



Australian Government

Comcare



TWO MINUTE TALK SCRIPT

Most of us have heard about bullying in the workplace, unfortunately it happens all too often. Bullying doesn't have to be tolerated and there are steps you can take to stop it happening again.

So what exactly is bullying—bullying is repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or a group of workers that creates a risk to their health and safety. As well as that health and safety risk, bullying can also impact on productivity, staff turnover and even our families.

'Unreasonable behaviour' is behaviour that is offensive, humiliating, degrading or threatening. Legitimate management action, however, including performance management processes, disciplinary actions and the like are not regarded as bullying although an assertive communication style may give that perception.

It is probably not surprising that those subject to bullying often find it difficult to know how to deal with it or who to turn to for help, especially if the bully is a boss or senior worker.

In other cases, the person being bullied could even feel that they are at fault in some way, or the bullying is a result of something they have done.

Many people who are bullied simply hope that the situation they find themselves in will right itself of its own accord. They think as long as they don't respond or avoid the person the problem will go away.

One of the best things someone being bullied can do is to talk about it with a person they trust who could well provide a more objective perspective to the problem.

While these people may not be able to fully understand what it's like to be bullied, the very act of discussing the situation with another person, who is not weighed down by the emotional response you might feel, can be helpful. They may offer a view that you haven't considered and could help you to sort through the available options.

And I want to assure you that there definitely are options. While the action you choose will depend on your particular circumstances, let's look at some of the options available, you can:

- > Talk to people you trust in the workplace.
- > Tell the person who is behaving inappropriately that you are offended and want it to stop.
- > Get advice from your health and safety representative, workplace contact officer or your union.
- > Seek professional counselling or advice. Contact your Employee Assistance Program provider—it's free of charge and your privacy is guaranteed.
- > Keep a record of events, including the names of people involved, these should include witnesses if there are any. Make sure the record focuses on the facts of the situation; what happened, when and on what date(s) and, if appropriate keep copies of any relevant documents. One way of keeping notes is to send yourself an email containing all relevant information as soon as possible after the event. Emails give you an accurate date and time as a record of the bullying.
- > Report the matter to management. If the bully is your direct supervisor, take it to their manager. Make sure you use the workplace health and safety incident reporting procedure to report the situation and take the time to understand what your workplace bullying policies and procedures are.
- > And one final point, if you are dissatisfied with the action taken in any way following a complaint, you can also seek advice from the Human Rights Commission, the Australian Public Service Commission or Comcare.