

## Bullying in the Workplace -

“Violence in the workplace begins long before fists fly or lethal weapons extinguish lives. Where resentment and aggression routinely displace cooperation and communication, violence has occurred.” Bernice Fields, Arbitrator

Dr. Gary Namie, author of “the Bully at Work” defines workplace bullying as the repeated, health-impairing mistreatment of a target, driven by the perpetrator’s need to control, which undermines legitimate business interest, preventing work from getting done. The bullying usually begins one on one; then the bully gets others to participate. Although it often it appears to management that they are “getting things done,” the bullies do so at an enormous cost to the organization.

### Why do Bullies Bully?

- Zero-Sum Competition Opportunities
- Machiavellian people, exploiters
- Employer rewards aggression.

### Who are the Targets?

In general they are people who (1) dared to be independent; (2) whose competence is threatening to the bully; (3) who possess social skills (though non-confrontive); and (4) who are ethical whistleblowers. They are most often women, though men can be bullied as well.

### So, how do bullies operate in an organization?

Tactics bullies often use include:

- Yelling, screaming
- Isolating the target
- Constant criticism of ability
- Inconsistent compliance with rules
- Threatening job loss
- Insults and put-downs
- Discounting/denial of accomplishments
- Exclusion from group
- Withholding earned awards, promotions, etc.

### How targets react to repeated bullying

- Anxiety (76%)
- Clinical Depression (39%)
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (30%)

### So why should managers care about a bully in their midst?

After all, bullies often are passionate employees who “get things done.” But here is the cost:

- Turnover and related costs
- Absenteeism, Lost Productivity
- Litigation
- Workmen’s compensation
- Upheaval in the work environment
- Talent flight of the best and brightest
- Sabotage and Resistance
- Negative PR as a bad place to work

### What can you do?

- Become educated about bullying in the workplace
- Do not tolerate bullying in your subordinates
- Bullies are most effective when operating in the dark. Shed light on their activities
- Decide whether you want to support or reject bullying in your organization

### To get more information:

The Bully at Work by Drs. Gary and Ruth Namie

<http://www.bullyinginstitute.org/>