2014 Annual Conference
Work Session X:
Employee Conduct in the Municipal Workplace
September 13, 2014

Bullying in the Workplace: How to Detect, Prevent and Eliminate

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BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE: HOW TO DETECT, PREVENT AND ELIMINATE



CAN YOU RELATE?



Is Workplace Bullying A Problem?

- It is a common experience
  - 27% report being the present or a prior Target of a Bully at work (36 million people) & 94% report working with a Bully at some point
  - Bullying is 4 times more common than harassment
- It often exists in hierarchical systems
  - 91% of nurses report verbal abuse & 50% feel unable to respond
- It is learned behavior
  - 21% of Bullies report being the Target of a Bully

Other Statistics: A Note About Gender

- 65 million workers are “affected” (are targets or have witnessed) by workplace bullying.
- 56% of the bullies are “bosses.”
- 69% of the bullies are Male.
- 57% of those targets are Female.
- When Female bully’s target, 68% of the time, they target other women.

Is Workplace Bullying A Problem?

- Bullying is on the Rise, especially with Females as the Bully
- Cost of bullying is incredibly High:
  - High number of hours in lost time & productivity
  - Consider high cost of leave, non-productive time, and of replacing departing employees
  - Tensions in the workplace rise
  - Increase in tardiness, early departure from work, or absenteeism occurs

The Lows of Bullying:

- Lower efficiency and production by the target
- Lower morale for the entire office, group or team

What Is Workplace Bullying?

- No universal definition
- Actions (by an individual or group) that are:
  - Repeated
  - Unreasonable (out of context for situation)
- And cause:
  - An intentional impact on the Target (i.e., humiliation, degradation, offense, intimidation) or
  - Dangerous results to the Target (i.e., risk to safety and/or mental or physical health issues)
- Bullying has psychological and potential medical adverse impact on the Target

What is a Workplace Bully:

Refer to the Definition referred to in the HR Executive Online Article

Three Typical Examples of Workplace Bullying

Examples of Workplace Bullying

(1) The Obvious

- Shouting/raising voice
- Ignoring or interrupting
- Invading personal space



Examples of Workplace Bullying

(2) The Not So Obvious

- Isolating or mobbing (e.g., ganging up)
- Manipulating ability to do work (unreasonable deadlines, overloading/under-loading)
- Always taking credit for work of others



Examples of Workplace Bullying

(3) Pretextual Performance Management

- Repeated accusations of undocumented errors
- Constant criticism on matters unrelated/minimally related to job performance



Four General Categories of Bullies

I. The Territory Marker

- Gets self worth from being in charge
- Covets information and relationships
- No collaboration
- No mentoring
- Creates barriers to growth of others



II. The Dismisser

- The “Talk to the Hand” person
- Shuts colleagues down
- Humiliates others in public
- Causes those around him/her to shut down



III. The Space Invader

- Uses presence to intimidate
- Does not understand the concept of personal space
- Puffing, touching, gets up close
- Shakes hand; won't let go
- Subtle message –
  I'm in control



IV. The Rage-aholic

- Only has to happen once
- No one wants to be on the receiving end



Profiles of the Bully and the Target

Characteristics of a Bully

- There's good and bad; often a disconnect between what the supervisor and Target experience
- Aggressive and creative
- Outgoing, funny and charming (people like him/her)
- Competitive (makes goals and gets things done)
- BUT – dishonest and self-interested (most often only the Target sees this part)



Characteristics of Those Targeted

- Non-expressive, often shy
- Hardworking
- Smart
- Socially and technically skilled
- Positive attitude
- Nice
- Empathetic



Bullying Dynamic

- At first, Target is too shocked to react
- Waits too long to confront or report
- Denial, shame, guilt, feels responsible
- Experiences health issue
- Stress, sleeplessness, depression, obsession
- Diminishing job performance
- Change in personality



Exercise

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MC32nbGVuJM

Why Address This? – Effect on Workplace

- Cliques or Subgroups
- Low productivity
- Restricted Communications
- Rigid or Dysfunctional Procedures
- Defensiveness or Fear
- Lack of Creative Solutions to Problems
- Avoidance



Why Address This? – Legal Exposure

- Tort law – negligent hiring, negligent retention, intentional infliction of emotional distress, assault, battery, defamation
- Discrimination law – especially disability if dealing with mental illness
- Private/public benefits – workers' compensation, disability, FMLA, unemployment
- OSHA – possibility of general duty clause implications
- Since 2003, 25 states have introduced variations of workplace anti-bullying bills that would allow workers to sue for harassment without requiring a showing of discrimination. No laws yet enacted.
- 11 States have 15 Bills active (FL, NM, WI, WV, PA, NJ, NY, VT, NH, MA, HI)

Some Bullies Are Worth Saving

- Employee who grew up in the organization; created a unique area of responsibility; did not train or share information with others; became indispensible; never took vacation; entire department became dysfunctional
- Group finally came forward to management; management admitted they knew she was dysfunctional for years; she let group confront her and she promised to work to resolve, asked employees to let her know if there was any backsliding

Where Do We Begin? Policies

- Observe the workplace for bullying – Detect, Investigate and Implement training
- Develop a Workplace Bullying & Violence Policy
  - Define workplace violence and bullying behavior
  - Provide a reporting procedure that identifies 2-3 specific management positions to report incidents
  - Include no-retaliation clause
  - Inform employees that violation of the policy may result in discipline, up to and including immediate termination

Where Do We Begin? Training

- Provide Supervisor/Employee Training
  - Basic leadership skills addressing employee problems/complaints, adequate follow up, evaluating employees, and enforcing policies and procedures
  - Anti-harassment/bullying training for all employees



Where Do We Begin?
Addressing Bullying Situations

- Commitment from leadership
  - Make it clear to all employees that a Bullying management style is not consistent with the organization's mission and values
- The Bully must embrace becoming a part of solution
  - Solicit feedback and be open to change
  - Identify Action Plan
  - Make meeting expectations a part of performance review; hold accountable.

Thank You

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