

About workplace bullying

Workplace bullying is any workplace behaviour that's physically, mentally or socially threatening. Some types are also crimes. It's everyone's responsibility to stop workplace bullying, including your employer, and if necessary, the police. If you are being bullied, there are actions you can take.

What is workplace bullying?

Workplace bullying is any physical or mental intimidation by a person or group of people in your workplace. It can happen in any kind of workplace and the person or group don't need to be managers or your boss – it can come from co-workers too. It happens to bosses, work experience students, interns, employees, casuals and temps.

Some types of workplace bullying include:

- hurtful comments making fun of you or your work
- sexual harassment
- excluding you from workplace activities
- playing mind games or 'ganging up'
- giving you pointless tasks that don't help you do your job
- making impossible demands; setting you up to fail
- using your roster to deliberately make things difficult for you
- withholding important info
- physical violence, from pushing and tripping to outright attacks
- threatening you with workplace equipment like knives or drills
- initiation or 'hazing' rituals where you have to do something unacceptable or humiliating

What bullying is not: Even though some things may seem unfair, they might not be bullying. Your boss can sack, transfer, demote, retrench or discipline you, as long as they have a good reason.

Who is responsible for stopping bullying?

Everyone. That's the short answer. All people, whether at work or not, should try to make sure they're not threatening and intimidating others. In workplaces, employers have a responsibility to provide a safe workplace, which means one that's free of bullying and intimidation. If you're seeing someone in the workplace being bullied, you've also got a responsibility to try to stop it.

This might help if...

- > *You're struggling at work, and feel threatened by other workers*
- > *You, or someone you know, is being bullied at work*
- > *You want to know what you can do about workplace bullying*

Take action...

- > *Find out what policies your workplace has around bullying*
- > *Get information on your legal rights when it comes to bullying*
- > *Work on your communication skills*

What's the effect of bullying?

Workplace harassment, intimidation and bullying can also be illegal. If the person being bullied is under 16, it could be child abuse. If you're being bullied for reasons like age, gender, disability, religion or sexual preference, the bullying could be discriminatory, which is illegal. Violence, or threats of violence, are always illegal.

I'm being bullied, what can I do?

If you're being bullied at work, there are steps you can take to stop it. They include:

- › *checking your work's policy on bullying and harassment*
- › *writing down what happens so you've got records of the bullying*
- › *talking to people you trust – whether it's a friend, counsellor, or other support person*
- › *talking to the bully about their behaviour, if you feel safe doing this*
- › *telling a manager or supervisor*
- › *taking it further: if you can't resolve the issue in your workplace, you can talk to the Australian Human Rights Commission, a union rep, or if the bullying is violent or threatening, the police*