

How to Recognize Bullying/ Abusive Conduct in the Workplace



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Pronouns: He/Him/His

Agenda

1. Definition of Workplace Bullying vs. Abusive Conduct
2. Types and Examples
3. Potential Discriminatory Practice
4. What Workplace Bullying is NOT...
5. Impact of Workplace Bullying/Abusive Conduct
6. The Why
7. As PD Professionals, How Do You Respond
8. Session Exercise / Discussion – Q&A

Exercise

When we mention the words:

Abusive Conduct

Workplace Bullying

Bullies

What Words Come to Mind?

Workplace Bullying

- No current Federal or State Legislation against “general” workplace bullying
- Current local statues that are incorporated within company/campus anti-bullying policies and procedures
- Among practitioners/researchers, general definition:
 - “Bullying at work means harassing, offending, socially excluding someone or negatively affecting someone’s work tasks.”
- Variables must include: frequency, persistency, hostility, and power imbalance



Abusive Conduct

Federal Legislation – No;

- State Legislation – Yes; as part of Senate Bill 1343;
- Current local statutes that are incorporated within company/campus anti-bullying policies and procedures;
- SB 1343 defines “abusive conduct” as:

“Conduct of an employer or employee in the workplace, with malice, that a reasonable person would find hostile, offensive, and unrelated to an employer’s legitimate business interests. Abusive conduct may include repeated infliction of verbal abuse, such as the use of derogatory remarks, insults, and epithets, verbal or physical conduct that a reasonable person would find threatening, intimidating, or humiliating, or the gratuitous sabotage or undermining of a person’s work performance.

A single act shall not constitute abusive conduct, unless especially severe and egregious.”

Let's Talk Stats

- Only 10% of workplace bullying complaints actually warrant attention (according study in 2011)
- Nearly 95% of employees have had some exposure to general bullying behaviors in the workplace in a study conducted over a 5-year period;
- Researchers show that males are more likely to engage in bullying behaviors than females;
- Employees with high strain jobs, with high workloads and low autonomy are more likely to engage in bullying behaviors;
- According to Keenan SafeColleges, research has found that workplace bullying's targets and witnesses spend as much as 50% of their day (on average) dealing with the bullying rather than working.

Types of Bullying

- Physical
 - Cyber bullying
- Subordinate to Supervisor
 - Amongst Co-Workers
- From Customers/Clients to Employees
- Emotional
- Relational
 - Supervisor to Subordinate



Examples of Workplace Bullying

- **Verbal** – Malice; Exclusion; Intimidation; Deliberate Undermining; Criticizing constantly; mimicking others;
- **Physical** – Abuse; stalking; yelling; profanity; hitting; throwing objects; pushing
- **Work Env:** Purposeful changes; inconsistencies; withholding necessary information; sabotage; underworking; Tamper personal belongings



Examples of Workplace Bullying

- **Blurred Lines:** Making offensive/practical jokes (family, sex, sexuality, gender identify, race, culture, education or any protected class)



Abusive Conduct

- Abusive Conduct that is directed at someone's membership in a protected classification – YES: Considered an illegal practice;
- Abusive Conduct, NOT directed at someone's membership in a protected classification, NOT Considered an illegal practice;
HOWEVER...

Abusive Conduct

- Even if not considered illegal, abusive conduct should be addressed internally, as a violation of board policy (i.e. code of ethics, professional behavior);
- Conduct of an employer or employee in the workplace, with malice, that a **reasonable person** would find hostile, offensive, and unrelated to an employer's legitimate business interests;
- A single act shall not constitute abusive conduct, unless especially severe and egregious. (Alters the conditions of employment and creates hostile work/abusive environment)/(falsifying documents; violence; causing harm to others; being under the influence-drugs/alcohol, etc.)

Protected Classes

Federally-Recognized

- AGE
- ANCESTRY
- COLOR
- DISABILITY
- MILITARY AND VETERAN STATUS
- ETHNICITY
- GENETIC INFORMATION
- NATIONAL ORIGIN/CITIZENSHIP
- PREGNANCY
- RACE
- RELIGION
- SEX * GENDER AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

State-Recognized

- AGE
- ANCESTRY
- COLOR
- DISABILITY
- MILITARY AND VETERAN STATUS
- ETHNICITY
- GENETIC INFORMATION
- NATIONAL ORIGIN
- PREGNANCY
- RACE
- RELIGION
- SEX
- SEXUAL ORIENTATION
- MARITAL STATUS
- GENDER
- GENDER IDENTITY
- GENDER EXPRESSION

Workplace Bullying is NOT:

- Reasonable work allocation;
- Requirements of a worker's role;
- Fair and appropriate management instructions and performance interventions;
- Decisions to counsel or warn when performance issues arise;
- Disagreeing with a colleague;
- Occasional differences of opinion or non-aggressive conflicts and problems in working relationships;
- Dissatisfaction or grievance with organizational and management practices;
- Feeling upset or undervalued.



Impact of Workplace Bullying, Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct

- Physical

- Change in appetite
- Decreased energy
- Headaches
- Insomnia
- Stress related ailments

- Emotional

- Anger
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Fear
- Feeling of isolation
- Self blame and guilt

- Employee Performance

- Absenteeism
- High turnover
- Increased accidents on the job
- Missed professional opportunities
- Steal or sabotage work

- Social/Family Life

- Take it out on innocent family or pets
- Contemplate a violent act and carry it out

In your opinion, why does bullying take place?

Let's Talk About the Why

- Power (or loss of)
- Controlling - will take over and push ahead
- Perfectionist - will see every flaw and potential error
- Jealousy - more likely between peers
- Feeling threatened - more likely by a supervisor, co-worker; anyone who may have influence over the target
- Attention getting - the person becomes difficult to ignore
- Enjoys your pain
- Responding to stress and trauma in a negative way
- Past experiences
- Most common – insecurity/they themselves feel threatened

How do you Respond



Responding: What can you do?

- Have a conversation with the individual in reference to how you feel about the offensive behavior (speak on the behavior; not the person);
- E-mail or letter; be upfront on what it is, name the behavior;
- Speak with your supervisor;
- Speak with someone in HR about what complaint procedures are in place and explain your situation;
- Request resources (EAP programs on campuses);
- Give the person space; acknowledge that they are in a different space than you.

Exercise – Workplace Bullying/ Abusive Conduct

A supervisor tells an employee in his department that she is being moved to another department because she is least senior person on the seniority list.

Exercise – Workplace Bullying/ Abusive Conduct

A co-worker expresses a difference of opinion based on their religious beliefs and because of that, threatens to file a complaint with HR based on religion.

Exercise – Workplace Bullying/ Abusive Conduct

A supervisor in Admission & Records holds a student services coordinator accountable for his/her/their work performance; includes information on evaluation.

Exercise – Workplace Bullying/ Abusive Conduct

An isolated incident of inappropriate behavior that includes a student yelling at a financial aid technician in the financial aid office.

Exercise – Workplace Bullying/ Abusive Conduct

In a department meeting, a maintenance/facilities manager purposely belittles and makes fun of an employee and makes a point to show superiority over them.

This happens once.

Exercise – Workplace Bullying/ Abusive Conduct

In a department meeting, a maintenance/facilities manager purposely belittles and makes fun of an employee and makes a point to show superiority over them.

Happened several times over the course of 6 months.

Exercise – Workplace Bullying/ Abusive Conduct

EOP&S director refuses to help a transgendered student fill out their paperwork because of their preferred gender identity.

What can you do? – FOCUS PD

- Role Model
 - AVOID using offensive language; refrain from engaging in bullying-type behaviors;
- Treat others in the manner you would want to be treated or the way you would want your own family member treated;
- Be cognizant of how words or conduct may be interpreted as offensive or bullying behavior;
- Recognize that different people have different thresholds of sensitivity;
- Become familiar with BPs and APs for your campus;
- Your role on campus is a role like no other; you share a common thread of Prof Dev throughout campus and you have the influence to infuse a collective sense of positive collegial conversations and interactions.... Embrace this!
- Introduce and conduct trainings on campus that discuss inclusivity, equal treatment, micro aggressions, unconscious bias, etc.; behaviors that can drive workplace bullying and abusive conduct.
- Give language to these terms; de-mystify what they mean and focus on the behaviors associated with these words

In Closing...

- Stay current on diversity, civility, and micro aggressions training when offered at your campus;
- Promote the above-listed topics on your campus;
- Bring awareness of these topics to your campus and bring language to them;
- Please reach out to your HR department if you ever need our guidance.

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