



# Build a bully-free zone

Establishing a bully-free zone in your workplace: know how to identify bullying behaviour, what to do, and how to encourage your co-workers to work together to create a better workplace for everyone.

Workplace bullying doesn't just affect people at work - it can have a profound effect on their personal relationships and sense of wellbeing outside work.



## What is workplace bullying?

Workplace bullying is negative, undermining or humiliating behaviour from one worker to another which is repeated, deliberate and which has a negative effect on a worker's health, their sense of psychological and/or physical safety and their ability to do their job. It can also impact on personal relationships and one's life and sense of wellbeing outside of work.

Bullying can be overt or covert and subtle in nature, and can involve a combination of behaviours, repeated over a period of time. The below types of behaviours are particularly common, or characteristic of workplace bullying:

- » Verbal abuse, offensive language and inappropriate or insulting comments
- » Excluding or isolating employees
- » Underwork, and assigning meaningless tasks unrelated to the job
- » Overwork, giving employees impossible assignments
- » Undermining work performance, deliberately withholding information that is necessary for effective work performance, supplying incorrect information or inadequate training
- » Deliberately changing work rosters to inconvenience particular employees
- » Constant intensive surveillance what happened what was or monitoring
- » Constant and unjustified criticism of a worker's performance or abilities
- » Imposing restrictive and petty work rules
- » 'Bad-mouthing'

- » Unreasonable administrative sanctions, such as undue delay in processing applications for training, leave or payment of wages
- » Giving workers no say about how the job is done
- » Open or implied threats of sack or disciplinary action

## What ISN'T workplace bullying?

Any negative behaviour towards others which is clearly discriminatory or attacking on the basis of a person's ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, age, religious affiliation or background, according to the terms of the Equal Opportunity Act 1984. These specific types of bullying must be defined and dealt with under the specific provisions of this Act, and again a Grievance Officer can assist you in making a complaint about behaviour that is discriminatory as defined by this Act.

Sexual harassment is unacceptable in any workplace, and incidents should be documented and raised immediately with your manager, a Grievance Officer, your Union or HR. However, it is not workplace bullying, it is dealt with under separate legislation and treated as a separate issue.

The appropriate, legitimate and respectful exercise of managerial responsibilities such as giving direction, approving or not approving leave, conducting disciplinary action, or performance management.

One-off incidents of negative behaviour are unacceptable, and it may still be reasonable to make a complaint. However they do not comprise bullying unless it can be shown they are a part of a pattern of ongoing negative behaviour, directed against the same people.