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fact sheet

Bullying – What you can do about it

Reducing the Effect

If you feel you have been or are being bullied or there are things that you can do to help reduce the effect.

- Ask for help early from your safety representative or your union representative.
- Keep a journal; this will help provide clarity and detail to your situation in the future
- Alternate periods of moderate physical exercise with relaxation to alleviate stress
- Structure your time – keep busy
- Keep your life as normal as possible
- Make as many decisions as possible – this gives you a feeling of control over your life
- Do not make big life changes. Your judgement, at the moment, may be impaired
- Do not allow yourself to become isolated
- Spend time with people who make you feel good
- Do things that make you feel good – you deserve it!
- Drive carefully – accidents often happen because people are stressed
- Do not expect colleagues to automatically stand up for you against the bully
- Accept acts of kindness and compassion
- Do not overuse drugs or alcohol

Taking Action against Bullying

Confronting bullying can be very difficult for the victim. Even so, there are a number of steps that can be taken to deal with bullying in the workplace in the first instance. Of course these are only effective if you feel they are suitable and you feel “up to it”.

Steps to take (If you feel you can do it)

As an individual

- Ask for a meeting with the person who is perpetrating the bullying.

- Choose a quiet confidential place.
- Take notes of the discussion. You may wish to have a witness such as your union or safety representative
- State aim of the meeting, for example "I'd like to discuss how we communicate with each other".
- Try to remain calm.
- Do not become personally abusive or insulting, i.e. remain completely professional.
- If the other person becomes aggressive, thank them for their time and end the meeting.
- Stand firm if you come under verbal attack.
- Tell the bully you will not put up with being spoken to in that way.
- Remain confident in your own judgement and ability.
- You may need to avoid being alone with the bully.
- If you don't feel up to this, be sure to contact your OHS Rep, Supervisor or union delegate.

Personal Approaches

- Talk to friends or people you trust in or outside work
- Maintain your outside interests (this helps to keep your sense of perspective)
- Look after yourself and your close relationships
- If you feel unwell, seek medical help and counselling

Workers Compensation

- If you become unwell through bullying get advice from your union on the process to make a claim
- See a doctor
- Lodge a claim
- Consult a solicitor (your union can refer you to one)

In Your Workplace

- Support your fellow employees - don't accept inappropriate behaviour
- Set good standards in dealing with others
- Speak out against inappropriate behaviour

If Bullying Becomes An OH&S Issue

- Talk to your union delegate or safety representative and request them to conduct a risk assessment
- Get support from your workmates
- Request the OHS Rep maintain confidentiality
- Ask your about Grievance Procedures and Dispute Settlement Procedures