



# DEALING WITH WORKPLACE BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Bullying and harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, culture, religion, and physical or mental disability is illegal. You do not have to put up with it! Here's how to deal.

## What is workplace bullying?

Bullying can be physical and/or verbal, and includes:

- Cultural insensitivity
- Unfair and excessive criticism
- Publicly insulting people
- Constantly changing or setting unrealistic work targets
- Undervaluing someone's efforts at work

## What is workplace harassment?

Harassment is unwelcome behaviour that causes physical or mental harm and humiliates, offends or intimidates. It is not appropriate nor relevant to work. Harassment can happen through:

- The use of words: "Don't be such a sissy. Man up."
- The use of actions: Touching a colleague without consent, or making rude gestures.
- The use of images: Distributing inappropriate material to team members.
- The use of attitudes: "Women shouldn't be in trades."
- The creation of a hostile or threatening atmosphere: "Why aren't you laughing at this? Don't you have a sense of humour? It's just a joke."

## IMPORTANT!

If a colleague is:

- making you feel physically unsafe or uncomfortable,
- bullying you through words or actions,
- causing mental distress or
- harassing you in any way, it's best to go straight to your supervisor, or a person that you trust.

## Get in touch

Please call **1300 363 831** and ask to speak to one of our Apprentice Advisors or email us at **[intrainingsupport@businessaustralia.com](mailto:intrainingsupport@businessaustralia.com)**

## How to stop workplace bullying and harassment

Your employer should:

- Send a clear message that workplace bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- Put in place and enforce a workplace bullying and harassment policy.
- Explain procedures to follow when reporting a bully.
- Create a supportive and safe environment to speak up in.

### You should:

- Seek help from someone you trust:
  - Your work supervisor or employer
  - Your company's workplace, occupational health and safety representative
  - Your company's personnel or HR department
  - Your union, if you're a member
  - SafeWork NSW
- Be the change: when you see any bullying or harassment happening, call it out if you are able – tell the bully that you find their behaviour unreasonable.
- Watch your own words and actions to make sure that you're not the bully.
- If someone comes to you and asks for help, don't ignore them.
- Not get isolated: bullies work hard to alienate targets from their co-workers. Make friends on your team that can support you.
- Display self-esteem and broadcast a positive attitude.
- Protect your personal information: don't share any details of your life with the bully, as that can give them power.
- Check if your industrial award or workplace agreement details processes for bullying or grievance handling.
- See a doctor to document and treat any injuries, either mentally or physically.
- Be methodical in collecting evidence of bullying to use as proof once you go the official route. Take notes after an incident, and save copies of emails, messages, doctor's reports, photos, voice notes, social media posts and eyewitness accounts.

## Don't be silent

Speaking out can be hard, but it makes a huge difference in changing workplace culture.

### What if my boss is the bully?

We can talk to your employer and provide mediation if needed. Contact us at [hello@apprenticeshipsupport.com.au](mailto:hello@apprenticeshipsupport.com.au)

Find more information here:

- **SafeWork Australia: explore national policies relating to bullying.**
- **SafeWork NSW: explore state policies relating to bullying.**
- **Fair Work Commission: more information on national anti-bullying laws, who can take action and how to apply for an order to stop workplace bullying.**