

Bullying doesn't just happen on the playground



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We hear a lot about bullying. But if you think bullying is only an issue for kids, you might be ignoring a big problem in your workplace.

60.3 million U.S. workers are affected by workplace bullying. Bullying is defined as repeated behavior that intimidates, offends, puts down or embarrasses a worker. It can happen in front of coworkers, supervisors or customers.

Bullying hurts business

- Morale suffers
- Workers feel stressed and unhappy
- Performance decreases
- Attendance problems increase
- Good people quit after getting bullied
- Good people quit after observing bullying

What you can do to stop bullying

Step 1: Recognize bullying

Do you know what it looks like when someone is being bullied? Victims of bullying report having the following experiences:

- Their comments get dismissed or ignored
- They're falsely accused of mistakes
- They're forced to do work outside of their job
- They feel harshly criticized
- They're held to different standards
- They get threatening looks

Step 2: Get involved

Twenty-five percent of employees report their manager did nothing about bullying complaints.¹ Telling your employees to “work it out” or “tough it out” doesn't work. This can come across as giving permission to the bully to be mean and rude. It's hard, but you need to get involved.

Step 3: Stop rumors

Rumors are a type of bullying. Stay involved with your staff so you know what rumors are circulating. Then put a stop to them. Be careful about calling a target of bullying a “victim” or doing anything that makes it seem like the target is the source of the problem.

Step 4: Change your workplace

Bullying is worse in organizations that allow it. If you really want to stop bullying, you need to put policies in place and enforce them.

Show staff you value a safe workplace and employee rights. It's important to keep bullies from being a normal part of your work life culture.

- Encourage a culture of support over one of competition
- Have a zero-tolerance anti-bullying policy
- Use staff from all levels to develop your policy
- Include skills to deal with bullying
- Make it clear there are consequences for bullying

Use these tips to make your workplace happier, healthier and friendlier for all your workers.

¹[2017 WBI U.S. Workplace Bullying Survey](#). Workplace Bullying Institute. Accessed May 2018.

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