

Bullying in the Workplace



We continue to hear and read about bullying in the workplace, on the school bus, on the sports field, and even in retirement communities. Bullying has recently received increased attention, because of an apparent rise in incidents and also because of the role that social media plays in both fostering and exposing it.

It is estimated that between 35% and 50% of workers have been bullied at some time in their lives. Some of us have experienced a co-worker who has mood swings, or “flies off the handle” and acts unpredictably. It could be the “silent treatment” or rage or criticism, most often in front of others.

A person is considered to be bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to offensive and hurtful actions on the part of one person or a group of people. In addition, the person being bullied typically has difficulty defending himself or herself.



How do bullies think and behave?

In general, bullies:

- Feel a need to control their targets (those they are bullying)
- Choose their targets, the timing, locations and methods of bullying
- Use offensive and/or intimidating conduct, verbal abuse, and sabotage, among other methods, to control their targets
- May bully overtly (behaviors are obvious to others) or covertly (behind the scenes, in a hidden way)
- Attack their targets repeatedly and methodically
- Attempt to involve others in the bullying campaign
- Undermine business interests because their personal agendas take precedence over the goals of the workgroup

Recognize possible warning signs of bullying

Not every stressful, conflictive relationship in the workplace is the result of bullying. A supervisor who has high performance standards of her subordinates is not a bully. But if you find yourself dreading every workday, getting a knot in your stomach when you see your tormentor, using all your sick time on “mental health days”, crying silently at your desk, feeling fearful at the workplace, and you think that you may fit the definition above of a bullied person, then consider these possible warning signs of being bullied.

You may be bullied by an employee or group of employees who:

- continually criticize and make you feel “wrong.”
- undermine or even shout at you, particularly when others are around to witness.
- treat you differently than others, isolate you or refuse to socialize with you.
- swear at you, yell at you, speak to you in offensive language.
- don't provide you with critical information to do your job while at the same time having access to the information themselves.
- regularly give you unrealistic goals or deadlines and penalize you for not achieving them.
- expect you to work more hours, or harder, than others.
- take credit for your work.
- physically intimidate you, move into your

personal space, or make threatening gestures.

Know How to Respond

It is not easy confronting a bully. The most common mistake people make is to ignore the behavior, hoping it will go away. Bullying, by definition, happens over time, and is often not recognized until a pattern has developed. This causes the targeted person to feel all the more helpless, defenseless and unable to confront the bully. Here are some helpful tips to successfully respond should you become bullied:

- Remain calm. Model respectful behavior.
- Keep a diary of behaviors with details (nature, dates, times, places, other people involved, what was said, etc.).
- Keep records that address the bully's performance-related accusations against you.
- Report the behavior to your Human Resources Department.
- Seek support. Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a good source of information and support in dealing with workplace issues such as bullying and how it may be affecting you.
- Decide whether you are willing and able to directly communicate with the bully about his/her behavior. If needed, solicit the support of a supervisor, HR representative or other witness in meeting with the bully.
- When confronting the bully, be assertive and direct; stick to specific behaviors; reiterate what you change you expect.

Should you witness a coworker being bullied or bullying, take action. Don't wait for someone else to “take care of the problem” or for the targeted person to say something. The targeted person may be unable to defend himself. Your Employee Assistance Program is a great confidential resource if you are unsure of how to intervene or how to report workplace bullying, harassment, or other hurtful patterns. Be part of the solution, not part of the problem.



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About Your EAP



The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a benefit set up by your employer to assist you in dealing with personal concerns that may affect your work or home life.

Use of the EAP is confidential and free to you and your immediate family members.

Visit our website for more information:
<http://www.paseap.com>

Small Amounts Add Up



Savings/yr

Now that the holidays are over, financial reality may be setting in. Credit card bills are due, the savings account is low and the car needs new tires. Where to get the money? It may be right in front of you, in small amounts, hiding in plain sight. Take a look at how small dollar purchases can add up quickly. Do you recognize any of these spending patterns in your daily routine? Circle ones that are representative of money you are spending (the exact amounts listed here may differ from what you spend).

	Savings/yr
Movies	
1 movie/week @ \$8	\$416
2 rented movies/week at Redbox @ \$2	\$104
1 pay-per-view movie/week @ \$4.99	\$259
Netflix/month @ \$8.99	\$108
Soda and Candy	
1 can soda from vending machine/workday @ \$1	\$260
1 candy bar from vending machine/workday @ 75¢	\$175
Eating Out	
Lunch for 260 workdays @ \$5	\$1,300
Lunch for 260 workdays @ \$10	\$2,600
Dinner 2 times/week @ \$30	\$3,120
Cigarettes	
1 pack/day @ \$4.50	\$1,643
2 packs/day @ \$4.50	\$3,285
Lottery Tickets	
1 Instant/day @ \$1	\$365
1 Instant/day @ \$2	\$730
1 Instant/day @ \$3	\$1,095

Drinks

12 cans soda/week @ \$3.75	\$195
12 cans beer/week @ \$8.50	\$442
5 cups Starbucks coffee/week @ \$3.00	\$780
3 restaurant alcoholic beverages/week @ \$15	\$780

Reading Material

2 paperback books/month @ \$8	\$192
1 magazine/week @ \$3	\$156
1 tabloid/week @ \$1.60	\$83

Acrylic Nails

New set 3 times/yr @ \$25, refill every 2 weeks @ \$15	\$465
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Music Downloads/App Purchases

3 music downloads/week @ \$3.87	\$201
5 phone app purchases/month @ \$10	\$120

How much you could save in one year if you stopped spending in only one area? _____

Two areas? _____ Three areas? _____

What bill could you pay off? _____

What small steps can you take to save toward one month's living expenses? _____

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Featured Service: Ask a Financial Coach

Everyone has financial questions, issues or concerns from time to time. PAS provides telephonic access to experienced financial counselors who can assess your situation, help you develop a plan, work with you to find the best course of action, provide resources, and coach you through the process. The financial coach can help with a wide variety of financial matters including:

- Cash flow and budget plans
- Changes in finances due to health issues, death, disability, divorce
- Credit debt and consolidation, avoiding bankruptcy
- Mortgage financing, avoiding foreclosure
- Retirement, planning for your children's education, eldercare financial matters
- Identity theft issues
- Tax considerations
- Estate settlements

A Service of Your EAP
(800) 356-0845

