

Workplace bullying incidents have the potential to create financial, physical and psychological trauma on individuals and organisations. Individual and corporate reputations can be severely affected when allegations are not effectively investigated or are ignored.

How would you answer these questions?

- » Do you know what to do when you have been bullied?
- » Do you know what to do if you are accused of being a bully?
- » Do you know how to defend an allegation of workplace bullying?
- » Do you know what questions to ask?
- » Does your organisation have a workplace bullying detection and prevention policy?
- » Do you know what type of questions you will be asked when you seek medical assistance?
- » Do you know what type of questions your legal professionals will ask you?
- » Do you know what to say to your family, friends and associates?
- » Do you know why investigations are conducted?
- » Do you know how to respond to media interest in workplace bullying allegations?

RESOLVING WORKPLACE BULLYING

RESOLVING WORKPLACE BULLYING

BERNIE ALTHOFER

Survival questions and helpful hints
from cubicles to boardrooms

This book is a must read if you answered no to any of the questions.

Scenarios, practical questions and helpful hints are used to help victims, alleged bullies, organisations, the medical and legal professions, family/friends and associates, investigators and the media understand issues involved in resolving workplace bullying.

EGL I Assessments Pty Ltd
www.egliassessments.com

ISBN 978-0-9805888-0-4



9 780980 588804

BERNIE ALTHOFER

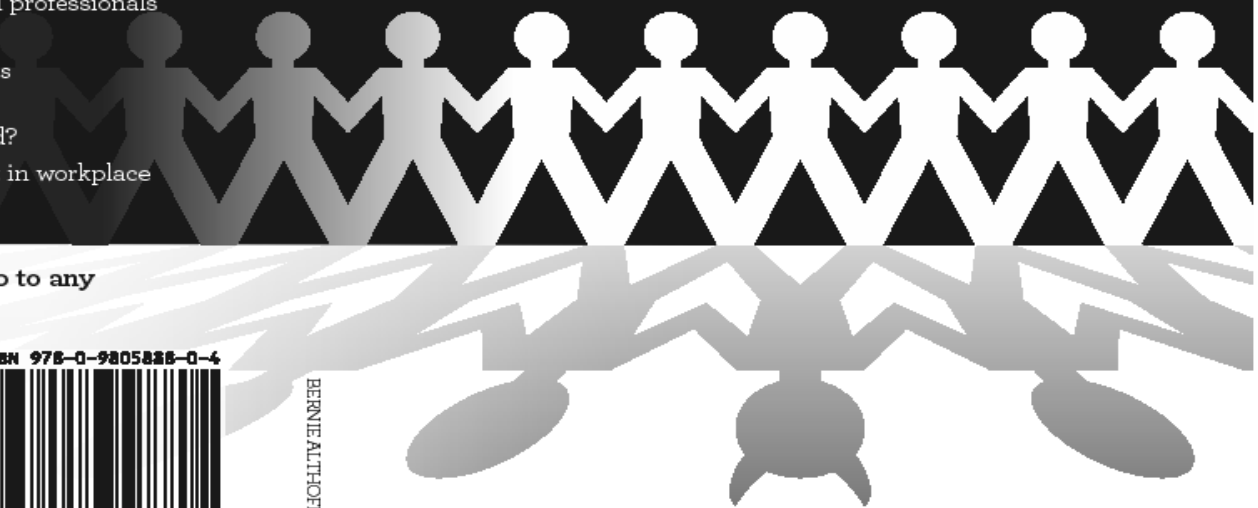


TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE FIRST CHAPTER OVERVIEW.....	1
THE SECOND CHAPTER OCCUPATIONAL AND WORKPLACE VIOLENCE.....	7
THE THIRD CHAPTER INTRODUCTION.....	15
THE FOURTH CHAPTER THE VICTIM.....	27
THE FIFTH CHAPTER THE ALLEGED BULLY.....	51
THE SIXTH CHAPTER THE ORGANISATION.....	71
THE SEVENTH CHAPTER THE MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS.....	93
THE EIGHTH CHAPTER THE LEGAL PROFESSIONALS.....	103
THE NINTH CHAPTER THE FAMILY, FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES (FFA).....	117
THE TENTH CHAPTER THE INVESTIGATORS.....	127
THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER THE MEDIA.....	139
THE TWELFTH CHAPTER SUMMARY.....	147
THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER A CALL TO ACTION.....	157
HELPFUL READINGS.....	162
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY.....	165
ABOUT THE AUTHOR.....	168



THE FIRST CHAPTER

OVERVIEW

This book contains thirteen chapters that provide some brief discussions regarding how each individual involved may feel and some thoughts that each of them may experience when workplace bullying happens. Each chapter is written in a simple, user friendly style that allows you to identify questions that are relevant to you, and provides some helpful hints for individuals and organisations.

The thirteen chapters of discussion, questions and helpful hints can be used to help people from being or remaining a victim to being a survivor if they are involved in a workplace bullying incident.

The chapters are:

- » **Overview** (the first chapter)
- » **Occupational and workplace violence** (the second chapter)
- » **Introduction** (the third chapter)
- » **The victim** (the fourth chapter)
- » **The alleged bully** (the fifth chapter)
- » **The organisation** (the sixth chapter)
- » **The medical professionals** (the seventh chapter)
- » **The legal professionals** (the eighth chapter)
- » **The family, friends and associates** (the ninth chapter)
- » **The investigators** (the tenth chapter)
- » **The media** (the eleventh chapter)
- » **Summary** (the twelfth chapter)
- » **A call to action** (the thirteenth chapter)

The book does not provide the definitive answer to every possible scenario that involves workplace bullying. It will help you gain a better understanding of how you can develop strategies and a tool kit that will help you respond to or even reduce the possibility of workplace bullying incidents and allegations.

Each and every one of us can do or say something that another person may perceive as workplace bullying.

Workplace bullying, workplace conflict, anger management, communication practices, and generational differences contribute to individual and organisational understandings of what is and what is not reasonable management and what are acceptable workplace practices.

Legislative requirements about safe working environments may also be factors that have to be considered when an allegation of workplace bullying is made.

Workplace bullying does not only impact on the victim and the alleged bully. A wide range of personnel and organisations, medical and legal professionals, family/friends and associates, investigators and the media are also drawn into the web for many reasons.

Sometimes what starts out as a minor dispute or misunderstanding through poor communication practices escalates through to legal action, resulting in damage to individual and organisations reputations.

Some of those involved may not know what questions are asked, why they are asked, who asks the questions and what the implications are in the resolution process.

Some individuals and some organisations may be ill prepared to respond to allegations of workplace bullying.

Workplace bullying is a growth industry that can be condoned and sanctioned by ineffective leadership, practiced by dysfunctional managers and employees, and suffered by innocent workers.

Organisations are susceptible to litigious actions, both civilly and criminally, if managers and supervisors fail to ensure there is compliance with organisational performance standards, codes of conduct or community expectations.

Any one from a CEO to an administration officer, from a respected business woman to a labourer, from a business owner to a client, can be accused of being a bully. Allegations can range from accusations that involve criminal behaviour through to issues that might be considered as immoral, unethical, or simply poor management practices.

Workplace bullying can occur in the public and private sectors, in sporting clubs, historical societies and in just about any place where people come together. People of any age including retirees and volunteers can be involved.

There are numerous definitions of workplace bullying. However, most workplace bullying allegations will contain elements of verbal threats or put-downs, derogatory language, and aggressive behaviours such as hostile questioning, yelling, shouting or throwing items such as furniture, books, workplace tools or other missiles.

Workplace bullying can also include undermining others by giving or failing to give complete instructions, inadequate or inappropriate information regarding a specific task or project, or repeatedly and without reason changing deadlines or task parameters.

Everyone should be able to identify what is workplace bullying so that they can make decisions as to courses of action they may need to take to prevent it from happening, or to resolve it when it does happen.

Whilst the second chapter of this book provides some definitions about workplace violence, harassment and bullying, it does not discuss every definition contained within all the literature. There are many excellent publications (refer to the helpful readings) for more definitions and explanations.

There are some commonalities in applying meaning to what is and what isn't occupational or workplace violence, and not all legislators have reached agreement on the topic.

Whilst organisational policies are written to support legislative requirements, the human factor is the major contributing factor as to whether or not workplace bullying flourishes, or is prevented from occurring.

It is suggested that duty of care obligations, as they relate to workplace bullying, may not be understood by some managers and supervisors, and equally, legislation to support whistleblowers who wish to raise allegations of workplace bullying may be seen by some as another barrier.

Sometimes the complex range of issues that are associated with an allegation of workplace bullying can make an individual feel like they are a hostage with limited ability to move or make decisions. Any false move could be detrimental to their survival or resolution of the incident.

Organisations are required to provide a safe working environment for employees and other persons. Workplace bullying is a health and safety issue that has the potential to impact on the physical and psychological well being of individuals.

Courts, Commissions and Tribunals are now saying that organisations and individuals are required to demonstrate that they have taken reasonable action to prevent breaches of health and safety legislation.

Proactive and preventive strategies can help organisations and individuals detect and prevent workplace bullying. Effective risk management including educational strategies can help organisations and individuals develop appropriate responses that help all parties achieve resolution.

Organisational and public involvement in workplace bullying can result in embarrassing situations for all those involved. Everyone involved will have their own views about what has happened, what should be done about it, and what action they want to take.

Resolution can be achieved in any place from a cubicle to a court house and can involve many individuals who have differing levels of expertise and views about bullying, differing work and life experience and exposure to workplace bullying, and differing problem solving abilities.

Sometimes the action they want to take includes legal action through Courts, Commissions or Tribunals, and this can be difficult for all concerned.

Ultimately, workplace conflict can result in extreme forms of occupational and workplace violence, including workplace bullying and many other forms of harassment. Irrespective of how it started, you will be involved whether you want to be or not.

Effective communication requires good listening skills. The questions that have been listed throughout the chapters in this book require you to listen to the responses provided.

You will provide some of the responses to the questions, and others will ask you questions expecting a response.

Depending on the response provided, additional questions may be asked. There are a few yes or no questions, but the majority require some detailed response.

Sometimes the response provided will need further research or will require you to do something such as gather information in preparation, or in the case of organisations, to review current policies or procedures.

With increased litigation comes an increased risk that settlements will be affected by the actions taken to prevent or detect workplace bullying.

This book provides you with practical advice that may help you move from being a victim to being a survivor.

Plan for the day that you will be involved in a workplace bullying incident. Use this book to reduce the fallout when it does happen.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

He was a police officer for almost 35 years, and worked in operational, training, management, operational audit and health and safety roles. He volunteered as a Harassment Referral Officer, Peer Support Officer and was an elected Workplace Health and Safety Representative.

He has:

- conducted workshops on detecting and preventing workplace bullying
- advised management, victims and alleged bullies on identifying, reporting and resolving workplace bullying
- presented papers on workplace bullying, leadership, performance management, and corruption prevention
- personal experience in responding to allegations of workplace bullying

CONTACT DETAILS

Bernie ALTHOFER AFAIM

MEd (Leadership and Management
MA (Justice Studies)
Cert IV Assessment and Workplace Training
Graduate Certificate in Applied Management

Managing Director

EGL I ASSESSMENTS PTY LTD

E enquiries@egliassessments.com

W www.egliassessments.com

P 0419 661 421

PO Box 776,

Spring Hill Qld 4004