

Who's doing the bullying?

Bullying can happen between co-workers, and they may also be harassed by clients, customers, contractors or others from outside the workplace. However, research shows more workers are bullied by employers and managers than by fellow workers.

Everyone has the right to dignity and respect, and to a safe and healthy environment at work. If bullying is happening in your workplace, there are ways to deal with it.

What can be done

- *get the issues out in the open by talking with fellow workers*
- *hold a meeting, away from the workplace if necessary*
- *get the workplace health and safety representative, OHS committee, or other delegates to take up the issues*
- *contact your union for assistance*

Use these processes to:

- *identify the most important issues*
- *keep records of incidents, so they are not forgotten or misrepresented*
- *raise the issues with the employer through workplace representatives*
- *arrange counselling and/or other assistance for distressed workers if needed*

Under occupational health and safety legislation, employers have a legal duty to control all health and safety hazards in the workplace. This includes organisational structures and behaviours which may lead to bullying.

Employers have to consult with their employees about policies and procedures to eliminate all hazards and risks from the workplace. There is no excuse for causing or allowing bullying.

If an employer will not act on these issues, health and safety representatives, in most states, can issue provisional improvement notices (PINS). These are official notices to an employer that a health and safety issue exists and needs to be fixed.

In all states, government health and safety inspectors can direct employers to fix problems in the workplace and may issue prohibition or improvement notices.

Some forms of bullying are outlawed by equal opportunity or anti-discrimination legislation.

Your union can provide further information and advice. Call the ACTU Helpline.

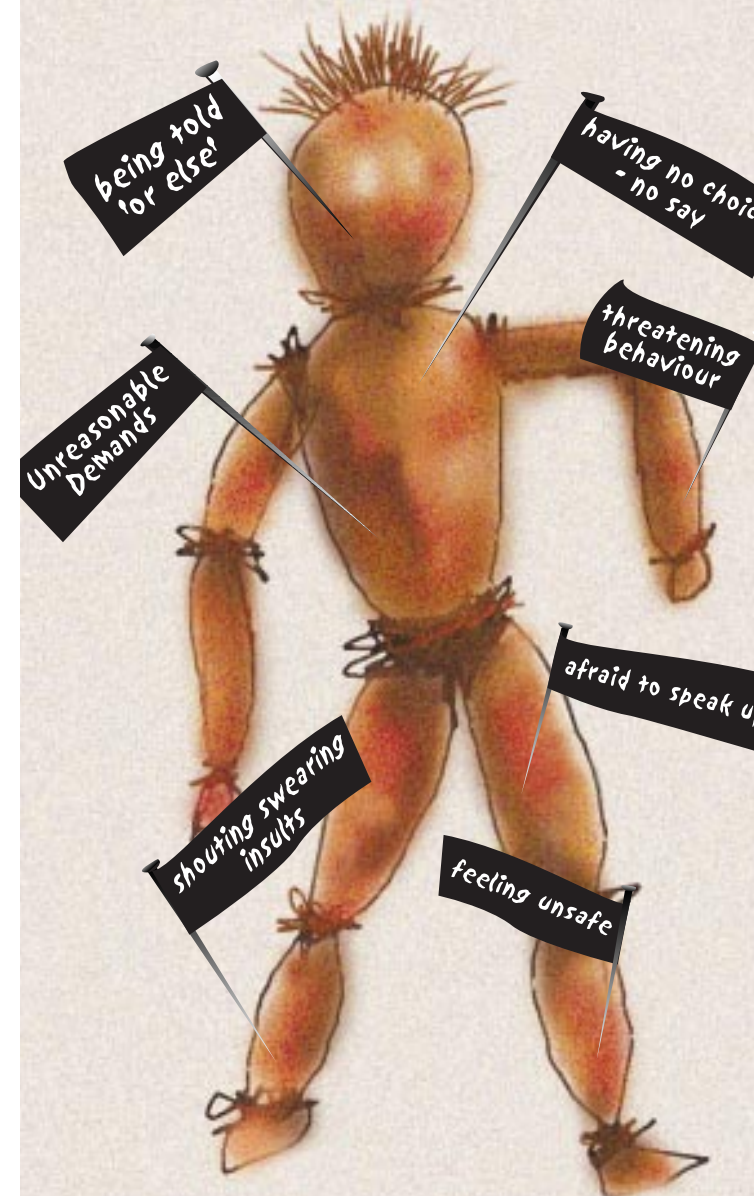
1300 362 223

Union workplaces are safer places.

www.actu.asn.au



Being bossed around is bad for your health.



The workplace is no place for bullying.

Is this your workplace?

- *unreasonable demands or impossible targets*
- *restrictive and petty work rules*
- *being required to perform tasks without adequate training*
- *being forced to stay back to finish work or additional tasks*
- *compulsory overtime, unfair rostering or allocation of work*
- *constant, intrusive surveillance or monitoring*
- *no say in how your job is done*
- *interference with personal belongings or sabotage of work*
- *shouting or abusive language*
- *open or implied threat of the sack, or demotion*
- *people afraid to speak up about conditions, behaviours, or health and safety*

Many people think of bullying as persecuting or 'ganging up' on individuals. But that's only part of the story.

Most bullying is not so obvious.

Bossing people around, intimidating, threatening or keeping them under pressure is also bullying. This is the most common form of bullying in Australian workplaces, and is a risk to health and safety.

Those seen to be most vulnerable include young workers, apprentices and trainees; women; older workers; and people of non-English speaking background, who may experience sexual and/or racist harassment.

However, bullying can happen to anyone.

It occurs across all industries and in all professions.

Bullying is a growing problem

Changes at work, brought about by deregulation, privatisation restructuring, downsizing and technological change, have contributed to an erosion of working conditions for many Australians.

Casualisation and job insecurity create a climate where people are increasingly powerless and at risk of being bullied.

What is Bullying?

The push for ever higher 'productivity' in an increasingly competitive environment can result in bullying tactics being used to drive workers to the limit.

Workers get the blame for poor performance or low productivity, no matter how well they do their jobs.

Health and Safety Effects

Bullying can affect our health in many ways. Being bossed around is a major cause of stress at work. At worst, it can result in serious physical illness, alcohol and drug use, depression or suicidal thoughts.

Other symptoms include headaches, sleep difficulties, high blood pressure, digestive problems, tearfulness, anxiety, nausea, anger, irritability, and loss of motivation, concentration, self-confidence and morale. The effects of bullying also place pressure on family and friends.

The significant effects which working conditions have on the health of workers are largely underestimated or ignored in this country. If you and/or your colleagues are experiencing any of the signs and symptoms described here, then the cause may well be bullying.

Bullying must not be tolerated.