

## Workplace Bullying: It's Impact Goes Beyond Hurt Feelings

The word 'bullying' is usually associated with schoolyard antics, along with negative considerations about bullies. Conversely, if the words 'workplace bullying' are coupled, then the thoughts usually developed are that a target of bullying is weak, needs to get tougher, needs to grow-up, or worse. It's these types of unnecessary evaluations and judgments that keep too many bullying targets silent about attacks. As a result, bullies use the workplace as their personal playground.

Bullying is bad, unacceptable, and isn't caused by a target --- regardless of the time, place, circumstance, or other considerations. Bullying is about a bully and their need for power, influence, and control.

The damaging affect of bullying on an individual's emotional, psychological, and physiological health are important reasons that this type of abuse shouldn't be allowed. Notwithstanding, there are other impacts that should be considered also; for example, the impact of workplace bullying on the well-being of an [organization's health](#).

### Workplace bullying can impact an organization's:

- Culture - a company's personality can lead to negative, demeaning, and morale impacting behavior by its resources (e.g., executives, managers, employees);
- Ethical Decision Making - resources can be pressured to make inappropriate choices;
- Successful Project Delivery - individuals or teams can be forced to make decisions based on undue influence instead of evaluations about a project's risks, challenges, goals, and objectives;
- Employee's Performance - individuals who are harassed, intimidated, or threatened can have diminished productivity, increased absenteeism, reduced engagement, a desire to leave their employment, or health issues;
- Performance - companies impacted by hostile work environments can be blocked from achieving its maximum output potential.

By reducing the impact or eliminating workplace bullying, organizations have a better chance to maintain healthy work environments --- including happier employees. Otherwise, resources might be bullied into doing things that wouldn't otherwise be condoned or becoming complicit to others inappropriate behavior.

Organizations can do the following to minimize, eliminate, or prevent workplace bullying:

- Executives must emulate a positive, non-threatening work environment for resources to follow;
- Policies and procedures must be implemented that document the way harassment (legal and illegal) --- including workplace bullying --- will be addressed;
- Inappropriate behavior must be resolved as quickly as possible to demonstrate that any unwanted activities will be addressed in a timely manner.

Whenever someone says that a workplace bullying target should get thicker-skin, suck it up, or grow-up, tell them that bullying isn't about the target. Bullying is about a bully's use of their power, influence, and control to attempt to dominate another --- and not a target's reaction to a bully's unwanted, unwelcomed, and unwarranted attack(s).

Workplace bullying is a toxin to an organization's and its resources' health, which can lead to lost productivity, fraud, worker abuse, and more.

Leaders have a responsibility to take proactive measures and swift corrective action(s) to ensure that their organization and resources are protected from unnecessary attacks that impact its performance potential.

*Additional information on workplace bullying can be obtained in Mr. Young's solution-oriented books "[Bullies... They're In Your Office, Too: Could you be one?](#)" or his mini-book "[Management Spotlight: Workplace Bullying](#)".*