Workplace Bullying: How HR Can Recognize & Stop It

An HRWebAdvisor Webinar

by

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Learning Objectives

- Identify bullying behavior
- Learn about bullying as a social phenomena
- Understand the damage bullying causes targets, witnesses, the bottom line
- Review anti-bullying policies
- Understand options and best practices in corrective and preventative actions
- Review status of laws and regulatory rules
What exactly is bullying?

- Repeated, perpetual, ongoing
- Harm
  - Psychological/physical harm to *targets and witnesses*
- Unfair Match
  - Perceived power imbalance
- Costly
  - Communication breakdown
  - Inability to meet organizational goals
  - Harm to the bottom line
Sample bullying behaviors

*Question:* Please describe the forms of mistreatment (Choose all that apply).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Rounding</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verbal abuse</strong> (shouting, swearing, name calling, malicious sarcasm, threats to safety, etc.)</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>53%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Behaviors/actions</strong> (public or private that were threatening, intimidating, humiliating, hostile, offensive, inappropriately cruel conduct, etc.)</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abuse of authority</strong> (undeserved evaluations, denial of advancement, stealing credit, tarnished reputation, arbitrary instructions, unsafe assignments, etc.)</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interference with work performance</strong> (sabotage, undermining, ensuring failure, etc.)</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Destruction of workplace relationships</strong> (among co-workers, bosses, or customers)</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (See list below)</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Visit www.NoWorkplaceBullies.com for an extended list of behaviors.
Sample bullying behaviors

**Aggressive Communication**
- Insulting or making offensive remarks
- Shouting, yelling, angry outbursts
- Going around co-workers in order to avoid communicating with them
- Harsh finger pointing, invasion of space
- Emails or other e-communication

**Acts Aimed at Humiliation**
- Humiliating or ridiculing, teasing
- Spreading rumors or gossip
- Ignoring peers when they walk by
- Playing harsh practical jokes
- Taunting with the use of social media, intranet, etc

**Manipulation of Work**
- Removing tasks imperative to job responsibilities
- Giving unmanageable workloads & impossible deadlines
- Arbitrarily changing tasks
- Using employee evaluations to document supposed decreased quality of work
- Purposely withholding pertinent information
- Leaving employees out of email correspondence or meeting invites
Aggression

- Incivility
- Emotional Bullying
- Predatory Bullying
- Mobbing
- Violence
Facts & Stats

- CareerBuilder, 2011
  - 5,600 survey respondents
  - 1 in 4 bullied

- Workplace Bullying Institute/Zogby International, 2007 & 2010
  - 4,210 survey respondents
  - 35% bullied

- Bullying lasts between 6 mos and 5 yrs
- 70% of bullying is superior -> subordinate (Rayner, 1997)
- 30% is subordinate -> superior
Facts & Stats

- 60% of bullies are male, 40% female
- When female, 80% of targets are other females
- 53% of targets file formal complaint (WBI, 2007)
  - 44% of cases employer did nothing
  - 18% of cases employer made problem worse for target
- 70% of targets are fired; 17% transferred (Namie, 2003)
- 30% of targets quit, 20% of witnesses also quit (Rayner, 2007)
What bullying is NOT

- Interpersonal conflict
- Harassment & discrimination
- Tough boss

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Tough Bosses</th>
<th>Bullies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coach poor performance using goals and rewards</td>
<td>Call employees “stupid” and other names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give credit when due</td>
<td>Take credit for others’ work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivate employees to succeed</td>
<td>Punitively and arbitrarily punish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give employees info about why they will not be included in a project anymore</td>
<td>Suddenly remove employees from projects without rhyme or reason</td>
</tr>
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Bullying is a Social Phenomenon

Organizational Norms, Stressors & Culture

Support
Damage
Damage

Power Imbalance

Bully

Target

Support
Damage
Damage

Organizational Members
Bullying is a Social Phenomenon

- Bully’s Assistants
- Target’s Assistants
- Reinforcers
- Bullied Non-Victims
- Outsiders

BULLY ↔ TARGET
Damage Caused by Bullying

- Leymann, 1990: $100,000 per target
- Harrison, 2002: Surveyed 9,000 federal employees; $180 Million
- American Psychological Association, 2007: $300 billion in the US annually
Damage Caused by Bullying

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Discouragement
- PTSD
- Absenteeism
- Presenteeism
- Turnover
- Vengeful activities
- Workers comp claims
- Health insurance costs
- Litigation costs

- Quality of work
- Quantity of work
- Self-esteem
- Job satisfaction
- Company loyalty
- Customer satisfaction
- Number of customers
- Company reputation
- Relationships
- Communication
- Ability to meet goals
- Bottom line
Rewards of a Healthy Workplace

- Bottom Line Results
- Meet Organizational Goals
- Reduced Turnover and Absenteeism
- Engaged, Motivated & Loyal Employees
- Enhanced Decision Making, Innovation & Learning
- Improved Communication and Relationships
Identifying Targets

- **Central Metaphorical Themes** *(Tracy et al, 2006)*

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<tr>
<th>Process = Nightmare; Battle</th>
<th>Bully = Evil; Dictator</th>
<th>Target = Captivity</th>
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<td>Battle, war, killing, death, playing a game, maimed, assassinated, beaten, abused, ripped, annihilated, nightmare, crazy making, hammering away, picking on, serial rape</td>
<td>Hitler, lord, narcissistic dictator, two-faced actor, evil, demon, conniving, possessed, shape-shifters</td>
<td>Slaves, animals, owns me, personal servant, caged animal, isolated, black, empty, disconnected, blackballed, doing time, prison record, suffocated, small, child</td>
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</table>
Identifying Targets

- Exit interviews
- Turnover rates
- Changes in employee reviews
- 360 degree reviews
- Climate surveys / communication audits
Talking with Targets

= FACTS ONLY
Preventative Action & Sustainable Change

- “It is more than the absence of communication disorders; it is the presence of communication competence.”
  (Quick & Macik-Frey, Positive Organizational Behavior, 2007)
Develop a Policy

- Group Ground Rules Activity
- Policy should include:
  - Management commitment and responsibility
  - Target and bystander responsibility
  - Define *acceptable* and unacceptable behaviors
  - Training program schedule
  - Complaint and investigation procedure
  - Potential disciplinary actions

Email [Catherine@CivilityPartners.com](mailto:Catherine@CivilityPartners.com) for template policy
Handling Complaints

- Take grievances seriously
  - Listen for facts, take notes
  - Conduct investigation = sexual harassment
  - Complete an incident report
- Peer listening scheme (Rains, 2001)
  - Royal Mail
Coaching Employees

1. Help them overcome denial
2. Interview and report
3. Engage in action coaching: “Eliminating co-worker perceptions” vs “Changing negative behaviors”
4. Provide benefits to change… Or repercussions to no change
Strategic Planning

- Create business values around positive workplace culture
- Attach rewards to positive leadership strategies
- Demonstrate why civility and respect helps the bottom line => Buy-In
- Promote, encourage and demonstrate positive communication
Leadership Strategies

- Climate
- Meaning
- Relationships
- Communication
Strategic Planning

- Team visions and corresponding SMART goals
- Track results
- Organizational champions (e.g., D&I team, peer listeners, one member of each department, etc)
Ongoing Training

- Workplace bullying
- Conflict management
- Communication skills
- Leadership
- Optimism; resilience
- Respect
- Diversity
- ETC...
Performance Management

- Clearly define required interpersonal skills and align with individual goals, rewards and advancement
- Use assessments (e.g., 360° reviews, personality)
- Mentor programs
- Management training in effective performance management and employee evaluations
Performance Management

- Move past the "people who cry bullying are really poor performers" paradigm
Current Options for Targets

- Intentional Infliction of Emotional Distress
- Title VII; Discrimination/Harassment
- Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH)
Healthy Workplace Bill
www.healthyworkplacebill.org

- Specifically defines “abusive work environment”
- Requires tangible proof of harm by professional
- Protects employers if preventative/corrective action is in place
- Compels employers to act with $25,000 fine
- Allows target to sue bullying individual
- Plugs gaps left by current law
- 21 states, over 300 legislative sponsors since 2003
Regulatory Updates

- Hawaii, 2006, Senate Resolution
- Indiana, 2008, Raess v Doescher
- Massachusetts, 2009, Collective Bargaining Agreement covering over 21,000 employees
- Nevada, 2010, Nevada Revised Statute 388
- New Jersey, 2011, Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights
Regulatory Updates

- Ireland; UK; Sweden; Denmark; 4 provinces in Canada; 2 states in Australia
- Joint Commission Leadership Standard (LD.03.01.01)
- OSHA
  - Own internal anti-bullying policy released May 2011
  - NIOSH conducted research 2003
    - 25% of workplaces have bullying
    - 55% of targets are employees
    - 11% of targets are the customer
Questions?
Thank You!

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