

BULLYING

In the Workplace

What Is Workplace Bullying?

Bullying usually involves repeated events or a pattern of behaviour that is meant to threaten, offend, insult, or embarrass a particular person or group of people. Sometimes bullying can also involve negative physical contact. Workplace bullying targets people while on the job.

Bullying in the workplace is a serious issue, but is sometimes hard to detect. The list below identifies some behaviour to watch for.

Bullying may include:

- Spreading rumours and gossip;
- Making offensive jokes or comments;
- Using insults or put-downs;
- Blaming, scolding, criticizing, and belittling;
- Excluding or isolating;
- Intimidating by standing too close or making inappropriate gestures;
- Constantly changing guidelines, making unreasonable demands, setting impossible deadlines; and interfering with work;
- Discrediting achievements and stealing credit for ideas or work;
- Disciplining or threatening job loss without reason;
- Withholding information or giving the wrong information;
- Taking away work or responsibility without reason;
- Denying requests for training, leave, or promotion;
- Using offensive language, or yelling and screaming;
- Pestering, spying, stalking, or tampering with personal belongings and equipment; and
- Physically abusing or threatening abuse.



When the source of the potential bullying is a supervisor, workers need to distinguish between firm management practices and inappropriate behaviour.

Are You Being Bullied at Work?

If you can answer yes to the following questions, you may be the target of bullying behaviour:

- Would most reasonable people consider the behaviour unacceptable?
- Are you spending a lot of time defending your actions and seeking support from your co-workers? (Employees who feel bullied spend about 10% to 50% of their time engaged in defending their own actions to co-workers.)

