



Article for Murray's Bully Free Community Education Campaign

Workplace Bullying (Part II)

By
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In the first article of this series on workplace bullying, we discovered that bullying can be a significant problem in businesses. So, why don't employees report it? There are several reasons. Sometimes they are embarrassed that they have allowed someone to overpower them. Other times, they may have observed other employees report bullying and nothing was done. They may also fear they will be blamed because their superior may not like them as much as the person doing the bullying. Of course, the bully may also be their supervisor or boss, so they fear they will be fired and they know jobs are scarce. Some bullied employees also don't want to be viewed as a problem or create a problem for their superior. They may also fear retaliation from the co-worker who bullies and those who support him.

When the problem of workplace bullying is not resolved, it can create health problems for bullied employees and cost their employer. Everyday, 1 million workers in the US are absent from work due to stress. Stress is costing American businesses \$300 billion a year in terms of diminished productivity, employee turnover, and insurance. For example, if 37% of workers are bullied, the potential cost to American businesses would be around \$111 billion annually. Here are some more documented facts regarding the impact of bullying:

- Workplace bullying leads to 18 million lost working days per year (*Hazards Magazine*, Issue 70)
- Increased turnover (*Keashly & Jagatic*, 2003)
- Increased cost of recruitment and training
- Low workforce morale (*Rayner & Hoel*, 1997)
- Poor customer relations (customers are bullied or they observe employees bullied)
- Decreased productivity and performance (*Field* 2001)
- Decreased employee commitment (*Hoel et. al.*, 2003)
- Potential litigation (*Earnshaw and Cooper*, 1996)
- Adverse media attention - negative impact on corporate image

The bottom line is that workplace bullies are just far too expensive to keep.

Workplace bullying has a direct impact on the health and productivity of employees. Here are the top twelve health consequences (symptoms) for bullied employees (Namie, G. Namie, R., *The Bully at Work*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, Inc. 2000):

- Severe anxiety (94%)
- Sleep disruption (84%)

- Loss of concentration (82%)
- Feeling edgy (jittery and nervous) (80%)
- Obsession over bully's motives and tactics (76%)
- Stress headaches (64%)
- Avoidance of feelings and/or places (49%)
- Shame and embarrassment causing a change in routine (49%)
- Racing heart rate (48%)
- Flashbacks (46%)
- New muscle or joint aches (43%)
- Diagnosed depression (41%)

Bullying weakens the mind, weakens the heart, weakens the body, and weakens the spirit. IT DRAINS THE SOUL!

The next article in this series will focus what you should do when you are bullied in the workplace.

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