

Bullying in the Workplace

Often when people hear the word "bullying," they think of children on the playground or high schoolers getting teased by their classmates. You might think that as people get older, rates of bullying decline due to developing brains and emotions. However, this is not the case. The prevalence of workplace bullying is significant. According to a 2017 national survey by the Workplace Bullying Institute, about 20% of U.S. workers have experienced bullying in the workplace and over 60 million workers have been affected by bullying.

Workplace Bullying Defined

Workplace bullying is defined by aggressive behavior with the intent to intimidate, humiliate, sabotage, or degrade. It involves deliberate, hurtful, and repeated mistreatment of employees fueled by a desire to control. Bullying behavior can exist at any level of an organization; bullies can be, and often are, managers or supervisors, as well as coworkers.

Identifying a Bully

It's important to be aware of the signs of bullying in order to identify when it is occurring. Bullying can take many forms: covert and subtle or blatant and obvious. Many signs of workplace bullying are subtle, such as the person who always takes credit for work that others clearly contributed to or someone who often critiques another's work with the intent of negatively affecting their reputation.

Examples of bullying:

- Being shouted at or humiliated
- Unwarranted or invalid criticism
- Being the target of practical jokes
- Being excluded or socially isolated
- Verbal intimidation (name calling, teasing, gossiping)
- Excessive scrutiny or micro-management
- Purposely withholding information or necessary resources
- Cyber bullying (via text, email, social media)

It's equally important to be aware of what bullying is not. There will always be healthy conflict in any workplace—colleagues with diverse backgrounds and personalities should be able to work together in a mutually respectful manner while speaking openly about matters, asking difficult questions, and challenging ideas.

Bullying is not:

- Expressing differences of opinion
- Offering constructive feedback
- Making a legitimate complaint about another worker's conduct
- Reasonable management action, including decisions about job duties or discipline

Common Characteristics of Bullies and Their Targets

Bullies seek out people who are vulnerable and unlikely to confront or report them. Bullies typically have dominant personalities and are quick tempered and opinionated. Bullies are often insecure themselves, and bullying helps them create the impression they are in control. On the other hand, their targets tend to be compliant in relationships—wanting to be a people pleaser—and are often shy, quiet, and non-confrontational. Victims are often seen as competition by the bully due to their competence. They might also be new to the workplace.

The Effects of Bullying

When organizations ignore workplace bullying behavior, it can cost the business significantly due to:

- Loss of productivity
- Increased absenteeism due to manifestation of illness
- Increased accidents on the job and healthcare payouts
- High rate of employee turnover

Steps to Stop Workplace Bullying

When a person is being bullied in the workplace, they often experience disbelief and shame, making it difficult for them to report the behavior. Often when the target does report it, the employer is in denial and makes excuses, which enables the behavior. In the majority of bullying cases, the bullying only stops when the target quits, is fired, or is forced to leave.

Employers lead by example and should:

- Know what constitutes bullying behavior
- Focus on job performance and ensure feedback is constructive
- Promote a positive workplace culture
- Establish an anti-bullying zero tolerance policy
- Establish processes for reporting, investigating, and resolving complaints

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Embracing Change

Change is a natural part of life and can be an opportunity to learn, grow, and build your character. However, change of any kind can be difficult to navigate and adjust to, whether you view it as positive or negative. Here are some suggestions for managing and embracing changes when they occur.

Manage Your Expectations

Sometimes the anticipation you experience before a big change occurs can cause more stress and anxiety than the change itself. Find ways to cope with the upcoming change in order to lessen your stress levels. Find someone to talk to about your feelings regarding the change, such as a trusted friend, family member, or counselor.

Radical Acceptance

First coined by psychologist Marsha Linehan, radical acceptance involves the practice of fully accepting reality as it is and acknowledging there are some things you cannot control—especially when things don't turn out the way you wanted or expected. Fighting or resisting change often makes it more painful than it otherwise would be. It doesn't mean that you are helpless to change things in the future but that you accept the present moment as it is.

Transitions Are Temporary

Keep in mind that the beginning of a transitional period is often the most difficult, and the adjustment period gets easier with each day. Try to take it one day at a time and keep channels of communication open with others who are also involved in the change. Remember that how you feel now regarding the change is temporary and you will adjust in time.

Find Positive Aspects

If change often causes you worry and fear, look for possible positive outcomes of the change. For instance, there could be new opportunities that enrich your life and connect you with new people. Also, change will often help you grow and learn about yourself. What at first may be considered a problem, could turn into a beneficial opportunity.

Build Your Resilience

Resilience is defined as the ability to adapt to difficult situations and come out stronger. Resilient people find ways to cope with adversity and overcome setbacks by utilizing their skills and resources. Think of change as an opportunity to strengthen your resiliency

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Keys to Overcoming Procrastination

It's 5 p.m. and everyone's leaving work -- except you, because you still have to do the weekly sales report. You knew the deadline but waited too long to get started. Why do you put off doing things until the last minute? "Many people don't realize procrastination is an automatic habit pattern they use to avoid tension," says William Knaus, Ed.D., a psychologist and author of "The Procrastination Workbook." "It's kicked off by some form of discomfort, such as feeling uncertain or insecure about something. These habit patterns are the barriers to overcoming procrastination." Dr. Knaus divides these patterns into the following three diversions.

Mental diversions

If you think, "I can't do it right now because I'm too tired. I'm not alert enough. I won't be able to concentrate well enough. I'll get to it later when I'm better prepared to think more clearly," then you've fallen into a procrastination trap known as the Manana Diversion. You've fooled yourself into thinking later is different from now, and that later will be better.

Action diversions

With this barrier, you procrastinate by going to the water cooler, doodling, calling someone on the phone or doing something else on your computer.

Emotional diversions

Some office tasks aren't inspiring or motivating -- they're drudgery. If you wait to be inspired to do something you consider a drag, you'll be waiting a long time

To overcome these barriers, Dr. Knaus recommends the following steps.

Five-minute system

Commit to the task for five minutes. For example, tell yourself, "I'll work for the next five minutes on gathering the information for developing this report." At the end of that five minutes, decide whether you'll commit for another five. Continue this pattern until you complete the task, run out of time or have a good reason to stop. "By doing the task for at least five minutes, you're already living through



the frustrations that are a part of the activity, and you're making a series of forward-moving decisions," says Dr. Knaus.

Plan in reverse

Many people set goals but don't have a plan. To create a clear, directed and purposeful plan:

First, visualize your goal as a target and imagine shooting an arrow into the target's center. Imagine the arrow's trajectory as you pull it back, release and hit the center. In other words, visualize your outcome first, then work back from there. Where do you want to end up? What do you do just before that, and before that? By doing this, you're automatically creating a plan at the same time you're reminding yourself the plan is a series of small parts.

Building frustration tolerance

If you can develop a high frustration tolerance, you'll achieve more in life because fewer things will burden your mind. By persistently tackling challenging tasks until you complete them, you build frustration tolerance. "Even if you don't overcome the discomfort, you've lived through the frustration, which creates this powerful message: You can organize and direct your activities for a productive result, and you do have control over yourself," says Dr. Knaus. "It's better to recognize that doing reasonable things, in a reasonable way, within a reasonable time, gets things done -- and you end up doing rather than stewing."

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Webinar Now Available:

Procrastination: Getting & Staying Motivated

Everyone procrastinates. Sometimes a little procrastination is fine - normal, even. But sometimes we get stuck. How do we get unstuck? This seminar will discuss ways to recognize our own patterns. Procrastination doesn't have to be a chronic problem. We'll discuss both the causes of and solutions to our patterns and ways to get motivated!

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Men's Health Month

June marks Men's Health Month, an annual observance aimed at heightening the awareness of preventable health problems and encouraging early detection and treatment among men and boys. While it's crucial to address all aspects of health, this year, we are turning the spotlight towards an often-overlooked component: men's emotional health.

Historically, societal norms have dictated that men should be stoic and resilient, often at the expense of expressing emotions or seeking help. However, the tides are turning. Emotional wellbeing is critical for everyone, and Men's Health Month provides the perfect opportunity to dismantle stigmas and advocate for mental and emotional support for men.

Recognizing Emotional Health: Emotional health is about understanding and managing your feelings, recognizing stressors, and seeking help when needed. It's about cultivating resilience, empathy, and psychological flexibility. For many men, acknowledging emotional struggles is the first step toward healing and growth.

Encouraging Open Conversations: One of the most potent tools for enhancing emotional wellbeing is conversation. Encouraging open discussions about feelings, experiences, and challenges can significantly reduce the isolation and stigma associated with emotional distress. It's about creating safe spaces where men feel comfortable sharing and seeking support.

Promoting Healthy Outlets: Engaging in activities that foster emotional expression and release is vital. Whether it's through sports, art, journaling, or therapy, finding healthy outlets for emotions is a key component of emotional wellbeing. Encourage exploration and experimentation to find what works best for each individual.

Seeking Professional Help: Professional help isn't a sign of weakness; it's a step towards empowerment. Men's Health Month is the perfect time to remind everyone that seeking therapy, counseling, or psychiatric care is a brave and proactive choice.

This Men's Health Month, let's shift the narrative. Let's celebrate strength in vulnerability, courage in seeking help, and pride in emotional resilience. By focusing on emotional health, we can support a future where men's wellbeing is holistic, encompassing both the physical and emotional spheres. Here's to a healthier, more emotionally connected world for all men.

Source: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/mens-mental-health-matters/202309/the-changing-view-of-men-on-mental-health>



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Celebrating Pride Month: Embracing Diversity and Inclusion

Pride Month, observed annually in June, is dedicated to celebrating the LGBTQ+ community and promoting inclusivity and acceptance. While its origins are rooted in historical events, today, it symbolizes progress and unity for people of all backgrounds.

June was chosen for Pride Month to honor the LGBTQ+ community's ongoing journey toward equality and to commemorate significant milestones in LGBTQ+ history. It's a time to recognize the contributions of LGBTQ+ individuals to society and reaffirm our commitment to creating environments where everyone feels valued and respected.

At its core, Pride Month is a powerful celebration of diversity. It serves as a constant reminder that each person's unique identity should not only be acknowledged but also celebrated. By embracing and accepting people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, we actively foster an environment of understanding and respect.

Participating in Pride Month activities, be it attending a parade, hosting educational events, or simply showing support through inclusive practices, is more than just a commitment to building a more inclusive workplace and community. It's a unique opportunity to stand in solidarity with LGBTQ+ colleagues, friends, and family members, and to collectively create a sense of belonging for everyone.

Pride Month encourages us to come together to celebrate our differences and promote a culture of acceptance and equality regardless of political affiliations or personal beliefs. Recognizing the importance of diversity and inclusion can create a more vibrant, compassionate, and supportive society.

Regardless of political affiliation or personal beliefs, embracing Pride Month aligns with respect, inclusivity, and equality values. It's an opportunity for companies and individuals to reaffirm their commitment to creating environments where everyone feels valued and accepted for who they are.

Source: [Celebrate Pride With Us: Without Exception!](https://www.hrc.org/campaigns/celebrate-pride-with-us-without-exception/) - Human Rights Campaign ([hrc.org](https://www.hrc.org))

We know it is not always easy to juggle everything & realize simple tips can help provide a different approach.
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How to Strengthen Your Social Wellness Toolkit

Social wellness is about cultivating relationships that nurture us, finding balance in our caregiving roles, and fostering a community of health and happiness.

Here are some ways you can strengthen your social wellness toolkit, enhancing not just your life but those around you.

Creating Meaningful Connections: Dive deeper than the surface. Meaningful relationships are built on shared experiences, sincere communication, and mutual respect. Arrange regular meetups, join clubs or groups with shared interests, or simply make a habit of having heart-to-hearts with friends and family. These connections fortify your support network, crucial for life's ups and downs.

Balancing Care: Caring for others is a beautiful aspect of human connection, but don't forget to care for yourself, too. Ensure you're taking time to recharge with activities that you love. Remember, a well-rested, happy you can care for others more effectively.

Getting Active Together: Shared physical activity isn't just good for the body; it strengthens emotional bonds. Whether it's family hikes, friend dance classes, or community sports, active engagements are fantastic for building relationships and health simultaneously.

Shaping Healthy Habits: Involve your family and friends in healthy habits. Cook nutritious meals together, establish routine health checks, or set collective goals. It's about creating a culture of health that everyone contributes to and benefits from.

Bonding with Your Kids: Quality time with children is priceless. Engage in activities that allow for bonding and open conversation. Whether it's story time, playing games, or working on a project together, these moments are building blocks for a strong, supportive relationship.

Building Healthy Relationships: Lastly, cultivate relationships that are respectful, supportive, and positive. Recognize toxic patterns and don't be afraid to set boundaries or seek help if needed.

Enhancing your social wellness means investing in relationships and activities that bring joy, support, and health to your life. It's about creating a community, from family to friends to partners, where everyone thrives. So go ahead, reach out, bond, and build up your social wellness toolkit!

Source: <https://www.nih.gov/health-information/social-wellness-toolkit>



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Avocado Caprese Salad

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground pepper
- 1 ½ cups multicolored cherry tomatoes, halved
- 2 ripe avocados, diced
- 4 ounces small fresh mozzarella balls
- 1 tablespoon drained capers (optional)
- ½ cup lightly packed fresh basil leaves

Directions

1. Whisk vinegar, oil, salt, and pepper together in a small bowl.
2. Combine tomatoes, avocados, mozzarella, and capers (if using) in a large bowl.
3. Add the dressing and basil; toss to coat.

Nutrition

Per Serving: 2/3 Cup

**Calories: 218 | Protein: 5g | Carbohydrates: 9g | Dietary Fiber: 5g | Saturated Fat: 5g |
Sugar: 3g | Sodium: 212mg | Cholesterol: 13mg**

Source: <https://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/7945626/avocado-caprese-salad/>

Stay Calm Under Pressure

Staying calm under pressure is an acquired skill, but it is unlikely you were taught how to do it. Work deadlines, facing irate customers, family emergencies, and public speaking are all examples of where staying calm under pressure counts. Remain calm under pressure by replacing negative thoughts with positive affirmations. Say to yourself, “I’ve done this before and will do it again this time.” Focus on action steps to solve the problem or situation. Don’t dwell on the magnitude of what you face. This practice reduces panic and emotional stress, and it reinforces a feeling of empowerment to help you feel in control. While solving the problem, practice deep breathing to reduce anxiety. How-to hint: Regularly practicing mindfulness and meditation can help you more quickly switch from panic to calm mode when under pressure because it conditions the part of your brain associated with awareness and attention.

PTSD Awareness Month: Post-traumatic Stress Disorder Affects Millions

PTSD is commonly associated with war veterans, but anyone could suffer from the condition following a traumatic event. About 7%-8% of the population will experience PTSD at some point, and research shows millions of people who suffer symptoms years later may not associate them with a past trauma. Lingering symptoms of PTSD decades later may be blamed on other conditions, like stress, anxiety, or depression. Some of these may include being easily startled, having nightmares, fearing closeness in relationships, or engaging in negative thinking too often. But, it’s a myth that traumatic events always cause PTSD. Likewise, you are not “in denial” if you claim to not experience PTSD following a traumatic event. For a full list of symptoms, visit the National Center for PTSD at www.ptsd.va.gov or contact your EAP to learn more.

Myths Keeping You from Psychotherapy Help

If you ever decided against seeking psychotherapy, was it because of one of these myths? 1) The therapist will examine every detail about my past. Fact: Professional counselors help you decide what you want to accomplish in counseling, and your past may play no role in achieving these goals. 2) Only those with severe mental illness seek professional counseling. Fact: Most psychotherapy clients are not mentally ill. They are seeking solutions for life’s challenges. 3) The professional counselor will judge or criticize me. Fact: Professional counselors are trained to be nonjudgmental and supportive so you feel safe and can work through your issues. 4) Seeing a professional counselor means I am weak. Fact: Seeking professional counseling shows a willingness to address problems and work toward a healthier, more balanced life. 5) Therapy takes a long time, and it might change my personality. Fact: Therapy can vary in length, often leading to positive changes in only a few sessions. However, the focus is on coping and solving problems, not changing your personality.

Practical Stress Tips: Mindfulness Meditation

One of the most researched and proven techniques for managing stress – yet one of the least known and least practiced – is “mindfulness meditation.” Mindfulness meditation involves paying close attention to your thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations in a calm and intentional way. Do it by sitting quietly, eyes closed, and gently bringing awareness to your breath. When distractions arise, acknowledge them, but gently redirect your attention. This practice cultivates mental clarity, emotional balance, and well-being. Regular practice may improve concentration, reduce stress, and build emotional resilience. Resource (book): “Deeper Mindfulness: The New Way to Rediscover Calm in a Chaotic World,” May 2023. (2) www.mondaycampaigns.org [search “mindfulness introduction”]

Understanding Cyberstalking: Steps to Protect Yourself and Stay Safe

Out of the blue, you receive an unwanted and intimidating text from an unknown phone number. Cyberstalking involves repeated, unwanted, and threatening behavior over a period of time, but a single intimidating message can be serious and should not be ignored. While cyberstalking can affect individuals of any gender, statistics consistently show that women are disproportionately targeted and experience higher rates of harassment and intimidation online. Digital communication and online social media have increased everyone's vulnerability to cyberstalking. Stalkers can use fake profiles, invade privacy, and even threaten your safety. Here's what law enforcement, related associations, and other professionals recommend: 1) Don't respond to or otherwise engage with the harasser. Doing so can prompt continued harassment. 2) Block the number. 3) Take screenshots of the message as evidence for potentially legal purposes. 4) Although technically cyberstalking is repeated unwanted behavior, if you are concerned, contact the police for guidance and the next steps regarding prevention and safety. 5) Some cyberstalking events are initiated by locating someone's phone number or through public records; review your social media accounts and privacy settings to determine if personal information about you is too easily available. 6) Don't keep your experience a secret. Tell someone like a family member or friend. A single incident of cyberstalking can frighten you and cause you to lose sleep. Sharing your experience with a trusted friend can reduce the distress of the event. Source www.safehome.org [search "cyberstalking statistics"].

Enhancing Your Relationship with the Boss: Share Personal Interests

These days, most bosses are aware of the risks associated with asking employees personal questions. Your boss may wonder about your personal interests outside of work but be understandably reluctant to probe. This is an opportunity for you. Tip: Consider sharing personal interests and hobbies with your boss in casual conversations. It sounds too simple, but it has a profound rapport-building effect because it helps your boss see you more as a whole person and builds a more personable relationship beyond just work-related interactions.

Lifesaving Health Tests Men Often Ignore

Some men avoid health tests due to a fear of diagnosis, the potential of bad news from a test, or anxiety about medical procedures. Others are just unaware of the medical screening tests that could detect a health condition many years before it is too late to save their life. It's time to stop this practice. The leading causes of death for men for which there are medical tests for early identification and treatment include heart disease and hypertension, cancer, stroke, chronic liver disease and cirrhosis, chronic lower respiratory diseases, diabetes and related kidney disease, and depression. Which one of these tests or health screenings could help you live a longer life?

Be a Better Listener at Work

At work, you will build stronger relationships, solve more problems, and help customers feel valued if you practice "active listening." Active listening is a communication technique that demonstrates you are fully and effectively listening to another person. While listening, they know you understand what they are saying because you are reflecting their message and recognizing their verbal and nonverbal cues. Finally, you give feedback that reassures the speaker you have a mutual understanding of the discussion. So, here are the keys: Demonstrate attention, actively show understanding of what is being communicated, respond to nonverbal cues, validate the speaker's feelings by expressing empathy, and paraphrase what you heard.

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