

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.

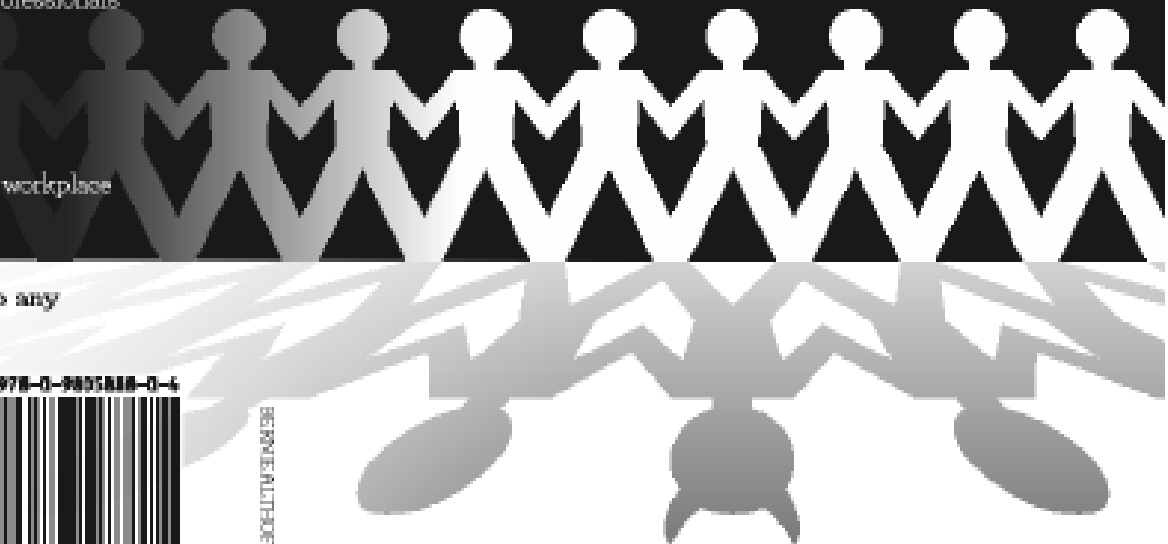
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Work bullying is an emotive topic and can affect each and every one of us directly or indirectly. You may know someone personally who is being or has been bullied.

You may even be a witness or have been a witness to bullying. In some cases, you might even find yourself or have found yourself accused of being a workplace bully.

If you have been in any of those situations, it may have been difficult to find a compromise that you could live with.

You might have read media reports from time to time that someone in Australia died because they were bullied in the workplace. You might wonder how this could happen.

You might be fed up with workplace bullies and the damage they cause. You might wonder why nothing is changing.

You may know by now that workplace bullying incidents can create financial, physical and psychological trauma to individuals and organisations.

Individual and corporate reputations can be severely affected when allegations are not effectively investigated or are ignored.

Someone, somewhere may die today (physically or psychologically) because of workplace bullying.

**There is an increased chance that you will be held personally liable for breaches of the law.**

In my roles as a Harassment Referral Officer, Peer Support Officer and as a Consultant, I found that many people were not aware of questions they should ask and why they should ask them.

I also found that many people went to work unprepared for the day they would be involved in a workplace bullying incident.

Many of these people were not aware of their employment conditions, Codes of Conduct, performance management processes, or even the workplace policies and procedures for the prevention, detection and resolution of workplace bullying.

It is apparent that workplace bullying is complex issue requiring complex solutions many of which are based on education.

Helping everyone to understand the questions, the need to gather 'evidence', and that the process can be long and involved is part of that educative process.

I also found that many of the people I have spoken to over the years did not want to read complicated books. Many just wanted to be told 'just tell me what I have to do'.

Recognising the long term physical and psychological costs associated with workplace bullying can be extremely difficult.

In many cases, costs are only recorded when an injury claim is lodged.

In my book, **RESOLVING WORKPLACE BULLYING. Survival questions and helpful hints from cubicles to boardrooms**, I suggest that the costs start to accrue from the first time that an individual believes they are being bullied.

In many cases, the individual does not recognise what is happening and does not keep any records either of the incident, or any job details that may assist in their claims at a later date.

The 168 page book is based on scenarios, practical questions and helpful hints 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.

In my book, I say that

*"Leaving a positive footprint of change that creates a world without workplace bullying can be a difficult task, but is one that we should all aspire to. Sometimes it is harder to change yourself than it is to change others. Change comes from within and some of us will need to become the change we want to see."*

The following is a brief overview of the book contents.

## **THE FIRST CHAPTER - OVERVIEW**

The 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 SECOND CHAPTER - OCCUPATIONAL AND WORKPLACE VIOLENCE**

This chapter is about putting occupational and workplace violence into context (for this book).

I have included some observations about rights and recognition, perceptions of workplace violence, International responses to workplace violence, defining workplace violence, bullying and harassment, and workplace toxicity.

## **THE THIRD CHAPTER - INTRODUCTION**

This chapter starts with some discussion about workplace bullying, and includes the following sub headings -

- evidence and questions
- communication
- key personnel involved with workplace bullying incidents
- prevention/detection and resolution
- where to go
- a framework
- flight or fight response
- from implementation to claim
- a no win situation
- nowhere to run
- harmless practical jokes and
- a barrage of questions.

## **THE FOURTH CHAPTER- THE VICTIM**

This chapter introduces you to the victim, and includes the following sub headings -

- what did I do to deserve this
- scenarios; getting an outcome
- allegations and investigations
- are you the victim of bullying
- induction programs
- looking at the issues
- options
- the legal battle
- staying in control
- tears, fears and doonas
- support
- corridor conversations
- a new normal
- desperation
- why pick on me and making notes.

The chapter finishes with Helpful questions under these headings –

- Who committed the behaviours against you?
- What is the specific nature of the behaviours?
- When were the behaviours committed?
- Why has the bullying happened to you?
- Where did the bullying behaviours happen? and
- How did you respond?

There are also sub headings including –

- what do you know about your organisation
- staying aware
- workplace investigations and
- some Helpful hints.

## **THE FIFTH CHAPTER - THE ALLEGED BULLY**

This chapter talks about the alleged bully as everyday looking people and includes the following sub headings -

- scenarios
- making an allegation
- reasonable management
- setting up the manager
- respect and dignity
- change management
- what can you do
- individual actions
- staying in the loop
- is this acceptable
- soft policies
- what policy should I read
- prosecutions
- telling tales
- investigating the allegations
- your behaviour and your employment and
- prevention and the cure.

The chapter finishes with Helpful questions and helpful hints.

## **THE SIXTH CHAPTER - THE ORGANISATION**

This chapter introduces you to risk management and includes the following sub headings -

- duty of care
- managing policies and procedures
- bottom line impact
- prosecuting your organisation
- research and policy
- waiting for it to happen
- one model doesn't fit every organisation
- catching and keeping employees
- position descriptions and workplace bullying
- leading and managing performance
- performance management and workplace bullying
- supporting the bully
- the champion

- finding the impact of workplace bullying
- calculating the cost
- cost of workplace violence
- workplace violence indicators and
- weighing up the cost.

The chapter finishes with Helpful questions and helpful hints.

## **THE SEVENTH CHAPTER - THE MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS**

This chapter introduces you the medical professionals and includes the following sub headings -

- the support people
- medical advice
- talking to the GP
- talking to the psychologists, psychiatrists and counsellors
- handling the medical information
- all the paperwork
- medication and you
- when the medical professionals talk to the legal professionals
- family/friends and associates
- going back to work and
- conflicting advice.

The chapter finishes with Helpful questions and helpful hints.

## **THE EIGHTH CHAPTER - THE LEGAL PROFESSIONALS**

This chapter introduces you to the legal professionals and includes the following sub headings -

- legal responses
- Common Law
- resolution options
- reporting requirements
- is legal action an option
- accountability and the workplace bully
- criminal allegations made against you
- internal policies
- getting the evidence
- you, your employer and the investigator
- giving instructions

- getting an outcome, and the
- legal maze

The chapter finishes with Helpful questions to ask your legal professionals, questions your legal professionals may ask you, and helpful hints.

## **THE NINTH CHAPTER - THE FAMILY, FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES**

This chapter introduces you to the family, friends and associates and includes the following sub headings -

- when allegations are a surprise
- not everyone wants to be involved
- when your colleagues are targeted
- good friends listen
- understanding the victim
- the partners role
- talking with your partner
- generational gaps
- go and get another job
- wary in the workplace
- talking about you
- support in the legal process
- trying to explain the process
- blaming the victim
- temptation to talk and
- legal limitations.

The chapter finishes with Helpful questions and helpful hints.

## **THE TENTH CHAPTER - THE INVESTIGATORS**

This chapter introduces you to the investigators and includes the following sub headings -

- what is the right time to investigate
- a workplace death
- when to charge someone
- what does your policy say about the investigation process
- internal or external investigators
- stepping on toes
- knowing what can't be raised
- raising corruption or unlawful activities

- time constraints
- multiple investigations and
- conflicting information and stressors.

The chapter finishes with Helpful questions and helpful hints.

## **THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER - THE MEDIA**

This chapter introduces you to the media and includes the following sub headings -

- getting attention
- confidentiality and public interest
- crisis management policies
- public knowledge and your workplace
- adverse publicity
- settlement conditions
- talking to the media is a high risk situation and
- the age of technology

The chapter finishes with Helpful questions and helpful hints.

## **THE TWELFTH CHAPTER - SUMMARY**

This chapter reflects on the scenarios from chapters four and five and includes the following sub headings -

- the dark side moving on
- staying up to date and
- taking action.

This chapter includes key points for the -

- victim,
- alleged bully
- medical professionals
- legal professionals
- family, friends and associates
- investigators and
- media.

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER - A CALL TO ACTION

This chapter is a call to action and includes the following sub headings -

- where to from here
- a plan of action and
- implementation.

## HELPFUL READINGS

The book includes a list of readings that may be of help to you.

## WHO SHOULD BE INTERESTED IN THIS BOOK?

If you work in the public or private sector in any of the following positions:

- Company directors, shareholders, partners and Chief Executive Officers (CEO's)
- Managers and supervisors (at all levels)
- Human resource managers, personnel officers, and support services (EAP/EAS/Harassment Referral Officers/Peer Support Officers)
- Risk managers and audit team members
- Industrial relations officers and advocates, unions
- Medical professionals including General Practitioners (GP's), psychologists, psychiatrists and counsellors
- Legal professionals
- Educational professionals - including TAFE and English Language schools, employment agencies
- Health - health funds, worker's compensation claims area and appeals areas
- Religious orders and groups
- Family/friends and associates
- Investigators - internal or external
- Media - TV or print
- Social justice advocates
- Emergency service providers such as Police, Ambulance and Fire Rescue

## PURCHASING INFORMATION

**Althofer, B (2009) RESOLVING WORKPLACE BULLYING. Survival questions and helpful hints from cubicles to boardrooms. Published by EGL I Assessments Pty Ltd, PO Box 776, Spring Hill Qld 4004.**

- The book sells for \$25.00 plus \$3.00 postage/handling within Australia.
- Booksellers and Library Suppliers
- You are entitled to 40% discount on purchases of the book.
- You can buy it for \$15 per copy plus \$3.00 postage and handling per copy (in Australia) - total cost per unit - \$18.00.

## BOOK SELLERS/LIBRARY SUPPLIERS

Resolving Workplace Bullying. Survival questions and helpful hints from cubicles to boardrooms has been advertised on page 47, of the Bookseller+Publisher Magazine published in October 2009. **ISBN 9780980588804**

The book is available from my website [www.egliassessments.com](http://www.egliassessments.com) or from the following suppliers:

Management Books  
Australian Institute of Management  
Cnr Boundary and Rosa Streets  
Spring Hill Qld 4000  
Phone: 1300 882 895 or 13 1648

River Bend Books  
193 Oxford Street  
Bulimba Qld 4171  
Phone: (07) 3899 8555

Self Help Books  
9<sup>th</sup> Floor, Silverton Place  
101 Wickham Terrace  
Spring Hill Qld  
Phone: (07) 3839 9727

## About Bernie Althofer



Bernie is the Managing Director and founder of EGL I Assessments Pty Ltd. After a career of almost 35 years as a police officer working in operational, administrative, training, project management, management and operational audit areas in a variety of locations and positions, he established EGL I Assessments Pty Ltd as a reflection of his principles regarding the prevention, detection and resolution of workplace bullying.

Bernie's academic qualifications and managerial experience include him being an Associate Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management and he is currently on the Australian Institute of Management Qld & N.T. Membership Committee. Bernie is an active member of the Corruption Prevention Network (Qld) and has previously served as Deputy Convenor.

Bernie's long term commitment to learning and development has resulted in him being conferred with a Master of Education (Leading & Management) and a Master of Arts (Justice Studies). Bernie also has a Certificate IV Assessment and Workplace Training and a Graduate Certificate in Applied Management.

Bernie has 19 years practical experience in the Public and Private sector undertaking roles such as Harassment Referral Officer, Peer Support Officer, Workplace Health and Safety Representative, Union representative, and Workplace Bullying Consultant providing advice, guidance and support to victims, alleged bullies and managers/supervisors on unlawful discrimination (including sexual harassment) and workplace bullying/harassment.

Bernie has extensive practical experience in managing critical projects, and conducting, leading, directing controlling and reporting on operational assessments, compliance audits and performance reviews. These roles have required to acquire, apply and transfer his knowledge and experience in researching, analysing, interpreting, communicating and apply a diverse range of legislative compliance requirements.

His extensive consultative experience in areas of risk management, workplace harassment/bullying, unlawful discrimination, workplace stress, leadership/management, occupational violence including domestic violence has been applied in the design, development and implementation of workshops on risk management, quality management, procedures writing, workplace bullying/harassment, unlawful discrimination (including sexual harassment), performance management and planning, strategic planning, and problem solving.

Bernie was officially acknowledged in October 2010 for his ten year participation and contribution to the QUT Mentor Scheme.

In 2009, Bernie self published his book 'Resolving Workplace Bullying. Survival questions and helpful hints from cubicles to boardrooms'. He has presented papers at Conferences in Australia on topics including workplace bullying, leadership, health and safety, risk management, deviance and corruption.

He has made contributions to the Human Capital Magazine and regularly provides comments to HR Daily on topics such as workplace bullying/harassment, sexual harassment, and performance management. He has also contributed to the Safety Concepts Website <http://safetyconcepts.com.au/>.