



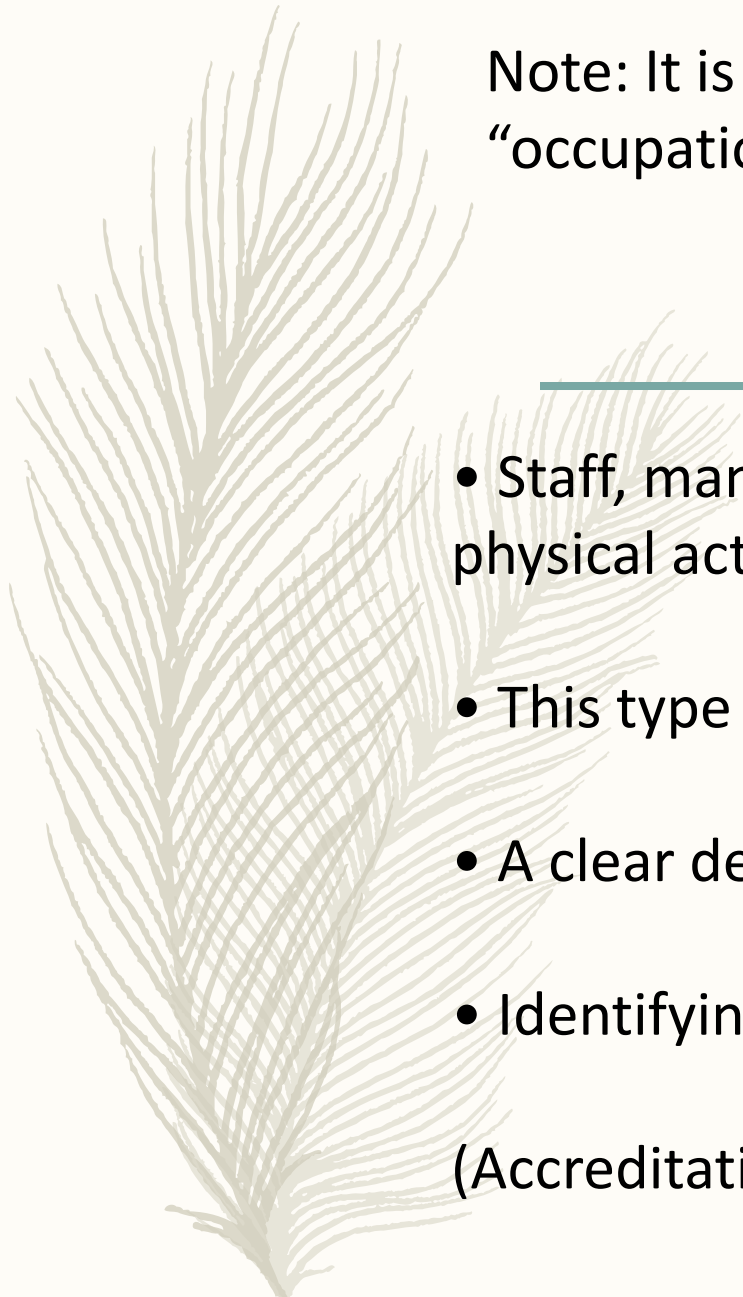
“Coping Strategies for Work Related Stressors and Workplace Bullying”

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Four types of workplace violence

- Type I (External): The perpetrator has no relationship to the worker or the workplace
- Type II (Client or Customer): The perpetrator is a client at the workplace who becomes violent toward a worker or another client
- Type III (Worker-to-worker): The perpetrator is an employee or past employee of the workplace
- Type IV (Domestic Violence): The perpetrator has a personal relationship with an employee or a client, e.g., domestic violence in the workplace



Note: It is important to clearly define the term “workplace violence”, or “occupational violence”, for several reasons:

- Staff, management and the public may not recognize certain non-physical acts (such as verbal abuse) as a type of violence
- This type of violence may precede physical violence
- A clear definition may encourage reporting
- Identifying bullying as an issue may encourage action to prevent violence

(Accreditation Canada 2008)



OUTLINE

- The effects of bullying in the workplace on the organization and workers
- Recognizing the signs of bullying and why it happens
- Roles of the employer, supervisor and employees in recognizing and preventing bullying
- Tools to assist the victim, co-workers, supervisors and the employer to recognize, assess and control bullying in the workplace

What is Bullying?


- repeated, persistent, continuous behavior as opposed to a single negative act and is generally associated with a power imbalance between the victim and perpetrator, where the victim feels inferior (Salin 2003).
- known as mobbing, abuse, workplace aggression, horizontal or lateral violence, victimization and social undermining.
- usually seen as acts or verbal comments that could “mentally” hurt or isolate a person in the workplace. Sometimes, bullying can also involve negative physical contact (e.g., pushing, throwing objects).



What is Workplace Bullying?

Workplace bullying refers to repeated, unreasonable actions of individuals (or a group) directed towards an employee (or a group of employees), which is intended to intimidate and creates a risk to the health and safety of the employee(s).

Workplace bullying often involves an abuse or misuse of power. Bullying includes behavior that intimidates, degrades, offends, or humiliates a worker, often in front of others. Bullying behavior creates feelings of defenselessness in the target and undermines an individual's right to dignity at work.



The following are examples of workplace bullying behaviors:(Salin 2003; Rowell 2005)

- Exclusion or Social isolation (silent treatment)
- Rumors
- Personal attack of a person's private life and/or personal attributes
- Excessive or unjustified criticism
- Over-monitoring of work
- Verbal aggression (being shouted at or being humiliated)
- Withholding information
- Withholding job responsibility
- Trivial fault finding or blaming without factual justification
- Replacing proper work with demeaning jobs
- Setting unrealistic goals or deadlines
- Being treated differently than the rest of your work group.
- Being the target of practical jokes.



Bullies, backstabbers and manipulators

Is there someone at your workplace who makes you feel anxious, frustrated or angry? Does that person seem intent on controlling your behavior against your will? Does he belittle, embarrass or even humiliate you? With most people, if you make the effort, you can usually get along. Problems arise and are solved.



Bullies, backstabbers and manipulators

But what if your boss, or one of your co-workers resists any attempt to have a normal, mutually respectful working relationship? Maybe he is overly critical or micromanaging. He seems intent on intimidating or controlling you. Or he appears to support you one day, then undermines you the next. You find yourself on an emotional roller-coaster. You feel confused and manipulated. You feel like you are alone in an increasingly painful struggle against his clever, self-serving, destructive behaviors. Your job has become an ordeal and there seems to be no way out. If this is your situation, then you are probably dealing with a workplace bully.



Corporate/institutional bullying can manifest itself in different ways:

- Placing unreasonable expectations on employees, where failure to meet those expectations means making life unpleasant (or dismissing) anyone who objects.
- Dismissing employees suffering from stress as “weak” while completely ignoring or denying potential work-related causes of the stress.
- Encouraging employees to fabricate complaints about colleagues with promises of promotion or threats of discipline.



Signs of corporate and institutional bullying include:

- Failure to meet organizational goals.
- Increased frequencies of grievances, resignations, and requests for transfers.
- Increased absence due to sickness.
- Increased disciplinary actions.



Recognizing Bullying

Signs and symptoms may include:

- Grievances by employees against their manager
- Declining work performance of dedicated and hard-working employees
- Increased stress and tensions between staff in a unit
- Poor morale
- Reported fear of a co-worker by other workers
- Individual symptoms of depression
- Increased absenteeism in a department/unit

(Hutchison et al. 2005; Rowell 2005)




Profile of the Bully

- low-self esteem
- Poor communication skills
- unresolved work issues from earlier in their career
- abusive behaviors onto others
- often are viewed as charmers
- may be well liked by their supervisors.
- often bully to cover up their own insecurities and weaknesses.

Does the person you're having trouble with:	Never	Not often	Often	Almost always/ Always
Ignore you, not say hello when you greet them, not return phone calls or emails?	0	0	1	2
Dismiss what you're saying or "put you down" while alone or in the presence of others?	0	1	2	3
Sabotage you or make you look foolish, such as by "forgetting" to tell you about a meeting or, if the person is your boss, set you up to fail by placing impossible demands on you?	0	2	3	4
Spread rumours, lies and half-truths about you?	0	2	3	4
Frequently act impatient with you, treating you like you're incompetent?	0	1	2	3
Blame and criticize you?	0	1	2	3
Try to intimidate you by interrupting, contradicting and glaring at you and giving you the silent treatment?	0	1	2	3
Tease, ridicule, insult or play tricks on you, especially in front of others?	0	2	3	4
Always insist on getting their own way and never apologize?	0	1	2	3
Yell, point their finger, swear, insult or threaten you or call you names?	0	2	3	4
Total score =				

Self-test: Are You Being Bullied?

Consider each of the questions in the self-test below, then circle the appropriate number to indicate how often the described behavior happens.



Add up the numbers to get your total score. There is a possible total score of 33.

If your score is 5 or below, it doesn't look like you're being bullied.

If your score is between 6 and 19, there are indications of bullying behavior. Naturally, the higher the score, the more pronounced the behavior.

If your score is 20 or above, you are definitely being bullied.

As scores increase beyond 20, the severity of the bullying is escalating.

<http://www.bullyfreeatwork.com>



Factors that Increase the Risk for Bullying Behavior:

- Significant organizational change (i.e., major internal restructuring, technological change).
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- 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. And
 - Work systems (e.g., lack of policies about behavior, high rate and intensity of work, staff shortages, interpersonal conflict, organizational constraints, role ambiguity, and role conflict.



Effect on Workers and the Organization

- Lower levels of job satisfaction
- Psychosomatic symptoms and physical illness (stress, anxiety, sleeplessness, fatigue, frequent colds, coughs, back pain, chest pains and angina, high blood pressure, headaches and migraines, sweating, palpitations, etc.)
- Post-traumatic stress
- Mental illness – depression
- Permanent disability

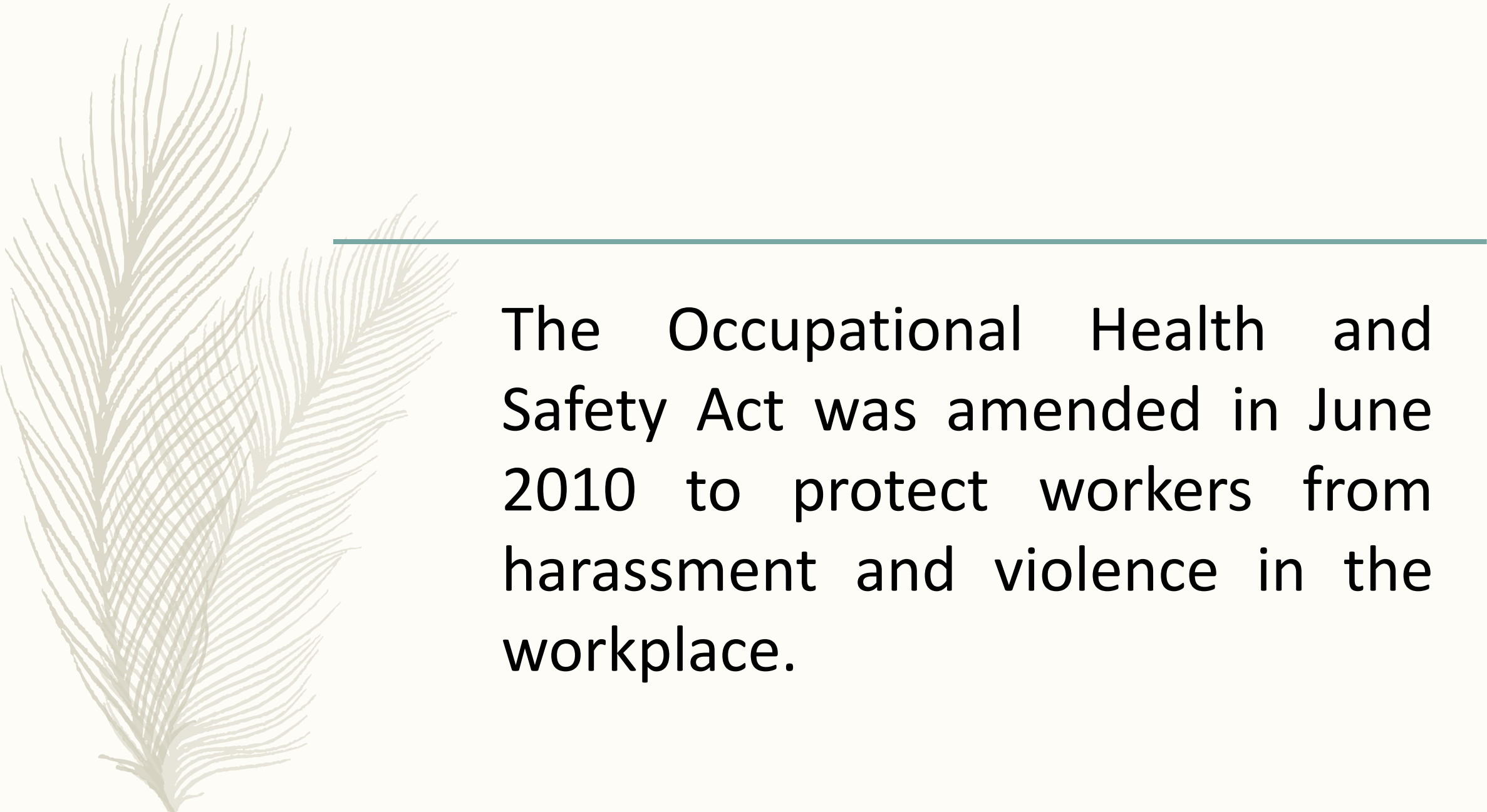
(Hutchison et al. 2005; Sofield & Salmond 2003)



Effect on Workers and the Organization

(Hutchison et al. 2005; Rowell 2005)

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- High absenteeism rates, turnover, recruitment costs and intent to leave the organization;
 - Reduced efficiency and productivity due to poor staff morale
 - High rates of injuries and illness
 - Increased short- and long-term disability costs
 - Increased employee assistance program (EAP) costs
 - Decreased commitment to the organization
 - Decreased productivity
 - Higher levels of client dissatisfaction
 - Decreased organization image
 - Legal action



The Occupational Health and Safety Act was amended in June 2010 to protect workers from harassment and violence in the workplace.



Employees – What to do if you are bullied at work

1. Learn more about bullying – information is power.
2. Don't ignore the behavior. Remember, the statistics show that you are not alone.
3. Get help/support. Tell others you trust. Do you have friends, relatives, a union, co-workers or another group who are truly understanding and supportive? or physician you can speak to?
4. Document every incident. Start a diary/journal and enter events after they occur or each night. Include the date (and time if relevant), who was present, what happened and how you felt.
5. Address the situation with the bully if you feel comfortable and safe. Let them know that their behavior is unacceptable. Stay calm; be polite and direct.
6. Be willing to examine your own behavior/feelings.
7. Report the incident to your manager or human resources.

(Sofield & Salmond 2003; Massachusetts Nurses Association 2008; RCN 2005; www.nobullyforme.ca)



If you are confronted – Know some bully-proof responses


Train yourself to listen critically to a bully. When you hear words of attack (criticism, blame or self-justification), fall back on the following responses. Very simply, excuse yourself with one of these bully-proof responses and walk away.

- Excuse me, I have a meeting to go to.
- I have something I have to attend to. I'll get back with you later.
- Pardon me, I was just heading out. Can we talk tomorrow?
- Let's talk later (this afternoon). I have something that can't wait.
- (Non-defensively) Do you think so? Maybe you're right.
- I don't agree, but I'm sure we can talk about this another time.



Providing defense skills: 10 steps you can take to prevent bullying

1. Be calm, stand firm, and try to keep up a confident appearance. Keep a detailed record of every incident; you will need it as proof if you decide to make a complaint.
2. Check your job description. If you suddenly find yourself being set menial tasks, or are given an increased workload with shorter deadlines, you can do something about it if those conditions contravene your contract.



3. Try to get witnesses to bullying incidents, and avoid situations where you are alone with the bully.

4. Get advice from your trade union or from personnel and health and safety officers at work. Does your employer have a policy on harassment or against unacceptable behavior?


5. Take a stress management course and/or assertiveness training. They are good for your general health, and may help you in the future.



6. If you go ahead with a complaint, state the facts clearly.

7. Get emotional support from your family and friends, talk to them about how you are feeling. Ask your physician about counselling.


8. If you decide to leave your job because of the bullying, let your company know exactly why you are resigning. It may help others in the future.



9. If you wish to pursue a legal claim against your employer, start by taking advice from your union.

10. Know there are many forms of legal action that may be possible, including industrial tribunals, civil claims for personal injury and sometimes even criminal action.

(Adapted from: National Workplace Bullying Advice)



Managers and supervisors can use this tool to determine whether the “suspect” in the workplace would qualify as a “bully”. Check if Yes

Observed behavior

- ☐ Blames others for “errors”
- ☐ Yells and screams
- ☐ Makes unreasonable job demands
- ☐ Frequently lies to others
- ☐ Insults and puts down others
- ☐ Criticizes others’ abilities
- ☐ Discounts and/or denies others’ accomplishments
- ☐ Steals credit from others
- ☐ Threatens others’ jobs
- ☐ Starts rumors to harm others



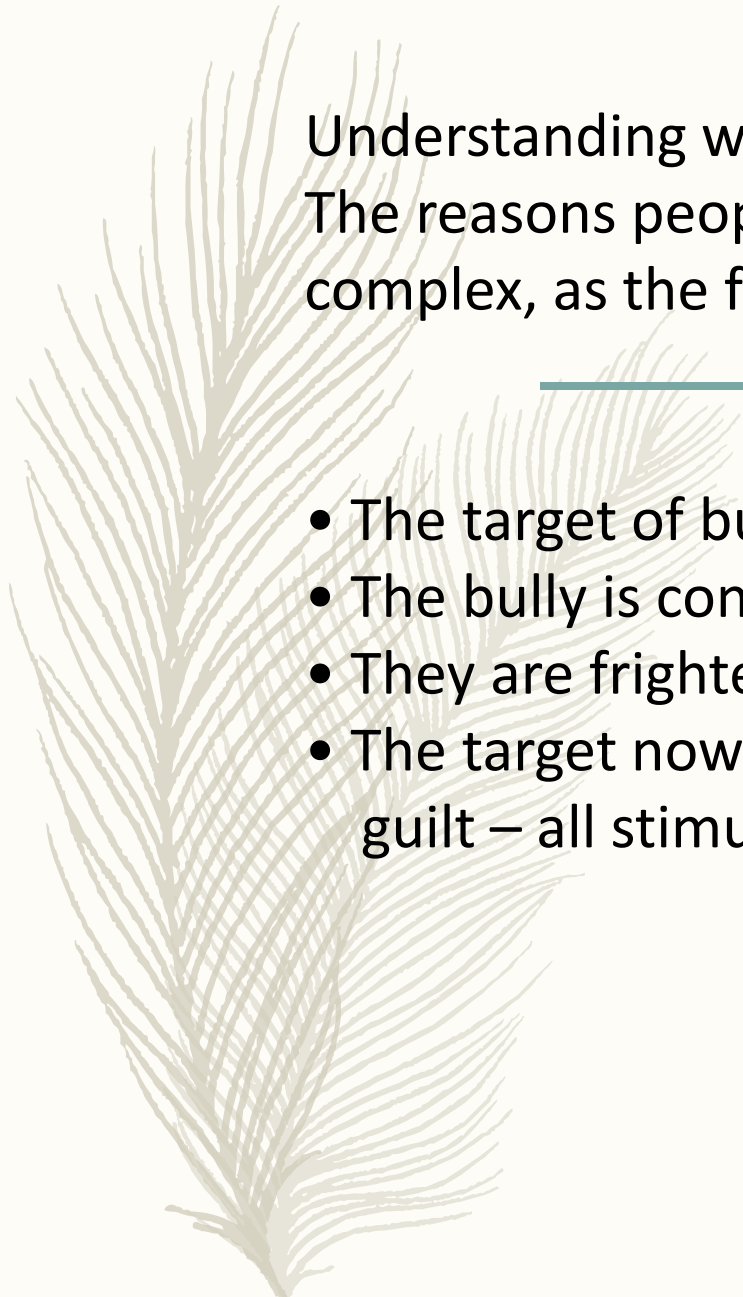
One or two check marks:

Not a huge worry. Some of the symptoms listed above are typical indicators of a stressful work environment.

More than two check marks:

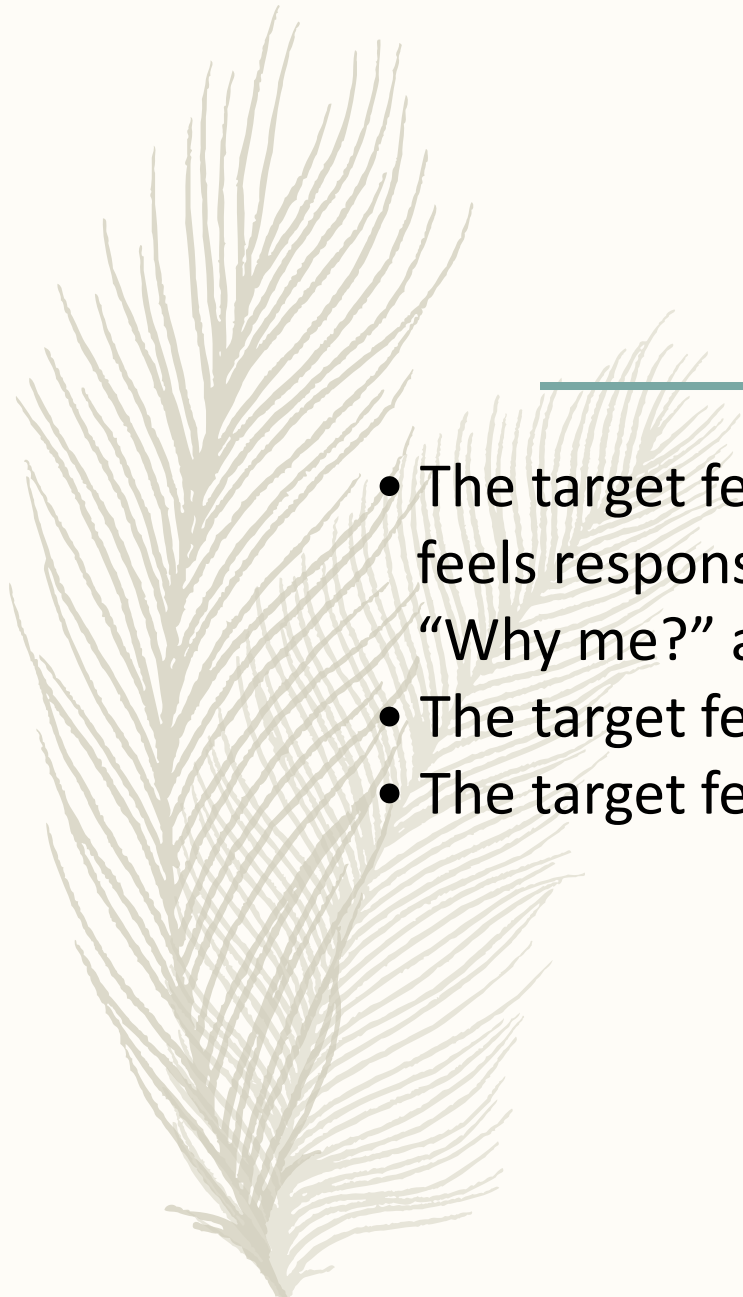
Several of these behaviors observed in an individual, as well as in a consistent trend, are cause to look more closely.

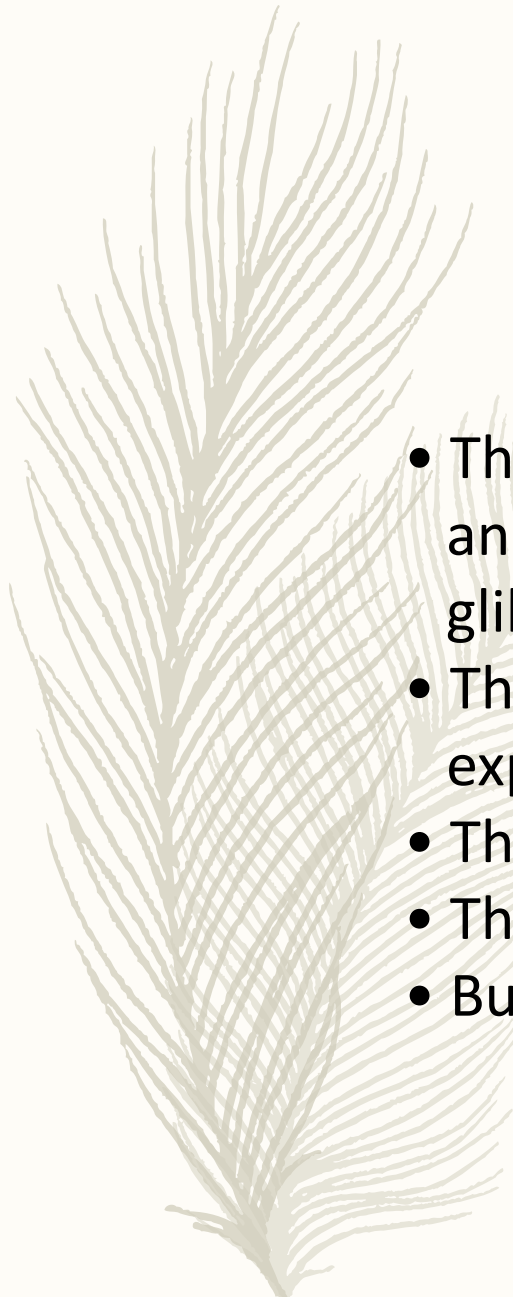
(From: <http://bullyfreework.com>)




Understanding why co-workers may not stand up for themselves
The reasons people don't assert their right not to be bullied are complex, as the following list of potential scenarios shows:

- The target of bullying has been disempowered through isolation and exclusion
- The bully is constantly threatening and intimidating the target and co-workers
- They are frightened to assert their rights
- The target now has artificially high levels of shame, embarrassment, fear and guilt – all stimulated by the bully

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- The target feels bewildered, often cannot believe what is happening and feels responsible in some way, as evidenced by the nagging thoughts, “Why me?” and, “Why did I let it happen to me?”
 - The target fears for loss of their job
 - The target fears they will be unable to obtain a reference

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- The target may be suffering a severe psychiatric injury, is traumatized and unable to articulate their circumstances – while the bully remains glib and plausible
 - The target has no knowledge of serial bullies, sociopaths, etc., and no experience of dealing with these characters
 - There's a lack of knowledge about bullying
 - The target fears that no one will believe them
 - Bullies are encouraged and rewarded, often by promotion

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- In many cases unions are unhelpful and may be part of the problem
 - The target doesn't want to have 'stress' noted on their health record
 - The target doesn't want to get others into trouble and is reluctant to initiate a grievance against a fellow human being
 - If another manager handles the grievance, he or she may be connected with the bully in some way

(Adapted from: UK National Workplace Bullying Advice, <http://www.bullyonline.org/workbully/amibeing.htm> and Stop Bullying in South Australia, <http://www.stopbullyingsa.com.au/recognise.asp>)



Putting the Knowledge to Work

This case study provides an example of how the employer, supervisor and fellow workers might respond to this potential bullying situation.

John is a middle-aged worker struggling to keep abreast of rapid changes at his workplace. His supervisor continuously criticizes him for his work, persistently picks on him in front of others, excludes him from meetings he should attend and often shouts at him for trivial reasons. John is concerned.



The list below outlines possible actions the employer, supervisor or co-workers can take.

Employer Response:

- Develop and enforce a zero-tolerance policy
- Offer an employee assistance program for all workers
- Offer training programs for all staff related to workplace bullying
- Educate managers in effective management strategies
- Conduct a culture assessment
- Develop fact sheets and a reporting process for employees
- Be prepared to discipline, retrain, suspend or terminate the perpetrator



Supervisor Response:


(In this instance this would be the person with authority over John's supervisor)

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- Conduct an assessment of the area if you suspect bullying
 - Encourage reporting of all incidents
 - Investigate the report of bullying and interview both parties
 - Provide support and inform John of resources available to him inside and outside the organization
 - Review the availability of the employee assistance program with all workers
 - Monitor the behavior (including management practices) in your department for signs of bullying
 - Instruct the perpetrator that the behavior itself must stop



Co-worker Response:

- Spend time with John and offer a listening ear; remind him that bullies are often intimidated by their targets
- Stand by John immediately after an attack to offer support
- Encourage John to document and report the episode and confront the behavior
- Circle the offending supervisor as a unified group; tell him or her to stop the unacceptable behavior
- Offer to be in attendance if John must meet with his supervisor
- Offer to be a witness when John is reporting the episodes
- Stand up to the bully and stop gossip about the target



Verbal responses John could use if he felt comfortable confronting his supervisor.

- I don't like shouting. Please lower your voice.
- I don't like it when you put me down in front of my peers.
- It's demeaning when I am told that I am...
- I don't like it when you point your finger at me
- I want to have a good working relationship with you.



Conclusion

Knowing the prevalence of bullying in the workplace and the costs to the victim, co-workers and the organization, it is necessary to include bullying in a workplace violence prevention plan and immediately address any reports of workplace bullying.

Anti-Office Bullying Act of 2014

In 2014, two law makers, Reps. Rodel Batocabe and Christopher Co of the party group Ako Bicol made an effort to bring workplace bullying legislation into the Philippines by filing the Anti-Office Bullying Act of 2014.

“While a law has been passed preventing and addressing acts of bullying in educational institutions,” they said, “there still prevails bullying and other similar acts in the workplace. These kinds of acts hamper peace and tranquility in a professional environment and disrupt the delivery of services to the public.”

According to the Batocabe and Co, workplace bullying was overlooked more often than not by employers. They felt legislation would help restore dignity in the workplace and enforce the rights of employees. The proposed law would cover government and private businesses, forcing them to adopt anti-bullying policies that combat intimidation and harassment in the workplace.

<https://nobullying.com/bullying-philippines/Bullying in the Philippines>
Modified : April 19,2017



Thank you for listening!