

# How to Manage Bullying in the Workplace



# Objectives

1. Define workplace bullying.
2. Define overt versus covert bullying.
3. Understand the personality traits of bullies and targets.
4. Understand the social relationship between bullies, their targets and other observers.
5. Name ways to manage bullying behavior both for the bully and for the target.

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Question:

How many of you have either felt bullied by someone or have witnessed bullying in the workplace environment?



# Bullying Definition

## What Bullying is:

*Conduct that cannot be objectively justified by a reasonable code of conduct, and whose likely or actual cumulative effect is to threaten, undermine, constrain, humiliate or harm another person or their property, reputation, self-esteem, self-confidence or ability to perform.*

**What is not bullying:** acceptable office banter, a tough or demanding boss, expressing differences of opinion, a manager who shouts at or criticizes all of his/her employees, a critical co-worker.

Negative comments or actions that are based on a person's:

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Religion
- Legally protected status.

This is considered harassment.

# What bullying may look like in the workplace

## Women versus Men

Sixty-nine percent of bullies were men

Sixty percent of targets were women

Women bullies target women 68% of the time

## Overt versus Covert

Overt: yelling, humiliating, aggressive, sexual

Covert: relational aggression, online, manipulative



# Overt/Covert Bullying Examples

**Language:** cursing, yelling, threatening, rumors or gossip, belittling, criticizing

**Attitude:** finger pointing, slamming things, throwing things, posturing body language, intimidation, excluding/isolating, glaring looks, pestering, spying, stalking

**Behavior:** withholding information/resources, constantly changing work, guidelines, establishing impossible deadlines, undermining work, assigning unreasonable duties/workload, unwarranted punishment, work equipment tampering

# The Why

1. Bully/ies threatened by target's technical skills
2. Bully/ies abusive-toxic personality/ies
3. Target is not a political game player
4. Bully/ies threatened by target's popularity with others
5. Target perceived as weak
6. Single instigator convinced group to mob target
7. Bully/ies are noticed by higher ups; promotions depend on willingness to aggress
8. Bullying is rewarded at the workplace; experimentation encouraged
9. Group did the bullying & became out of control
10. Target deliberately provoked attacks upon self

# Target personality characteristics

- Independent
- More technically skilled than their bullies
- Better liked, have more social skills, and may have greater emotional intelligence
- Are ethical and honest
- Are non-confrontational





# Bully Personality Traits



- The Screaming Mimi
- The Two-Headed Snake
- The Constant Critic
- The Gatekeeper
- The Attention Seeker
- The Wannabe
- The Guru
- The Sociopath

Anton Hout, founder of [OvercomeBullying.org](https://www.OvercomeBullying.org), identifies these eight bully types.

# The Social Relationship

## **Polsky's Diamond**

Leader

Lieutenant

Members

Status Seekers

Scapegoats

# What can you do if...

You are being targeted or see it happening to someone.

You recognize yourself as a bully.

You manage others,

You work in HR



# Your Employee Assistance Program

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Thank you!**

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