

Bullying in the workplace



BCGEU/CEU Health and Safety
Conference

cope 378



Examples of bullying behaviour

- **Aggressive or frightening behaviour such as swearing, shouting, intimidation by threatening violence**
- **Spreading false accusations about a person with the result that they are ostracised**
- **Criticism, isolation and exclusion of another.**



Examples of bullying behaviour

(cont'd)

- **Humiliation, invasion of privacy**
- **Mobbing...where two or more workers are "ganging up" on another**
- **Slanderous comments, undermining destructive rumours or gossip and making unreasonable demands.**



Examples of bullying behaviour

(cont'd)

- Rude, belittling or sarcastic comments
- Abusive, belittling or intimidating phone calls, emails, notes, etc...email being the most prolific
- Baiting or unreasonable teasing
- Nasty practical jokes.



Examples of bullying behaviour

(cont'd)

- **Deliberate and unreasonable isolation or exclusion from work discussions, communication or other work-related activities—in other words, deliberately withholding work flow so that someone cannot do their job**
- **Removing areas of responsibilities without just cause.**

Bullying is not...

- **Actions/comments occasioned by management that is directive and constructive**
- **A one-off incident—this of course does not include a threat, or act of physical violence. The key pieces of identifying bullying are intent and repetition.**

Bullying is not... (cont'd)

- Fair and legitimate urging by management to encourage or urge staff to give their best
- If you are not sure if the action or statements are considered bullying, you use the "reasonable person test": **Would most people consider the action unacceptable?.**



Responsibilities of the employer

- **To be educated and to educate and train the workforce on what bullying is, its effects on workers and the workplace and enforce zero tolerance**
- **Develop policies and procedures in the absence of collective agreement language. Further, to do this jointly with the union so as to ensure there are no conflicts with current collective agreement language.**



Responsibilities of the employer

(cont'd)

- **To take all complaints of bullying seriously and investigate thoroughly.**



Responsibilities of the union

- To negotiate collective agreement language that addresses the issues of bullying

This ensures that there are rights ingrained into the collective agreement regardless of employers' policies because policies can change without the unions input/agreement.



Responsibilities of the union

(cont'd)



- **In the absence of collective agreement language, labour management committees should work towards getting policies done jointly**

Unions need to be proactive towards eliminating bullying, just as we are with harassment and discrimination.

Responsibilities of the union

(cont'd)

- **Even in the absence of collective agreement language and/or employer policy, stewards, workers and executive need to listen to complaints of bullying by workers and address it with the employer in support of the worker.**

Responsibilities of workers

- Need to attend training and gain a deeper understanding in recognition of what bullying is and what its effects are on workers
- Workers need to be vigilant in addressing bullying behaviour with the employer and with fellow workers whether they see bullying or are a victim of bullying.



Quick stats...

- Women are the primary targets of bullies
- Women who bully choose women targets 87% of the time
- Men who bully choose women targets 71% of the time
- The bully has a higher rank than the target 71% of the time.

Quick stats (cont'd)

- Women who bully are more likely to torment more than a single target in the workplace (68%) than were men (63%)
- 77% of bullies chose to enlist others to help...it's rare they do it alone
- The target co-workers frequently became the bully's allies 48% of the time
- Men who bully more often than not, use the organization's hierarchy, whereas women use the social network of peers to bully.