



## BULLYING RISK MANAGEMENT TOOL

This tool describes each step of a risk management process for creating a positive, bully-free workplace. This tool includes practical examples for each step of an effective risk management approach.

STEP	DESCRIPTION	PRACTICAL EXAMPLES
1. Identify the hazard and sources of potential harm	Sources of potential harm can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; lack of awareness</li><li>&gt; disrespectful behaviour</li><li>&gt; negative leadership styles</li><li>&gt; organisational change</li><li>&gt; changes in technology</li><li>&gt; workforce characteristics</li><li>&gt; poor workplace culture and relationships</li><li>&gt; lack of appropriate work systems, such as staff shortages and poorly defined job roles.</li></ul>	Obtain information to identify factors that can lead to bullying in your workplace. You can obtain information from the following sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; consultation—employee opinion surveys, HSR reports, issues raised by health and safety committees</li><li>&gt; data—worker's compensation claims, absence and turnover rates, transfer requests, use of harassment contact officers, grievance complaints and exit interviews</li><li>&gt; complaints management system—the number, type and severity of complaints.</li></ul>
2. Assess the risk	The information you gathered in the identification step can be used to determine the specific behaviours and circumstances where incidents of workplace bullying may occur.	Identifying hazards will assist you in prioritising areas that require action—for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; unreasonable, disrespectful behaviour</li><li>&gt; organisational circumstances</li><li>&gt; workplace history/previous incidents</li><li>&gt; other major contributing factors.</li></ul> You should always document and retain risk assessments as they are evidence of the risk management processes undertaken.



STEP	DESCRIPTION	PRACTICAL EXAMPLES
3. Control the risk	<p>A comprehensive approach is the best solution. You can control the risks of bullying through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; senior management commitment</li> <li>&gt; leadership initiatives</li> <li>&gt; workplace culture initiatives</li> <li>&gt; organisational initiatives</li> <li>&gt; early intervention strategies.</li> </ul>	<p>Senior management commitment</p> <p>Approach the issue with commitment from senior management. Senior management can demonstrate their commitment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; actively endorsing a bullying policy</li> <li>&gt; communicating with their employees that bullying in the workplace will not be tolerated</li> <li>&gt; taking action to properly investigate all reports of bullying</li> <li>&gt; demonstrating positive behaviours of respect and courtesy</li> <li>&gt; encouraging a positive workplace culture</li> <li>&gt; promoting the code of conduct and values for your industry or organisation</li> <li>&gt; consulting with a variety of staff.</li> </ul> <p>Leadership initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; actively promote a supportive leadership culture</li> <li>&gt; provide leadership training to employees with supervisory or managerial responsibilities, focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– enhancing supportive behaviours</li> <li>– providing feedback—formal and informal</li> <li>– engaging employees in decision-making processes</li> <li>– effective management of workloads</li> </ul> </li> <li>&gt; establish people management accountability policies for all supervisors and managers</li> <li>&gt; develop agreed targets and performance indicators in consultation with employees.</li> </ul> <p>Workplace culture initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; improving recruitment and induction by focusing on selecting and introducing people into a positive work culture<sup>1</sup></li> <li>&gt; ensure standards of behaviour are an integral part of performance management systems and that the system provides for early discussions where there is a behavioural issue</li> <li>&gt; apply quality control to the performance management system</li> <li>&gt; develop a conflict management process and train staff in conflict resolution</li> <li>&gt; provide access to advice and assistance from employee representatives including Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs)</li> <li>&gt; provide additional training for employees—for example, workplace diversity and tolerance</li> <li>&gt; access better practice guides or industry standards for specific risk control measures<sup>2</sup>.</li> </ul> <p>Organisational initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; clearly define job roles and redesign if necessary</li> <li>&gt; review staffing levels and working hours</li> <li>&gt; improve the availability of flexible working arrangements</li> <li>&gt; include consultation in change management procedures and practices ensuring staff at all levels are consulted prior to and during organisational change.</li> </ul>

1 Australian Public Service Commission, 2009, *Respect: Promoting a culture free from harassment and bullying in the APS*. [www.apsc.gov.au](http://www.apsc.gov.au)

2 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in the UK has developed a standards-based approach to the prevention of psychological injury by identifying certain principles as a basis for their management standards. The management standards represent desirable states to be achieved and may be used as a guide to good practice. See [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

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4. Monitor, evaluate and review	<p>Measure and report against agreed targets and performance indicators and review against strategy goals.</p> <p>Encourage reporting of bullying incidents. Employees must be willing to report incidents if intervention is to be accurately assessed. You should aim for continuous improvement, rather than a dramatic or uniform improvement.</p>	<p>Relevant workplace information you should monitor includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; patterns of absenteeism</li> <li>&gt; grievances</li> <li>&gt; staff turnover</li> <li>&gt; the use of employee assistance and support programs</li> <li>&gt; staff satisfaction through surveys, exit interviews etc</li> <li>&gt; lost productivity</li> <li>&gt; injury reports and workers' compensation claims</li> <li>&gt; reported incidents of bullying behaviour</li> <li>&gt; feedback from staff, harassment contact officers and HSRs.</li> </ul> <p>Keep records of all reviews and retain them as evidence of your risk management process.</p> <p>Analyse reports of bullying and investigations to determine if further training is required.</p> <p>Improve interventions as indicated by the evaluation and review.</p>