

# Bullying Prevention



# Workplace Bullying Defined

Repeated and unwanted actions by an individual or group intending to intimidate, harass, degrade or offend

Abuse or misuse of power

Bullying *is* psychological **violence**



# DEFINITION OF BULLYING

**Bullying is behavior that is:**

- **Intentional (consider the context);**
- **Targeted at an individual or group;**
- **Repeated;**
- **Hostile or offensive; and**
- **Creates an intimidating and/or threatening environment which produces a risk of psychological and/or physical harm.**

# Harassment of a Different Kind

Harassment comes from the French word

“*Harasser*” which literally means to sic a “dog on someone” without provocation



# Harassment

- Can be either hostile work environment or quid pro quo
- Unwelcome verbal or physical conduct based on one or more of an individual's protected bases under Title VII, ADEA, ADA or other statutes

# What Does the Law Say?

- EEO Law Protection
- Harassment/Hostile Work Environment
- Retaliation
- Workplace Violence Issues
- Lawful v. Unlawful Bullying

# What's EEO Law?

- [Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#) (Title VII), which prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin;
- [Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967](#) (ADEA), which protects individuals who are 40 years of age or older;
- [Title I and Title V of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990](#) (ADA), which prohibit employment discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in the private sector, and in state and local governments;
- [Sections 501 and 505 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#), which prohibit discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities who work in the federal government; and

# WHEN IS IT VIOLENT/CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR?

- Crimes that are addressed in Washington statutes include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - a. Harassment (RCW 9A.46.020);
  - b. Malicious harassment (RCW 9A.36.080);
  - c. Telephone harassment (RCW 9.61.230);
  - d. Assault (RCW 9A.36.011);
  - e. Reckless endangerment (RCW 9A.36.050);
  - f. Extortion (RCW 9A.56.120);
  - g. Coercion (RCW 9A.36.070);
  - h. Burglary (RCW 9A.52.020);
  - i. Criminal trespass (RCW 9A.52.070);
  - j. Malicious mischief (RCW 9A.48.070, .080, and .090);



# What's Covered by Federal EEO?

- **Charges dealing with EEO Cases**
    - Race**
    - Color**
    - Religion**
    - Sex**
    - National Origin**
    - Disability**
    - Age**
    - \*Hostile work environment**
- And what else?**

# REPRISAL OR RETALIATION

It is a violation for any person to engage in reprisal or retaliation against an individual because that individual has, in good faith, filed a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated in any process under this policy, or has attempted to do so.

Reprisal or retaliation actions will not be tolerated

# When can Harassment occur?

- **Before, During or After Work**
- **Breaks**
- **Lunch hour**
- **Work-related events outside of office, (i.e. happy hours, work conferences, dinners, holiday parties, picnics)**



# Bullying & Workplace Violence

- Factor to Consider if an Individual imposes a Direct Threat:
  - Nature & Severity of Harm
  - Likelihood that Harm will Occur
  - Imminent Fear or Intimidation
  - Your Workplace Violence Policy

# **Offensive Behavior**

- **What is Offensive Behavior?**
- **How many people does it take to determine that someone's behavior is offensive?**

# Offensive Behavior

- Remarks
- Feelings
- Behaviors
- Hurtful
- Anger
- Resentment
- What Pushes Your Buttons?



# Workplace Examples of Bullying

- Being shouted at or humiliated
- Being the target of practical jokes
- Blame without justification
- Exclusion or social isolation
- Physical intimidation (proximal)
- Excessive micro-managing
- Purposely withholding vital information

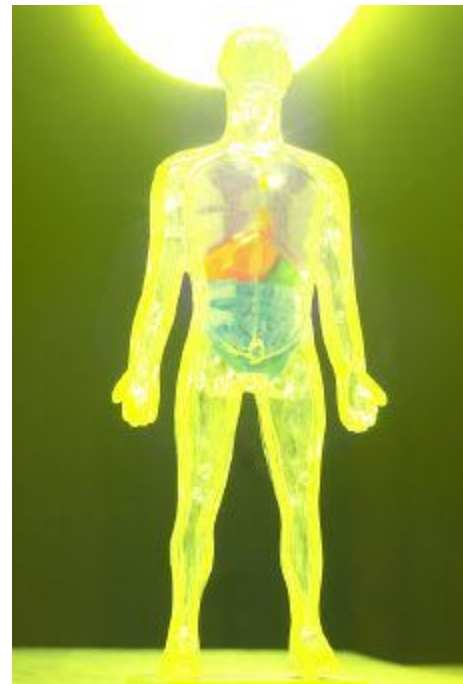
# Examples (cont.)

- Setting impossible goals for subordinates to reach
- Blocking potential training and employment
- Tampering with an employee's personal belongings
- Removing areas of responsibility without cause



# The Effect of Bullying

- Absenteeism
- Decreased productivity
- Manifestation of illness
- High turnover
- Increased accidents on the job
- Violence



# The Effects of Bullying...

- When targets believe that they have been bullied:
  - Some will cut back on work
  - Some will contemplate leaving the job
    - Only 10% do
  - Take it out on innocent family or pets
  - Others will steal from the job, sabotage work, damage equipment, damage personal property of the bully or
  - Contemplate a violent act and carry it out

# Bullying is on the Rise...

- According to a recent study by the national Institute for Occupational Health and Safety (NIOSH) bullying in the workplace is on the rise.
- 24.5% of companies surveyed indicate that bullying has taken place; 10.5% involving bullying by external customers
- More women are becoming bullies

# Statistics on Bullying



- 37% of the workplace has been bullied
- 72% of bullies are bosses
- 57% of targets are female
- Bullying happens four times more than illegal harassment
- 62% of employees ignore the problem

# Statistics (cont.)



- 45% of targets report stress related health problems
  - Panic attacks
  - Clinical depression
  - Post traumatic stress
- 40% of targets never tell anyone
- 3% of targets file lawsuits

# Dealing with “Group Think”

- Be Aware of It
- Make Group Aware of It
- Create Environment That Allows Asking “Why?”
- Explicitly Encourage “Dissenting” Views

# How to Deal with Bad Behavior...

- **First, be kind to yourself – don't personalize it b/c even though it may be directed at you, probably not about you**
- **Acknowledge that there are various sources for « rude » behavior**
- **Respond with calmness; rather than behavior that escalates rudeness**
- **Self righteous behavior only reflects poorly on you**

# How to Deal with Bad Behavior...

- **Try to address the underlying cause of the behavior: I see you are very stressed. Maybe I could help if you tell me what's bothering you?**
- **If the conversation remains irrational, then know when to quit**
- **Recognize whether behavior is a pattern or mishap; respond appropriately**
- **From: The Civility Solution: What to Do When People are Rude, St Martin's Press, 2008**



# Keep in Mind

- **Conflict Happens.**
- **Situations happen but work should not hurt.**
- **Remember: The only thing you can truly control is how you choose to respond.**

# The Power of an Apology

- A *sincere* apology benefits the giver and receiver.
- Shows respect and empathy for the wronged person
- It is a way of acknowledging an act that if left un-noticed may compromise the relationship.

# INFORMAL COMPLAINT PROCESS

The goal of the informal process is to resolve bullying complaints at the lowest level and as quickly as possible.

# INFORMAL COMPLAINT PROCESS (CONT.)

The following methods of informal resolution are available:

- 1) Ask your supervisor or a co-worker to intervene on your behalf, or meet directly with the party to talk about their behavior and ask them to stop.
- 2) Engage in an informal meeting with the alleged offender and his/her supervisor or manager.
- 3) Request mediation with the alleged offender through the use of a neutral third party such as Human Resources.

# INFORMAL COMPLAINT PROCESS (CONT.)

Use of the informal process does not restrict the complainant from the formal complaint process. If the informal process is unsuccessful or no longer an option, the formal process is available to resolve the complaint.

For your own review,  
reflect on the following questions.

1. T/F Effects of bullying often include increased performance and a decrease in on-the-job accidents?
2. T/F By legal definition harassment and bullying only happen during working hours?
3. T/F A sincere apologize demonstrates empathy and respect for the offended individual?

# Quiz

4. Approximately \_\_\_\_ of targets never tell anyone that they are being harassed or bullied?

- a. 3%
- b. 40%
- c. 96.7%

5. T/F Being shouted at, excessive micro-managing and social isolation is rude, but not considered bullying?

# Answers

1. False
2. False
3. True
4. B. 40%
5. False