

Harassment and Bullying

Introduction

All employers should have practices in place which work towards eliminating all forms of discrimination. This includes barriers to recruitment, retention, development and promotion of its employees. Harassment and bullying are forms of discrimination, which are not tolerated as they are in violation of Equal Employment Opportunity principles.

If you are being harassed or bullied...

If you are being harassed or bullied, you do not have to put up with it. The problem is with someone else's behaviour, not with you. This behaviour is unlikely to change unless it is dealt with.

You have a right to work in an environment that is free from **harassment and bullying**.

What can you do?

- You can tell the offender very clearly that you do not like their behaviour and ask them to stop it. You do not have to do this if you prefer seeking help elsewhere first.
- You can go to someone you trust to discuss what you can do about the behaviour. This could be a Supervisor / Team Leader / Manager / EEO Co-ordinator / Human Resources. Your Union will also be able to assist.
- Write down some notes about your complaint. This will help you explain to other people what has happened.
- Once you have complained about the behaviour, whomever you decide to talk to, should arrange a confidential interview addressing the problem. No one else should be told about your complaint without your consent and the possible consequences of your complaint will be discussed with you.
- If you are not happy with the way your complaint has been addressed, follow this up, either with the first contacted person or with someone else.

Harassment and Bullying – What are they?

Harassment and bullying can be very obvious or quite subtle.

Intimidation

Examples

- over zealous supervision and control
- shouting
- making others afraid through looks, actions and gestures

Emotional abuse

Any of these examples are valid whether they are to someone's face or behind their back.

Examples

- put downs
- not acknowledging others' feelings and concerns
- name calling
- humiliating people
- implying a person's opinion or work is not of value because of their age
- display of racist material
- telling jokes which portray an ethnic group or nationality as inferior
- treating another in a patronising way or with contempt because of their ethnicity, age, sexual orientation or disability

Isolation

Examples

- omitting people from the information chain
- stopping access to senior management

Minimising, Denying, Blaming

Examples

- trivialising incidents
- blaming others for abusive behaviour

Coercion and Threats

Examples

- making and /or carrying out threats about legal action or complaints to management

Economic Abuse

Examples

- pay inequity
- withholding money for retraining or resources
- not giving appropriate raises

Abusing Position

Examples

- not consulting or sharing information
- being set up to fail with an overload of work
- unjustifiable and inconsistent discipline

Sexual harassment is a form of harassment.

Information for Managers

It is your responsibility to:

- Ensure the workplace is free from harassment and bullying.
- Inform new staff about this policy as part of their orientation.
- Act immediately should complaints of harassment and bullying be made to you and ensure that complaints are followed up appropriately. This includes ensuring that any complaints are dealt with confidentially.
- Address harassment and bullying that you become aware of, whether or not it has been the subject of a formal complaint.
- Seek help (with the complainant's permission) from your Human Resources if you would like assistance with following up a complaint.

The effects of harassment and bullying on staff can impact negatively on job performance. It is in your interest to ensure that staff enjoy a workplace that is free from harassment and bullying.

What Can You Do If You Are Accused Of Harassment / Bullying?

If you are told by someone that your words or actions are considered to be harassment or bullying, please STOP. Consider their point of view.

If you want to discuss the complaint you can talk to any of the following:

- Your supervisor / team leader / manager.
- EEO co-ordinator
- Human Resources
- Your Union