

TEN TIPS FOR AVOIDING BULLYING AND HARASSMENT AT WORK

Everyone has the right not to be bullied or harassed at work

Workplace bullying is verbal, physical, social or psychological abuse by colleagues, an employer or manager, another person or by a group of people at work. It can happen in any workplace, and it can happen regardless of status or seniority; it can happen to volunteers, junior staff, managers or supervisors, as well as apprentices, casuals and permanent employees.

It isn't confined to one workplace type or another; it can happen in cafes, shops, large public sector departments, charities or community services as well as on construction sites and at a mine.

Some types of workplace bullying are criminal offences, which bring jail terms. If you have experienced a physical or sexual assault, violence, sexual touching or stalking, you can report it directly to the Police.

If you are experiencing workplace bullying or harassment, you should:

- 1. Avoid becoming emotional.** The bully will use this to manipulate you or misrepresent you to others.
- 2. Don't blame yourself.** Acknowledge to yourself that the bullying and harassment is not about you, it's about the bully. Don't lose your confidence or self-esteem.
- 3. Maintain your work performance.** The best defence against being undermined at work is to show your team leader and your other colleagues that you are a strong performer.
- 4. Remain positive and chatty with colleagues.** Don't retreat to your office or avoid lunch rooms and social settings; this will allow the bully to win.
- 5. Keep a Log or Diary of the bullying.** Write down what happened, when and where. If you need to take it to HR you will have the details. Consider sending it as an email to yourself - that will show the date and time you made the log.
- 6. Seek assistance.** If you are being bullied or harassed, it's time to talk to people who are in a position to intervene. Speak to your manager, HR or your union.
- 7. Reach out for support.** Professional counselling services are impartial, independent and confidential. They will help you deal with the stress and anxiety you may feel while providing reassurance that you are not to blame.
- 8. Stay healthy.** Maintain a healthy and balanced lifestyle outside of work. This will build your resilience for dealing with what's happening at work. Stay active, eat well and get a full night's sleep.
- 9. Learn about your company's policies.** The more you know about the rules and policies in your workplace the better your chances of dealing with the situation.
- 10. Not expect to change the bully.** You have no control over their behaviour and it's not your responsibility to "fix" them.

