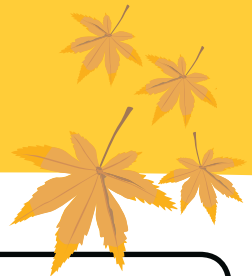




HALDIMAND-NORFOLK HEALTH UNIT

WORKPLACE HEALTH



Workplace Bullying

Currently, there is no occupational health and safety legislation in Canada that specifically deals with bullying in the workplace; bullying usually falls under the harassment or code of conduct sections. With the growing concerns and incidences of workplace bullying, one tends to think that it may be time to create more specifications when dealing with bullying. Quebec has been the only province to implement some governance in response to bullying – and only recently at that. Without any legislation and increasingly stressful workplaces, incidences are only growing. Canadian studies are showing that one in six employees has been bullied and one in five employees has seen a co-worker bullied.

What is bullying?

Bullying is a form of workplace violence. Bullying can happen at every level of an organization and is often tolerated in highly competitive, result-driven fields.



The Canada Safety Council describes it as “the assertion of power through aggression.”

A 1999 International Labour Organization (ILO) report on workplace violence emphasized that physical and emotional violence is one of the most serious problems facing the workplace in the new millennium. The ILO definition of workplace violence includes bullying: “any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work. These behaviours would originate from customers [and] co-workers at any level of the organization. This definition would include all forms of harassment, bullying, intimidation, physical threats/assaults, robbery and other intrusive behaviours.”

Some workplace factors that may be producing this include stress, overwork, imbalance in the workplace, long hours people are working, the downsizing epidemic and the constant fear people have that they must outperform all the time. All of this could be contributing to an unhealthy workplace. Often, people don't even understand that they are bullying others. They don't understand that their behaviour is considered to be illegal behaviour, and that the victim has every right to step forward and put in a complaint.

(continued on page 2)



Giovanna Ferrara
Health Promoter
Workplace Health Program
519.426.6170 Ext. 3236
giovanna.ferrara@hnhu.org

Let's Put Health on the Table

What: Fostering a Healthy Corporate Culture

When: Wednesday Oct 18, 2006
8:00 am - 9:30 am

Where: Business Development Centre

How: Please R.S.V.P. to Giovanna Ferrara (519) 426-6170 Ext. 3236 by Monday, Oct 16, 2006




Continental Breakfast Provided

ANNOUNCEMENTS

October

- Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- Mental Illness Awareness Week, Oct. 1-7
- Networking Breakfast, Oct. 18
- Healthy Workplace Week, Oct. 23-27

November

- Diabetes Awareness Month
- National Addiction Awareness Week, Nov. 7-11
- Bullying Conference, Nov. 9

December

- MADD Red Ribbon Campaign
- Happy Holidays!



WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE BEING BULLIED

Bullying (cont'd)

Being a Responsible Workplace

Combating the growing bullying epidemic starts in the workplace with mandates set by employers. Employers have a responsibility to create a healthy, respectful environment for their employees. According to the Canada Safety Council, organizations that manage people well outperform those who don't by 30-40%.

What, as an employer, can you do?

- Identify bullying as unacceptable in your employee handbook.
- Establish a method of conduct and thorough investigation if bullying occurs.
- Maintain discretion and confidentiality at all times.
- Develop a detailed workplace violence-prevention program.
- Encourage a respectful workplace.
- Have a reporting system.
- Educate people on bullying through workshops and written communications.
- Treat all complaints seriously and never ignore potential problems.
- Try to work out situations before they get out of control.
- Train supervisors and managers on how to deal with bullying complaints.
- Do not delay resolution.

There are legal ramifications with harassment issues in a workplace. Part of the problem with bullying is that there are no legal ramifications; more often than not, it just gets swept under the carpet.

Be informed. Educate yourself as to your employer's policies and procedures for bullying.

Document everything. Keep a diary documenting everything that happens, including what you've done to try stopping it. Record the date, time, where and what happened in as much detail as possible, along with the names of witnesses and the outcome of the event.



Stand up to the bully. You should ask a supervisor or a union member to be with you when you make the approach. Be calm and civilized. Take a deep breath and say, "I find the way you've just spoken to me offensive and I believe it is harassment. I'd like you to not do it again or I'll have to take further action." If you can't confront the bully, write to him/her with a specific example of his/her offensive behaviour and let him/her know how you expect to be treated in the future.

Speak to colleagues. Maybe they are experiencing the same thing. There's always strength in numbers.

Get advice from your union, a human resource manager, a health and safety rep (if you have one), a supervisor, and/or a human rights association.

Speak to the bully's manager. Be sure to go with all your evidence though, as he/she might be defensive of his/her employee.

Follow procedure. If the situation continues or is serious, you might need to make a formal (written) complaint that follows company policy.

Talk to your doctor. He/she will be sympathetic and help you get time away from work to relax. Professional counselling and/or assertiveness training could also be an option.

An eye for an eye gets nowhere. Whatever you do – do not retaliate. You'll look just as guilty as your bully and you might even be blamed for instigating the conflict.

Climb the ladder. If you've reported it to your supervisor or human resources person and nobody does anything about it, proceed to the next level of management. Keep going up until you find someone who will do something about it.

What happens if still nothing is done? As harsh as this may sound, the Safety Council recommends in situations where an employer is non-responsive to a complaint, you may need to consider working elsewhere.

Adapted from a Centre for Occupational Health & Safety article.

Parenting Skills That Foster Bullying Behaviours

We've all seen it: a parent in the supermarket rushing for groceries and coping with a child having a temper tantrum. The frustrated parent gives in and gives the child what he wanted. We all know who won.

With today's hurried lifestyles, this kind of thing happens often. Parents have too little time and too little energy, so it's so much easier to give in or to bribe for good behaviour. But by failing to provide firm behaviour guidelines or to say "no" and stick to it, we can build the basis for bullying. Bullying is all about control and absence of empathy for victims. The child who gets their own way most of the time is bullying the parent!

Bullying behaviour is apparent by kindergarten entry. Unchecked, it tends to continue right through to adolescence. It arises in children from homes where parents use physical discipline. Increasingly, we see it in families where no discipline at all happens. Bullying behaviour places a child at risk for outright delinquency (60% of bullies have a criminal conviction by early adulthood).

On the other hand, there is excellent evidence that raising your child with firm expectations and guidelines – about values and behaviour – and eliminating physical punishment, leads to less bullying and other aggressive behaviours. Of course, parents need to

model those expectations as well. Families who share dinner – or another meal – together most days, and spend that time in conversation with each other, have fewer long-term problems with their children.

In addition, positive attention also improves parent-child relations. Taking some time each day to just pay attention to your child – talk, read, watch TV together, play a game – boosts your child's well-being and family peace.

The one thing you should spend on your child is your time.



Written by Judith Hayman, Public Health Nurse and Lactation Consultant.

Does your workplace have an alcohol and drug policy?

Why the concern?

Substance use by employees can, and often does, have a negative impact on work performance and presents potentially serious safety risks.

Impacts of alcohol and other drugs in the workplace include:

- Absenteeism.
- Staff turnover.
- Theft.
- Reduced productivity.
- Unsafe work practices.
- Aggression towards co-workers/ customers.
- Reduced alertness and motor coordination.
- Errors in service delivery.
- Workplace injury.
- Legal liabilities.

Why a policy?

One of the most effective ways of preventing alcohol and other drug-related problems in the workplace is by establishing a clear and comprehensive policy. Workplace policies are a simple and practical way to create awareness among employees regarding their responsibilities and expectations. Having a policy in place helps management avoid having to make judgement calls by eliminating ambiguity in certain situations. As a result, legal liabilities may be reduced.



What should be in the policy?

Since each workplace environment is unique. Policies should be tailored to meet the specific needs of each workplace. Consider the following key policy components when developing an alcohol and drug workplace policy, or when reviewing and upgrading an existing policy:

1. Initial and ongoing employee awareness of the policy.
2. Access to assistance, if needed, through a contracted employee assistance program or, as appropriate, community resources.
3. Training for supervisors on their role under the policy, including both performance management for early identification of potential problems and appropriate steps to take to investigate a possible policy violation.
4. A variety of tools to investigate if someone may be in violation of the policy.

Barbara Butler & Associates Inc.
(continued on page 4)



October 23-29, 2006.

The theme for Canada's Healthy Workplace Week (CHWW) 2006 is Make a Difference in Your Workplace. Whether you're the CEO or on the front lines, you can make a difference!

Did you know every shining example of a healthy, high-performing organization has a senior decision-maker who became very engaged in the process at an early stage? These are the executives who recognized the need to create an environment where people can buy into a vision, feel respected and listened to, and have work-life balance. In these environments, they were able to encourage creativity, innovation, productivity and, in the end, profit. And they all say this is not a complicated thing to do, but it also doesn't happen overnight.

For organizations and individuals interested in participating in Canada's Healthy Workplace Week 2006, go to www.healthyworkplaceweek.ca. You will find a selection of ideas and activities that can be adapted to fit your needs.

The activities are separated into three sections:

- 1 Activities to Enhance your Personal Well-being.
- 2 Activities to Support Managers.
- 3 Activities for Organizations to Implement.

(Top five activities from previous years – back by popular demand.)

Many of the activities were provided by consultants who practice in the field of organizational health and wellness.

This information was taken from www.healthyworkplaceweek.ca.



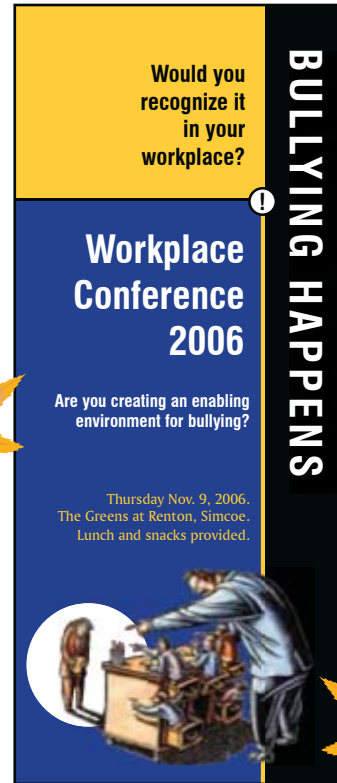
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REGISTER NOW for the 2006 Workplace Conference



Visit our website www.hnhu.org for a complete brochure.

Does your workplace... (continued from page 3)

How effective will the policy be?

It is important to remember that written policies are only a small piece of the pie. In order to be effective, all employees must be aware of their existence, management must monitor for compliance on an ongoing basis and enforcement must take place in the case of violation.

How do I get started?

The following website provides detailed information on alcohol and drug programs and policies for workplaces. It also has a section for custom policy building with many options from which to choose: <http://www.dol.gov/elaws/drugfree.htm>.

Take action. Reduce your liability. Protect your employees. Develop an alcohol and drug workplace policy or review and upgrade an existing one.

If you would like more information on alcohol and drug workplace policies, please contact Michelle Pasichnyk, Health Promoter at 519-426-6170 Ext. 3274 or 905-318-6623 Ext. 3274 (free from 905) or by email at michelle.pasichnyk@hnhu.org.