



Article for Murray's Bully Free Community Education Campaign

What to Do When Bullied at Work (Part III)

By
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This is the last article in the series focusing on workplace bullying. What can you do to protect yourself from people who bully? When seeking to answer this question, I could recall what someone once said, "Though you cannot go back and make a brand new start, my friend, you can start now, and make a brand new end."

Every situation is different. How you respond to bullying in the workplace depends on the extent and intensity, how it affects you, your company's policies and leadership quality, and your particular situation. You could take an informal approach or follow a more formal approach. The important thing to remember is, Take Action! Help Yourself!

First, set some major goals for yourself, such as:

- To protect myself from future bullying.
- To briefly explore why I am being bullied. (Don't spend much time on this. *No one deserves it.*) Too much time on "Why" can cause you to think too much about your own doubts and insecurities and prevent you from moving forward to solutions to the problem.
- To develop a plan for managing the hurt and the stress to minimize the impact on bullying.

Before we talk about what you should do, there are a few don'ts. For example:

- Don't appear hurt or cry
- Don't let the bully sense he/she has power and control over you
- Don't deny it is happening to you
- Don't constantly complain to your co-workers about the bully's behavior – this is not constructive, it's disrespectful and adds fuel to the fire
- Don't ignore or minimize the bullying
- Don't write it off as interpersonal conflict or a misunderstanding – it's Bullying!
- Don't waste energy having a breakdown on account of a bully
- Don't retaliate

Now, let's discuss what you should do. Please consider the following *Seven-Step Process* (Beane, 2012). To read about each step, visit our website www.bullyfree.com and click on "Workplace Bullying" appearing at the top of the homepage.

- Step #1: Acknowledge, State, and Understand the Problem
- Step #2: Consider Assertively Confronting the Bullying
- Step #3: Develop a Safety Plan
- Step #4: Check Company Policies and Procedures
- Step #5: Document Incidence
- Step #6: Seek Advice and Report (If Desired)
- Step #7: Empower Yourself
 - Develop a Wellness Action Plan (Cope with the Stress)
 - Enlist Support
 - Develop Your Strengths
 - Increase Your Options
 - Build Decision-Making Skills
 - Develop Assertiveness Skills

Workplace bullying is widespread. The impact of bullying is costly for both the business and the individuals involved. Workplace bullying should be viewed as an organizational problem, not just an individual problem. Therefore, the interventions need to be targeted at both the individuals involved, and the organization.

If you are bullied at work, remember! You're not the problem, it's the bully who has a problem. You are not helpless in facing the problem of bullying. You can reclaim your energy and your love for your work. You can reclaim your positive self-esteem.

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