

Tips for Dealing With Workplace Bullying



By The Associated Press
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More than a third of U.S. workers have experienced workplace bullying, the repeated mistreatment by a boss or co-workers, which includes verbal abuse, threatening conduct, intimidation, harassment or social exclusion, according to the Workplace Bullying Institute. Targets of on-the-job bullying often suffer increased fear, anxiety, helplessness or anger.

Many victims of workplace bullying never report the incidents because they fear retaliation or lack confidence that their employer will address to the problem. Human resource experts say it's important to speak up and resolve the issue before it results in physical or mental harm.

Some other tips:

—Consult your company's employee handbook to see if it has a policy prohibiting harassment or other workplace bullying behavior. Many organizations define acceptable standards of office behavior and have a process for filing complaints and punishing misconduct.

—Keep detailed notes of the bully's actions, including the date, time and circumstances of what took place. The information is essential for filing an internal complaint or, possibly, a lawsuit.

—Talk to the person who has been bullying you. Sometimes, a boss or co-worker doesn't realize words or actions have been hurtful. Talking it over in a professional way may resolve the problem. But don't get caught in a war of words or make threats that could escalate the confrontation. Bring in a third party if talking privately makes you feel uncomfortable.

—If talking it over doesn't help, it's time to talk to the human resources department or the bully's supervisor. If the bully is a senior manager or CEO, approach another senior official or someone close to the bully and urge that person to help defuse the situation.

—Keep doing your job well to show managers that you are a valuable employee. Make it in the company's interest to keep you happy.

—If you've worked through channels inside the office and there's still no resolution, it may be time to part ways with your employer.