Bullying in the Workplace

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This presentation is based on the books:

Smart Manager FAQ
by Rex Gatto

Mentoring Process for CPA/CAs
By Rex Gatto
Soft skills are personal attributes that enhance an individual's interactions, job performance and career prospects.

Unlike **hard skills**, which are about a person's skill set and ability to perform a certain type of task or activity, soft skills are interpersonal and broadly applicable.

Soft skills are often described by using terms often associated with personality traits, such as:

- optimism
- common sense
- responsibility
- a sense of humor
- integrity
Abilities that can be practiced (but require the individual to genuinely like other people) such as:

- empathy
- teamwork
- leadership
- communication
- good manners
- negotiation
- sociability
- the ability to teach.
Conceptual Overview

Bullying – what is it?
Who are Bullies?
Statistics
Types of Bullies
How to Cope

Benefits of this presentation: You will have an understanding of Bullying in the Workplace and Tools to address the issues
Defining Bullying
Workplace Bullying refers to:
repeated, unreasonable actions of individuals (or a group) directed towards an employee (or a group of employees), which are intended to intimidate, degrade, humiliate, or undermine; or which create a risk to the health or safety of the employee(s).
Workplace Bullying and harassment are defined as unwanted and unwarranted behavior that a person finds offensive, intimidating or humiliating and is repeated so that it has a detrimental effect upon a person's dignity, safety (physically and emotionally) and well being. (Olsen, H.)
It is estimated that there are 14 million people bullied — (Workplace Bullying Institute - WBI)

Bullying causes significant health and safety issues

- Stress
- Psychological injury
- Suicide

Employees feel stuck
Dealing with a Bully

We all have to deal with Bullies!

Are YOU a Bully or do you know a Bully?

We will assess:

Traits of bullies in the workplace
Characteristics of a Bully?

Answer yes or no
Are you Being Bullied?

Constantly told what to do

Not allowed to voice an opinion

Feel intimidated

Feel I can do nothing about the intimidation – no one cares

Feel telling someone about the bullying will make it worse
Examples of Bullying

- Blamed without facts
- Not recognized
- Treated differently
- Gossiped about
- Being humiliated
- Being sworn or yelled at
- Constantly criticized
- Exclusion - social isolation
- Team members not performing

- Females targeted more often
HR Action

Were any of your responses Yes?

If yes?

What is one action you can take to address a yes response?
What is going on in the workplace?
Who are Bullies?

Do people get up in the morning thinking, “How can I bully and intimidate others? Is it always the same people who Bully?

Culture of Collusion

60% of Workplace Bullies are men and they bully men and women.

40% of Workplace Bullies are female and they primarily bully other females.
Facts

13%, or nearly 15 million workers, reported experiencing bullying on a weekly basis.

Cost for bullying is $250 million+ annually.
N=3,892

35% of workers felt bullied
16% suffered health related issues
17% decided to quit
Who Bullies

• 48% said the boss;
• 45% said coworkers
• 31% said picked on by customers
• 26% said someone higher up in the company

Age of Bullies

• 54% said someone older than them
• 29% someone younger than them
Workplace Bullying Institute
Outcomes

T = Target
P = Perpetrator

77.7% No longer employed

28% T Quit

5% P Fired

6% T Trans

11% P Punished

25% T Forced Out

25% T Fired

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Misuse of power

Workplace bullying often involves an abuse or misuse of power. Bullying behavior creates feelings of defenselessness and injustice in the target and undermines an individual’s right to dignity at work.
Why do people in power bully?

Lack assertive leadership skills
Ignorant about bulling
Incompetent
Lack respect/empathy
Are under stress/pressure
Are mean
Ok if we achieve
Empowered by the organization
Types of Bullies

Aggressive:
screams, threatens, blames

Passive:
subtle, divisive, undermining
Bullying Behaviors

• Banter: teasing, verbal abuse, blame
• Aggressive
• Silent treatment, humiliation
• Harass, discriminate
• Manipulate, unrealistic workload deadlines and micromanage
Organizational Bullying

Accepted as part of the workplace culture

Placing unreasonable expectations, failure = making life unpleasant

Stress employees = “weak” (while denying work-related causes)
Bullying is different than
Demanding

Tough or demanding bosses are not necessarily bullies as long as they are respectful and fair and their primary motivation is to obtain the best performance by setting high yet reasonable expectations for working safely.
Factors that Support Bullying

- Significant organizational change
- Worker characteristics (e.g., age, gender, parental status, apprentice or trainee)
- Workplace relationships (e.g., inadequate information flow between organizational levels, lack of employee participation in decisions)

Question
Impact on the Workplace

Low productivity - failure to meet organizational goals

Low morale

Increased frequencies of grievances, resignations, requests for transfers (people vote with their feet)

Risk of lawsuits

Increased absence due to sickness

Increased disciplinary actions.
Most statistics indicate that current efforts to put an end to bullying in the workplace are close to being totally useless.

According to the Workplace Bullying Institute, most tactics utilized by many HR departments (confronting, imploring the bully’s boss, filing an HR complaint, or telling senior management) are total failures.
What can Leaders Do?

If you are aware of bullying in the workplace and do not take action, then you are accepting a share of the responsibility for any future abuses.
What HR can Do?

- Set a limit of tolerance
- Conduct training
- ID bully behavior
- Use tools to stop it
- Document bully’s behaviors
- Collect evidence
The purpose of this policy is to communicate to all employees, including supervisors, managers and executives that Company ABC will not in any instance tolerate bullying behavior.

Employees found in violation of this policy will be disciplined, up to and including termination.
Verbal Bullying: slandering, ridiculing or maligning a person or his/her family; persistent name calling

Physical Bullying: pushing; shoving; kicking; poking; tripping; assault, or threat of physical assault

Gesture Bullying: non-verbal threatening gestures, glances which can convey threatening messages

Exclusion: socially or physically excluding or disregarding
This means that witnesses of bullying behavior should be encouraged to report any such incidences.

Individuals are less likely to engage in antisocial behavior when it is understood that the organization does not tolerate such behavior and that the perpetrator is likely to be punished.
How organizations can cope

- Create a zero tolerance anti-bullying policy
- Bullying behavior should be addressed IMMEDIATELY
- Complaints about bullying need to be taken seriously and investigated promptly/ask questions on employee surveys
- Empower employees - autonomy
- Create awareness about bullying – report it/have an open door policy
- Management needs to be involved
What Employees can do

- Recognizing that you are being bullied
- Realizing that you are NOT the source of the problem
- Recognizing that bullying is about control, and therefore has nothing to do with your performance.
How do you cope?

- Relax and don’t get off balance
- Minimize the impact by keeping a journal detailing the nature of the bullying (e.g., dates, times, places, what was said or done and who was present) focus on facts
- Know the action you can take to remain in control
- Don’t react but rationalize
- Stay organized and focused (documents, emails, and or reports)
- Calming: state the facts
- Focus on issues
- Set ground rules - this is how you will act/respond
- Don’t get pushed around
- Use visuals and collect information until they repeat their ideas
Stay focused with Bullies

- Assess the situation
- Don’t think of the person as a Bully
- Separate you and the person from the difficult behavior
- Develop a coping plan
- Implement the plan
- Assess the plan
Questions for employees

- Has this person acted the same or differently in similar situations?
- What is the person’s way of acting?
- Am you reacting out of proportion?
- Were your responses excessive?
- Was there a particular incident that triggered the difficult behavior?
- Will direct, open, discussion help elevate the situation?
- Can I help?
Managing your coping plan

- Assess the situation
- Ask questions
- Take responsibility
- Demonstrate maturity
- Create trust
- Focus on the moment: the NOW

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Summary
Dealing with Bully Could be rewarding if you think of yourself as a Coach/Mentor!