of the problem, the bully is.
- Recognize that bullying is about control and power; it consequently has nothing to do with your performance.
- Keep a diary that details the nature of the bullying incidents (date, time, place, what is said/done).
- Obtain any copies of documents that show harassing/bullying if possible.

It is very important to remember that you need to go to your employer to discuss what can be done if you feel you are being bullied. Handling these situations on your own may only perpetuate more harassment and harm for yourself.



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