



Bullying and Violence in the Workplace



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Pocket Guide on Bullying and Violence in the Workplace

Other Useful Documents:

Guide for Members

Membership Benefits pamphlet

Your Union at Your Service (CD-ROM)

Professional Institute By-Laws and Regulations

Professional Institute Policy Manual

Manual for Elected Officials

Pocket Guide for Elected Officials

Steward Manual

Pocket Guide for Stewards

Mentorship Guide for Stewards

Pocket Guide on Consultation

Pocket Guide on Occupational Safety and Health

Pocket Guide to Employment Equity

Pocket Guide on Harassment

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INTRODUCTION

A child pushes another child in the school yard. It happens all the time. Fortunately, teachers know how to handle such situations and, in some cases, the bullies will have learned their lesson and will not repeat their deeds. Unfortunately, some children don't learn and these schoolyard bullies will, in many cases, grow up to become workplace bullies.

Bullying, harassment and workplace violence are on the rise. Relationships among employees and between management & staff are strained more than ever because of time and productivity pressures. Pressure, to some, justifies the mistreatment of others. But when mistreatment goes unchallenged, even passive individuals are capable of explosive rage that can result in headline episodes of workplace violence.

In 2007, Drs. Kevin Kelloway and Lori Francis of the CN Centre for Occupational Health and Safety at St. Mary's University in Nova Scotia surveyed 1,400 Nova Scotians on this topic. Of the respondents, 20% indicated that they had been subjected to workplace violence, 12% had been threatened with physical assault and 11% had had objects thrown at them.

Seems pretty discouraging doesn't it? It's time to do something about it.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Violence in the workplace can come from anyone and be directed at anyone. It can be subtle or overt, deliberate or unintended. The test is whether a reasonable person knows, or ought to know, that the behaviour would be considered unwelcomed or inappropriate by the recipient. It may be a single event or may involve a continuing series of incidents. It may involve the abuse of authority or position, or it may involve relations among co-workers and affiliated personnel. Violence can victimize both men and women and may be initiated by or directed towards workers, clients and members of the public.

The risk of workplace violence is greater in jobs in the health care field, the social services field and the correctional environment, to name but a few. The risk is also great for people working in jobs that involve public or community contact or for those working with unstable or volatile people.

According to article 20.2 of the Canada Occupational Health and Safety Regulations “workplace violence constitutes any action, conduct, threat or gesture of a person towards an employee in their workplace that can reasonably be expected to cause hurt, injury or illness to that employee”.

Violence can be defined as meaning any of the following:

- (i) threats, including a threatening statement or threatening behaviour that gives employees reasonable cause to believe that they are at risk of injury.
- (ii) conduct or attempted conduct of a person that endangers the health or safety of an employee.

In other words, it is the threatened or actual use of force that causes or may cause injury to a worker. This also includes any threats which lead an employee to believe he/she is at risk of injury. This would include behaviours such as:

- physical or sexual assault or aggression
- unsolicited and unwelcomed words, conduct, comment, gesture or contact which causes offence or humiliation
- harm to any individual which creates fear or mistrust, or which compromises and devalues the individual

A national survey conducted by Statistics Canada in 1993 found that 23% of Canadian women had been subjected to harassment, intimidation or humiliation at work. Of those, 55% identified co-workers, 39% bosses or supervisors and 13% clients or customers as the source of violence.

Unfortunately, violence does occur in the workplace. However, the most common forms of workplace violence

would assuredly be the more insidious ones such as harassment, intimidation and most of all, bullying.

There are established recourse processes to deal with some forms of workplace violence. If someone physically or sexually assaults an employee, the aggressor can be charged under the *Criminal Code*. If someone is being harassed because of their race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability or pardoned conviction, they can file a complaint under the *Canadian Human Rights Act* or file a grievance against the violation of their human rights.

In a previous booklet, we spoke at length of harassment, what it is and how to fight it. In this booklet, we will concentrate on bullying as it can take many forms and can affect any one of us.

We have all, at one time or another, heard about or had to deal with managers abusing their authority, abusing their power, constantly belittling their employees. But what about the employee who starts or spreads malicious rumours? What about the employee who deliberately excludes a colleague from conversations or events?

Bullying can take many forms. Sometimes it can be very overt and easily identifiable but other times, it is insidious and can be perceived as acceptable behaviour.

So, before we can determine ways in which we can fight bullying in the workplace, we need to identify it. We need to establish what can be considered bullying in all its forms. Only then will we be able to limit it and even eradicate it, thus making our workplaces safe for all employees.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Like schoolyard bullying, workplace bullying is the tendency of individuals to intentionally use aggressive or unreasonable behaviour or comments to hurt or isolate an employee.

Workplace bullying can include such tactics as verbal, non-verbal, psychological and physical abuse as well as humiliation and degradation. Other terms used to describe bullying could include psychological violence, psychological harassment, personal harassment, mobbing and emotional abuse.

Bullying often takes place within established rules and policies. Such actions are not necessarily illegal, and may not even go against regulations, but the damage to the targeted employee and to morale of other employees in the workplace is immeasurable.

In 2007 the Workplace Bullying Institute conducted the first representative study of adult Americans on the topic of workplace bullying. The findings of the study were that 37% of workers have been bullied; most bullies are bosses (72%) and most targets (57%) are women. The survey also showed that bullying is four times more prevalent than illegal harassment, that 62% of employers ignore the problem, that 45% of targets suffer stress-related health problems, that 40% of bullied individuals never tell their employers and that only 3% of bullied people file lawsuits.

That's really scary. Those statistics would appear to indicate that you, the person next to you, or at the very least, someone in your section, has experienced bullying. But while you might think that you are lucky because it hasn't happened to you, has it really not happened or did you not recognize what was happening?

Euphemisms such as incivility, disrespect, difficult people, negative conduct and ill treatment are often used to describe bullying. Unfortunately, these expressions only serve to mask the problem by trivializing bullying and its impact on bullied people.

When you are dealing with people who are disrespectful, rude or arrogant, they are not just “difficult people”. Let’s call them by their real name. They are bullies.

So, let’s see what defines bullies, how to identify them and how to deal with them. Let’s see if we can get them to change their harmful behaviour.

PROFILE OF A BULLY

Usually, adult bullies, like their schoolyard counterparts, tend to be insecure people with poor or non-existent social skills and little empathy. They turn this insecurity outwards, finding satisfaction in their ability to attack and diminish the capable people around them.

A bully is a person who

- has never learned to accept responsibility for his/her behaviour
- wants to enjoy the benefits of living in the adult world, but who is unable and/or unwilling to accept the responsibilities that are a prerequisite for being part of the adult world
- abdicates and denies responsibility for his/her behaviour and its consequences
- is unable and/or unwilling to recognize the effect of his/her behaviour on others
- does not want to know of any other way of behaving
- is unwilling to recognize that there could be better ways of behaving

While some studies have shown that envy and resentment may be motives for bullying, there is little evidence to suggest that bullies suffer from any deficit in self-esteem as this would make it difficult to be a bully. However, in some cases, bullying can be a tool to conceal shame or anxiety. By demeaning others, the bully feels empowered.

A workplace bully subjects his target to unjustified criticism and trivial fault-finding. In addition, he or she humiliates the target, especially in front of others, and ignores, overrules, isolates and excludes the target.

If the bully is the target's superior, he or she may set the target up for failure by setting unrealistic goals or deadlines, denying necessary information and resources, either overloading the target with work or taking all work away, sometimes replacing proper work with demeaning jobs, or increasing responsibility while removing authority.

Regardless of specific tactics, the intimidation is driven by the bully's need to control others.

TYPES OF BULLIES

Just like everybody else, bullies are not all the same. According to the Canada Safety Council, there are four different types of bullies.

The **Screaming Mimi** humiliates targets in public settings in order to control the emotional climate at work.

The **Constant Critic** falsely accuses and undermines targets behind closed doors, attempting to control the target's self-identity.

The **Two-Headed Snake** is a duplicitous, passive-aggressive destroyer of reputations who, through rumour-mongering, damages the target's reputation.

The **Gatekeeper** controls targets by withholding resources like time, budget, autonomy, and training which are necessary to succeed.

Knowing the type of bully you are dealing with can help determine how best to defend yourself.

HOW DO BULLIES SELECT THEIR TARGETS?

Just as there are different types of bullies, there are also different types of employees. Not everyone in a worksite is the victim of a bully. Are some people more likely to become victims? How do bullies select their victim?

Bullies usually select targets that have some of the following qualities:

Employees of whom the bully may be jealous

- Being popular with people (colleagues, customers, clients, etc.). Jealousy of relationships and envy of abilities are strong motivators of bullying.
- Being the expert and the person to whom others come for advice, either personal or professional. More than anything else, bullies fear exposure of their inadequacy and incompetence. Popularity and competence unwittingly fuel that fear.
- Having a strong sense of integrity and a well-defined set of values which the employee is unwilling to compromise, showing independence of thought or deed and refusing to become a corporate clone and drone.
- Being willing to go that extra mile and expect others to do the same, which the bully is unable or unwilling to do.

- Being idealistic, optimistic, always working for improvement and betterment of self, family, the employer, and the world and wanting to tackle and correct injustice wherever it is seen.
- Having the ability to think long term and to see the bigger picture which the bully may perceive as a threat.
- Being sensitive and showing empathy, concern for others, respect and tolerance.
- Being slow to anger.
- Being helpful, always willing to share knowledge and experience.
- Having high expectations of those in authority and a dislike of incompetent people in positions of power who abuse power.

Employees who may appear to be vulnerable

- Having at least one vulnerability that can be exploited such as being too old or too highly paid (usually both), or too young and naive.
- Having a tendency to self-deprecation, indecisiveness, deference and low assertiveness.
- Exhibiting signs of low self-esteem such as having a need to feel valued, or being quick to apologize when accused, even if not guilty.
- Having a higher-than-average level of dependency, naivety and guilt.
- Having difficulty saying no.
- Having a strong forgiving streak which the bully exploits and manipulates to dissuade the target from taking grievance and legal action.
- Having a desire to always think well of others.
- Having a tendency to internalize anger rather than express it.

EVENTS THAT MAY TRIGGER BULLYING

But what causes someone who first appeared to be a “normal” person, to suddenly become this overbearing, rude and possibly dangerous bully? Bullying usually starts after one of these events:

- there's a reorganisation
- a new manager is appointed
- an employee's performance unwittingly highlights or draws attention to the bully's lack of performance
- an employee blows the whistle on incompetence, malpractice, fraud, illegality, breaches of procedure, breaches of health & safety regulations, etc.
- an employee gains recognition for his/her achievements
- an employee is being promoted
- an employee suffers illness or injury, whether work related or not
- an employee refuses to obey an order which violates rules, regulations, procedures, or is illegal
- an employee stands up for a colleague who is being bullied

EXAMPLES OF BULLYING

While we could elaborate extensively on the definition of bullying, providing a list of examples seems a much easier way of highlighting the many forms that bullying can take.

Personal Attitude

- Being rude or belligerent
- Having an arrogant attitude in general, e.g., “I'm right and everyone else is always wrong”
- Talking in a dismissive tone (“talking down”) to subordinates and/or peers

- Discounting the person's thoughts or feelings ("oh, that's silly")
- Intimidating a person
- Staring, glaring, being non-verbally intimidating and clearly showing hostility
- Encouraging targets to feel guilty, and to believe they're always the ones at fault
- Constantly criticizing and subjecting victims to destructive criticism (or constructive criticism as they like to call it)
- Ridiculing, overruling, dismissing or ignoring explanations and proof of achievement
- Belittling, degrading, demeaning, patronizing, subjecting target to disparaging remarks
- Being quick to criticize and slow to praise
- Using lengthy memos to make wild and inaccurate accusations
- Threatening, shouting at and humiliating the target, especially in front of others
- Using personal insults and name-calling
- Using offensive language, personal remarks, or inappropriate bad language
- Yelling or using profanity
- Making jokes that are 'obviously offensive' by spoken word or e-mail
- Taunting and teasing with the intention to embarrass and humiliate
- Character Assassination
- Spreading malicious rumours, gossip, or innuendo
- Falsely accusing someone of "errors" not actually made
- Failing to stop destructive rumors or gossip about a person
- Encouraging people to turn against the person being tormented

- Freezing out, ignoring, excluding or isolating someone socially or physically
- Using the “silent treatment” to “ice out” and separate from others
- Physically abusing or threatening abuse
- Targeting someone with unwanted sexual behaviour
- Intruding on a person’s privacy by pestering, spying or stalking

Work Attitude

- Forever subjecting employees to nit-picking and trivial fault-finding
- Withholding necessary information or purposely giving the wrong information or knowledge necessary for undertaking work and achieving objectives
- Subjecting the target to excessive monitoring, supervision, micro-management, recording, snooping, etc.
- Deliberately sabotaging, undermining or impeding a person’s work
- Constantly undervaluing effort, especially in front of others
- Refusing to delegate
- Constantly changing work guidelines
- Establishing impossible deadlines that will set up the target to fail
- Creating a feeling of uselessness by underworking the target
- Harassing the target by calling him at home or on holiday, often at unsocial hours
- Making unpleasant or threatening calls or harassing with intimidating memos, notes or emails
- Sabotaging the person’s contribution to a team goal and reward

- Raising false concerns or doubts over a person's performance or standard of work
- Increasing the target's responsibilities but removing authority
- Removing areas of responsibility without cause
- Assigning unreasonable duties or workload
- Subjecting the target to unwarranted and unjustified verbal or written warnings
- Disregarding satisfactory or exemplary quality of completed work despite evidence
- Stealing credit for work done by others (plagiarism)
- Declaring the target "insubordinate" for failing to follow arbitrary commands

Managerial Attitude

- Coercing the target into reluctant resignation, enforced redundancy, early or ill-health retirement
- Denying the target the right to earn his livelihood including preventing him from getting another job, usually with a bad or misleading reference
- Threatening the target with dismissal on fabricated charges or flimsy excuses, often using a trivial incident from previous months or years
- Denying annual leave, sickness leave, or – especially – compassionate leave
- Blocking applications for training or promotion
- Attaching unacceptable and unnecessary conditions to leave requests
- Overturning previously approved leave requests
- Abusing the evaluation process by lying about the person's performance
- Using confidential information about a person to humiliate privately or publicly
- Retaliating against the person after a complaint was filed, such as assigning undesirable work as punishment

- Encouraging the target to quit or transfer rather than face more mistreatment
- Inviting the target to “informal” meetings which turn out to be disciplinary hearings

EFFECTS OF BULLYING

Employees being bullied may feel anxious, nervous or even hopeless. They carry an uneasy knot in their stomach which follows them home. They discuss the situation with friends and family and this seems to help for the time being. However, after another rough night, tomorrow arrives and it all starts over. Their heart starts pounding, their hands are clammy, the panic returns and they are propelled into another day with their least favourite person in the world.

For the victim, abuse can be manifested in physical symptoms such as:

- inability to sleep, loss of appetite, anxiety, shock, anger
- feelings of depression, frustration and/or helplessness
- increased sense of vulnerability
- feelings of guilt, loss of confidence, self-doubt about competency
- loss of concentration, fatigue, emotional instability, reliance on medication or alcohol

Abuse can also be manifested in psychosomatic symptoms such as:

- stomach pains
- headaches
- panic or anxiety attacks, especially when going to work
- inability to concentrate and
- low morale and productivity

The target's family and friends also suffer the results of daily stress and eventual breakdown. Marriages suffer or are destroyed under the pressure of the target's anxiety and anger. Friendships cool because the bullied employee becomes either obsessive about the situation or terribly withdrawn and depressed.

Bullying can also be damaging to other employees in the workplace as they may no longer feel safe and comfortable at work. This can lead to loss of productivity and decreased work performance. Overall employee morale may drop. Recruiting and retaining staff may become more challenging.

An "unhealthy" workplace can have many effects. In general these include:

- increased absenteeism
- increased turnover
- increased stress
- increased costs for employee assistance programs (EAPs)
- increased risk for accidents/incidents
- decreased productivity and motivation
- poor morale
- reduced corporate image and customer confidence and
- poorer customer service

Violence in the workplace can seriously compromise a work environment. Research has proven that 45% of bullying targets have stress-related health problems. Past research found that targeted individuals suffer debilitating anxiety, panic attacks, clinical depression (39%), and even post-traumatic stress (30% of women; 21% of men).

Research also shows that bullied employees waste between 10 and 52 per cent of their time at work defending themselves and networking for support, thinking about the situation, being unmotivated and stressed, not to mention taking sick leave due to stress-related illnesses.

Bullies poison their working environment with low morale, fear, anger, and depression. The employer pays for this in lost efficiency, absenteeism, high staff turnover, severance packages and law suits. In extreme cases, a violent incident may be the tragic outcome.

Moreover, our health care system ends up being overtaxed in trying to repair the damage with numerous visits to the doctor for symptoms of stress, prescriptions for antidepressants, and long term counselling or psychiatric care. In this sense, we all pay.

LEGISLATION

On April 6, 1999, a former employee of OC Transpo in Ottawa went on a shooting rampage that left four employees dead. He then took his own life. During the course of the investigation, it was discovered that the killer had himself been the victim of workplace harassment.

Workplace violence refers to behaviours, actions and occurrences connected with a person's employment, in situations where the employee is threatened, injured or put in reasonable fear of such injury. As workplace violence can occur in any workplace environment, it must be considered an occupational health and safety issue.

Violence may be initiated by someone with grievances against the workplace or its employees, co-workers, customers or the public at large. It can result in death, injury or disability to employees, high employee turnover, absences, stress-related illnesses or loss of productivity. Workplace violence can occur in any occupation. Among the recommendations of a coroner's inquest following the OC Transpo incident, was that the definition of workplace

violence should include not only physical violence but also psychological violence such as bullying, mobbing, teasing, ridicule or any other act or words that could psychologically hurt or isolate a person in the workplace.

At that time, no jurisdiction in Canada required employers to have a workplace violence prevention program. For that reason, the OC Transpo jury recommended that federal and provincial governments enact legislation to prevent workplace violence and that employers develop policies to address violence and harassment.

Within Canada, each province, territory and the federal government has occupational health and safety legislation establishing rights and responsibilities for employers and employees. Such legislation is aimed at achieving safe and healthy workplaces in general; at identifying hazards and risks associated with certain occupations; and at establishing minimum conditions and guidelines for particular activities.

Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia, among others, have occupational health and safety legislation that requires employers to have a violence prevention program in place. Québec has legislation on workplace psychological harassment.

The Canada Occupational Health and Safety Regulations of the *Canada Labour Code* were amended in 2008 by adding Part XX - Violence Prevention in the Workplace.

According to this regulation, the employer must carry out its obligations in consultation with and with the participation of the occupational health and safety (OHS) policy committee or, should there be no policy committee, with the OHS workplace committee or the OHS representatives.

The employer (each department) is required to develop a workplace violence prevention policy setting out, among other things, the following obligations of the employer:

- to provide a safe, healthy and violence-free workplace;
- to dedicate sufficient attention, resources and time to address factors that contribute to workplace violence including, but not limited to, bullying, teasing, and abusive and other aggressive behaviour and to prevent and protect against it;
- to communicate to its employees information in its possession about factors contributing to workplace violence; and
- to assist employees who have been exposed to workplace violence.

Among the responsibilities of the employer under this new legislation, are the following:

- the identification of all factors that can contribute to workplace violence
- the assessment of the potential for workplace violence
- the development and implementation of systemic measures to eliminate or minimize workplace violence
- the review of the effectiveness of those workplace measures when there is a change in respect of the risk of workplace violence, or when new information on the risk of workplace violence becomes available, or every three years
- the development and implementation of emergency notification procedures in response to workplace violence
- the assurance that employees are aware of the emergency notification procedures and that these procedures are posted in locations easily accessible to employees
- the development and implementation of measures to assist employees who have experienced workplace violence

TRAINING

Education to increase awareness is key to eliminating workplace violence. Many employees are not aware that their employer has a policy against violence, bullying and harassment nor are they familiar with it. Increased knowledge of these policies and procedures assists in reducing the stress as a result of an incident.

The fundamental components of workplace violence and harassment prevention and management are communication, education and training of all those associated with the employer.

These three components are covered in the *Canada Labour Code*, according to which the employer is required to provide information, instruction and training on the factors that contribute to workplace violence. This training must include:

- the nature and extent of workplace violence and how employees may be exposed to it
- the communication system established by the employer to inform employees about workplace violence
- information on what constitutes workplace violence and on the means of identifying the factors that contribute to workplace violence
- the workplace violence-prevention measures that have been developed and
- the employer's procedures for reporting on workplace violence or the risk of workplace violence

Ideally, a policy statement delivered by the employer should be firm but positive, emphasizing that the well-being of its employees is its main priority. Based on this belief, any form of violence, whether actual or perceived, will not be tolerated.

Managers should be encouraged to learn appropriate ways to handle terminations, layoffs and discipline. Supervisors and managers should be trained on how to deal with complaints

and potential incidents. They should also be encouraged to address incidents promptly whether or not a formal complaint has been filed.

Employees should be encouraged to report all incidents involving threats, harassment or other inappropriate behaviour without fear of reprisal or criticism. They should be trained in conflict resolution, harassment and stress management techniques, as well as defusion techniques to reduce the chances of a violent outcome to a situation. Training in personal safety could also be offered to help employees avoid being victimized.

WHAT CAN BE DONE

Now that we have looked at what is a bully, how someone becomes a bully, how a bully selects a target and the effects of bullying on the target as well as on the target's colleagues, we must look at what can and must be done for the victims.

THE UNION ROLE

The ONLY advocates and representatives for the working person are unions. Unions can try to convince employers to adopt internal policies and procedures to make the workplace safe. Unions can endorse, and rally support for anti-bullying legislation.

Bullying jeopardizes worker health. Unions are uniquely qualified to advocate for protections against psychological assault. The more union leadership and rank-and-file know about bullying, the better they can support the abused member and work to change the behaviour of the perpetrator when he or she is a member.

The Institute has successfully negotiated clauses against discrimination on prohibited grounds and sexual harassment in most of its collective agreements. The next step should be to try to amend these clauses to include all forms of harassment including bullying.

Furthermore, since most of our members are protected by legislation against workplace violence, it is crucial that monitoring take place to ensure that they are aware of the policies and that the employer is providing the required training.

THE STEWARD'S ROLE

The steward should be able to assist a member faced with a bullying or violent situation.

Here are some examples of what you, as a steward, can do to ensure that our members feel safe in their workplace and that the employer lives up to its responsibilities as prescribed in the legislation.

- Increase your understanding and awareness of personal harassment/bullying and signs that it might be occurring (absenteeism, turnover, complaints)
- If you believe an employee is being bullied, ask someone in a position of authority to intervene early and continue to consistently monitor the problem
- Create expectations of behaviours and procedures which reduce bullying, stressing cooperation, mutual support, and minimizing aggression
- Encourage everyone at the workplace to act towards others in a respectful and professional manner
- Ensure there is a workplace policy in place that includes a reporting system
- Ensure that the employer educates everyone that bullying is a serious matter
- Try to work out solutions before the situation gets serious or “out of control”
- Assist in educating everyone about what is considered bullying and where they can go for help
- Do not ignore any potential problems
- Do not delay resolution. Act right away

Should a member approach you with a complaint, take their complaint seriously and deal with it promptly and confidentially.

Obtain a statement from the complainant about what happened, when, where, who was present. Talk to identified witnesses to get their recollection of events. Keep complete notes with dates and times.

If you are unsure of who is telling the truth, ask yourself: Who always needs to be right? Who criticizes the other in public? Whose behaviour is irrational and unpredictable? Who has the selective memory? Who fails to take any responsibility for their behaviour? Who feels damaged?

First and foremost, should the situation be one of physical violence, assist the member in contacting the police. The steward should also refer the victim to his workplace EAP which, as indicated further, can provide initial counselling and the required assistance.

If the situation is one of verbal or psychological violence, the steward should assist the member in filing a grievance or harassment complaint against the fact that he is being bullied or harassed by another employee.

The steward can also help the employee determine if the situation represents a violation of the employee's human rights. In federal jurisdiction, the *Canadian Human Rights Act* sets out 11 criteria against which a harassment complaint can be filed. They are race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability and conviction for which a pardon has been granted. Should this be the case, ensure it is indicated in the grievance as many labour boards have the authority to render decisions on human rights issues.

Members who are the subject of discipline or a negative performance appraisal may believe that such action is bullying or harassment. The steward should advise the employee that, in the absence of evidence of improper intent, such exercises of managerial authority do not constitute bullying or harassment. Instead, the steward can assist the member in determining whether a grievance should be lodged where the manager's action appears to have been based on incomplete or erroneous information.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

Ideally, an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can provide initial counselling and then refer employees to a variety of community support services or to their union.

Proactive EAP providers make sure that they tell employers and union representatives about needed changes to policies and procedures and new ways of reducing workplace risks or improving security.

But for the victim to be able to get past the bullying and violence, the root cause must be eliminated. Get rid of the bullies, and the workplace returns to being a safe, productive place.

WHAT TO TELL SOMEONE WHO IS THE TARGET OF A BULLY

The following conclusion is advice you can provide to a member who is the victim of bullying. Feel free to reproduce it and hand it out to members.

CONCLUSION

Not calling bullying by its real name in order to avoid offending the sensibilities of those who made the bullying possible is a disservice to bullied individuals whose jobs, careers and health have been threatened as the result. Psychologist Tom Engelhardt expressed it wisely when he said, “Words denied mean analyses not offered, things not grasped, surprise not registered, strangeness not taken in, all of which means that terrible mistakes are repeated, wounding ways of acting in the world never seriously reconsidered. The words’ absence chains you to the present, to what is accepted and acceptable.”

Bullying in the workplace hurts everyone. It is time to put a stop to it!

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Best Practices for Workplace Promotion of Violence
Prevention - PEI

http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/hss_violprevent.pdf

Bullying

<http://www.bullyonline.org>

Understanding bullying in the workplace

<http://ring.uvic.ca/98mar20/Bullying.html>

Wikipedia - Workplace Bullying

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Workplace_bullying

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

<http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/bullying.html>

Canada Labour Code - Canada Occupational Health and Safety
Regulations - PART XX - Violence Prevention in the Work Place

http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/showdoc/cr/SOR-86-304/bo-ga:l_XX-gb:s_20_10/20090812/en#anchorbo-ga:l_XX-gb:s_20_10

Advice for Victims of Workplace Bullying

✓ **Name it.** Calling it bullying or psychological violence or harassment makes the problem external. Shame is reduced and healing can begin.

✓ **Firmly tell the person** that his or her behaviour is not acceptable and ask them to stop. You can ask a supervisor or union member to be with you when you approach the person.

✓ If you think you are being bullied, **talk to someone you trust**, your union steward or your manager.

✓ Take time to accomplish the following four tasks:

1. Check your physical health for stress-related complications
2. Get mental health counseling if required
3. Check for violations of employer policies and labour laws
4. Gather data showing the financial impact of the bullying on the employer

Document what is happening to you, what happened and how you felt. This can combat the confusion you may feel and help you to “see the forest.” Keep track of the date, time and what happened in as much detail as possible, note the names of witnesses and the outcome of the event. Remember, it is not just the character of the incidents, but the number, frequency, and especially the pattern that can reveal the bullying or harassment. Keep copies of any letters, memos, e-mails, faxes, etc., received from the person.



✓ **Report the harassment** to the person identified in your workplace policy, your supervisor, or a delegated manager. Present a detailed business case and evidence. If your concerns are minimized, proceed to the next level of management.

✓ If more than one person is being bullied, encourage them to **file a group grievance** or to each file a grievance or harassment complaint. A group grievance or a series of grievances or complaints are more difficult to dismiss as untrue.

✓ Finally, **have courage**. From the playground to the workplace, bullying happens because it is allowed. Courage on the part of those who can take action is vital.

If you are going to confront the bully, focus on the unacceptable behaviour rather than attacking the person. Help them understand the situations in which the behaviour occurs and the impact on others. Individual counselling may be recommended.

The one thing you should remember is **DO NOT RETALIATE**. You may end up looking like the perpetrator and will most certainly cause confusion for those responsible for evaluating and responding to the situation.