

## **Workplace bullying must stop**

We have all at least witnessed the insidious nastiness and cruelty of bullying behavior. It is commonplace in too many Taranaki workplaces.

Workplace bullying is one of the biggest hidden causes of loss of productivity. It is a major cause of stress and stress-related illnesses and leads to higher staff turnover. It can ruin careers and destroy confidence and self-esteem

Workplace bullying is the intimidation and undermining of a person with the insidious intention of making their life as miserable as possible.

Targets are often popular, intelligent and, most importantly, good at their job, possessing qualities that the bully, often subconsciously, envies and perceives as a threat. Or they may simply be perceived as being vulnerable and therefore an easy target.

The workplace bully has two faces” The charming, “aren’t I great” that bosses and fellow workers see, and the sadistic one they turn on their target.

Workplace bullies do not usually use physical intimidation as their primary method. Their real power lies in the psychological damage they can do. They will do whatever it takes to humiliate, undermine the target’s confidence and belief in themselves and their abilities.

It may force them to such a point where they feel leaving their job is the only way to preserve their sanity.

But this is not always possible and some can become trapped in a miserable working environment.

The bully usually works alone, although they will encourage others to join in the persecution if they can. They will try to separate the target from friends and support.

They are often very friendly with senior managers, giving the target little chance of having their grievances dealt with fairly or even taken seriously.

Even if the bully succeeds in the removal of their target from the workplace, that is not the end. Workplace bullies are always repeat offender.

If something is not done about their behavior, they will always be looking out for their next target. And so a workplace gets a reputation as being one to avoid.

Everyone benefits if workplace bullying is dealt with.

Gordon Hudson, Current Manager, Like Minds Taranaki

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