

## How being bullied can affect your work

- If you are being bullied at work you might:
- Be less productive
- Be less confident in your work
- Feel scared, stressed, anxious or depressed
- Have your life outside of work affected, example: study, relationships
- Want to stay away from work (more than usual)
- Feel unable to trust your employer or the people you work with
- Lack confidence and self-esteem in yourself and your work
- Have physical symptoms of stress such as headaches, backaches and sleep problem

## Why people bully others at work

Like bullying at school or other places, people who bully others at work often have low self-esteem or have been a victim of violence themselves. They use bullying as a way of making themselves feel more powerful.

If you are experiencing bullying it may help to remember that bullies are often not as tough as they make out. Often bullying can become their way of dealing with their own problems. Bullies can also be motivated by jealousy, lack of knowledge, fear or misunderstanding.

## Your rights

No one deserves or asks to be bullied. Everyone has the right to work in an environment free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence. Employers and employees have duties by law (example: Occupational Health and Safety Acts) to comply with any measures in place to promote health and safety within the workplace and not to put themselves or their colleagues at risk.

It's also worth keeping in mind that bullying is not the same as conflict. Disagreement and conflict happens at most workplaces, however it should never turn into bullying or



# Workplace Bullying



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24 Hour Crisis Line  
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## What is Workplace Bullying?

Workplace bullying is when you are verbally, physically, socially or psychologically hurt by your employer (or manager), another person or group of people at work. It can happen in any type of workplace, from offices to workshops, including voluntary, casual and military positions.

### Psychological and Social Bullying can include:

- Verbal abuse or making fun of your work or you (including your family, sex, sexuality, race or culture, education or economic background)
- Excluding or isolating you from people or situations.
- Psychological harassment (playing mind games, ganging up on you).
- Intimidation (making you feel less important and crappy).
- Giving you pointless jobs that have nothing to do with your job.
- Giving you impossible jobs that can't be done in the given time or the resources provided.
- Deliberately changing your work roster to make it difficult for you.

### Physical bullying or violence is when you are physically attacked or threatened. It can include:

- Pushing, shoving, tripping, grabbing
- Punching, kicking, scratching, biting, spitting or any other type of direct physical contact.
- Attacking or threatening with equipment, knives, guns, clubs or any other type of object that can be turned into a weapon.
- Any form of sexual harassment, such as flashing or touching.
- Initiation or hazing - where you are made to do humiliating things in order to be accepted as part of the team.
- Make sure you're informed - find out what the organization's policies and procedures are for preventing and handling bullying.

### What you can do if you are being bullied at work:

- Keep a journal documenting everything that happens, including what you've done to try stopping it. This can help if you make a complaint.
- Get external information and advice, e.g. the union representing your industry, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission These organizations can give you advice on your options and your rights. You can also ask them to act on your behalf

if you don't feel comfortable doing so. They should also respect your confidentiality, though if you are concerned about this, ask them what their responsibilities are.

- Tell someone. The person to talk to might be a Human Resource Manager, but if there isn't one you should report it directly to your employer, a supervisor/manager or health and safety representative (if your work has one). This situation might be able to be resolved informally, without any official complaint being made.
- If the situation continues or is serious, you might need to make a formal (written) complaint that follows company policy. The person doing the bullying might be officially warned, and be required to have counseling. If the bullying continues, there might be a mediation process and if all else fails, the person bullying might be fired. If you end up having to leave, you might be eligible for outstanding wages and entitlements.
- If the person doing the bullying is your employer or they do not do anything to stop it, it's important you get outside support and advice.

