

Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace

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Harassment (Massey)

- A request for **sexual intercourse, sexual contact**, or other form of **sexual activity**, ...
- The use of language or visual material of a sexual nature, ... that is unwelcome or offensive to that person ...
- The use of language, visual material, or physical behaviour that expresses hostility against, or brings into contempt or ridicule, any other person on the ground of the **colour, race, or ethnic or national origins** of that person; and is hurtful or offensive...
- Massey also treats seriously any expressions of hostility, contempt or ridicule of a person on the grounds of their **religious or ethical beliefs, disability, age, political opinion, nationality, employment status and family status**...

Bullying

- Broader
- Origins in the playground
- Inevitably present in any large workplace
- Abuse of formal and/or informal power

Definition: Workplace bullying

- *"Persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating or insulting behaviour, abuse of power or unfair penal sanctions which makes the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable, which undermines their self-confidence and which may cause them to suffer stress"* MSF Union, 1994

Examples

- HOS
 - Paper Co-ordinator
 - Colleague
 - Student
 - Secretary
- (note irrelevancy of 'line management')

Initial strategies

- Remove self asap
- Look after self
- Plan 'safety'
- Challenge secrecy
- Share - but wisely

Informal follow-up

- Use a witness/ support
- Limit time with bully
- Document
- React (emails etc)
- But consider before action
- Rehearse
- Imagine others' reactions to your strategies

Systemic follow-up

- Keep notes of conversations
- Use witness/ support
- Record via email
- Use lowest level necessary to address
- Escalate as necessary
- Treat as 'Health and Safety' issue
- Ask for mediation (informal - formal)
- Submit grievance
- Memo on your own HR file

Self management & care

- Occupy high moral ground
- Understand how the bully works and use this
- Refuse to be labelled
- Avoid 'complaining'
- Be careful re bullying in return
- Access professional help - doctor/ counsellor... (EAP)
- Exercise the rest of your good life
- Stay realistic re options

OK Corral

I'm Ok You're OK	I'm not OK You're OK
I'm OK You're not OK	I'm not OK You're not OK

DESC

- **Describe** the problem behaviour
- **Express** the feelings you have
- **Specify** the changes you want
- Explain what the **consequences** of the changes will be

Assertiveness

- Remain adult/ adult (OK/ OK)
- Use 'I' statements
- 'Broken Record'
- Delay responses if necessary
- Start low key and build responses
- Monitor your body language

NB Limits to assertiveness