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STAR AVIATION Workplace Bullying and Occupational Violence

About This Module

Bullying and occupational violence can occur in any organisation and can affect workers' health and their ability to do their job.

This module has been designed to increase your awareness of what is considered bullying and occupational violence and describes your responsibilities regarding such behaviours.

This module is divided into three units:

Unit 1 Legislation and Responsibilities	Unit 2 Understanding and Preventing Bullying	Unit 3 Reporting Bullying
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You should allow approximately 30 minutes to complete this module. At the end of the module you will be asked to undertake an online assessment to check your understanding of the key concepts presented.

You are now ready to begin.

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Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Define bullying and differentiate it from other behaviours
- Understand your responsibilities in relation to bullying in the workplace
- Explain how to prevent bullying
- Describe how to raise and manage grievances
- Acknowledge the consequences of bullying

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Workplace Bullying and Occupational Violence

What Is Bullying and Occupational Violence?

Workplace bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed toward an individual or a group, that creates a risk to health and safety.

Occupational violence is a form of bullying where a worker is physically attacked or threatened in the workplace.

No form of bullying will be tolerated, condoned or ignored by our organisation.



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Unit 1: Legislation and Responsibilities

Legislation protects the rights of individuals to fair and equitable treatment in the workplace and to a safe working environment (see Note).

Under these laws and our Code of Conduct, bullying is strictly prohibited.

At our organisation, it is both expected and required that all individuals show respect for each other and that human rights, diversity, inclusion and tolerance are valued in the workplace.



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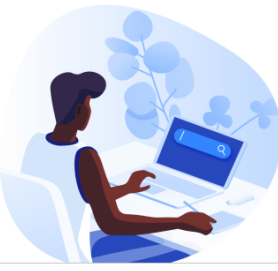
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Your Responsibilities

Under legislation and in line with our organisation's standards of behaviour, you must refrain from engaging in any form of bullying.
As a worker, you are also responsible for:

- Preventing bullying
- Undertaking appropriate training
- Acting as a role model
- Reporting bullying

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Management Responsibilities

While managers must comply with the responsibilities that apply to all workers, they are also responsible for:

- Advising workers of their rights and responsibilities
- Establishing acceptable behaviour
- Intervening where appropriate
- Monitoring compliance
- Assisting in informal

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Management Responsibilities

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Unit 2: Understanding and Preventing Bullying

Bullying behaviour can be obvious and openly aggressive or be subtle and not easily observed by others. It can occur at any time or place where workers interact.

Common types of bullying include:

- Verbal bullying
- Cyber bullying
- Covert bullying
- Inappropriate managerial action

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What Is Not Bullying?

Management actions which occur in a fair and reasonable manner do **not** constitute bullying.

Such actions include, but are not limited to:

- Performance management processes;
- Constructive negative feedback or provision of performance or career advice;
- Reasonable disciplinary action;
- Legitimate action taken to transfer or retrench a worker;
- A decision not to provide a promotion or acting appointment based on the worker's capability;
- Allocating work in compliance with legitimate needs, systems and policies;
- Business processes, workplace change or restructuring.

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Activity: Behaviours That Do Not Constitute Bullying

It is important that you are able to differentiate conduct that is **not** considered bullying. Select the behaviours that you believe **do not** constitute bullying:

- Excessive, unjustified monitoring of a person's work
- Asking questions about progress at work
- Unreasonable demands at work
- Being reprimanded if repeatedly late for work
- Personal insults and criticism
- Discussions about repeated non-attendance at work
- Repeated public confrontations about performance

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Occupational Violence

Occupational violence is a form of bullying and is present in situations where workers are physically threatened, attacked or assaulted in the workplace. Common examples include:

- Physical attacks
- Throwing objects
- Using weapons
- Indecent contact
- Threatening behaviour

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Case Study: Weekend Plans

Jason, Anh and Christine have been emailing each other throughout the day discussing their weekend plans and engaging in casual banter.

Jason tells Christine and Anh that he will be attending a dance class on Sunday and that he will push them down the stairs if they tell anyone about it. Anh and Christine feel uneasy and threatened by Jason's comment and decide to leave the email conversation.

Which of the following statements is correct?

1. Jason's comment cannot be considered occupational violence as it is clear through the email conversation that it was a joke. Answer

2. Threatening another person with harm or injury, even as a joke, is inappropriate behaviour and considered occupational violence. Answer

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Is Intention Relevant?

Workplace bullying and occupational violence can be:

- Intended:** where actions are intended to humiliate, offend, intimidate, distress or physically hurt and did in fact cause that effect;
- Unintended:** where actions which although not intended to humiliate, offend, intimidate, distress or physically hurt, did cause and should reasonably have been expected to cause that effect.

Therefore, what matters is the effect of a worker's behaviour, not whether there was a specific intent to bully or exert violence.

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Case Study: Photo Editing

Michael enjoys amateur photography in his spare time. Following the team's Christmas party he begins using Photoshop to distort and splice photos of team members in amusing ways. Michael then starts to circulate the images via email.

Initially everyone has a good laugh at them, but over the coming weeks Janet notices that her picture is increasingly being used as the subject of the joke. Janet begins to feel that Michael's images are belittling and offensive and raises the issue with her manager, Simon.

Which of the following statements is correct?

1. Michael's behaviour constitutes bullying and Simon has a responsibility to address the issue.

2. Michael's intention was innocent and as no one else complained, he cannot be

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Contributing Factors

There are a variety of reasons why a worker may bully or exert violence onto another worker in the workplace. Some reasons include:

- Power
- Self-esteem
- Difference
- Perceived threat

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Bullying: Myths versus Facts

There are many myths surrounding bullying. Read the common myths about bullying below and move your cursor over the 'Fact' button to read the corresponding facts.

1. Bullying only happens to low-level workers.
2. Bullying is just another word for a personality clash.
3. I can get away with comments and jokes if the other person laughs along with me.
4. If I avoid the bully, they will go away.



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Impacts

Bullying and occupational violence impacts both individuals and our organisation as a whole.

Hold your cursor over the boxes below to learn about the:

-
-



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Preventing Bullying

Problems with bullying often arise because of breakdowns in communication, leading to situations where people have difficulty expressing themselves in a constructive manner.

All workers are required to be proactive in preventing bullying. For this to be achieved, it is important that you are able to communicate openly and honestly, while maintaining professionalism at all times. This results in workers being able to manage differences and work cooperatively.



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Authorising and Assisting

Any level of involvement which condones bullying behaviour is unacceptable. If you authorise or assist in bullying, you may be held liable if a complaint is made about the behaviour.

Inaction can also have significant consequences. Being aware of bullying and doing nothing about it can give the impression that this behaviour is acceptable. This then:

- Encourages those bullying to continue their behaviour;
- Discourages those being bullied to report the behaviour or lodge a complaint.



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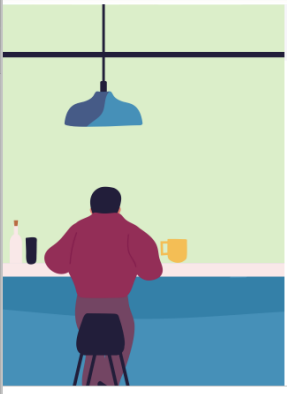
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Case Study: Friday Night Drinks

On Friday nights, a group of workers go to the local pub for a few drinks. Brad usually organises the event and often goes ahead of the group in order to get a table big enough for everyone.

Geoff, a colleague of Brad's, regularly comes along but always arrives a little late due to some extra responsibilities he has at work. Geoff often asks Brad to save him a seat, however, every time Geoff arrives there is never an extra seat for him. When Geoff asks Brad why he didn't save a seat, Brad will point at a chair on another table and say, while laughing: "There it is, over at that table!". Then, when Geoff brings an extra chair to the table, many of his colleagues don't move to allow Geoff to join the table.

Which of the following statements is correct?

1. Geoff is being bullied and should make a complaint to his manager. Answer
2. As this is occurring outside of work hours, Geoff cannot make a complaint to his manager. Answer

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Preventing Cyber Bullying

Social media plays a prominent role in our daily lives and is increasingly being used as a platform for bullying. Cyber bullying is particularly damaging as it is a one-way, often anonymous, attack on an individual or a group.

When posting on social media sites you should consider:

- What is the nature of my post?
- How could my post be received?
- Who could potentially read my post?
- Is my post in my organisation's interests?



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Unit 3: Reporting Bullying

Bullying can severely undermine an individual's self-esteem and can also affect the general atmosphere in the workplace. Despite this, bullying is often not reported.

Some of the reasons for this include:

- Fear of 'payback' or victimisation;
- A belief that no-one will act on the problem;
- Fear of being labelled 'weak' or a 'whinger';
- Fear that speaking out will compromise future career opportunities and wellbeing.

It is important to remember that there is zero tolerance for bullying in our organisation. Reporting of incidents is a critical first step in eliminating such behaviour in our workplace.



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Raising and Managing Grievances

If you feel that you are being bullied, it is important that you don't ignore it. Your first step should be to approach the individual who behaved inappropriately and let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable and ask them to stop.

When speaking to the person, you should:

- Remain calm;
- Confront the individual in private;
- Try to talk about the behaviour and not the person.

If you feel uncomfortable in approaching the worker or if you don't get results from the confrontation, you should report your grievance to your manager.

What should you do if you witness an incident of bullying?

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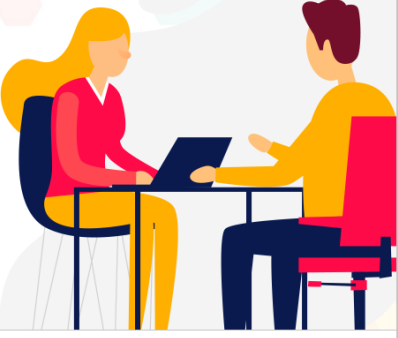
Workplace Bullying and Occupational Violence

What If You Are Accused of Bullying?

If someone confronts you and accuses you of bullying or subjecting them to occupational violence, you should:

- Stay calm and listen to **the other person's grievance**;
- Treat the situation seriously;
- Acknowledge the situation that your alleged actions may have caused;
- Consider telling your manager what has happened;
- Make sure that your ongoing future behaviour is professional.

If you realise that you have behaved inappropriately, then it is important that you apologise for your actions and explain that you did not mean to cause offence or harm.



Note 1 Note 2 Tip

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Formal Grievance Procedure

You may choose to report your grievance formally if:

- A resolution is not able to be reached through informal discussions;
- The matter is very serious in nature.


The formal grievance procedure requires:

- An investigation of the incident;
- Confidentiality to be maintained at all times;
- The identification of **potential outcomes**.

A Reasonable Person

The behaviour will be considered based on the question 'what would a 'reasonable person' do in this situation?'

If this comparison shows that the behaviour was unreasonable and / or inappropriate, then it could be concluded that the offensive behaviour took place.



Note Caution

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Consequences of Bullying Behaviour

If a complaint is substantiated, disciplinary action will be taken. This may include a disciplinary penalty up to and including termination of employment.

Breaches of legislation can leave both the individual(s) concerned and our organisation vicariously liable, and can result in monetary fines and / or imprisonment.

What could happen if a worker's actions amount to criminal conduct?

Answer

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Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

If you would like additional external support during the complaint process or wish to discuss any other personal, work or financial issues, you can contact the employee assistance program (EAP).

The EAP is an external counselling service that is voluntary, confidential and free to all workers and their immediate families.

You can contact our EAP provider 24 hours per day, seven days per week.



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Module in Review

Our organisation has zero tolerance for any form of bullying, including occupational violence.

Every worker has a shared responsibility to promote a positive work environment and not engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour.

If you experience or witness bullying in our organisation, you should report the incident. All grievances will be taken seriously and will be addressed promptly.

If you have any questions about the topics discussed in this module, please contact your manager.

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What can you do to prevent bullying?

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- A Adopt a serious demeanour at work.
- B Communicate openly and honestly with other workers while maintaining professionalism at all times.
- C Only communicate with other workers face to face in order to minimise misunderstanding.
- D It is impossible to prevent bullying.

Click to continue

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Your Manager assigns you a project that needs to be completed by a certain deadline. A week prior to the due date, your Manager asks you if the project will be completed on time. Is this an example of bullying?

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A Yes, this is bullying because your Manager is hassling you and putting you under unnecessary pressure.

B No, this is not bullying, your Manager is simply asking for an update.

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Which of the following is required of workers at our organisation? Select all answers that are correct.

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Preventing and reporting bullying.

Maintaining a bullying offenders list.

Undertaking appropriate training on bullying.

Acting as a role model.

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Verbal threats of physical violence constitute occupational violence even though no one is physically harmed. True or false?

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True

False

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What is a common reason why one worker may bully another worker? Select all answers that are correct.

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- They are attempting to boost their self-esteem.
- They see the other person as a threat.
- The other person has flaws that should be pointed out
- They want to use their position of power over those who are perceived to be weaker.

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Workplace bullying is defined as repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed toward an individual or a group that creates a risk to health and safety. True or false?

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True

False

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Which of the following are potential impacts of bullying on individuals? Select all answers that are correct.

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Fear, stress and anxiety.

Reduced output and performance.

Loss of self-esteem and motivation.

Increased morale.

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Which of the following is an impact of bullying on our organisation?

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- A Reduced efficiency, productivity and profitability.
- B Reduced absenteeism / turnover.
- C Lower workers compensation premiums.
- D Increased worker morale.

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Bullying is prohibited under our organisation's Code of Conduct. True or false?

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- True
- False

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If you believe you are being bullied, what are some of the actions that you might take to resolve the issue, depending on the situation? Select all answers that are correct.

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- Address the issue directly with the person who is bullying you.
- Report the bullying to your Manager.
- Retaliate by treating the bully the same way they have been treating you.
- Start a rumour around the office that the person in question has been bullying people.

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CONGRATULATIONS

You have successfully completed your assessment with a score of 80%

Your results have been recorded, please close this window.

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