


Bullying and Violence in the Workplace



AnthemEAP

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Objectives

- Define workplace violence
- Know the warning signs
 - Behavioral
 - Physical
 - Cyberbullying
- How to respond
- What your company can do
- What you can do
- Cost to companies
- What is workplace bullying?
- Bullying warning signs
- Impact on the company and employees
- Who gets targeted?
- Why bullying persists?
- Developing a policy against workplace bullying
- What to do if you are targeted

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Definition of Workplace Violence

- Violence or the threat of violence against workers
- Can occur at or outside the workplace
- Can range from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and homicide

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Statistics on Workplace Violence

- Workplace shootings account for almost 8% of all work-related deaths each year in the United States
- Workplace fatalities due to intentional injuries by another person represent almost 14% of all workplace deaths

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Know the Warning Signs

Beware of employees who:

- Use intimidation, harass, bully others or display belligerent behaviors
- Talk about or carry weapons
- Exhibit paranoid or anti-social behavior
- Feel they are not being heard by the company
- Exhibit signs of personal desperation
- Obsess about their problems
- Are loners and don't fit in with the group
- Seem like their anxiety is getting more frequent or more extreme in nature

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More Warning Signs

Employees who...

- Yell, slam doors
- Are inflexible and controlling
- Take no responsibility for their actions
- Blame others for their mistakes
- Have many conflicts with customers, co-workers and/or supervisors
- Become fixated on an idea and/or an individual
- Have a history of violence
- Suddenly behave in ways that are out of character or extreme

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Physical Warning Signs

- Perspiring and red face
- Clenched jaw or opening and closing fists
- Raised voice
- Rapid breathing
- Staring
- Talking too close to you
- Repetitive movements such as running fingers through hair
- Pacing

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Virtual or Cyberbullying

- Cyberbullying is anything written about you or to you, online
 - Intent is to injure, humiliate or intimidate
- One study showed that 11% of respondents were cyberbullied
- Cyberbullying can be done by:
 - a superior, as a pressure tactic
 - a co-worker, as gossip or a threat
- Retaliation is not a solution; report it as you would other harassment
- There are laws against cyberbullying in all states except Montana

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How To Respond

- Do not overreact
- Do not ignore a situation
- If you see something say something to your manager
- Managers should discuss situations with trained supervisors and HR, to determine how to best handle it
- All employees should know who to contact, should a tense situation start to escalate

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What Your Company Can Do

- Stress the importance of training
- Appoint a group to examine violence in the workplace
- Create policies to prevent workplace violence
- Review and update current policies and training as it relates to workplace violence and bullying
- Keep the lines of communication open
- Develop a reputation for zero-tolerance with regard to an intimidating work environment

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What Your Company Can Do (Continued)

- Write a violence response protocol – make it visible to all employees
- Document all facts related to a violent or escalating episode
- Follow up with immediate consequences
- Institute a termination procedure specifically for violent incidents
- Make sure all entrances and loading docks are secure
- Know who is in the building at all times
- Consider implementing identification badges and sign in procedures
- Examine parking lots to see whether there might be a benefit to hiring security personnel

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Importance of Pre-screening

- Institute a rigorous method of pre-employment screening
- Contact all references
- Test for substance abuse
- Do a background check – including researching public records that may show previous arrests or convictions related to violent behavior
- Conduct at least two interviews
- Fingerprint all applicants



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What You Can Do

If confronted by a very angry employee or potentially violent situation:

- Do not respond with anger
- Talk softly and gently
- Use reflective listening
- Empathize
- Document the encounter, in detail
- Talk to a supervisor, manager or HR
- Have a safety plan

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Cost of Workplace Violence

The cost of workplace violence to U.S. businesses is estimated to be about \$36 billion per year

- Medical and psychiatric care
- Lost business and productivity
- Repairs and clean up
- Higher insurance rates
- Increased security costs
- Loss of valued employees

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Workplace Bullying

Workplace bullying takes one or more of the following forms:

- Verbal abuse
- Offensive conduct/behaviors (including nonverbal) which are threatening, humiliating, or intimidating
- Work interference or sabotage which prevents work from getting done

According to the FBI: Workplace bullying is repeated mistreatment of one or more persons (targets) by one or more perpetrators

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Bullying Warning Signs

- Nit picking, sarcastic putdowns and criticizing
- Undermining target's value and potential
- Humiliating, belittling, yelling at target in public
- Threatening, intimidating
- Marginalizing, ignoring or sidelining
- Taking credit for the target's work
- Piling work onto the target, unnecessarily
- Taking pleasure in employee's fear
 - Having unrealistic goals or deadlines
 - Rallying others to ridicule the target
- Starting cruel rumors
- Tries to get the target fired
- Using profanity toward others

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Impact on the Company

Costs to the company that result from bullied employees include loss of productivity, impact on morale and the employees may experience health problems such as:

- Cardiovascular problems
- Impaired immune system
- Debilitating anxiety
- Post-traumatic stress

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Impact on Employees

Bullying can result in an "unhealthy" workplace, which can have many effects:

- Increased absenteeism
- Increased turnover
- Increased stress
- Increased costs for employee assistance programs
- Decreased productivity and motivation
- Decreased morale

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Who Gets Targeted?

Targets are...

- Independent and confident on the job
- More technically skilled than their bullies
- Experienced workers that junior employees turn to for advice
- Popular and intelligent
- Ethical and honest
- Social, empathetic and have non-confrontational personalities.
- Targets will "take it"

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Why Bullying Persists

- Element of personal shame
- Majority of bullies (72%) are bosses
- Some managers direct bullies to target particular employees
- Fear that complaints will lead to retaliation or reprisal
- Fear of loss of job
- No defined protocol in place to deal with bullies
- Mediation is often used which may exacerbate the situation

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Develop A Policy Against Workplace Bullying

- A definition workplace bullying including a broad list of bullying behaviors
- A course of action to take after the claim of workplace bullying has been made
- An outline of the immediate consequences for violators of the policy
- A clear message that workplace bullying is prohibited and will not be tolerated
- Assurance that no reprisals will be made against workers who report an incident
- Clearly stated declaration that the policy encompasses everyone involved in the organization, including supervisors and managers

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Develop A Policy Against Workplace Bullying (continued)

- Distribute the policy to all employees
- Make it visible – post it throughout the workplace
- Make sure it is posted on the businesses' website
- Take all complaints seriously
- Be respectful of the target employee
- Encourage reporting of all incidents of bullying

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What To Do If You Are Targeted



- Keep a detailed log of all bullying incidents
- Seek the advice of a trusted mentor
- Talk to your manager, supervisor or HR
- ONLY if it is safe, talk to the bully in a calm manner
 - Describe what has been happening and how it is affecting you
 - Tell the bully to stop
- Don't allow the bully to undermine you

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Summary

- Bullying must be treated with zero tolerance
- No one should ever feel subjected to intimidation, fear or humiliation in the workplace or anywhere else
- Do not allow anyone in your company to bully others
- Speak up, if you are the target or have witnessed bullying or violence in the workplace
- If you are a supervisor or manager, take action immediately when an incident is brought to your attention
- Review your company's policies and resources

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Evaluation Survey
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THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

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